



Gloucestershire
COUNTY COUNCIL

Failure to Gain Access

**Revised and checked – Janet Waters
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Failure to Gain Access Policy

1. Introduction

This policy arose from a CSCI report, which encouraged all local authorities to develop a comprehensive, no response policy for situations when staff are unable to gain access to a person's home. It incorporates some of the guidance in the Community Steps procedures, but this is extended to the processes to be followed by all staff whenever they are unable to gain access.

2. Purpose

The policy aims to give clear instructions on the actions that staff must take when there is no response to a visit to a person's house. By taking a consistent approach, it should help to ensure that emergency services are alerted when appropriate.

3. Scope

All Adult Care staff who visit or call on people in their own homes are covered by this policy. Organisations who are funded by the C&ACD to provide services must have their own policy that ensure that the approach that their employees or volunteers take in these situations is consistent with this policy.

4. Legislation

Outcome 4 of Essential Standards of Quality and Safety – CQC

5. Mandatory Guidance

Fieldworkers have a duty to ensure that people receive any assessment or service that they are entitled to, and providers have a duty to ensure that people receive the service as detailed on the care plan. However, individuals must be allowed choice and be encouraged to be independent and make informed decisions about the services they receive. If a person who has mental capacity refuses the service, then that decision and their feelings and views must be respected. If an individual lacks capacity and has no carer or advocate to act on their behalf and by refusing services is creating an unacceptably high level of risk an assessment of mental capacity & best interests' assessment should be undertaken in relation to the decision to refuse the service. FACE form MCA2 should be used to complete the assessment. Consideration must be given to whether the Safeguarding Adults Procedures and any statutory intervention which may be appropriate should be instigated.

Practice Guidance

6. Home Support Workers and Rehabilitation Assistants

6.1 Some guidance can be found in the Community Steps Procedures and in the Disrupted Rotas policy.

6.2 Where staff depend on individuals for access, they must allow time for people to get to the door and check whether they can hear the bell/knocker.

6.3 If there is no reply, staff should check the windows and call/look through the letterbox. If staff cannot see the person they should then try to telephone them to see if there is any response. If this telephone call produces no response, then the member of staff should make enquiries of the warden and check with any neighbours without sharing any personal information.

6.4 If staff still cannot ascertain the whereabouts of the person, they should contact their offices to see if any message has been left there which might indicate their whereabouts. The manager will then:

- Telephone any other contact numbers e.g. relatives and family.
- Telephone any other agency involved in the service user's care e.g. District Nurse, CPN, hospital etc.

6.5 If a person can be seen to be collapsed or in such a condition that warrants extreme concern to their well-being, then the Home Support worker/ rehabilitation assistant must call the emergency services and alert their line manager/Home support Officer or the Out of Hours team depending on the time of day. The staff member must remain at the address until the emergency services arrive and pass on any relevant information. The line manager/Home Support Officer will also contact any known family or contacts to alert them of the situation. The line manager/Home Support Officer can then re-schedule the worker's rota and inform service users of any possible delay. In some circumstances it may be appropriate for the Line manager /Home Support officer/ to go out to support the member of staff.

6.6 If there is still no response or sign of the person, then staff must report to their line manager so that they can check their details based on what knowledge they have of them and what the possible reasons for the no response might be.

6.7 If there is no information that confirms, without any doubt, that the person is out then it must be assumed that they are in the premises and unwell. The line manager/Home Support Officer/ Out of Hours co-ordinator must then take the decision to call the emergency services and ask the staff member to wait.

6.8 The Service co-ordinator/ Home Support officer/line manager will contact the duty officer or Emergency duty team to inform them of the situation.

6.9 A decision will be made by the line manager as to whether the Home Support worker/ rehabilitation assistant should stay at the premises until the situation is resolved or call back later. The Service co-coordinator/Home Support officer/line manager will inform all relevant persons of any outcome.

6.10 The office-based manager must record all these details on the individual's file and on ERIC because the monitoring of repeated incidences of a failure to gain entry may indicate that a review is necessary.

6.11 If a member of staff is refused entry by a person or their carer(s), then the line manager must be informed and the incident recorded on the personal file or on ERIC. The procedures in the Disrupted Rotas Policy must be adhered to. Once again if there are repeated incidences of denial of access then a review will be necessary to ascertain how the situation can be resolved.

7. Community Meals staff

7.1 Where Community Meals staff depend on the individual for access, they must allow time for people to get to the door and check whether they can hear the bell/knocker.

7.2 If there is no response, the Community Meals staff should check through the windows and call/look through the letterbox. If there is no response then they should contact the Adult Helpdesk within thirty minutes.

7.3 If a person can be seen to be collapsed or in such a condition that warrants extreme concern to their well-being, then the Community Meals staff should contact the emergency services at once and inform their line manager. If the accommodation is warden assisted, then the Meals on Wheels provider should either locate the warden if they are on site or inform the Adult help desk to contact the warden in order to gain access. The Community Meals staff should wait or ensure another person e.g. neighbour, remains present until assistance arrives.

7.4 The CSO will telephone the person and failing that, any known emergency contact to establish the whereabouts of the individual. If the person is located and there are no concerns, then they should contact the Community Meals provider and update them.

7.5 If the CSO is unable to establish what has happened to the person, they should send an urgent referral to the locality office and telephone the Duty manager to make them aware. It may be appropriate for the duty worker to contact Community Steps staff to see if they have any workers in the area who could call in to the address. If the person is still not located then consideration must be given by the Duty Manager to calling the police. Once the situation is resolved the Duty Manager/worker should inform the Community Meals provider of the outcome.

7.6 If an incident occurs outside of locality office hours, Community Meals staff should make initial enquiries and if they fail to locate the person then they should contact the Out of Hours service to instigate an investigation.

7.7 If a person refuses to accept their meals, it should be reported to the Community meals provider organisation. The meals should not be left but the Adult Help desk should be contacted and asked to record the incident on ERIC.

8. Day centre staff

8.1 See also Guidance for re-allocating a day centre place.

8.2 If a person is unexpectedly absent, the key worker or manager, depending on the setting, will:

- Telephone the person.
- Telephone any other contact numbers e.g. relatives and family.
- Telephone any other agency involved in the person's care e.g. District Nurse, GP. CPN etc.
- Contact the domiciliary care agency if there is one.

8.3 Day centres who have access to ERIC should check the personal record to see if there has been any emergency intervention since they last attended.

8.4 It is important for day centre staff to check if there are any risk assessments available for the person and to make a judgement based on known facts about their behaviour as to the most appropriate course of action. Staff should check with a family member and any other agencies who are involved to see if they are aware of why the person did not respond to the call.

8.5 If the person lives alone, then it is particularly important to resolve this on the same day. If there is no information, following the checks, that confirms, without any doubt, that the individual is out then it must be assumed that they are in the premises and unwell. The manager/key worker may wish to discuss the situation with the appropriate fieldwork team manager. The manager/key worker should then contact the police to discuss the situation and meet them if required. The service manager should be made aware of the situation.

8.6 If drivers and escorts cannot get a response when they call for a person, they should check by calling through the letterbox and looking through the letterbox and windows. They should also check the gardens. For drivers and escorts employed by the county council, if there is concern about a person and a key safe is available then they can access the property to check that the person is unwell within the property. For drivers and escorts not employed by the council it would be expected that they would contact the relevant day centre as soon as possible so that they can begin to make the checks.

8.7 If a person is seen collapsed or in such a condition that warrants extreme concern to their well-being they should alert the emergency services at once and report to the day centre for advice. They should then wait until assistance arrives.

8.8 Details of any incidents and the outcomes should be recorded on the running notes at the day centre and any other involved professionals informed.

8.9 Habitual non-attendees should be informed both verbally and in writing that not only are they jeopardising their day centre place, they may be subject to a police break-in and liable for the cost of any repairs that could arise.

9. Fieldwork Staff

9.1 It is normal practice for fieldwork staff to make a mutually convenient appointment with a person before visiting.

9.2 If a fieldworker calls at a house at a pre-arranged time and is unable to gain entry. Staff should check the windows and call/look through the letterbox. If possible staff should phone the person to see if they can obtain a response. If there is still no sign of the person they should check with neighbours without sharing any personal information or a warden if there is one available. It is not acceptable to simply leave a calling card.

9.3 If the person cannot be seen or traced, fieldwork staff should use their professional judgement, taking into account the person's past history and level of vulnerability as to what action they should take. If there is any cause for concern they should telephone the Duty Manager to discuss the situation. The Duty Manager should consider telephoning any known contacts e.g. family, GP, hospital etc.

9.4 The Duty manager and fieldworker may consider approaching the emergency services if the degree of concern is felt to be high.

9.5 If a person can be seen to be collapsed or in such a condition that warrants extreme concern to their well-being, then the fieldworker must call the emergency services and alert the duty manager. The fieldworker must remain at the address until the emergency services arrive and pass on any relevant information. The duty manager will ensure that any known family or contacts are made aware of the situation.

9.6 Any missed visits should be recorded on ERIC.

10. FAB Team

10.1 FAB visiting officers should always make a mutually convenient appointment before visiting a person.

10.2 If a visiting officer calls at a house at a pre-arranged time and is unable to gain entry, they should check the windows and call/look through

the letterbox. If possible staff should phone the person to see if they can obtain a response. If there is still no sign of the individual they should check with the neighbours without sharing any personal information or speak to a warden if one is available.

10.3 If a person cannot be seen or traced, on return to the office the visiting officer should check ERIC to see if there is any relevant information to assist in the situation. If they cannot establish where the person might be, then they must send an email to the referring social worker to advise them of the missed visit.

10.4 If a person can be seen to be collapsed or in such a condition that warrants extreme concern to their well-being, then the visiting officer must call the emergency services and alert their line manager and the duty fieldwork manager who may be able to access relevant information which could be passed on to the emergency services. The visiting officer should wait until the emergency services arrive to pass on any relevant information.

10.5 Any missed visits should be recorded on FAB and re-arranged where necessary.

10.6 If it is believed that a person or their carer are purposely delaying their financial assessment e.g. by repeatedly failing to keep appointments, the FAB manager has the discretion to backdate charges to the date on which the original financial assessment would have taken place.

10. Associated Policies

Staff may find the following policies of assistance:

Procedures following a death policy
Post-Incident support policy

11. Implementation

This guidance will form part of the Home Support Workers training and it should be part of the induction for all fieldwork and day centre staff. There will also be a notification in 'This Week'.

12. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored through staff supervision and will be reviewed in accordance with the practices of the CACD Strategic Policy and Planning section.