SECTION 8 — INCIDENTS, EMERGENCIES & BUSINESS CONTINUITY

POLICY 78 — EMERGENCY & CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE POLICY

78.1 Purpose

Homeward Futures LTD is committed to protecting residents, staff, visitors and the wider community during emergencies and critical incidents.

This policy establishes a clear framework for responding to emergencies, reducing risk, protecting life and maintaining appropriate support to residents.

78.2 Scope

This policy applies to all staff, managers, contractors and volunteers acting on behalf of Homeward Futures LTD.

It applies to emergencies occurring:

- Within accommodation.
- During support sessions.
- During visits or activities.
- While transporting residents where applicable.
- In the wider community where staff become aware of an emergency affecting a resident.

78.3 Emergency Principles

During any emergency, staff should:

1. Prioritise the preservation of life and immediate safety.
2. Contact emergency services where required.
3. Remain calm and provide appropriate reassurance.
4. Follow established emergency procedures.
5. Remove themselves and residents from immediate danger where safe to do so.
6. Notify management as soon as reasonably practicable.

7. Record the incident accurately.
8. Ensure appropriate follow-up and review.

Staff must not place themselves or residents at unnecessary risk.

78.4 Types of Emergency

Emergencies may include:

- Fire.
- Serious injury or medical emergency.
- Missing resident.
- Serious safeguarding incident.
- Violence or serious aggression.
- Criminal activity.
- Suspected exploitation.
- Drug-related emergency.
- Gas leak or suspected carbon monoxide.
- Flood.
- Serious property damage.
- Loss of heating, water or electricity.
- Structural damage.
- Severe weather.
- Major utility failure.
- Serious IT or communications failure.
- Death of a resident.
- Any event presenting an immediate or significant risk to life or safety.

78.5 Emergency Services

Staff should contact the appropriate emergency service when necessary:

- **999** for an immediate threat to life, serious injury, fire or crime in progress.
- **101** for non-emergency police matters where appropriate.
- **NHS 111** for appropriate non-emergency medical advice.
- Relevant utility or emergency contractors for property emergencies.

Staff must use professional judgement and should err on the side of safety where there is uncertainty about an immediate risk.

78.6 Evacuation

Where evacuation is required:

- Residents should leave the building using the safest available route.
- Staff should not unnecessarily delay evacuation.
- Staff should direct residents to the designated assembly point where safe.
- Staff should account for residents where reasonably practicable.

- Emergency services should be informed of any person believed to remain inside.
- No one should re-enter the building until authorised by the appropriate authority.

78.7 Critical Incident Management

For serious or critical incidents, management will:

- Establish immediate priorities.
- Ensure emergency services have been contacted where necessary.
- Identify affected residents and staff.
- Coordinate communication.
- Notify relevant professionals or agencies where appropriate.
- Consider whether safeguarding procedures are triggered.
- Ensure appropriate records are completed.
- Consider business continuity arrangements.
- Arrange post-incident support and review.

78.8 After an Emergency

Following an emergency, management will consider:

- Resident welfare.
- Staff welfare.
- Accommodation safety.
- Medical follow-up.
- Safeguarding referrals.
- Risk assessment updates.
- Support plan updates.
- Insurance notification where applicable.
- Repairs.
- Regulatory or commissioning notifications where applicable.
- Lessons learned.

PROCEDURE 79 — EMERGENCY CONTACT & ESCALATION PROCEDURE

79.1 Purpose

This procedure establishes clear arrangements for contacting the appropriate person or organisation during an emergency or serious concern.

79.2 Immediate Emergency

Where there is an immediate threat to life or serious danger:

Step 1 — Protect life and safety

Staff should move themselves and residents away from immediate danger where safe to do so.

Step 2 — Contact emergency services

Call **999** where appropriate.

Step 3 — Provide essential information

Staff should provide:

- Exact location.
- Nature of emergency.
- Number of people involved.
- Known injuries or immediate risks.
- Relevant information requested by emergency services.

Step 4 — Notify management

The designated manager or responsible person should be notified as soon as reasonably practicable.

Step 5 — Record the incident

An incident report must be completed as soon as practicable.

79.3 Escalation Levels

Level 1 — Routine Concern

Examples:

- Minor property issue.
- Routine resident concern.
- Minor support issue.

Action:

- Record appropriately.
- Address through normal management arrangements.

Level 2 — Significant Concern

Examples:

- Increasing risk.
- Significant resident distress.
- Repeated incidents.
- Serious property problem.
- Concern requiring management involvement.

Action:

- Notify management.
- Review risk.
- Consider whether external professionals need to be contacted.
- Record actions taken.

Level 3 — Serious Incident

Examples:

- Serious injury.
- Serious safeguarding concern.
- Police involvement.
- Missing resident presenting significant risk.
- Significant violence.
- Major property damage.

Action:

- Contact emergency services where required.
- Notify senior management immediately.
- Initiate safeguarding and incident procedures.
- Notify relevant agencies where appropriate.
- Complete formal incident reporting.

Level 4 — Critical Incident

Examples:

- Death.
- Major fire.
- Serious threat to multiple residents.
- Major structural failure.
- Significant criminal incident.
- Incident requiring evacuation or temporary closure.

Action:

- Contact emergency services.
- Activate critical incident and business continuity arrangements.
- Notify senior management.
- Notify relevant authorities, commissioners or safeguarding agencies where required.
- Arrange alternative accommodation/support where necessary.

- Maintain detailed records.

79.4 Emergency Contact Information

Homeward Futures LTD will maintain an up-to-date emergency contact list containing, where relevant:

- Senior management.
- Emergency services.
- Local authority contacts.
- Safeguarding contacts.
- Housing/property emergency contacts.
- Utility providers.
- Relevant contractors.
- Insurance contacts.
- Key professional contacts.

The contact list will be reviewed regularly.

79.5 Escalation Records

Staff must record:

- Time of incident.
- Nature of concern.
- Person contacted.
- Advice received.
- Actions taken.
- Outcome.
- Further action required.

POLICY 80 — BUSINESS CONTINUITY & SERVICE DISRUPTION POLICY

80.1 Purpose

Homeward Futures LTD is committed to maintaining safe and appropriate accommodation and support during periods of disruption.

This policy establishes arrangements for maintaining essential services and protecting residents when normal operations are affected.

80.2 Potential Disruptions

Business continuity arrangements may be required following:

- Fire.
- Flood.
- Major water leak.
- Loss of heating.
- Loss of electricity.
- Loss of water.
- Serious structural damage.
- Severe weather.
- Public health emergency.
- Major IT failure.
- Cyber incident.
- Loss of key staff.
- Contractor failure.
- Loss of access to accommodation.
- Major safeguarding incident.
- Other circumstances that significantly affect service delivery.

80.3 Continuity Priorities

The priority order will normally be:

1. Protect life and safety.
2. Ensure residents have safe accommodation.
3. Maintain essential support.
4. Maintain safeguarding arrangements.
5. Maintain communication.
6. Restore normal service as soon as reasonably practicable.

80.4 Alternative Accommodation

If accommodation becomes temporarily unsafe or unavailable, Homeward Futures LTD will consider appropriate alternative arrangements.

This may involve:

- Temporary alternative accommodation.
- Support from partner organisations.
- Local authority involvement.
- Emergency accommodation arrangements.
- Temporary relocation.

Any alternative accommodation must be assessed for suitability and safety.

80.5 Staffing Disruption

Where staffing levels are affected, management will:

- Assess immediate risks.
- Prioritise essential support.
- Redeploy appropriately trained staff where possible.
- Consider approved temporary or agency staffing.
- Ensure staff are appropriately briefed.
- Escalate significant staffing shortages.

Staffing arrangements must remain safe and proportionate to resident needs.

80.6 Communication During Disruption

Management will provide appropriate information to:

- Residents.
- Staff.
- Relevant professionals.
- Commissioners or local authorities where required.
- Emergency services where relevant.

Residents should be informed in a clear and accessible manner about:

- What has happened.
- What arrangements are being made.
- Any changes to accommodation.
- Changes to support.
- Who they can contact.

80.7 Records and Data

Homeward Futures LTD will take reasonable steps to protect:

- Resident records.
- Confidential information.
- Contact information.
- Risk assessments.
- Support plans.
- Financial information.
- Business records.

Appropriate backup and recovery arrangements should be maintained.

80.8 Recovery

Following disruption, management will:

- Assess damage.
- Restore essential services.
- Review resident needs.

- Review risks.
- Review staffing.
- Complete required notifications.
- Record lessons learned.
- Review the effectiveness of the continuity response.

POLICY 81 — SERIOUS INCIDENT REPORTING POLICY

81.1 Purpose

Homeward Futures LTD will ensure serious incidents are identified, reported, recorded and reviewed appropriately.

The purpose of this policy is to promote resident safety, accountability, learning and continuous improvement.

81.2 What Is a Serious Incident?

A serious incident may include:

- Death.
- Serious injury.
- Serious illness.
- Hospitalisation.
- Serious safeguarding concern.
- Significant violence.
- Serious assault.
- Sexual assault or suspected sexual exploitation.
- Missing resident where significant risk is present.
- Serious criminal activity.
- Fire.
- Major property damage.
- Serious self-harm concern.
- Significant drug or alcohol-related emergency.
- Any incident involving emergency services.
- Any event that creates significant risk to a resident, staff member or member of the public.

81.3 Immediate Response

Staff must first address immediate safety.

This may include:

- Calling emergency services.
- Providing appropriate first aid within their competence.
- Removing people from danger.
- Seeking medical assistance.
- Informing management.
- Contacting safeguarding professionals where appropriate.

81.4 Incident Reporting

A serious incident report should include:

- Date and time.
- Location.
- People involved.
- Factual description.
- Immediate actions.
- Injuries or damage.
- Emergency services involvement.
- Safeguarding actions.
- Notifications made.
- Outcome.
- Follow-up actions.

81.5 Reporting to External Agencies

Where required, Homeward Futures LTD will notify appropriate external organisations.

Depending on the circumstances, this may include:

- Local authority safeguarding teams.
- Police.
- Emergency services.
- Commissioners.
- Relevant healthcare professionals.
- Housing authorities.
- Insurance providers.
- Other statutory or professional bodies.

Notifications will be made in accordance with applicable requirements and contractual arrangements.

81.6 Serious Incident Review

Following a serious incident, management will consider:

- What happened.
- Why it happened.
- Whether risks were known.

- Whether procedures were followed.
- Whether the response was appropriate.
- Whether resident support needs have changed.
- Whether additional safeguards are required.
- What lessons can be learned.

81.7 Learning

Learning from incidents may result in:

- Policy changes.
- Additional training.
- Changes to risk assessments.
- Changes to support plans.
- Environmental improvements.
- Changes to staffing arrangements.
- Additional monitoring.

POLICY 82 — DEATH OF A RESIDENT POLICY

82.1 Purpose

The death of a resident is a serious and potentially traumatic event.

Homeward Futures LTD will respond respectfully, sensitively and professionally while ensuring that legal, safeguarding and investigative requirements are followed.

82.2 Immediate Response

Where a resident is found unresponsive or believed to have died, staff must:

1. Assess the situation without placing themselves at risk.
2. Contact **999** where appropriate.
3. Follow emergency operator instructions.
4. Provide first aid/CPR if instructed and trained to do so, unless emergency professionals advise otherwise.
5. Notify management immediately.
6. Preserve the scene as far as reasonably practicable.
7. Avoid disturbing potential evidence unnecessarily.

82.3 Confirmation of Death

Staff must not independently declare a resident deceased unless legally authorised and appropriately qualified to do so.

Confirmation of death should be undertaken by the appropriate healthcare or emergency professional.

82.4 Police Notification

The police should be contacted where:

- The death is unexpected.
- The circumstances are unclear.
- There is a suspected crime.
- There is a suspected overdose.
- There is suspected self-harm or suicide.
- There are safeguarding concerns.
- The cause of death is unknown.
- Emergency services advise police involvement.

82.5 Preserving the Scene

Where the death may be unexplained, suspicious or potentially criminal:

- Staff should avoid moving objects unnecessarily.
- Staff should not clean the area.
- Medication, substances or other items should not be removed unless necessary for immediate safety.
- Access should be restricted where appropriate.
- Staff should follow police instructions.

82.6 Family and Significant Others

Notification of family or significant others should be handled sensitively and in accordance with instructions from appropriate authorities.

Staff should not make assumptions about who should be notified where police or healthcare professionals are managing the notification.

82.7 Safeguarding and External Notifications

Management will consider whether notifications are required to:

- Local authority safeguarding services.
- The resident's placing authority.
- Relevant professionals.
- Commissioners.
- Police.
- Other appropriate authorities.

82.8 Support Following a Death

Homeward Futures LTD recognises that a resident's death may significantly affect:

- Other residents.
- Staff.
- Family members.
- Professionals.

Appropriate support and signposting will be considered.

Residents should be offered appropriate emotional support and information while respecting confidentiality.

82.9 Records

A full factual record should be maintained, including:

- Circumstances known at the time.
- Actions taken.
- Emergency services contacted.
- Management notifications.
- External notifications.
- Instructions received.
- Follow-up actions.

Records must be factual and avoid speculation.

82.10 Review

A death will be reviewed appropriately to identify:

- Safeguarding concerns.
- Risk management issues.
- Service improvements.
- Learning.
- Required policy or practice changes.

POLICY 83 — POLICE INVOLVEMENT & CRIMINAL JUSTICE POLICY

83.1 Purpose

Homeward Futures LTD will work appropriately with the police and criminal justice agencies where residents are victims, witnesses, suspects or otherwise involved in criminal justice processes.

83.2 Principles

The organisation will:

- Prioritise resident safety.
- Respect residents' rights.
- Cooperate lawfully with police.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality.
- Avoid obstructing criminal investigations.
- Provide appropriate support.
- Record police involvement accurately.

83.3 Contacting Police

Staff should contact the police where:

- There is an immediate threat to life or safety.
- A serious crime is taking place.
- A serious assault has occurred.
- A resident is at significant risk of harm.
- There is suspected exploitation or trafficking.
- A serious criminal incident has occurred.
- Police involvement is otherwise necessary and proportionate.

Use:

- **999** for emergencies.
- **101** for appropriate non-emergency matters.

83.4 Residents as Victims or Witnesses

Where a resident is a victim or witness of crime, staff should:

- Prioritise immediate safety.
- Encourage appropriate reporting.
- Support access to relevant services.
- Avoid pressuring the resident into giving an account.
- Avoid conducting their own investigation.
- Preserve relevant evidence where appropriate.
- Record concerns factually.

83.5 Residents as Suspects

Where a resident is suspected of criminal activity, staff should:

- Maintain professional conduct.
- Prioritise safety.
- Cooperate with lawful police requests.
- Avoid interfering with investigations.
- Continue providing appropriate support unless safety or legal considerations require otherwise.

Residents should be treated with dignity and respect regardless of allegations or involvement in criminal justice processes.

83.6 Information Sharing

Information may be shared with police where there is an appropriate lawful basis.

This may include circumstances involving:

- Serious crime.
- Immediate risk.
- Safeguarding.
- Legal requirements.
- Prevention or detection of crime.

Information sharing should be:

- Necessary.
- Proportionate.
- Relevant.
- Accurate.
- Secure.

83.7 Police Requests for Information

Where police request resident information, staff should:

- Verify the identity and authority of the requesting officer where appropriate.
- Refer requests to management where practicable.
- Consider the lawful basis for disclosure.
- Provide only information that is necessary and appropriate.
- Record the request and disclosure.

Where immediate disclosure is necessary to protect life or prevent serious harm, information may be shared without prior management approval where lawful.

83.8 Police Attendance at Accommodation

If police attend accommodation:

- Staff should cooperate appropriately.

- Staff should prioritise resident and staff safety.
- Staff should avoid obstructing lawful police activity.
- Staff should record significant attendance where appropriate.
- Management should be notified.

83.9 Arrest or Detention

If a resident is arrested or detained:

- Staff should remain professional.
- Relevant management should be informed.
- Appropriate safeguarding concerns should be considered.
- The resident's accommodation and immediate welfare should be considered.
- Relevant professionals may be informed where there is an appropriate lawful basis.

83.10 Criminal Justice Support

Where appropriate, residents may be supported to engage with:

- Police.
- Youth or adult criminal justice services, as applicable.
- Probation services.
- Solicitors.
- Courts.
- Victim support services.
- Other relevant agencies.

Support should focus on safety, stability, understanding responsibilities and maintaining appropriate engagement with services.

83.11 Safeguarding

Police involvement may indicate wider safeguarding concerns.

Management will consider whether the incident indicates:

- Exploitation.
- Abuse.
- Grooming.
- County lines or criminal exploitation.
- Trafficking.
- Domestic abuse.
- Sexual exploitation.
- Violence.
- Serious substance misuse.
- Risks to other residents.

Where appropriate, safeguarding procedures will be activated.

83.12 Records

Records relating to police involvement should include:

- Date and time.
- Nature of incident.
- Police force/contact where appropriate.
- Incident or crime reference number where provided.
- Actions taken.
- Information shared.
- Advice received.
- Follow-up actions.

Records must remain factual and secure.

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84. INCIDENTS, EMERGENCIES & BUSINESS CONTINUITY — RECORD KEEPING AND MONITORING

Homeward Futures LTD will maintain appropriate records relating to incidents and emergencies, including:

- Incident reports.
- Serious incident reports.
- Emergency contacts.
- Emergency service attendance.
- Police involvement.
- Safeguarding referrals.
- Notifications to external agencies.
- Business continuity incidents.
- Accommodation disruption.
- Alternative accommodation arrangements.
- Post-incident reviews.
- Lessons learned.
- Actions arising from incidents.

Management will monitor incidents to identify patterns, recurring risks and opportunities for improvement.

Where appropriate, incident information will be reviewed alongside resident risk assessments, support plans and service-level quality monitoring.

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85. INCIDENT REPORTING AND REVIEW PRINCIPLES

Staff must report incidents promptly and must not intentionally conceal, minimise or falsify information.

Incident records should be:

- Factual.
- Accurate.
- Timely.
- Objective.
- Respectful.
- Secure.

Staff should distinguish between:

- What they directly observed.
- What they were told.
- Their professional assessment.
- Actions they took.

Speculation should be avoided.

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86. POLICY REVIEW

This section will be reviewed:

- At least annually.
- Following any major or critical incident.
- Following the death of a resident.
- Following significant police involvement.
- Following a major service disruption.
- Following changes to relevant legislation or guidance.
- Following safeguarding reviews or learning.
- Where audits identify a need for amendment.

The review will consider whether the organisation's emergency response, reporting arrangements and business continuity procedures remain effective and proportionate.

Policy Owner: Homeward Futures LTD
Responsible Person: Management
Review Frequency: At least annually
Next Review Date: _____
Version: _____