

The Village Residence	<b>POLICY NO:</b>	
	Date reviewed	<b>March 2014,, May 2017, January 2021, October 2021, Sept 2023</b>
	<b>Pages 8</b>	
<b>Policy on Missing Persons</b>		

<b>Policy on Missing Persons</b>	
<b>Developed by: Director of Nursing Office and Clinical Nurse Managers</b>	<b>Date Developed: Revised February 2011. Revised March 2014,, May 2017, January 2021, October 2021, Sept 2023</b>
<b>Developed By: Nursing Department.</b>	<b>Date Approved: February 2011, March 2014,, May 2017, January 2021, October 2021, Sept 2023</b>
<b>Implementation Date: April 2009</b>	<b>Review Date: Sept 2026.</b>
<b>Policy Reference Number: DSOP HIQA SCHEDULE 5 Risk Management Policies</b>	<b>No. of Pages: 8</b>
<b>Status of the Policy: Final</b>	

The Village Residence	POLICY NO:	
	Date reviewed	March 2014,, May 2017, January 2021, October 2021, Sept 2023
Pages 8		
Policy on Missing Persons		

## Policy Statement

This policy sets out the values, principles and policies underpinning The Village Residence approach to the discovery that a service user is missing.

Through its policy and procedures, the home also seeks to comply with the requirements to report serious instances through HIQA’s notification procedures and the local Adults Safeguarding Team procedures and take the appropriate actions in the event of accidents or in the event of a service user going missing from The Village Residence

It is common for at least some of the service users in this care home to be limited in their mobility. Some may also be confused or easily disoriented and therefore become easily lost. For these reasons a service user going “missing” would be an obvious cause for concern.

However, it is accepted that there will be many active service users who value their mobility and independence and spend time out in the local community without raising concern. Thus, service users’ need for close supervision must always be balanced against their rights to make their own decisions regarding their movements and whereabouts.

## Preventing Missing Persons Incidents.

Staff must remain vigilant at all times and try to be aware of exactly where vulnerable service users are at any given time. Service users who are prone to wandering, or who may be at risk of getting

The Village Residence	POLICY NO:	
	Date reviewed	March 2014,, May 2017, January 2021, October 2021, Sept 2023
	Pages 8	
Policy on Missing Persons		

lost by reason of their mental state, will have this identified during risk assessment and a suitable entry made in their care plan. Such service users are kept under observation as appropriate to the level of risk identified.

Action taken to avoid false alarms includes the simple precaution of encouraging service users, and their relatives and visitors, to inform a member of staff when they are leaving the home on an outing or a walk and to give both a time they expect to return and a contact name and telephone number. All such arrangements are entered in the home's log book or record keeping system.

### **Raising the Alarm**

Staff should raise the alarm immediately they suspect that a service user may be missing by informing their duty manager. Staff should note that it is often difficult to ascertain whether or not an individual service user has gone missing until certain key points in the home's daily timetable, such as mealtimes, when all service users would normally be expected to make an appearance.

Situations where a missing persons' report should be made include the following:

- where a service user has not returned from an arranged outing, activity or walk
- Where a service user cannot be found in the centre or grounds and no arrangements have been made for an outing, activity or walk.

The Village Residence	POLICY NO:	
	Date reviewed	March 2014,, May 2017, January 2021, October 2021, Sept 2023
Pages 8		
Policy on Missing Persons		

### **Procedure in the Event of a Service User Being Reported as Missing in The Village Residence**

When it becomes clear that a resident is missing it is vital that all the members of staff work as a team and follow a clearly defined procedure. Upon receiving a missing persons report the duty manager should carry out the following procedure.

Check in the day book that the service user is not on a prearranged outing, activity or walk. If they are, and are overdue, then the manager should make efforts to contact the service user or the people/place they are visiting. Where contact cannot be made and the judgment of the duty manager is that they may be at risk, then An Garda Shoshana should be contacted and a suitable entry made in the residents' notes.

Give a Garda Siochana a description of the resident and what they were wearing

Where a resident is not on a prearranged outing, activity or walk then the following procedure should be followed.

The duty manager should carry out the following.

Alert all staff to the possibility of the resident being missing and ask for information/sightings.

Check who last saw the resident and question them about the service user's known plans and movements.

The Village Residence	POLICY NO:	
	Date reviewed	March 2014,, May 2017, January 2021, October 2021, Sept 2023
Pages 8		
Policy on Missing Persons		

Where necessary tactfully question relevant residents about the missing service user's plans and movements.

Carry out a thorough search of the centre and grounds, checking that the resident user has not become lost or trapped. Knowledge of the resident and their usual movements and habits should be employed (i.e. staff should search their favourite places and, if they are used to visiting relatives nearby, then relatives should be contacted) and staff may be dispatched to tour the vicinity.

A through search of 5 units should be included.

It is important here that the duty manager has a structured plan to their search ([See Accompanying documents](#)) and does not just send staff off in a haphazard way.

At the end of the search the duty manager must be confident that the centre and its grounds and new build area have been systematically searched, including the residents own rooms, toilet and favourite spots. For searches in the dark a supply of torches are kept in each centre along with a first aid kit and space blanket for treating hypothermia.

On no account should other service users be allowed to involve themselves in any search of the grounds and sufficient staff should always remain in the Village residence to ensure its proper running and the safety of other residents.

If no sign of the service user can be found, or if information is provided from either staff or other service users that raises concern that the service user may be at risk, then the local police should be

The Village Residence	POLICY NO:	
	Date reviewed	March 2014,, May 2017, January 2021, October 2021, Sept 2023
	Pages 8	
Policy on Missing Persons		

alerted and their advice and assistance sought.

Where An Garda Siochana are involved then the manager on duty or senior staff nurse should be informed, as should members of the missing residents family if they have not already been contacted.

The duty manager should, at the earliest opportunity, fill out an incident form and make a suitable note of events in the service user's notes. Times of actions and decisions should be noted as accurately as possible Families should be requested to telephone the home if the resident contacts them and relatives should be kept informed at each stage of the search.

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.

If at any stage the duty manager is unsure of what to do then the responsible person Michael McCaul or Maura Ward should be contacted immediately for advice.

### **Procedure to Follow after a Missing Persons Incident**

Care staff must record any significant incident on the resident's care plan and the service's accident/incident records (which should be available for HIQA inspection if required). The recording should include the times the person went missing and was returned and the actions taken for the person to be returned. The Health Information and Quality Authority are notified by Michael

The Village Residence	<b>POLICY NO:</b>	
	Date reviewed	<b>March 2014,, May 2017, January 2021, October 2021, Sept 2023</b>
	<b>Pages 8</b>	
<b>Policy on Missing Persons</b>		

McCaul on the Portal NF05 – Portal Person in charge, any unexplained absence of a resident from the designated centre. Timeframe within 3 working days of the incident

All incidents should be reviewed to learn the lessons from them and to prevent reoccurrence.

If the user was injured or harmed or was seriously at risk of being harmed because of going missing, the management will notify HIQA and the safeguarding and Protection Team, which might wish to investigate further depending on the circumstances. If the care home has acted in error or negligently it should exercise its duty in its dealings with the person’s relatives.

If going missing results in a person’s tragic death, there will be a range of procedures to be followed, which could include a police investigation, Coroner’s Inquest and a Serious Case Review.

If a complaint is made against a care staff member as a result of a service user going missing, the matter will be investigated through the complaints procedure. The investigation will include any possible misconduct by the care staff responsible as a result of the person going missing through its established disciplinary procedures.

All staff are made aware of the possible consequences of a service user whom they are supervising going missing.

**Training**

The Village Residence	<b>POLICY NO:</b>	
	Date reviewed	<b>March 2014,, May 2017, January 2021, October 2021, Sept 2023</b>
	<b>Pages 8</b>	
<b>Policy on Missing Persons</b>		

All staff are trained in the missing persons procedure and to know their role in the event of a search.

Signed:	_____
Date:	_____
Policy review date:	_____

Last reviewed 12 Sept 2023