

WEST LIMERICK INDEPENDENT LIVING CLG

Security of the Home Policy

Policy Reference	WLILP16
Category	Operational Policies — Health & Safety, Safeguarding
Version	2.1 (policy number confirmed as WLILP16)
Status	APPROVED — by the Board of Directors on 9 October 2026
Supersedes	WLILP16/WLILP18 - Security of the Home Policy (number unconfirmed); Security of the Home Policy - DRAFT v2.0
Policy Owner	Board of Directors, West Limerick Independent Living CLG
Applies To	All West Limerick Independent Living staff entering service users' homes
Related Policies	WLILP7A - Data Protection Policy; WLILP7D - Data Retention, Rectification and Erasure Policy; WLILP8 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse Policy; WLILP17 - Consent Policy; WLILP19 - Lone Working Policy; WLILP30 - Incident Management & Reporting Policy
Review Cycle	Annually, or as needed to ensure ongoing compliance with HIQA standards

Purpose

To ensure that service users are safe and secure in their homes while receiving support, in line with HIQA's Draft National Standards for Home Support Services (2024).

Scope

Applies to all West Limerick Independent Living ("WLIL") staff entering service users' homes.

Legislative and Regulatory Framework

- HIQA Draft National Standards for Home Support Services (2024)
- Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR — see WLILP7A - Data Protection Policy, particularly relevant to how key codes and access details are recorded and stored
- Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015, as amended by the 2022 Act (both fully commenced 26 April 2023) — see WLILP17 - Consent Policy for WLIL's full consent framework

Access to the Home

- Access arrangements will be discussed during the initial assessment and recorded in the care plan
- Only agreed safe entry methods may be used
- Unsafe practices (for example leaving keys under mats) are prohibited
- Safe alternatives include key safes and coded door entry

Key Holding

- WLIL does not normally hold keys
- If required, key holding must be risk assessed, documented, and consent obtained, using the form below
- Keys must be securely stored or held only by authorised staff
- Keys must be coded without identifying the address, consistent with WLILP7A - Data Protection Policy
- Staff must report immediately if keys are lost or stolen

Entering and Leaving the Home

- Always knock, ring, or announce yourself before entry
- Show your ID badge upon arrival
- Secure all windows and doors when leaving
- Never leave a service user unattended unless assessed and documented as safe

Identification

- Staff must wear an up-to-date ID badge at all times
- Lost badges must be reported immediately
- Staff supporting service users with communication needs must introduce themselves verbally and visibly

Unauthorised Visitors

- No unauthorised persons or pets may be brought into a service user's home
- Where a staff member has a concern about who else is present in a service user's home, or about pressure being placed on the service user by another person present, this should be considered under WLILP8 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse Policy, not treated only as an access issue

Emergency Procedures

- Do not force entry if unable to access
- If an emergency is suspected, call emergency services and inform your Service Coordinator
- Follow instructions provided by your Service Coordinator
- Record all actions taken using the SBAR incident report form in WLILP30 - Incident Management & Reporting Policy, Appendix 3
- Where a staff member is alone when responding to an access or emergency situation, this should also be considered under WLILP19 - Lone Working Policy

Learning and Development

- Staff must read, understand, and sign off on the employee handbook which accompanies this policy
- Compliance with this policy is mandatory and non-compliance may lead to disciplinary action

Consent and Documentation

- Key holding permissions and risk assessments must be documented and reviewed at least annually

- Consent forms must be signed by the service user, or by their Decision-Making Assistant, Co-Decision-Maker, or Decision-Making Representative appointed under the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015, where the service user needs support to make or communicate this decision

Records Retention

Key holding consent forms, risk assessments, and related documentation generated under this policy are retained in accordance with WLILP7D - Data Retention, Rectification and Erasure Policy, which is the single authoritative source for WLIL's retention periods.

Policy Review

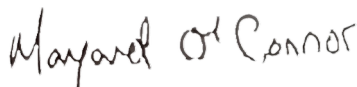
This policy will be reviewed annually or as needed to ensure ongoing compliance with HIQA standards.

This policy reflects HIQA's Draft National Standards for Home Support Services (2024) and GDPR, checked as accurate as of drafting. It is not a substitute for legal advice.

Approval

Approved by the Board of West Limerick Independent Living CLG on 9 October 2026.

Signed on behalf of the Board, on its instruction, by the General Manager:



Margaret O'Brien O'Connor, General Manager

Date signed:



Key Access and Holding Consent Form

1. Service User Details

Name of Service User: _____

2. Staff Member Details

Name of Staff Member: _____

3. Key Holding Agreement

- I, or my Decision-Making Assistant, Co-Decision-Maker, or Decision-Making Representative, give permission for the staff member named above to access and use the keys for my home in order to deliver my agreed support
- The key will be kept securely and used only as required to provide care and support
- If keys are lost or stolen, WLIL will be notified immediately
- I understand that the staff member must follow this Security of the Home Policy at all times

4. Consent

I agree that keys may be:

- Held by WLIL Office
- Held securely by the authorised staff member (where appropriate)

(Please tick one box.)

Consent Given By

- ☐ The service user themselves, giving their own consent
- ☐ A Decision-Making Assistant, Co-Decision-Maker, or Decision-Making Representative, appointed under the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015, on behalf of a service user who needs support to make or communicate this decision

Name of person giving consent, if different from the service user:

Relationship or legal basis, if consenting on behalf of the service user:

Service User / Person Consenting Signature: _____

Date: _____

Staff Member Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witness / Service Coordinator Signature: _____

Date: _____

Notes: A copy of this form will be kept securely on the service user's file, in line with WLILP7D - Data Retention, Rectification and Erasure Policy. Consent can be withdrawn at any time by notifying WLIL in writing.