
DEALING WITH EMERGENCIES – POLICY & GUIDANCE

INITIAL RESPONSE

You may have to deal with several types of emergency during the course of your work. In the vent of one happening while you are in the service users home, either through sudden illness, accident or crime, you should:

- Remain calm
- Decide whether you need to phone the emergency number 999.

IF IN DOUBT, CALL THE CARE SERVICES MANAGER FOR ADVICE ON 0200011273

Stay with the service user where possible until the emergency service arrives. If the premises need to be secured the local police should be informed of this. Report what action has been taken to the Care Services Manager as soon as possible.

If it is an emergency, while you are waiting for the ambulance please use the following basic first aid procedure:

- Do not move the person or attempt to lift them if they have fallen.
- Loosen clothing around the neck.
- Cover them and keep them warm.
- If the service user is conscious, sit close by and offer constant reassurance.
- Ask the service user if they are in pain, and if so, make a note and inform the ambulance crew on arrival.
- Do not offer any alcohol or other drinks, other than sips of water.
- If the person is unconscious check that they are breathing and their nose and mouth are clear of any obstructions. Sit nearby and watch for any changes, which should be reported to the ambulance crew.
- Collect any medication that the service user may be taking and give it to the ambulance crew, together with details of next of kin.
- When the service user has been removed to hospital inform the Care Services Manager about which hospital they have been taken to.

FRUITLESS VISITS

If you do not have the keys to the service users' home and they do not answer the door, check if you can see them through the window or letterbox, etc.

If the service user can be seen, and you think they need help, then phone 999 and ask for the appropriate service. State that you are unable to gain entry and keep a note of the time you called at the service users home and the time you telephoned the emergency service. Then inform the MOONSTONE CARE Services Manager as soon as you are able to do so.

If the service user cannot be seen, then try calling neighbours on either side for any information. If you have the service users' phone number, ring him or her. If this is unsuccessful then contact the MOONSTONE CARE Services Manager who will attempt to contact any known relatives, key holders or local hospitals, to find out where the service user might be. If the service user is in sheltered housing then use the alarm and notify the warden, do not leave the service users home until told to do so by the MOONSTONE CARE Services Manager.

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DEATH OF A SERVICE USER

If a service user shows no sign of life ring the Care Services Manager immediately for advice and support. If necessary, they will come straight out to you. Such an event is upsetting for any Care Worker, and support will be available to you on request.

The following action will need to be taken and the Care Services Manager will decide who should take responsibility for what action. In the meantime do not touch anything.

- ❑ If the service user has been seen in the last 24 hours by his or her GP, the Doctor should be called.
- ❑ If the death is unexpected an ambulance should be called and police if the circumstances appear suspicious.
- ❑ If applicable, the Care Services Manager will contact the Service Purchaser to make them aware of the situation.
- ❑ The nearest relative of the service user will need to be informed, as they will become responsible for registering the death.
- ❑ If the premises are to be left empty, make windows and doors secure, put out any rubbish, empty commode, deal with perishable food and make sure lights and fires are switched off.
- ❑ Do not remove any money or valuables from the premises; inform the care Services Manager if you are aware of them being on the premises.

DOUBLE DOSE OF MEDICATION

No matter how high the standards of individual Care Workers are, and how good the policies that they work to, medication errors can still occur. It is therefore important that the MOONSTONE CARE maintains an open “no blame” policy, where Care Workers are encouraged to report such errors without delay. If such a policy is not followed there is a danger of cover up and concealment with potentially dangerous results. All incidents will be fully and carefully investigated taking full account of the context, the circumstances and the position and experience of the staff involved.

In the event of a double dose of medication the Care Manager would request information from the Care Worker of the exact description of the medication, quantity administered and time taken. The Care Worker would be instructed to stay with the service user until told otherwise.

Using the recorded information on the service users Care Plan their local GP would be called immediately to confirm the level of risk. Alternatively outside surgery hours, the 24/7 emergency number for NHS Direct would be called.

Once the level of risk had been established, the Care Manager would issue appropriate instructions to the Care Worker. If life threatening, an ambulance would be called. If likely to cause discomfort or side effects, the next of kin will be called to request their presence, or if necessary the Care Worker will remain with the service user.

The incident would be recorded in the medication record kept in the service users’ home, and in the contact log sheet. The service users Social Worker will be notified by Fax of the incident and details of immediate action taken.

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The Care Manager will issue instructions for the Monitoring Officer to conduct an investigation within 48 hours into the incident to establish exactly how the service user was given a double dose of medication. This will include recommendations for reducing the likelihood of a similar incident reoccurring. A copy of this report will be provided to the service user and Social Worker.

The Care Manager and Registered Manager will agree action, if any, to be taken, including whether a review of the MOONSTONE CARE Medication Policy or re-training is necessary.

REFUSING MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

The Pan-London Care Agency Consortium recognises that every service user has the right of free choice, including refusal of medical assistance.

The Care Worker would attempt to give the service user enough information to make an informed choice about whether to give permission (consent) for medical diagnosis to be sought.

If it is not possible to gain consent then the Care Manager will be informed. Medical advice from a suitably qualified person would be sought, such as a local GP. If medical treatment is recommended, or it is considered an emergency situation, then an ambulance will be called.

Social Services will be informed of the situation, first verbally and then confirmed by fax transmission. The Care Worker will remain with the service user until a safe handover has been made with Social Services, and/or medical staff.

The Care Worker will record the incident in the contact log sheet, and the Care Manager will inform the next of kin about the situation. The incident will be raised and discussed at the next case review held for the service user.

SERVICE USER FALL OVERNIGHT

The Care Worker will make the service user as comfortable as possible, and if necessary adopt the recovery position.

The Care Worker will call the Care Manager to make them aware of the situation. An ambulance will be called and the Care Worker will wait for their arrival.

The Care Manager will inform the Social Services of the situation and whether the service user has been taken to hospital, or will require personal support beyond the time that the Care Worker would normally stay in the home.

The incident will be recorded by the Care Worker in the contact log sheet, and an accident report form will be completed and returned to the Care Manager, who will then copy this to the Social Services and service user.

Fire Precautions

In the event of a fire, observe the following:

- **Raise the alarm**
- **If appropriate, assist the service user to leave premises if safe to do so**
- **Telephone 999 and ask for the Fire Brigade – giving clear instructions of the location of the fire**
- **If safe to do so, close windows and doors to prevent fire and smoke spreading**
- **Do not enter the building to collect personal belongings**
- **Do not return to the building until the Fire Brigade have confirmed it is safe to do so**
- **Report the incident to your office**
- **Keep calm yourself and reassure your service user at all time.s**

Water Leak or Flooding

- **Put a bucket or bowl underneath the flow of water if possible**
- **Turn the stop cock for the water supply to the house or flat to cut off the supply of water from the mains**
- **If the water is coming from the main water tank in the house, leave the bath tap running. If the stop cock has been turned off and the main tank is empty, there will be no more water leak into or flood the house.**
- **Telephone the emergency number of the water company which supplies water in your service user's area**
- **If water has to be mopped up, use towels or other absorbent material eg natural fibres (cotton, wool, silk). Nylon, polyester, fibreglass and other man made fibres will not absorb water to any great extent.**
- **Keep calm and reassure your service user.**

Gas or Fumes

- **If you can smell gas or fumes, open windows to let it escape. Turn off any fires or cookers and DO NOT LIGHT matches, candles, tapers or cigarette lighters**
- **Turn off the main gas supply where it enters the house or flat**
- **Telephone the emergency number of the gas company supplying your service users home**
- **Try to identify the source of any fumes coming from something other than domestic gas**
- **If you or your service user is having difficulty breathing or coughing, hold a damp cloth over the nose and mouth to help ease the condition**
- **Consider going outside if fumes persist.**

Electricity

- **Do Not touch your service user whilst they are in contact with the electrical supply**
- **Turn off the electricity supply at the mains**
- **If you are unable to do this, stand on a dry rubber mat or dry wooden block or book (telephone directory)**
- **Use a wooden broom handle or something similar to push your service user's limbs away from the electric source (never use anything metal)**
- **Treat for shock, call help from GP or call 999**

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NO REPLY VISIT EXAMPLE

All no reply incidents will follow our set policy & procedure that can be found in the Home Security & Failed Visit Policy.

The following is a practical example of this policy in practice:

“Mrs B is a service user living on her own in a council property. This service user has a history of alcohol abuses. She has been admitted to hospital several times and in a recent incident, she fell on the stairs and sustained fracture in one of her legs while she was under the influence of alcohol.

SORAG has been commissioned by Greenwich Social Services to provide Domiciliary Care services for this service user. Her care package comprises of an hourly daily morning visit for personal care and two hours of housework and shopping.

On 21 August 2003 the care worker turned up for to give the service user her personal care. The care worker knocked the door but there was no response. In accordance with our No Reply procedure, the care worker checked the key hole and letterbox. She also went around the house to check through windows but there was sign of the service user’s presence at home. The care worker then knocked on the door of one of the neighbours’ home but there was no one at home.

The care worker, having explored all means of checking whether the service user is at home or not, rang the office and reported the matter to her care manager. The care manager rang the service user’s next of kin who informed him that she had been taken to hospital the night before.

The care manager reported by telephone the case to the Social Services Duty Care Manager. This initial report was followed by a written report to the social services. A copy of this report is also kept in the services users’ folder.

The care manager also suspended the service temporarily and notified all relevant sections such as SSD finance.