Helping Hands

POLICY (POL)

Title of Policy	Customer Safety and Access		
What type of document is this?	Policy (POL)	Policy Reference Number	HHH-POL-049
Purpose of POL	This policy defines Helping Hands approach to preventing missed visits and how we manage visits to customers that are missed by Visiting Carers, dealing with situations where there is no response on arrival at a customer's property, what Helping Hands carers will do if the customer refuses care and how Helping Hands responds when informed a customer is missing and their whereabouts is not known.		
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES Include in this section details of the key roles and associated responsibilities relevant to the document			
Roles	Responsibility		
Group Managing Director	Responsible for reviewing and ensuring this policy is updated aligned with any internal changes to procedure and external changes to legislation.		
Safeguarding Lead	Responsible for providing safeguarding guidance to care managers and branch employees		
Helping Hands Care Managers	Responsible for implementing this policy and ensuring adherence		
All Employees	Responsible for adhering to this policy		
Scope of POL	This policy applies to carers, care managers, branch employees, the On Call team and the Helping Hands Safeguarding Lead in regards to preventing and responding to missed/late care visits, responding to notification of missing persons (customer), and no response		

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Title of POL: Customer Safety and Access

Custodian: Group Managing Director

Version Number: 06

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	when arriving at a care visit/customers home, refusal of care and gaining access to a customer's home.

1.0 Missed Visits

1.1 Prevention

Helping Hands views all missed visits as a serious matter, in order to ensure that visits are not missed and that our customers are not left without care, Visiting carers must complete the following checks before starting their visits to ensure that no one is missing from their schedules:

1.1.1 Carers check their daily schedules and question with their manager if a customer they would visit on a regular basis is not on the list, and the reasons for this.

1.1.2 If schedules are changed at short notice, carers must ensure that they receive updated details from their managers as soon as possible and only work from this updated schedule, all other schedules will be disregarded.

1.1.3 Managers responsible for the scheduling of carer work will ensure that any changes are communicated to the carer without delay. It is recognised that due to the nature of domiciliary care, often this could be at very short notice, however Helping Hands has robust systems in place to ensure that carers are communicated with immediately

1.2 Failed Service Delivery

1.2.1 In the event that a care visit is missed, Helping Hands has a thorough investigative process to establish the cause of the missed visit and the measures that we can put in place to prevent further occurrence.

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1.2.2 Helping Hands Manager will make contact with the contracting department where it is a funded package, the customer and/or their representative to report that a scheduled visit has been missed, and the reason for this. They will be informed of the measures put in place to prevent reoccurrence and an apology issued on behalf of the company. The manager will also discuss with the customer and/or their representative the possibility of rescheduling the visit at a later time, if this is refused, the visit will be cancelled and no charge made.

1.2.3 Where scheduled visits have been missed that involve the administration of medication, Helping Hands will make contact with the customer's General Practitioner to advise them the the visit has not been completed and seek advice on the effects if any that the non administration of medication will have. The manager will also discuss with the customer and/or their representative the possibility of rescheduling the visit at a later time, if this is refused, the visit will be cancelled and no charge made.

1.2.4 In cases where medication has been missed, or some harm has come to the customer because of the missed visit, Helping Hands will notify the local safeguarding team and also complete the appropriate notification to the regulator (CQC / CIW), detailing all measures put in place to prevent reoccurrence and the action taken with the employee.

2.0 Dealing with no Response

2.1 Helping Hands carers must demonstrate they have made reasonable and repeated attempts to gain access to the customer's property ensuring all appropriate methods of communication (such as knocking the door/window, ringing the doorbell, phoning, calling through the letterbox, calling out to gain attention of the customer). However, Helping Hands carers are not permitted to attempt to force entry, any request for a carer to force entry will be reported to Helping Hands and a note made on the customer's file, detailing who made the request and why.

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2.2 If there is any reason to believe the customer is at immediate risk of harm, the carer must contact 999.

2.3 If no response, Helping Hands carers will contact their line manager immediately to inform them that they are unable to gain access and raise a Customer Notification form.

2.4 Helping Hands carers are not to leave the vicinity of the customer's property until informed by their Branch Manager, the Police or verification has been made that the customer is safe, or alternative cover is found and confirmed with their branch manager.

3.0 Missing Persons

3.1 Upon learning that a customer is missing, employees must act swiftly and calmly. If identified by a carer, the carer must contact their line manager / On-Call team immediately to inform them that the customer is missing and raise a Customer Notification form.

3.2 Where it is possible to do so, the customer's home including all rooms, gardens, and immediate surroundings should be checked.

3.3 It is the responsibility of the persons at the Branch / the On-Call team to ensure the customer is located. Contact is to be made with the Lead Contact, Next of Kin (NOK) and any other customer contacts available.

3.4 The Branch or the On-Call team must try to establish the following:

3.4.1 Time and circumstances of the disappearance

3.4.2 When and where the customer was last seen

3.4.3 Who last saw the customer

3.4.4 Where the customers may have gone (based on knowledge, intelligence and patterns of behaviour)

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3.4.5 The customer's state of mind at time of disappearance (if known)

3.4.6 Collate together any potential risks (such as medication needs or confusion)

3.5 After reviewing the requirements outlined in 3.4, If there is any reason to believe the customer is at risk of harm, 999 must be contacted immediately.

3.6 If the customer's location and welfare remain unknown, the branch / On-Call must check and searches are to be made with the following:

3.6.1 Neighbours, acquaintances nearby

3.6.2 The customer's GP surgery, and local hospitals

3.6.3 The customer's favourite / familiar places

3.6.4 With any Local Authority contacts

3.7 Alongside 3.6, if the customer's location and welfare remain unknown after initial checks, it is crucial to inform the relevant parties as follows:

3.7.1 Update the customer's NOK / family as soon as possible

3.7.2 Emergency services (police) immediately, providing all available information gathered

3.7.3 Notify Helping Hands Safeguarding Lead

3.7.4 Ensure to document and record all actions taken and communications made within the communication log

3.8 Once the customer has been located, the following steps must be taken:

3.8.1 Consider the customer's physical and emotional wellbeing. If necessary, contact 111 or 999 to seek medical attention.

3.8.2 Ensure the customer is safe and comfortable. Offer reassurance and support and inform the NOK / family / stakeholders.

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3.8.3 Inform the police and emergency services that the customer has been located.

3.8.4 Ensure the incident is recorded and detailed on the customer Accident, Near Missing & Incident form; record the outcome and any relevant observations.

3.8.5 If the incident is related to neglect or abuse, raise as a safeguarding referral with the local authority, applicable regulatory notification and ensure to record on the internal safeguarding notification form and update the Helping Hands Safeguarding Lead.

3.9 After the incident, ensure to consider actions to prevent recurrence. In order to consider preventive actions and learning, care managers should:

3.9.1 Review the circumstances of the disappearance and identify any contributing factors.

3.9.2 Review and where appropriate update the customer's support plan and relevant risk assessments to address any risks or triggers identified.

3.9.3 Consider and discuss with the customer and / or representative additional safety measures, such as use of technology, or environmental adjustments.

3.9.4 Ensure to share any important updates and details to relevant branch employees and carers.

3.9.5 Share lessons learnt with the team / wider team to strengthen procedures and understanding.

4.0 Gaining Access to the Customer's Property

4.1 All Visiting Carers will arrive at the property in uniform and will be wearing an identity badge.

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4.2 Visiting Carers will ensure that they conduct a 'one minute risk assessment' when they arrive at the customers home. This will involve looking at the outside of the property for anything that could present a hazard for the customer or the carer as they enter or leave. All hazards will be reported to the appropriate manager by the carer. Hazards include, but are not exclusive to:

- Overgrown or deteriorating pathways

- Slippery/mossy/crumbling steps

- Loose ridge tiles

- Poor door locks that may present a security risk

- Poor lighting

- Any other hazards that may cause a customer or a carer to slip/trip/fall

4.3 Entering the customer's home using a Key Safe - Key Safe numbers are given to carers on a 'need to know basis', Helping Hands uses an encrypted system to provide carers with this information, therefore at no time will the key safe number be exposed to the general public. Visiting carers will ensure that upon leaving the property, the key safe numbers are scrambled to prevent unauthorised access.

4.4 Helping Hands actively promotes the use of safety measures to ensure customers are safe and secure. Where a carer is suspended from duty, or leaves Helping Hands, the Care Manager will make contact with the customer and/or their representatives to discuss and recommend changing the Key Safe number. The Care Manager will follow up the recommendation with the customer and/or the representative in writing including the date of contact and will document this action in the Customer's communication log within the customer's record in care planning.

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4.5 Helping Hands will where necessary make contact with the customer and/or their representatives to discuss household security if it has been brought to our attention that there are concerns over the customer's safety. Visiting carers are not permitted to retain keys to customers homes.

5.0 Refusal of Care

5.1 If the customer repeatedly refuses care and has allowed the carer into the property, the carer will document in the record notes via the Access App the reasons for refusal. The carer will then inform the appropriate manager. If the customer has not allowed the carer entry, the carer will contact the appropriate manager to report the refusal, a record of all refusals will be placed on the customer's record. Only once this has been reported to the manager and documented should they leave the property.

5.2 Helping Hands will make contact with the commissioning body, the customer and/or their representative to discuss this matter, where necessary and appropriate, Helping Hands will inform the customer's GP or other health care team, so that the customer may be examined for signs of illness or where a further review of needs may need to be assessed.

5.3 Helping Hands will only terminate its services once we have received confirmation from the customer, their lead contact with decision making responsibility or commissioner that it is no longer required in line with Helping Hands cancellation policy.

6.0 Late Visit

6.1 Every effort is made to ensure customers receive care and support at agreed times. However, there are at times unforeseen factors which may result in a late visit. If there is a report of a late visit, Helping Hands will make every effort to contact the customer to ensure they are informed and advise when the carer is expected to arrive.

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6.2   Where care visits may be time sensitive, every effort will be made to make alternative arrangements for the customer to ensure they are safe. Services should review visit data to understand and detect any patterns of late visits and act on these accordingly.

TRAINING Is training required?	No
Details of training	*N/A*
COMPLIANCE How is compliance within this document going to be monitored?	Change in process or breach will be monitored and review of this policy will be actioned.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND PROCEDURAL INFORMATION		
	Positive/Negative/N/A	Comments
Does the document have a positive or negative impact on one group of people over another based on their:		
• Age?	N/A	
• Disability	N/A	
• Gender assignment?	N/A	
• Pregnancy and maternity (which	N/A	

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includes breastfeeding)		
• Race (including nationality, ethnic or national origins or colour)?	N/A	
• Marriage or civil partnership?	N/A	
• Religion or belief?	N/A	
• Sex?	N/A	
• Sexual orientation?	N/A	
If you have identified any potential impact (including any positive impact which may result in more favourable treatment for one particular group of people over another), are any exceptions valid, legal and/or justifiable?	N/A	
If the impact on one of the above groups is likely to be negative:		
Can the impact be avoided?	N/A	
What alternatives are there to achieving the document's aim without the impact?	N/A	
Can the impact be reduced by taking different action?	N/A	
Is there an impact on employees, customer or someone else's privacy?	N/A	

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Changes since previous version	- Added to new policy template - Added Scope of policy - Amended section 2.0 'Dealing with no response'. - Added new section 3.0 'Missing persons'
Who was involved in developing /reviewing/amending the document? (list titles)	Quality Development Lead Safeguarding Lead Group Managing Director Executive Assistant Head of Quality
How confidential is this document	Restricted	Can be shared freely within Helping Hands but NOT outside
References	N/A	
Associated Documents	N/A	