

LONE WORKING POLICY

Introduction

Parish Nurses are registered nurses who are employed or appointed by a local church to lead whole person health ministry. North Blackwater Parish Nursing Ministry (NBPNM) partners with and is accredited by Parish Nursing Ministries UK (PNMUK), a charity providing training, coordination and resources to help and support good practice. Locally, North Blackwater Parish Nursing Ministry is governed by North Blackwater Parishes.

Policy aims

- To encourage safe working for North Blackwater Parish Nursing Ministry (NBPNM) staff and volunteers.
- To protect staff and volunteers from false accusations.
- To ensure that lone working is risk-assessed and safe systems are implemented.

Scope

This policy applies to all NBPNM staff and volunteers who may be working alone in the church or church premises, driving alone, or visiting private homes on behalf of the church.

Principles and procedures

Travelling

- Before leaving home, staff and volunteers should always check that they have a mobile phone that is fully charged and topped up, and has emergency numbers programmed in.
- If using public transport, staff and volunteers should plan the route in advance, have extra change for an alternative route if necessary, sit in a more crowded place or near the driver, and get off if feeling uncomfortable with the behaviour of others.
- If using taxis, staff or volunteers should book in advance if possible, only using licenced companies, have their numbers programmed into a mobile phone for quick access, wait in a public place and sit behind the driver.
- If walking late at night, know routes, walk with others or get a taxi, do not walk using a phone or earphones, walk confidently, and keep to main roads.
- If driving, staff and volunteers should always ensure they have spare food, drink, blankets, a small amount of coins, first aid kit, torch, and a mobile phone.
- With all of the above, staff and volunteers should be encouraged to recognise warning signs and be encouraged to heed them.
- Before setting off for visits or meetings, staff and volunteers should ensure that someone knows their intentions, their mobile number and expected time of return. If confidentiality of the visit is an issue, it may be necessary to formalised this arrangement with a 'buddy' person who does not know the client.
- If staff and volunteers are working at night or in dangerous areas, they should be offered use of a panic alarm.
- If possible, home visits should be scheduled for when someone else is also in the home.

Working alone in a building

- Staff and volunteers should always lock the door and not open it to anyone without being confident of their identity and intention.
- Staff and volunteers should have a phone with them at all times.
- Staff and volunteers should not engage in any potentially hazardous activity, e.g. climbing a ladder or using machinery.
- When leaving a building at night, staff and volunteers should not leave one person to lock up alone.

General

- Training – all staff and volunteers will be offered training in personal safety and how to react when faced with violent behaviour or language. This will include the procedure for dealing with anyone whose mental health give cause for concern or endangers others.

- Children, teenagers and vulnerable adults – the Parish Safeguarding Handbook guidance will be followed in respect of all safeguarding practice.
- All meetings and visits will be recorded in a diary, which will be kept for five years.
- Any incident or near miss -incident where a member of staff or volunteer felt threatened must be reported to the supervisor, and support offered.

Checklist

- Always ask – do I really need to make this visit/meeting, and do I have to make it alone? Could I ask this client to come to the church premises?
- If the contact is with someone of the opposite gender, ensure that you are not alone together in their home, try to make the appointment when another person is at home, take someone with you or meet in a public place.
- If a lone visit is unavoidable, ensure that someone knows where you are, who you are with and what time you expect to finish. Suggest they phone you at an agreed finishing time.
- Ask yourself, *what if?* And cover all outcomes.
- If you do not feel confident to go, don't go!