



Missing persons policy

Policy and Procedure

Notice to employees using a paper copy of this policy
The company Policies folder on the shared drive holds the most recent version of this document and all employees must ensure that they are using the most recent guidance.

Document Control

Document Name	Missing Persons Policy
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Purpose	The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure systems are devised and implemented to protect employees who are required to work by themselves for significant periods of time, so far as is reasonably practicable, from the risks associated with working alone, and to meet the requirements of legislation.
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Version Control

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Introduction

Through its policy and procedures Libertatem Healthcare Group also seeks to comply with the requirements to report serious instances through the CQC's notification procedures and the local Adults Safeguarding Board's procedures and take the appropriate actions in the event of accidents or in the event of a service user going missing from during a time when we are supporting them.

It is common for at least some of our service users to be 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. However, it is accepted that there will be many active service users who value their mobility and independence and spend time out in the local community without raising concern. Thus, service users' need for close supervision must always be balanced against their rights to make their own decisions regarding their movements and whereabouts.

Purpose of the policy and procedure

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure systems are devised and implemented to support the Policy commitment made by the Libertatem Healthcare Group to protect their service users from the risks associated with becoming lost confused or disorientated out in the community.

Scope

This policy applies to all service users of Libertatem Healthcare Group.

Responsibilities

Board of Directors

The Directors are responsible for ensuring that appropriate procedures and suitable precautions, including relevant training, are in place to safeguard the health & safety of their service users.

Managers

Managers are responsible for raising awareness of this policy and that its contents are known by support staff and its recommendations are being carried out by:

- Carrying out and reviewing suitable and sufficient risk assessments for all service users who are deemed at risk of going missing.
- Ensuring that all employees of Libertatem Healthcare Group working in the field know who to call if a service user is missing.
- Ensuring all workers in the field know how to accurately report information concerning a missing service user.
- Ensuring that a full and complete risk assessment for each person we support has been undertaken and the relevant worker is fully apprised of all risks and control measures prior to placement.
- Ensure completion of full company induction and completion of mandatory training that includes information pertaining to safeguarding of the health, safety and welfare of lone workers.
- Managers must take account of the individual capabilities when allocating tasks to staff ensuring that the worker has the necessary capabilities, disposition and training for supporting a service user who is at risk of going missing.
- Ensure regular supervision of all employees as per supervision policy and determine increased frequency if required if high risk assignments.

Employees

There is a legal requirement for employees to bring to the notice of their employers any workplace health and safety risks or incidents. There is also a requirement for employees to co-operate with their employers to enable compliance with statutory duties.

Therefore, employees are responsible for:

- Ensuring that they know the whereabouts of their client at all times.
- Familiarising themselves with the missing persons risk assessments in place for activities they are involved in;
- Co-operating by following all procedures designed to keep the service user safe when accessing the community.
- Reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of the service user as appropriate.
- Taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of this procedure

Prevention

Employees must remain vigilant at all times and try to be aware of exactly where vulnerable 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 or injury, will have this identified during risk assessment and a suitable entry made in their care plan. Such service users are kept under observation as appropriate to the level of risk identified.

Action taken to avoid false alarms includes the simple precaution of encouraging service users, and their relatives and friends, to inform a member of staff of their whereabouts and to give both a time they expect to return and a contact name and telephone number. All such arrangements are entered in the communications book in the property.

Raising the Alarm

Employees should raise the alarm immediately they suspect that a service user may be missing by informing the **Libertatem Office on 01189 730006** and also the service user's case manager. Employees should note that it is often difficult to ascertain whether or not a service user has gone missing until certain key points in their daily schedule, such as community activities, travelling by public transport etc have been taken into account.

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 their 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 (employees, managers and directors) work as a team and follow a clearly defined procedure. Upon receiving a missing persons report the employee supporting the service user or manager should carry out the following procedure.

Check in the Care and support plan that the service user is not on a prearranged outing, activity or walk. If they are, and are overdue, then the employee supporting the service user or manager should make efforts to contact the service user or the people/place they are visiting. Where contact cannot be made and the judgment of the employee

supporting the service user or their manager is that they may be at risk, then the police should be contacted and an incident report form filled out, Times of actions and decisions should be noted as accurately as possible.

The service user's next of kin will then be informed by the Libertatem Office and they should be requested to telephone the office if the service user contacts them and their next of kin 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 employee supporting the service user or manager is unsure of what to do then the directors of Libertatem Healthcare Group should be contacted immediately for advice.

Procedure to follow after a missing persons incident

Libertatem Managers must record any significant incident on the service users care plan and the accident/incident records, which should be made available for inspection. The recording should include the times the person went missing and was returned and the actions taken for the person to be returned.

If the service user was injured or harmed or was seriously at risk of being harmed as a result of going missing the management will notify the Care Quality Commission and the relevant Local Authority Safeguarding Unit, who might wish to investigate further depending on the circumstances.

If a complaint is made against an employee as a result of a service user going missing, the matter will be investigated through the complaints procedure. The investigation will include any possible misconduct by the employee responsible as a result of the person going missing through its established disciplinary procedures.

All staff are made aware of the possible consequences of a service user whom they are supervising going missing.

Training

All staff are trained in the missing persons procedure and to know their role in the event of a search.

New staff are introduced to this policy and procedure in their induction training in line with 2010 Common Induction Standard.

Incident reporting

Libertatem Healthcare has a robust system in place for care workers to report and record accidents, incidents and near misses.

Any accidents or incidents should be examined by the manager to see whether these are covered by the risk assessment and review whether any safety measures to ensure they are still valid. If the incident is new, or the safety measures are no longer valid, the risk will need to be re-evaluated and new safety measures arranged.

Near misses are useful to report too, as these are potential incidents waiting to happen and may influence the risk assessment along with any control measures that might be appropriate.