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## Key Holding in Domiciliary Care (England) Policy

### Policy Statement

Key holding by staff is sometimes an essential part of providing high-quality care to certain people receiving care who are infirm or immobile, or otherwise are assessed as having difficulty in getting to the door and letting in a home care worker. In such cases it is far safer for the home care worker to hold or have access to a key to the home than for the person to leave a door unlocked or use a similar strategy such as hiding a key outside the house in a known place. Such strategies represent obvious security risks.

This policy describes the key holding arrangements made by this service. It is in line with Regulation 12: Safe Care and Treatment of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014, which, with regard to home security, states that risks to the health and safety of the person receiving care should be assessed and, where possible, any risks mitigated. The policy should also align with local authority commissioning quality requirements.

The aim is to ensure that people are protected and are safe and secure in their homes and that where keys are held by staff to effect entrance to the home, those keys are kept securely.

The care expects its care and support workers always to ensure the security and safety of people receiving care and their homes when providing personal care and that they must therefore take great care of any key holding responsibility.

Safe key holding, the showing of identity cards and following correct procedures when using safety alarms and similar devices are all important parts of the agency's provision of safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led care to people in their own homes.

### Procedures

In this care service the following procedures are adopted.

- During the initial assessment, when care is planned, the security of the home will be discussed and an agreement reached about how the care worker will effect entrance to it. The care worker might be asked to hold a key to the person's home where the person needing care would find it difficult to open the door for a home care worker because of infirmity, disability, incapacity or mental state.
- Such a decision will only be reached where this represents the best way of effecting entrance for the care worker and where it represents the best way to ensure the safety and security of the person needing care.

- If it is decided that the care worker should hold a copy of the person's key, then the permission of the person needing care or their relatives should be made in writing and a suitable entry made on the care plan. Key holding should never be embarked upon without the express permission of the care worker's line manager or supervisor, or without an entry being made on the care plan.
- Staff who hold keys for people needing care should:
  - a. label the key with a code, never with the name and address of the person in case the key gets lost
  - b. be very careful that they keep the key in a safe place at all times
  - c. inform their line manager immediately in cases of the loss or theft of keys
  - d. always knock on the door and announce themselves before entering a person's home with a key.
- Staff should never:
  - a. agree to leave a key outside a house, in a safe place or on string by the letterbox
  - b. attempt to effect forced entry to the home.

## Key Safe Procedures

In the event of there being a key safe installed in line with local authority eligibility criteria and local telehealth procedures, and the agreement of the person receiving care, the care service will follow all agreed protocols to ensure the safety of the person using the service and their home. These include the following.

- Staff needing the key will be given the code number of the key safe.
- They will be instructed to never give the code to any third party nor the name and address of the person living there or of their home.
- They will use the key only to gain access and to leave the house after their work there.
- They will ensure that the code does not show up after leaving the premises.

The care service will report any concerns about key safe use to the telehealth authority or equivalent which is responsible for key safe security and will take part in any review of its use. It will repeat its security procedures when codes are changed and when different staff need the code.

In the event of a person using the care provider's services installing their own key safe (or equivalent), the care service will use it only with the explicit request and agreement of the person and will accept responsibility for its safe and correct use.

## Training

All staff should understand the policy and be trained in home security procedures. Security training is included in the induction training for all new staff and in house training sessions on security are conducted at least annually and all relevant staff attend.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy review date: \_\_\_\_\_

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