

Client not home responding to a scheduled visit

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. Purpose

There is public concern that isolated people, especially older people, have died alone in the community and have not been found for extended periods after they have passed away.

With many older or people with a disability wanting to remain living at home, Subee Pty Ltd and its Care Staff play an important role in helping to keep older or people with a disability who live alone in the community safe from harm. They are in regular contact with many clients who could potentially be at risk. Taking appropriate and timely action when a client does not respond to a scheduled visit may reduce the risk of an adverse event or result in earlier discovery of a mishap.

2. Scope

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to Subee staff when the client does not respond to the phone, doorbell or knock on the door at a time when the client had said they would be available to see the staff person

3. Position Statement

Subee Coordinators will ensure there is a planned and documented response for when a client does not respond to a scheduled visit. When a client does not respond to a scheduled visit, the staff should implement the agreed response plan

4. Response Plan

Identifying the planned approach during the assessment process and document on the client support plan.

The Coordinator will ensure there is a non-response plan for when a client does not respond to a scheduled visit. Such a

response will be developed after consultation with the client (and where appropriate their carer/family). The non-response plan will be individualised for each client and documented in the clients Intake form with a copy made available to the client. If a client does not want any response, this should also be documented on the client support plan.

The response should include client consent for 000 emergency services breaking into the house if necessary.

[Procedure for when a client is not responding/contactable to a scheduled visit](#)

Check client is safe

Phone rostering coordinator or oncall who will phone client

If client is reported to be unsafe or injured coordinator will call 000 if support worker hasn't already

If there are no signs of the client, rostering coordinator follow the clients Non-Response Plan

If the designated emergency contact person/s is unable to assist the Rostering coordinator or Service coordinator (or on-call Coordinator if after hours), Senior Management will be notified, and a decision is made to contact emergency services on 000

Clients with external case managers will be notified if a scheduled service does not take place. The planned response and client's emergency contact details will be reviewed as part of the regular Care Plan review.

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5. When a client is not contactable

If the client is not there or responding when the staff person arrives at a prearranged time and place, the staff person will make all efforts to clarify that the client is safe by:

- Staff will phone rosters or on-call who will phone the client. They can look in the windows (if safe to do so from ground level) and check the house for “signs of life” or disturbance. If the client appears to be unconscious or injured or if there are signs of forced entry the staff will phone rosters (or on-call Coordinator) who will phone the Police and client’s next of kin.
- If there is no sign of the client, the staff will phone rosters (or on-call Coordinator) who will then phone the client and if still no response rosters will phone the client’s next of kin/first contact and ask if they know the whereabouts of the client.
- If the designated emergency contact person/s is unable to assist the Rostering coordinator or Service coordinator (or on-call Coordinator if after hours), Senior Management will be notified, and a decision is made to contact emergency services on 000

Rosters or the service coordinator may identify with the worker the most appropriate person to accompany them when entering a client’s home. This may be a Coordinator, neighbour, an emergency worker such as ambulance personnel, or a police officer.

The on-call Coordinator is to determine how long the staff should wait for the client or client’s next of kin, referring to the client’s non-response plan.

Where a client has requested that they do not want a planned response and a staff has concerns or there is an indication

that there may be something wrong, the staff should raise their concerns with rosters who will then make a record of these concerns and escalate to a member of the Senior Management Team.

The Senior Management Team will respond according to Subee Duty of Care to clients.

If an on-call Coordinator is involved in “client not responding” incident s/he is to inform the clients service coordinator at the earliest possible time on the next business day.

6. Spare key to client’s home

The clients service coordinator will discuss with the client the option of a spare key to the client’s home being accessible and when it may be used.

There are restrictions on when a spare key can be used to access a client’s home. Staff need to speak to a Coordinator to gain permission before using a client’s spare house key.

A spare key may be left in a locked box outside the client’s home, with a neighbour or with a family member/friend. The coordinator will record on the client file where the client has spare keys to their home. This information must be kept secure to prevent unauthorised people discovering the key or combination to a locked box. If there is a key to the client’s home left in a locked box this will only be used to access a client’s home if:

- the client is physically unable to open the door;
- the client has locked her/himself out; or
- we know the client is alive but cannot open the door.

Where a client agrees to have a spare key accessible, the service coordinator must ensure the client specifies the circumstances under which the key may be used.

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7. Client with a history of not responding to a scheduled visit

If the client has dementia, a history of falls, mental health problems, and/or a history of missing or not responding to scheduled visits the service coordinator will ensure that this is detailed in the client's record.

If a staff phones rosters (or On-call Coordinator) to say that such a client is not responding the Coordinator may recommend the staff revisit the client later in their shift or will ensure the client's contact person/next of kin or Coordinator follows up later in the day.

8. Client/Carers responsibilities

The client/carer agrees to notify the service provider if the client is not going to be home for the prearranged visit.

The client/carer to ensure that emergency contacts know they have been nominated as a contact and that emergency contact details are updated and current.

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