



12. **COMMUNITY SERVICES POLICIES**
12.1 **HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE**
12.1.15 **How to respond when a community care client does not respond to a scheduled visit**

Background & Issues

Providers of community care services play an important role in helping to keep frail older people who live alone in the community safe from harm. They are in regular contact with many care recipients who could potentially be at risk. Taking appropriate and timely action when a care recipient does not respond to a scheduled visit may reduce the risk of an adverse event, or result in earlier discovery of a mishap.

As such all Home and Community Care (HACC) service providers are required to have policies and procedures in place for when care recipients do not respond to a scheduled visit.

Objectives

Ensuring a client's safety

- In recognition of the vulnerability of clients receiving community care services, procedures need to be established to ensure a client's safety is not neglected.

Establishing levels of responsibility for each party

- To ensure a timely and appropriate response to a situation where a care recipient might be at risk it is important to establish the level of responsibility of the service provider, the support worker and the care recipient.

Area of Application

An individualised approach

As part of the development of a service response it is important that Shire of Manjimup HACC have a process in place for when a care recipient does not respond to a scheduled visit. Such a response needs to be based on assessment and individualised because each care recipients circumstances will differ.

It is expected that individualised plans would be progressively documented at service reviews or re-assessment.

Policy Measures

- Each care recipient is required to have a planned response for when they do not respond to a scheduled visit. Such a response needs to be individualised for each care recipient, and documented in the client support plan or service agreement with a copy made available to the care recipient.
- Regularly updated carer and/or emergency contact details will be included in a service delivery response agreed with the care recipient.
- Some care recipients, such as those who are assessed as at risk, or with a pattern of not responding to scheduled visits, should have appropriate documentation on how the support worker is to respond.
- The care recipient/carers agrees to notify the service provider if the care recipient is not going to be home for the prearranged visit.



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- The care recipient/carer will ensure that emergency contacts know they have been nominated as a contact and that emergency contact details are current.
- In the event that a care recipient does not want any response, this should be documented in the client support plan or service agreement.
 - ❖ It is important to note that even where a care recipient has requested that they do not want a planned response, if a support worker has concerns or there is an indication that there may be something wrong, they should raise their concerns with the service provider.
- When a care recipient does not respond to a scheduled visit, the support worker should make the initial steps to implement the care recipients agreed response plan and contact the service provider.
- The support worker should not enter the home of the care recipient unless instructed to do so.
 - ❖ The first step in a planned response is that the support worker will contact the service provider to see if the client has advised that they will not be home and to identify the individualised response.
 - ❖ If the support worker can see that the care recipient is in need of emergency services they should call 000 and follow their instructions and then phone the service provider.
- Upon confirmation a care recipient is absent at the time of a scheduled visit, it is the responsibility of the service provider to implement the planned response for that individual as previously agreed by the care recipient.

EXAMPLES OF STRATEGIES TO INCLUDE IN A PLANNED RESPONSE

The following strategies are strategies that may be proposed to care recipients in developing their individualised planned response. These may be particularly relevant to clients with dementia, a history of falls, mental health problems, or those who repeatedly miss scheduled visits.

- Support worker completes a form indicating that they had arrived for a scheduled visit and that no one was home. The form asks that the client ring the service provider when they return home to let them know they are safe. The support worker puts the note under the front door (this is the door most commonly used by the client). Support worker leaves and continues remaining visits. When the client returns home and finds the note, they are to contact the service provider to advise that they are home.
- Safe storage of a spare key by means of any of the below example arrangements:



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- The use of a coded key safe installed at the client's home. Arrangements for this may be made by the service provider or by the client. The client's written permission must be obtained as to whom and under what conditions the key may be accessed.
 - A key held by an emergency contact such as a family member, neighbour or friend as nominated by the client and/or his/her representative. Details of this emergency contact should be recorded by the service provider.
 - A key held by the service provider, when a key safe is unable to be installed at the client's property. The client's written permission must be obtained as to who has access to the key, and under what conditions. Support workers may wish to be accompanied when entering a client's home.
- Service providers should identify with the support worker the most appropriate person to accompany them if they are instructed to enter a client's home. This may be a supervisor, neighbour, an emergency worker such as ambulance personnel, or a police officer.
 - Consider referring the client to a service that provides a daily phone call to check their well-being.
 - Consider referring the client for a personal alarm system supplier.

It should be noted that each individual receiving care has different levels of dependence and social networks, and each service provider may operate from different service models.

The point where the service provider's responsibility should terminate, will be discussed, agreed and documented for each individual case.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are for use in the preparation of a planned response:

- **SCHEDULED VISIT OR SERVICE** – a situation where a home-visit to provide a service has been prearranged. This could include services such as, domestic assistance or transport to an appointment or other activity.
- **SUPPORT WORKER** – a volunteer or paid employee of the Shire of Manjimup Home and Community Care, who is visiting the care recipient to provide a service that has been agreed with the care recipient.
- **SERVICE PROVIDER** – Shire of Manjimup Home and Community Care (HACC)



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- **CARER** – Unpaid relatives or friends who provide regular and ongoing care and support to the care recipient.
- **CARE RECIPIENT/ CLIENT** – Person who receives government funded services from the Shire of Manjimup HACC.

Administration

HACC Manager/ Coordinator

Adoption and Date Due for Revision

**ADOPTED 9 DECEMBER 2010
NEXT DUE FOR REVIEW DECEMBER 2014**

The Administration of this Policy is by Community Services.