

# SERVICE CLOSURE AND EXIT PROCEDURE

PRN-119: Service Closure and Exit Procedure

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Trading/Business Name: Trusted Companionship

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## 1. Purpose

This procedure provides guidance for the planned or unplanned closure of services and support arrangements.

The organisation recognises that ending support can be a significant event for service users, volunteers, employees, and families. Service closure should therefore be managed sensitively, safely, and in a person-centred manner.

This procedure aims to:

- Ensure safe and appropriate closure of services.
  - Support positive transitions.
  - Minimise distress and uncertainty.
  - Promote continuity of support where possible.
  - Capture feedback and learning.
  - Ensure records are completed appropriately.
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## 2. Scope

This procedure applies to:

- Service users
- Employees
- Volunteers
- Managers

- Volunteer Coordinators

The procedure applies to:

- Planned service closure
  - Unplanned service closure
  - Withdrawal of support
  - Service user departures
  - Volunteer/service user relationship endings
  - Transfer to alternative services
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### **3. Principles**

All service closures will be:

#### **Person-Centred**

Respecting the wishes, dignity, and wellbeing of the individual.

#### **Planned**

Wherever possible, closures should be organised and communicated in advance.

#### **Supportive**

Providing information, guidance, and signposting where appropriate.

#### **Safe**

Taking account of safeguarding and wellbeing considerations.

#### **Respectful**

Recognising the significance of ending support relationships.

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### **4. Reasons for Service Closure**

A service may close for a variety of reasons, including:

- Achievement of support goals.
- Service user choice.
- Relocation of the service user.
- Increased support needs beyond the scope of the service.
- Referral to alternative services.

- Withdrawal of consent.
- Long-term loss of contact.
- Safeguarding concerns.
- Organisational capacity limitations.
- Serious breach of organisational policies.
- Death of a service user.

Each situation should be assessed individually.

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## **5. Planned Service Closure**

Planned closures should normally involve:

### **Step 1**

Discussion with the service user.

### **Step 2**

Review of support outcomes.

### **Step 3**

Identification of any ongoing support needs.

### **Step 4**

Consideration of signposting or referrals.

### **Step 5**

Agreement of closure arrangements.

### **Step 6**

Completion of closure records.

The aim is to support a positive and well-managed ending.

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## **6. Service User Requested Closure**

A service user may choose to end support at any time.

Where this occurs:

- The decision should be respected.
- Reasons may be discussed if the individual wishes.

- Alternative options may be offered where appropriate.
- The closure should be recorded.

Individuals should never feel pressured to continue receiving support.

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## **7. Closure Following Achievement of Outcomes**

Support may conclude where:

- Agreed goals have been achieved.
- The individual has developed alternative support networks.
- Community connections are established.
- Ongoing support is no longer required.

A closure review should be completed wherever possible.

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## **8. Transfer to Alternative Services**

Where a person's needs change, alternative services may be more appropriate.

Examples include:

- Adult Social Care services.
- Healthcare support.
- Specialist wellbeing services.
- Advocacy services.
- Community organisations.

Where appropriate and with consent, referrals may be made before closure occurs.

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## **9. Closure Due to Increased Needs**

If a service user's needs increase beyond the scope of the organisation:

- A review should be completed.
- Risks should be assessed.
- Appropriate referrals should be considered.
- The individual should be supported through the transition.

Support should not be withdrawn abruptly unless safety concerns require immediate action.

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## **10. Closure Due to Safeguarding Concerns**

In some circumstances, safeguarding concerns may affect service provision.

Where safeguarding concerns arise:

- Risks should be assessed.
- Advice should be sought from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Appropriate referrals should be made.
- Decisions should be clearly documented.

Safeguarding considerations must remain the priority.

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## **11. Closure Following Loss of Contact**

A service may be closed where reasonable efforts to maintain contact have been unsuccessful.

Reasonable attempts may include:

- Telephone calls.
- Emails.
- Letters.
- Contact through agreed representatives where appropriate.

All attempts should be documented.

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## **12. Volunteer Availability Changes**

A service may require closure or reassignment where:

- A volunteer resigns.
- A volunteer takes extended leave.
- Availability changes significantly.

Where possible:

- Alternative volunteers should be considered.

- Service users should be informed promptly.
  - Transition arrangements should be planned carefully.
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### **13. Rematching Before Closure**

Where a volunteer leaves but support is still required:

- Rematching options should be explored.
- Service user preferences should be considered.
- Risk assessments should be reviewed.
- New introductions should be arranged.

The organisation should seek continuity wherever practicable.

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### **14. Endings of Volunteer and Service User Relationships**

Ending a support relationship should be managed sensitively.

Considerations include:

- Emotional impact.
- Length of relationship.
- Service user wellbeing.
- Communication needs.
- Future support arrangements.

Both parties should be supported through the ending process.

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### **15. Unplanned Service Closure**

Unexpected situations may require immediate closure, including:

- Serious safeguarding concerns.
- Threats or violence.
- Professional boundary breaches.
- Significant risk to employees or volunteers.
- Organisational emergencies.

Such decisions should be authorised by management and fully documented.

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## **16. Closure Due to Service User Death**

Where a service user dies:

### **Immediate Actions**

- Record relevant information.
- Notify appropriate personnel.
- Inform the volunteer where appropriate.
- Update service records.

### **Follow-Up Actions**

- Offer support to affected volunteers or employees.
- Conduct a service closure review.
- Retain records in accordance with retention policies.

Compassion and sensitivity should be demonstrated at all times.

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## **17. Closure Meeting**

Where appropriate, a closure meeting may be arranged.

The purpose may be to:

- Review support provided.
- Discuss achievements.
- Explore ongoing needs.
- Provide information and signposting.
- Obtain feedback.

Closure meetings should be conducted respectfully and positively.

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## **18. Feedback During Closure**

Service users should be invited to provide feedback regarding:

- Quality of support.
- Outcomes achieved.
- Volunteer relationships.

- Areas for improvement.
- Overall experience.

Participation is voluntary.

Feedback should contribute to organisational learning.

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## **19. Signposting and Future Support**

Before closure, consideration should be given to:

- Community groups.
- Social activities.
- Volunteer-led opportunities.
- Support organisations.
- Health and wellbeing services.
- Advocacy services.

Signposting may help reduce the risk of isolation after support ends.

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## **20. Recording Service Closure**

Closure records should include:

- Date of closure.
- Reason for closure.
- Individuals involved.
- Outcomes achieved.
- Referrals made.
- Signposting provided.
- Feedback obtained.
- Future recommendations.

Records should be completed promptly and stored securely.

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## **21. Closure Review**

A closure review may consider:



- Whether outcomes were achieved.
- Lessons learned.
- Any outstanding concerns.
- Need for future contact.
- Service improvement opportunities.

Reviews contribute to quality assurance and continuous improvement.

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## **22. Confidentiality After Closure**

Confidentiality obligations continue after support has ended.

Employees and volunteers must:

- Continue to protect personal information.
- Follow confidentiality requirements.
- Maintain professional boundaries.

Records must be managed in accordance with organisational policies.

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## **23. Volunteer Support Following Closure**

Volunteers may require support following the closure of a longstanding support relationship.

Support may include:

- Debriefing discussions.
- Supervision.
- Reflective practice.
- Wellbeing support.

Managers should remain mindful of the emotional impact of endings.

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## **24. Service Closure Flowchart**

### **Review Need for Closure**

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Identify Reason for Closure

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Risk and Support Needs Reviewed

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Closure Discussion Held

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Signposting / Referrals Considered

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Feedback Obtained

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Closure Records Completed

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Service Closed

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Learning and Review

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## **25. Case Study**

### **Scenario: Support Goals Achieved**

A service user was referred due to loneliness following retirement and loss of regular social contact.

#### **Support Provided**

- Weekly companionship visits.
- Introduction to a community wellbeing group.
- Support accessing local social activities.

#### **Review Findings**

After twelve months:

- The service user regularly attends community activities.
- New friendships have been established.
- Confidence and wellbeing have improved.

#### **Action Taken**

- A closure review is completed.
- Community contacts are confirmed.
- Feedback is gathered.
- Support ends by mutual agreement.

### **Outcome**

The service user maintains community connections and no longer requires regular companionship support.

### **Learning Point**

Service closure can be a positive outcome when support goals have been successfully achieved.

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## **26. Responsibilities**

### **Managers**

Responsible for:

- Authorising service closures.
- Reviewing closure decisions.
- Managing risks.
- Supporting transitions.
- Ensuring records are completed.

### **Volunteer Coordinators**

Responsible for:

- Managing volunteer-related transitions.
- Supporting rematching arrangements.
- Providing volunteer support.

### **Employees**

Responsible for:

- Conducting closure reviews.
- Communicating with service users.
- Completing records.

## **Volunteers**

Responsible for:

- Supporting planned endings appropriately.
  - Maintaining professional boundaries.
  - Reporting concerns during closure arrangements.
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## **27. Monitoring and Quality Assurance**

The organisation will monitor:

- Service closure reasons.
- Outcome achievement.
- Feedback received.
- Rematching activity.
- Safeguarding concerns.
- Closure review completion.
- Service user satisfaction.

Monitoring information will support service development and continuous improvement.

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## **28. Review Arrangements**

This procedure will be reviewed:

- Annually.
  - Following safeguarding reviews.
  - Following significant incidents.
  - Following service user feedback.
  - Following organisational changes.
  - Following legislative or regulatory updates.
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## **Related Policies**

- Person-Centred Support Policy
- Adult Safeguarding Policy

- Volunteer Management Policy
- Service User Review and Outcome Monitoring Procedure
- Volunteer and Service User Matching Procedure
- Complaints Policy
- Records Management and Record Keeping Policy
- Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement Policy