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## POLICY STATEMENT

Homecare Domiciliary and Domestic Limited believe in providing a working environment that is safe and easy to use for service users, their relatives and visitors, and our staff. Homecare D & D Ltd is committed to providing safe and easy access to all parts of its premises for service users or staff who uses wheelchairs, who are infirm or unsteady on their feet, or who suffer from sensory impairments.

Homecare D & D Ltd believes that access to buildings is a critical part of their design, especially for domiciliary care agencies whose users may include the disabled, the infirm and the elderly.

The Equality Act 2010 requires employers to make “reasonable adjustments” for disabled people, such as providing extra help or making changes to the way they provide their service and to take reasonable steps to remove, alter or provide reasonable means of avoiding physical features that make it impossible or difficult for disabled people to use a service or to be employed in a workplace.

In addition, under the Building Regulations, new commercial buildings must cater for disabled visitors as well as the people working in them, while building works to existing premises should not have any facilities for disabled people made worse.

All access points to head office have been reviewed and are suitable under the Equality Act 2010 and Building Regulations. These include the provision of disabled parking bays close to the building, ramps and slopes to replace stairs and steps, suitable hand rails, easy to open doors for wheelchair users, the provision of an internal security system of door codes, the removal of furniture or fittings that block wheelchair access, a review of floor surfaces and coverings to make slip and trip free and a review of signage to ensure that service users and visitors know where they are.

All new employees will be employed on the basis of merit and performance at interviews, and no applicants for jobs will be discriminated against on any basis, including that of disability. Reasonable adaptations or change in systems or procedures will be made to accommodate new staff who may have disabilities in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

During the initial assessment, when care is planned, access to service user’s home, the security of the home and the security of the staff should be considered and any difficulties, hazards or risks identified.

An agreement should be reached between the service user, their advocates, any relevant authorities and Homecare D & D Ltd and entered in the service user plan about how the home care worker will affect entrance to the service user’s home and this should include details of any adaptations or alterations agreed to by the home owner to minimise risk. **The care workers who will be attending the property will be given the care plan information to follow.**

When gaining access to service user’s homes, staff should at all times adhere to the agencies’ policies on security, key holding and identity cards.

## PROCEDURE

### Access to a service user’s home

When approaching a service user’s house a visual inspection should be carried out to identify any hazards that may constitute a risk to the service user, these could include:

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- Slippery or obstructed pathways
  - Loose ridge tiles or guttering
  - Poorly maintained steps
  - Damaged locks that may present a security risk
1. Any hazards found should be noted in the communication log and reported to head office.
  2. If Service Users cannot open their door then it may be necessary for the Service user's key to be kept in a key safe.
  3. The Service User's key safe will have a unique number, which will be stored in the Service User records. The number will only be issued to the member of staff attending the service user and the member of staff that is on call.
  4. **Any key safe numbers stored and/or given out, will be given out in a code relating to the key safe number. The code's formula is never given out to anyone other than Homecare D&D staff members.**
  5. Use the door bell or knocker for entry. For security reasons staff cannot agree with the service user to leave a key in an accessible location i.e. attached to the letterbox on string etc. Report to head office if this is requested.
  6. Members of staff must carry their identity badge at all times to show the service user when the door is opened or at the first available opportunity.

## Leaving the service users home

1. The care worker, must, on completion of all work, carry out the following routine prior to leaving the Service Users home:
2. Ensure that all gas and electric appliances are switched off or left in a safe state.
3. Ensure that any free standing heaters are left in a safe position.
4. Ensure that there are no dishcloths or tea towels left above gas hobs.
5. Ensure that all foodstuffs used in the preparation of meals have been properly stored away.
6. Any food left for the Service User to be eaten later is to be covered and left in an easily accessible position.
7. Ensure that all-exterior windows and outer doors are secured, unless the Service User requests otherwise.
8. Remind the service user of the date/day and time of the next visit.
9. Leave the house via the agreed door, ensuring the door is firmly secured and locked.
10. Intruder alarms should be set in accordance with instructions.

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11. If a key safe is in place return the key to the key safe and reset the numbers

## **Procedure for no response**

1. If on a scheduled visit to a Service User you do not get any response when trying to gain entry, you should try and establish the reason why. A scheduled visit should not be abandoned without verifying the Service Users safety and welfare.
2. Having an in-depth knowledge of the Service Users habits, you might have some idea of what the reason could be, try this first. If you are still unable to gain entry, attempt the following possible causes listed below:
  - Check the back garden and back door, listen for electrical appliances turned on (Vacuums can be very loud), listen for the radio or television turned up loudly. If you can hear a device is too loud, and the Service User could be home, repeat attempts to gain entry.
  - The Service User may have forgotten you were coming and went shopping etc check with neighbours, if your investigation reveals this is the case, contact your supervisor or main office for further instructions.
  - The Service User could have gone out unexpectedly. Check with neighbours and the main office to see if a message has been left.
  - The worst scenario could be the Service User has taken ill or been injured, look through the windows and letter box, if milk has not been taken in, or mail and newspapers not collected then contact your supervisor or main office immediately, they will give you further instructions.
3. If after all your attempts have exhausted you are still unable to gain entry, contact the main office for further instructions.
4. The manager will contact relatives and inform them of the situation
5. The manager will check the service user's personal service plan and establish what is held on record regarding emergency access.
6. Forced entry cannot be sanctioned unless authorised by Service User (held on record) relative, professional or emergency services after exhausting every possibility to avoid forced entry
7. All non-response situations will be documented in the Service User records.

## **Procedure for burglary or attempted burglary**

1. If a member of staff finds that burglary or attempted burglary has taken place when visiting a service user's home, dial 999 and summon the police immediately. If you see signs of a break-in prior to entering the property or for other reasons you are highly suspicious then dial 999 before entering and await the police arrival.

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2. If the service user was in the house at the time of the incident, comfort them and try to ensure that nothing is touched or disturbed pending the police arrival. Notify the service user's family or advocate.
3. In the absence of family with the help of the service user try to make a list of items that has been stolen
4. In the absence of family or friends. If damage has been done to the property that makes the property unsecure, Homecare D & D will make arrangements for this to be repaired before leaving. Homecare D&D will ask the service user or their advocate, which contractor they prefer to do the work, if the service user or advocate does not know of a contractor, the police should be asked, as a last resort refers to the agency emergency list of contractors.
5. If the work is going to take a long time and a member of the family or advocate is unable to be present then your coordinator or the on call **team**, if out of office hours, should be contacted for advice.

## TRAINING

All staff will be offered training covering basic information about staff duties and responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, Safeguarding and health and safety risk management and the reporting of hazards.

All new staff will receive induction training, which will include guidance on improving access and procedures wherever possible. In particular, staff will be trained to be more aware and involved with disabled access and to consider how services can be provided in a different way that disabled people would find more convenient.