



“No Reply” Policy

January 2022

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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL POLICY

This Policy applies where staff enter the client’s home other than by key safe or security keypad – e.g. by the client letting the carer in.

In all situations where access cannot be gained to a client’s home, staff must assume there is a possible emergency situation requiring immediate action to establish the well-being and safety of the client.

Under no circumstances will 1st Homecare staff stop their attempt to establish the client’s safety until it is known what has happened to the client, or until the matter has been placed in the hands of another appropriate person – see section 4.2 below – or the emergency services.

At all times, actions to establish the safety of the client will be taken with due regard to the safety and well-being of the staff involved.

All staff 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 of new staff.

2 ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY THE CARER UNDERTAKING THE VISIT

2.1 Initial actions

On finding that access cannot be gained, the carer should do the following:

- **Keep trying for a while longer:** Repeat the usual method for gaining entry **at least three (3) times, allowing sufficient time for the client to respond.** For example, knock at the door and wait for a response
- **Phone the client:** If the client’s telephone number is known, including mobile number, the carer should contact them by telephone or if he or she does not have the client’s telephone number, the carer should contact the office or the on-call manager and ask the office or on-call manager to phone the client
- **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.
- **Look for signs:** If there is still no reply, the carer should look for signs that may indicate that the house is empty or that the client’s condition has changed. This may include letters or newspapers laying uncollected at the door or milk delivered that has not been taken in
- **Look through windows and doors:** The carer should attempt to establish whether the client is at home, including the possibility that he or she may be lying on the floor, by looking through the letterbox or any windows at the property that can be accessed safely, and in any gardens adjoining the home. The carer should call through the letterbox or at an open window if necessary



- **Look to see if there has been a crime:** The carer should look for signs of break-ins, such as broken windows or doors that have been forced open. If there is any possibility of a break-in, or that someone may be in the client’s home without the client’s consent, the carer **should immediately contact the police by calling 999**
- **Speaking to neighbours:** If it is safe to do so, speak to near neighbours to ask if they know where the client is, or whether they have concerns about the client’s well-being. The carer should:
 - Introduce himself or herself, showing his or her i.d. badge, and explain the circumstances – that he/she is concerned about the client’s well-being
 - Provide neighbours with the Office telephone number if they wish to speak to the carer’s employer

2.2 Client is home but not answering

If the carer can see the client but they are not responding or appear to be distressed, the carer should contact the emergency services, asking for the police or ambulance services, as appropriate.

2.3 Speak to managers

The carer should immediately make contact with the Office or On-call manager - depending on the time at which the concern arises - and explain what has happened, and the steps taken. The carer should follow any instructions given by the Office or On-call manager, including as to where the carer should wait. As soon as possible after the event, the carer should complete an incident report, setting out the details and the actions taken..

3 ACTIONS OF ALL STAFF INVOLVED IN CONCERNS ABOUT CLIENT

Any member of staff receiving a call about inability to access the client’s home must ensure the issue is escalated to the appropriate manager **without delay**.

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

Any case where a carer is unable to enter a client’s home could be a potential emergency situation and this Policy must be followed until the location and safety of the client is established or the matter is handed over to another suitable person or organisation – see section 4.2 below – or to the emergency services.

4.1 On being alerted

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
- Try and contact those listed at section 4.2 below
- Consider whether there is sufficient concern to summon emergency services immediately
- Assess the carer’s safety for any future actions requested
- Instruct the carer or other staff to complete any necessary actions not already undertaken

4.2 Contacting sources of information

The manager should attempt to contact as a matter of urgency the following people to establish if they know the reason why there is no response and/or establish the client’s location and safety:

- The client on his or her home telephone and any mobile phone, if known, regardless of whether the carer/Office has already rung the client
- 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)
- The client’s social worker or Duty Team for the Local Authority commissioning the care

4.3 Next steps

If the manager is satisfied that the client’s is safe and his/her whereabouts are known, this must be documented in the appropriate records and all further steps halted.

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

If after speaking to the contacts above, the manager is not satisfied that the client is safe, he or she should contact the police without delay and report the matter and co-operate with all reasonable requests for information and assistance.

If the emergency services take over the matter, the procedure should be halted and this should be documented.

The actions taken by the manager and outcome of the investigations should be recorded, including handover to another appropriate person or to the police or emergency services. The client’s main contact/family or social worker/Duty Team should be advised accordingly. The procedure can then be regarded as concluded.



5 ATTEMPTING TO GAIN ACCESS TO THE CLIENT’S HOME

Under no circumstances should a carer try and get into the client’s home without prior discussion and agreement with the manager. **The carer should not place him or herself at risk of any harm by entering the client’s home.**

Together with the manager, the carer should assess whether he/she is able to enter the home by any other means, and whether it is safe to do so. The Care Plan sets out the way in which the carer is authorised by the client or his/her family or representative to enter the client’s home. **Any other form of entry will not have been consented to and so the following steps should be followed:**

- If the client is in a warden-controlled block, and the warden does not know the whereabouts of the client, the warden should be asked if he/she will enter the client’s flat using the warden’s key. The warden only should go in first – the carer should wait outside
- If the client has a family member or a representative or primary emergency contact living locally who has a key, the manager should contact them and ask if they will come to the client’s home with their key. The family member, representative or primary emergency contact should enter the client’s property first – the carer should wait outside
- If there is a key safe or a security keypad but this is not normally used, the manager should contact a family member or a representative or primary emergency contact and obtain their consent to entering using the key safe or security keypad, and obtain the number if the office does not already know it
- If the door to the client’s home is open –, the carer should call through the door announcing his or her presence in a loud clear voice, saying “Hello [client’s name]. This is [name of carer] from 1st Homecare. I am worried about your safety – are you there? Can you tell me where you are?” If there is no reply, the carer should NOT ENTER BUT should contact the office or On-call manager to take the next steps. If the client replies, the carer can enter if satisfied it is safe to do so (**MAKING SURE THERE ARE NO PETS THAT COULD HARM THE CARER**) and establish if the client is alright.

If it is established that the client is in the home and is injured, the emergency services should be contacted, and an ambulance requested, and the carer should stay with the client until the ambulance arrives **PROVIDED IT IS SAFE FOR THE CARER TO DO SO. IF IT APPEARS A CRIME MAY HAVE BEEN COMMITTED THE CARER SHOULD NOT TOUCH ANYTHING but contact the police.**

6 GENERAL

This Policy may be amended at any time as may be required and shall be reissued in this case 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 – to make applicable to both offices and tidy some parts up
4	December 2018	Fourth issue – change of Oxford address
5	January 2020	Fifth issue – inclusion of KL address
6	January 2022	Sixth issue – very minor changes including to take account of digitalisation of reports to office.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Name of document	“No Reply” Policy
Status	Approved
Issue	6
Issue date	January 2022
Maintainer	1HC
Owner	1HC
File name	1HC No Reply Policy
File location	Shared folders/Policies and procedures/Care
Review date	January 2023