

# HOME VISITS POLICY & GUIDELINES

<b>Term of policy:</b>	3 years
<b>Approved by:</b>	Nick Wellington, Chair
<b>Date ratified:</b>	24.05.2024
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	24.05.2026
<b>Author:</b>	Matthew Barnett
<b>Version:</b>	1.0
<b>Online location:</b>	SharePoint folder: Policies

## Contents

- 1. Introduction**
  - 1.1 Home Visit Definition**
  - 1.2 Reasons for Home Visits**
- 2. Home Visit Requirements and Recommendations**
- 3. Home Visit Procedures and Guidelines**
  - 3.1 Before the Visit**
  - 3.2 Preparing for the Visit**
  - 3.3 During the Visit**
  - 3.5 After the Visit**

## 1. Introduction

This guidance is to be used for home visits with adult clients. It should be applied in conjunction with existing Safeguarding Policies. The purpose of this policy is to ensure good working practice and to provide guidelines in reducing risks to members of staff and clients when undertaking home visits.

The following guidelines are important for all home visits, but individual circumstances should be taken into account. Risk assessment should be considered for all visits.

### 1.1 Home Visit Definition:

A home visit is a procedural or emergency visit that requires Nova staff to enter a private home for the purposes of supporting a Nova client. The client must be an adult and registered with Nova as a beneficiary of Information, Advice and Guidance or Family Programme Services.

### 1.2 Reasons for home visits:

Home visits should only be undertaken if absolutely necessary, when clients cannot attend Nova offices or other supervised centres and a remote meeting is not possible or suitable.

Possible reasons for home visits:

- Reduced mobility
- Emergency / Threat to wellbeing
- Safeguarding concerns
- Site specific assistance – cannot explain something remotely

- Delivery or installation
- Facilitating a meeting with an external provider/partner

## 2. Home Visit Requirements and Recommendations

The following requirements for home visits must be adhered to:

- All home visits conducted by staff *must* first be approved by a Line Manager.
- Client receiving a home visit must be registered with a Nova service.
- All staff conducting Home Visits must hold an Enhanced DBS for Adult Workforce.
- Home visits must always be conducted in pairs, with both holding the appropriate DBS.

The following recommendations for home visits should be followed unless a variation is approved for mitigating circumstances:

- Home Visits should be scheduled to take place during working hours, 9:30AM-5:30PM, when an office-based emergency contact is available. If an emergency visit is absolutely necessary outside of working hours, an office-based emergency contact must be on call for the duration of the visit.
- The generic risk assessment for home visits can be used for your visit, however if there are specific or unique individual circumstances, please write up a new risk assessment accordingly.

## 3. Home Visit Procedures

### 3.1 Before the Visit

- Seek permission for the home visit from your Line Manager *before* the meeting is agreed. Be clear about the purpose of the visit and that it is absolutely necessary.
- Make an appointment with the client to establish a convenient time to ensure that everyone you want to see will be present. Seek written confirmation by email (if possible), clearly setting times, time constraints and expectations for the purpose of the visit. Copy your Line Manager into these messages.
- Record the time, date, location, staff members involved and purpose of the visit as a service on Salesforce, in advance of the visit taking place. For **IAG**, a home visit should be recorded as a *Case Session/Appointment*, for **Family Programme**, a home visit should be recorded as *Other Activity*.
- Arrange for an appropriate person to accompany you. Clarify each person's role.
- Make sure you are well informed about the client/family and are aware of personal circumstances and the subject of the visit. Collect any necessary documentation. You may want to know who lives in the home, are there any pets (dangerous dogs, etc), does anyone there suffer from any health issues, do you know if there is a history of domestic abuse or safeguarding concerns in the home?
- Consider who you need to see, e.g. one or both parents/carers, with or without child/ren.
- Review the generic **Risk Assessment** and update for individual circumstances as required.

### 3.2 Preparing for the Visit

- Dress appropriately and professionally. This means you should wear clean clothing that is not too casual or revealing, avoid clothing with statements, words or images that could be viewed as provocative or offensive.

- Carry a fully charged mobile phone with you.
- Carry your identification badges - using only a breakaway lanyard.
- Do not carry large sums of money or valuable personal items when making a home visit.
- Do not leave your personal items in another room, keep them with you at all times in the home.
- Take useful numbers with you in case of emergency.
- Agree a code words if you need to leave quickly.
- Agree a time that the visit needs to end and stick to it

### 3.3 During the Visit

- Introduce yourself on arrival, show identification and explain again the purpose of the visit.
- Be sensitive to the culture and/or religion of the home. Be prepared to remove footwear if expected to.
- Ask if there are any large pets (like dogs) who are sensitive to new people that may need to be safely put away in another room.
- Both staff visitors must stay together at all times.
- Do not enter the premises unless invited in by a responsible adult.
- Do not enter the premises if invited to do so by a child that is on the premises unsupervised by a responsible adult.
- If the visit is regarding a child or children, only speak to parents/carers or another responsible adult whom a parent/carer has delegated to be there in their absence and who has been given permission to speak about the child for whom you are making the home visit. Consider if the child is listening to what is being said which may or may not be appropriate.
- Do not speak to children alone other than to ask if their parent/carer is available. Do not discuss the purpose of the visit with children or any other unknown young person or adult at the premises.
- Do not go upstairs in a property, unless absolutely necessary for the purpose of your visit.
- Follow our Safeguarding Policies for Children and Vulnerable Adults at all times. If you are concerned that a child or vulnerable adult is in the home inappropriately alone, unsupervised or in risk, report your Safeguarding Concern to your line manager and DSL.
- If you feel that a child or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger, contact emergency services on 999.
- Keep to the point and stick to your agreed times.
- Do not accept gifts.
- Ensure you always have access to the exit of the building/room and never allow people to block your exit or close the doors unnecessarily.
- Do not accept any food.
- Keep to time and do not extend. If the visit runs into post 5:30PM, then call the office to notify.

### Action to take if you feel at risk

- If you are asked to leave, then leave the property immediately and inform the office.
- If you have any concerns about personal safety, then leave the property immediately and inform the office.
- If you are threatened or prevented from leaving, stay calm. Try to explain that you need to call the office/check with your manager, speak slowly and clearly and do not be drawn into an argument. Try to diffuse the situation by saying you will seek advice from a senior member of staff or colleague.
- Keep your distance, never touch or turn your back on someone who is angry and move towards an exit.
- Use a code word (safe word) or phrase to alert a colleague that you need assistance or should leave (this must be agreed before you enter the home).
- Use the same code word should be used if you contact the office to alert them that you are in danger and need support (again, this is needed at the planning stage).
- Staff must leave the property and reach a place of safety if you have any concerns about personal safety and inform the office immediately.
- You may wish to use the what3words app to identify locations.

### 3.3 After the visit

- Report back to your office contact that the meeting has been completed.
- Update your Service Delivery record on Salesforce, with a record of entry and exit time, alongside written feedback on the outcome of the visit, as required. Include a short report detailing what took place and any agreed actions required.
- Any safeguarding incidents should be reported to your Line Manager and the DSL immediately after the visit. Any safeguarding concerns arising from home visits should be recorded on CPOMS.
- Do not discuss individual home visits with any staff who are not directly involved.
- It is important to review any safety and reflect on the visit if any concerns were raised during your visit.