

BROTHERS OF CHARITY SERVICES IRELAND

POLICY ON MISSING PERSONS


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Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction.....	3
2.0	Policy Statement.....	3
3.0	Purpose	3
4.0	Scope	4
5.0	Legislation and other related policies	4
7.0	Roles and Responsibilities.....	5
8.0	Process.....	5
9.0	Review.....	7
10.0	References	7
Appendix I	Missing Person Plan.....	8

Ethos

'We are committed to working with people with an intellectual disability to claim their rightful place as valued citizens. Inclusion is a fundamental principle that underlies all aspects of our work. We believe in the intrinsic value of every person and we aim to further the dignity of all associated with our services.'

'We continue the Brothers of Charity Services' tradition of being open to the best contemporary influences. We want to be inspired by the most creative ideas ...and to ask how we give them concrete expression.'

The Brothers of Charity Services Ethos (2001), Going Forward Together.

1.0 Introduction

The Brothers of Charity Services Ireland endeavour to offer services/supports in local communities. This enables each person who is supported by our services to positively engage in the social and economic life of their local towns and villages and in doing so, develop a range of relationships that enhance their quality of life.

Our responses are based on the recognition of each person (who is supported by our service) as an individual, an equal citizen with equal rights and an absolute respect of that status. We, therefore, support each person to live their lives based on their own personal visions and choices, to identify and select their personal goals in life and to develop their personal plan to achieve those goals.

2.0 Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Brothers of Charity Services Ireland that each service area will have in place an agreed response in the event that an individual supported by the Services leaves the services without the required supports and where relevant, without the knowledge of the staff on duty.

3.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide staff with the procedure to be followed in the event of an individual going missing, without the knowledge of staff on duty, and where staff, having considered the vulnerability of the individual have a concern for the safety and well being of the individual concerned.

4.0 Scope

This policy applies to all Brothers of Charity Services Ireland (BOCSI) employees. This document outlines the procedure to be followed by all staff in the event that an individual who avails of day and/or residential supports goes missing from services or care.

5.0 Legislation and other related policies

- Health Act 2007 (Care and Support of Residents in Designated Centres for Persons (Children and Adults) with Disabilities) Regulations 2013
- National Standards for Residential Centres for Children and Adults 2013.
- Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015
- Brothers of Charity Services National Risk Management Policy & Procedure 2019

- GDPR

In order to fulfil its obligations as a Service Provider the Brothers of Charity Services Ireland is required to create and process records which hold both personal and sensitive data. These records are kept 'in confidence' and processed in strict accordance with the privacy and data protection rights of the individual. The BOCSI shares records only for the purpose of compliance with service delivery, health, and regulatory requirements.

Data will be disclosed where required or authorised by law and in line with the General Data Protection Regulations.

6.0 Glossary of Terms and Definitions

Missing could be described as wandering off, leaving unexpectedly, failing to return or turn up at a designated area at an appointed time, without the knowledge of staff on duty, and where staff has a concern for the safety and/or well being of the individual. To be considered missing the amount of time absent is not necessarily the main indicator, other factors could carry more weight e.g. the circumstances surrounding the event and the individual concerned.

The Services refers to the Brothers of Charity Services Ireland.

Staff includes all persons paid or unpaid who support individuals in our services.

Personal Plan – refers to the Person Centred Plan, Personal Support Plan, Care Plan, or Individual Plan

7.0 Roles and Responsibilities

- 7.1 It is the responsibility of the local manager to ensure that this procedure is clearly disseminated to and understood by all staff.
- 7.2 All staff are expected to comply with this procedure. Staff must be familiar with the individuals they support and identify those who have the potential to leave without the required supports.

8.0 Process

- 8.1 Each service area will initially ascertain the likelihood of an individual supported by the Services going missing. Based on the result of the initial review the service area will make a decision to undertake a risk assessment as outlined in the National Risk Management Policy & Procedure. If the risk assessment determines that there is a likelihood that the person will abscond, a Missing Person Plan will be developed. The Personal Plan process must ensure that an individualised Missing Person Plan (Appendix 1) is developed for any person where such a risk has been identified.
- 8.2 In developing a plan consideration will be given to
 - The level of risk of an individual going missing – this may vary depending on the individual and activity. Individual Personal Plans will support this risk identification process
 - The level of staffing in the service area at any time
 - The level of vulnerability of the individual as this will dictate the intensity of the initial response. Factors to be considered in relation to vulnerability are
 - Does the individual generally require supervision while out?
 - The medical needs of the individual
 - The weather conditions
 - Time of day/night
 - Any familiar patterns or places for the individual
 - Nature of disability
 - Would the individual be able to use transport or accept a lift?
 - Is the individual a threat to themselves or others?
 - Does the person have a mobile phone?
 - The individuals awareness around safety and sexual and financial abuse
- 8.4 Each service area must ensure that information pertaining to the individuals' identity and their family contacts etc. are readily accessible and that staff are aware of where this information is maintained.

- 8.5 Individuals supported by the Services should be made familiar with the appropriate actions to take in the event that they become lost. .
- 8.6 Each service area must have in place a site specific procedure to be followed in the event of someone leaving unexpectedly and who is deemed missing. At a minimum this must include:
- 8.6.1 Staff member who suspects that someone has left the premises without the required supports should inform all staff in the immediate vicinity.
- 8.6.2 Inform the most senior staff on duty, who then becomes the coordinator of the search. The coordinator's mobile number should be given to all people involved in the search.
- 8.6.3 Search the premises and/or the area where the individual was last seen. The individual may have a favourite place(s) that they are likely to go and staff should search these areas first.
- 8.6.4 Having completed the above steps and if the individual is not located:-
- a) An extended search then follows. Call all available staff, including those in other service areas for inclusion in the search party.
 - b) Notify: -
 - (1) The local Gardaí **and**
 - (2) The parents/guardian/next of kin **and**
 - (3) The service area manager on call.
- 8.6.5 A copy of the Missing Person Plan Form (**Appendix I**) should be given to the Gardaí with an up-to-date photograph of the missing person.
- 8.6.6 Staff on duty will be required to remain on duty until released off duty by the Service Manager.
- 8.6.7 When the person is located the coordinator of the search should notify all parties involved in the search.
- 8.7 Any incident where an individual goes missing must be recorded in accordance with the Incident Reporting procedures. This should include all details of the circumstances known to staff and should be completed and forwarded to the Service Manager within 24 hours. If the incident involves an individual who lives in a Designated Centre it is necessary to notify HIQA within 3 days of the incident.
- 8.8 The Service Manager should conduct a review of the incident to determine whether any underlying difficulties for the individual are causing an attempt to leave the premises without the required supports.
- 8.9 A review of the risk assessment should be carried out on the individuals return to the centre/house. This should identify any further risks and control measures to be put in place to prevent a reoccurrence. This should

be reviewed within 24 hours to identify any future risks and control measures to be put in place.

- 8.10 Following the event the Service Manager should convene a debriefing session with the staff team which should include reference to the Employee Assistance Scheme.

9.0 Review

A review will be carried every 3 years unless for example, an audit, serious incident, organisational structural change, scope of practice change, advances in technology, significant changes in international best practice or legislation identifies the need to update the Policy.

10.0 References

- Health Act 2007 (Care and Support of Residents in Designated Centres for Persons (Children and Adults) with Disabilities) Regulations 2013
- National Standards for Residential Centres for Children and Adults with Disabilities 2013.

Appendix I Missing Person Plan

Missing Person Plan			
Details			
Individuals Name:	File No:	Photograph	
DOB:	Gender:		
Height:	Eye Colour:		
Build:	Marks/Scars:		
Distinguishing behaviour or habits			
Medical needs e.g. epilepsy/diabetes:			
History: has the individual ever gone missing or absconded before?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If yes please give details including when and where was the person found			
What are the foreseeable risks if the individual goes missing?			
If the individual were to go missing from their home, where are the most likely places they may go? Please list in priority.			
To be completed in the event that an individual goes missing. Outline below the current details of the person i.e. describe the clothes they are wearing and other aspects related to their appearance			
In the event that a person goes missing please attach a current photo of the individual to this sheet.			
Form Completed by:		Date:	

PLEASE ENSURE YOU HAVE UP TO DATE PHOTOGRAPH OF INDIVIDUAL

This is personal and sensitive information and should be retained in a secure but accessible file.