



Review Sheet



Last
Reviewed
23 Jul 2025



Last
Amended
23 Jul 2025



This policy will be reviewed as needs require or at the following interval:
Annual

Business Impact:



Changes are important, but urgent implementation is not required, incorporate into your existing workflow.

Reason for this Review:

Scheduled review

Changes Made:

Yes

Summary:

This policy will support staff on how to respond in the event that the V.I.P goes missing from their home. It has been reviewed with minor word changes and removal of section 4.4. The references and further reading links have been checked to ensure they remain current.

Relevant Legislation:

- The Care Act 2014
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Mental Health Act 2007
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) (Amendment) Regulations 2012
- UK GDPR

Underpinning Knowledge:

- Author: ADASS, (2017), Quick Guide to Deprivation of Liberty Orders [Online] Available from: <https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms2/media/17576/community-dol-a-quick-guide-to-community-dols.pdf> [Accessed: 23/07/2025]
- Author: SCIE, (2022), Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) at a glance [Online] Available from: <https://www.scie.org.uk/mca/dols/at-a-glance> [Accessed: 23/07/2025]
- Author: The Metropolitan Police, (2024), Herbert Protocol for people with dementia at risk of going missing [Online] Available from: <https://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/missing-person/missing-persons/vulnerable-people-at-risk-of-going-missing/dementia-missing-risk-herbert-protocol/> [Accessed: 23/07/2025]
- Author: Alzheimer's Society, (2021), Why a person with dementia might be walking about [Online] Available from: https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/info/20064/symptoms/262/walking_about [Accessed: 23/07/2025]
- Author: Association of Chief Police Officers, (2014), "Missing from Care - A multi-agency approach to protecting vulnerable adults" [Online] Available from:

	https://library.college.police.uk/docs/APPREF/Protecting-Vulnerable-Missing-Adults-Framework-FINAL.pdf [Accessed: 23/07/2025]
Suggested Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage sharing the policy through the use of the QCS App
Equality Impact Assessment:	QCS have undertaken an equality analysis during the review of this policy. This statement is a written record that demonstrates that we have shown due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with respect to the characteristics protected by equality law.

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1. Purpose

1.1 To ensure that staff understand the procedure to follow in the event of a Care Worker being able to access the V.I.P's home (e.g. via a key in a safe) at the agreed scheduled time but finding that the V.I.P is not home as expected. This policy must be read alongside Access to People's Homes Policy and Procedure.

1.2 To ensure that AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. responds in a proportionate, well-considered and reasonable manner to a missing V.I.P incident.

1.3 To safeguard the wellbeing of vulnerable V.I.Ps.

1.4

Key Question

Quality Statements

SAFE

QSS4: Involving people to manage risks
QSS5: Safe environments

1.5 Relevant Legislation

- The Care Act 2014
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Mental Health Act 2007
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- UK GDPR



2. Scope

2.1 Roles Affected:

- All Staff

2.2 People Affected:

- Service Users whose whereabouts are unknown and the circumstances are out of character or suggest they or others may be at risk of harm or a crime

2.3 Stakeholders Affected:

- Family
- Advocates
- Commissioners
- External health professionals
- Local Authority
- NHS



3. Objectives

3.1 To ensure that V.I.Ps have freedom of choice and privacy, this includes the choice to leave their home, unless constrained by a Deprivation of Liberty Authorisation or other legal restraint which specifically restricts their freedom in this respect.

3.2 To ensure that all staff recognise their responsibility for the safety and security of all V.I.Ps.

3.3 To ensure that all decisions that are made follow the Mental Capacity Act 2005 five principles and best interests guidance.

3.4 To ensure that AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. has mechanisms in place to keep up to date with V.I.Ps' whereabouts and maintain their safety and welfare.



4. Policy

4.1 AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. understands that it provides Care for V.I.Ps who may be frail, infirm or limited in their mobility. Some V.I.Ps may also have cognitive difficulties that can put them at risk including disorientation, lack of judgement and difficulty wayfinding and therefore become easily lost or vulnerable if unaccompanied.

For these reasons, a V.I.P going "missing" from home may be an obvious cause for concern regarding the V.I.P's safety and must be considered as a potential emergency situation.

4.2 Any response to a missing V.I.P will be proportionate, considered and reasonable. AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. will ensure that risk assessments are undertaken prior to care commencing for V.I.Ps who are known to 'exit seek' and put themselves at risk. AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. will also ensure that up-to-date details of V.I.Ps are on file and will consider using the [Herbert Protocol](#) for V.I.Ps who are considered at risk.

4.3 All V.I.Ps have freedom of choice, including the choice to leave their home, unless constrained by a Deprivation of Liberty Authorisation or other legal restraint which specifically restricts their freedom in this respect.

However, it is necessary that members of staff understand the importance of responding and reporting when the V.I.P is unexpectedly not at home at the time of an agreed visit.

4.4 In the event of a V.I.P going missing, this policy will be adhered to. It is the policy of AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. that all staff recognise their responsibility for the safety and security of all V.I.Ps.



5. Procedure

5.1 Prevention

Whilst the emphasis of this policy and procedure is on when V.I.Ps go missing, it is fundamentally vital that AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. does all it can to prevent this happening in the first place.

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5.2 Record Keeping and Consent

- It is essential to keep up-to-date information for all individuals at AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C.
- Prior to starting care and support with AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C., full information about the V.I.P will be taken which includes addresses (home, work, previous, family), all known and significant locations and descriptive information such as the V.I.P's skin colour, hair (colour, style), eye colour, height, build, distinctive features (tattoos, physical impairment etc.)
- Where V.I.Ps are known to 'walk about', information on why they are seeking to leave or 'walk about' (if this is known) will be recorded to assist staff with engaging with the V.I.P to stay safe and independent
- This will form the basis of information to be shared with the Police when reporting a missing V.I.P incident. Where possible, AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. will seek the V.I.P's consent to share their risk assessment information with the Police and other relevant agencies in order to inform a search strategy in the event of them going missing. If they do not have the capacity to consent, consent will be sought from the health-related power of attorney or via the best interest process. If care is commissioned by health or social services, this will be coordinated in consultation with the Commissioner
- AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. will consider the **Herbert Protocol** to assist with obtaining information that will be useful in the event that a V.I.P goes missing
- AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. provides an alternative Missing Persons Profile form (alongside the Herbert Protocol) for those not presenting with Dementia

5.3 Risk Assessment

Risk assessments will be undertaken to fully document the risks associated with the V.I.P leaving their home. These risk assessments will be used to inform any decision making process if the V.I.P is not present when the Care worker arrives at the V.I.P's home.

5.4 Risk Assessment Outcomes

Risk assessments to ensure the safety of V.I.Ps when they leave their home will have one of the following outcomes:

- **Outcome 1** - A general agreement that the V.I.P is able to maintain their safety whilst away from the premises alone
- **Outcome 2** - An agreement that the V.I.P is not able to maintain their safety whilst away from home, except when with a companion who is able to maintain that safety and agrees to do so
- **Outcome 3** - An agreement that the V.I.P is unable to maintain their safety whilst away from home in any circumstances

Relating to the Above Outcomes:

- Outcome 1 must be accompanied by a copy of the risk assessment held within the Care Plan
- Either of outcomes 2 or 3 indicates that, in the best interests of the V.I.P, they may be deprived of their liberty
- Where the V.I.P lacks capacity, this must trigger an immediate referral to Social Services to discuss whether Deprivation of Liberty applies

5.5 Missing V.I.P Procedure

If the Care Worker is unable to gain entry to the V.I.P's home, and there is no answer:

- The Care Worker should ring the door bell or knock on the door firmly and wait outside to see if it is taking the V.I.P a little longer to answer the door

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- Failing success of this, the Care Worker will check that the V.I.P has not fallen or is unwell if possible by
 - Going to the back door and checking if access can be gained
 - Looking through any downstairs windows if possible
 - Checking the garden if possible
 - Telephoning the V.I.P
- Staff will then raise the alarm immediately by informing AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. or the out-of-hours service. AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. will check if there is any record of hospital appointments, admissions or social activities
- AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. will then follow the steps outlined below

If the Care Worker has gained access to the V.I.P's home, they are not at home and this is unexpected:

- Staff will raise the alarm immediately by informing AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. or the out-of-hours service. AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. will check if there is any record of hospital appointments, admissions or social activities
- The Care Worker will check any visit records to see if any notes have been left
- AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. will try contacting the V.I.P if they have a mobile phone
- AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. will contact the last Care Worker who visited, if different, to check if they know of the V.I.P's location
- If the V.I.P has recently been in hospital, AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. will contact local hospitals. Be aware that it is not unusual for vulnerable V.I.Ps to be picked up by concerned motorists who may then drop them at hospitals on their journey some distance away
- It is important here that Beverley Williams has a structured plan to their search and that the search does not place staff or V.I.Ps at risk
- AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. will follow the emergency procedure agreed with the V.I.P at the start of the service to contact family or friends
- If the V.I.P is unable to be located, the Duty Social Services Team will be contacted for further advice or guidance
- Where contact cannot be made and the judgement of Beverley Williams is that the V.I.P may be at risk, then the Police will be contacted, and a suitable entry made in the V.I.P's records. The Registered Manager will consider any medication that might be due as well as any medical or mental health conditions when assessing the risk. Weather conditions will also be considered
- Once AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. is aware that the V.I.P is not at home, the Care Worker will not be permitted to re-enter the V.I.P's home. This is to ensure the security of the V.I.P's home and prevent safeguarding incidents arising in the V.I.P's absence
- The Care Worker will ensure that the home is left secure, and that any keys are returned to the key safe if applicable

In circumstances where the V.I.P has not returned from an arranged outing, activity or walk at the expected time, AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. must also follow this policy and procedure.

5.6 Communication

- Families will be requested to telephone AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. if the V.I.P contacts them and relatives will be kept informed at each stage of the search if this is in line with the V.I.P's agreed emergency plan
- Once the V.I.P has been found, it is essential that all the parties who were advised of the emergency are contacted again and informed that the search has been concluded

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- AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. will be aware of any contractual requirements and procedures in relation to No Reply and Missing V.I.Ps and ensure that the policies of AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. dovetail with their contractually required and locally agreed procedures

5.7 Incident Recording, Review and Notifications

- The Registered Manager will, at the earliest opportunity, complete an incident form and record details of the incident in the V.I.P's records. Times of actions and decisions will be recorded as accurately as possible
- Following a missing V.I.P incident, AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. will investigate the incident thoroughly. The investigation will try to establish why the V.I.P went missing and how the V.I.P went missing. The investigation will include any recommendations to prevent the incident arising again
- AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. will refer to the CQC Statutory Notification Requirements and submit a CQC Notification following the incident, if required to do so
- AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. will also review Wirral Council safeguarding adult procedures and raise a safeguarding notification with the Wirral Council Safeguarding Adults Team if there are concerns that the V.I.P has suffered, or may have suffered, harm or neglect
- Where a complaint has been made in relation to the V.I.P going missing, the matter will be investigated through the Complaints, Suggestions and Compliments Policy and Procedure at AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C.

5.8 Training

All staff will be made aware and trained in the Missing Service User Policy and Procedure and the steps to take if a V.I.P is found to be missing.

**6. Definitions****6.1 "Missing" {Service_user_text}**

- A V.I.P who has left their home but whose ability to manage their personal safety is in doubt, who may or may not be subject to a Deprivation of Liberty in the Community (Community DoLs) Authorisation or other legal restraint on their freedom to leave the premises
- A V.I.P who has left their home with the knowledge of staff but whose late return is unusual and causing concern
- Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests that the person may be the subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another

6.2 'Walking About'

- Many people with dementia feel the urge to **walk about** and, in some cases, leave their homes. Walking is not a problem in itself - it can help to relieve stress and boredom and is a good form of exercise. When a person with dementia often walks about, it can be worrying for those around them and may at times put the person in danger. It may not be clear why the person is walking about, and this is often referred to as '**wandering**'. However, this term is **unhelpful** because it suggests **aimlessness**, whereas the **walking** often does have a **purpose**. Rather than dismissing it, it is important to think about how the person's independence, safety and dignity can be preserved

6.3 Herbert Protocol

- The **Herbert Protocol** initiative is named after George Herbert, a war veteran of the Normandy landings, who lived with dementia. It is an initiative adopted by many police forces compiled of useful information, which can be used in the event of a vulnerable person with dementia going missing. AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. will seek advice from its local police force on the initiative in the local area. Although this was designed with care homes in mind, the principles can be applied in a domiciliary care setting with the V.I.P's consent

6.4 Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards

- The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) are part of the Mental Capacity Act 2005. The safeguards aim to make sure that people in care homes and hospitals are looked after in a way that does not inappropriately restrict their freedom
- For settings, such as supported living, adult placement/shared lives or domiciliary care, the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards cannot be used, so an application must be made to the Court of Protection
- In these settings, care providers (where appropriate, with Local Authority Care Managers) should examine the situation of people who lack the mental capacity to agree to their living arrangements, to see if they appear to be deprived of their liberty in light of the Supreme Court Judgment. They may wish to seek legal advice and liaise with the commissioners of the service if they think that they might be depriving someone of their liberty and cannot find a less restrictive option for providing care or treatment



7. Key Facts - Professionals

Professionals providing this service should be aware of the following:

- AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. will ensure that detailed information is recorded when the V.I.P's care starts. This information will be checked and updated regularly
- The V.I.P's consent will be obtained in order to share information about them in the event of an emergency
- Staff will be trained to understand the Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards and how they might apply in AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C.
- The V.I.P's right to privacy, dignity, respect and choice will be maintained and this needs to be considered in the context of security within the V.I.P's home



8. Key Facts - People Affected by The Service

People affected by this service should be aware of the following:

- You will be asked for your consent prior to any information about you being shared with other agencies
- Unless you are detained under the Mental Health Act or subject to a DoLS order you will be free to come and go from your own home
- Your right to privacy will be respected



Further Reading

CQC - Police Involvement in an Incident – Notification Form:

<https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/notifications/police-involvement-incident-notification-form>



Outstanding Practice

To be "outstanding" in this policy area you could provide evidence that:

- The wide understanding of the policy is enabled by proactive use of the QCS App
- The V.I.P's Care Plan contains information about their life, including significant people, events and places
- Staff have received training on living with dementia and have employed person-centred strategies to support V.I.Ps who walk with purpose, to remain safe and engaged in activities that are meaningful to them. They use life histories to assist with this
- Robust risk assessments are in place, which are regularly reviewed when an incident or near miss, or change in circumstance or health arises
- AJ AND FRIENDS C.I.C. can evidence that there is a clear management escalation plan in place if an incident arises
- There is evidence that the information about the V.I.P's likes, dislikes and choices are considered and reviewed frequently



Forms

The following forms are included as part of this policy:

Title of form	When would the form be used?	Created by
Missing Person's Assessment Form - AR35	In the event a person presents as at risk of absconding or going missing.	QCS

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Missing Persons Assessment	Number:	
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		Grade	Low	Medium	High	Very High
Impact						
5	Catastrophic	5	10	15	20	25
4	Significant	4	8	12	16	20
3	Moderate	3	6	9	12	15
2	Minor	2	4	6	8	10
1	Limited	1	2	3	4	5
		Low	Medium Low	Medium	Medium High	High
		< 6%	6 - 20%	22 - 50%	51 – 80%	>80%
		1	2	3	4	5
		Likelihood				
Grade:						

Name:		Picture
Address:		
Date of Birth:		
Gender:		
Ethnicity:		
Telephone:		
Eye Colour:		
Build:		
Distinguishing Marks:		
Mobility:		
Communication Skills:		

My Contacts				
Relationship:	Next of Kin	GP	Social Worker	Psychiatrist
Name:				
Address:				
Postcode:				
Email:				
Phone Number:				

Other Relevant Information	
Medication:	
Significant Health:	
Behaviour Pattern:	

History of Going Missing/Absconding	
When?	
How long?	
Where found, etc.:	

In the Event of Going Missing/Absconding and the Police are Called			
Date Police Called:		Time:	
Date & Time Last Seen:		Police Ref:	
State of Mind:		Suggested Places To Go:	
What Were They Wearing?			
Suggested Contacts:			
Advice Given / Action Taken:			
Any Other Relevant Information:			

Linked Documents	Type	Location
MAR		

How Often and How will we Monitor and Review the Effectiveness of this Assessment.			
Every _____ months we will monitor and review this Assessment.			
Every _____ months we will hold a Full Formal Review (or sooner if needed).			
Completed By:		Date:	