

HOME VISITING GUIDE

To ensure that work in client's homes does not pose a risk to health and safety to you it's important to identify risks as soon as possible.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Hazard identification

A number of factors may influence your safety whilst on a home visit and may be assessed as follows:

- Emotional factors
 - Client history and other services history of that client
 - Client current behaviour
 - Likelihood of changes in client behaviour, health status, domestic, social and support networks
- Physical factors
 - Substance abuse, access to weapons by client or by others on the premises
 - Hazardous substances used in the home
 - Manual handling activities involved
 - Equipment and work environment
 - Heat/cold/confined spaces/noise/light/electricity/moving or falling objects
 - Threat of violence by client or others, including neighbours, relatives and pets.

Safe Work Practice – General Principles

- When visiting for the first time, complete an assessment of the client and their home where relevant
- Review the client's history - including a past history of violence and any existence of an Apprehended Violence Order
- In situations where safety is a known issue, the first client visit should take place at a neutral venue. This venue should not be an isolated place.
- Upon arriving at the home check for unsafe situations such as uncontrolled pets, unexpected visitors, heated arguments and do not enter premises if you feel unsafe
- If door is answered by an unfamiliar person check that the client is present and expecting your call before entering.

- Maintain a level of professionalism and do not become over-involved with an issue
- Workers should not give surnames, home phone numbers or home addresses to clients until trust is established
- Carry identification such as a business card or ID card which has Better Caring office contact details until trust is established
- Where worker safety could be an issue, workers should park their car to allow for a quick exit and facing the direction of travel. It may be necessary to park some distance away
- If safety is an issue, workers can choose not to go to client's home
- A mobile phone should be charged and kept on during a client visit. The phone should have a programmed emergency number.
- Avoid carrying valuables into the home whenever possible – consider use of a lanyard with car keys and mobile phone attached or carry in a pocket.
- Workers should immediately call Police on 000 if their safety is at risk and they cannot leave
- Workers should always leave an address with somewhere stating where they will be visiting a client
- Workers should always estimate the length of the visit and arrange to ring a friend on completion or to advise that extra time is required
- Where workers are visiting a number of clients a schedule of visits should be provided so that they can be contacted and the worker should ring the friend at the end of the shift or if problems arise.
- If the worker feels unsafe, the worker must leave the situation. The worker always has the right to refuse to see a client.
- Any incident must be recorded in your client's case notes on your Better Caring dashboard even if considered minor and the visit has been completed as it may warn of future more serious problems
- Unless absolutely necessary, do not use a client's phone; if ringing from the client's phone, punch in other numbers after the call to ensure that a 'recall' facility cannot be used to trace the call.
- In the client's home, choose a safe place to sit. Be aware of access and egress of the premises and ensure exits are not locked.
- Know where candles or a torch is kept if the power fails, especially if you work at night
- The worker should share any concerns about safety with Better Caring. If necessary the worker may be accompanied by another worker or buddy.