

Hornsea United Reformed Church Lone Working Policy

Lone Worker Coordinators: Ann Bosworth, Ann Jordan



1. Introduction

Hornsea URC recognises that church workers may need to work alone for extended periods without close supervision. This may occur in isolated areas, outside regular hours, or while traveling alone. This policy outlines measures to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of workers engaged in lone working, whether on an occasional or regular basis.

The church will:

- Take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of lone workers.
- Conduct relevant risk assessments to identify hazards and control risks effectively.
- Develop safe working arrangements to eliminate or mitigate risks.

This policy applies to both paid staff and volunteers working alone at Hornsea URC premises, off-site events, or during pastoral care activities. It excludes staff working alone in their own homes.

This policy should be read alongside:

- **Good Practice 6 - Safeguarding - URC** [Link](#)
- **Hornsea URC Safeguarding, Health & Safety, and Data Protection Policies** [Link](#).

2. Aims

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Ensure workers understand their responsibilities and accountability regarding lone working.
- Protect workers from the risks associated with lone working through support and training.
- Communicate arrangements for managing risks and maintaining safe working standards.
- Confirm that all lone workers are covered by liability insurance, regardless of their role.
- Ensure risk assessments are conducted, documented where necessary, and regularly reviewed.
- Report, investigate, and learn from incidents, accidents, and near-misses to prevent recurrence.
- Require workers to comply with all legislation relevant to lone working.

3. Risk Assessment

Lone working risk assessments apply to both on-site and community-based activities. Key factors to consider include:

- The building and its security.

- The surrounding neighbourhood or community.
- Methods of transportation to and from the location.
- Others present at the location.
- Local issues or specific hazards (e.g., dogs).
- Awareness of the lone worker's schedule and location, with clear contact points for emergencies.

Elders and team leaders should aim to avoid lone working whenever possible. If unavoidable, they must:

- Conduct thorough risk assessments.
- Introduce controls to eliminate or reduce risks to the lowest practicable level.

Lone workers may need additional training and time to consider potential risks and discuss concerns.

4. Supervision of Lone Workers

Although lone workers operate without constant direct supervision, effective systems must be in place to ensure:

- Access to all relevant work information and training.
- Clear communication about personal safety risks.
- Adherence to processes and procedures designed to protect workers.

Team leaders and elders should brief lone workers on safety factors before they begin or change work patterns.

5. Procedures for Lone Workers

Lone workers should follow these steps:

- Inform a designated contact (e.g., an elder, team leader, family member, or friend) of their location, activity, and estimated finish time.
- Carry a mobile phone for emergency communication.
- Confirm completion of work with their contact; if not, the contact should escalate appropriately.
- Ensure premises are secure, including locked windows and doors.
- Familiarise themselves with emergency exits and evacuation procedures.
- Have access to first aid equipment.
- Comply with all risk assessments and safe working arrangements.
- Report any incidents, accidents, or safety concerns to the elders or team leaders immediately.

6. Incident Reporting

Incidents, including verbal abuse or situations where workers feel threatened, must be reported to the elders, team leaders, or safeguarding officers. This includes unplanned or uncontrolled events with potential for harm, even if no injury occurs. Reporting ensures:

- Incidents are documented and investigated.

- Lessons are learned to reduce recurrence.

7. Responsibilities of Elders and Team Leaders

Elders and team leaders must:

- Avoid lone working where practicable.
- Ensure arrangements are in place for monitoring lone workers' safety.
- Establish check-in systems for the end of lone working periods.
- Implement emergency procedures for advice and assistance.
- Provide training to help lone workers understand risks and safe practices.
- Confirm that work can be safely undertaken by one person.

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as needed. It must be adopted by the church meeting.

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