

26 September 2023

Dear Resident,

Safety and Security remains, as always, our number one priority for residents and staff.

On 21 August we received a report from a family member of a resident that passed away, while packing up the home, that they suspect someone had gained access to the house as the content looked disturbed between their visits. The SAPS was contacted immediately to open a case. They sent detectives to the village to investigate and possibly try lift some fingerprints from the scene.

On 31 August, another resident, reported upon getting home after a 21 day stay in our care centre, that items are missing from his home. Once again, SAPS were contacted immediately and detectives were dispatched to the village to investigate and try gather evidence.

I can confirm that in both these cases, nobody was home. It is believed that access was gained to both these houses via a window left open to air the home and that there was no sign of forced entry.

Management, together with Grinnell security, immediately started our own investigation of these matters. We viewed hours of CCTV footage, and interviewed staff to identify possible suspects. It was difficult to pin point the exact dates and times where possible access to the homes could have been gained due to them being vacant.

Twelve members of staff were interviewed and from that six staff member were sent for polygraph tests, this included both village and healthcare staff as well as service providers. All these staff members passed their polygraph tests – NDI – No Deception Indicated.

Upon further investigation two more staff members were identified as possible suspects, they were immediately suspended, and a notice to attend a polygraph test and disciplinary hearing was issued.

These two staff members did not arrive for the arranged hearing and any attempt to contact them have proved fruitless. Although we cannot confirm, but due to their actions and absconding, we are confident that these two suspects were possibly the intruders.

Management has worked hard behind the scenes on this matter for the past month, there was no breach of our perimeter or our front gate. All security protocols were followed and I am proud of management and security in the manner that this incident has been dealt with. At no stage was there physical danger to any other residents in respect to these incidents. These were opportunistic incidents that could only have been avoided if the windows of the homes were closed.

I would like to reassure residents that Evergreen Lifestyle and Evergreen Health has a strict employment policy, which includes background checks on all employees prior to being employed.

We recently sent out correspondence to remind residents once again to be cautious of their safety, regardless of living in a security estate. Please close windows and doors when leaving your home and when going out.

To this end, we have started the process of ensuring all private domestics, gardeners and carers are put through the same background checks as our employees. We want to do everything in our ability to avoid any incidents in the future. We urge residents to cooperate with us in this regard.

Whilst we are on security, a reminder of the protocol around deliveries of medicine and or groceries (Pick n Pay) to residents in the apartments. We call the resident to ask them if they expecting a delivery, if they confirm we tell them it is at reception to please come down and receive and pay where necessary.

If for some reason they are unable to, we send the delivery person to the resident. The medicine and grocery delivery people are known to reception, as they are the same people that come daily.

This is no different to a delivery to a house, security or reception call the resident to see if they are there, and then they deliver to the house.

Before COVID all deliveries went directly to residents after an initial call and not left at reception as is the case now, thus our security I this instance has been heightened.

All delivery vehicles and drivers get scanned, both their vehicle license disc and their driver's license, thus providing us with more information on the individual.

In general, contractors are issued with a bright orange or yellow bib. In the past on occasions if a contractor has well marked company clothing on, they were not issued with a bib. We have reviewed this and will with immediate effect ensure that ALL contractors entering the village are issued with a bib.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone involved for their ongoing support to ensure that safety and security of our residents remain our priority. Management takes these matters extremely serious.

Kind Regards

Garry Reed
Managing Director | Evergreen Lifestyle