



Saint John of God
Community Services clg.

Kerry Services Policy

Missing Service User Policy and
Procedure

Completed April 2024

THIS DOCUMENT OUTLINES ST JOHN OF GOD COMMUNITY SERVICES CLG.
Kerry Services

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Policy and Procedure

Situations where immediate contact should be made with the Gardaí prior to following the search stages below are as follows;

- Where the service user is away on holiday, or
- Where the service user has gone missing from a highly populated area
- Where contact through the Service's Supervisory chain is unsuccessful.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to provide clear direction in the event of a service user going missing including when a service user gets lost or absconds. Service user, for the purposes of this policy and procedure, refers to a child, teenager or adult. As with all reporting processes of the organisation where a Supervisor cannot be contacted staff members contact their Supervisor's Supervisor or designated nominee for the relevant area (weekly governance structure also in place).

2. Scope of Policy and Procedure

This policy and procedure is applicable to all staff, students and volunteers working in Kerry Services. This policy and procedure is applicable to all staff working in the area of Residential /Respite/Day Services including support staff.

3. Roles and Responsibility

- 3.1 The Regional Director of Kerry Services acknowledges his/her responsibility in ensuring adequate planning for a missing service user.
- 3.2 Person in Charge of the Designated Centre/Day Service takes a lead role in co-ordinating the Policy and Procedure.
- 3.3 During out of hours e.g. evening or weekends the Supervisor on Call takes the lead role.
- 3.4 Person in Charge for Community Houses/Apartments takes a lead role in co-ordinating this policy and procedure for these locations or Supervisor on Call over weekend or out of hours.
- 3.5 All staff working in Saint John of God Kerry Services are responsible for adhering to this policy and procedure.



As noted above; situations where immediate contact should be made with the Gardaí prior to following the search stages below are as follows;

- Where the service user is away on holiday, or
- Where the service user has gone missing from a highly populated area
- Where contact through the Service's Supervisory chain is unsuccessful.

It is important to note also that in cases where there is an emergency e.g. fire, and a service user is missing, then gardaí/emergency services would be contacted immediately, as opposed to going through the regular procedure.

In all other situations the following steps are to be taken:

4. Primary Search Stage

- 4.1 As soon as it is realised that a service user is missing the relevant Supervisor/Supervisor On-Call is to be informed.
- 4.2 In cases where the service user has a mobile phone staff will try to make contact with the individual on their phone.
- 4.3 Ensuring the other service users are safe, the staff present will conduct a search to last no more than 10 minutes (5 minutes in the case of a child) of the service premises/vicinity where the service user was last seen.
- 4.4 The result of this search will be communicated to the relevant Supervisor/Supervisor On-Call.
- 4.5 If the person is still unaccounted for after 10 minutes proceed to Secondary Search Stage.

5. Secondary Search Stage

- 5.1 The relevant Supervisor/Supervisor On-Call will contact the Co-ordinator/Programme Manager for Saint John of God Kerry Services advising that a service user is unaccounted for. In the case of a child, go straight to 6.1.
- 5.2 Under the joint supervision of the relevant Supervisor and Co-ordinator/Programme Manager the search will be widened.
- 5.3 Where applicable, continue to try making contact with the service user via their mobile phone.
- 5.4 Staff will focus on checking service premises and surrounding area/area where the person was last seen, with assistance from other available staff.
- 5.5 The Emergency Contact Sheet will be used by all staff involved in the search who will use the document containing the missing person's photo throughout to describe and identify the person to members of the public.
- 5.6 If and when the Gardaí become involved the Emergency Contact Sheet will be furnished for their assistance.
- 5.7 If the service user uses public transport the Services most senior staff member involved at this stage of the search will make contact with Taxi Company or Bus Éireann seeking assistance.
- 5.8 If the service user remains unaccounted for the Co-ordinator/Programme Manager will now assume the role of Search Coordinator.



5.9 If the person is not located the Search Co-ordinator will make the decision of when it is appropriate to inform the Director and proceed to Tertiary Stage.



6. Tertiary Search Stage

- 6.1 The Search Co-ordinator will advise the service user's family in a calm manner, that the service user is unaccounted for and that a search is underway, noting that they will provide an update of events to the family, where practicable, every 15 minutes.
- 6.2 Where applicable, the frontline staff will continue to try making contact with the service user via their mobile phone.
- 6.3 If not already contacted, the Search Co-ordinator will now contact the Gardaí and provide them with the service user's information, what their description is, what they were wearing, and current photograph to be provided.
- 6.4 All preferred places and regular routes are to continue to be visited by staff in a planned and co-ordinated manner.
- 6.5 If the person is still unaccounted for the Search Co-ordinator will request Gardaí to assume responsibility for progression.

7. Garda Search

- 7.1 The Regional Director and Search Co-ordinator will liaise with the Gardaí and agree how best to proceed with the search.
- 7.2 Any contact with the media is to be with the express authorisation of the Director or designate.

8. Service User Located

- 8.1 Upon location of the service user the staff member/Supervisor/Search Co-ordinator/parent/ guardian will ascertain if hospital attendance or GP visit is required.
- 8.2 Feedback and acknowledgement is to be expressed to all who assisted in the search, as determined by the most senior staff member involved.

9. Post Incident Process

- 9.1 **NIRF** form is to be completed by the frontline staff member directly involved, which in turn, is to be signed by the staff member and countersigned by the relevant PIC/Coordinator/Manager. The completed **NIRF** Form will be forwarded by the PIC to appropriate staff member for input to NIMS.
- 9.2 Where applicable the PIC will complete the relevant notification to HIQA (3 day notification NF05)
- 9.3 The most senior staff member involved will convene a meeting, within 24 hours of incident, to discuss the event and explore potential learning, minutes of which will be attached retained on the service user's file. This meeting may include a representative from Human Resources.
- 9.4 The services of the **Employee Assistance Service** will be offered to all staff involved.
This is a free and confidential service 24/7, 365 days. Poster on display with contact details throughout the service.



