**Mearns Kirk Helping Hands**

**Lone Working Policy**

Mearns Kirk Helping Hands (MKHH) recognises we have a legal duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of our staff and volunteers while they are at work, as set out in our Health and Safety Policy. We recognise that at any given time staff or volunteers may be working alone, whether that is in the halls, office space, when driving with group members or when attending events or meetings across the city.

We have a responsibility to assess the risks to lone workers and to take steps to avoid or control the risks where necessary. Staff and volunteers have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and others in lone working situations. Lone working is not inherently unsafe and proper

precautions can reduce the risks associated with working alone.

***Definition of Lone Working***

The Health and Safety Executive defines lone workers as those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision, for example:

People working separately from others in a building.

People working outside ‘normal’ hours.

People working away from their fixed base without colleagues.

People working at home other than in low risk, office-type work.

The definition covers staff and volunteers in situations with varying degrees and types of risk. It is important to identify the hazards of the work and assess the risks involved before applying appropriate measures.

***Potential Hazards of Working Alone***

People who work alone will of course face the same risks in their work as others doing similar tasks. However, additionally they may encounter the following:

Accidents or sudden illnesses may occur when there is no-one to call for help or first aid available.

Fire.

Violence or the threat of violence.

Lack of safe way in or out of a building e.g. danger of being accidentally locked in.

Attempting tasks which cannot safely be done by one person alone.

***Measures to reduce the risk of lone working***

MKHH undertakes the following measures to reduce the risk of lone working:

***General***

Where you are concerned that you may be unsafe working alone in any situation, you should discuss your concerns beforehand with your Group Leader, the Volunteer Coordinator or the Project Manager. A risk assessment of the situation will then be undertaken if appropriate.

A risk assessment will identify any hazards. When a risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone volunteer or staff member, arrangements will be made for somebody else to be present.

In any situation where you feel unsafe whilst working alone, you should remove yourself from that situation immediately, and report the incident to your Group Leader, the Volunteer Coordinator or the Project Manager.

***Supervision***

Lone workers are, by definition, not under constant supervision. Prior to any lone working we will ensure that you understand any risks associated with your work and the relevant safety precautions.

Lone workers still undergoing training will need to be accompanied initially.

Regular contact by phone may be appropriate and we ensure that lone workers have a mobile phone available at all times to enable them to contact the office in the event of an emergency.

***Accidents and Emergencies***

Lone workers should be capable of responding correctly to emergencies. This may include First Aid Training. It may be sensible for an individual frequently lone working away from the office to carry a basic first-aid kit.

Paid staff or volunteers working alone in the Church Halls should advise either their Group Leader or Line Manager so they can be accounted for in case of fire.

Paid staff or volunteers working alone in the Church Halls out of hours are responsible for adhering to security and fire regulations.

***Violence at work***

You must ensure that any violent incidents are reported to ensure that the risk can be communicated to all staff and volunteers. The risk of violence may not be directly people related; it may be associated with environmental issues, for example, leaving the Halls alone outside after dark.

Staff or volunteers likely to be lone working in circumstances under which such situations may occur will be trained in dealing with such situations, in ways to recognise risk and in behaviours which may reduce the risk e.g.

de-escalation and calming techniques.

* Where necessary, report incidents of violence at work to the police.

***Summary***

Establishing safe working for lone workers is no different from organising the safety of other paid staff or volunteers, but the risk assessment must take account of any extra risk factors.

We ensure that measures are in place to reduce risk and that expectations have been communicated to lone workers and appropriate training provided.

All paid staff and volunteers, including lone workers, are responsible for following safe systems of work and should take simple steps to reduce the risks associated with their normal duties.

*This policy should be read in conjunction with the MKHH Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy.*

***Vicky Attwood***

***February 2018***

***(Reviewed August 2019)***

***(Reviewed April 2020)***

***(Reviewed by MKHH Policy Review Working Group September 2021)***