



Missing Person Policy	
Latest Review: June 2024	Next Review: June 2025
<p>Compliance: Care Act 2014 Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 Mental Capacity Act 2005 Norfolk Safeguarding Adults Board’s Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedure</p>	
<p>Associated Policies: Disaster Policy (Contingency Plan for Coping with Crises) Health and Safety Policy Incident Reporting Policy and Procedure Safeguarding Adults Policy</p>	
<p><i>A missing person is anyone whose whereabouts can’t be established and:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>o The context suggests the person may be a victim of crime; or</i> <i>o The person is at risk of harm to themselves or another; or</i> <i>o Where there is particular concern because the circumstances are out of character, or there are ongoing concerns for their safety because of a previous pattern of going missing.</i> <p><i>In most situations adults have the right to go missing and they have not done anything wrong by doing so.</i></p> <p><i>However many of the members of Assist have particular vulnerabilities, often associated with illness or mental ill health which might affect their capacity to keep themselves safe</i></p> <p>Assist Trust fully recognises the duty of care it holds towards its members, and ensures that staff members are aware of their responsibilities when working with individuals and groups, particularly with regard to the health and safety of members.</p> <p>There are a number of measures in place which are intended to address the risks associated with supporting members in a group or on a one-to-one basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New staff members are given a full induction when they start, covering the relevant policies and procedures. New members of staff are not asked to 	

run groups by themselves, especially those accessing the community, for the first 3 months they are employed by Assist.

- At the start of and during each session, staff members must check that each member in their group is present. Any unexpected or unexplained absences at the start of sessions must be followed up by a telephone call to the member/their parents/carers within an hour of their expected arrival time. The Missing Persons procedure set out below is instigated in the event that the person's whereabouts cannot be established.
- The following information is held on each members' file in case of emergency and to ensure that all staff members are aware of relevant risks and concerns:
 - Photo
 - Height/build/distinguishing features
 - Details of any known risks
 - Details about whether the member travels independently (and where), and if there are any known issues for that individual when accessing the community

Assist Trust takes a balanced approach to supporting our members, recognising their rights and freedoms as adults, alongside the support they may need in maintaining their safety (also see Positive Risk-Taking and Risk Management Policy). Staff members are encouraged to support members to develop their independence and confidence in dealing with difficult situations through the following measures:

- Staff members should talk through **group risk assessment** with all members at the start of every timetable. This includes discussing what to do if a member becomes separated from the rest of their group.
- Members are given a **members card**, with the relevant contact numbers for Assist Trust, which members are encouraged to use in the event of an emergency. Staff should ensure that they have the mobile telephone numbers for members who carry these and *should discuss their use during risk assessment discussions and before each trip out.*
- Members receiving one-to-one support to learn how to travel independently are not 'signed off' to do so until staff members are confident the member knows what to do in the event of an emergency - see Travel and Training Policy.

Staff should also ensure that they are following these practical steps when running groups, particularly those accessing the community;

- Staff members running a group together should discuss how the activity will be managed, ensuring that they have read the group Risk Assessment, and are aware of any risk issues for the members involved. They should ensure they have a list of who is in the group, make a brief note of what each member is wearing that day, and whether the member will be absent from the group for any reason (such as going to a work placement).
- Staff members should try to walk at the front and back of the group, especially in busy areas. Staff members need to be especially vigilant and count group members when getting on and off public transport, and sit somewhere so that all members can be monitored. *If a staff member is supporting a small group on their own, they should stay at the back of the group so that all members can be supervised.*
- Staff should ensure that they carry a mobile phone in case of emergency, and ensure that they are aware of the Missing Persons procedures set out below.

As soon as it becomes clear that an individual has gone missing or cannot be accounted for while attending Assist, members of staff must alert the main office immediately.

Office staff will inform the manager in charge of the organisation at the time, so that an immediate assessment of the situation can be made.

The manager in charge will exercise their discretion in these circumstances, using the "Incident Details Form" (electronic version in manager's files in shared staff account, under "Emergency / Missing Person") to log all relevant factors, in order to decide on the appropriate course of action and to then proceed without delay. This manager will then become the Incident Co-ordinator and will remain at the Assist Trust head office in order to communicate effectively with all parties concerned:

- **If the individual is considered to be vulnerable without supervision:**
 - An immediate search party will be organised, consisting of all Assist staff members that can be *safely* freed up at the time.
 - The Incident Co-ordinator must continue to log all search details and establish as much information as possible concerning the individual's appearance, what they are wearing and carrying that day and where they are likely to go in the circumstances (referring to the individual's file and asking all staff who know the individual well as appropriate).
 - After 30 minutes: If the initial search has not been successful, parents or carers should be contacted, in order to help direct the search to places the individual is likely to visit and to provide more details regarding the individual's appearance and clothing on that day, etc.

- After a further 30 minutes (ie. 1 hour after the initial alert) the police should be contacted (non-emergency no: 101), alerted to the situation and all relevant information passed on.
- **Note: These timescales can be shortened if the individual is considered to be particularly vulnerable in the situation at the time (eg. If they are not able to cross roads safely, if their behaviour is likely to put them in danger or if they are in an unfamiliar or dangerous location, etc.)**
- **If the individual is considered to be relatively able and has some independence without supervision:**
 - The above procedure should be followed, but the police should be informed of the assessment of the individual as having some level of independence.

Guidance for the Incident Co-ordinator:

- Record information relevant to the situation in the appropriate spaces in the Incident Details Form as it is retrieved.
- As the search continues, enter details of areas covered, new information received, etc. in chronological order, alongside the time it occurs.
- *Include information regarding what led up to the person going missing*
- Make sure you have all relevant phone numbers to hand.
- Co-ordinate the search, direct people to appropriate areas and maintain an awareness of places checked.
- *Make sure that staff cover remaining at all Assist Trust sites is adequate and maintains safe rotas at all times.*
- Make sure the language you use to all parties is clear, factual and straightforward. Do not try to make light of the situation or worry people unnecessarily.
- Contact the parents or carers of the individual every half hour to apprise them of the situation at the time. Make it clear that you will continue do this so that their hopes are not raised unnecessarily each time.
- A copy of the incident form – once resolved – should be put in the relevant member(s) file.

Contacting the Trustees and dealing with the press

- It may be necessary to contact the Chair or vice Chair of the board of Trustees, to allow them to prepare for possible communication with parents/carers and other external organisations. The timing of this will be based on the factors considered above.

- The Trustee concerned should be fully apprised of the situation so that they are aware of every aspect of the situation. If it becomes necessary, a clear and concise statement can be drawn up in readiness for any enquiries from the press.
- Suitable responses to the parents or carers of the individual need to be carefully considered at this point so that questions are answered factually and sensitively.

Signed and Authorised by:

Name:

Role:

Date:

Name:

Role:

Date: