MISSING PARTICIPANT

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| Policy number | OP007 |
| Effective from | March 2024 |

AIM

To promote a ‘best practice approach’ to Participant assessment and support to minimise the potential risks, associated with absconding and or unsafe wandering behaviour. The risk of any participant going missing is considered on an individual basis through intake and is a component of the Participants individual support planning process.

sCOPE

This applies to all FLINTWOOD employees, Participants, families, carers and Persons Responsible and across all flintwood service settings.

1. DEFINITION

* CCTV: Closed Circuit Television
* CIRT: Critical Incident Response Team
* MiSSING PARTICIPANT: A participant is considered missing when they are absent from the place where they are expected to be, have not been sighted or accounted for and their present whereabouts is unknown.

4 .POLICY

The CIRT will provide guidance on what is required when a Participant has been reported as missing. The capabilities and historical referencing of the Participant regarding his or her own independent movements is a crucial component in determining how and where to seek out the missing Participant.

5.PROCEDURE

5.1

As a component of intake and or risk review, the issue of absconding and or going

missing must be considered. This is to support developing guidelines for early

detection and risk minimisation.

5.2

Alert the Service Manager and / or General Manager immediately. Have all relevant

information ready including exact location where the Participant was last seen, what they were wearing, any distinguishing features, places they show interest in, known travel routes and previous incidences. Does the Participant have the capacity to travel from place to place unaided? Follow the directions given by the Critical Incident Response Team. Issue and most recent photo of Participant to aid the search team.

5.3

Ensure the Participants environments and community-based activities are risk

assessed to minimise the risk of Participants going missing,

5.4

Each Participants right to independence and freedom of movement both within and

outside of FLINTWOOD services and the within the wider community is respected.

5.5

At the discretion of the General Manager the Police may need to be called for assistance and the reporting of the missing Participant. Ensure all information listed above is readily available, including a most recent photograph. Follow all directions given by the Police where they to be involved.

5.6

Initially search in all immediate surroundings and particular places of interest that the Participant may be attracted to.

5.7

Ask for assistance within location (e.g. Centre Management, pool employee). Ask for searches of CCTV footage if these are readily available within internal sites and venues. Use the public as sources of reference and or witnessing.

5.8

Consider the Participants travel skills and their abilities to return alone, contact (where applicable) Group Homes, families etc, and call to see if they have returned. Determine if the Participant is missing or does not want to be found

5.9

Employees are to remain in constant contact with a Service Manager or General Manager and ensure there is a direct (free) telephone line always maintained between the parties.

5.10

If any Participant is subject to a restriction based on the level of risk of going missing and the restriction is unacceptable, the reason must be documented, including any assessment used to determine the use of restrictive options. Documentation of the restriction must include evidence of all strategies considered and or tried to attempt to reduce or manage the associated risks.

5.11 Where any Participant goes missing, Flintwood have a Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) that will take charge of the situation. The CIRT team have dedicated responsibilities that include liaisons with police, families, and the media (including social media)

5.12 It is critical that employees **DO NOT** speak to the media or others regarding the missing Participant, nor will employees make comment upon any social media platforms regarding same. The CIRT team will update sites, employees and those who have the need to know, they may also call upon others to join the search, however, all communications both through face to face and social media platforms must be left to the overseeing Critical Incident Response Team.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees.

* Ensure other Participants in the group are kept safe.
* Call the Service Manager or General Manager immediately any Participant has gone missing
* Follow directions given by Service Manager or General Manager
* If requested (by the CIRT team) assist with the search and keep the lines (mobile telephone) of communication open.
* Employees must always act in accordance with FLINTWOOD’s Policy and guidelines on the prevention of or use of restrictive practices. Unnecessary restrictions are not placed on a person’s right to freedom of movement.
* Employees will not speak to the media nor make any references to a missing Participant through any Social Media platform as in accordance with FLINTWOOD’s Policy

Service Manager

* Develop and maintain a risk management plan, where there is a history of any Participant being missing or is known to partake in unsafe wandering. This will include any areas where the Participant frequents or has interest / knowledge of. Consider any environmental triggers, indicators that have the potential to be a trigger for wandering behaviour.
* Contact CEO and General Manager (CIRT team coordinators)

Assist with the search in accordance with the CIRT team directions.

General Manager

* Inform CEO
* Co-ordinate search
* Assist with the search
* Provide regular briefings to the CEO until the Participant has been located.

CEO

* Liaise with and provide briefings to the board if required
* Communicate with external parties e.g., media.
* Assist with or Co-ordinate the Search

1. CHANGE HISTORY

| Version | Release / Review date | Author / Reviewer | Change details |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |
| 0.1 |  | Jashika Pillay | New format added definitions and updated procedures |
| 0.2 | September 2021 | Gerry Connolly | Update and formatting |
| 0.3 | September 2021 | Policy Committee | Read and Approved |
| 0.4 | March 2024 | Gerry Connolly | Added media communications and formatting requirements |