**Date of Review: 15/07/2019 Reviewed by: Mr Ryan Palmer (Registered Care Manager)**

**Policy Statement**

It is common for some of the service users who Comfort Home Care provides care for to be frail, infirm or limited in their mobility. Some may also be confused or easily disoriented and therefore become easily lost.

For these reasons, a service user going "missing" from their home while under the care of a support worker from Comfort Home Care would be an obvious cause for concern as to the service user's safety and should be considered as a potential emergency situation.

Comfort Home Care adheres fully to Outcome7: Safeguarding People who use Services form Abuse of the Essential Standards of Quality and Safety and Regulation 11: of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2010; which relates to ensuring that staff and people who use services understand the aspects of the safeguarding processes that are relevant to them and Outcome 20: Notification of Other Incidents of the Essential Standards of Quality and Safety and Regulation 18: of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2010; which relates to any incident which is reported to, or investigated by, the police.

**Aim of the Policy**

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles and policies underpinning Comfort Home Cares approach to the discovery that a service user is missing.

**Preventing Missing Persons Incidents**

* Support staff from Comfort Home Care should always remain vigilant and be aware of exactly where service users are at any given time.
* Service users who are prone to wandering, or who may be at risk of getting lost by reason of their mental state, should have this identified during risk assessment and a suitable entry made in their plan of care. Such service users should be kept under observation as appropriate to the level of risk identified.

Situations where a missing person's report should be made include the following:

* where a service user has not returned from or has got lost during an arranged activity or walk.
* where a service user cannot be found in their house or grounds and no prior arrangements have been made to explain their absence.
* If it becomes clear that a service user may be missing, it is vital that all the members of staff in Comfort Home Care work as a team and follow a clearly defined procedure.

**Missing Persons Procedure**

As soon as it is suspect that a service user may be missing, support staff at the service user's home or place of care should:

* Initiate an immediate search of the building and its immediate surrounds.
* Contact relatives, friends, neighbours or other obvious places where the service user may have gone or has been known to go in the past.
* Check the GPS tracker and identify the location of the service user (where applicable).
* Ensure that service users who are prone to absconsion have an up to date picture on file at Comfort Home Care’s head office.

If the service user cannot be found during the initial search, then the member of support staff should immediately raise the alarm by informing their line manager at the office by phone or call the on-call supervisor (out of office hours).

They should pass on all relevant information, such as the full details of the service user (it is very important to correctly identify the service user) and full details of the incident, including when and where the service user was last seen, who by and what the service user was wearing.

The member of support staff should then remain at the service user's home or place of care in case the service user returns (within the allocated care time for that service user).

Upon receiving a missing person's report, the line manager should do the following.

* Make immediate efforts to contact the service user's relatives or carers, if not already done, to inform them of the situation, to gather information and to get advice.
* Contact the police and give full details about the service user, including when and where they were last seen, who by, what they were wearing and any special risk factors involved.
* Co-operate fully with any police search.
* Where the police are involved then Comfort Home Cares Registered Care Manager should be informed as soon as possible, as should members of the missing service user's family if they have not already been contacted. Families should be requested to telephone the office, on-call supervisor or police if the service user contacts them, and relatives should be kept informed at each stage of the search.

The line manager should, at the earliest opportunity, fill out an incident form and ensure that a full note of events has been made in the service user's notes by the member of support staff at the service user’s home. Times of actions and decisions should be noted as accurately as possible. On conclusion of the incident, support staff involved should be asked to check the incident form for accuracy and to sign it.

Once the service user 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, including the member of support staff at the service user's home and the police.

At all stages the line manager should be sensitive to the needs of members of support staff involved, who may well be upset by the emergency incident, and should provide or arrange any support required, including bringing in extra staff to help or sending someone to "sit" with the support staff involved, and checking staff are ok before they go home.

If at any stage the on-call supervisor is unsure of what to do then the Registered Care Manager should be contacted immediately for advice.

**Procedure to Follow After a Missing Persons Incident**

Upon conclusion of a missing persons incident Comfort Home Care should mount a full enquiry and investigate the incident thoroughly. The Registered Care Manager or a member of the senior Management team will follow the Care Quality Commission’s (CQC) guidance and forward a detailed notification.

Investigations should be led by the Registered Care Manager who will also be responsible for implementing any improvements that are indicated.

**Training**

The Registered Manager is responsible for organising and coordinating training. All staff should be trained in the Missing Persons procedure and to know their role in the event of a search.