

# POL55 – Late and Missed Visits Policy and Procedure

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd  
Unit 5 Millennium Way, Dunston, Chesterfield, Derbyshire  
S41 8ND



## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 To ensure consistency and continuity of Care.
- 1.2 To ensure the safety and wellbeing of Service Users.
- 1.3 To support Serendipity Healthcare Ltd in meeting the following Key Lines of Enquiry:

Key Question	Key Lines of Enquiry
SAFE	S3: How does the service make sure that there are sufficient numbers of suitable staff to support people to stay safe and meet their needs?
SAFE	S6: Are lessons learned and improvements made when things go wrong?
WELL-LED	W2: Does the governance framework ensure that responsibilities are clear and that quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements are understood and managed?

- 1.4 To meet the legal requirements of the regulated activities that Serendipity Healthcare Ltd is registered to provide:
  - The Care Act 2014
  - Equality Act 2010
  - Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Registration and Regulated Activities) (Amendment) Regulations 2015
  - Human Rights Act 1998
  - Mental Capacity Act 2005
  - Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice
  - Data Protection Act 2018

## 2. Scope

- 2.1 The following roles may be affected by this policy:
  - Registered Manager
  - Other management
  - Administrator
  - Care staff
- 2.2 The following Service Users may be affected by this policy:
  - Service Users
- 2.3 The following stakeholders may be affected by this policy:
  - Family
  - Advocates
  - Representatives
  - Commissioners
  - External health professionals
  - Local Authority
  - NHS

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### 3. Objectives

- 3.1** To ensure that all staff at Serendipity Healthcare Ltd understand the negative impact late or missed calls have on Service Users and to ensure that there are effective mechanisms in place so that they do not arise. Where they do, lessons learnt must be applied and contractual notifications made.

### 4. Policy

- 4.1** Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will have in place a system to ensure that it is notified **immediately** and therefore able to initiate corrective action, if a visit to a Service User is late or missed completely by staff.
- 4.2** Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will have in place easily understood procedures for Service Users to quickly and effectively inform Serendipity Healthcare Ltd of the late or non-arrival of a booked Care Worker. These arrangements will be communicated to all Service Users on a regular basis.

### 5. Procedure

#### 5.1 Procedure for Responding to Late or Missed Calls

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will ensure that they have a plan in place for responding to missed or late visits and that it includes:

- How and when a missed or late visit will be communicated to the Service User or their Care Workers
- Emergency contact details, which are kept up to date
- Arrangements for a family member, carer or neighbour to visit instead
- An assessment of risk and what will happen if a visit is late or missed
- Robust recruitment pipelines to ensure that sufficient pools of staff that can be mobilised at short notice in the event of an unplanned absence or emergency

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will recognise that Service Users living alone or those who have cognitive impairment may be particularly vulnerable if visits are late or missed. Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will therefore make it a high priority for back-up plans to be actioned as soon as possible for these specific groups.

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will assess the potential benefits of introducing electronic call monitoring, if they do not have it already, and make a decision as to its implementation.

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will check arrangements to ensure that services operating outside of office hours and at weekends are consistent with the levels of service operated during weekdays. Regular reviews of procedures for out-of-hours

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services will be undertaken to ensure that a robust system is in place to identify and respond to missed or late calls.

Where service levels may be influenced by commissioning practise, Derbyshire County Council, Sheffield City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council must be contacted to discuss reasons for the late and missed calls and potential solutions.

### **5.2 Late Visits**

Care Workers who realise that they are going to be late for a visit must immediately contact Serendipity Healthcare Ltd to inform them of the fact and the reasons for it. Irrespective of the method of notification of a late visit or the likelihood of a late visit of more than 15 minutes, the Service User will be contacted immediately to inform them of the late visit, and also of the expected time of arrival of the Care Worker.

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will immediately make any arrangements necessary to reduce the lateness of the visit to a minimum, including allocating other Care Workers to the visit or other visits.

The Registered Manager will be informed of all occurrences of late visits. The staff member may choose to inform The Registered Manager, while off duty, if the reason for the late visit indicates problems which may recur and affect other visits, which are due on that or immediately upcoming shifts. Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will have an escalation plan in place for out of hours so that staff know who to contact.

### **5.3 The late visit will be recorded, showing:**

- Reason for delay
- Rostered Care Worker
- Substitute Care Worker
- Visit duration
- Scheduled visit time
- Time delayed
- Name of Service User

### **5.4 The records of late visits will be reported to each Management Meeting, indexed on each of:**

- Reason for delay
- Care Worker initially allocated
- Service User

in order to identify trend information for action and lessons learnt.

### **5.5 Missed Visits**

Care Workers who realise that they are going to miss a visit must immediately contact Serendipity Healthcare Ltd to inform them of the fact and the reasons for it. Irrespective of the method of notification of a missed visit, the Service User will be contacted immediately to inform them that the booked visit will not occur, enquire as to what support the Service User requires, and arrange for that support to be delivered, including allocating other Care Workers to the visit.

The Registered Manager will be informed of all occurrences of missed visits. All missed calls will be logged as part of the incident reporting procedures at Serendipity Healthcare Ltd. Following an investigation and root cause analysis, lessons learned will be applied and any corrective action required will be taken to prevent reoccurrences. Staff at Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will need to understand that where 6 missed or late

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calls arise, if the investigation highlights that the incident was a failure to follow agreed procedure and it resulted in harm of any kind to the Service User, it may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd must implement an incident review schedule to audit the number of missed or late visits (and the reasons for these) occurring over a minimum period of four weeks and review practice to reduce them.

### 5.6 The missed visit will be recorded showing:

- Name of Service User
- Visit booked time
- Visit booked duration
- Care Worker allocated
- Reason for missed visit

Note of discussion with Service User on support required, and arrangements made.

### 5.7 The records of missed visits will be reported to each Management Meeting, indexed on each of:

- Service User
- Care Worker allocated
- Reason for missed visit

in order to identify trend information for action.

### 5.8 **Duty of Candour**

The Registered Manager will apologise to Service Users who experience late or missed visits. The apology will be face to face in the event of repeated occurrences, with a clear explanation of the arrangements being made to remedy the contractual breach.

Where required by Derbyshire County Council, Sheffield City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council or other commissioning organisations to supply contract information, late and missed visits will be reported to them in accordance with the contract. Multiple missed or late calls will be classed as a safeguarding issue and reported via the safeguarding reporting channels at Derbyshire County Council, Sheffield City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council and to the CQC.

Where disciplinary action is taken that leads to dismissal of a Care Worker or member of staff who is required to have an enhanced disclosure because of the nature of their role, a referral to DBS will also be made.

### 5.9 **Shortened and Extended Visits**

The duration of an allocated visit to a Service User may be shortened or extended as a result of a variety of reasons. Care Workers who find that the duration of a Service User's allocated visit no longer meets the Service User's needs, must report this immediately to Serendipity Healthcare Ltd.

The Registered Manager will investigate the reasons and where it is found that the duration of an allocated visit for the Service User is no longer sufficient and requires an increase or decrease in allocated time, The Registered Manager will liaise with the Derbyshire County Council, Sheffield City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council or the Service User (for private contracts), to review the care package.

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Upon agreement of a new care package, a full Care Plan review will also take place, as per the Service User Care Planning Policy and Procedure at Serendipity Healthcare Ltd and Care Workers will be advised of any changes that have occurred.

Where it is apparent that a Care Worker is shortening or extending the visit without adequate reason, the suite of HR policies and procedures at Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will be followed and disciplinary action taken where necessary.

### **6. Definitions**

#### **6.1 Late Call**

- A late call is defined by Serendipity Healthcare Ltd as any call that is later than 15 minutes

#### **6.2 Missed Call**

- A missed call is defined by Serendipity Healthcare Ltd as a visit that is either missed entirely or is 30 mins later than the agreed time

#### **6.3 Root Cause Analysis (RCA)**

- A systematic process for identifying “**root causes**” of problems or events and an approach for responding to them. It is part of good governance processes

#### **6.4 Shortened Visit**

- A shortened visit is defined by Serendipity Healthcare Ltd as a visit that is shortened by 15 minutes or more before the agreed end time

#### **6.5 Extended Visit**

- An extended visit is defined by Serendipity Healthcare Ltd as a visit that is extended by 15 minutes or more after the agreed end time

**Reviewed – 28.01.2022**

**HR Manager – Lisa Ward**

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