 **Promise Care Services Ltd**

# MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Scope

* **Policy Statement**
* **The Policy**
* Scope with Regard to Timesheets, Visits and Journeys
* Electronic Call Monitoring
* Spot Checks
* The Use of Time Sheets
* **Related Policies**
* **Related Guidance**
* **Training Statement**

Policy Statement

This organisation provides its care staff with a schedule of visits, which provides for some flexibility insofar as each set of work tasks always needs to be completed fully and to the satisfaction of the Service User. This can sometimes result in the schedule being disrupted or delayed.

This organisation also operates on the basis that a degree of trust must be placed in staff to carry out their work satisfactorily and that it encourages transparency and honesty in their use of time. It expects staff to communicate any difficulties that they experience, e.g. in travelling and in obtaining entry to a Service User’s home.

The organisation’s Missing Persons Policy and Service User’s Home Security Policy address the main contingencies in which visits might not be completed as scheduled or result in delays; these can disrupt the rest of the worker’s schedule.

In all of these instances, the care worker is expected to contact their supervisor, line manager or office at the earliest opportunity and to discuss appropriate ways of proceeding.

The Policy

This policy makes clear this organisation’s expectations concerning the completion of worksheets used to record the making of a call or visit to a Service User’s home, and the accountability of staff with regards to their conduct using social networking sites. The policy includes how this organisation monitors staff working patterns and the actions that it takes if it discovers that staff have been falsifying records, e.g., by recording that they have made a visit when, for some reason, it has not been made. The need for such a policy has arisen because of a (hopefully small) number of publicised incidents in which domiciliary care workers have been known to have falsified time or worksheets.

Scope with Regard to Timesheets, Visits and Journeys

The policy applies to all care staff who have a schedule of visits and who need to record accurately the fact that:

* The visit has been made.
* The duration of the visit.
* Journey time(s) between visits.

Electronic Call Monitoring

It is an integral part of our monitoring policies that we explicitly include electronic call monitoring as part of the process. Electronic data monitoring is a routine part of adult social care and is often part of contractual arrangements between providers and local authorities (LA) or health service commissioners. For clarity, electronic monitoring covers the following:

* Telephony systems to include mobile phones, all business lines operating from an office base, and any phone data downloaded to an electronic mobile device.
* Off-the-shelf or bespoke, individual systems operated by, or on behalf of the business, which is used to electronically track and validate service provision e.g. staff visits, timesheets, or schedules, e.g. CM 2000, Quickplan or icare, etc.
* Any off-the-shelf, or, bespoke system used in the calculation of wages, salaries, mileage etc as part of staff payroll services.

The data collected from any electronic monitoring system/device is used, handled, shared, and stored subject to the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

Staff, during their induction training, are made aware of the use of any such devices and where appropriate are trained in their use.

Service Users are informed during their assessment of the purpose and use of any system and its use is covered in their contractual arrangements with the organisation.

Where the use of any electronic system is part of the local authorities or health service contract, this will be covered within their contract.

Any updated versions of such electronic systems will be installed by the provider or LA or health service commissioners: whoever is the provider of the system.

Spot Checks

An important part of monitoring the service is to carry out regular spot checks. Spot checks provide valuable insight into measuring the experience of people that use the service and also assessing the competency of staff in carrying out their duties effectively.

Spot checks should be carried out by a competent and experienced person who has the skills and knowledge to be able to observe and assess the care being provided.

There should be a schedule for routine spot checks for every member of staff and every Service User. You should identify the number and frequency of spot checks based on the number of Service Users and staff. The more you have the more spot checks should be done. Consideration should also be given to the complexity of the Service Users’ needs, the more complex it’s likely more spot checks are needed.

If there are concerns around the quality of care or the performance/reliability of a staff member, then spot checks must be carried out as soon as possible and be unannounced.

The assessor should introduce themselves and explain to the Service User before carrying out the spot check, the reason why they are there and seek the Service User’s approval to continue with the spot check.

Examples of what a spot would check cover

* The punctuality of the staff member
* Is the staff member wearing their uniform, sensible clothing, and footwear?
* Wearing their ID badge
* Knocking and introducing themselves when entering
* Seeking the person’s consent to carry out their duties
* How the staff member interacts with the Service User
* Are they communicating in an accessible way?
* Following effective infection control procedures, such as using and disposing of PPE
* Do they read the care plan and care notes before they carry out any caring duties?
* Do they explain what they are going to do and give the Service User the choice to agree or refuse?
* Following safe medication procedures
* Are safe moving and handling procedures being followed such as checking equipment before use?
* Is care delivered with dignity and respect including privacy?
* Ask the Service User if there is anything else they need before they leave
* Complete the daily records in a clear and legible fashion – visit sheets, mar charts etc.
* When leaving do they ensure the property is secure?

Spot checks are also an opportunity to explore the staff member’s understanding of company procedures such as reporting a concern or what to do in the event of a fire. It’s important for the check to be a two-way process by asking the staff member if they have any concerns about their role or how they are being treated.

It’s also an opportunity to seek the views of the Service User to establish their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the service.

The assessor should complete, date, and sign the observations on the spot check review form (the staff member should also sign the form) and use the information to:

* Prompt a review of the care plan
* Prompt supervision with the staff member
* Prompt any potential disciplinary action
* Identify additional training needs
* Raise and report any safeguarding concerns

Copies of spot checks should be placed in the staff & Service User’s files and the schedule updated with the date of the next spot checks.

Spot checks shouldn’t be considered as a method to “checkup” on somebody, a spot check should be viewed and promoted as an opportunity to communicate and improve the quality of the service and staff wellbeing.

The Use of Time Sheets

The time or worksheets that the organisation asks a care worker to complete daily provide a tool to enable the business to exercise its accountability for the service that it provides to its users and its commissioners.

To complete the timesheet, the organisation requires the care worker to record the times of arrival at, and departure from the Service User’s place of residence, obtaining the Service User’s signature or that of someone else in the household wherever possible. If this is not possible, the space should be left blank. The organisation will try to obtain specimen copies of authorised signatures from Service Users or representatives in advance to help with the checking.

The line manager will collect time sheets weekly and carry out a check, to assess and validate that visits have been made as planned, and to take note of any issues indicated by the records. The manager might make spot checks by telephoning a sample of Service Users to make sure they have received the visits as planned and to discuss any quality issues that have arisen.

When making supervisory visits to Service Users’ homes to comply with the Fundamental Standards, the manager will also check care plans and records held in the home to verify that the visits have taken place as planned. Managers will also use review meetings as a means of monitoring.

The organisation expects that its care staff will be able to account for any significant discrepancies or departures from the agreed schedules. It will use staff meetings and supervision to discuss any workload difficulties that might be experienced.

However, the organisation expects honesty and transparency and will take disciplinary measures if it discovers that there has been deliberate falsifying of timesheets and that care workers have failed to carry out their agreed work schedules. This could result in a worker’s dismissal.

In addition, if it has been proved that care workers by their misconduct for example, not making calls when they have recorded them has caused harm or possible harm to Service Users, the business will be legally required to refer them for possible inclusion on the DBS Barred List, which would bar them from future care work. In some cases, the business might need to refer the matter to the police if it believes the care worker might have committed a criminal offence.

Related Policies

Appraisal

Code of Conduct for Workers

Data Protection Legislative Framework (UK GDPR)

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and (DBS) Referral

Internet, Email and Mobile Phone (Acceptable Use)

Supervision

Related Guidance

Employee Handbook

Skills for Care: Code of Conduct for Healthcare Support Workers and Social Care Workers

www.skillsforcare.org.uk

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.

Date Reviewed: May 2023

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

Next Review Date: May 2024