Missing Client Policy

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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL POLICY

This Policy applies in situations where the authorised means of entry into a client's home is via a security keypad or key safe, and the carer enters the client's home to find that the client is missing.

1st Homecare staff **must take action straightaway** to establish the client's safety and whereabouts until it is known what has happened to the client, or until the matter has been placed in the hands of another person or body who will be responsible for investigating further – this is most likely to be either one of the contacts referred to under section 3.2 below or the emergency services (police).

All staff of 1st Homecare will be made aware of this Policy and the importance of taking the actions set out in it. It will be included in the Company's induction for new staff.

2 ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY THE CARER UNDERTAKING THE VISIT

2.1 Initial actions

On entering and failing to find the client, the carer should do the following:

- Call out again more loudly and/or check all rooms in the client's home
- If the client still cannot be located, **immediately leave the property, securing the home again after leaving in the usual way**
- Ask the warden: If the client lives in a warden-controlled block of flats, ask the warden when the client was last seen/if he or she is aware of the client's whereabouts

2.2 Speak to the Office or On call manager

The carer should immediately make contact with the Office or On call manager - depending on the time of the visit - and explain that the client is missing. The carer should follow any instructions given to him or her. As soon as possible after the event, the carer should complete an incident report, setting out in writing the details and the actions taken, and sign and date this.

3 ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY THE MANAGER DEALING WITH THE INCIDENT

Any case where a client is missing could be a situation that poses a risk to the client. It may be simply that the client forgot to notify the Office that he or she would be away or out on certain dates or at certain times, or that family or friends of clients have taken the client out for a visit without informing the office, or other similar cases, however, it may be that the client's safety is at risk or else that harm may have come to them.

1st Homecare staff must therefore take steps immediately to check the whereabouts and safety of the client and will continue to do so until the client's whereabouts are established or the matter is handed over to another appropriate person or body who will investigate – see section 3.2 below – or to the emergency services (police).

3.1 On being alerted to the concern

On being alerted to the situation, the manager responsible should:

- Check whether there is any prior information on record about the client's absence from home
- Confirm the initial actions have been taken by the carer – see section 2.1 above
- Seek to contact those listed at section 3.2 below
- Consider whether there is sufficient concern to contact the emergency services immediately

3.2 Contacting sources of information

The manager should attempt to contact as swiftly as possible any or all of the following people to establish any known reason why the client is not at home, and/or establish the client's location and safety:

- The client on his or her mobile phone, if he or she has one
- The client's primary emergency contact
- The client's main representative (if different to his or her primary emergency contact)
- Members of the client's family, or friends of the client's if known
- Any other responsible person or organisation that may know of the client's whereabouts and safety (e.g. Day Centre visited by the client)
- The client's social worker or Duty Team for the Local Authority commissioning the care

3.3 Next steps

If the manager is confident that the client's location and safety are known, this must be documented in the client records and all further steps halted.

If any of the above contacts asks to take over the matter or agrees to accept responsibility for investigating the situation further, and it is reasonable to hand the matter over to them, the procedure should be halted, and this should be documented in the client records.

If the manager is unable to satisfy him or herself that the client is safe, he or she should contact the police without delay and report the matter and cooperate with all reasonable requests for information and assistance.

The actions taken by the manager and the outcome of the investigation should be recorded, including any handover to another appropriate person or to the emergency

services (police). The client's main contact/family or social worker/Duty Team should be advised accordingly. The procedure can then be regarded as concluded.

4 GENERAL

This Policy may be amended at any time as may be required and reissued and staff will be notified of the amended Policy.

Change History

Issue	Date	Description of Change and Reason
1	June 2015	First issued
2	June 2016	Second issue – Policy reviewed, no changes required
3	January 2017	Third issue – policy made applicable to both offices
4	December 2018	Fourth issue – change to Oxford address, minor typos amended
5	January 2020	Fifth issue – insertion of KL address
6	July 2022	Sixth issue – typos amended, no other change required

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Name of document	Missing Client Policy
Status	Approved
Issue	6
Issue date	July 2022
Maintainer	1HC
Owner	1HC
File name	1HC Missing Client Policy
File location	Shared folders/Policies and procedures/Care
Review date	July 2023