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**Missing Persons Policy**

**[Date of Issue]**

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# Introduction

Clients are fully entitled to leave their own homes when and as they wish, without informing others. [Company Name]’s policy is only in relation to clients that have gone missing and cannot be easily found. [Company Name] values equality and diversity amongst our clients. Many clients value their mobility and independence and spending time in the local community without a cause for concern. Some clients, however, are limited with their mobility and can also become confused and disorientated and therefore easily lost. In this instance, a client who would be deemed missing, would be a cause for concern.

# Policy Statement

[Company Name] frequently provides care for clients who are frail, infirm, or limited in their mobility; some may also be confused or easily disoriented and therefore become easily lost. For these reasons, a client may go “missing” from their home; this would cause concern for the client’s safety and should be considered as a potential emergency.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Mental Capacity Act and DoLS Policy.

# Scope

The policy applies to all staff, volunteers and contractors working for or on behalf of [Company Name]. The Registered Manager has overall responsibility of the implementation of this policy.

# Procedures

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles, and policies underpinning [Company Name]’s approach to the discovery that a client is missing.

**Preventing Missing Persons Incidents**

Clients without capacity who enjoy walking around, or who may be at risk of getting lost due to their mental state, should have this identified during risk assessment and a suitable entry made in their plan of care (refer to Mental Capacity Act and DoLS Policy and Procedures). Such clients should be kept under observation as appropriate to the level of risk identified.

Situations where a missing person’s report should be made include the following circumstances:

* a client has not returned from or has become lost during an arranged activity or walk
* a client cannot be found in their home or grounds and no prior arrangements have been made that explain their absence.

If it becomes clear that a client may be missing, it is vital that all the members of staff at [Company Name] work as a team and follow a clearly defined procedure.

**Missing Persons Procedure**

As soon as a member of staff suspects that a client may be missing, staff should

* initiate an immediate search of the client’s home and its immediate surrounds
* telephone the client’s mobile phone where applicable
* contact relatives, friends, or other obvious places where the client may have gone or has been known to go in the past.

If the client cannot be found during the initial search, then the member of staff should immediately raise the alarm by informing their line manager. They should pass on all relevant information, such as the full details of the client. It is vital to correctly identify the client. The incident reporting form should include when and where the client was last seen, by whom, and what the client was wearing. The incident should be completed in line with [Company Name]’s Incident Management Policy.

**Upon receiving a missing person’s report**

The manager should do the following:

* make immediate efforts to contact the client’s relatives or carers, if not already undertaken, to inform them of the situation, gather information and receive advice
* contact the police and give full details about the client, including when and where they were last seen, by whom, what they were wearing, and any special risk factors involved
* advise the Police that you have a current photograph which you can send electronically
* contact telephone numbers should be given and the line manager should remain at the office both to co-ordinate the company’s response and maintain communications
* co-operate fully with any police search.

Where the police are involved then [Company Name]’s registered owners should be informed as soon as possible, as should members of the missing client’s family if they have not already been contacted. Families should be encouraged to telephone the office or police if the client contacts them, and relatives should be kept informed at each stage of the search.

The line manager should, at the earliest opportunity, fill out an incident form and ensure that a full note of events has been made in the client’s notes, logging all the people who have been contacted. Times of actions and decisions should be noted as accurately as possible. On conclusion of the incident, staff involved should be asked to check the incident form for accuracy and to sign and date it.

Once the client has been found, it is essential that all the parties who were advised of the emergency are contacted again and informed that the search has been concluded, including the member of staff at the client’s home and the police.

At all stages, the line manager should be sensitive to the needs of members of staff involved (who may well be upset by the emergency incident) and should provide or arrange any support required.

If at any stage the duty manager is unsure of what to do, then the registered owner should be contacted immediately for advice.

**Procedure to Follow After a Missing Persons Incident**

Upon conclusion of a missing person’s incident [Company Name] should:

* update the clients risk assessments and care/support plan as required
* undertake a full enquiry and investigate the incident thoroughly, investigations should be led by Registered Manager and the company’s registered owner, who will also be responsible for implementing any improvements that are indicated
* it is important that staff learn from the investigation and implement the findings to improve the service.
* regulation 20 Duty of Candour requires that a CQC notification should be completed and submitted online, and, if a breach of the harm threshold has occurred due process must be followed.

# Monitoring

Regular audit will be carried out and the Registered Manager will have responsibility for the policy.

# Related Policies

* Complaints Policy
* Duty of Candour Policy
* EDHR Policy
* Governance and Risk Policy
* Incident Management Policy
* Information Governance and Record Keeping Policy
* Mental Capacity Act and DoLS Policy
* Quality Assurance Policy
* Safeguarding Adults Policy

# Legislation and Guidance

**Guidance**

* SCIE <https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/practice/questions>
* <https://missingpersons.police.uk/cy-gb/resources/downloads/protecting-vulnerable-missing-adults-framework>
* <https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/notifications/police-involvement-incident-notification-form>

# Summary of Review

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