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POLICY STATEMENT

It is a responsibility of management to ensure that Homecare D & D Ltd employs care staff in sufficient numbers and with appropriate skills to respond effectively to the needs of the service users for whom we provide services.

Managers therefore should keep under review the size and composition of the workforce and correlate this with the profile of needs presented by current and predicted service users. Where there is not a good match, necessary action on recruitment or training or in other personnel areas should be initiated.

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE OF INDIVIDUAL CARE WORKERS

Homecare D & D Ltd wishes to provide as wide a range of skills as possible to meet the needs and preferences of service users. Line managers therefore should keep the capabilities of each of the care workers for whom they are responsible under review.

The objective should be to add to the care workers' skills and experience through balanced and varied workloads, incorporating new sorts of work if possible, and through appropriate training and supervision, so that they are able to make as broad a contribution to the work of the agency as possible.

MATCHING CARE WORKERS TO SERVICE USERS

When Homecare D & D Ltd accepts a referral and agrees to provide a service, the responsible manager needs to take care that the new work is allocated to a care worker who has the appropriate skills and experience to meet the needs and preferences of the new service user. This is of course subject to other workload pressures, but for every new case we should seek as good a match between the service user and the care worker as is possible.

The following will be taken into consideration

- Gender
- Honesty and reliability
- Personality
- Age
- Cultural/ethnic/religious background and have an awareness of diversity and human rights to support the Service User in their care
- Temperament to respond to the changing needs of their Service User
- Interests, Hobbies and Knowledge
- Specific skills training and updates as required
- Can promote the independence, support the dignity and understand the physical and emotional needs of the Service User
- Have the necessary positive checks (DBS)
- The supervision of new workers
- Are entitled to work in the United Kingdom
- Can demonstrate competency if recruited outside of the United Kingdom
- Are physically and mentally able to carry out the role
- Are not placed at risk through an existing condition or illness
- Are not placing a Service User at risk through an existing condition or illness

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- Are able to communicate effectively with Service Users using their preferred method and with other staff and so not to compromise the service provided
- Any preferences expressed by the service user will be recorded in their care plan at the initial visit.

MEETING THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF INDIVIDUAL SERVICE USERS

The process of matching a care worker to the specific needs and preferences of a service user becomes even more important where a service user has specific needs arising from dementia, mental health problems, sensory impairment, physical disabilities, learning disabilities or substance misuse problems, or where our service is for intermediate care or respite care. In any of these instances, the manager responsible for case allocation must ensure that the worker allocated to the service user has the appropriate skills and experience and is prepared carefully for the new work.

Use might be made of knowledge possessed by other care workers for briefing a worker new to such a situation, and managers should use the opportunities of internal training and group supervision sessions to facilitate this sort of sharing.

MAKING CHANGES OF CARE WORKER ALLOCATED

In certain circumstances it will be necessary to change the Service User's care worker allocated. These circumstances are listed below:

- In cases where the care worker has reported sick, is on holiday, or is unavailable through attending training courses, left the agency or has a re-arranged duty rota.
- The Service Users physical/psychological condition changes and the care worker have not got the requisite skills, specialist training or physical capacity to continue the care.
- The Service User has the right to request a change of care worker at any time. If a request is made, the Service User will be advised to contact the co-ordinator; a record of the request is to be written into the Service User notes.

The service user will be informed immediately should any changes to care worker be made and care taken to ensure the new care worker has the skills and knowledge to fully carry out the service required.

ALLOCATION OF TWO CARE WORKERS

1. The manager will plan the calls with two care staff to arrive at the scheduled call at the allocated time.
2. The service cannot commence until both staff are present.
3. If one member of staff is absent from a double up call that requires two people for safe practice this should be reported to the manager or if out of office hours report to the "On Call"
4. Another member of staff will be allocated to attend, if this results in the call being later then the service user will need to be informed of this. Everything practicable needs to be done to ensure the service is provided safely.
5. Only trained staff can use the specified equipment that is required and hold a current 'Moving and Positioning Certificate'

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6. If a family member or representative of the service user wishes to be involved in the manual handling of the service user proof of training in Manual Handling procedures and equipment is required. Training needs to be at the required Standard. If this is not provided then the family member or their representative cannot be involved in any manual handling procedures.
7. A manual handling risk assessment will be completed and where practicable action taken to eliminate/reduce the risks identified
8. All the above will be reported to the General Manager and the head officer. A discussion will take place to evaluate the actions and implement any long term actions were practicable.

Wherever possible, service users and advocates will be consulted about any changes prior to them happening. In all cases the service user will have the final decision as to whether a care worker is acceptable for his/her needs.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF SERVICE USERS FROM MINORITY GROUPS

Similar care must be taken in selecting a care worker to take on the care of a new service user from an ethnic, social, cultural or religious minority. Homecare D & D Ltd cannot and would not wish to guarantee that a service user would invariably be assisted by a care worker from the same group, but we should make use of the personal knowledge gained from a care worker's membership of a minority group where this is appropriate.

A care worker's ability to understand the language of choice of a service user may be particularly helpful. Where a care worker is to become responsible for the care of a member of a minority with which he or she has not previously has much experience, the care worker should be carefully briefed so as to be able to provide appropriate services with tact.

Some matters should be carefully briefed so as to be able to provide appropriate services with tact. Some matters such as diets, toileting procedures and religious observations may involve areas of particular sensitivity.

INTERMEDIATE AND RESPITE CARE

When Homecare D & D Ltd is asked to provide a short term service as, or contributing to, a respite care or intermediate care service, special steps need to be taken to ensure that the allocated worker understands and is capable of responding to the particular demands and pressures of these forms of service.

LISTENING TO SERVICE USERS

We have a responsibility at all times to ascertain and take into account the wishes and feelings of service users. Care workers who pick up any views about the service from a service user with whom they are working should pass these on to their supervisor, who should consider the implications both for that particular service user and for the service in general. All staff should encourage and help service users to make decisions about their care.

SERVICE USERS' RIGHT TO CHOICE

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We have a responsibility to provide service users with full information about services and offer opportunities for choice wherever possible.

If a service user expresses a wish to change the pattern of the service they receive, for example a variation in the number, length or timing of care worker visits; this should be reported to the supervisor and immediately considered.

If a service user expresses a wish for a change of care worker, this should be similarly reported and explored by the supervisor.

If it appears that Homecare D & D Ltd is not able to meet the needs or preferences of a newly referred service user, the manager should give consideration to advising on an alternative source of service, either by referring the service user to the social services department or by directly suggesting another agency.

If a situation arises where an existing service user develops needs or preferences that the current care worker is not able to meet, the manager or supervisor should consider whether an alternative care worker would be more suitable and to arrange this if appropriate.

If exceptionally it appears that in any way we are unable to continue to meet the service user's requirements, they should be referred elsewhere and appropriate arrangements made for Homecare D & D Ltd to be terminated.

If the service we provide is likely to be varied to any significant degree for a service user whose fees are being paid by a social services department, the manager should take steps to consult and obtain authorisation from the responsible social services care manager before implementing any change.

ENCOURAGING SERVICE USERS' AUTONOMY

All staff should take steps to ensure that the provision of our service does not undermine a service user's capacity to take decisions about their own care.

Care workers should take every opportunity to stress to service users with whom they work that they retain the right to organise their own lives and that our task is to meet their requirements as best as possible.

Supervisors should take a similar stance when making monitoring visits. Managers are responsible for ensuring that this position is reflected in all of Homecare D & D Ltd literature and in communications with service users and others.

TRAINING

Homecare D & D Ltd is obliged to see that all services are demonstrably based on good practice and reflect the relevant clinical and specialist guidance. The manager is responsible for reviewing new publications, government documents and professional guidance as it appears, for considering its relevance to our work, and where necessary for instituting appropriate changes in working practice, instructions to staff and staff training.

All staff will receive full training in meeting the individual needs of the service user through induction and a qualification in National Occupational Standards and attending updates as required.

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