

# ACCESS TO SERVICE USERS’ HOMES POLICY

## Policy Statement

Zenith Care Recruitment recognises that carers and support workers would ensure the safety of service users and their homes at all times when providing personal care. Zenith Care Recruitment believes in providing a working environment that is safe and easy to use for service users, their relatives and, for staff. We believe that access to Service users home is a critical part of our work as our clients are vulnerable adults therefore safety and adequate levels of security is important.

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## Aim

The aim of the policy is to ensure that service users are protected and are safe and secure in their homes.

## Policy

At Zenith Care Recruitment, our carers and support workers will ensure the safety of the home and the service user at all times when supporting them and providing personal care. Specific instructions regarding security of the property or the individual will be included in the care plan as appropriate.

1. During the initial assessment, when care is planned, the safety of the home will be discussed and an agreement reached about how the home care worker will effect entrance to the service user’s home. This would be entered in the service user plan.
2. Zenith Care Recruitment carers will:
	1. always carry their identification badge and show it to the service user on entry
	2. always encourage service users to adopt safe home practices wherever possible, including using door safety chains, even when they know that it is the home care worker at the door, and requesting identification.
3. As a short term (up to 6 weeks) solution to accessing a property where installing a key safe would be appropriate or not immediately possible e.g. to provide care for a service user in the final stages of a terminal illness, bed bound or a service user undergoing a period of re-ablement, or in response to a crisis. If our carers need to use a key to access a property service users that are bed bound, we will advise to have a key safe fitted. Wherever possible the key safe should be fitted and authorisation for access will be obtained from the service user before a package of care is implemented
4. Staff would never:
	1. agree to leave a key outside a house, in a safe place or on string by the letterbox
	2. attempt to effect forced entry to the home.
5. If it is decided that the home care worker would hold a copy of the service user’s key, the permission of the service user or their relatives would be made in writing and a suitable entry made to the service user plan. Key holding would never be embarked upon without the express permission of the home care worker’s line manager or supervisor or without an entry being made to the service user plan.
6. Staff who hold keys for service users would:
	1. Staff will hold a list of key codes and client identity numbers coded to maintain security. Key codes must not be disclosed to any other individual without authorisation from the Manager. To do so would be considered a disciplinary offence. Under no circumstances must keys be taken home or additional keys cut..
	2. label the key with a code, never with the name and address of the service user, in case the key gets lost
	3. be careful that they keep the key in a safe place at all times
	4. inform their line manager immediately in cases of the loss or theft of keys.
7. Where key safes are not fitted. Occasionally a service user may refuse to have a key safe fitted while it is very inadvisable for keys to be left hidden outside a property, we strongly discourage this practice However if service users continue to keep keys outside their property after the risks have been brought to their attention the appropriate section on the key authorisation form would be signed by the service user.

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## Protocol for Entering a Service User’s Home

Zenith Care Recruitment staff would:

1. knock or ring the doorbell or call out before entry, even if they hold a key and can let themselves in
2. always show their identification badge on entry
3. offer to check that windows and doors are secure before leaving a premises
4. always check that the door is secure as they leave.

## Identity Card Policy

At Zenith Care Recruitment identity cards are provided for all care and support staff entering the homes of service users. The cards would:

1. display a photograph of the member of staff
2. display the name of the person and employing organisation in large print
3. display the contact number of the organisation
4. display a date of issue and an expiry date, which would not exceed 36 months from the date of issue
5. be available in large print for people with visual disabilities
6. be laminated
7. be renewed and replaced within at least 36 months from the date of issue
8. be returned to the organisation when employment ceases.

## Procedures in the Event of Inability to Gain Access

The following procedure would be followed in cases where the home care worker attends premises but cannot get in or receive an answer from the service user.

1. Zenith Care Recruitment staff would check in their diary that they have the right day/time/address.
2. Zenith Care Recruitment staff would then knock several times and try to raise the service user by calling through the letterbox.
3. If there is still no answer the care worker would try phoning the service user or their relatives, or getting the agency office to do so.
4. If the problem is not resolved by phone the home care worker would report the situation to their line manager or supervisor, who will continue to attempt to contact the service user and/or their relatives.
5. If there is cause for concern as to the service user’s wellbeing, the care worker would report this to the agency office and their line manager and/or supervisor, and the police would be contacted, either by the office or by the home care worker themselves.
6. On no account would the home care worker attempt to effect forced entry to the home. In the case of an emergency they would always contact the police or an ambulance and wait for them.
7. If the person appears not to be answering or is out deliberately to avoid receiving the arranged service, this could indicate a need for a review of the service agreement and care plan.

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## Training

All staff at Zenith Care Recruitment would understand this policy and know how to follow Safety procedures. Safety training is included in the induction training for all new staff. In-house training sessions on Safety are conducted at least annually and all relevant staff is to attend.

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| Signed: | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_Kechi Ayanuwu\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Date: | \_\_\_\_\_\_05th December 2021\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Policy review date: | \_\_\_\_\_15th April 2022\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

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