

Knowsley Adult Social Care No Access Guidance

Good Practice Guidance for dealing with No Access for Community/Home Care/Domiciliary Services

Many adults with care and support needs are now supported to live in their own homes by a number of Home Care or Domiciliary Services. In most cases regular, timed visits are made to their homes. There are occasions when staff cannot gain access to the adult and it is clear that there have been different responses to this situation.

This Guidance outlines expected practice for staff so that we can ensure that an adult has not suffered harm or been placed at risk. All staff and agencies providing services in Knowsley are required to adhere to this Guidance

1. Introduction

- a) Many agencies deliver services to adults in their own homes. It is important to have agreed and understood procedures for dealing with occasions when staff cannot gain access to the person.
- b) Access issues should be discussed with the adult when services are being established (and reviewed), so that, if possible, they can agree a plan of steps to be taken in the event of 'no access'; for example if a friend/neighbour has a key then they should be asked to agree that the service contact them and use the key to gain access. Adults receiving a service at home should be made aware of this Guidance document for responding to failed visits. Service providers should review annually contact details for relatives or other emergency contacts and agreed actions to be taken in the event that a careworker cannot gain access. Any changes to contact details should be communicated to KMBC Adult Social Care Services so that the information held in the data base can be updated.
- c) All care plans should contain relevant information about days/times when the adult will/may be out, if this is part of their regular routine, as well as day and evening contact details for their GP, other relevant community health staff, family members and any neighbours or friends who offer support.
- d) If the adult has restricted mobility or other health issues consideration should be given to discussing the installation of a key safe. **(If a key safe is installed the person should be asked for consent to share the code with Mersey Fire and Rescue Service - MFRS; this should be passed**

to MFRS to be added to their database for use in case of fire at the property).

2. Care Worker's Response

- a) Every attempt should be made to make contact – it is not sufficient to phone or knock once. If there is no response, where possible, and safe to do so, look through the window and call through the letterbox.
- b) If still no response, speak to neighbours and ask them when the adult was last seen. Look for any indicators, such as milk still on the doorstep or newspaper still in the letterbox.
- c) If access to the adult's home is gained (using key from key safe either routinely or only when there is no reply) and you cannot locate the adult within the home then this needs to be reported to the supervisor within your own service and investigated following this No Access procedure.

3. Supervisor's Response

- a) **The actions of the Care Worker must be fully recorded on the file**
- b) If the adult has a telephone, contact them immediately.
- c) Check the file for any notification of hospital appointment, family visit etc which might explain the 'no access'.
- d) Check local hospitals for A&E attendance/inpatient records.
- e) Check file for any falls or other physical health issues which may explain why their mobility may be reduced.
- f) If there is a 'no access' plan, then make contact with the key holder; otherwise contact the named main contact. Explain why you are calling and ask if they know the adult's whereabouts, but be sensitive and do not raise unnecessary alarm.

If concern remains you must contact Knowsley Adult Social Care Services (via the Contact Centre) on 0151 443 2600 immediately. You can contact this number at any time; this is a 24 hour service which is available during weekdays, evenings, weekends and holidays.

4. Adult Social Care response

- a) The Duty Social Worker, or if out of hours, the Emergency Duty Team (EDT), should consider making all relevant checks again and will check the data base and files for any other contacts.
- b) If possible the Duty Social Worker or EDT worker will check with the adult's GP surgery and/or Community Nursing Service/Hospital to see if they are aware of any reason for no access.
- c) Should concerns remain, the Duty Social Worker or EDT worker will visit the adult's property immediately and risk assess whether this needs to be with another worker.
- d) If there is still no contact the Duty Social Worker or EDT worker will discuss with their line manager who will liaise with senior management and authorise contact with the Police.

- e) Under Section 17(1)(e) of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 a police constable may enter and search any premises for the purpose of saving life or limb or preventing serious damage to property. It is for the police to determine whether to exercise the power and a **social worker has no right of entry. If a social worker needs to gain entry legal advice should first be sought.** (This emphasises the need to gain the adult's consent to their property being entered in an emergency, at the **point of establishing the service**, thereby avoiding the need to apply to Court). For information, refer to Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) Guidance 'Gaining access to an adult suspected to be at risk of neglect or abuse' published October 2014 for full details. A copy can be found here:
<https://www.scie.org.uk/care-act-2014/safeguarding-adults/adult-suspected-at-risk-of-neglect-abuse/>
- f) **All actions by the Duty Social Worker, or EDT worker, must be recorded in the adult's file in the Liquid Logic system.**

ANY STAFF MEMBER WHO HAS IMMEDIATE CONCERNS FOR THE LIFE OR SAFETY OF ANY ADULT WITH CARE AND SUPPORT NEEDS AT ANY TIME SHOULD CALL 999 IMMEDIATELY AND REQUEST URGENT HELP