

Security, Keys & Access to Property

1. Background

People who live independently and who need support from any of our team may then have to allow people they may not know into their homes. They need to be assured that this will not compromise their privacy or their safety and security.

Staff need to understand the importance of security when accessing peoples' homes and must be clear about their responsibilities regarding privacy, door security and the use of keys, entry codes and key safes, and what to do in the event that they are unable to gain access or in the event of an emergency.

2. Objectives

The aim of this policy is to ensure that:

- Staff recognise the importance of promoting and respecting privacy when entering people's homes to deliver planned services e.g. maintenance, housekeeping;
- The security of people's homes is never compromised by Abbeyfield The Dales Staff; and
- There are procedures in place regarding the use of keys, entry codes and key safes.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and agency workers employed by Abbeyfield The Dales.

4. Policy

The arrangements for safe and secure access to a person's property must be agreed and detailed in their information along with tenancy, contracts etc. and staff must always adhere to the agreed arrangements. The care plan should always include the following:

- How staff should access the person's home;
- What action to take in the event that they are unable to gain access, for whatever reason; and
- How to access the person's home in the event of an emergency.

4.1. Staff Identification

All Abbeyfield The Dales staff will be issued with appropriate uniform and will have an ID badge which they must wear with them to all planned visits.

4.2. Preferred Method of Gaining Access

Although not always possible, the preferred method of gaining access to a person's home will be for staff to knock on the door/ring the doorbell or use the door entry system and wait for the person to let them in.

4.3. Use of Key Safes

We have key safes to access the main building in some locations, the codes will be held by a limited number of staff and not recorded in a way that can identify the location. In the independent properties if you require a key safe this can be fitted by our maintenance team however this is chargeable.

4.4. Use of Keys

Abbeyfield The Dales hold keys for all of our properties and they are clearly marked so as to identify it to the right person and property. Keys will not have addresses on them or any information which would make it possible for an unauthorised person to identify the property and gain unlawful access. The keys are held in Head Office in a locked cabinet with restricted access.

Abbeyfield The Dales staff keep a register of keys held and a record of who has the keys at any one in time. Staff must take care of keys in their possession and should never leave them unattended.

If keys become lost, the person who owns the keys must be informed immediately, and with their consent, the loss should be reported to the police.

Under no circumstances must additional keys be cut.

4.5. Access Codes

Staff may be issued with an access code, either to a key safe or to a door lock which functions in the same way as a key. Access codes must not be written down in a way that an unauthorised person could identify the property and gain unlawful access.

4.6. Use of Master Keys

Where the person's property is within an Abbeyfield The Dales Residential or Independent Living scheme staff have access to their property with use of a master key. It is critical that there are robust arrangements in place to ensure the security of master keys as the loss of a master key can have significant consequences.

4.7. Written Consent

The person will be asked to give their written permission for staff to access their property and where applicable, to hold keys or to have access to door/key safe codes. **See Appendix 1.**

5. Finance, Value for Money & Social Value

Whilst this policy does not have financial implications, there are significant risks to people's homes if Abbeyfield's security arrangements are not sufficiently robust.

We are committed to providing care in the community which offers value for money

6. Supported Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Security, Keys and Property Access Consent Form

7. Linked Policies

N/A

8. Legislation/Regulation

Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014

Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) (Amendment) Regulations 2015

9. Review

Every 3 years, subject to any regulatory or legislative updates.

10. Procedure/Guidance

10.1. Conduct of staff when they arrive & when they leave

Staff should always follow the agreed instructions regarding access as detailed in the person's file. Regardless of the mode of entry, when arriving for a planned visit staff should always:

- Knock and wait for a reply;
- Announce themselves before entering;
- Introduce themselves, especially if they are not known to the person, and show proof of ID;
- Close all external doors behind them; and
- Be careful not to startle people who have hearing or sight difficulties in case they have not heard or seen the staff arrive.

Before leaving staff should always:

- Explain that they are leaving and check that the person is comfortable;
- Confirm the date and time of the next planned visit if required;
- Let the person know if there is to be a change of staff member; and
- Close all doors behind them.

10.2. What to do if staff are unable to gain access or if there's no answer

The notes in residents file/care plan should include details of what to do in the event that staff cannot gain access to a person's property by the agreed method and staff should follow these instructions. Should an occasion arise where staff are still unable to gain access, or a person who usually answers the door doesn't do so, the staff should assess the situation by:

- Checking all doors/windows and calling through the letter box;
- Checking with neighbours whilst being mindful of confidentiality;
- Contacting with relevant Line Manager for advice; and/or
- Call the person and/or any named contact in case there is a routine explanation e.g. the person has gone out or is in hospital.

If it is not possible to establish the person's whereabouts and staff are concerned that the person may be in their home but is unable to answer, or if the person can be seen or heard and appears to be in any kind of difficulty, staff should call the emergency services immediately by dialling 999. At least one member of staff should wait for help to arrive. Staff should contact the relevant Service Lead at the first opportunity to let them know what has happened. They must immediately notify any named relatives or authorised representatives.

10.3. Access in an Emergency

The residents file/care plan should include details of how to gain access to a person's property in the event of an emergency and staff should follow the arrangements detailed in the care plan. As above, in an emergency, staff should call emergency services by dialling 999 if they are concerned about the person's safety or welfare.

APPENDIX 1: SECURITY, KEYS AND ACCESS TO PROPERTY CONSENT FORM

Abbeyfield The Dales Ltd

Security, Keys & Access to Property



Consent Form

Resident name:

Site / Location

Apt/Suite No:

For each of the following, please tick Yes, No or N/A for those which do not apply.

For the purpose of providing the care and support as agreed in my care plan:

I give my permission for Abbeyfield staff to enter my property for planned visits or in an emergency. ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

I give my permission for Abbeyfield staff to enter my property in my absence, in the event of a property emergency. ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

I give permission for Abbeyfield staff to have and use the key code for the entrance door(s). ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

I agree to have a key safe fitted at the above address and for Abbeyfield staff to have the access code. ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

I give permission for Abbeyfield staff to have a key to my property which they can use to gain access. ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Signed:

Date: