

# MISSING PERSONS

<b>VERSION No</b>	3	
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## Policy Statement

This organisation frequently provides care for residents 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 resident may go “missing” from the home; this would cause concern for the resident’s safety, and should be considered as a potential emergency situation.

## The Policy

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles and policies underpinning this organisation’s approach to the discovery that a resident is missing.

### 1. Preventing Missing Persons Incidents

Staff from this organisation should always remain vigilant, and be aware of exactly where residents are at any given time. Residents who are prone to wandering, 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. Such residents 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 resident has not returned from or has become lost during an arranged activity or walk
- ✗ a resident cannot be found in the house or grounds and no prior arrangements have been made that explain their absence.

If it becomes clear that a resident may be missing, it is vital that all the members of staff in the organisation work as a team and follow a clearly-defined procedure.

### 2. Missing Persons Procedure

#### a) As soon as they suspect that a resident may be missing, staff should:

- i. initiate an immediate search of the building and its immediate surrounds
- ii. telephone the residents mobile phone (if appropriate)
- iii. ask the other residents if X said where they were going
- iv. contact relatives, friends, or other obvious places where the resident may have gone or has been known to go in the past.

If the resident cannot be found during the initial search, then the member of staff should immediately raise the alarm by informing the RGN in charge, who must inform the manager and / or deputy. They should pass on all relevant information, such as the full details of the resident (it is vital to correctly identify the resident) and the incident; this should include when and where the resident was last seen, by whom, and what the resident was wearing.

#### b) Upon receiving a missing person’s report, the RGN in charge should do the following:

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

- vi. Where the police are involved then the organisation's registered manager should be informed as soon as possible, as should members of the missing resident's family if they have not already been contacted. Families should be requested to telephone the office or police if the resident contacts them, and relatives should be kept informed at each stage of the search.
  - vii. The RGN in charge should, at the earliest opportunity, fill out an incident form and ensure that a full note of events has been made in the resident's notes. Log all the people and organisation 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.
- c) **Once the resident 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 resident's home and the police.

At all stages the RGN in charge 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 deputy manager is unsure of what to do, then the registered manager should be contacted immediately for advice.

### 3. Procedure to Follow After a Missing Persons Incident:

Upon conclusion of a missing person's incident the organisation should:

- i. update the residents risk assessments and care/support plan as required
- ii. undertake a full enquiry and investigate the incident thoroughly, investigations should be led by the organisation's registered owner, who will also be responsible for implementing any improvements that are indicated
- iii. it is important that staff learn from the investigation and implement the findings to improve the service.
- iv. 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.

### Training Statement

The Registered Manager is responsible for organising and co-ordination training. All staff should be trained in the Missing Persons procedure and be aware of their role in the event of a search.

*Related Policies*  
*Adult Safeguarding*  
*Duty of Candour*  
*Notifications*