



Service Users

Handbook

www.caretakerssouthwest.co.uk

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A Introduction

We Caretakers SW Ltd have written this handbook to help you manage your care packages and work better with all the people and organisations involved in your care. We aim to provide you with an appropriate service as set out in our aims and objectives.

B Equal Opportunities

We believe that you have the right to choose and be independent. We take this view when forming all our policies and procedures.

In line with our policy, we will not discriminate against you on grounds of your:

- Age;
- Sex;
- Sexuality;
- Disability;
- Race;
- Colour;
- Nationality;
- Religion; or
- Ethnic origin.

We regularly review our procedures for managing your care package to make sure we follow this policy. We respect your right to manage your life and make your own choices.

If you break any part of our equal opportunities policy (for example, you racially abuse your care worker), we may withdraw our services.

C Care Plans

1 Care Plans and Work plans

Care plan

Under community care laws, you are entitled to have your care needs assessed. The Social Services department of your local authority will arrange for one of their care managers to assess your needs if you feel you cannot manage very well by yourself and need help. The care manager will discuss the council guidelines on how they assess your care needs and what services they think are appropriate for you. They will then work out a care plan for you. Your care plan will say:

- The type of service you will get;
- When you will get the service; and
- How long the service will last.

The care manager will then choose a care provider and, in your case, Caretakers SW Ltd has been asked to provide your service.

If you come to us privately, our own care managers will help you work out your care plan, and we follow similar procedures in how we assess your care needs.

Work plan

We will then work out a temporary work plan which will set out in detail how we will provide our service. We will send you the temporary work plan and the care worker who comes to work with you will use the work plan to carry out their duties. During the first few days of your service we will contact you quite a lot. Before the service starts we will phone you to tell you the name of your care worker. The day after the service we will phone you just to check that the care worker has arrived and everything is all right. One of our supervisors will visit you no later than 10 days after the service starts to discuss the work plan with you to make sure your care worker is carrying out all their duties in the way you have agreed. Our supervisor will write down what you tell them and use this in your final work plan for us to use, especially if your care worker is ill or on holiday. Your final care plan will help any new care worker who comes to work with you because they will know exactly what to do and how to do it. This work plan also forms your contract with us.

2 A flexible Care Plan

We appreciate that it is not easy for you to have a stranger in your home doing things for you which you would rather do yourself. Your care worker will as flexible as possible in the way they carry out their duties, but they must stick to your care plan. If you want to change the time of day they visit you, we will do our best to change this and tell the Care Trust.

If a service you receive is set out in your care plan we can't change this without permission from the Care Trust.

If you have arranged your care plan with us privately you will be able to make any changes through us.

3 How To Change Your Work plan

Your care worker is not allowed to make any changes to your care plan or the work plan. We can make changes to the work plan if you need them, but only Care Trust can make changes to your care plan.

For example, you may have a service which says "housework and shopping between 2pm and 3.30pm". you can ask us to change the time and the day, but we cannot increase the time your care worker spends on a particular duty and can't carry out extra housework instead of shopping. You will have to ask Social Services if you want to change the amount of time your care worker spends on certain duties, but if you have arranged your care plan with us privately you can arrange any changes with our care office.

4 How To Cancel Your Work Plan

If you want to cancel a service for a day or permanently, you must tell Care Trust or us (and we will tell Social Services for you). If you have arranged your care plan with us privately you only need to tell us.

Please give us some notice if you need to cancel a service so that we can make arrangements to find new work for the care worker.

D Your Care Worker

1 Code Of Conduct For All Staff And Care Workers

When we employ new staff, and before they start work for us, we will give them an induction (an introduction to their job and what we do). We ask them to promise to follow our code of practice as set out below. This is followed up by an enhanced Criminal Bureau check.

Code Of Practice For All Staff And Care Workers

I will respect users of our service as individuals, and ensure that their dignity and legal rights are safeguarded.

I will address the service user in the manner they request and not use terms such as “love” or “dear”.

I will not act in a prejudiced manner towards service users in respect of their ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, age or disability.

I will not reject service users or be less concerned for their well being even if obliged to protect others against them.

I will recognise my responsibility to help service users obtain services or facilities to which they are entitled.

I will respect the privacy of service users and the treat information gained from my relationship with them as confidential.

I will ensure that information passed to me will not be passed to anyone without prior knowledge and informed consent.

I will not take unauthorised persons, including children and pets, to the service users home during my working hours.

I will not use the service users telephone unless requested to do so by the service user to act on their behalf, except in the case of an emergency.

I will not smoke in the service users home, even if the service user is smoker themselves.

I will not accept gifts or legacies from any service user, nor will I become involved in their will making or accept power of attorney.

I will not give gifts to the service user as this might put them under an obligation.

I will restrict my financial involvement with the service user to what is in the care plan.

I will wear appropriate clothing and avoid wearing jewellery.

I will always carry my ID card when working and show it when required.

I will pay careful attention to the safety of the service user.

I will take care not to carry large sums of money.

I will keep Care Trust informed of any matters which will assist me working according to this code of practice.

Our supervisors must make sure that our care workers keep to our code of practice. A supervisor will visit you regularly to discuss our services with you. If you would like to see a supervisor for any reason contact our offices.

Our care workers do not work for an agency. They are employed by us and covered by our insurance policy. This means that you are insured against any loss or damage your care worker may cause. We are insured with a company recommended by the United Kingdom Home Care Association (our professional trade association).

2 What To Do If Your Care Worker Does Not Visit You When They Are Supposed To

You have the right to expect your care worker to arrive at the times you have agreed in your care plan. Sometimes a care worker can be delayed due to circumstances they could not have predicted. If this happens we expect them to phone us and we will phone you to let you know what is happening. If your care worker has not arrived within 20 minutes of the expected time, please phone one of our care managers who will look into what has happened straight away and, if necessary, send you a replacement care worker.

3 Your Right To Change Your Care Worker

We always do our best to match you with a care worker you can get on with. Sometimes we get it wrong and you do not get on with your care worker or their skills do not match your expectations (for example, if your care worker has to prepare your meals and they are not a very good cook). If this happens we will try to find you a care worker who can match your needs better.

Sometimes your care worker may not get on with you or be able to work in your home (for example, if you smoke heavily), and in this situation we would give the care worker a chance to change.

There are occasions where we would not be able to agree to change a care worker, for example, if you asked us to change your care worker for a reason that would be considered to be racist. If you cannot reach an agreement with your care worker we might ask you to ask Social Services to find you another agency to provide you with a care worker (see "termination of service")

4 Male And Female Care Workers

We limit situations where a male care worker looks after a woman or the other way round because this can often cause distress.

Personal care

We will always offer you a care worker of the same sex for personal care unless you ask us for a different arrangement. Often, men are used to female care workers and often prefer it. However, if you are a man who has a history of sexual harassment, we will refuse to give a female care worker.

If you need two care workers we will do our best to provide two care workers of the same sex, but if we cannot do this we will provide one care worker of the opposite sex in the short-term as long as we have your permission.

Domestic care and escorting

We will provide a qualified care worker for this service not matter what their sex.

If you are from an ethnic minority

We understand that in some religions it is not acceptable for people of different sexes to mix and in these cases, we will take this into account when we offer you a care worker.

5 Medication

Help with medication falls into the following two categories.

Your care worker will:

- Tell you to take your medication at the correct time, and help you get your repeat prescriptions and other medication; and
- Help you prepare your medication, for example, by shaking the bottle, removing the lid and so on.

If appropriate, you should use a dosett box or something similar. We encourage our care workers to ask for advice and we consult community nurses on their behalf.

Your care worker must keep a record of anything they do involving your medicines so that other care workers or your relatives can use this record if they need to give you your medicine. Your care worker will keep a record of your medication in your home.

Your care worker must not recommend or give any medicines which you have not been prescribed or have not been bought for you.

Your care worker must respect your right to be independent and must keep the details of your medication confidential.

If for any reason you choose to refuse to take your medication, this is your right. It is your care worker's responsibility to explain the risk you take by doing this. They will have to tell us if you refuse or choose not to take your medication, but they must not force you to take it against your will.

Your care worker will only be able to help you with your medication if it is listed in your care plan.

6 Timesheets

The timesheet is the document which tells us that your care worker has visited you when they were supposed to and that they have carried out their duties. It is proof which your care worker needs to get paid. Your care worker will give us their timesheets every week and we tell them to ask you to sign their timesheets every day. They must not ask you to sign the timesheet for a whole week in one go, or ask you to sign a timesheet for future date. This is to protect you and to make sure that your care worker visits you each time they are supposed to. Please help us by refusing to sign your care worker's timesheet if they ask you to sign for a whole week or for a future date. If your care worker does not visit you or does not stay and provide the full service as set out in your care plan you do not have sign their timesheet. If you feel intimidated and not able to refuse to sign your care worker's timesheet please sign it and then contact us immediately.

You may find it difficult to sign a timesheet, for example, if your sight is not very good or you have painful arthritis. If this is the case, please tell us so that we can make other arrangements.

7 Money And Finances

We will encourage you to manage your own finances or manage them with help from a relative or friend.

If this is not possible and it becomes part of the care plan, we will draw up an agreement which clearly sets out who is responsible for doing what. Your care worker must use a cash transaction sheet and keep receipts for anything they buy for you. Your care worker will ask to check and sign the cash transaction sheet and give you a copy together with all the receipts and any change left over. They will send us the cash transaction sheet which we will check and keep. Please check your receipts and change carefully before you sign the cash transaction sheet.

Your care worker is not allowed unlimited access to your accounts, and they are not allowed to use your cash card and PIN or look after cash for you.

You should tell us immediately if you think your care worker has stolen from you. You have a right to report the matter to the police and we will help you to do this.

8 Making A Will And Witnessing Documents

It is our policy not to allow our care workers or their friends and relatives help you make or witness a will, even if they are not going to gain financially from it. Your care worker must not witness any legal document for you or agree to be power of attorney.

We understand that you will trust a care worker who has been with you for a long time and rely on their help for many things. But we have introduced this rule to protect you and your care worker. Your family or friends should help you make your will or, if this is not possible, you should get help from a professional such as a solicitor or notary.

9 Gifts

Your care worker should not accept gifts from you under any circumstances. Care workers must not give you presents which may make you feel obliged to your care worker (for example, they may use the situation to their advantage by not turning up sometimes and expect you not to tell us).

We know that you appreciate the work our care workers do for you, often carried out over a long period of time, and you may want to show your appreciation. You would put your care worker into a really difficult situation by persuading them to accept a gift from you. They could lose their job and we could lose our contract.

If you want to show how satisfied you are with your care worker you could tell us and we may reward your care worker with a commendation and a small prize.

10 ID Cards, Key Safe, Passwords And Codes

Sometimes you will need to give your care worker a key, perhaps because you have difficulties getting to the door. This might worry you as you do not know what happens to your key. To reassure you about how your care worker looks after your key we have given them the following instructions.

- They must not label your key with a name and address but use some other way to identify the key, such as a number, colour or picture.
- They must not give the key to anyone else unless we tell them (in writing). If they do not know the person they are giving the key to, they must have a letter from us and they must show you their ID.
- They will also need a password for people who have a door-entry system and cannot come to the door to check an identification card.
- Some door-entry systems have a keypad and the care worker will have to type in the code to get in. They must never tell anyone else this code.
- If the care worker has opened the door they must not let anyone else in who may have arrived at the same time as they did. They should ask them to wait, shut the door and ask you whether they should allow this person in.
- If your care worker thinks that someone has a key or knows a code or password they should tell us immediately.

11 Unauthorised Persons

Your care worker must never bring children, pets or any other person with them when they visit you, and they must not leave children waiting in a car on their own. If this ever happens please let us know.

12 Your Belongings

You should not let your care worker borrow anything from you. This includes:

- Books;
- Videos;
- Tapes;
- Tools;
- Cars; and
- Anything else which belongs to you

13 Food And drink

Your care worker must not accept food and drink from you on a regular basis unless it is set out in your care plan because they have to stay with you for longer. That does not mean your care worker cannot accept a cup of tea at the end of their shift or have a drink to celebrate something with you or have a piece of cake on a special occasion.

14 Buying And selling Goods And services

Your care worker must not buy from or sell goods or services to you. This also covers introducing other people who offer goods or services for sale, such as catalogues or Avon representatives. Your care worker or their relatives are not allowed to work for you privately without our permission.

15 If your Care worker Breaks Something

Your care worker must tell one of our supervisors about all breakages or other damage they cause to your property so we can keep a record of it in our contact book.

One of our supervisors will then look into the situation to see if the damage was caused by an accident. If we find that the care worker was responsible, we will give you compensation. However, we will not compensate you for damage caused by wear and tear.

16 Smoking

Your care worker must not smoke in your home, or go outside for a smoking break while they are on duty.

17 Using The Phone

Your care worker must not use your phone to receive or make personal calls. They may phone us on your behalf, but they should make the call and then ask us to call them back on your phone.

Your care worker must not make or receive personal calls on their mobile while they are on duty

E You, The Service User

1 Your Rights & Responsibilities

It is our policy to acknowledge your rights and responsibilities, including your right to refuse to have a service even where this puts you at risk. You are entitled, as far as possible, to express your views and be treated as a valued member of society.

You have a right to make choices even if they involve risks. This right does not allow you to put your care worker in danger (for example, if you refuse to use the hoist, or lock away an aggressive dog).

Your care worker must tell our supervisors if you are taking risks that put you in danger (for example, if you refuse to eat or to take your medication).

You also have responsibilities to treat your care worker with respect, whatever their social class, ethnic origin and sex. You also have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for the care worker to work in.

2 Confidentiality And Access To Information

We handle all information we receive about you confidentially. It is very important for our care workers to keep to our confidentiality policy. Our care workers need to know some details about you if it helps them to carry out your care plan. You may tell your care worker details about yourself when they are on duty and you have the right to expect them to keep these things confidential (we tell care workers this during their training).

Your care worker should consult you when they prepare written records about you and make sure they do not include any sensitive information about you.

There may be circumstances when your care worker needs to pass information about you to us. In these cases your care worker will speak to a supervisor who will then decide what to do next. This usually applies if:

- You have broken the law and this puts others at risk;
- Information kept from us could put others at risk;
- The information your care worker gives us suggests that you are in danger (for example, you might commit suicide or are very ill); or
- Your care worker thinks you are being abused.

It is our policy to keep to the Data Protection Act and to limit who has access to your information.

Only you, Social Services and our staff are allowed to see information we hold about you. Anyone else (even your family) need your written permission to see information we hold about you.

3 Health And Safety

We have thorough health and safety procedures. You can get a copy of these from our office. We make sure that, as far as we can, we look after your health and safety and that of our care workers.

However, you and your care worker's health and safety largely depends on how you both act. The following especially affects you.

Risk assessment

As we mention in section IV.5 we carry out a risk assessment. If we discover any risk to you or your care worker we must put it right so that your care worker can go on working with you. Risks include things like:

- Dangerous wiring;
- Chemicals stored in ordinary bottles;
- A dog which may bite if someone touches you.

COSSH Regulations

These regulations cover potentially dangerous substances such as cleaning materials and other chemicals. They must always be kept in the original packaging in line with the instructions (COSHH information) printed on them. Your care worker must read the instructions before using these materials.

Infections

We tell our care workers to wear gloves all the time to prevent spreading infection. The gloves they use are for you alone and your care worker must not use them when they work with other people. We understand that you might not like the idea of someone wearing gloves when they wash you or touch you, but these rules are for your protection as well as other people's. It stops infection being carried from one person to another.

Accidents

If you or your care worker have an accident in your home, you must report it to us straight away.

4 When We May Refuse To Give You A Service

We are committed to providing you with an ongoing service. However, there may be occasions when we can no longer provide a service. The three main reasons we may stop a service we provide are as follows.

A Risk

Risk can come in various forms. If you refuse to eat or to take your medication and put yourself at risk, your care worker may feel stressed because they cannot look after you properly. If you refuse to use aids (such as a hoist) which allow your care worker to work safely this puts you and your care worker at risk.

Your home may be very dangerous because you have not been able to maintain it properly or keep it hygienic, and this puts you and your care worker at risk.

Another risk may come from animals you have, especially if you are not able to keep your dog under control. Under these circumstances we may suspend all or part of your care.

B Harassment

If you, your family or friends harass your care worker we will stop your service.

Harassment includes:

- Racial harassment; and
- Sexual harassment.

Racial harassment may be verbal (spoken) or physical and includes attacks on someone's property as well as on the person because of their colour, race or ethnic origin.

Examples of racial harassment in this context include:

- Physical assault;
- Damage to property;
- Causing and affray;
- Verbal abuse; and
- Threatening or abusive behaviour.

Sexual harassment is:

- Unwelcome sexual behaviour;
- Asking for sexual favours;
- Making suggestions of a sexual nature;
- Touching; and
- Showing offensive sexual photographs.

Please remember these are not the only types of harassment.

C Violence

Sometimes violent behaviour is part of your medical condition. This will be shown in the risk assessment and your care worker will be trained to deal with it.

We will end our services if you are deliberately and unexpectedly violent towards any of our staff. We tell our staff to leave immediately if you or your family are violent towards them.

We will discuss with Social Services any decision we make to stop a service we provide. If you do not agree with our decision to stop or suspend the service you can complain using our complaints procedure (see section VI.4).

5 What Your care Worker Is Not Allowed To Do

Our care workers are not domestic servants, or nurses, but we often find they are asked to carry out tasks appropriate for these roles.

It will say in your care plan what your care worker is allowed to do. Your care worker is not allowed to carry out tasks which are not included in your care plan.

Your care worker is also not allowed to:

- Clean outside windows, or high inside windows;
- Change electrical plugs, fuses or light bulbs;
- Help you with DIY;
- Give you injections, change or apply bandages or treat open wounds;
- Cut your toenails, and
- Cut or set your hair.

Our insurance does not cover your care worker for carrying out these tasks, so please do not ask them to. They may sometimes find it difficult to refuse.

Your care worker is not allowed to substitute one task on your care plan for another. For example, if you find your neighbour to do your shopping on a regular basis your care worker is not allowed to do your ironing instead.

Your care worker can only carry out tasks which are not included in your original care plan if we or Social Services change your care plan appropriately.

F What To Do When Things Go Wrong

However hard everyone tries, things still do go wrong. When things go wrong it is useful to understand why and how we can put it right.

1 If You Are Not Happy With Your Care Plan

Your care plan is always set out before your service starts and if you have never had a service before it may not work out as you have expected. A friend may offer to do your shopping, so you might not need this service, but you really struggle with your laundry which is not included in your care plan, you may have forgotten that you need a bath and your daughter has hurt her back and can't help you any more.

This means we need to change your care plan and the Social Services care manager will do this for you. You can often make a small change to your care plan by phoning your local Social Services department. To make a more significant change we may need to visit you to carry out another risk assessment.

2 If You Are Not Happy With Your Work Plan

You may be happy with the general tasks as set out in your care plan but may prefer it if your care worker carried out some of their tasks in a different way. This may involve changing the order your care worker carries out their tasks. You will have to arrange any changes to your work plan with one of our supervisors. You can phone us and we will arrange for a supervisor to visit you to review your work plan.

3 If You Are Not Happy With Your Care Worker

If you are not happy with your care worker (for example, if they are often late or do not do all the work set out in the work plan), you can discuss this with one of our supervisors, who will speak to your care worker. If the situation does not improve, the supervisor will do their best to find you a care worker who suits you better.

4 Our Procedure For Complaints And Compliments

We have set out our procedure for complaints and compliments in the section “Statement of purpose” in this handbook.

If your care worker has given you a particularly good service, we would always want to hear your feedback. You can speak to your care worker directly or contact one of our care managers to let us know. We will record this on our “Compliments database” and also on your care worker’s file. We will contact your care worker in writing and give them details of your feedback. We will also discuss your feedback with them during their reviews. It is very important for your care worker to receive this kind of information as most of our care workers work extremely hard and deserve praise for providing a good service.

(Please also see the section “Gifts”).

5. Abuse

Abuse is most distressing because it is often committed by people close to you. Some people do not even consider they have abused when they have suffered violence or neglect. We have set out different types of abuse below.

Physical abuse includes:

- Hitting;
- Slapping;
- Pushing;
- Shaking;
- Pulling hair;
- Pinching; or
- Rough handling.

Psychological abuse includes:

- Emotional pressure;
- Blackmailing;
- Swearing and blaming;
- Shouting; and
- Bullying.

Sexual abuse includes:

- Rape;
- Touching;
- Making offensive suggestions; and
- Showing offensive sexual material.

Financial abuse includes misusing or stealing money or other possessions.

Neglect includes withholding:

- Food or drink;
- Proper clothing;
- Heating;
- Services; and
- Support

Tell us immediately if you think you have been abused by your care worker and we will take action against them.

If you have been abused by someone else, your care worker can help you. They have been taught how to recognise some types of abuse and have to tell us immediately if they think you have been abused.

Please remember, no one has to suffer abuse even if it is your close family or friends abusing you. No one deserves to be abused. We and your care manager at Social Services are here to help you.

G. What Should Be In Your Folder

Everything we have mentioned in this booklet should be included in your care folder.

H. Where You Can Get help

Social Services

Social Services can help you with any changes to your care plan, payment contributions, or help with applying for benefits.

Your GP

Ask your GP about anything to do with your medication, if you are not feeling well or if you need to go to clinics for special condition (such as diabetes). They can also help you with referrals to specialists at the hospital or specialist medical advice.

A District nurse

A district nurse can help you change dressings, set out your medication, supply you with incontinence pads and give you general medical advice.

An occupational therapist

An occupational therapist can help assess if you need things like:

- Aids and adaptations;
- Hoists;
- Bath seats; and
- Commodes and so on.

A physiotherapist

You can only be referred to a physiotherapist through a hospital or your GP. A physiotherapist can help you with mobility and physical rehabilitation, especially after operations and injuries.

Advocacy service

Examples of an advocacy service are Citizens Advice or the Greenwich Advocacy Service for older people.

Caretakers SW Ltd

We can help you anything to do with your care, except changes to your care plan

Community alarm

Your alarm services can help you get help in an emergency

Care Quality Commission

This is the national regulatory body for all home-care agencies. They make sure that we meet all their standards and carry out regular inspections. They will also deal with any complaints you might have.

Our Phone Number Is: 01803 540714 / 540715

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