# Missing or Lost Customer

Procedures and Guidance

The following procedures have been produced to provide guidance to staff in the event of a Customer going missing or getting lost, this is not exhaustive and their may be circumstances where additional action would be appropriate.

Staff should act promptly, diligently and taking the vulnerabilities of the individual into account.

*Deciding if a Customer is lost or missing*

In some instances it will be clear if a Customer is lost or missing, in others less so. In order to decide this, the following factors will need to be considered:

* Time Customer last seen
* Did they indicate their plans for the day (where, when, how, who with, expected return time)?
* Their actions differ from their plans (i.e. they still have not arrived home 4 hours after the time they planned to be)

*If you suspect the Customer missing:*

*(A)*

*From their home address*

* Check the property thoroughly, all communal areas and ask other Customers (if applicable) if they know the whereabouts of the absent party.
* Check the grounds of the property.
* Conduct a search of the immediate vicinity.
* Try calling their mobile phone if they have one.
* Call other staff members for support ( maybe they have seen the Customer or received a call from them)
* Check any placements (activities, work, college)
* Check any known friends and family
* Check known places frequented by the person i.e. town centre, park

*In the community*

If you are supporting a Customer in the community and they go missing:

* Retrace your movements to the place where you were last aware that they were in your company.
* Conduct a search of this area and the area between here and the point that you became aware of their absence.
* Call their mobile phone if they have one

If in the local community also:

* Call their home as they may have returned home under their own steam
* Call the office as they may have called there for support before you have had a chance to call and inform other members of staff of the situation.

If you are still unable to ascertain the whereabouts of the Customer follow section *(B)*.

(B)

If you have arrived at this point then the Customer is officially deemed to be ‘missing’.

Initiate the following procedure: -

* Inform the service manager or team leader in their absence.
* Inform the police on the local number that you wish to report a vulnerable adult as missing. You will need to give the police the following information:
	+ - * A clear description of the person including any distinguishing physical characteristics or behaviours
			* Provide a copy of the Customers missing person form
			* Give details of clothing worn at the time (if known)
			* As many details as possible on the circumstances of the disappearance
			* An explanation of Customers physical / mental health / medical issues – give examples of level of confusion or likely responses if found
			* Any prescribed medication being taken
* Inform the Customers Care Manager or the ‘Out of Hours’ team.
* Ensure that the telephone is attended.
* Keep a record of the all that you have done to locate the missing person – This will assist you later.

*When the Customer is found:*

* Inform all parties previously advised.
* Decide how and who is the most appropriate to assist the Customer in returning to their home.
* Ensure medical checks are carried out as necessary.
* Complete an incident report and forward it to the necessary parties.

Your manager will take any further action, which they feel is necessary to investigate the incident and to prevent a reoccurrence if possible.

Risk Assessment

Individual Customers will have a risk assessment in place, in completing a risk assessment the following vulnerabilities and risk factors should be considered:

* Sensory ability (vision, hearing etc.)
* Vulnerability to exploitation by others e.g. theft of money, physical abuse etc.
* Proximity to major hazards e.g. water, main road
* Health risk factors e.g. extent of any disability, medication e.g. epilepsy, diabetes, psychosis and any time scales between administrations of medication.
* Risk of deterioration of physical / mental health
* Risk of suicide
* Ability to communicate effectively with others i.e. their name, where they are going etc.
* Ability to make own transport arrangements
* Previous incidents of going missing