 **Promise Care Services Ltd**

**CONTINUITY OF CARE FOR SUPPORT WORKERS**

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Policy Statement

This document sets out the circumstances that may result in a change of worker from the regular service users care, team. This occurs for all sorts of reasons, but particularly when sickness takes place. This organisation believes that to deliver a quality service, continuity of care is paramount. This policy sets out when changes would need to be made.

This document outlines the procedures of this organisation concerning the exceptional circumstances in which a change of a service user’s care or support workers might be unavoidable.

The Policy

To comply fully with the Fundamental Standard Regulations, this organisation must organise staff and staff duties so that sufficient numbers of experienced, skilled, and competent staff are on duty at all times.

* The registered manager has to take sufficient steps to ensure that, at all times, there are sufficient numbers of suitably qualified, skilled, and experienced staff to carry out the regulated activity.
* This means that staff sickness, absence, and holiday cover must be planned and managed so that the delivery of service to the service user is not compromised.
* It also means taking into account the needs and preferences of the service user to ensure that the services delivered meet their needs.
* This includes, when necessary, taking account of any fluctuating needs.
* This includes the procuring and use of agency staff where required.

General Rules for Replacing Workers

A manager or supervisor who has to arrange for a replacement worker should observe the following general rules:

* Consult the service user or their representative if possible and if time permits. This is advisable in every case but is dependent on circumstances.
* Unless the previous worker was found to be unsatisfactory, always use a worker who, as near as possible, replicates the skills, experience, and knowledge of the worker being replaced.
* If the service user has several workers supplying service, consider whether one of the other existing workers could be available. This could be made possible by extending hours or by shifting from other duties but avoid setting off chains of changes that disrupt other service users.
* If the service user has had other workers in the past and was satisfied with them, consider whether they could be available.
* Ensure that the newly-allocated worker is briefed both by you and, if feasible, by the worker being replaced.
* If there is time, ensure that the newly-allocated worker receives appropriate specialist training before starting to provide service or as soon after as possible.
* Apologise fully, express sympathy, and, as far as possible, provide support to the service user and their carer or representative throughout the process.
* In cases where a service user has communication or comprehension difficulties, take special care to ensure, as far as possible, that they understand what is happening, and that the position has been explained to the service user’s relative or representative if there is one.
* In cases where a service user is receiving substantial help from a carer, ensure that the situation is fully explained to the carer, as well as to the service user.
* Remember that obligations exist to staff as well as to service users. In particular, be careful not to reveal confidential information about a staff member.
* In communicating with a service user or their representative, always consider whether it would be best for a care worker who is familiar with the service user to carry out this function on the company’s behalf.

Agency Staff

Agency staff must be of a competent and high calibre so that the quality of care delivery is unaffected by their use. Concerning agency staff, the following process must be followed

* A contractual arrangement must be in place with a reputable supplier of care agency workers.
* As part of the contractual arrangement, a small team of care or support workers must be available to us to be able to call on when required.
* As part of the arrangement, we must ensure that all staff who are available to us have undergone the appropriate recruitment and regulatory checks.
* It is not enough for the agency to state that these have been done - evidence must be obtained that details the completion of such checks, including the DBS disclosure number.
* Staff who are required to have a specific level of qualification, e.g. Level 3, must also have evidence of the required qualification, their training record, and a programme of personal development.
* Any agency staff must undergo our induction concerning policies, procedures, and practice.
* As an organisation committed to continuity of care and the quality of our care, an review of our agency supplier will take place annually or before if there is an issue with the continuity or the competency of the assigned staff.
* We are currently contracted with the following agencies **BLESSING EZIKE.**

Specific Reasons for Making a Change

The worker is unavailable at short notice

Most sickness absence is unpredictable, so quick action is likely to be needed to fill the gap created by the non-availability of a worker. An attempt should be made to work out how long the absence is likely to be and to make a plan to cover the whole period, rather than proceeding on a day-to-day basis. An absence arising from special or compassionate leave should be similarly handled.

Worker on holiday or training

It should usually be possible to anticipate absences resulting from holidays or training, make careful replacement plans, and explain the situation fully to the service user in advance.

A worker leaves the organisation

It should usually be possible to anticipate absences resulting from a worker leaving the company, make careful replacement plans, and explain the situation fully to the service user in advance.

Sudden, Unpredicted Need to Change Worker Permanently

If a worker, e.g. leaves the company without notice or it becomes necessary to change a worker urgently for any of the reasons listed, quick action is likely to be needed to fill the gap. Consideration should be given as to whether it is possible to make an alternative long-term arrangement immediately or whether a temporary arrangement is necessary until a more satisfactory long-term replacement can be available.

Service Requirements Change in Ways that Make it Impossible for the Worker to Continue

If a situation arises in which it becomes apparent that a worker does not have the necessary skills, physical capacity, or training to deal with a service user’s changed needs, or cannot be available for additional hours or changed times, it should usually be possible to anticipate the development and make planned arrangements for a replacement. If not, the point above applies.

Service User Requests a Change of Worker

If the service user requests a change of worker, the manager should, of course, explore the reasons. In most cases, since we always aim to meet service users’ requirements, the request should be met. Even if the request seems unreasonable, it may be wise to make a change, as the relationship with the existing worker may deteriorate further. Only if the request seems flippant or if there are repeated requests, should we hesitate to comply with a service user’s wishes. Before making the change, the manager should discuss the request with the worker to obtain as full a picture as possible; support the worker, if appropriate; and, if the worker was indeed unsatisfactory, initiate any other necessary action, e.g. further training, increased support or supervision, or, in serious cases, discipline. Subject to some discretion, the manager should confidentially brief the replacement worker on what happened.

A Non-Professional Relationship Has Developed

If a non-professional relationship has developed between a service user and a worker, it is usually necessary to act swiftly, but the service user should still be consulted as fully as possible about the replacement. The manager should then assess whether the incident should lead to further training, disciplinary or other action in respect of the worker and, subject to some discretion, should confidentially brief the replacement worker on what happened.

An Assignment Causes Severe Stress for a Worker

If it is necessary to relieve a worker because of the stress the assignment generates, the situation should usually be anticipated and a carefully planned replacement introduced with full consultation. The new worker should, of course, be confidentially briefed on what has happened and, if appropriate, be provided with additional support. Careful consideration should be given to the future workload and support needs of the worker replaced.

Worker Suffers Abuse or Discrimination

If a worker suffers abuse or discrimination to an extent that they need to withdraw from a service user, the manager should thoroughly explore the situation and consider whether the organisation can continue to provide a service. If it is decided to continue, any replacement worker should be thoroughly briefed on the risks of the situation. The service user or their representative should still be consulted as fully as possible about the replacement, but they should be warned that any recurrence of the abuse or discrimination may prejudice the continuance of the service.

Related Policies

Business Contingency and Emergency Planning

Confidentiality

Data Protection Legislative Framework (UK GDPR)

Dignity and Respect

Equality and Diversity

Meeting Needs

Responsive Services

Related Guidance

CQC Key Lines of Enquiry for Adult Social Care Services:

https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/adult-social-care/key-lines-enquiry-adult-social-care-services

CQC Adult Social Care Key Lines of Enquiry and Prompts: Source of Evidence:

https://www.cqc.org.uk/sites/default/files/20180530%209001095%20ASC%20assessment%20framework%20with%20sources%20of%20evidence%20v4%2000.pdf

Training Statement

All staff, during induction, are made aware of the organisation’s policies and procedures, all of which are used for training updates. All policies and procedures are reviewed and amended where necessary, and staff are made aware of any changes. Observations are undertaken to check skills and competencies. Various methods of training are used, including one to one, online, workbook, group meetings, and individual supervisions. External courses are sourced as required.

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Person responsible for updating this policy: **IFEYINWA ODOEMENAM**

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