

Access to client's homes

Communicare staff and volunteers will usually be let into people's homes by the person they are visiting. However some of the people we help can't open the door themselves. Occasionally volunteers are given permission to go into a home when they know the person they are helping won't be there.



It's extremely important that the office know if you are letting yourself into someone's home. If you are asked to go into someone's home when they won't be there you must discuss this with the office first.

People who can't open the door themselves

If the person you are visiting can't open the door themselves you may be asked to use a key safe or keep a key. If possible it is better for you to use a key safe as this makes it less likely that a key you are looking after will get lost. It also means you are less likely to be seen as their emergency contact. We advise you to think very carefully before you agree to be an emergency key holder for a client: are you really prepared to be contacted in the middle of the night to let someone in? What would happen if you are on holiday? There are usually better solutions so please talk to the coordinators.

If you are asked to use a key safe or keep a key:

- You should only use the key or key safe when the person is expecting you to visit and if you expect them to be in. If you have been asked to go in when the person isn't there please see the next section.
- Please make sure the office knows - we need to keep a record that you know their key safe code or have a key. We will ask them to sign a permission form.
- Please keep the physical key/key safe code safe and don't store it with the person's address.
- Let the office know if the key or the code is lost or stolen.
- If Communicare has the key safe code we will store it in a locked cabinet. If we need to give it to a volunteer we won't send it to you with the person's address.
- If you go into someone's home and they are not there please let the office know asap.
- Please ask for a copy of our 'key safe guidelines' if you have any questions.

Going into a client's home if you know they won't be there

Normally Communicare staff and volunteers should only go into a person's home if they have arranged to visit the person and expect them to be there. In some exceptional circumstances volunteers may agree to go into someone's home when they are not there. This should be exceptional, not a regular or ongoing thing. Having general permission to use a key safe/hold a key doesn't give you permission to go into their house if you know they are not there - you must get separate permission.

If you are asked to go into someone's home when you know they won't be there

- Please discuss it with the office first. If the need is urgent and can't wait for office hours (e.g. it's a bank holiday weekend) let the office know as soon as possible and show us the signed permission.
- You must get signed permission from the person who's home it is (or a relative who has power of attorney) before going into their house if they won't be there. If possible, use the Communicare form. If the person is in hospital or a care home, try to get a member of staff to witness the person giving you permission.
- Agree exactly what you will do or not do in the home- for example where are they happy for you go, can you open drawers or throw away out of date food?
- Agree when and how often you will go into their home. Each visit must be agreed in advance.
- Don't collect cash or credit/debit cards unless it has been specifically agreed by a senior Communicare staff member.

Please talk to the office team if you have any questions or concerns or need a copy of the form for the person you help to sign. Thank you