SERVICE CLOSURE AND EXIT PROCEDURE

PRN-119: Service Closure and Exit Procedure
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Trading/Business Name: CAREHOPES
Company Registration Number: 15556946
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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.

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