



Missing Persons Policy

Revised March 2013

Missing Persons

Organisation Name: The Wellbeing Residential Group

Policy Statement

The Wellbeing Residential Group fully adheres to the new outcomes Essential Standards of Quality and Safety which consists of 28 regulations and its associated outcomes. They are set out by the Health and Social Care Act 2008 for regulated activities.

The Wellbeing Residential Group also complies with Regulation 17(2) of the Care Homes Regulations 2001 which states that a statement of the procedure to be followed in the event of accidents or in the event of a service user becoming missing should be included within the policies and procedures of a home.

It is very common for at least some of the elderly service users within the Wellbeing Residential Group to be frail, infirm and limited in their mobility. Some may also be confused or easily disoriented and therefore become easily lost. For these reasons a service user going missing would be an obvious cause for concern as to the service users safety. However, many more active service users value their mobility and independence and spend several hours out and about in the local community without raising concern. Thus the need for close supervision must always be balanced against the freedom and dignity of the individual service user (See Policy on Autonomy).

Aim of the Policy

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles and policies underpinning the Wellbeing Residential Group approach to the discovery that a service user is missing.

Preventing Missing Persons Incidents

Staff should remain vigilant AT ALL TIMES and try to be aware of exactly where service users are at any given time. Service users who are prone to wandering, or who may be at risk of getting lost by reason of their mental state, should have this identified during risk assessment and a suitable entry made in their care plan. Such service users should be kept under observation as appropriate to the level of risk identified.

In the Wellbeing Residential Group home action taken to avoid false alarms includes the simple precaution of encouraging service users, their relatives and visitors, to inform a member of staff when they are leaving the home on an outing or a walk and to give both a time they expect to return and a contact name and telephone number. ALL SUCH ARRANGEMENTS SHOULD BE ENTERED IN THE VISITORS BOOK AND INDIVIDUAL DAILY LOGS.

Raising the Alarm

Staff should raise the alarm immediately they suspect that a service user may be missing by informing the duty manager. Staff should note that it is often difficult to ascertain whether or not an individual service user has gone missing until certain key points in the Wellbeing Residential Group's daily timetable, such as meal times, when all service users would normally be expected to make an appearance.

Situations where a missing persons report should be made include the following:

- where a service user has not returned from an arranged outing, activity or walk
- where a service user cannot be found in the home or grounds and no arrangements have

been made for an outing, activity or walk.

Procedure In The Event Of a Service User Being Reported As Missing

When it becomes clear that a service user is missing it is vital that all the members of staff work as a team and follows a clearly defined procedure. Upon receiving a missing persons report the duty manager should carry out the following procedure.

- Check in the day book that the service user is not on a prearranged outing, activity or walk. If they are, and are overdue, then the manager should make efforts to contact the service user or the people/place they are visiting. Where contact cannot be made and the judgement of the duty manager is that they may be at risk, then the police should be contacted and a suitable entry made in the service users notes.
- Where a service user is not on a prearranged outing, activity or walk then the following procedure should be followed. The duty manager should:
- alert all staff to the possibility of the service user being missing and ask for information/sightings
- ascertain who last saw the service user and question them about the service users known plans and movements
- Where necessary tactfully question relevant service users about the missing service users plans and movements
- Arrange a thorough search of the Wellbeing Residential Group home and grounds, checking that the service user has not become lost or trapped. Knowledge of the service user and their usual movements and habits should be employed (i.e. staff should search their favourite places and, if they are used to visiting relatives nearby, then relatives should be contacted) and staff may be dispatched to tour the vicinity. It is important here that the duty manager has a structured plan to their search and does not just send staff off in a haphazard way. At the end of the search the duty manager must be confident that the wellbeing Residential Group home and its grounds have been systematically searched, including the service users own rooms, toilet and favourite spots. For searches in the dark a supply of torches are kept in the night box and office. Take a first aid kit and blanket for treating hypothermia. On no account should other service users be allowed to involve themselves in any search of the grounds and sufficient staff should always remain in the Wellbeing Residential Group to ensure its proper running and the safety of other service users.
- If no sign of the service user can be found, or if information is provided from either staff or other service users that raises concern that the service user may be at risk, then the local police should be alerted and their advice and assistance sought.
- Where the police are involved then the Wellbeing Residential Group should be informed, as should members of the missing service users family if they have not already been contacted.
- The duty manager should, at the earliest opportunity, fill out an incident form and make a suitable note of events in the service users notes. Times of actions and decisions should be noted as accurately as possible.
- Families should be requested to telephone the Wellbeing Residential Group if the service user contacts them and relatives should be kept informed at each stage of the search.
- Once the service user 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.

If at any stage the duty manager is unsure of what to do then the Wellbeing Residential Group Director should be contacted immediately for advice.

Procedure to Follow After a Missing Persons Incident

Upon conclusion of a missing person incident the Wellbeing Residential Group should mount a full enquiry and investigate the incident thoroughly. Investigations should be led by the Wellbeing Residential Group who will also be responsible for implementing any improvements that are indicated.

Training

The Homes Manager is responsible for organising and co-ordinating training.

All staff should be trained in the Missing Persons procedure and to know their role in the event of a search.

Signed:

Date:
