



SERVICE USER GUIDE

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Mobile: 07718170186



Service User Handbook

Introduction

This guide will provide you with an overview of Abbey Support and Services (the Agency) and how they can support you in maintaining your independence in your own home.

Abbey Support and Services Philosophy of Care

*All people supported by and who work at the Agency and all people who visit will be treated with respect at all times.

*We aim to offer skilled care to enable people supported by us to achieve their optimum state of health and well-being.

* We uphold the human and citizenship rights of all Service Users and all who work and visit here.

*Individual choice and personal decision-making are the right of all Service Users and will be supported by all the people who work here.

*The right of independence will be respected and encouraged for all Service Users.

*The individual uniqueness of Service Users, staff and visitors will be recognised and these people will be treated with dignity and respect at all times.

*The individual requirement for privacy will be respected at all times and all information relating to individuals will be treated in a confidential manner.

*We recognise the individual need for personal fulfilment and aim to offer individualised programmes of meaningful activity to satisfy the needs of Service Users and staff.

Principles and values of Abbey Support and Services

Abbey Support and Services is committed to supporting vulnerable people so that they can continue their lives with dignity and independence and be participating members of their own communities. Abbey Support and Services strives to meeting the needs of those people entrusted to our care. Usually we see no conflict between meeting the needs of Service Users and those of workers. Where such conflict exists, the needs of Service Users must take precedence. The basic principles underlying our support to vulnerable people include:

Privacy: The care workers recognise your right to privacy and to be left alone, undisturbed and free from intrusion and public attention. You have the right to privacy with regard to both your personal affairs and belongings. Written permission will be sought for access to your records.



Confidentiality of Information: Your rights to confidentiality will be safeguarded. The care worker will not disclose any personal information about you to a third party unless this has been agreed with you. Agreement to disclose information should only be sought if it is for your benefit, and where it becomes our statutory duty to do so e.g. for the purpose of safeguarding the Service User.

Fulfilment of Aspirations Your social, emotional, cultural, political and sexual needs are accepted and respected.

Consultation: You will be consulted about daily living arrangements and enabled to participate in discussions about any proposed changes to those arrangements. You will be fully involved in and fully informed with respect to the individual assessment of your support needs. You have a right to be involved in a careful and thorough assessment of your needs and wishes, and to be informed of the outcome. Abbey Support and Services commitment will be to find the best and most cost effective way of meeting your needs and aspirations. You will be supported to make informed choices about the future; this will be incorporated into your care plan.

Personal Choice: Your support worker will support you to exercise your personal choice in opportunities and lifestyle. The support worker will ensure that you are central to all decisions being made. If, for reasons of mental frailty, you are not able to participate fully in Service User Planning, consideration will nevertheless be given to your wishes, as far as these are expressed and are practical. We welcome designated advocates to this context. Account will also be taken of the needs and rights of carers to lead their lives without unreasonable levels of demand and stress.

Review: You will have a regular review of your individual circumstances with the Agency.

Service Information: You will be fully informed about the Services provided by Abbey Support and Services.

Legal Rights: You will be fully informed about your legal rights.

Medication: You will be fully informed about your medication needs and supported in making decisions in relation to medical treatment whenever possible.

Family and Friends: You will be supported to maintain access to family, friends, facilities and the overall community.

Complaints: You will have access to a formal complaints procedure and will be able to be represented by third party or adviser if you so wish.



Supporting your Independence: You will be supported to take risks on the basis of your own, informed opinion. You will have the opportunity to think, act and make decisions. This will include the capacity to incur a degree of calculated risk.

The principles outlined above must be guided by prior commitments imposed by health and safety or statutory Requirements.

Standards that you can expect

The below standards are from the care Quality Commission leaflet “What standards you have a right to expect from the regulation of agencies that provide care in your own home”.

To be involved and told what’s happening at every stage of your treatment

- You (or someone acting on your behalf) will be involved in discussions about your care, treatment and support.
- You will get support if you need it to help you make decisions and staff will respect your privacy and dignity.
- Before you receive any examination, care, treatment or support, you will be asked whether or not you agree to it.

Care, treatment and support that meets your needs

- Your personal needs will be assessed to make sure you get safe and appropriate care that supports your rights.
- You will get the care that you and your social care professional agree will make a difference to your health and wellbeing.
- Your care needs are coordinated if you move from one care provider to another.
- Staff respects your cultural background, gender, aged, sexual orientation, religion or belief and your disability if you have one.

To be safe when using a service

- You will be protected from abuse or the risk of abuse, and staff will respect your human rights.
- If your home care agency is providing nursing care, you will get the medicines you need, when you need them, and in a safe way.

To be cared for by staff with the right skills to do their jobs properly

- You will be cared for by staff who have the knowledge, skills and experience needed to meet your health and welfare needs.



- You will be looked after by staff who are well managed and have the chance to develop and improve their skills.

Your home care agency routinely checks the quality of its services

- The managers of your home care agency continuously monitor the quality of their services to make sure you receive the support you need.
- Your personal records will be accurate and kept safe and confidential.
- You or someone acting on your behalf can complain and will be listened to. Your complaint will be dealt with properly.



Seeking a Service

The first step is to arrange to visit you in your own home. The Registered Manager will discuss with you your individual requirements and the range of Services we are able to provide at Abbey Support and Services. This process will be formalised into an assessment of your needs, which should form the basis for a decision by both you and the agency as to whether the necessary service can be provided. In common with all records regarding Service Users, the assessment(s) will be made with your full knowledge and cooperation, and the records will be shown to you and be available to you at any time.

The Registered Manager or one of our team will visit you in your home, or in hospital if necessary, and will document a pre-service start assessment with you. This initial set of information will form part of your Support Plan which illustrates and reviews how your family and our staff gain an understanding of how we can use our skills for an overall improvement to your health and wellbeing.

If you have any questions please discuss them with your Key Worker, or contact the Registered Manager, who will be very happy to answer them. The agency manages commencement of service arrangements according to a detailed Policy and Procedure, a copy which is available from the Agency on request.

Key Workers

In order for you to receive quality care, we have initiated a Key Worker system. Where possible, you will be offered an opportunity to choose your key worker. They will undertake to identify your needs with you and ensure that they can be met through a Service User Plan.

The aim of the Key Worker system is to provide each Service User with an advocate within the staff team, and to develop a relationship based on trust and mutual respect. The Key Worker will undertake an assessment with you to establish your preferred name, personal circumstances, personal history, and social and medical circumstances, all of which will be entered into your Care Plan. The Key Worker will also assess your psychological and physical capabilities. Previous work and hobbies, preferences with regard to activities and food will be noted and a personal programme of support and/or care devised according to your wishes.

Your Key Worker will be the main point of contact for you and your principal carers/relatives, and will be available to answer any questions, to support your daily care routine and to simply have a chat with you whenever you so wish. They will also arrange for meetings to review your Service User Plan periodically with you and your family or friends, and to measure the progress of your care programme.



It is human nature that not everyone gets on with each other. If you are unhappy with your key worker, please bring this to the attention of the Registered Manager. The matter will be resolved sensitively and confidentiality and a new key worker will be assigned to you if this is appropriate.



Key Policies and Procedures

Confidentiality

Our policy is that any information about you is strictly confidential and that maintaining a position of trust in this regard is paramount. However, because some information is relevant to providing quality support, such information will be shared with members of staff who may be supporting you. Visiting professionals and visitors requiring information will be referred in the first instance to the Registered Manager or the person in charge within the agency. You or, where appropriate, your principal Carer will be consulted where appropriate before information is released.

Information about you will be stored in paper form, and also held on a secured database in electronic format. Both forms are treated in the same strictly confidential way.

Information about you is needed in order to enable staff to provide proper support and treatment. Some of the information may also be used for other purposes, such as:

- Making sure our services meet your needs.
- Helping staff to review the support they provide to you to help them achieve the highest standards.
- Investigating complaints or legal claims.
- Auditing of our services.

Sometimes information about you needs to be passed on to other agencies or organisations, for example if you are receiving care or support from a GP or hospital. The types of organisations with whom we may share information about you are:

- GPs
- District nurses
- Other health professionals
- Social Workers
- Care Quality Commission

Gifts, Wills and Other Documents

All employees are expressly forbidden to act as witnesses to the signature of any documents such as wills and testaments. Neither employees nor the Agency may be a beneficiary under a Will of any past or present Service User. Gifts to staff are subject to disclosure to the Registered Manager, and may be refused on the basis of conflict of interest.



Service User's Personal Fulfilment

The aim of Abbey Support and Services is to actively help you to lead a fulfilling life within the limits of your abilities and wishes, and to recognise and cater for you should you wish not to be active or socialise.

Staff will take an interest in things that you have done in the past and discuss current interests, particularly those you wish to retain. They will assist you in developing skills and following your interests.

You will be central to the devising of your Service User Plans. A family member, friend or external advocate may also be involved as is considered appropriate. Staff will endeavour at all times to create a stimulating environment and to focus on maximising your potential. They will attend to your complete needs irrespective of how your disabilities may affect them. You are an equal human being and will be offered help and services according to your own unique needs, irrespective of race, gender, sexuality, culture or state of health.

Risk Taking & Risk Management

The assessment of risk is addressed as part of the commencement of service process for each person and the results are integrated into the Service User Plan. By this process of integration your views, the views of the principal carer, family members and professional advisors will be fully taken into account, as part of the participative Service User Planning process.

The following checklist of issues forms the basis of the risk management assessment. Each issue will be discussed in detail and those discussions will be recorded and will determine the way in which Abbey Support and Services aims to undertake to meet your wishes:

- Privacy;
- Visitors;
- Attendance at clubs and centres;
- Going to places of worship and other activities;
- Engaging in leisure and recreational pursuits;
- Carrying identification;
- Bathing;
- Use of stairs;
- Degree of independence;
- Seeking help in an emergency



Equal Opportunities

You have the right to practise your beliefs, religion and culture without constraint by restrictive or discriminatory practice.

Complaints of discriminatory practice will be thoroughly investigated and the results of the investigation made known to the complainant.

All complaints will be recorded in such a way as to highlight repeated problems

Inappropriate Behaviour

Inappropriate behaviour is the systematic maltreatment, or physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse of one person by another.

Abbey Support and Services is committed to preventing inappropriate behaviour and if you, a carer, friend or relative has any concerns in this area, they should discuss this immediately with a senior staff member, or use the formal complaints procedure.

You, your principal carers and relatives will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation into any complaint.



- ASAS management is responsible for ensuring compliance with the Policy and Procedure, and in particular ensuring that action is taken if necessary in the light of the outcome of a complaint.
- ASAS will take all reasonable steps to ensure that Service Users are aware of:
 - The Complaints and Comments Procedure
 - The roles of ASAS, and the Health Service Ombudsman with regard to Services User complaints.

This includes the alternative facility for the Services User to complain directly to the Care Quality Commission instead of making their complaint to ASAS, as well as their right to escalate their complaint to the Health Service Ombudsman when they are dissatisfied with the initial response.
- Service Users will be encouraged to complain in writing where possible.
- All complaints will be treated in the strictest confidence.
- Service Users who make a complaint will not be discriminated against or be subject to any negative effect on their care, treatment or support.
- Where a complaint investigation requires access to the Service User's care records and involves disclosure of this information to a person outside of ASAS, the Manager, will inform the Services User or person acting on their behalf.
- ASAS will maintain a complete record of all complaints and copies of all related correspondence. These records will be kept separately from Service Users' care records.



Complaint Procedure

Complaint initiated on Service User premises

- In the event that an ASAS staff member notices that a Services User appears to be distressed / upset, they should immediately contact ASAS Managing Director, who will attempt to identify and resolve the problem personally at that time.
- In the event of an ASAS staff member being advised that a Service User wishes to make a complaint, the Service User should be passed a copy of the current Abbey Support and Services Complaints and Comments information policy.
- The Service User should be asked if they intend to complete the form there and then, or do they intend to complete it later.
 - If they intend to complete it later, the ASAS staff member should provide them with an envelope.
 - If they intend to complete it there and then, the ASAS staff member will ask if they require assistance in completing it – if so, then the office should be contacted to provide such assistance.
- Whichever option is chosen, the Service User will be assured that their complaint will be acknowledged within 3-4 working days from receipt of the form.

Receipt and acknowledgement of complaints

Abbey Support and Services Ltd (ASAS) may receive the following complaints:

- A complaint made directly by the Services User or former Services User, who is receiving or has received care from ASAS ;
- A complaint made on behalf of a Services User or former Services User (with his/her consent), who is receiving or has received care from ASAS;
- Where the Services User is incapable of making a complaint, then a representative who has an interest in his/her welfare may do so;
- All complaints, whether written or verbal will be recorded by ASAS management;
- All written complaints will be acknowledged in writing within 3-4 working days of receipt;
- If Abbey Support and Services identifies that the complaint will involve an additional provider it will agree with that provider which organisation will take the lead in responding and communicating with the complainant.

Periods of time within which complaints can be made

- The periods of time within which a complaint can be made is normally:
 - 6 months from the date on which the event / incident which is the subject of the complaint occurred; or
 - 6 months from the date on which the event / incident which is the subject of the complaint comes to the complainant's notice.



- All complaints, whether verbal or in writing must be forwarded immediately to ASAS management.
- Where the complaint is made verbally, a written record will be made of the complaint and a copy of this will be provided to the complainant.
- A verbal or written acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint must be made not later than 3-4 working days after the day on which ASAS receives the complaint.
- This written acknowledgement will include:
 - The name and contact details of ASAS member of staff/representative who will be attending the meeting and investigating the complaint
 - An offer to meet with the complainant, at a time and location convenient to them, to discuss the manner in which the complaint is to be handled and the response period within which the investigation of the complaint is likely to be completed and the full response is likely to be sent to the complainant.
- As much of the following information as possible will be obtained at this initial meeting, to enable their concerns to be assessed correctly, resolved quickly if possible and build a good ongoing relationship with them:
 - Ascertain they would like to be addressed – as Mr, Mrs, Ms or by their first name.
 - Ascertain how they wish to be kept informed about how their complaint is being dealt with – by phone, letter, email or through a third party such as an advocacy or support service.
If it's by phone, ascertain the times when it is convenient to call and verify that they are happy for messages to be left on their answerphone.

If it's by post, make sure that they are happy to receive correspondence at the address given.

 - Check if consent is needed to access someone's personal records
 - Check if they have any disabilities or circumstances that need to be taken account of.
 - Ensure they are aware that they can request an advocate to support them throughout the complaints process, including at the first meeting.
 - Systematically go through the reasons for the complaint so that there is a clear understanding why they are dissatisfied.
 - Ascertain what they would like to happen as a result of the complaint (for example, an apology, new appointment, reimbursement for costs or loss of personal belongings or an explanation).
 - Advise them at the outset if their expectations are not feasible or realistic.
 - Formulate and agree a plan of action, including when and how the complainant will hear back from ASAS.
- If it is considered that the matter can be resolved quickly without further investigation, ASAS will do so, providing the complainant agrees and there is no risk to other service users.
- In the event the complainant does not accept the offer of a discussion, Abbey Support and Services will itself determine the response period and notify the complainant in writing of that period.



Investigation and response

- Complaints should be resolved within a “relevant period” i.e. within 3 months from the day on which the complaint was received.
- However, at any time during the “relevant period”, ASAS has the discretion to liaise with the complainant to extend this timeframe to a mutually agreeable date, provided it is still possible to carry out a full and proper investigation of the complaint effectively and fairly.
When an extension to the 3 months timeframe is being considered, it is essential that one takes into account that either party may not be able to remember accurately the essential details of the event / incident and also the feasibility of being able to obtain other essential evidence specific to the time of the event.
- ASAS will investigate the complaint speedily and efficiently and as far as reasonably practicable, keep the complainant informed of the progress of the investigation.
- After the investigation is completed, ASAS will compile a written report which incorporates:
 - A summary of each element of the complaint
 - Details of policies or guidelines followed
 - A summary of the investigation
 - Details of key issues or facts identified by an investigation
 - Conclusions of the investigation: was there an error, omission or shortfall by your organisation? Did this disadvantage the complainant, and if so, how?
 - What needs to be done to put things right
 - An apology, if one is needed
 - An explanation of what will happen next (e.g. what will be done, who will do it, and when)
 - Information on what the person complaining should do if they are still unhappy and wish to escalate the complaint, including full contact information on the Health Service Ombudsman.
 - ASAS will send the complainant a response within the 3 months “relevant period”, signed by a Manager or Director ie ‘The written report’
 - Confirmation as to whether ASAS is satisfied that any necessary action has been taken or is proposed to be taken;
 - A statement of the complainant’s right to take their complaint to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.
- If ASAS does not send the complainant a response within the 3 month “relevant period”, it will
 - Notify the complainant in writing accordingly and explain the reason why; and.
 - Send the complainant in writing a response as soon as reasonably practicable after the 6 month “relevant period”.
- In the event that the complaint has been incorrectly sent to ASAS, then ASAS will advise the Services User of this fact within 3 working days from its initial receipt and ask them if they want it to be forwarded to the correct organisation.