

Key Holding in Domiciliary Care (England) Policy

Policy Statement

Key holding by staff is sometimes an essential part of providing high-quality care to certain service users who are infirm or immobile or otherwise are assessed as having difficulty in getting to the door and letting in a home care worker. In such cases it is far safer for the home care worker to hold a key to the home than for the service user to leave a door unlocked or use a similar strategy such as hiding a key outside the house in a known place. Such strategies represent obvious security risks.

This policy describes the key holding arrangements made by this service. It is in line with Regulation 12: Safe Care and Treatment of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014, which, with regard to home security, states that risks to the health and safety of the service user should be assessed and, where possible, any risks mitigated.

The aim is to ensure that service users are protected and are safe and secure in their homes and that where keys are held by staff to effect entrance to the home, those keys are kept securely.

The care expects its care and support workers always to ensure the security and safety of service users and their homes when providing personal care and that they must therefore take great care of a service user's key.

Safe key holding, the showing of identity cards and following correct procedures when using safety alarms and similar devices are all important parts of the agency's provision of safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led care to people in their own homes.

Procedures

In this organisation:

- a. during the initial assessment, when care is planned, the security of the home should be discussed and an agreement reached about how the home care worker will effect entrance to the service user's home; the home care worker may be asked to hold a key to the service user's home where the service user would find it difficult to open the door for a home care worker because of infirmity, disability, incapacity or mental state
- b. such a decision should only be reached where this represents the best way of effecting entrance for the home care worker and where it represents the best way to ensure the safety and security of the service user

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- c. if it is decided that the home care worker should hold a copy of the service user's key then the permission of the service user or their relatives should be made in writing and a suitable entry made to the service user plan; key holding should never be embarked upon without the express permission of the home care worker's line manager or supervisor or without an entry being made to the service user plan
- d. staff who hold keys for service users should:
 - i. label the key with a code, never with the name and address of the service user in case the key gets lost
 - ii. be very careful that they keep the key in a safe place at all times
 - iii. inform their line manager immediately in cases of the loss or theft of keys
 - iv. always knock on the door and announce themselves before entering a service user's home with a key
- e. staff should never:
 - i. agree to leave a key outside a house, in a safe place or on string by the letterbox
 - ii. attempt to effect forced entry to the home.

Training

All staff should understand the policy and be trained in home security procedures. Security training is included in the induction training for all new staff and in house training sessions on security are conducted at least annually and all relevant staff attend.

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