

Working Safe

Home visiting guide

- ? Have you recently been briefed on the current relevant consumer and environment risk assessments, e.g. risk of aggression and hazards around the home?
- ? Are you clear on the identified level of risk and the number of staff required to visit this consumer?
- ? Do you feel you have been adequately trained to identify and manage any threats and hazards that could arise?

If you answered 'no' to any of the above questions, see your supervisor before conducting the home visit. A second person may need to attend the visit with you.

Before you leave the office

Have you:

- ✓ familiarised yourself with relevant risk assessments?
- ✓ asked your supervisor or other staff for possible updates on the consumer?
- ✓ made sure your phone is on and working?
- ✓ checked the phone has 000 and the office numbers on speed dial?

- ✓ phoned the consumer to reconfirm visit and assess for indications of aggression, substance use or unsafe environment?
- ✓ familiarised yourself with your organisation's procedure for notification of whereabouts and expected return time or phone-in-time.
- ✓ ensured a member of staff is aware of where you are going and your log-out details, even if office is closed?
- ✓ worked out how to get there? Made sure there is a street directory in the car?
- ✓ allowed plenty of time to drive to the appointment?
- ✓ familiarised yourself with the vehicle and ensured it is fuelled and operational – if necessary getting petrol before the visit?
- ✓ logged out and left the following information?
 - name and address of who you are going to visit
 - scheduled time and length of visit
 - your mobile phone number
 - an agreed safety code word
 - any change to your timetable
 - your proposed route
 - your vehicle details
 - if providing transport for a consumer, the location and arrival time
 - expected time of return to the office.

When you arrive at the visit

- Park vehicle close to the consumer's home, in a safe, well-lit area.
- Try to park on the street, in a spot where you can't be parked in or obstructed.
- Park your vehicle in the direction you will be exiting.
- Only take into the visit what you really need.
- Do not walk in deserted places or take shortcuts through vacant blocks, car parks or residential areas.
- Check for locking mechanism on gate.
- Be observant.
- Before entering, be aware of anything that may make the situation unsafe, e.g.
 - listen for arguments
 - unrestrained, potentially aggressive animals.
- If you feel unsafe, do not enter – leave the premises and phone your supervisor.

You are the key to safety.

Always work safely.

During the visit

- Be cautious when entering a consumer's home.
- If an unfamiliar person opens the door, make sure the consumer is home and you feel safe before entering.
- Be aware of and plan your exit routes.
- Keep your keys and mobile phone on you.
- Conduct a quick assessment by asking yourself:
 - Is the consumer coherent?
 - Is there anything different in their demeanour?
 - Are they exhibiting signs of agitation or aggression?
 - Is there evidence of alcohol or drug use?
 - Are other people present?
 - Is anyone arguing?
 - Are there any visible weapons?
 - Is the home in disarray or different from usual?
- If you believe there is an immediate risk to your safety, as a result of your quick assessment, leave the premises and phone your supervisor.

After the visit

- Report any incident or significant observations to your supervisor.
- Document any incidents, concerns or significant observations in the consumer notes.
- Report to the office via phone after each visit.
- Don't be afraid to speak to your employer if you need debriefing, counselling or support services.

These steps should become a part of your daily routine, even with consumers you know and are familiar with.

If at any time a consumer's circumstances change, you should discuss the changes with your supervisor or a colleague and have another risk assessment completed.

You also need to be aware of your organisation's policies and procedures, especially regarding high-risk consumers, including when 2 staff should visit.

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for

Support Staff

August 2010

