

## Emergency Access (Welfare Concerns) Policy

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Approved by	Stephen Evans, Director for Customers and Communities (Deputy CEO)

Version Control
Version 1 - Date 01 <sup>st</sup> October 2025
Version 2 -

Changes Made	Section	Date
New overarching policy and procedure	all	October 2025

## Introduction

At Caredig, we are committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of our residents and ensuring that all individuals living in our properties are safe, supported, and treated with dignity. There may be rare but critical occasions when emergency access to a property is required due to serious welfare concerns—such as when a resident is unresponsive, at risk of harm, or where there is reasonable belief that their health or safety is compromised.

This policy outlines the circumstances under which emergency access may be sought, the procedures to be followed, and the safeguards in place to ensure that such actions are lawful, proportionate, and respectful of residents' rights. It is designed to support staff in making informed decisions, working collaboratively with emergency services and other relevant agencies, and prioritising the welfare of residents above all else.

Caredig recognises the importance of balancing the duty of care with the right to privacy, and this policy aims to provide clear guidance to ensure that emergency access is only used when absolutely necessary and in accordance with legal and ethical standards.

## The Aims of the Policy and Procedures

- To safeguard residents where there is a credible concern for their health, safety, or wellbeing we will take a risk-based approach to gaining access to residents' properties if we have serious and significant concerns about someone's safety.
- To provide clear guidance for staff on when and how emergency access may be sought.
- To ensure compliance with relevant legislation, including the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016, Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), and Equality Act 2010.
- To promote a trauma-informed, person-centred approach in all welfare-related interventions.

## Our Values

In applying this policy, we will be guided by our values. Our values determine how we behave towards our customers, our colleagues, our partners and our work:

**Kind** - We recognise that relationships are at the heart of everything we do, at the heart of good relationships is kindness.

**Innovative** - We continuously strive to be the best we can whilst seeking creative ideas to improve and grow.

**Trusting** - We trust people to do the right thing, because good relationships are built on mutual trust and respect.

**Accountable** - We accept the responsibilities of our role and are accountable for our actions and for doing what is right.

## Definitions

- **'Resident'** is used to describe the contract holder, resident or service-user for the purpose of this policy

## What is covered by the policy?

This policy applies to all Caredig properties and covers situations where we may take action to gain access including, but not limited to:

- Unresponsive residents with known vulnerabilities.
- Reports of serious welfare concerns from support providers, family, or neighbours.
- Evidence of immediate risk (e.g. fire, flood, gas leak, safeguarding alerts).
- Concerns raised by statutory agencies (e.g. social services, police, health professionals).

Emergency access must comply with:

- Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 - Landlords must maintain properties in repair and respond to urgent health and safety issues.
- Housing Act 2004 - Duty to assess and mitigate risks under HHSRS.
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 - Duty to ensure safe, habitable homes.
- Equality Act 2010 - Duty to make reasonable adjustments for vulnerable tenants.
- Human Rights Act 1998 - Respect for private and family life (Article 8).

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

- All staff are responsible for responding to reports of concern.
- Operational Managers, Community Housing Officers, Service Coordinators, Team Leaders and Extra Care Managers, Extra Care Estate Officers are responsible for the decisions and actions.
- The Operational Managers for Housing Management, Supported Living and Extra Care are responsible for the overall performance management.
- The Head of Housing & Support has overall responsibility for this area included review and monitoring.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Caredig is committed to ensuring that its policy and procedures are nondiscriminatory and that all applicants can access the service, especially taking account of any vulnerability or other specific needs, and also the needs of different groups protected by the Equality Act 2010

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and as a result, we will ensure we take account of individual circumstances both in term of how we communicate and manage tenancies and support provision.

### **References to other relevant policies and procedures**

- Gas Safety Management Procedure
- Death of a Tenant or Resident
- Escalating issues Procedure
- Procedure for staff when dealing with a service user/tenant/tenant who is at immediate risk to life.
- Abandonment of properties
- Ending occupation contracts
- Complaints, Concerns and Compliments
- Anti-Social Behaviour & Community Safety
- Hate & Hate Crime
- Compensation