

# UNITED CHURCH DORCHESTER

49 – 51 Charles Street Dorchester Dorset DT1 1EE

A joint Methodist and United Reformed church  
The front entrance of the church is located on South Street



## Lone Working Policy

### 1. Purpose of Policy

The aim of this policy is to set out United Church Dorchester's practices for working alone, identify the risks faced by volunteers and staff, and provide practical advice and instruction.

Lone workers include those who:

- work away from the church premises (ministers, pastoral staff and volunteers)
- work outside normal working hours (building maintenance volunteers)
- are the only person on the premises (administration staff, volunteers)
- work in a space on their own (shop volunteers)

### 2. Practices for Lone Workers

United Church Dorchester (UCD) is committed to the safety and security of its volunteers and staff, and as such has agreed the following practices:

- All new staff and volunteers will, during their induction, receive guidance on lone working where appropriate
- UCD assesses all 'reasonably foreseeable risks' faced by lone workers
- UCD ensures that there are systems in place to ensure volunteer and employee safety whilst they are working both off and on the premises
- Home visiting volunteers and staff will receive regular training regarding personal safety
- The Pastoral Care lead ensures that all relevant information is passed on to visitors (eg number of people in the house, new member)
- UCD will make sure that, wherever practicable, two people are working together (for example in the shop)

### 3. Risks of Lone Working

The risks faced by lone workers naturally differ according to the circumstances. Volunteers and staff who visit people in their homes should be mindful of the potential risks to their wellbeing,

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such as:

- Verbal or physical abuse
- Pets
- Smoke
- Theft
- Overdependency
- Inappropriate behaviour

Lone workers who are office- or home-based may be subject to the following:

- Stress, isolation and depression
- Medical fitness for lone working (eg diabetes)
- Safety and emergency issues such as fire
- Verbal or physical abuse from customers / visitors

### 4. Practical advice and instruction

For home visitors

- Before you visit someone at home for the first time, introduce yourself at church, phone or write
- If you have any concerns regarding the visit, it may be best to arrange to meet in a public space (for example, the UCD coffee shop)
- The first time you visit (or for subsequent visits as necessary), let someone else know where you are going and for how long. Arrange to contact them when you have finished your visit.
- Phone the person you are visiting just before you go, to remind them you are coming
- Always wear your identity badge
- Don't assume you will be invited in. Take your cue from the person you are visiting
- Set clear boundaries: how long you will be staying, when you will leave, what you will do
- Be aware of any pets and if necessary ask for them to be put in another room
- If the person you are visiting is a smoker, ask them not to smoke whilst you are there
- Ask the person where they would like you to sit, but try to sit as near the door as possible
- If you feel uncomfortable for any reason, make your apologies and leave straight away
- Report any issues back to the pastoral visiting coordinator

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Minister

Rev Peter Clark  
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For volunteers and staff who work alone on the church premises for any reason:

- Ensure all doors are kept locked when you are alone on the premises outside of opening hours
- Let someone know where you will be, and for how long. Arrange to contact them when you are finished.
- If you are concerned for any reason (noises / lights / obvious activity) do not investigate unless you are completely confident. Leave the building (locking it behind you) and contact the church secretary.
- If you are working alone in the shop for any reason, and someone attempts theft, hand over all cash: once they have left, contact the police
- Ensure you know what to do in the event of fire, power outage, any medical emergency etc
- Report any issues as soon as practicable to your line manager

Approved: Council of Stewards 2 March 2020

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