



	West Limerick Independent Living CLG Policies				
Title:	SECURITY OF THE HOME POLICY				
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Category: Operational Policies

Subject: SECURITY OF THE HOME POLICY (Guidance for Staff)

Responsible for Review of this Policy: West Limerick Independent Living CLG Board

SCOPE

This guidance and set out West Limerick Independent Living's approach to the security of service users' homes. The intended outcome of this set of documents is that service users are protected and are safe and secure in their own homes whilst receiving a service from West Limerick Independent Living.

ACCESS TO THE HOME

Care/support planners (Service Coordinators) will discuss access arrangements and security of the home with service users during the initial assessment visit. This includes making sure you are safe whilst working; for example, if you have to enter or leave a house in the dark there needs to be adequate lighting.

Decisions about how you gain entrance to the home will be documented in the risk assessment and care plan. If you feel unsafe about any aspect of your work, please discuss this with your line manager as soon as possible.

Methods of entering a service user's home that leave it vulnerable to crime will not be used.

These include:

- leaving keys with neighbours
- leaving doors unlocked
- leaving keys outside the home, for example under a mat
- attaching keys to a string behind the letterbox.

Safe alternatives include:

- door entry code systems
- key safe boxes.

Entry codes and key safe combinations need to be kept secure and confidential at all times and will only be issued to staff on a need to know basis. Never write down combination numbers next to the address to which they apply.

SAFE KEEPING OF KEYS

It is West Limerick Independent Living's policy not to hold service users' keys. If access problems preclude the provision of care/support, the care planner will firstly discuss alternative arrangements (for example, the provision of a key safe box) and may, in exceptional circumstances, assess whether there is a need to hold keys.



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If service user keys are to be held, this will be documented in the risk assessment and care plan as well as on the appropriate key holding authority form.

Where keys are held in the West Limerick Independent Living office, they will be kept securely in a locked cabinet. You will be required to:

- collect and return the key at the start and end of each period of care/support
- sign for the key in the key logbook on collection and return.

Where keeping a key in the West Limerick Independent Living office prevents care from being provided (for example where it is impractical to collect and return keys due to timings or distance), you may be authorised to hold a key. You are not obliged to hold keys in this way, but if you choose not to, you may be excluded from working in a care/support package where this is required. You will not be penalised in any other way.

- If you are required to hold service user keys the care planner will carry out an additional risk assessment, including an assessment of the risk taken by you as a care worker.
- Keys held will only be labelled with a code, never with traceable identification such as name and address, to ensure safety and confidentiality if they are lost or stolen.
- If a service user asks you to hold a key, and you are not authorised to do so in the care plan, you are not permitted to accept the key, but are required to report the matter to your Service Coordinator so that the necessary arrangements can be made.
- In an emergency, speak to your Service Coordinator or the person on call.
- If you use keys belonging to a service user, you need to ensure that you keep them safe at all times.
- Inform your Service Coordinator or the person on call immediately if keys are lost or stolen.
- You are not permitted to get involved in the duplication / cutting of keys on behalf of service users.

ENTERING AND LEAVING A SERVICE USER'S HOME

West Limerick Independent Living respects the rights and privacy of primary carers, their families and those with care/support needs. We are aware that our workplace is often the service user's private home and we expect all staff to act as guests during their visit to it. You are also required to make sure that service users are protected, safe and secure in their home during the period you are providing care/support.

When entering the home you will:

- always use the method of entry agreed in the care plan
- knock, ring the doorbell or call out before entry, even if you are letting yourself in
- knock or call out before entering a private room
- show an identification badge on entry.

When leaving the home you will:

- offer to check that windows and doors are secure
- check that the door you leave through is closed securely
- replace keys in the key safe box if used.



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You will never leave the person with care needs unattended unless it has been assessed and documented in the risk assessment and care plan that it is safe to do so. In an emergency you are required to contact your Service Coordinator or the person on call for advice.

IDENTITY (ID) BADGES

Always introduce yourself and produce an ID badge when presenting yourself at a service user's home. It is a regulatory requirement for you to carry an ID badge with you at all times when working. This may be spot checked by both external and internal inspectors.

If you lose your ID badge or it is stolen you are required to inform your Service Coordinator or the person on call immediately. Your ID badge will be renewed within 36 months of issue. If your badge becomes out of date, please inform your Service Coordinator.

If you leave employment with West Limerick Independent Living you are required to return your ID badge. If you are going to work with people with visual impairments, badges with large print are available. You are also required to introduce yourself verbally in such circumstances.

If a service user has special communication requirements, the care planner will agree and document at the initial assessment clear ways of how the person will be able to identify visiting West Limerick Independent Living staff.

UNAUTHORISED VISITORS

You are not permitted to take any unauthorised person/s (including children) or pets into a service user's home.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

If you cannot gain access to a service user's home on a scheduled visit:

- Do not attempt to force your way into the home.
- In the case of an obvious emergency, contact the appropriate emergency services, wait for them to arrive and inform your Service Coordinator or the person on call of the situation.
- If there is no obvious emergency, check your diary to make sure you have the right day / time /service user's address.
- Try to raise the service user, for example by knocking several times on the door and windows as appropriate to establish whether they have not heard you or are in difficulty.
- Contact your Service Coordinator or the person on call to check the day and time of the visit and to ensure the person with care needs is not in respite or on holiday. The Service Coordinator or person on call will try to contact the primary carer or person with care needs by phone or may contact the next-of- kin or relevant professionals.



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From this point onwards keep in contact with your Service Coordinator or the person on call and be guided by them. Depending on the particular circumstances of the service user/s involved, your Service Coordinator will direct what action you need to take. This may include for example consulting a neighbour to confirm if the service user has gone away.

If you are still unable to gain access, your Service Coordinator or the person on call will assess the situation in accordance with the person with care needs' disability and history in order to establish whether there is cause for concern regarding their well-being.

- If the person with care needs never leaves the house, your Service Coordinator or the person on call will call the emergency services.
- If the situation is not assessed as an emergency (for example where the person with care needs is low dependency) it may be possible that they have forgotten the scheduled visit. In this case, if no immediate crisis is discovered, your Service Coordinator or the person on call may recommend that you leave a note confirming your visit and asking the primary carer or person with care needs to contact the West Limerick Independent Living office on their return.
- Your Service Coordinator or the person on call will then take the necessary follow-up action, for example arranging for another staff member to return later.

You will need to make a record of your actions and this will be kept on the service user's file in the West Limerick Independent Living office. Your Service Coordinator or the person on call will also keep a record of events and inform the purchaser of care in writing as necessary.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

You are required to sign to indicate that you have received, read and understood the content of the security of the home policy as directed by your Service Coordinator.

On completion of induction, it is your personal responsibility to follow the security of the home guidance. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary proceedings.



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Key Holding Guidelines

If the key is to be kept securely at the West Limerick Independent Living's office to be picked up and returned by Personal Assistant workers at the start and end of each period of care/support, then:

- section A of the accompanying form will be completed and signed
- where possible the consent of both the primary carer and the person with care needs will be obtained.

If holding a key in the West Limerick Independent Living office prevents care from being provided (for example where it is impractical to collect and return the key due to timings or distance), the primary carer e.g. family member or person with care needs may choose to give their permission for individual care workers to hold keys. In this case:

- sections A and B of the accompanying form will be completed and signed
- wherever possible the consent of both the primary carer and the person with care needs will be obtained.

A clear record of which staff members hold keys and staff are required to sign section C of the accompanying form to confirm this.

Where keys are held in the West Limerick Independent Living office or by individual staff members, service coordinators will ensure that there is a re-assessment of the risk involved (including risk to staff) which is carried out annually or with each change in needs, whichever is sooner.

Any disagreements between the Personal Assistant and the service user need to be handled sensitively and any issues resolved before an agreement to hold keys is made.

A copy of all written consent using the forms below will be kept by the primary carer or service user in their home as well as on the corresponding office file.



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AUTHORITY FOR KEY HOLDING

SECTION A

I hereby give my permission for West Limerick Independent Living staff to hold a key to be used in the provision of care/support. Unless section B below is signed, these keys will be collected and returned for safekeeping in the West Limerick Independent Living office at the start and end of each period of care.

Name of person with care needs: (please print)	
Signature:	
Date:	

Name of Personal Assistant: (please print)	
Signature:	
Date:	

Name of person with authority to give key holding permission: (please print)	
Signature:	
Date:	

If permission is being given by someone other than the service user or primary carer then detail below the authority under which permission is given:

.....

If any of the signatures above are not relevant or unable to be sought, please explain why (to be completed by appropriate member of West Limerick Independent Living staff):

.....



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SECTION B

I understand that it is usual for keys kept by West Limerick Independent Living to be picked up from and returned to the West Limerick Independent Living office at the start and end of each period of care/support. I do not find this acceptable and choose to give my permission for individual personal assistant care workers to keep my personal keys in order to provide care/support.

Name of person with care needs: (please print)	
Signature:	
Date:	

Name of Personal Assistant: (please print)	
Signature:	
Date:	

Name of person with authority to give key holding permission: (please print)	
Signature:	
Date:	

If permission is being given by someone other than the primary carer or person with care/support needs then detail below the authority under which permission is given:

.....

If any of the signatures above are not relevant or unable to be sought, please explain why (to be completed by appropriate member of West Limerick Independent Living staff):

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SECTION C

Name of primary carer:	
Name of person with care/support needs:	
Name of personal assistant care worker holding keys:	

I confirm that I have received property keys for the above named and that I will hold them in accordance with the security of the home policy for staff (WLILP18).

Signature of care worker:	
Date:	