






SOS Kilkenny clg



Missing Persons Policy

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SOS Kilkenny clg will be referred to as SOS throughout this Policy and Procedure. Throughout the term of this Policy, SOS reserves the right to change the Procedures and associated documentation as necessary at any time pending review of the full Policy every 3 years.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 SOS provides Day and Residential Services to adults with an intellectual disability. In line with the Human Rights Approach and the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015, all individuals aged 16 years and over have the right to make their own choices in relation to all aspects of their life including the right to wander, be independent and take risks. This policy will give clear procedures to follow in the event of a person supported whereabouts becoming unknown.

2.0 Purpose of Policy

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to establish clear and defined procedures for locating and returning a person supported to his/her place of residence if and when considered necessary and to safeguard the person supported.
- 2.2 People supported have the right to leave their residential service if they choose. Personal preferences will be ascertained as part of the “discovery” process during the development of the persons Personal Plan (PCP). SOS will carry out an assessment of needs on admission to the residential services and review annually thereafter. SOS will refer to the HSE for provision of alternative community supports as required.
- 2.3 In the case of people supported living in semi-independent accommodation, the people supported may be considered missing if their absence is contrary to their usual pattern of behaviour or there has been a report or suspicion that the person supported may be at risk or harm.
- 2.4 SOS will support positive risk taking, undertake a collaborative risk assessment with the person supported and endeavour to increase capability through education and support. SOS have a strict protocol in the event that a person supported is found to be missing without notifying anyone from his/her place of residence, (staffed house/semi-independent living house/respite house/retirement home/independent living house).

3.0 Aims

- 3.1 The aim of the policy is to give strict protocols and guidance to all staff in locating and returning a person supported to his/her place of residence and to recognise what constitutes “safe wandering” for different people.

4.0 Scope of the Policy

- 4.1 This policy applies to all people supported availing of day and residential support from SOS.
- 4.2 This policy applies to all staff employed by SOS, including students on placement, Government employment related schemes, i.e CE Schemes, volunteers and host families.

5.0 Definitions

- 5.1 For the purpose of this document a vulnerable adult is a person over the age of 18 who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of an intellectual disability, and is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or is or may be unable to protect him or herself from significant harm or serious exploitation, as defined in his/her Personal Plan.
- 5.2 The term missing as used in this document applies to people supported who absent themselves without notifying anyone from their place of residence or who fail to return within an agreed period of time without making contact with staff.
- 5.3 The person supported is not considered missing if they are engaging in “safe wandering”, their whereabouts are known but they are refusing to return to their residential house and there is no immediate risk to themselves or others. Options such as requesting the emergency on-call manager, residential staff, family or friends to discuss and negotiate with the person supported about returning to their house must be considered. See missing person's flowchart. Appendix 1
- 5.4 Definition of level of risk guideline:
 - 5.4.1 Category 1 = High Risk
 - Category 2 = Low Risk

Category 1 Any person supported who is or has been:

- 5.4.1.1 In need of regular medication, absence of which would cause threat to health such as insulin dependent diabetes
- 5.4.1.2 Expressed suicidal thoughts
- 5.4.1.3 Vulnerable due to confusion
- 5.4.1.4 Vulnerable due to level of learning disability

- 5.4.2 Category 2 Any person supported who is or has:
 - 5.4.2.1 A low clinical risk and who is responsible for own actions
 - 5.4.2.2 When a staff member is aware of the whereabouts of a person supported
- 5.4.3 If the person supported is assessed as being a high risk following a Risk Assessment, the Missing Person procedures must be activated immediately. (Section 7)

6.0 Responsibilities

- 6.1 The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Operating Officer (COO) or Residential Operations Manager is responsible for any communication with outside agencies such as the press in relation to a missing person.
- 6.2 The Person In Charge or in his/her absence the CEO will notify the Chief Inspector in writing within three working days of any unexplained absence as per Health Act 2007 (Care and Support of Residents in Designated Centres for Persons) (Children and Adults) with Disabilities) Regulations 2013, under Notification of Incidents (or for the purposes of this policy as defined as a resident missing from their residential home).
- 6.3 The CEO, COO or Residential Operations Manager and/or Social Work Department will liaise with the HSE and the person supported family.
- 6.4 The On-Call Manager will notify the Residential Operations Manager who will coordinate information between the relevant parties as required.

7.0 Confidentiality

- 7.1 Article 40.3.1 of the Irish Constitution sets out that privacy is a core personal right and confidentiality stems from this right.
- 7.2 All staff involved in a missing person incident must be aware of the importance of keeping information confidential.
- 7.3 The decision to disclose information must be based on the best interests of the person supported.
- 7.4 Although every case must be considered on its merits, the confidentiality of the person supported will usually not present a barrier to providing basic information about the absence of a person supported to people such as other residents of the house and those who the person supported is likely to contact who may be able to assist in locating the person supported.

8.0 Procedure

- 8.1 The residential staff member on duty is responsible for instigating the missing person procedure as soon as they become aware that the person supported is missing (See Missing Person Flow Chart). Appendix 1.
- 8.2 The Emergency On-Call Manager will contact the Residential Operations Manager with a missing person incident. The Residential Operations Manager will have overall responsibility for contacting the relevant staff and co-ordinate any search.
- 8.3 When a person supported is found to be missing from his/her place of residence, the residential staff in charge must undertake a search of the house and the immediate area i.e the garden, garage. The residential staff in charge should also make telephone enquiries to locations where the person supported may visit such as family or other residential houses. Where a resident has a mobile phone this should be rung initially and continue to be rung as search continues.
- 8.4 If a decision is made to report the person supported as a missing person, the Residential Operations Manager will contact the relevant Garda Station and report the individual as missing or instruct the Emergency On Call Manager to contact the relevant Garda Station. The Emergency On-Call Manager will complete and deliver a Missing Person's Checklist to the relevant Garda Station ensuring all categories are fully completed with a photograph attached. (See Appendix 2 Missing Person's Checklist Doc: 036a/01).
- 8.5 The Residential Operations Manager must inform the following people:
 - 8.5.1 An Garda Siochana
 - 8.5.2 Social Work Department
 - 8.5.3 The Chief Inspector, Health Information & Quality Authority (HIQA)
 - 8.5.4 The COO
 - 8.5.5 The CEO
- 8.6 The Social Worker must inform:
 - 8.6.1 The next of kin of the person supported
- 8.7 The staff on duty who reported the absence/missing person must complete the "Internal Notification of an Unexplained Absence/Missing Person from a residential home, Doc 036a/02, Appendix 3.

9.0 Debrief

- 9.1 Following the incident, a debriefing group session must be arranged by the Residential Operations Manager with all staff involved in the incident.
- 9.2 Additional support for staff, the person supported and their family is provided by a referral to the Social Work Department and the Employee Assistance Scheme.
- 9.3 Staff will ensure the person supported has appropriate opportunity and time to discuss their reasons for leaving their place of residence without informing the staff and how this can be avoided in the future. The person supported must be involved in reviewing a risk assessment and support plan in light of the incident. Referrals to other services such as Psychology may be considered.

10.0 Training

- 10.1 Front line managers must ensure all staff are aware of and comply with the procedures within this policy. The implementation of the policy will be reviewed with staff groups as part of SOS Kilkenny staff development via Managers meeting and Staff meetings, staff education to support this change in thinking will be provided via staff meetings.
- 10.2 It must form part of and be discussed during all future inductions of new staff.

11.0 Reviewing of Policy

- 11.1 The Residential Operations Manager will undertake a 3 year review of this policy to test its reliability. In line with the Assisted Decision making (Capacity) Act 2015, this policy has been reviewed (April 2023).
- 11.2 The authors of the policy should archive a copy of the previous document.

12.0 Missing Persons Policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents/policies:

- 12.1 Admissions Policy
- 12.2 Person Supported Personal Plan
- 12.3 Incident Reporting
- 12.4 Confidentiality Policy
- 12.5 Emergency On-Call Residential Policy

Missing Persons Checklist Available on DMS/ check to ensure all details are updated and correct.

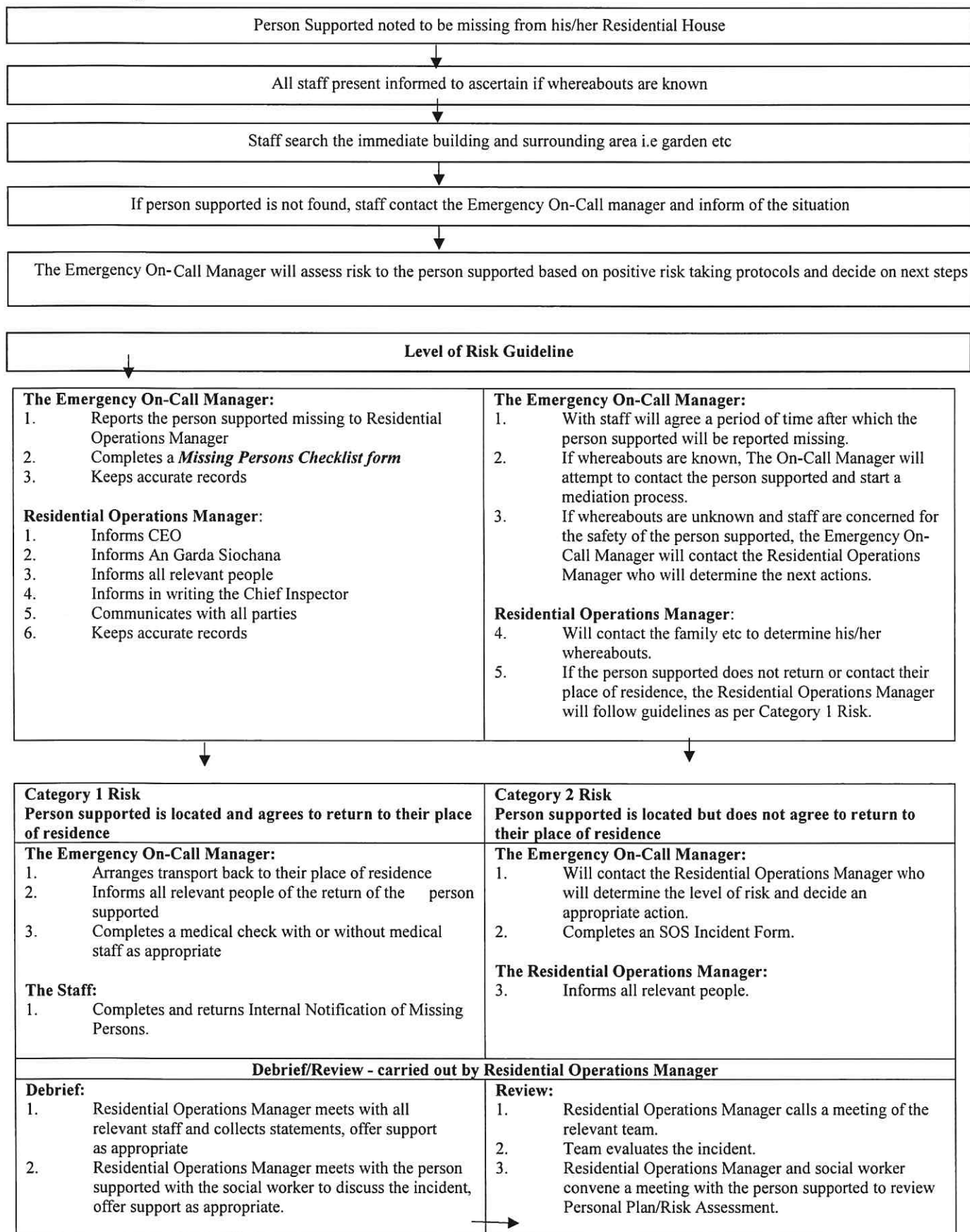
Photograph

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Name: | |
| D.O.B: | PPS Number: |
| Missing from i.e House etc | |
| Contact Number: | |
| Time person last seen and by whom: | Time: Who: |

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| Missing persons last known location: | Nature of Risk: |
| | |
| Missing person last seen with: | |
| Missing persons phone number: | |

| | | |
|---|--------------------------|--|
| Description of missing person: | | |
| Hair colour: | Height: | |
| Eye colour: | Glasses: Yes/No | |
| Clothing: | | |
| Next of Kin details: | | |
| Emergency On-Call Manager notified: | Yes/No – Phone No | |
| Residential Operations Manager notified: | Yes/No – Phone No | |
| Have Next of Kin been notified: | Yes/No – Phone No | |
| Access to money: Yes/No | How: | |

Missing Persons Flowchart



Internal Notification of any unexplained absence/missing person from a residential home

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| <p>Policy 036a</p> | <p>Internal Notification of any unexplained absence/missing person from a residential home</p> |  |
|-------------------------------|---|---|

| 1. Details | |
|----------------------|--|
| House Name: | |
| House Address: | |
| Manager: | |
| Date Form Completed: | |
| | |

| 2. Details of Missing Person/Please identify the individual person supported affected | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Name of Person Supported: | | | |
| Date person supported was considered missing | | Time person supported was considered missing | |
| Length of absence (hours) | | Time absence was first noticed | |

| |
|---|
| 3. Had the person supported been identified as being at risk in this regard? |
| Please comment: |
| 4. Circumstances of the absence: |
| Outline the circumstances of the absence: |

Internal Notification of any unexplained absence/missing person from a residential home (cont'd)

5. Current status of the person supported:

Describe the current status of the person supported, for example physical and/or mental state:

6. Immediate actions taken:

Outline immediate actions taken:

7. Additional Information:

Additional Information pertinent to the absence:

Declaration:

I, the undersigned declare that the information I have provided in this notification form is true to the best of my knowledge and belief

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Name (please print) | |
| Signed: | |
| Date: | |
| Position | |
| Telephone Number: | |

Glossary of Terms for the purpose of this policy

| No | Term | Acronym | Definition |
|-----|--|---------|--|
| 1. | Person Supported | PS | Person using the services of SOS |
| 2. | Emergency On-Call Manager | OC | Manager who is available for emergencies from 5 pm to 9.30 am & weekends |
| 3 | Chief Executive Officer | CEO | Person in charge of total management of an organisation |
| 4 | Chief Operating Officer | COO | |
| 5 | Residential Operations Manager | ROM | Manager in charge of residential services |
| 6 | Respite | | The provision of short-term, temporary relief to those who are caring for family members |
| 7. | Semi Independent House | | Low support place of residence/non staffed |
| 8. | Social Care Worker | SCW | Staff who are employed to work in the residential service |
| 9. | Risk Assessment | | Process to determine level of risk |
| 10. | Day Services Manager | DSM | Manager in charge of Day service |
| 11. | Team Leader | | Coordinator of staff within a specific area |
| 12. | Chief Inspector | | Chief Inspector of Social Services in accordance with Section 40 of Health Act 2007 |
| 13. | Social Worker | | Person employed by SOS to access, support, coordinate with the family of the people supported and organisation |
| 14. | Health Service Executive | HSE | Responsible for promoting and protecting the health of the population of the country |
| 15. | Category of Risk | | Category 1 – High Risk Category 2 – Low Risk |
| 16. | Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015 | | |

Signature Sheet

I have read and understood the Policy and Procedures on Missing Persons
Version 4

| Print Name | Signature | House / Department | Date |
|------------|-----------|--------------------|------|
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