

Harmony Care & Support Ltd

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This document summarises basic information for users of Harmony services, people who are considering using our service, and the friends, relatives, carers and representatives of users and potential users.

Harmony aims to provide care and support for people who cannot wholly look after themselves. Harmony provides the service in your own home, at times convenient to you, and in ways you find most acceptable. Harmony has sound principles for the way we run our service. Central to these is our belief that the rights of service users are paramount.

PRINCIPLES

- Harmony will focus on our service users. We aim to provide personal care and support in ways, which have positive outcomes for you and promote your active participation.
- Harmony will ensure that they are fit for the purpose. We examine our operations constantly to ensure that we successfully achieve our stated aims and purposes. Harmony welcomes feedback from you and your friends and family.
- Harmony will work for the welfare of you. We aim to provide for each service user a package of care that contributes to his or her overall personal and healthcare needs and preferences. Harmony will co-operate with other services and professionals to help to maximise each service user's independence and to ensure as fully as possible the service user's maximum participation in the community.
- Harmony will meet assessed needs. Before we provide services, we ensure that a potential service user's needs and preferences are thoroughly assessed. We aim to ensure that the care Harmony provides meets the assessed needs of each service user, that needs are re-assessed as frequently as necessary, and that the care and support provided have the flexibility to respond to changing needs or requirements.
- Harmony provides quality services. We are whole-heartedly committed to providing top quality services and to continuous improvement in the level of the care we offer.
- Harmony employs a good quality workforce. Standards for our managers and staff are based on the national occupational standards for the care industry by C.S.C.I.

SERVICE USERS RIGHTS

Harmony aims to provide a good quality of domiciliary care, and we Harmony promote a way of life for service users which permits them to enjoy, to the greatest possible extent, their rights as individual human beings. The following is so important to Harmony and are the fundamental rights of the service user:

- **PRIVACY** – an individual's right to privacy involves being free from intrusion or unwelcome attention. Harmony aim to maximise our service user's privacy in the following ways:
 1. Staff will enter a service user's property and rooms within the property only with express consent.

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2. A service user has the right not to have to interact with or be interrupted by a worker when, for example, they are entertaining a visitor or are engaged on an intimate activity on their own account.
 3. We respect the fact that a service user's possessions are private and always act in accordance with the principle that our workers are guests.
 4. Our staff respects a service user's right to make telephone calls and carry on conversations without being overheard or observed by a worker.
 5. We ensure that records of the service provided are seen only by those with a legitimate need to know the information they contain.
- **DIGNITY** – the right to dignity involves recognising the intrinsic value of people as individuals and the specific nature of each person's particular needs. Harmony aim to maximise our service user's dignity in the following ways:
 1. Harmony arrange for service users who require assistance with bodily tasks such as dressing, bathing, and toileting to be helped as far as possible by the care worker of their own choice and, if desired, of the sex of their choice.
 2. Harmony ensure if asked that service users receive the necessary assistance with dressing and maintaining their clothes.
 3. Harmony will try to provide help for service users with make-up, manicure, hairdressing, and other elements of their appearance so that they can present themselves, as they would wish.
 4. Harmony aim to minimise any feelings of inadequacy, inferiority, and vulnerability which service users' may have arising from disability.
 5. Harmony treat service users with the sort of respect with reinforces personhood and individual characteristics, addressing them and introducing them to others in their preferred style, responding to specific cultural demands and requirements, and aiming to maintain relationships which are warm and trusting but appropriate to the relationship of worker to service user.
 - **INDEPENDENCE** – independence means having opportunities to think, plan, act, and take sensibly calculated risks without continual reference to others. Harmony aim to maximise our service users' independence in the following ways:
 1. Harmony helps service users to manage for them where possible rather than becoming totally dependent on care workers and others.
 2. Harmony encourages service users to take as much responsibility as possible for their own healthcare and medication.
 3. Harmony involves service users fully in planning their own care, devising and implementing their care plans and managing the records of care.
 4. Harmony aim to create a climate in the delivery of care and to foster attitudes in those around a service user, which focus on capacities rather than on disabilities.
 - **SECURITY** – in providing services to people with disabilities, there is a difficult balance to be struck between helping them to experience as much independence as possible and making sure that they are not exposed to unnecessary hazards. Taking care for the security of service users therefore means helping to provide an environment and support structure, which offers sensible protection from danger and comfort and readily available assistance when required. Harmony respond to our service users' need for security in the following ways:

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1. Harmony will try to make sure that help is tactfully at hand when a service user needs or wishes to engage in any activity, which places them in situations of substantial risk.
 2. Harmony hope to help to create a physical environment, which is free from unnecessary sources of danger to vulnerable people or their property.
 3. Harmony always carries out thorough risk assessments in relation to premises, equipment, and the activities of the service user who is being helped.
 4. Harmony staff will advise service users about situations or activities in which their disability is likely to put them or their property at risk.
 5. Harmony staff is well selected, trained and briefed to provide services responsibly, professionally and with compassion and never to exploit their positions to abuse a service user.
- **FULFILMENT**- fulfilment has been defined as the opportunity to realise personal aspirations and abilities. It recognises and responds to levels of human satisfaction separate from the physical and material, but it is difficult to generalise about fulfilment since it deals with precisely those areas of lifestyle where individuals differ from each other. Harmony responds to service users' right to fulfilment in the following ways:
 1. Harmony tries to help service users to participate in as broad a range of social and cultural activities as possible.
 2. If requested, Harmony will assist a service user to participate in practices associated with religious or spiritual matters and to celebrate meaningful anniversaries and festivals.
 3. Harmony aim to respond sensitively and appropriately to the special needs and wishes of service users who wish to prepare for or are close to death.
 4. Harmony makes particular efforts to understand and respond to the wish of any service user to participate in minority-interest events or activities.
 5. Harmony will do everything possible to help a service user who wants to achieve an unfulfilled task, wish, or ambition before the end of their life.
 - **DIVERSITY** – services therefore need to be accessible. Harmony make particular efforts to reach out to vulnerable people who might have been deterred from approaching agencies which appear not to relate to their special needs and aspirations, and to demonstrate that Harmony welcome and celebrate the wide range of people in the community generally and among the users of services in particular. Harmony responds to service user's right to express their diversity in the following ways:
 1. Positively communicating to our service users that their diverse backgrounds enhance the life of the community.
 2. Respecting the ethnic, cultural and religious practices of service users
 3. Outlawing negatively discriminatory behaviour by staff and others.
 4. Accommodating individual differences without censure.
 5. Helping service users to celebrate events, anniversaries, and festivals which are important to them.

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- **CIVIL RIGHTS** – Harmony aims to help our service users to continue to enjoy their civil rights in the following ways:

1. If service users wish to participate in elections, Harmony will try to access the necessary information and either provide or obtain any assistance, which they need to vote.
2. Harmony want to help our service users to make use of as wide range as possible of public services, such as libraries, education, and transport.
3. Harmony will encourage our service users to make full use of health services in all ways appropriate to their medical, nursing, and therapeutic needs.
4. Harmony will provide easy access for our service users and their friends, relatives, and representatives to complain about or give feedback on our services.
5. Harmony if can, will support our service users in their participating as fully and diversely as they wish in the activities of their communities through voluntary work, religious observance, involvement in associations and charitable giving.

- **CHOICE** – choice consists of the opportunity to select independently from a range of options. Harmony will respond to our service user's right to choice in the following ways:

1. Harmony avoids a pattern of service delivery, which leads to compulsory timings for activities like getting up and going to bed.
2. Harmony will manage and schedule our services so as to respond as far as possible to service users' preferences as regards the staff with whom they feel most comfortable.
3. Harmony respects service users' person preferences and idiosyncrasies.
4. Harmony hopes to cultivate an atmosphere and ethos in our service delivery, which welcomes and responds to cultural diversity.
5. Harmony encourages service users to exercise informed choice in their selection of the organisation and individuals who provide them with assistance.

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CARE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This procedure within Harmony Care & Support Ltd for carrying out a care needs assessment for a potential service user who approaches the Harmony direct. It also outlines the procedure for recording the equivalent details for service users who are referred through a social services department. Service users in this situation will have had a needs assessment undertaken by their care manager and Harmony Care & Support Ltd will have been provided with a summary of that assessment.

The principles of care needs are only carried out by (.....) who have been appropriately trained and who are specifically authorised for this task. Throughout the care needs assessment process, the staff member carrying out the assessment should communicate with and actively involve the prospective service user and their representative. It is particularly important to find out the service user's wishes and feelings and to take them into account, to provide the service user with full information and suitable choices, and to enable and encourage service users to make decisions about their own care. Harmony will comply with any special local arrangements for self-assessment by service users.

The expectation is that service users, themselves will be able to give Harmony care & Support Ltd the necessary information. If this is not possible, the service user's carer, relative or representative is the most likely sources; in this case, if at all possible, the service user should be present when the information is being gathered and recorded as an indication that they agree that Harmony should have access to the information and that they feel the information Harmony are given to be true.

The staff member carrying out the assessment needs to interview the service user in the setting in which the service will be delivered. A specific appointment should be offered with a named staff member.

The staff member should aim to create a warm and relaxed atmosphere for the interview, should accept any hospitality which is offered, should give the prospective service user the opportunity to demonstrate his or her abilities as well as discussing his or her needs, and should use the time to observe the service user and his or her environment, as well as discussing what Harmony Homecare Ltd has to offer.

The staff member should ask to see around the areas of the premises in which a care worker would need to operate and should particularly note anything which might be sources of risks to either the service user or the care worker.

Information should be recorded at the time of the interview, or as soon as possible afterwards, on the Care Needs Assessment Form. The staff member should be quite open about recording the information and should show the prospective service user the form if requested.

The staff member should acquire:

Basic information – on the form must record the basic information about the service user. It should be completed in full.

Physical and Mental Health and Abilities – to record information about the service user's health and abilities. It is the task of the staff member carrying out the needs assessment to decide which items are

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relevant for the service that Harmony Care & Support Ltd is being asked to provide. Care should be taken not to place too great a stress on disabilities. The staff member should emphasise

From the outset that a care worker will work with the service user and try to support the service user's independence as far as possible. If there are health issues on which further medical or nursing details are required, the staff member should ask the service user or carer to obtain and pass to Harmony Homecare the necessary reports.

Must have a form detailing the services that Harmony Care & Support Ltd is being requested to supply. At this point a manager must take the formal decision that Harmony is in a position to provide the requested services, given the details of the care needs assessment.

When the manager has decided that Harmony Care & Support Ltd will supply services, a care worker must be allocated to the case.

The allocated worker should then be passed a copy of the assessment form and is responsible for reading and absorbing the information before making the first visit to the service user.

In cases where a potential service user is referred by a social services department, the manager must obtain a summary of the needs assessment, which the department has undertaken. A care needs assessment form should be filled out. The summary of the social services needs assessment should be filed with Harmony care & support Ltd own form. Harmony will comply with any special local arrangements for self-assessment by service users.

If Harmony Care & Support Ltd has been requested to provide services at short notice or in a crisis; there may not be an opportunity to carry out a full assessment before starting to provide a service.

When emergency services are provided, the manager must complete the basic information form and allocate the case to a care worker who is competent to undertake a initial contact assessment.

In the course of the first visit to provide a service, the care worker must undertake the initial contact assessment and complete as much of the remainder of the form as possible. Within two working days, the manager must arrange for a full assessment to be carried out and the form to be completed with all relevant details for providing services over a longer term.

If the service is provided at the request of a social services department, the manager must ensure that the department completes an assessment within two working days and passes the information to Harmony Care & Support Ltd.

It is the responsibility of any care worker providing service to report to their manager any significant changes in a service user's needs and circumstances. The manager is responsible for considering whether any change in the service is required as a result of the change in the service user's needs. If so, the manager should initiate a discussion with the service user, or the service user's carer or representative if appropriate and, if necessary, with the relevant social services department.

Whether or not any specific changes to the service user's needs and circumstance have been reported, the manager should review the appropriateness of the service provided within a year of our starting to provide services, and at least annually thereafter. Throughout the whole assessment process great importance should be attached to the service users own views of their needs and wishes, and service users should be given every encouragement to express themselves.

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MEETING NEEDS

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

Managers (.....)
Therefore should keep under review the size and composition of Harmony Care & Support Ltd 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.

Harmony Care & Support 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 Harmony Care & Support Ltd as possible.

When Harmony Care & Support 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 Harmony will seek a good match between the service user and the care worker as is possible.

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.

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. Harmony Care & Support 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 Harmony would 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 had much experience, the care worker should be carefully briefed so as to be able to provide appropriate services with tact. Some matters such as diets, toileting procedures, and religious observance may involve areas of particular sensitivity.

When Harmony Care & Support 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.

Harmony has the 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

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service users to make decisions about their care. Harmony will comply with any special local arrangements for self-assessment by service users.

Harmony has 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 car 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 Harmony Care & Support 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 we cannot in any way continue to meet the service user's requirements, they should be referred elsewhere and appropriate arrangements made for Harmony Care & Support Ltd services 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.

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 Harmony Care & Support Ltd literature and communications with the service users and others.

Harmony Care & Support 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.

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RELIGION AND BELIEF

OBJECTIVE

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that every service user has the right to freedom of religion and belief and that this includes opportunities and facilities to practice their religion as long as such practices are not offensive to others. Harmony will do everything possible to ensure that the way in which our service is delivered does nothing to compromise this right.

PROCEDURE

1. Harmony will ensure that the information about the agency, which we provide to prospective service users, informs them of their rights in respect of their religion and beliefs and of what help we can provide to further that right. Harmony will recognise that for some ethnic minorities, religion is inescapably linked with culture and sometimes with language, so we will make every effort to ensure that this information is accessible, comprehensible, and expressed sympathetically for all who need to understand.
2. In the course of making or considering the assessment of the needs of a prospective service user, Harmony will seek and record information regarding their religious needs so that we can give assurances that our care workers will be able to respond appropriately when they provide care in the person's home.
3. If Harmony honestly feels that we would not be able to provide appropriate care because of a prospective service user's religious needs, Harmony will advise the person and, if necessary, their care manager, relatives and representative accordingly.
4. In each service user's care plan Harmony will in collaboration with the service user set out what involvement if any in the care staff are expect to have in relation to the service user's religious needs.
5. Harmony will brief all relevant care staff on each service user's religious needs and ensure that they understand the undertaking which Harmony has given and take all necessary steps to fulfil these elements of the care plan.
6. Harmony recognises that contacts with places of worship and fellow believers are for many service users an important element of their continued integration with the community, and if asked to do so we will take steps to make such continued contacts possible and meaningful.
7. The staff who visits a service user's home will respect the necessary space and privacy which the service user needs to engage in personal religious practice such as prayer, worship, meditation or the reading of scriptures if and when they wish to.
8. If staffs are involved with food preparation they will make every possible effort to observe any dietary requirements, which are based on a resident's religious beliefs and take account of any special requirement of the service user in relation to festivals and anniversaries related to their faith.

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9. Harmony acknowledges that at the time of dying and death religious belief and practice may assume a particular significance. Harmony staffs who are involved at such times will try observing any requests for special treatment, ritual, or family and community contacts which are requested, for service users close to death and after and for their friends and relatives.
10. Harmony recognises that for some people the expression of personal and spiritual values takes forms outside a structure of religious belief and practice, and in such instances Harmony will do everything possible to facilitate that expression in ways appropriate to individuals in order to make possible their maximum personal fulfilment.
11. Harmony knows that some people with severe disabilities, communication difficulties, mental disorders or terminal illnesses retain a sense of the importance of their personal faith – Harmony will respect and try to respond to this need in any appropriate way.
12. Harmony will take vigorous steps to ensure that no service user is the subject of discrimination because of their religious beliefs or practices. A lack of respect for religious needs on the part of any member of staff will be the subject of disciplinary action.
13. All Harmony staff members will be given a copy of this policy and encouraged to read it during induction. If any new service user presents religious needs with which staff are not familiar, Harmony will take steps to ensure that the relevant staff receive appropriate briefing and training in order to provide good care in this regard.
14. Harmony see our efforts to promote appropriate responses to service users' religious needs as a part of all our efforts to provide each service user with as fulfilling and participative a lifestyle as is possible according to their personal preferences, needs and choices.

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RANGE OF ACTIVITIES AND THE LIMITS TO RESPONSIBILITY

This procedure summarises the procedures within Harmony Care & Support Ltd for defining the range of services we provide and the limits of Harmony responsibility.

Management is responsible for keeping under review the range of services Harmony Care & Support Ltd provide and this may change in the light of variations in levels of needs, changes in the practice of local authorities and other social policy developments. Currently Harmony Care & Support Ltd services are as set out below:

- Older people
- People with physical disabilities
- People with mental health problems
- People with dementia
- People with substance misuse problems
- People with learning disabilities
- Children and their families
- Personal or family carers.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd welcomes referrals from or on behalf of people who require respite, intermediate or any other short-term care.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd welcomes referrals from or on behalf of people from ethnic, social, cultural or religious minority groups. Harmony will discuss a potential service user's special needs and preferences at the time of Harmony agreeing to provide a service and Harmony will seek to meet requirements as closely as possible or to refer on to appropriate sources of help elsewhere.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will be able to provide services at any time required.

Harmony care workers are happy to work alongside an existing carer, family member, or friend. Harmony will explore this issue at the time of making needs assessment and before starting to provide a service so that the position is clear to all concerned.

Harmony staff is covered by insurance.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd is in the business of helping people who care. Harmony is constantly reviewing our services and always willing to discuss the particular needs of an individual. If at all possible Harmony will try to provide a service, which meets their needs and preferences.

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VULNERABLE SERVICE USER

This policy of Harmony Care & Support Ltd in relation to the special arrangements for particularly vulnerable service users.

The following principles will underline Harmony Care & Support Ltd approach to vulnerable service users:

- All of the people using Harmony Care & Support Ltd are likely to be somewhat vulnerable through poor health or disability and may need protection from hazards, which would present little problem to people in sound health and without disabilities.
- A minority of service users are especially vulnerable in ways which need to be specifically identified and addressed; this vulnerability may be permanent or temporary, and it may involve all or only some of their activities.
- It is not possible or sensible to aim for a lifestyle for vulnerable service users, which is totally free from risk.
- Many service users find the taking of risks an essential, and sometimes desirable, element in the way they live.
- Service users, except for a small minority in whom the lack of capacity to take responsible decisions about their own welfare has been specifically identified and agreed, retain the right to take decisions about risks for themselves.
- Some, but not all service users, wish a carer, family member, friend, or representative to be involved in decisions about situations in which they might be especially vulnerable.
- Harmony right to intervene to protect vulnerable service users from potentially damaging risks is circumscribed by the fact that Harmony provide services only for specific periods and within contracted areas and that we operate on the private premise of our service users.

Before Harmony Care & Support Ltd enter into an agreement to provide a service, Harmony will always ensure that a thorough assessment of the prospective service user's needs has been undertaken, either by the referring agency or under our own procedures.

The assessment will include the identification of service users who are especially vulnerable in general. The vulnerability of a service users will be re-assessed when the service user's care of plan is reviewed or more frequently if circumstances alter. Harmony will respect the right to the greatest possible degree of independence, which vulnerable service users retain.

For any situation, which might carry a significant risk, a trained and qualified person will undertake a formal risk assessment at the time of the drawing up or revision of the care plan. Each risk assessment will list the possible benefits of taking the risk against the possible adverse outcomes, the precautions, which should be taken, and the arrangements for reconsidering the matter when appropriate. These factors and the conclusion of the risk assessment will be recorded in the care plan, and the responsibility of the relevant domiciliary care workers in relation to any risk likely to be faced by the service user will be clarified. Risk assessments will be reviewed at regular intervals or whenever circumstances change significantly or a new risk arises.

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The assessment of need will take into account all sources of possible danger. These include the service user's own behaviour, illnesses or disabilities, their living environment, specifically dangerous items including medicines, the actions of other people regularly or occasionally present in the home, and the possible intrusion of strangers or others from outside. Harmony's limited capacity to react to some of these sources of risk will be recognised and taken into account in the care plan, but it may, with the service user's permission, be possible to alert other people or agencies that can take action to minimise the danger.

If a vulnerable service user does not follow the action agreed in relation to the assessment of any risk and therefore puts themselves in unacceptable danger, the relevant domiciliary care worker will communicate this fact to their supervisor who will consider whether any further action is required, for example, further discussion with family member or other professionals, revision of the risk assessment and care plan, or in extreme circumstances the withdrawal of service. Any discussion and the action taken will be fully recorded.

Harmony will ensure that all staff having contact with vulnerable service users are adequately trained and appropriately experienced to provide the best possible service. Where a prospective service user presents an area of vulnerability outside the experience of the staff allocated to their care, the staff will be given specific briefing or training before starting to provide a service. Care workers will be provided with supervision by qualified and experienced senior staff, and will have access at all times when on duty to a responsible and competent person for advice and support.

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CONFIDENTIALITY

OBJECTIVE

Harmony has the legal obligation of the **Data Protection Act 1998** lays obligations on Harmony concerning the handling of the information we hold on individuals. Information must, for example, be obtained fairly and lawfully, be held for specified purposes, be adequate, relevant and not excessive for the purpose for which it was gathered, be accurate and up to date, and not be held for longer than is necessary. Harmony observes all of these requirements.

Harmony is able to satisfy service users and their relatives or representatives that their personal information is handled appropriately and that their personal confidences are respected. It also makes detailed stipulations regarding sharing information between staff and with other agencies, references to confidential information in supervision, breaches of confidentiality, and the storage and administrative handling of confidential material.

Harmony obliges us to conduct and provide care in a manner, which respects the confidentiality of information relating to service users.

Every user of the services of Harmony must have their care needs thoroughly assessed before services are provided. This necessarily involves the staffs that carry out an assessment or handle assessment material sent to us from other agencies in learning a considerable amount about an individual. It is the duty of such staff to retain, record, and pass to the allocated care workers only the information, which is relevant to the person's future care. A similar obligation applies to staff involved in a review or reassessment of care needs or in making any changes in the service provided.

There are rare occasions on which it is necessary for a staff member acting in good faith to breach confidentiality in an emergency situation – for example, to protect the service user or another person from grave danger – without obtaining the permission of the person to whom it applies. In such a situation, the staff member should use their best judgement, should consult the service user's representative, a manager, or a colleague if possible, and should inform their manager of what has happened as soon afterwards as possible.

PROCEDURE

1. The work of Harmony inevitably involves the need to know a good deal about our service users. Harmony cannot provide good care without access to that information.
2. Much of this information is highly personal and sensitive. Harmony recognises that our service users have a right to privacy and dignity, and that this extends to our handling information about them in ways which cause as little as possible intrusion on those rights.
3. Harmony wants the service users to feel at ease with the staff that helps to care for them. An important element in that relationship is the capacity of a service user to be able to share information with staff, confident that it will be used with appropriate respect and only in relation to the care provided.
4. As providing care is a complex process, it is not possible to guarantee to a service user that information they give about themselves will be handled only by the staff to whom it was first

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Passed but we can ensure that information is seen only by staff on the basis of their need to know.

5. Harmony sometimes has to share information with colleagues in other agencies but we only do so on the basis of their need to know and as far as possible only with the consent of the person concerned.
6. Harmony will only break the rule of confidentiality in very extreme circumstances, which justify our taking that action for the greater good of a service user or, exceptionally, others.
7. Care workers to treat all personal information with respect and in the best interests of the service user to whom it relates.
8. Care workers to share with their manager, when appropriate, information given to them in confidence.
9. Care workers to share confidential information when appropriate with colleagues with whom they are sharing the task of providing care.
10. Care workers to pass and receive confidential information to and from colleagues on occasions when they have to be replaced because of sickness, holidays, or other reasons, in a responsible and respectful manner.
11. Care workers only pass confidential information to other social and healthcare agencies with the consent of the service user, with the permission of the manager, or in emergencies when it is clear that it is in the interests of the service user or is urgently required for the protection of the service user or another person.
12. Care workers to refer to confidential information in training or group supervision sessions with respect and caution and preferably in ways, which conceal the identity of the service user to which it relates.
13. Care workers never to gossip about a service user or to pass information to any other individual other than for professional reasons.
14. Managers to provide lockable filing cabinets to hold service users' records and ensure that records are kept secure at all times.
15. Managers to arrange for information held on computers to be accessed only by appropriate personnel.
16. Managers to locate office machinery and provide appropriate shielding so that screens displaying personal data are hidden from general view.

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CONTINUITY OF CARE OR SUPPORT WORKERS

This policy outlines the procedures of Harmony Care & Support Ltd in relation to the exceptional circumstances in which a change of a service user's care or support workers might be unavoidable.

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 there is time. This is advisable in every case, and if the change is permanent or likely to last longer than 30 days.
- Always, unless the previous worker was found to be unsatisfactory, 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, by extending hours or by shifting from other duties but avoid setting off chains of changes, which disrupt several 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 we have obligations 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 Harmony Homecare behalf.

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.

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

It should usually be possible to anticipate an absence resulting from a worker's leaving Harmony Care & Support Ltd to make careful replacement plans and to explain the situation fully to the service user in advance.

If a worker, leaves Harmony Care & Support Ltd without notice or it becomes necessary to change a worker urgently for any reasons. Harmony Care & Support Ltd will quickly take action and would likely 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.

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 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 must 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, Harmony will not hesitate to comply with the 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, to support the worker if appropriate, and if the worker was indeed unsatisfactory to initiate any other necessary action, for example, 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.

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 or disciplinary or other action in respect of the worker and, subject to some discretion, should confidentially brief the replacement worker on what happened.

If it 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.

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 Harmony Homecare Ltd can continue to provide a service. If it is decided to continue, any replacement worker should be thoroughly briefed on the risks in 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.

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RESPONSIVE SERVICES

This policy outlines Harmony Care & Support Ltd in relation to providing services, which are responsive to our service users' needs and preferences.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd aims to make its services as responsive as possible to service users' needs and preferences, in accordance with the following principles:

- **RELIABILITY** – Harmony aim to ensure that our service can be absolutely depended on by service users.
- **FLEXIBILITY** – Harmony are prepared at any time to adjust the service we provide to meet the changing needs and preferences of service users.
- **CONTINUITY** – Harmony service is planned to provide the maximum degree of continuity and the fewest possible changes for service users.
- **COMMUNICATION** – Harmony undertake to consult and communicate with service users and their representatives as fully as possible about their service.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will fulfil, and where possible exceed, all legal requirements governing the conduct of domiciliary care agencies. The National Minimum Standards and the Domiciliary Care Agencies Regulations 2002 that Harmony has to do is:

- Provide care workers who are reliable and dependable, arriving promptly and working the full period allocated.
- Offer a flexible service so that, for example, care workers ask service users on each visit whether they have any particular needs or requirements.
- Only changes care workers for a limited range of legitimate reasons.
- Consult service users or their representatives in advance about a significant change of care worker.
- Keep service users and their representatives fully informed on care matters.
- Employ sufficient suitable skilled and experienced staff.
- Provide staff with information and advice about service users, their needs, and the provision of personal care.
- Provide staff with suitable assistance and appropriate equipment for the provision of care.
- Ensure that staff has access to support from a qualified and competent person whenever they are working.

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- Ensure that employing temporary staff does not detract from reasonable continuity of care.
- Ensure that all staff has job descriptions, receive appropriate training, and performance appraisal, and are given assistance and time off when necessary in order to obtain relevant qualifications.
- Address any unsatisfactory elements of a worker's performance.
- Provide all staff with proper supervision.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will therefore undertake specifically only to change a service user's care or support worker in one or more of the following situations:

1. The worker is sick or on holiday
2. The worker is undertaking training.
3. The worker ceases to be employed by Harmony Care & Support Ltd
4. The service requirements change to an extent that the worker lacks the necessary skills, physical capacity, or specialist training to continue to provide a service.
5. There is a requirement for additional hour or changed times of services which the worker cannot fulfil.
6. The service user makes a legitimate request for a change of worker.
7. A non-professional relationship has developed between the worker and the service user.
8. The work situation has become so stressful for a worker that they need relief.
9. The worker is suffering abuse or discrimination.

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SERVICE USER PLANS

This policy outlines that Harmony Care & Support Ltd in relation to the process of producing, implementing, and reviewing Service User plans.

The following principles will underlie Harmony Care & Support Ltd process of planning service user care.

- Harmony planning is person –centred. A plan of care will never be made without the active participation of the person to whom they relate, or where necessary their representative.
- Harmony planning care involves others who are relevant to the service user. Many service users want their carers or relatives to be involved in planning their care. Harmony will make sure this happens provided that it does not prejudice the principle that the service user must always remain central.
- Harmony planning care often needs to be multidisciplinary. Most service users have needs which span social care and health. Harmony will ensure that the views and contributions of all relevant agencies and professions are drawn into a single plan.
- Harmony basis the plan of care to be based on evidence. The plan of care for each service user will be based on a formal assessment of their care needs.
- Harmony sets the plan of care on objectives. As a plan of care is intended to bring about some sort of desired change, we work with the service user to set objectives and to give thought as to how those aims are to be achieved.
- Harmony care plan must be realistic. The plans of care Harmony prepare are not merely expressions of aspirations. They are based on realistic judgements about what can be achieved and include honest estimates of the resources involved.
- Harmony plans of care will be reviewed. A plan of care is not made once and for all. Plans must be capable of being adapted if new evidence becomes available or circumstances change. Every plan will be regularly reviewed and revised over time.
- Harmony plans of care will be actioned. The planning of care is not a mere paper exercise. Harmony will sincerely be committed to putting every plan of care into action, so Harmony set out defined responsibilities and clear a process for monitoring progress.
- Harmony will do assessment of care needs. Before Harmony enters into an agreement to provide a service, Harmony ensures that a thorough assessment of a prospective service user's needs has been undertaken. For people referred to Harmony Care & Support Ltd by a social services department, this assessment will have been carried out as part of the care management process and Harmony will be provided with at least a summary.
- For people who approach Harmony Homecare Ltd direct, Harmony will be responsible for carrying out a full assessment of care needs under our procedures for care needs assessment. All of the

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- Action considered for the Service User Plan must be soundly based on material in the care needs assessment.
 1. Harmony has the following people who are involved in the plan of care.
 2. The Service User is always central. Harmony emphatically does not plan for people; we plan with them. If a service user is not able to participate meaningfully for them, we will always seek an appropriate representative who can faithfully put forward what they believe the service user would have contributed.
 3. Relatives, friends, and carers. Subject to the service user's agreement Harmony would wish to involve other people in the service user's circle who are likely to be involved in implementing the agreed Service User Plan. Harmony recognise that carers and others sometimes have needs and interests of their own; Harmony will take these into account but will insist always that the needs and preferences of the service user remain pre-eminent.
 4. Staff of Harmony Care & Support Ltd. In planning and reviewing the care Harmony provide, Harmony try to involve all of the people who know the service user well. This is likely to mean the staff that carried out the care needs assessment or who dealt with the social services referral, the care staff who are providing the day-to-day service, and the person who supervises the care workers.
 5. Other agencies and professionals. As health and social care needs and services relate to each other closely, it is likely that our service users will have been in touch with other agencies. Where appropriate, and with the service user's agreement, Harmony will involve representatives of these bodies in planning care to ensure that the services Harmony provide are as well co-ordinated as possible.
- Before Harmony start to provide a service, or as soon as possible afterwards in urgent cases, Harmony will plan a meeting of all the appropriate people to draw up the Plan to Harmony regular format. A central task is to identify the objectives of the care Harmony will be providing and then to outline appropriate strategies to meet those objectives. Those involved in the process need to be realistic about what can be achieved, what resources are needed and available, who will undertake the agreed tasks, and the timescales. In all of these discussions, the user's views will be central.
- Any Plan is likely to involve some risks for the service user. This does not mean that no action should be taken, since reasonable and responsible risks are inherent to quality of life. For any situation, which might carry any risk, which is identified in the drawing up of the plan, a formal risk assessment will be undertaken. This will list and weigh the positive benefits against the possible adverse effects of the proposed action, the precautions that should be taken, and the arrangements for reconsidering the matter when appropriate. These factors and the measured conclusion of the risk assessment will be recorded as part of the Service User Plan.
- All of those who participate in the drawing up of the Plan must accept responsibility for contributing to its implementation. Harmony believes a Plan is for action and our staff will be supervised and monitored against the Plan's objectives and timescales.

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- Harmony will review the Plan, as circumstances change but not less than annually, with the involvement of those who participated in drawing it up. Decisions taken at review will be incorporated into an updated Plan and actioned.
- The initial decisions about the Service User Plan, the risk assessments, and any other significant issues will be recorded and should be signed by all parties. Copies of the Plan, as initially drawn up and as subsequently reviewed, will be held by the service user, except where there are clear and recorded reasons against this. The Plan is in a format intended to be accessible to service users and others. If it is appropriate arrangements will be made to translate the Plan into a language the service user can readily understand.

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RELATIVES, FRIENDS AND CARERS

This policy outlines Harmony Care & Support Ltd in relation to involving relatives, friends, and carers in our dealings with the service users.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd recognises that the services it provides to the service user are only one part of the network of care and support on which the service user depends. Harmony will always strive therefore to cooperate with and help any relatives, friends, and carers whom a service user identifies to us. Harmony believe that each service user should be able, in ways and at a level they themselves decide, to maintain relationships with relatives, friends, and cares and these become involved in any aspect of the assessment, care and support of a service user that the service user wishes.

Harmony will see relatives, friends, and carers as partners in caring for service users and, subject always to the principle that the needs and wishes of the service user remain paramount. Harmony value and seek to encourage their involvement in the life and work of the agency. Harmony undertakes always to deal courteously with the relatives, friends, and carers of service users.

These are specific procedures towards relatives, friends, and carers:

- Staff of Harmony will only communicate with a relative, friend, or carer of a service user with the service user's express permission. Harmony will always respect the service users right to privacy in their affairs, in particular in relation to information about them held by or known to Harmony. Subject to those limitations Harmony will attempt to involve named relatives, friends, and carers in all appropriate areas of a service user's assessment and care.
- Before starting to provide services to a service user, Harmony will provide both full information on the agency's services and facilities and the contract of service to any relative, friend or carer whom the prospective service user identifies to Harmony, with written material in a relevant language, style and format.
- In carrying out the needs assessment of a prospective service user, Harmony will consult any appropriate relative, friend or carer, Harmony will take fully into account any information they supply about the service user and about their relationship to the service user, and will respect their privacy and other rights. Harmony will be especially sensitive in situations where our staffs visit a prospective service user in a property where a relative, friend, or carer also resides.
- If it is appropriate, Harmony will, in the course of carrying out a needs assessment, seek and take into account information about the needs and wishes, as carers or service users in their own right, of any relative, friend or carer of a prospective service user.
- Harmony will be responsive to information provided by relatives, friends, and carers during any further assessment or re-assessment of a service user's situation carried out during their period of their receiving services.
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- Harmony will take particular care in dealing with the relatives, friends, and carers of service users who come from minority cultures, ensuring that our staff are familiar with and respect practices relating to families, kinship, and social relationships.
- Harmony will involve appropriate relatives, friends, and carers in drawing up, reviewing and implementing the service user plan of the service user to whom they are related or connected.
- Harmony will involve appropriate relatives, friends, and carers in all aspects of the day to day care which Harmony staff provide for a service user if this is what they and the service user wish, will consult them in advance if possible and involve them in the decision about any change of care or support worker, and will keep them fully informed on issues relating to the care provided.
- Harmony will record the names and contact details of relatives, friends, and carers with whom the service user wishes us to communicate and establish with them and with the service user the circumstances in which they are to be informed or contacted about any significant development.
- Harmony will take all possible steps to encourage and facilitate contact between service users and their relatives, friends, and carers, by helping in arrangements if a service user wishes to welcome visitors to their home.
- Harmony will never act to restrict contact between a service user and their relatives, friends, and carers except at the request of a service user.
- Harmony will be particularly responsible to the need to involve and cooperate with relatives, friends, and carers at times of the increasing infirmity, terminal illness or death of a service user, will show sensitivity to any special requests made to us regarding rituals, cultural practices or required methods of care associated with dying and death, and will try to respond to the needs of relatives, friends, and carers after the death of a loved one.
- The relatives, friends, and carers of a service user who have been named by the service user as approved by them will have access to that resident's record whenever they require it.
- Harmony will encourage, enable, and empower service users' relatives, friends, and carers to make complaints and suggestions about the service and ensure that these are promptly investigated and where appropriate acted on.
- Harmony will systematically seek the views of service users' relatives, friends, and carers on the services Harmony provides, using consultation processes and surveys, and will incorporate this material into our quality assurance procedures.
- Harmony will encourage and assist the formation of groups of relatives, friends, and carers both locally and nationally as an aide to expressing views in ways, which can lead to improvements in Harmony services.

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- If a service user expresses a wish that Harmony should have no further contact with a relative, friend, or carer, that wish will be respected.
- If a service user expresses a wish to cease to have contact with a relative, friend, or carer, Harmony will as far as possible support them in carrying out that decision.
- If it is apparent or suspected that a service user is suffering any form of abuse from a relative, friend, or carer, Harmony will take all necessary steps to protect the service user, to report to the relevant authorities and to collaborate in any further investigation and action.
- Harmony will respect the right of a service user at any stage to appoint a representative to deal with Harmony on their behalf, and Harmony recognise that this may be someone other than the relatives, friend, and carers with whom we had previously had contact. Harmony will provide information to service users, relatives, friends, and carers about independent advocates who can act on their behalf and about self-advocacy schemes.

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ADVOCACY

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that service users should be enabled to express their views as clearly and candidly as they wish. Recognising that some residents may not be able to communicate easily, we encourage representatives to speak on their behalf where that is appropriate.

Harmony believes that representation of this sort may be required:

- In the course of the initial needs assessment
- During any subsequent assessment of needs
- In the drawing up or review of the service user plan of care
- In the process of assisting of service user to participate in the day to day delivery of their service
- In making risk assessments relating to a service user's activities
- When helping a service user to represent their views to an outside organisation
- When a service user wishes to express a concern or complaint
- In instance where a service user may have been subject to abuse
- When a service user wishes to submit their views to Harmony as part of our quality assurance programme
- In helping a service user to make an input to the drawing up or review of Harmony policies and procedures.

The aim of this policy is to help service users to express their views both to Harmony and to other bodies and to feel that their views are understood and respected.

The definition of advocacy is taking action to help people say what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests and obtains service they need. Advocates and advocacy schemes work in partnership with the people they support and take their side. Advocacy promotes social inclusion, equality, and social justice.

The qualities of advocacy are:

- Independence – advocates should be independent from statutory and other service providing agencies.
- Empowerment – people using advocacy should be able to participate in the running of the scheme.
- Accountability – every advocacy scheme should monitor and evaluate its work effectively
- Support for advocates – advocates must be appropriately prepared, trained and supported
- Complaints – advocacy schemes must have policies for dealing with complaints.
- Clarity of purpose – advocacy schemes must have clear objectives and must make these known.
- Putting people first – advocates must be non-judgmental and respectful of service users' needs, views, and experiences.

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- Equal opportunities – advocacy schemes must have and observe a written equal opportunities policy.
- Accessibility – advocacy must be provided free of charge and in ways which make it widely accessible.
- Confidentiality – advocacy schemes must have a policy on confidentiality, which includes the circumstances under which confidentiality might be breached.

Harmony will seek to make advocacy available to any service user who needs help in presenting their views by:

- Publicising information on local advocacy schemes
- Involving advocates where appropriate in the preparation and review of individual care plans
- Using advocates to promote service user participation in the running of the agency
- Helping service users to find and participate in advocacy schemes
- Seeking peer support for individual service users from people who share their disability, heritage or aspirations
- Promoting a culture which enables service users to call on advocates to express their concerns and provide feedback on the way the agency is run
- Respecting the role of advocates in situations in which service users wish to complain about services
- Co-operating with any Independent Mental Capacity Advocate appointed to assist a resident.

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PRIVACY AND DIGNITY

This policy outlines Harmony Care & Support Ltd does in relation to providing service which respect the privacy and dignity of our service users.

Harmony aims at all times to respect the right of its service users to privacy and dignity, recognising that these values can easily be threatened by the processes covering the provision of care in a service user's own home.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd assessing the care needs of service user by:

- Harmony recognises that making an assessment of the needs of a service user can be very intrusive.
- Harmony are obliged to ask questions about the most intimate areas of a service user's life and it is helpful at the outset of our contact to observe a service user in their own private environment where care will be delivered.
- Harmony will do everything possible to limit the embarrassment a service user can experience at this stage and to provide all possible reassurances about the nature of our operations generally and particularly the confidentiality of our information systems and the sensitivity of our workforce.
- Potential service users will wish a carer or representative to be present during the assessment interviews, but Harmony will not assume that they will necessarily be privy to all of the information the service user has to provide about them. If it seems helpful Harmony will arrange for some parts of the interview to take place with the service user alone.
- If the staffs who undertake a review are not already known to the service user, it will require additional sensitivity since, from the service user's point of view, they are confronting a stranger.
- Care workers too may pick up some information about a service user's changing care needs during the process of service delivery. The worker should check with the service user whether they have any objection to details being recorded, though they may have to explain that information does indeed have to be shared with colleagues of Harmony.
- When information about service users has to be passed from a care worker to a manager, or between care workers, it will always be treated with respect.
- Arrangements for processing, handling, and storing data are based on the need to retain as much privacy for our service users as possible. See Harmony Homecare Ltd policy on confidentiality and procedures on confidentiality of information.
- Care workers are instructed never to forget that they are guests in the service user's homes, and that they must be careful that familiarity does not blunt the respect they should continue to show to their host.

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- Harmony knows that some service users have forms of address for themselves to which they are particularly attach, or conversely forms they find particularly offensive.
- Harmony care workers will make notes of and observe such individual preferences; they'll always address a service user by their chosen name, and know that the acceptable usage may vary between people or over time.
- Harmony recognises that the carrying out of some tasks, particularly those relating to intimate bodily functions, places a service user's privacy and dignity at severe risk. Harmony undertakes that their care workers will show great tact in such situations.
- Some situations may carry additional sensitivity if the worker is a different sex from the service user, so Harmony will attempt if asked to provide service users with same sex care staff.
- Care workers have been instructed to be alert to the potential invasion of privacy involved in handling a service user's personal possessions or documents, and will always respect boundaries the service user chooses to set.
- If a service user is particularly sensitive about their privacy or dignity in any other area of their lifestyle, care workers will tread with particular care.
- Harmony is aware that issues of privacy and dignity may be specially sensitive when the service user is from a minority group.
- Harmony seek to make the staff alert to points of cultural difference they may encounter in their work and Harmony encourage our service users to draw to our attention any particular matter of which we should be aware.

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SEXUALITY

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that service users have the right, which is often denied to older people and to people with disabilities, to develop and maintain intimate personal and sexual relationships, to engage in sexual activity which is within the law and does not cause significant offence to others, and to enjoy pleasurable experiences and take appropriate decisions for themselves in this area of their lives.

Harmony recognise, however, that the presence of care staff in the homes of service users and their performing intimate care tasks may threaten the privacy on which this right depends. Harmony believes that our care practice should support the operation of rights associated with sexuality, and that where appropriate we should help to provide the information and guidance to help service users remain safe and healthy.

Harmony aim to ensure that:

- Our staffs never forgets that they are guests in a service user's home and that our providing a domiciliary care service should never interfere with service users' right to have visitors at any time and to entertain their visitors in private.
- For a service user who has a marital or sexual partner who resides with them or visits them, our service is provided in ways, which respect their wish to be together in private.
- Service users are assured that while a worker is in their home there will be no interruption of privacy for any intimate or personal contacts or sexual activity.
- Service users are able to decide whom they see and do not see, and if necessary and requested to do so our staffs provides support in these decisions and protection from any personal contacts which are unwelcome or abusive.
- A request by a service user for assistance in restricting or forbidding entrance to their home by an unwelcome visitor is recorded and as far as possible complied with.
- Wherever possible, when intimate care is given, service users' wishes as regards the gender of the care worker are respected.
- We assist service users' who require access to advice or guidance to ensure that any sexual activity in which they engage is safe and pleasurable.
- The sexual orientation and preferences of service users are treated with respect.
- Gay and lesbian relationships are accorded similar respect to that given to heterosexual activities.
- If service users engage in any sexual activity or display which is offensive to a staff member or make a sexual approach to a staff member, the matter is reported to their supervisor who takes prompt and appropriate steps to discuss the matter with the person concerned and to help them contain their behaviour within reasonable limits.

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- If service users persist in engaging in inappropriate sexual activity or display in the presence of a staff member, the service may be terminated.
- All possible efforts are made to protect service users from any forms of sexual abuse.
- Any service user who, because of a disability, requires assistance in fulfilling their sexual aspirations has the opportunity to discuss their needs with staff, who where possible as part of our care service will arrange for appropriate help to be provided.
- Information about service users' personal and sexual relationships and activities is treated confidentially and sensitively and is passed only to those with a specific need to know.
- The opportunity is provided for service users to discuss matters relating to their sexual relationships and activities within the care planning process if they wish to, always with due regard to the need to treat these issues with confidentiality and sensitivity.
- Particular care and sensitivity are exercised if it is necessary to pass information between staff or to make a written record relating to any matter concerning a service user's intimate relationships or sexual activity.
- Service users' relatives, friends and representatives are fully informed about the contents of this policy and are provided with appropriate support and guidance if they seek it.
- A service user requiring advice on sexual matters or personal relationships can raise the matter with any member of the care staff or management with whom they feel comfortable.
- Sexual relationships between staff and service users are not allowed.

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DEALING WITH SO-CALLED CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR, VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION

- Harmony Care & Support Ltd seeks to demonstrate respect for the lifestyles and human rights of its service users.
- Harmony recognise, nevertheless that exceptional circumstances may arise when our workers might be called upon to place limitations on a service user's behaviour, either in their interest or for the protection of others.
- Harmony will attempt to anticipate these possibilities and to follow precise procedures designed to ensure that the limitation to a service user's lifestyle or human rights is kept to a minimum.
- In all instances where Harmony workers are likely to encounter challenging behaviour, violence or aggression to an extent that limitations of a service user's lifestyle or human rights might be necessary, Harmony will seek, when the Service User Plan is drawn up or revised, to discuss the facts with all concerned and record the decision and the proposed action in detail.
- Harmony will seek to understand the reasons for the possible action and to initiate action, which will tackle the problem more positively.
- In the course of considering the Service User Plan Harmony will carry out and fully record a risk assessment in order to make a sober calculation of the possible danger, which is faced, and the balance of benefits and disadvantages of the proposed course of action.
- Harmony will make every effort to involve a service user at risk of limitation to their lifestyle or human rights in the discussion about possible restraint and to obtain their agreement that such an intervention might be necessary.
- For service users who are permanently unable to understand the situation or to give informed consent, Harmony will seek agreement from someone close to them and knowledgeable about the situation who can genuinely represent their interests.
- Communication is the important to calm down the service users.
- Neither restraint nor the threat of restraint should ever be used as a form of punishment. Any instance of the use of restraint should immediately be reported. The worker involved should report what happened to their manager as soon as possible and the manager should review the position and initiate any possible action to avert a recurrence.
- Harmony Homecare regard the use of medication simply as a means of restraint as unethical. If Harmony Homecare learns of situations where they believe others are using restraint inappropriately, Harmony will bring the matter to the attention of the appropriate authorities.

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RESUSCITATION

The resuscitation of service users requiring emergency care following sudden collapse or illness.

The policy applies to all situations in which resuscitation may be indicated or needed and describes the responsibilities of care staff present at the time and the limits to those responsibilities.

- Everyone has the right to make choices and decisions about their treatment in the event of their needing to be resuscitated and these wishes should be respected if the situation arises. As far as possible people's wishes should be ascertained and recorded on their service plan, taking into account that this process will require sensitive and careful handling.
- The person's capacity to take decisions for her or himself will need to be taken into account, but once taken it needs to be respected as will any associated wish such as keeping the decision confidential from relatives and others. Harmony may need to clarify its ethical and legal position in cases, for example, where there are doubts about a person's capacity.
- Service users will be encouraged to lodge any Advance Treatment Directive (an advance directive states the sort of treatment a person would want for different levels of illness, such as a critical or terminal illness, permanent unconsciousness or dementia. An advance directive will tell medical doctors and health care professionals that the person does not want certain types of treatment such as to be put on a ventilator if in a coma) or Living Will to the effect that they do not wish to be resuscitated with their medical practitioner.
- All care staff will receive guidance and learning opportunities to clarify their attitudes and feelings over such issues and to understand their respective roles and responsibilities in such situations.
- In incidents of sudden or unexpected collapse where a person has clearly not made any living will or given any indication of their views on resuscitation, best efforts to resuscitate should be undertaken in accordance with the competence and qualifications of available staff to offer emergency treatment/first aid principles and training. In most cases it will be imperative to summon medical help and the emergency service without delay.
- Only care staff who are available and who are competent and qualified to provide resuscitation themselves, including the use of appropriate equipment and appliances, will be expected to do so, but all staff will be expected to provide normal standards of help and comfort, for example pending the arrival of the emergency services or medical help.
- The medical practitioner and/or paramedical practitioners will then direct further interventions. Harmony staff is aware that the ill person has made a living will or clear statement that they do not wish to be resuscitated then this should be passed on to the medical team.

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MEDICATION POLICY

Harmony believes that every service user has the right to manage and administer their own medication if they wish and will provide support and aids to enable safe self-administration wherever possible. However, to ensure their safety, all service users will be assessed for risk on a regular basis by a competent member of café staff and any need for help with the collection or administration of medication will be identified. Any request for support from care staff belonging to Harmony Homecare identified within a care plan should be discussed with Harmony managers before being implemented to ensure that the role being requested is appropriate and can be performed safely and competently by Harmony staff.

No member of care staff belonging to Harmony Care & Support Ltd should precede with care involving the administration of medication until they have the explicit agreement of Harmony's Manager and this has been entered in the Service User Plan, and the member of staff are to be trained.

If a member of the family puts up the medication in the dosiette boxes then the staff members of Harmony Care & Support Ltd does not supervise the medication, and the family will have to give the medication to the family member themselves.

Any member of staff who is unsure of what to do regarding medication in any given situation should contact their line supervisor or Harmony Manager immediately.

Appropriately trained member of staff only should administer medication. The medication should either be in a blister pack or dosiette box done by the pharmacy.

When administering medication, staff should:

- Check that the medication is written in the home care medical record or Service User plan,
- Know the therapeutic use of the medication administered, its normal dose, side effects, precautions and the contra-indications of it use.
- Be certain of the identity of the service user to whom the medication is being given.
- Check that the prescription or the label on the medication is clear and unambiguous and relates to the service user in person.
- Check the expiry date.
- Check that the service user is not allergic to the medication.
- Keep clear and accurate signed records of all medication administered, withheld, or refused
- A home care medicines record should be kept in the service user's home of any service user receiving help with medication as part of their care plan.
- Any mistake or error in administering drugs must be reported to a line manager, a supervisor, or responsible medical practitioner without delay.

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- Staff must never, in any circumstances, administer medication, which has not been prescribed, give medication to a service user against their wishes, or alter in any way the timing or dosage of medication.
- Staff should always be aware of the nature of the medication being taken by individual service users and should report any change in condition that may be due to medication or side-effects immediately to their line manager or supervisor or to the GP or community pharmacist.
- All unwanted or surplus medication should be returned to the community pharmacist for disposal and a receipt obtained.

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COLLECTION OF PRESCRIPTIONS

Harmony believes that every service user has the right to manage and administer their own medication if they wish to and that this is an important part of maintaining their independence, dignity, and autonomy. This not only applies to the keeping and administration of medicines but also to their collection and dealing with prescriptions.

- Members of staff from Harmony Care & Support Ltd should provide support to enable self-administration and collection of prescriptions/medication wherever possible.
- To ensure the safety of both service users and staff, any request for care involving medication from care staff belonging to Harmony should be identified within a written care plan and should be discussed with managers before being implemented, to ensure that the role being requested is appropriate and can be performed safely and competently by home care staff.
- No member of care staff belonging to Harmony should proceed with care involving medication including the collection of prescriptions, unless they have the explicit agreement of manager and this has been entered in the plan of care.
- When collecting prescriptions, home care staff should follow these guidelines:
- Wherever the possibility of an arrangement exists for the GP practice to automatically inform a pharmacist of a prescription and for that prescription to be delivered to a service user by the pharmacist, then home care staff from Harmony in preference to actually collecting the prescription themselves should support this arrangement.
- Where no such arrangement exists, and where a suitable entry has been made in the plan of care, home care staff should.
- Ensure that both the GP surgery and the pharmacy are informed of who will be collecting the prescription and that, in the case of repeat prescriptions; the appropriate forms have been completed and handed to the surgery.
- Collect the prescription from the GP surgery following whatever prescription system is in place at the surgery and giving the surgery sufficient warning as is required in the case of repeat prescriptions.
- Take the prescription immediately to the pharmacy and follow whatever system is in place at the pharmacy.
- Where necessary, produce proof of identity.
- Transport the medication immediately to the service user's home.
- Show the medication to the service user or a relative and go through the prescription to ensure that it is correct

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- Place the medication in a safe place as agreed with the service user, relative, or other care staff.
- Where a member of staff has any queries about the prescription or collection of a prescription they should, with the service user's permission, discuss the matter with the GP or pharmacist involved or with their manager.

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NON-COMPLIANCE WITH MEDICATION

Most service users who require domiciliary care are prescribed some form of medication at some time as part of their treatment by their doctor or nurse. Most service users are able to be responsible for their own medication but some require help from Harmony Care Staff.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that any aid offered by Harmony staff to help a service user to take their medication or to actually administer medication should be agreed with the service user and the Manager and entered into the plan of care according to Harmony's Care & Support Ltd medication policy.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd understands that the correct taking of such medication is essential for the health and well being of service users but Harmony also understands that there are circumstances whereby some service users may fail to comply with their prescribed treatments, self-medicating service users failing to take their medication as directed or non-self-medicating service users refusing prescribed medication, or failing to swallow it and then disposing of it. In such cases Harmony is clear that its staff have no right to force non-compliant service users to take their medication but that they do have a duty to report cases of non-compliance back to the service user's GP or to the service user's nurse or key worker.

Any member of staff who is unsure of what to do regarding medication in any given situation should contact their manager immediately.

Self-administering Service Users

Harmony understands 'self-administering service users' to refer to service users who are responsible for collecting, storing and taking their own medication without any help being required from Harmony staff.

- Harmony believes that every service user has the right to manage and administer their own medication if they wish to and are safe to do so.
- In cases where there is evidence that a self-medicating service user is failing to comply with their prescription, or taking the wrong amounts of a medicine, then the case should be referred to the service user's GP to the service user's nurse or key worker.
- Any subsequent request for support from care staff belonging to Harmony Care & Support Ltd identified within a care plan should be discussed with Harmony managers before being implemented to ensure that the role being requested is appropriate and can be performed safely and competently by Harmony staff.
- No member of care staff belonging to Harmony Care & Support Ltd should proceed with care involving the administration of medication (tablets, liquids or creams) or support of self-medication until they have the explicit agreement of a manager and this has been entered in the plan of care.

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- All self-medicating service users should be offered help and assistance to maintain their self-medicating status whenever possible and wherever an assessment indicates that this is possible or appropriate. The use of compliance aids, such as monitored dosage systems (where daily medication is set out by a pharmacist into compartmentalised containers).additional support by

Staff and responsible others, such as reminders and regular checks by the Homecare Managers. on self-administering service users

Harmony Care & Support Ltd understands 'non-self-administering service users' to refer to service users who require help from Harmony staff in collecting, storing and taking of their medication. Such help can range from helping a service user to take their medication from a monitored dosage system done by the pharmacy to actually administering the correct amounts and helping the service user to take it. All such help should be entered into the plan of care and agreed with Harmony Care& Support Ltd managers prior to the help being given.

- Where service users are helped with or administered their medication by Harmony staff, those staff should encourage compliance by ensuring that service users actually take their medication at the time that it is given. Staff should directly observe the taking of medication and medicines should never be left to 'be taken later'. Staff should only sign a service user's medication chart after the medicines have been taken and if this has been directly observed.
- Staff should always be aware of the medication being taken by individual service users and should report any change in condition that may be due to non-compliance immediately to their manager or supervisor. The manager or supervisor should then discuss the case with the service user's GP or Nurse or with the pharmacist.
- A service user has the right to refuse medication and such refusal should be recorded. All such incidents should then be referred back to the prescribe service user's GP or nurse or the pharmacist.
- Harmony staff may make such efforts to encourage the service user to take their medication as are reasonable and appropriate under the Medicines Policy but staff have no right to force non-complaint service users to take their medication. The use of undue pressure on a non-compliant service user by any member of staff will be recognised by Harmony Homecare Ltd as the basis for disciplinary action.
- Medical advice should be sought immediately if Harmony staff believe that refusal to take medication constitutes a risk to the service user.

All staff must be trained on medication.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd

PROVISION OF NON-DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICE

This policy outlines that Harmony Care & Support Ltd in relation to the provision of non-discriminatory or anti-discriminatory practice.

Non-discriminatory or anti-discriminatory practice means working in a way, which respects the views, rights, and behaviour of people from minority groups and which celebrates their diversity.

There is some important legislation in this area, particularly relating to the **Race Relations Act 1976**, and the **Protection from Harassment Act 1997**, but good care practice needs to be ahead of the legislation since some minority groups have little or no formal legal protection. The fact that people using Harmony Care & Support Ltd service are likely to be vulnerable through poor health or disability makes us particularly vigilant in wishing to protect them from any sort of discrimination.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will operate best equal opportunities practice in our recruitment, training, promotion, and other personal policies and practices, and where possible we will reflect in our staff group the ethnic and cultural mix of our service users.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will welcome the cultural diversity of our service users and will always try to ensure Harmony care staff respects the views, rights, and behaviour of people from minority groups in all of their contacts with them.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will be particularly alert to, and try to meet, the diverse needs of service users in relation to diet, religious practice, respect for their immediate environment and social activities.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd welcome the rituals, festivals, and celebrations of our service users as bringing interest and variety of daily life in our society, and Harmony Care & Support will do everything possible to facilitate service users' capacity to practice their religion or culture in the ways they individually wish to do. Evidence of discriminatory practice, remarks, or attitudes among staff will be treated as warranting disciplinary action.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will apply similar standards and practices to our relations with service users' relatives and representatives.

Harmony Homecare Ltd will challenge discriminatory behaviour by service users whether this is directed against staff or other service users. If discriminatory behaviour, remarks, or attitudes are repeated we reserve the right in extreme circumstances to decline further service.

Any service user who feels that they have been the subjects of discrimination by a staff member should complain as soon as possible to a manager of Harmony Care & Support Ltd.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd undertake that the matter will be investigated promptly, that arrangements will be made for alternative staff to provide the service in the interim, and that if the allegation is found to be justified appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

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AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE

This policy outlines Harmony Care & Support Ltd in relation to promoting its service users' autonomy and independence.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd seeks positively to promote the autonomy and independence of our service users. Harmony Care & Support Ltd recognises that the capacity for independent action of our service users has often been undermined. Harmony will therefore strive to help service users make their own decisions and to support them in controlling their own lives.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will aim always to balance the protection of service users from unnecessary risks with the promotion of independence and choice.

Harmony recognise that the tone of the relationship between Harmony Care & Support Ltd and a service user is often set by the initial contact and that the care needs assessment which must be undertaken before we start to provide a service can in itself be a process which endangers a potential service user's sense of being in control. Harmony will do everything to empower our service users from the very outset of our dealing with them.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will recognise the important role, which can be played by knowledge of what is going on in making people feel independent. Harmony will therefore provide good, thorough, and up-to-date information about our service and other facilities at the beginning and throughout our contact with a service user. Harmony will always try to provide information in formats and languages, which make it accessible to the individuals to whom it is addressed.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd knows that choice has become increasingly important for service users and Harmony will attempt to advance this principle throughout our operations. Harmony will ensure that every service user who receives our service has positively opted to use Harmony Care & Support Ltd. Harmony will try to provide service users with the chance to exercise choice about the care workers with whom they interact and will change the worker in instances when the service user requests it. Harmony is particularly sensitive to matching workers and service users where issues of gender, culture, or ethnicity play a role.

The care workers providing care and support on a day-to-day basis will aim to carry out their tasks in co-operation with service users not in ways, which destroy the possibility for the service user to exercise their own discretion, initiative, and control. Harmony realise that this principle is particularly difficult to uphold where service users have disabilities or severe mental incapacities.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will value risks as playing an essential part in a fulfilling lifestyle. Care workers will support service users in taking reasonable risks, without obviously endangering their health and safety, and subject to a sensible risk assessment recorded in the Service User Plan.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd knows how disempowering it can be for service users not to understand fully what is going on. Care worker will wherever possible communicate with service users in their first or preferred language.

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When requested, Harmony Care & Support Ltd will provide support to service users in controlling their own financial affairs, always respecting the privacy and confidentiality of documents to which we have to have access.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will provide facilities for service users to see their personal files in accordance with the **Data Protection Act 1998** and inform them of the access to files which may be required by inspectors.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will try to respect the lifestyles service users have chosen for themselves but exceptionally may be obliged to intervene to prevent a service user from harming themselves or becoming a danger to someone else. On these rare occasions, our workers will act with respect for human rights, within our responsibilities in law and Harmony Care & Support Ltd policy on restraint, and in the best interests of the service user and others closely involved.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will try to relate to service users' relatives and carers where this is appropriate, treating them as partners in providing care. Harmony is concerned that these relationships should not undermine the autonomy of service users themselves, so Harmony insist on having the service user's permission before dealing with anyone on their behalf or releasing confidential information to others.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will provide information when requested about the availability of independent advocates and self-advocacy schemes, and are quite willing if required to communicate to service users' advocates.

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WORKING WITH SERVICE USERS WHO MIGHT LACK MENTAL CAPACITY

- Harmony Care & Support Ltd complies with the principles of the **Mental Capacity Act 2005** by first treating all of the people who use Harmony services and prospective service users on the basis that they are able to take their own decisions.
- There might be some occasions when Harmony staff in the course of their care work become involved or find it necessary to enter into some decision making process on behalf of someone who cannot take a decision at the time that it needs to be taken. In respect of the involvement Harmony Care will take to be related to a care matter.
- Harmony Care & Support Ltd will take decisions on behalf of a service user only if there is evidence that they cannot take the decision (at the time it needs to be made) because of mental incapacity. Harmony will co-operate with relatives and others involved with the service user in decision making on behalf of a person on the same basis.
- Harmony Care & Support Ltd will not take in taking decisions for a service user where, from its point of view, there is insufficient evidence and it does not appear to be in that person's best interests.
- Harmony will only take a decision for one of its service users after it has exhausted every means of enabling the person to take it of their own accord. Harmony will also show its actions in taking the decision are reasonable and in the person's best interests.
- Where Harmony Care & Support Ltd has information that suggests the person might be unable to take some decisions at some times it will carryout or contribute to an assessment of that person's mental capacity. Harmony recognises that the assessment procedure should follow the two-step assessment process recommended in the Mental Capacity Act's Code of Practice.
- Harmony Care & Support Ltd ensures that it complies with the all aspects of the law in the cases of service users who are subject to guardianship proceedings or who need legal protection on account of their lack of mental capacity. It includes here service users, who have assigned powers of attorney or who are subject to Court of Protection proceedings.
- Harmony Care & Support Ltd familiarises and acts upon any advance directives or 'living wills' that its service users have chosen to make situations where they might lose the ability to take a decision. Harmony also attempts to find out about any end-of-life plans so that a service user's wishes are known in the event of their death.

Assessment of Mental Capacity

- Harmony Care & Support Ltd will ensure that a person's needs assessment and service user plan of care contain all the information needed relating to a person's decision taking capacity and the decisions over which they might need help on account of their possible lack of capacity.
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- The information included indicates a) which decisions the person is able to take at all/most times, b) those that the person has difficulty in taking, and c) those that the person is unable to take.
- In respect of each area of decision taking where there are difficulties or an inability to take decisions, the service user plan of care records the actions to be taken for the person that are deemed in their best interests.
- The individual is always as fully involved as possible. Decisions are only taken on the basis of the best information available and the agreement of those concerned in the person's care and future. All decisions taken for that person are fully recorded and made subject to regular review.
- Service users, who lack mental capacity as any others, are only subject to any form of restraint when by not doing so would result in injury or harm to them or to other people. All incidents where restraint has been used follow the Harmony Care & Support Ltd procedures for reporting and recording.

Staff Involvement

- Harmony Care & Support Ltd expects its care staff to implement the agreements and decisions that are identified on an individual's plan of care.
- Harmony Care & Support Ltd also expects its staff to involve service users in all day-to-day decisions that need to be taken by seeking their consent and checking that the actions to be taken are consistent with their plan of care if the individual service user lacks capacity at the time. Where the service user needs to take a decision that lies outside of their ability at the time staff must do everything to help the person decide for her or himself.
- Harmony Care & Support Ltd expects its staff to avoid taking decisions on behalf of a service user unless they can show that it is necessary and the service user at the time is unable to take that decision her or himself. Any such incident must be fully recorded.
- Harmony Care & Support Ltd expects its staff to take decisions for service users lacking capacity only because they have reasonable beliefs that they are necessary and in the person's best interests. When in doubt that they can proceed in this way they must seek advice from the manager.

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HEALTH AND SAFETY

Harmony Care & Support Ltd recognises its responsibility to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to provide and maintain working conditions that are safe, healthy, and compliant with all statutory requirements and codes of practice.

The legal requirement to have a health and safety policy is a direct obligation arising from the **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**. It requires that every employer with five or more employees must prepare and revise as often as necessary a written health and safety policy for the workplace and must explain the arrangements for putting that policy into force. This policy and any revision must be brought to the notice of employees. The failure to have a written health and safety policy can result in the issue of an improvement notice ordering the matter to be attended to within a fixed period. Non-compliance can result in prosecution and a fine.

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles, and policies underpinning Harmony Care & Support Ltd approach to safe working practices.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd is committed to ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of its staff, so far as is reasonably practicable, and of all other persons who may be affected by Harmony activities including service users and their relatives. Harmony will take the following steps to ensure that its statutory duties are met at all times.

- Each employee should be given such information, instruction and training as is necessary to enable the safe performance of work activities.
- All processes and systems of work should be designed to take account of health and safety and will be properly supervised at all times.
- Adequate facilities and arrangements will be maintained to enable employees to raise issues of health and safety.
- Competent persons should be appointed to assist in meeting statutory duties including, where appropriate, specialists from outside Harmony Homecare Ltd.
- This document will be regularly monitored to ensure that its objectives are achieved. It will be reviewed and, if necessary, revised in the light of legislative or Harmony's changes.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd recognises its responsibility under the **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974** and the **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999** to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to provide and maintain working conditions, which are safe, healthy, and compliant with all statutory requirements and codes of practice. Employees, service users, contractors, and visitors are expected to abide by safety rules and to have regard to the safety of others at Harmony Care & Support Ltd.

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Harmony Care & Support Ltd policy will be, so far as is reasonably practicable to:-

- Make a risk assessment of every service user's home before a member of staff is allocated to that home.
- Negotiate appropriate risk management measures to reduce any identified risks or hazards to an acceptable level.
- Communicate agreed risk management measures to care staff involved and ensure regular monitoring of risk levels.
- Provide and maintain equipment such that it is safe and healthy to use.
- Provide any relevant and appropriate protective equipment or clothing required by staff to perform their role safely.
- Arrange for safe and healthy use, handling, storage, and transport of articles and substances.
- Provide the information, instruction, training, and supervision required to ensure the health and safety, at work, of employees and others.
- Control and maintain Harmony Care & Support Ltd offices in a safe condition, with appropriate risk assessments and management as above.
- Provide a safe means of access to and exit from the place of work.
- Maintain a working environment that is safe, healthy, and equipped with adequate facilities and arrangements for welfare at work.
- Conduct, record, and implement the findings from regular risk assessments performed in accordance with the **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**.
- In the event of any accident or incident (such as a near miss) involving injury to anybody to make a full investigation and to comply with statutory requirements relating to the reporting of such incidents.
- Appoint a health and safety officer.

The health and safety officer for Harmony Care & Support Ltd is

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The successful implementation of this policy requires total commitment from all employees. Each individual has a legal obligation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety, and for the safety of other people who may be affected by their acts or omissions.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd

It is the policy of Harmony Care & Support Ltd that of the **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**, it is the duty of every employee at work:-

- To take reasonable care of their own health, safety, and those of any other person who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.
- As regards any duty or requirement imposed on their employer by or under any of the relevant statutory provisions, to co-operate with the employer, so far as is necessary, to enable that duty or requirement to be complied with.

In addition, no person employed by Harmony Care & Support Ltd shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety, and welfare in pursuance of any statutory provisions. Failure to abide by this policy will be considered a disciplinary offence.

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PERSONAL SAFETY

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that its staff should be safe at work and should not be exposed to undue or unreasonable risk. In particular, Harmony Care & Support Ltd is committed to implementing measures that increase the personal safety and security of staff wherever possible, along with safety of their personal property, and which ensure an effective response to personal safety and security incidents. Harmony Care & Support Ltd also seeks to encourage service users, staff, and others to have care and concern for the safe keeping of equipment and property and the personal safety of all.

This policy applies to all Harmony Care & Support staff without exception.

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles and policies underpinning Harmony Care & Support Ltd approach to ensuring that staff working for Harmony Care & Support Ltd are as safe as is reasonably practical while at work or when travelling to and from work.

Harmony Care will: -

- Seek to ensure that it can respond effectively to all personal safety and security incidents, including incidents involving violence or threats of violence to staff, through the preparation of plans, management of incidents and appropriate follow up and recovery actions, as deemed necessary
- Seek to ensure that the personal safety of staff is always considered a factor when planning individual care plans with service users, especially with regard to staff travelling to and from a home care site; and, wherever possible, arrangements that involve care staff travelling to and from houses alone during the hours of darkness and in isolated areas or in known high crime areas, should be avoided,
- Be responsible for crime prevention/loss reduction measures, including assessing threats to personal safety of staff and investigating and initiating follow up actions in response to any reported incidents,
- Provide home care staff with a personal alarm where necessary; raise awareness of personal safety and security issues by offering training and advice to staff and service users on personal safety and security.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that personal security is also the responsibility of every member of staff. Harmony Care & Support Ltd expects every member of staff to accept that responsibility and to: -

- Act and behave in a way so as to ensure their own safety and security at all times.
- Act and behave in a way so as to ensure the safety and security of service users and property in the areas in which they are working.

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- Report all personal safety and security incidents, including violence or threats of violence to themselves, and suspicious activities or incidents.
- Always leave information of their whereabouts with the office and with a friend/relative and to advise the office of any changes to those whereabouts.
- Never leave equipment visible in their cars, especially things like mobile phones, laptop computers, staff should only carry equipment that is strictly necessary for the visit they are making and should lock it away in the boot.
- Always try to park in a well-lit, open location, or walk to a service user's home, along well-lit and populated routes.

All home care staff are strongly encouraged to carry a personal mobile phone and to ensure that an up to date contact number for it is left with the main office in case they need to be contacted. Staff carrying mobile phones should ensure that the battery is fully charged before leaving for work. A spare mobile phone is kept in the office for emergency use.

Security is also considered an issue in Harmony Care & Support Ltd offices, especially for staff working alone there. Harmony Care & Support Ltd security lead should conduct or arrange to conduct regular risk assessment checks around the offices specifically designed to pick up on security issues. Checks should be carried out on a basis and should include: -

- Alarms
- Security lights
- Window and door locks.

Staff should always be aware of who is in the building at all times. Any designated staff working at the office beyond their standard 'going home' time should check who is still in the building before they leave.

Staff should enter the office building by using a key r via the keypad-controlled entrance from the car park. Codes for the keypad should be kept secret by staff and never disclosed to anyone else. Keypad numbers should only be made known to staff on a 'need to know' basis and should be changed every few months. Staff should never leave the outside door open.

Visitors are able to announce that they have arrived by using the entrance intercom system. Office staff should answer the intercom politely and check the identity of the caller before allowing them in. staff who are working alone in the offices should be sure that they know the identity of a caller before allowing them in, otherwise they should refuse entry and ask the visitor to return when other staff are around.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd pursues a zero tolerance policy towards aggression and violence directed against staff.

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COSHH

COSHH stands for The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002. The regulations aim to protect people who come into contact with hazardous substances as part of their work. Under COSHH every employer must, by law, ensure that the exposure of employees to substances hazardous to health is either prevented or, where this is not reasonably practicable, adequately controlled.

Harmony Homecare Ltd believes that staff and service users within Harmony should be as safe as possible from the threat of harm through coming into contact with chemicals or other dangerous substances and that the best way to ensure this state of safety exists is to comply with the law as set out in the **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002**.

The policy is intended to set out the values, principles, and policies underpinning Harmony Homecare Ltd approach to COSHH. By implementing COSHH guidelines thoroughly and fully Harmony aims to protect staff that come into contact with hazardous substances as part of their work. Such 'hazardous substances' include: -

- Substances or mixtures of substances classified as dangerous to health under the current CHIP Regulations, including chemicals classified as very toxic, toxic, harmful, irritant, or corrosive, such as bleaches and cleaning agents.
- Any substance, which has been assigned a maximum exposure limit or occupational exposure standard.
- Substantial concentration of airborne dust.
- Harmful micro organisms.

COSHH 2002 came into force on 21 November 2002 and replaced earlier Regulations dating from 1999.

CHIP is the **Chemicals (Hazard Information and Packaging for Supply) Regulations 2002**. The aim of CHIP is to ensure that people who are supplied with chemicals receive the information they need to protect themselves, others, and the environment. To achieve this CHIP obliges suppliers of chemicals to identify their hazards (for example flammability, toxicity) and to pass on this information together with advice on safe use, usually by means of package labels and safety data sheets.

To comply with COSHH Harmony Care & Support Ltd will: -

- Ensure that the exposure of staff (or anyone else) in Harmony Care & Support Ltd to hazardous or potentially hazardous substances is minimised and adequately controlled in all cases.
- Ensure that COSHH risk assessment is carried out of all work in Harmony Homecare Ltd that involves exposure to hazardous substances as define above. This includes regular assessments of Harmony's premises as well as assessments made during the initial health and safety assessments of service users' homes.

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- Ensure that COSHH assessments are reviewed and performed regularly or whenever there is a substantial modification to the work process.
- Ensure that all staff that come into contact with, or have the use hazardous substances in their work receives comprehensive and adequate training and information and are issued with appropriate protective clothing or equipment.

With Harmony Care & Support Ltd all COSHH risk assessments should be made using five steps: -

- Identify hazardous substances in the workplace.
- Identify risks associated with those substances.
- Decide what can be done to minimise the risks.
- Record the findings/actions.
- Keep the findings of risk assessment on file.

All COSHH assessments should be based on the manufacturer and supplier's safety guidance, which accompanies most products. A file of such information will be kept in the main office.

Where an assessment has shown it is necessary health surveillance and monitoring will be carried out. This might involve examinations by a doctor or trained nurse.

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INFECTION CONTROL

Infection control is the name given to a wide range of policies, procedures, and techniques intended to prevent the spread of infectious diseases amongst staff and service users. All of the staff working in the organisation is at risk of infection or of spreading infection, especially if their role brings them into contact with blood or bodily fluids like urine, faeces, vomit, or sputum. Such substances may well contain pathogens that can be spread if staff does not take adequate precautions.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that adherence to strict guidelines on infection control is of paramount importance in ensuring the safety of both service users and staff. Harmony also believes that good, basic hygiene is the most powerful weapon against infection, particularly with respect to hand washing.

The aim of Harmony Care & Support Ltd is to prevent the spread of infection amongst staff, service users, and the local community.

The goals of Harmony Care & Support Ltd are to ensure that: -

- Service users, their families, and staff are as safe as possible from acquiring infection through work-based activities.
- All staff at Harmony Care & Support Ltd is aware of and put into operation basic principles of infection control.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will adhere to infection control legislation: -

- The **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**, and the **Public Health Infectious Diseases Regulations 1988**, which place a duty on Harmony Care & Support Ltd to prevent the spread of infection.
- The **Reporting of Incidents, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995**, which place a duty on Harmony Care & Support Ltd to report outbreaks of certain diseases as well as accidents such as needle-stick accidents.
- The **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)**, which place a duty on Harmony Care & Support Ltd to ensure that potentially infectious materials within Harmony Care & Support Ltd are identified as hazards and dealt with accordingly.
- The **Environmental Protection Act 1990**, which makes it the responsibility of Harmony Care & Support Ltd to dispose of clinical waste safely.
- The **Food Safety Act 1990**.

In Harmony Care & Support Ltd will adhere to infection control procedures: -

- All staff are required to make infection control a key priority and to act at all times in a way that is compatible with safe, modern and effective infection control practice.

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- The management of Harmony Care & Support Ltd will make every effort to ensure that staff working in the homes of service users has access to sufficient facilities and supplies of appropriate equipment to ensure that they can implement effective infection control procedures and techniques.
- Any staff that does not feel that they have access to sufficient facilities and supplies of appropriate equipment to ensure that they can implement effective infection control procedures and techniques have a duty to inform their manager or supervisor.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that unwashed or poorly washed hands, which provide an effective transfer route for micro - organisms the majority of cross-infection in a care environment. Harmony believes that regular, effective hand washing and drying, when done correctly, is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. Staff who fail to adequately wash and dry their hands before and after contact with service users may transfer micro – organisms from one service user to another and may expose themselves, service users, and the public to infection.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will abide by: -

- All staff should, at all times, observe high standards of hygiene to protect themselves and their service users from the unnecessary spread of infection.
- All staff should ensure that their hands are thoroughly washed and dried:
 1. Between seeing each and every service user where direct contact is involved, no matter how minor the contact,
 2. After handling any body fluids or waste or soiled items,
 3. After handling specimens
 4. After using the toilet
 5. Before handling foodstuffs
 6. Before and after any care or clinical activity.
- Hands should be washed thoroughly – liquid soaps are disposable paper towels should be used rather than bar soaps and fabric towels whenever possible.
- All cuts or abrasions, particularly on the hands, should be covered with waterproof dressings at all times.
- Ordinary soap is considered to be effective for routine use in removing dirt and reducing levels of transient micro – organisms on the skin to acceptably safe levels.
- The use of antiseptic or antimicrobial preparations is recommended if service users are known to have an infectious disease or are colonised with antibiotic-resistant bacteria, such as Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA).
- Antiseptic hand washing solutions may also be used in situations where effective hand washing is not possible,

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- The use of alcoholic products for hand decontamination is not intended to replace washing hands with soap and water but rather to supplement hand washing where extra decontamination is required or to provide an alternative means of hand decontamination in situations where standard facilities are unavailable or unacceptable (for example between service users or in unsanitary conditions).
- To be effective hands should be thoroughly washed before the use of an alcoholic rub and again after the procedure or patient contact has ended.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will adhere to the handling and disposal of clinical and soiled waste: -

- All clinical waste should be disposed of in sealed yellow plastic sacks and each sack should be clearly labelled with the service user's address.
- Non- clinical waste should be disposed of in normal black plastic bags.
- When no more than three-quarters full, yellow sacks should be sealed and stored safely to await collection by an authorised collector as arranged.
- Staff should alert the office if they are running out of yellow sacks, disposable wipes or any protective equipment.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will adhere to the use of protective clothing: -

- Harmony Care & Support Ltd should provide adequate and suitable personal protective equipment and clothing.
- All staff should who are at risk of coming into direct contact with body fluids or who are performing personal care tasks should use disposable gloves and disposable aprons.
- Sterile gloves are provided for clinical procedures such as applying dressings. These should be worn at all times during service user contact and should be changed between service users. On no account should staff attempt to wash and reuse the gloves.
- Non-sterile gloves are provided for non-clinical procedures.
- The responsibility for ordering and ensuring that supplies of gloves and aprons are readily available and accessible lies with Harmony Homecare Ltd and staff.
- Any member of staff who suspects that they or a service user might be suffering from an allergic reaction to the latex gloves provide should stop using them immediately and inform their manager. They should then consult their GP.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will adhere to cleaning and procedures for the cleaning of spillages: -

- Staff should treat every spillage of body fluids or body waste as quickly as possible and as potentially infectious.

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- When cleaning up a spillage staff should wear protective gloves and aprons and use the disposable wipes provided wherever possible.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will adhere to the handling and storage of specimens: -

- Specimens should only be collected if ordered by a GP.
- All specimens should be treated with equally high levels of caution.
- Specimens should be labelled clearly and packed into self-sealing bags before being taken to the doctors.
- Non-sterile gloves should be worn when handling the specimen containers and hands should be washed afterwards.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will adhere to the disposal of sharps (for example used needles): -

- Sharps – typically needles or blades – should be disposed of in proper, purpose-built sharps disposal containers complying with BS7320.
- Sharps should never be disposed of in ordinary or clinical waste bags.
- Staff should never re-sheath needles.
- Boxes should never be overfilled.
- When full, boxes should be sealed, marked as hazardous waste and clearly labelled with the service user details.
- Staff should never attempt to force sharps wastes into an over-filled box.
- Used, filled boxes should be sealed and stored securely until collected for incineration according to individual arrangements.

In the event of an injury with a potentially contaminated needle staff should: -

- Wash the area immediately and encourage bleeding if the skin is broken.
- Report the injury to their manager immediately and ensure that an incident form is filled in.
- Make an urgent appointment to see a GP, or if none are available, Accident and Emergency.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will adhere to food hygiene: -

- All staff should adhere to Harmony Homecare Ltd food hygiene policy and ensure that all food prepared in service users homes for service users is prepared, cooked, stored and presented in accordance with the high standards required by the **Food Safety Act 1990**, and the **Food Hygiene Regulations 2005**.

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- Any member of staff who becomes ill while handling food should report at once to his or her manager at Harmony Care & Support Ltd.
- Staff involved in food handling that is ill should see their GP and should only return to work when their GP states that they are safe to do so.

The **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)** oblige Harmony Care & Support Ltd to report the outbreak of notifiable diseases to the HSE.

Notifiable diseases include: -

1. Cholera
2. Food poisoning
3. Smallpox

4. Typhus
5. Dysentery
6. Measles
7. Meningitis
8. Mumps
9. Rabies
10. Rubella
11. Tetanus
12. Typhoid fever
13. Viral haemorrhagic fever
14. Hepatitis
15. Whooping cough
16. Leptospirosis
17. Tuberculosis
18. Yellow Fever

Records of any such outbreak must be kept specifying dates and times and a completed disease report form must be sent to the HSE.

In the event of an incident Is responsible for informing the HSE

RIDDOR forms are kept

In the event of the suspected outbreak of an infectious disease at Harmony Homecare Ltd, the local Consultant in Communicable Disease Control or Communicable Disease Team should be contacted immediately.

Enter the details of the department:-

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MRSA

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that adherence to strict guidelines on infection control is of paramount importance in ensuring the safety of both service users and staff.

The aim of Harmony Care & Support Ltd is to prevent the spread of MRSA amongst service users and staff.

The goals of Harmony Care & Support Ltd are to ensure that: -

- Service users, their families, and staff working for Harmony are as safe as possible from MRSA.
- All staff of Harmony Care & Support Ltd is aware of the causes of the spread of MRSA and are trained to avoid these.
- Service users who are colonised with MRSA receive the highest quality of care and are not discriminated against.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd should adhere to the following infection control legislation: -

- The **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**, and the **Public Health Infectious Diseases Regulations 1988** which place a duty on Harmony Care & Support Ltd to prevent the spread of infection.
- The **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)** which place a duty upon employers to control dangerous substances in the workplace.
- The **Reporting of Incidents, Diseases, Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)** which place a duty on Harmony Care & Support Ltd to report outbreaks of certain diseases as well as accidents such as needle-stick accidents.

MRSA, or Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus, is a variant of Staphylococcus Aureus, a type of bacterium carried normally by about a third of the population. In most people Staphylococcus Aureus causes no harm. However, when the skin is broken or where a patient is otherwise unwell the bacteria can cause boils or pneumonia and can prevent wounds from healing properly. MRSA behaves in much the same way as its more common relative but, while Staphylococcus Aureus is readily treatable with modern antibiotics, MRSA has a high resistance to antibiotics, which makes MRSA infections much harder to treat.

Many people carry MRSA in the same way that they carry Staphylococcus Aureus without it causing any harm to themselves or others. These people are said to be 'colonised' with MRSA rather than 'infected' as they are not ill and there are no visible signs that they are carrying MRSA. However, when MRSA does cause an infection this can be very dangerous, even life threatening, and is especially problematic in elderly, vulnerable patients who are debilitated.

In healthcare settings, healthcare employees who do not wash their hands sufficiently between person contacts spread MRSA by hand from person to person unwittingly. It can also become established in clinical areas, on equipment and in such things as bedding and clothes and extremely vigorous cleaning and infection control techniques are required to eradicate it or halt its growth.

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In healthcare organisations MRSA carriers should not be a hazard to staff and, according to Department of Health guidelines, the implementation of sound infection control techniques, especially rigorous attention to hand washing, are sufficient to control the spread of bacteria.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will adhere to MRSA policy on preventing it by: -

- All staff should comply with Harmony's infection control policies and procedures and adhere to best practice in infection control at all times.
- All staff should adhere to Harmony's Hand washing Policy at all times, ensuring that their hands are thoroughly washed and dried on arrival and before leaving a service users home, between seeing each and every service user where direct contact is involved, after handling any body fluids or waste or soiled items, after handling specimens, after using the toilet and before handling foodstuffs, Harmony believes that, consistent with modern infection control evidence and knowledge, hand washing is the single most important method of preventing the spread of infection whether a service user is a known carrier of MRSA or not.
- All staff should adhere to Harmony's Protective Clothing Policy and disposable gloves and aprons should always be worn when attending to dressings, performing aseptic techniques, dealing with blood and body fluids or when assisting with bodily care; gloves and aprons should be changed and disposed of after each procedure or contact and always between contacts with different service users.
- Cuts, sores, and wounds on staff and service users should be covered with suitable impermeable dressings.
- Blood and body fluid spills should be dealt with immediately according to Harmony's Infection Control Policy.
- Clinical waste should be disposed of according to Harmony's Infection Control Policy.
- Sharps should be disposed of into proper sharps containers.
- Equipment (such as commodes) should be cleaned thoroughly with detergent and hot water after use.
- Service users and staff should not need routine screening for MRSA unless there is a clinical reason for such screening to be performed (for example, a wound getting worse or new sores appearing) and in such cases screening should be requested by a GP or by the local consultant in communicable disease control.
- If a service user's wound gets worse or does not respond to treatment then the service user's GP should be advised immediately.
- MRSA risks should be included in COSHH assessments and any appropriate control measures taken to reduce identified risks.

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If a service user is identified as colonised with MRSA: -

- They should not be isolated (according to Department of Health guidelines the isolation of colonised service users in nursing organisations is not necessary and may adversely affect the service users' quality of life).
- They may receive visitors and go out, for example to see their family or friends, and should not be discouraged from normal social contact.
- Friends or family need not take any special precautions when visiting.
- Harmony Care & Support Ltd staff with eczema or psoriasis should not perform intimate nursing care on service users with MRSA.

When arranging care for a new service user or when transferring service users to and from hospital: -

- The relevant care manager should always ask in the initial assessment of a potential service user if there is any record that the applicant is colonised or infected with MRSA and this should be entered into the plan of care.
- Colonisation with MRSA should never be reason for refusing a service to a potential service user, for preventing discharge from hospital or for any other form of discrimination.
- Harmony Care & Support Ltd staff should always inform a hospital if a service user that they care for who is admitted hospital is known to be infected with or colonised with MRSA.
- Service users with MRSA should not normally require special treatment after discharge from hospital but if a specialised course of treatment needs to be completed, the hospital should be asked to provide all the necessary details and agree in advance in the discharge plan and check that Harmony Care & Support Ltd is agreeable.
- Harmony care staff should seek and follow expert infection control advice from the consultant in communicable disease control/community infection control nurse in any case where support is required and for any service user with MRSA who has a post-operative wound or a drip or catheter.

Contact details for local Consultant in Communicable Disease Control, Communicable Disease Team, or Communicable Disease Control Nurse are as follows:

.....
.....
.....

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MRSA is not a notifiable infection under the **Reporting of Injuries, Disease** Ltd to report the outbreak of notifiable diseases to the Health and Safety Executive. The presence of MRSA in a service user can only be ascertained by the laboratory investigation of swabs and any positive result will be notified to the service user's GP. Harmony Care Managers should liase with the relevant GP if a positive result is received and should work with all relevant members of the healthcare team to revise the service user's plan of care and to ensure that everybody involved in the care of the service user is informed.

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PROTECTIVE CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

Infection control is the name given to a wide range of policies, procedures, and techniques intended to prevent the spread of infectious diseases amongst staff and service users. All of the staff working in the organisation is at risk of infection or of spreading infection, especially if their role brings them into contact with blood or bodily fluids like urine, faeces, vomit, or sputum. Such substances may well contain pathogens that can be spread if staff does not take adequate precautions. Disposable gloves and protective clothing such as aprons offer staff some protection from being contaminated with an infection and then passing it on to somebody else.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that adherence to strict guidelines on infection control is of paramount importance in ensuring the safety of both service users and staff. Harmony also believes that good, basic hygiene is the most powerful weapon against infection, particularly with respect to hand washing.

The aim of Harmony Care & Support Ltd is to prevent the spread of infection amongst staff, service users, and the local community.

The goals of Harmony Care & Support Ltd are to ensure that: -

- Service users, their families, and staff are as safe as possible from acquiring infection through work-based activities.
- All staff at Harmony Care & Support Ltd is aware of and put into operation basic principles of infection control.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will follow infection control procedures by: -

- All staff should adhere to Harmony's protective clothing policy and use the disposable gloves and disposable aprons which are provided for staffs who are at risk of coming into direct contact with body fluids or who are performing personal care tasks.
- Staff should treat every spillage of body fluids or body waste as quickly as possible and as potentially infectious, they should wear protective gloves and aprons and use the disposable wipes provided wherever possible.

The hands or clothes of staff are likely to be the most common means of transmission of infection unless basic precautions are taken. This involves careful hand washing between contacts and the correct use of protective clothing such as disposable gloves (sterile or non-sterile) and disposable aprons. It is therefore the policy of Harmony Care & Support Ltd is that disposable gloves and disposable aprons are provided for all staff that is at risk of coming into direct contact with body fluids.

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Gloves should be worn at all times during personal care or cleaning procedures and disposed of immediately after the procedure or contact is finished. Gloves should always be changed between service users. On no account should staff attempt to wash and reuse gloves.

Plastic disposable aprons are also provided for use by care staff. Aprons should be used in procedures where body fluids may be involved or there is risk to clothing from substances such as bleach. They should be changed between contacts with individual service users.

The responsibility for ordering and ensuring that supplies of gloves and aprons are readily available and accessible lie with Harmony Care & Support Ltd. Individual care staff are responsible for contacting the main office to order fresh supplies, which they should do before they run out or their stock becomes too low.

It is known that some people can develop allergic reactions to the latex within disposable gloves. Any member of staff who suspects that they might be suffering from an allergic reaction to the latex gloves provided should stop using them immediately and inform the manager. They should then consult their GP.

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SMOKING AND NON-SMOKING

Domiciliary care agency smoking policies should be based on the new anti-smoking laws that are now in force under the **Health Act 2006** and the **Smoke Free (Premises and Enforcement) Regulations 2006**. However they are in an unusual position regarding the new legislation. The non-smoking laws apply to public places and workplaces. This means that no employee can smoke inside Harmony Care & Support Ltd premises or the service user. But domiciliary service work also takes place in the private of people who receive their services and are not workplaces as defined in the legislation. There is no ban on smoking in private places.

Agency smoking policies need to be reviewed as a result of the Health Act 2006, which now bans smoking in all enclosed public places. The new law requires enclosed public places (including workplaces) to be smoke free. Vehicles used for business purposes are also affected by the law. Outdoor areas are not covered by the legislation. The legislation affects most public premises with only a few exemptions, mainly on humanitarian grounds. These include designated rooms in adult resident care homes. Any smoking by service users should not present a hazard.

STAFF SMOKING

Many employers have provided a designated smoking area for staff to use during their breaks. The Health Act 2006 now makes such provision illegal. All care home staff; volunteers and contractors are now covered by the legislation and are banned from smoking in the workplace. Employers are empowered to apply a total ban on smoking inside/outside their premises. Managers should agree a suitable policy with their staff, including designated staff representatives wherever possible.

All staff should be made aware that the breach of smoking could lead to disciplinary action. Sanctions against smokers breaking the rules should be included in a misconduct clause in either a contract of employment or a disciplinary policy.

If confronted with a member of staff who fails to comply with the ban of smoking on Harmony Care & Support Ltd premises, manager should: -

- Tell them that Harmony would be breaking the law if it allowed them to smoke, that they are breaking the law by smoking in a smoke-free premises or vehicle, and that both parties could be fined.
- Remind them that the new law is to protect employees and the public from the harmful effects of their second hand smoke.
- Remind them of Harmony's Care & Support Ltd policy and of the likely repercussions of continuing refusal to comply with the policy.
- If necessary, put into practice the disciplinary procedure for non-compliance with Harmony's Care & Support Ltd smoke-free policy.
- Keep a record of where and when incidents took place, the names of the involved, and the outcome.

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Staff who continue to refuse to comply should be given a written warning and, where indicated in the disciplinary procedure, may have their employment terminated.

In addition to the premises, smoking is banned in any vehicles run by Harmony Homecare Ltd and in any vehicles used by employees as part of their work. This is particularly relevant when a private vehicle is being used to convey passengers.

Smoke-free vehicles will need to display a no-smoking sign in each compartment of the vehicle in which people can be carried. This must show the international no smoking symbol at least 70mm in diameter.

The principles of any policy in light of the current legislation and general trends are: -

- Non- smoking should be regarded as the norm.
- Priority should be given to the needs of non-smokers who do not wish to breathe tobacco smoke
- Special provision, which complies with anti-smoking legislation, is made for any smoking permitted. Smokers should be segregated from non-smokers.
- The wishes and views of care staff about being exposed to second hand smoke from service users who do smoke should be carefully considered.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd managers must take reasonable steps to make all staff and service users aware of their policies that have been made to comply with anti-smoking legislation.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd smoking policy applies to all its employees. The policy has been developed after consultation with the people who use Harmony Care & Support Ltd services, stakeholders, and staff members.

As employers we recognise our duty to provide an environment that enable residents to follow their preferred life-styles and for staff to meet their contractual duties. We must respect people's rights to smoke, particularly in and around their own homes. At the same time we must safeguard the health of everyone who does not smoke and who does not want to breathe in smoke from others. Our policy is to ensure that no one is subject to second hand smoke against his or her wishes.

Harmony Homecare Ltd is committed to promoting the health and safety of all the people who uses its services and it employees. There is now a substantial body of research linking smoking to a variety of serious medical conditions, and evidence is increasingly suggesting that these health risks apply equally to passive smokers. There is also evidence to link smoking to high fire risks.

There must be no smoking in respect of the following: -

- Smoking is forbidden on all premises owned by Harmony Care & Support Ltd
- Harmony employees are not allowed to smoke in the homes or outside areas of people who use its services.
- Staff must not smoke in their cars on any occasion that they transport service users or in transport provided by or paid by Harmony Care & Support Ltd.

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- Harmony Care & Support Ltd does not provide any breaks or respite for its employees to smoke at any time or in any place. Employees must bear this in mind when travelling between calls.
- Harmony Care & Support Ltd will ensure that its premises are clearly marked with no smoking signs that comply with regulations issued under the Health Act 2006.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd undertakes to identify the smoking/non-smoking behaviour and habits of all service users and co-residents when contracting to provide a service to them. It has also prepared an information leaflet that it issues to prospective service users and everyone who uses the service.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd also undertakes to obtain the views of its staff on whether they are prepared to inhale second hand smoke in service users' own homes and to accommodate their wishes, for example, not to be exposed in any way to second hand smoke wherever possible.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd might need to carry out a risk assessment and management plan to reduce the health risks to staff to an acceptable level.

It then forms an agreement with the service user and co-residents, who smokes, which is written into the care plan, and contract. This states the conditions in which the service will be provided based on the information they have about the service user's smoking behaviour and habits and the health risks involved.

All service users and co-residents, who smoke, will be asked not to smoke during the visit from a member of Harmony's staff. Where there is a risk of care workers inhaling considerable amounts of second hand smoke, service users might also be asked to put aside a room that is smoke free for the purpose of the visit.

Harmony's Care & Support Ltd management treats breaches of the rules as serious matters of discipline and are dealt with accordingly. Staff violations of the policy are subject to the normal disciplinary procedures and sanctions. Harmony Care & Support Ltd instructs all new staff to read the policy on smoking as part of their induction and refers them to the no smoking clause in their contract of employment.

Care workers who find that they are exposed to unacceptable amounts of second hand smoke during a visit should discuss the matter with the service user and co-resident with reference to Harmony Care & Support Ltd policy. If the situation does not improve, the care worker should report the matter to their manager to investigate and discuss with the service user with reference to their initial agreement. All such disputes should be recorded.

Service users who wish to stop smoking can be referred to their GP or put in touch with the local NHS smoking cessation service. Staff wishing to give up smoking should discuss the matter with their manager who may be able to refer the staff member to an occupational health support or smoking cessation service

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ACCIDENT REPORTING

Harmony Care & Support Ltd recognises its responsibility to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to provide working conditions that are safe, healthy, and compliant with all statutory requirements and codes of practice.

However, Harmony Care & Support Ltd recognises that even in the safest of working environments accidents are from time to time, inevitable. The **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974** requires employers to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of all their employees as far as is reasonably practicable. As part of this commitment, employers must, by law, notify certain categories of accidents, specified cases of ill health and specified dangerous occurrences to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) or the local authority to comply with the **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)**. This is necessary so that the HSE can determine trends and patterns in workplace accidents and put in place legislation and guidelines that will safeguard workers all over the UK. It also helps Harmony Care & Support Ltd to determine local patterns and causes of accidents so that it can ensure that preventative measures are in place to avoid a recurrence. Therefore, Harmony Care & Support Ltd will make sure that all accidents, incidents, and 'near misses' must be recorded and reported to the management.

The policy is intended to set out the values, principles, and policies underpinning Harmony Homecare Ltd approach to accident reporting, to enable Harmony Care & Support Ltd to meet the requirements of the **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)** and to prevent the recurrence of incidents in the future as far as it is possible.

The goals of Harmony Care & Support Ltd are to ensure that: -

- Harmony Care & Support Ltd complies fully with the **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)**.
- All accidents and incidents involving injury to staff or service users are reported and recorded, no matter how minor.
- All reported accidents or incidents are fully investigated.
- The results and recommendations from investigations are fully implemented to prevent any recurrence of such incidents.

The **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995** covers accident reports, requires employers to: -

- Keep adequate records of accidents and injuries
- Report fatal accidents immediately to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
- Report major injuries immediately to the HSE or LA
- Report dangerous occurrences immediately to the HSE or LA
- Report specified diseases to the HSE or LA

A report is required in the following circumstances: -

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- A fatality (to an employee or a non-employee)
- A major injury to an employee, including: -
 1. skull, spine, or pelvic fractures
 2. any other fracture other than to fingers, thumbs, or toes,
 3. any amputation
 4. dislocation of the shoulder, hip, knee, or spine
 5. loss of sight (temporary or permanent)
 6. chemical burn to the eye or penetrating injury
 7. any injury resulting from an electric shock or electrical burn leading to unconsciousness or requiring resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours
 8. any other injury leading to hypothermia, heat-induced illness, or unconsciousness, requiring resuscitation, or requiring hospital admission for more than 24 hours
 9. loss of consciousness caused by asphyxia or exposure to a harmful substance or biological agent
 10. absorption of any substance by inhalation, ingestion or through the skin leading to acute illness requiring medical treatment or resulting in loss of consciousness
 11. acute illness requiring treatment where there is reason to believe this resulted from exposure to a biological agent or its toxins or infected materials
 12. Any other injury, which results in the person being admitted immediately into hospital for 24 hours or more.
- An employee being unable to carry out normal work for three successive days. An over-three-day injury is one which is not major but results in the injured person being away from work or unable to do the full range of their normal duties for more than three days (including any days they wouldn't normally be expected to work such as weekends, rest days or holidays) not counting the day of the injury itself.
- Dangerous occurrences, including: -
 1. lifting machinery
 2. pressure systems
 3. electrical short circuit
 4. biological agents
 5. collapse of scaffolding, building, or structure
 6. explosion or fire
 7. escape of flammable substances.

NOTE: reportable dangerous occurrences are potentially dangerous incidents (eg. Collapse of part of a building or scaffolding, accidental ignition of explosives and the release of large quantities of flammable liquid), which must be notified to the enforcing authority even if they do not, in fact, cause injury.
- Reportable diseases. The list of reportable diseases is split into two parts; there are 72 listed under the following three categories: -
 1. conditions due to physical agents and the physical demands of work
 2. infections due to biological agents

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3. conditions due to substance

- Notifiable diseases which include cholera, food poisoning, smallpox, typhus, dysentery, measles, meningitis, mumps, rabies, rubella, tetanus, typhoid fever, viral haemorrhagic fever, hepatitis, whooping cough, Leptospirosis, tuberculosis, and yellow fever.

A written record should be kept of any accident, however minor, that occurs in Harmony Care & Support Ltd. Three types of records should be made.

- An Accident Book is provided in Harmony Care & Support Ltd main office to keep a record of all accidents which occur in Harmony, whether they are notifiable or not, whether they occur in a service user's home, in the street or in the office, and whether or not they happen to a member of staff, a contractor, a service user or a relative.
- Accident/incident report forms are also available in Harmony general office. One of these should be filled in by the person suffering from the accident or by a member of staff. Forms should be witnessed and counter-signed by the witness.
- For reportable accidents listed above, HSE report forms F2508 are also available from the general office. These forms must be completed and sent to the relevant enforcing authority within 10 days of the incident or accident.
NOTE: - fatal accidents, major injury accidents/conditions and dangerous occurrences must be reported immediately by telephone to the enforcing authority by the manager of Harmony Care & Support Ltd followed up by the appropriate form.

Telephone notification should always be followed up with submission of form F2508. The manager of Harmony Care & Support Ltd should complete notification forms as soon as possible after the accident. Copies of the completed form should be kept.

The HSE Incident Contact Centre for reporting can be contacted by writing to Incident Contact Centre, Caerphilly Business Park, Caerphilly CF83 3GG, tele: 0845 300 9923 (0830-1700); fax: 0845 300 9924; e-mail: riddor@natbrit.com; website: www.riddor.gov.uk.

There is a legal requirement that written records of reportable accidents and dangerous occurrences (i.e. those which must be reported to the appropriate enforcing authority) be kept for a minimum of three years.

It is the policy of Harmony Care & Support Ltd that all records should include: -

- The date, time and place of incident that occurred
- The name, address and job of the injured or ill person
- Details of the injury/illness and what first aid was given
- What happened to the person immediately afterwards (for example went to Harmony, went back to work, went to hospital.
- The name and signature of the first aider or person dealing with or witnessing the incident.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd

LONE WORKING

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that lone workers should not be at more risk than other employees.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd understands lone workers to be those who work without close or direct supervision or company for substantial periods of time. This includes most domiciliary care staff that visits and care for service users in their own homes. In this context Harmony Care & Support Ltd understands its duty as an employer being to assess any risks to lone workers and take steps to avoid or control those risks where necessary. Harmony Care & Support Ltd recognises that staff working alone in potentially isolated conditions have no immediate back up or support and so are at a greater risk of injury through aggression or violence directed towards them from service users, relatives, carers, or the general public. Harmony Care also recognise that staff working alone need to rely on their own judgement and initiative and may be at a greater risk of making mistakes or errors.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that training is particularly important for lone workers and research shows that adequate training is the single most critical factor in avoiding panic reactions in unusual situations. In particular lone workers need to be deemed competent to work alone, to be sufficiently experienced and to understand the risks and precautions needed fully. Harmony Care understands its duty as an employer to ensure employees are competent to deal not only with the day to day facets of their work but with circumstances which are new, unusual or beyond the scope of their training, for example, if threatened with aggression and violence.

Lone workers are those who work without constant supervision throughout their working day, therefore procedures must be put in place to monitor lone workers to ensure they remain safe and to provide supervision on a regular basis. This includes supervisors periodically visiting and observing those working alone and regular contact between the lone worker and supervision by telephone.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that supervision helps to ensure that employees understand the risks associated with their work and that the necessary safety precautions are carried out. The extent of supervision required depends on the risks involved and the ability of the lone worker to identify and handle health and safety issues.

When a member of staff visits a service user in their own home he or she may be at risk through health and safety hazards in, around service user's homes, and of physical or verbal assaults and hostility from service users', relatives, and the general public. Recent evidence suggests that such incidents may be on the increase and home-visiting protocols should take this into account, particularly in high risk areas such as high crime rate areas.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd this is what they do: -

- The assessment of all new referrals should include a risk assessment, which includes threats from health and safety hazards and from aggression and violence and other threats to lone working.
- Lone workers should carry panic alarms and mobile phones so that they can summon help quickly, all phones should include an emergency number which will be attended at all times that staff are working.

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- Lone workers should call in at regular intervals to report that they are safe, including at the end of a shift.
- Administration staff in the office should log and keep details of all home visits as well as having access to the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of service users.
- Administration staff in the office should contact the duty manager in the event of any emergency situations.
- In a situation where a lone worker feels under immediate threat of their physical safety they should contact the police directly or inform the duty administrator who should contact the police for them; the administrator should be careful to take all appropriate information from the lone worker, such as location and telephone number, and to pass this on to the police, after the incident the lone worker should fill in an incident form.

It is strongly advised that staff carry in their cars the absolute minimum amount of equipment and that they always park their car in a well-lit, public place if at all possible. Thefts from cars are a major area of concern and muggings of care staff are a real threat, especially in high crime areas. If on foot then care staff should avoid dark, unlit, isolated routes to work.

In cases where care is to be provided in high crime area or to a service user with a known history of aggression or violence associated with them, then a full risk assessment should be completed by the supervisor/manager. Where there is significant risk then the care plan should be altered accordingly, either by reviewing the case with the relevant case manager or by arranging for care workers to attend in pairs.

Untoward incidents, including all incidents, which involve the use of threat of aggression or violence, should be regularly reviewed and audited.

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FIRE SAFETY

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that staff and service users should be as safe as possible from the threat of fire or from injury in the case of an outbreak of fire. Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that the best way to ensure this state of safety exists is to have robust fire policies and procedures in place, to ensure that home care staff are well trained to cope with an outbreak of fire or an alarm in a service users' home, and to ensure that appointed fire wardens are in place in accordance with the law in Harmony Care & Support Ltd office.

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles, and policies underpinning the Harmony Care & Support Ltd approach to fire safety. The aim of Harmony Care & Support Ltd is to ensure that, as far as is possible, fires are prevented and that, in the event of a fire, staff know exactly what to do and how to react.

The goals of Harmony Care & Support Ltd are: -

- To minimise the risk of workplace fire by the use of adequate fire prevention and risk assessment techniques.
- To ensure that all staff understand what to do in the event of a fire.
- To ensure that all staff attend fire training at least annually.
- To ensure that, in the event of a fire, Harmony Care & Support Ltd premises and service users' homes can be evacuated as quickly, safely, and efficiently as possible.

SERVICE USERS' HOME

A fire evacuation plan should be agreed as part of the initial health and safety risk assessment in any new home. The plan should be entered in the service users' plan and should note: -

- Escape routes
- Fire risks (smoking habits of service users, use of electric bar fires, etc)
- Evacuation risks (is the service user immobile or disabled? Is the evacuation route restricted?)

Where evacuation or fire risks are high then professional fire advice should be sought. All service users should be encouraged to adopt fire awareness behaviours and to install smoke alarms. Special evacuation arrangements should be made for service users with limited mobility, wheelchairs or sensory impairments.

On the discovery of or suspicion of a fire, home care staff should: -

- Remain as calm as possible and raise the alarm immediately.
- Evacuate the house immediately, helping any service users, visitors, or relatives on the premises to evacuate as per the evacuation plan.
- Ensure that everybody who was in the house is accounted for.
- Close all doors upon leaving.

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- Call the fire brigade if not already done.
- Ensure that any person not accounted for is immediately reported to a fire brigade officer on arrival.
- Contact Harmony Care & Support Ltd head office and report the fire.
- Record the details of the incident in the Incident Book in Harmony's office and fill out any accident forms in the event of injuries.
- NOTE: if the suspicion of fire is raised by seeing smoke coming from under a door or by seeing smoke in a closed room staff should on no account attempt to open the door but should raise the alarm and summon the fire brigade as quickly as possible.

Staff should: -

- Never stop to collect valuables or possessions.
- Never use lifts (except for disabled stair lifts where there is no alternative means of transporting a service user downstairs)
- Never open doors where they can see smoke coming through, unless that is the only means of escape.
- Never attempt to re-enter the building until told it is safe to do so by a fire brigade officer.

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On the discovery of or suspicion of a fire: -

- Staff should remain as calm as possible
- The first person aware of the fire or on the scene should raise the alarm immediately by operating the nearest break glass fire alarm or by shouting 'Fire'.
- If the suspicion is raised by seeing smoke coming from under a door or by seeing smoke in a closed room staff should on no account attempt to open the door but should raise the alarm and summon the fire brigade as quickly as possible.
- Small fires can be fought with the appropriate fire extinguisher, but only if safe to do so and only if the alarm has first been raised.

In the event of a fire or of the fire alarm sounding staff should: -

- Evacuate the building immediately and go to the nearest designated fire assembly point.
- Remain as calm as possible and help any service users, visitors, disabled persons, or contractors on the premises to evacuate.
- Where possible and safe to do so, check all rooms (in particular toilets) to ensure nobody remains in them or are trapped.
- Close all doors.
- Ensure that any person not accounted for is immediately reported to Harmony Homecare Ltd manager, nominated fire warden or directly to a fire brigade officer.

Staff should: -

- Never stop to collect valuables or possessions.
- Never use lifts.

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- Never open doors where they can see smoke coming through unless that is the only means of escape.
- Never attempt to re-enter the building until told it is safe to do so by the Harmony Homecare Ltd manager, by a nominated fire warden or by a fire brigade officer.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd manager is responsible for ensuring that: -

- The fire brigade has been called to any fire by dialling 999/112 and asking for Fire Service.
- The fire brigade is met on arrival.
- The Staff Register and visitor book is removed from the building and used to account for staff and visitors by roll call.
- Any person not accounted for is immediately reported to the fire brigade upon arrival.

The appointed Fire Safety Wardens are responsible for: -

- Supervising evacuation assembly points.
- Carrying out roll calls.
- Liaising with the fire brigade on arrival.

It is Harmony Care & Support Ltd policy that an appointed fire warden should be on duty at all times.

Fire Risk Assessment Protocol

..... Is responsible for carrying out Fire Risk Assessments.

Daily Checks (usually at close of day)

- That all fire doors are closed.
- That all fire exits and stairways are free of clutter.
- That all unnecessary electrical equipment and heaters are turned off.
- The storerooms or rubbish areas do not have smouldering fires.
- Those areas where contractors have been working are free of fire hazards.

Weekly Checks

- That alarm systems function and can be heard in all parts of the building.
- That all fire fighting equipment is in good repair and are in place.
- That stock of flammable materials or gases is kept to an absolute minimum and is stored safely away.
- That all goods and boxes are safely stored away to minimise clutter, reduce the fuel available to a fire and to enable people to exit the building safely in the event of an emergency.
- That all FIRE INSTRUCTION NOTICES and NO SMOKING notices are in place and have not been obscured.
- That individual rooms do not contain obvious fire hazards such as overfull wastebaskets or portable heaters placed close to curtains.

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- That all electrical equipment is free of obvious defects such as worn or broken cables and leads.
- Harmony Care & Support Ltd security arrangements are all in place discouraging arson.

Annual checks

- That fire alarm systems, smoke detectors, emergency lighting, sprinkler systems and fire fighting equipment are serviced on an annual basis.
- The Alarm System fitted is
- The engineers contracted to service the fire alarm systems are.....
- The company contracted to service the fire extinguishers is

Administrative Guidelines

Full records of fire precautions should be kept in the Fire Log. This information should be entered by the fire safety lead or by one of the nominated fire wardens and should include: -

- For fire drills: the times and dates of drills and the time between sounding the alarm and the last person leaving the building.
- For fire alarm tests: the times and dates of tests.
- For fire fighting equipment, alarms and fittings such as emergency lighting: the times and dates of inspections, of replacements and of servicing.
- For training: times and dates of training events, who attended and what was covered.
- Is responsible for ensuring that the staff and service user nominal rolls are kept up to date.

Personnel

- The fire safety lead is responsible for ensuring that the correct fire procedures and arrangements are in place.
- The fire safety lead for Harmony Care & Support Ltd is
- Fire wardens are responsible for supporting the fire safety lead.
- The nominated fire wardens for Harmony Care & Support Ltd is.....
- Nominated fire warden posts will be reviewed every

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- Harmony Care & Support Ltd fire advisor is

Training

All new staff should be encouraged to read the policy on fire safety as part of their induction process. All members of staff should be aware of the procedures in case of a fire at Harmony Care & Support Ltd premises. They should also all be aware of how they must respond in the event of an emergency.

..... Is responsible for organising and co-ordination fire training.

All new and existing staff should know: -

- Who is responsible for ensuring the correct fire procedure is carried out.
- Who the fire wardens are.
- The location and usage of all fire extinguishers and where special extinguishers (eg those suitable for use on electrical equipment) are located.
- The location of break glass fire alarm points.
- The emergency fire evacuation procedures.
- How to use the internal telephone systems to call for the fire brigade.

In house training sessions for existing staff should be arranged so that all relevant staff can attend a session every.....

Such general fire safety training should include instruction on fire prevention, on what to do in the event of a fire and on fire fighting. Records should be kept in the fire log of who attended each session. Staff who does not attend should be reminded to attend the next session.

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DEALING WITH ACCIDENTS AND EMERGENCIES

Harmony Care & Support Ltd recognises its responsibility to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to provide working conditions, which are safe, healthy, and compliant with all statutory requirements and codes of practice. However, Harmony Care & Support Ltd recognises that accidents are, even in the safest of working environments, from time to time inevitable, despite the best efforts of staff, service users, relatives, and other professionals to prevent them. Such occurrences must be handled by Harmony Care & Support Ltd and by its staff so as to minimise threat and injury to all, including service users, relatives, and the general public. They must also be reported and the reports acted upon by Harmony Care & Support Ltd so that accidents can be minimised in the future and Harmony Care & Support Ltd and staff can learn from their experiences.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd understands ‘accidents and emergencies’ to cover an accident of injury to a member of staff or a service user or relative, including health and safety accidents such as trips, falls, and cuts.

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles, and policies underpinning Harmony’s Care & Support Ltd approach to an accident, emergency, or crisis.

The goals of Harmony Care & Support Ltd are to ensure that: -

- All accidents and incidents are appropriately dealt with.
- All accidents and incidents involving injury to staff or service users are reported and recorded, no matter how minor.
- All reported accidents or incidents are fully investigated.
- The results and recommendations from investigations are fully implemented to prevent any re-occurrence of such incidents.
- Harmony Care & Support Ltd complies fully with the **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)**.

In the event of an accident, incident or emergency staff should take the following action: -

- In the event of a minor injury or health related incident the First Aid Policy should be followed and first aid care rendered according to the situation and the member of staff’s capabilities and training. Following such an incident an incident or accident form should be completed and the service user’s GP informed.
- In the event of an injury where medical attention is considered advisable or necessary, the service user’s GP or an ambulance should be called as appropriate. If there is any doubt about the need for medical attention, an ambulance should be called immediately and arrangements should be made to take the casualty to hospital.

If the first-aider or home care workers, decides that an ambulance is appropriate, they should follow the procedure: -

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- Call 999/112 and make arrangements for an ambulance to be sent immediately. It is essential that the precise location of the occurrence is given and the nearest point of access for the ambulance suggested.
- Make arrangements for the ambulance to be met by a relative or other person as appropriate and if available.
Ensure that the service user is accompanied to hospital, when appropriate, by a responsible person and that they contact Harmony Care & Support Ltd office soon after arrival at the hospital, to give updated information on the condition and location of the casualty.
- Contact the main office or manager to report the incident and make arrangements for the appropriate forms to be completed.
- NOTE: if home care worker is unsure about the course of action to take, or in the event of complications (such as having to accompany the service user themselves) then they should contact their manager or the main office for advice.

The home care worker, or first aider, attending to the casualty should then ensure that the managers are notified of the accident/illness, as appropriate.

The responsible manager should then ensure that arrangements are made for relatives or friends of the casualty to be advised fully of the situation, if necessary, and to ensure that an incident report form and any other relevant paperwork is completed as soon as possible.

In the event of an injury requiring first aid, where a fire is reported, where there is violence or aggression or where a service user goes missing, then the appropriate policy should be followed.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd all accidents, incidents, emergencies, and 'near misses' must be recorded and reported to the management using a standard incident form. Accident and incident reports should then be dealt with according to the policy. Employers must by law notify certain categories of accidents, specified cases of ill health and specified dangerous occurrences to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) or the local authority (LA) to comply with the **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)**

A written record should be kept of any accident or incident, however minor, which occurs in Harmony Care & Support Ltd.

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FIRST AID

Harmony Care & Support Ltd recognises its responsibility to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to provide and maintain working conditions, which are safe, healthy, and compliant with all statutory requirements and codes of practice.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd understands First Aid to refer to: -

- The initial and appropriate management of illness or injury, which aims to preserve life or minimise the consequences of injury and illness until professional medical help, can be obtained.
- The treatment of minor injuries that do not require the attention of a medical practitioner or nurse.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd recognises that employers are required to make arrangements for first aid at work, to ensure that illness or injury at work is treated and managed in the most appropriate way.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd ensures that a Qualified First Aider is available at all times that there is staff working. They should be contacted via the main office where there is a list displayed with their names. In addition to Qualified First Aiders Harmony Care & Support Ltd also supports a number of Appointed Persons to assist the Qualified First Aiders.

All employees in Harmony Care & Support Ltd should have access to a first aid box whilst at work. The principal First Aid Box is carried by the on-call First Aider who is responsible for checking its contents and ensuring that it is replenished when necessary. The box should contain the following: -

- An HSE leaflet giving general guidance on First Aid
- 20 individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings (assorted sizes)
- 2 sterile eye pads
- 4 individually wrapped triangular bandages (preferably sterile)
- 6 safety pins
- 6 mediums sized (approximately 12 cm x 12 cm) individually wrapped sterile unmedicated wound dressings.
- 2 large (approximately 18 cm x 18 cm) sterile individually wrapped unmedicated wound dressings.
- 1 pair of disposable gloves.

Tablets or medicines should never be kept in the First Aid Box at Harmony Care & Support Ltd and items that are out of date should be replaced and disposed of immediately.

Appointed Persons who are care staff and are thus mobile may carry smaller First Aid Boxes. Appointed Persons who are allocated First Aid Boxes are responsible for checking contents.

First Aid signs and posters are prominently displayed in the main office informing staff, visitors, and service users what to do in the event of an emergency and from whom to obtain First Aid assistance. This should include emergency contact telephone numbers. Similar information is included in all care staff induction packs and should be carried by care staff at all times.

All staff must familiarise themselves with the First Aid arrangements and with the names and locations of Qualified First Aiders or Appointed Persons and First Aid Boxes.

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In all situations where staff or service users are injured at work and requiring First Aid the accidents procedure should be followed and the appropriate accident forms should be filled in and witnessed. An incident record should also be made in the Accident Book if required.

First Aiders must keep a record of all treatment that they provide by completing a First Aid Treatment Record. This information helps to identify accident trends and can be used for reference in future First Aid needs assessment.

Injuries at work are also covered by RIDDOR (the reporting of injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences regulations) and may require a report to be made to the Health and Safety Executive.

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FOOD HYGIENE

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that, where care provide to service users includes help with the cooking, storing, preparing or serving food, then Harmony Care & Support Ltd has a duty to ensure that all service users are protected from food-related illness, by the adoption of high standards of food hygiene and preparation.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that the effective management of food safety relies heavily on having effective operational policies for the safe preparation, storage, and handling of food. Therefore, Harmony Care & Support Ltd operates the following procedures: -

- All food should be prepared, cooked, stored, and presented in accordance with the high standards required by the **Food Safety Act 1990** and the **Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006**.
- In all cases where food is to be prepared in a service user's home a preliminary risk assessment of the available food preparation and storage facilities should be carried out. Where a home requires improvements or changes these should be discussed with the service user or their family prior to food preparation taking place. Where conditions are assessed as unacceptable then alternative methods of food provision should be sought.
- Care staff should keep all food preparation areas; storage areas and serving areas clean while they are using them. All tools and equipment such as knives, utensils, and chopping boards must also be cleaned regularly during the cooking process.
- Adequate sanitary and hand-washing facilities should be available within the kitchen, including a supply of soap and paper towels for hand drying. All care staff **MUST** wash their hands before and after handling foodstuffs. All foodstuffs should also be washed before use.
- Everyone in a food handling area must maintain a high level of personal cleanliness and food handlers must wear suitable clean and, where appropriate, protective clothing.
- Staff preparing food should take all reasonable, practical steps to avoid the risk of contamination of food or ingredients.
- Food storage areas should protect food against external sources of contamination such as pests.
- Food handlers must receive adequate supervision, instruction, and training in food hygiene.
- When serving food, all staff should scrupulously observe appropriate hygiene standards.
- Suspected outbreaks of food related illness should be reported immediately to the service users' GP.
- Any member of care staff who becomes ill whilst handling food should stop work at once and report their manager. Care staff involved in food handling who are ill should see their GP and should only return to work when their GP states that they are safe to do so.

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In addition care staff should: -

- Always wash their hands after visiting the lavatory.
- Ensure that all food stored in the refrigerator is covered and adequately chilled.
- Ensure the thorough cooking and re-heating of all meat, especially poultry.
- Ensure that deep frozen food is thawed before cooking (especially important when using a microwave oven).
- Be aware of the risk of salmonella infection associated with foods containing uncooked eggs such as mayonnaise and certain puddings.
- Wash hands after handling raw meat or eggs, particularly before handling other food.
- Never re-use utensils with which raw eggs or meat have been prepared without first washing them with hot water and detergent.
- Never allow juices from raw meat to come into contact with other food (cooked food and uncooked food should not be stored together).
- Avoid serving raw eggs (or uncooked foods made from them) to vulnerable people such as the elderly and the sick (all eggs should be cooked until they are hard – both yoke and white).

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RISK ASSESSMENT

Harmony Care & Support Ltd recognises its responsibility to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to provide and maintain working conditions, which are safe, healthy, and compliant with all statutory requirements and codes of organisation, including the statutory duty on employers to conduct regular health and safety risk assessments.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd is committed to ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of its staff, so far as is reasonably practicable, and of all other persons who may be affected by our activities including service users, their relatives and visitors.

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles, and policies underpinning Harmony Homecare Ltd approach to risk assessment, health, and safety.

The following points constitute the policy of Harmony Care & Support Ltd: -

- A risk assessment should be undertaken, by a trained and qualified person, of the potential risks to service users and staff associated with delivering any agreed package of care before the care or support worker commences work – where appropriate this should include risks associated with assisting with medication and other health-related activities and should be updated annually or more frequently if necessary.
- The risk assessment should include an assessment of the risks for service users in maintaining their independence and daily living within the home.
- The manner in which the risk assessment is undertaken should be appropriate to the needs of the individual service user whose views, and those of their relatives or advocates, should be taken into account.
- A separate moving and handling risk assessment should be undertaken, by a member of staff who is trained for the purpose, whenever staff are required to help a service user with any manual handling task, as required under the **Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992**.
- A comprehensive plan to manage the risks (including manual handling and the risks to service users) should be drawn up, in consultation with the service user, their relatives, or representatives; this should be included in the Service User Plan and kept in the home of the service user for home care staff to refer to, a copy should also be placed on the personal file kept in the main office of Harmony Homecare Ltd, this risk management plan should be implemented and reviewed annually or more frequently if necessary.
- New risks which arise (including defective appliances, equipment, fixtures, or security of the premises) should be reported by care workers to their manager or identified during regular reviews or the Service User Plan.
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- Only staff who are both trained to undertake risk assessment and competent to provide the care should be assigned to emergency situations and where pressure of time does not allow a risk assessment to be undertaken prior to provision of the care or support.
- Two people fully trained in safe handling techniques and the equipment to be used should always be involved in the provision of care when the need is identified from the manual handling risk assessment.
- The name and contact number of the organisation responsible for providing and maintaining any equipment under the **Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992**, and the **Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998** should be recorded on the risk assessment.
- Any manual handling equipment provided should be maintained in a safe condition to use and be subject to regular inspections by the manufacturers, records of all such equipment and their maintenance schedules are kept at Harmony Care & Support Ltd office, and is responsible for ensuring that equipment is maintained adequately.
- A responsible and competent person will be on call and contactable at all times when care and support staff are on duty.
- Staff should comply with Harmony Care & Support Ltd staff travelling policy.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd recognises the risk assessments are a legal requirement under Regulation 3 of the **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR)**. Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that risk assessments should identify hazards and resulting risks to employees and other persons who may be affected by work activities. Harmony Care & Support Ltd understands a hazard to be the potential for harm, and risk is the likelihood of that harm actually occurring and the severity of the harm (eg. Slight injury, major injury, and death).

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will fully implement Regulation 3 of MHSWR, which requires employers to: -

- Make an assessment of risks to employees.
- Make an assessment of risks to others who might be affected by work activities such as service users, contractors, visitors, and the public.
- Clearly identify the measures needed to protect the persons in the above.
- Review the assessment and make necessary changes if a) there is any significant change, which affects risk (a new employee, machine or service user), b) there is reason to think it is no longer valid.
- Where there are five or more employees, keep records of a) the significant findings of the assessment b) any group of employees identified by it as being particularly vulnerable.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will include the following as areas of potential hazard of risk: -

- Hazardous substances within the scope of the **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002** (eg chemical hazards, drugs, sharps, body fluids, hazardous waste) and others not currently cover by COSHH (eg lead, asbestos, and substances which are hazardous for reasons other than their toxicity, those which are flammable, or which enhance combustion, react violently)
- Manual handling and the moving of service users.

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- Use of display screen equipment (computers)
- Electrical hazards.
- Work equipment and machinery.
- Workplace hazards (eg space, clutter, lighting, heating, ventilation, tripping hazards, safe access, inadequate sanitary facilities, eg toilets, drinking water).
- Emergencies (eg fire, injuries requiring first aid, dangerous spillages, etc)
- Violence or threats and abuse.

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MANUAL HANDLING

Harmony Care & Support Ltd recognises its responsibility to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to provide and maintain working conditions that are safe, healthy, and compliant with all statutory requirements and codes of practice.

Manual handling is also covered specifically by the following legislation: -

- **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**
- **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**
- **Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992**
- **Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998**

The **Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992** were the end result of a European directive, issued in 1990, and are firmly based on a 'minimal handling' approach to manual handling. Under the Regulations, employers are required to avoid the need for employees to undertake any manual handling operations which involve a risk of their being injured and where such activities cannot be immediately eliminated a 'suitable and sufficient assessment' of all such operations is mandatory. Having carried out this assessment, employers must take appropriate steps to reduce the risk of injury to the lowest level reasonably practicable.

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles, and policies underpinning Harmony Homecare Ltd approach to manual handling.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd recognises its responsibility under the **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**, and the **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**, to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to provide and maintain working conditions that are safe, healthy, and compliant with all statutory requirements and codes of practice. Employees, service users, and contractors are expected to abide by safety rules and to have regard to the safety of others.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd understands manual handling as the transporting or supporting of loads by hand or by bodily force without mechanical help. This includes activities such as lifting, carrying, shoving, pushing, pulling, nudging, and sliding heavy objects. It especially covers the lifting or moving of service users by staff. There should be no lifting of service user's the staff should be using the equipment.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd is committed to ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of its staff, so far as is reasonably practicable, and of all other persons who may be affected by our activities including service users, their visitors, and contractors. As all of these manual handling activities obviously carry the risk of injury if they are not performed carefully, Harmony Care & Support Ltd will take the following steps to ensure that its statutory duties to protect staff and service users are met at all times.

- Each employee should be given such information, instruction, and training as is necessary to enable safe manual handling.
- All processes and systems of work should be designed to take account of manual handling.
- All processes and systems of work involving manual handling should be assessed and properly supervised at all times.

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All potential manual-handling tasks should be fully assessed first using the following process.

- A moving and handling risk assessment should be undertaken, by a member of staff who is trained for the purpose, whenever staff are required to help a service user with any manual handling task, as required under the **Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992**. This should be performed in any new care situation and before the care or support worker commences work. The results should be included in the risk management plan.
- Two people fully trained in safe handling techniques and the equipment to be used should always be involved in the provision of care when the need is identified from the manual handling risk assessment.
- Staff should always consider each manual handling task for risk of injury. If the activity involves occasional lifting of small, regular-shaped, lightweight items, the risk can be deemed to be negligible. If however the task involves repeated movement of a heavier item, or one that is an odd, uncomfortable shape, then the risk is increased and should be identified as a potential risk.
- If a risk is identified, care staff should next consider whether there is a way to eliminate the need for manual handling altogether. For instance, can equipment be used instead?
- If the manual handling task cannot be eliminated completely, the specific risks involved must next be assessed. This is done in a similar way to any other health and safety risk assessment but the assessment does need to be recorded provided it is easy to repeat.
- Where a specific risk of injury is identified and manual handling is unavoidable, then measures to reduce the risk must be introduced. Examples of these are the use of mechanical aids, changing the task to minimise the risk or altering the working environment to make manual handling less awkward.
- Any measures taken to ensure manual handling safety must be in proportion to the risk and the cost-benefit involved.

NOTE: STAFF SHOULD NEVER, IN ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, ATTEMPT TO LIFT SERVICE USERS.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd policy will, so far as is reasonably practicable, be to: -

- Provide and maintain lifting equipment such that they are safe and healthy to use.
- Provide the information, instruction, training, and supervision required to ensure the health and safety, at work, of employees and others.
- Control and maintain the place of work in a safe condition.
- In the event of any accident or incident (such as a near miss) involving injury to anybody on work premises to make a full investigation and to comply with statutory requirements relating to the reporting of such incidents.

The **Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992** set out an obligation upon employees to make full use of systems of work laid down for their safety in manual handling operations. This is in addition to their obligations under other health and safety legislation including making proper use of

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Equipment provided for their safety. To conform with the **Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992**, Harmony Homecare Ltd requires its staff to adopt the following three-stage model: -

1. Staff should avoid hazardous manual handling as far as is reasonably practical.
2. Where hazardous manual handling cannot be avoided, staff should assess the risk first
3. Depending on the result of the assessment, staff should reduce the risk involved to the lowest level reasonably practicable.

The successful implementation of this policy requires total commitment from all employees. Each individual has a legal obligation to take reasonable care for their own health and safety, and for the safety of other people who may be affected by their acts or omissions.

It is also the policy of Harmony Care & Support Ltd under the **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**, it is the duty of every employee at work: -

- To take reasonable care of their own health, safety, and those of any other person who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.
- As regards any duty or requirement imposed on their employer by or under any of the relevant statutory provisions, to co-operate with the employer, so far as is necessary, to enable that duty or requirements to be complied with.

In addition, no person at Harmony Care & Support Ltd shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety, and welfare in pursuance of any statutory provisions.

Manual handling accidents are covered by the **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)**. According to RIDDOR, all manual handling accidents and injuries should be recorded and also reported to the HSE, especially if they result in staff being off work for three days or more or involve faulty equipment. All staff injured at work will be given appropriate support and any staffs that have suffered a manual handling injury should see their GP as soon as possible. Any necessary alterations to a member of staff's job after an accident will be made in line with current **Disability Discrimination Act 1995** guidelines.

Any manual handling equipment provided should be maintained in a safe condition to use and be subject to regular inspections by the manufacturers. Records of all such equipment and their maintenance schedules are kept in Harmony's office. Harmony Care & Support Ltd is responsible for ensuring that equipment is maintained adequately, and also it is the responsible of staff members to report any faults with the equipment.

All staff members of Harmony Care & Support Ltd will take a mandatory course of Manual Handling and this will be subjected to yearly updates.

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GIFTS AND LEGACIES

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that its service users have a right to expect that Harmony will be run on an honest and sound financial basis with robust procedures for dealing with and protecting the financial interests of service users.

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles, and policies underpinning Harmony Care & Support Ltd approach to the giving of gifts to Harmony staff by service users or their relatives. It also aims to set out Harmony Care & Support Ltd policy on legacies.

It is not uncommon for service users who have developed sometimes long and close relationships to individual staff to offer gifts or gratuities or to seek to include a member of staff in their will. However, such activities can lead to accusations of coercion, exploitation, and fraud. It is vitally important to the staff at all times uphold the highest standards of Harmony and always act in an honest manner with the best interest of service users in mind.

Therefore Harmony Care expects: -

- A member of staff should never accept personal gifts if the value of the gift is estimated to be more than £5, if this is given then you must inform the office, which have a book to record what the service user has given you of money value, or a gift.
- Staff should never, under any circumstances, accept valuables belonging to a service user or monetary gifts.
- Any gift given to a member of staff must be declared as soon as is reasonable practicable and details recorded in the Gifts Record in Harmony's office, this must include the date that the gift was given and its monetary value and it must be signed by the recipient.
- Staff should never become involved with making of service users' wills or with soliciting any form of bequest or legacy from a service user, they should never agree to act as a witness or executor of a service user's will nor become involved in any way with any other legal document – if a service user does need help with making a will or requests help from Harmony Care staff then the service user should be referred to an impartial or independent source of legal advice, such as the local citizens advice bureau or local law society which will hold lists of local solicitors.
- Failure to declare a gift, the accepting of a gift in excess of £5, the involvement in a will or attempting to solicit money or items through a service user's will or legacy will be considered a disciplinary offence.

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HANDLING OF SERVICE USERS' MONEY

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles, and policies underpinning Harmony Care & Support Ltd approach to service users who require help with the use of their money or finances as part of their care. The goal of Harmony Care & Support Ltd is to ensure that all assistance with service users' money is provided on a sound, open, honest, and transparent basis and that the highest standards of probity are followed at all times. Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes as a general principle that service users should retain or enhance their independence in dealing with their own money or finances for as long as possible and expects its care staff to support this principle.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that keeping your own money and spending it however you wish is a fundamental human right and an important element in maintaining our human dignity and in being able to exercise choice and autonomy. Harmony Care & Support Ltd also recognises that in some cases its service users lack the ability to manage their own money and require some help from care staff but that such arrangements, if not based within a clear and agreed framework, may be open to abuse or the risk of allegations of misuse. Therefore Harmony Care & Support Ltd operates the following procedures: -

- Senior staff in Harmony Care & Support Ltd should ensure that safeguards are in place at all times to protect the financial interests of the service user.
- When a new service user is assessed as a client, their ability to manage their finances will form part of the assessment, and any concerns will be fully discussed with the service user's relatives, GP, or social services key workers as appropriate. A description of the exact help they will need, if any, will be documented in their care plan and reviewed on a regular basis.
- Staff should ensure that service users retain effective control of their own money in all cases except where it is explicitly stated that they require aid.
- Existing service users who have difficulties dealing with their finances or with money should be offered support and help by Harmony Homecare Ltd only following a re-assessment of their condition and with the explicit agreement of the social services key worker/GP involved. All such agreements should be recorded in the plan of care.
- Where the money of individual service users is handled by staff (for example during accompanied shopping, unaccompanied shopping, collecting pensions, paying bills) they should check and keep all receipts along with any other written records of transactions. The amount and purpose of all financial transactions undertaken on behalf of a service user, including shopping and the collection of pensions, should be recorded appropriately on the visit record held in the service user's home, signed and dated by the care worker and checked by the service user, if able to do so, or their relative or representative on their behalf as appropriate.
- Service users should be encouraged to keep money and valuables in a secure place at all times and not to leave money or valuables lying about.

Care staff working for Harmony Care & Support Ltd should ensure that they: -

- Act with the highest standards of care, probity, and honesty at all times.
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- Respect service users' rights to spend their own money in the way that they wish to spend it and to keep their own financial affairs private.
- Uphold service user's right to confidentiality regarding their financial information.
- Only ever spend, use, carry, transport or invest a service user's money according to the service user's explicit instructions.
- Do not give service users financial advice or information other than that which would reasonably be required as part of fulfilling their duty of care as set out in the plan of care.
- Declare any financial or business arrangements that they have which may cause a conflict with or compromise their ability to handle a service user's money honestly and impartially.
- Report to manager any discrepancies or problems relating to service users' money or finances immediately, including worries or concerns that a service user may be being cheated or defrauded by a third party or has otherwise lost or mislaid money or valuables.

The registered person of Harmony Care & Support Ltd will keep a register that is open to inspection where staff should declare, in writing, any interest or involvement with: -

- Any other separate organisation providing care or support services or responsible for commissioning or contracting those services, including where partners or other close family members own or manage at a senior level.
- Other businesses providing domiciliary, day, residential, or nursing care.

Staff from Harmony Care & Support Ltd work with vulnerable people where trust is of fundamental importance to the relationship. Harmony Care therefore views any potential breach of that trust as a very serious matter indeed and any allegations relating to financial irregularities, the mishandling of service users' money or financial affairs, dishonesty, theft or fraud will be rigorously investigated by the organisation according to its complaints or disciplinary procedure, the police being involved wherever indicated.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd as Gross Misconduct and subject to summary dismissal will consider all substantiated cases of dishonesty, theft, or fraud. Professional staff involved in any criminal act will be reported to their relevant professional bodies.

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INVESTIGATION OF FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES

Harmony Care & Support Ltd is committed to the highest standards of moral and ethical behaviour. Employees of Harmony Care & Support Ltd are expected to report known or suspected financial irregularities. Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that its service users have a right to expect that Harmony will be run in an honest and sound financial basis with robust procedures for dealing with and protecting the financial interests of service users.

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles, and policies underpinning that Harmony Homecare Ltd approach to financial irregularities in the management of Harmony Care & Support Ltd and in the management of service users' money and finances. The goal of Harmony Care & Support Ltd is to ensure that staff working for Harmony Care & Support Ltd safeguards service users' financial interests.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd follows the standards of financial irregularities: -

- Written records of all transactions with service users should be maintained and kept securely.
- Open, transparent, and robust accounting and financial procedures should be adopted and annually audited by an independent firm of auditors.
- Annual accounts will be prepared and submitted by a professional independent accountant.
- Any member of Harmony Care & Support Ltd staff who suspects that a service user may be being cheated, defrauded or robbed or that a service user is no longer capable of managing their own finances should report their suspicions to their manager, any member of Harmony Care & Support Ltd staff who suspects financial irregularities or corruption by Harmony staff or managers should report their suspicions immediately to the owner of Harmony Care & Support Ltd.
- All Harmony Care & Support Ltd staff are encouraged to raise any genuine concerns about any malpractice, suspected crime, breach of legal obligations, miscarriage of justice, danger to health and safety or the environment, financial malpractice, fraud, corruption and breach of regulations, or any cover up of these, that they may come across, which affects Harmony Care & Support Ltd, its service users or other staff – all staff who so disclose information have statutory protection in line with the **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998** and Harmony whistle blowing policy, provided that concerns are raised in the right way and they are acting in good faith.
- All financial irregularities or suspected financial irregularities will be fully investigated by the owner of Harmony Care & Support Ltd as per Harmony's disciplinary policy.
- Any evidence of fraud or criminal activities will be immediately reported to the police.
- All members of Harmony Care & Support Ltd staff should co-operate fully with, and make any documents available to, the police and/appointed auditors upon investigation of any allegations of financial irregularities.

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- Harmony Care & Support Ltd will maintain a register (that is open to inspection) within which Harmony's owners and managers should declare, in writing, any interest or involvement with: any other separate organisation providing care or support services or responsible for commissioning.
- Contracting those services, including where partners or other close family members own or manage at a senior level; other businesses providing domiciliary, day, residential or nursing care.
- Where financial information is held on a computer or in a database then the requirements of the **Data Protection Act 1998** should be followed.
- All parties involved with a financial irregularity, must handle the reporting and investigating with utmost confidentiality and objectivity.

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ABUSE

This document outlines the policy of Harmony Care & Support Ltd in relation to dealing with abuse of our service users.

This document is based on the conviction that: -

- Vulnerable people are at risk of abuse in varied forms
- Abuse may be committed by the staff of Harmony Care & Support Ltd providing care or by others who are in a trusting relationship with a vulnerable person.
- Harmony Care & Support Ltd has a duty to do everything possible to prevent, report and tackle abuse wherever we encounter it.

It is the duty of all members of staff of Harmony Care & Support Ltd to be vigilant regarding the welfare of our service users. All staff will be trained to recognise the signs of abuse when they occur. Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that abuse may take the following forms: -

- Physical abuse
- Neglect
- Psychological abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Racial, discriminatory, religious or cultural abuse
- Failure to prevent self-harm
- Inhuman or degrading treatment

Any member of staff who knows or believes that abuse is occurring has an obligation to report it as quickly as possible to their manager. If the victim requests that the matter should not be reported, the staff member should inform them that silence in that situation is not permitted but reassure the service user that the matter will not be taken further than the manager without their consent unless there are exceptional circumstances. Harmony Care & Support Ltd will take vigorous action against anyone trying to suppress a possible report of abuse.

If the situation is an emergency, with a service user in immediate danger, staff should take urgent action to intervene and call for assistance as soon as possible. They should give any necessary first aid and contact appropriate emergency services if necessary. If the abuser remains present, staff should seek to calm the situation. Staffs have a right to avoid putting him or herself at risk of violence or other harm.

When a manager receives a report of suspected, imminent or actual abuse, an investigation should be opened as soon as possible. The staff member investigating the abuse should take steps to arrange for the service user to be interviewed and, if possible, to give their consent to further investigation and action. If the service user refuses consent, their wishes must be respected unless the manager judges that they or others are in serious danger or if they are clearly incapable of making an informed decision. In cases of incapacity, the manager should attempt to pursue the matter with an appropriate representative of the service user. If the suspected abuser is a member of staff of Harmony Care &

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Support Ltd the manager should initiate appropriate steps under the disciplinary procedure. Staff will take all possible steps to co-operate with further investigations by social services or the police.

If the consent of the service user has been obtained, the situation should be reported as soon as possible to the social services department who will carry out a thorough investigation under their abuse procedures, involving other agencies as necessary.

If it is suspected that a criminal act might have been committed, the situation should be reported to the police. Every effort should be made not to interfere with possible evidence.

The contact details of relevant organisations are as follows: -

Social Services

Police

In instances where a service user refuses their consent for an allegation of abuse against a member of staff of Harmony Care & Support Ltd to be further reported, the appropriate manager should nevertheless proceed with an internal investigation within the disciplinary policy should take any necessary steps to safeguard the service user as far as possible, and should keep the situation under review in case it becomes possible or necessary to take further action.

All details associated with allegations of abuse will be recorded clearly and accurately and in accordance with Harmony Care & Support Ltd complaints policy. These records will be kept securely and Harmony's rules on confidentiality carefully followed. Reports will be made as required to the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

There is a legal requirement on Harmony Care & Support Ltd management to refer someone to be placed on the Protection of Children's Act (POCA) or Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) lists where there is evidence that the person has been guilty of misconduct by harming or putting at risk a child or vulnerable adult, during the course of their work, even if they have left the employment of Harmony Care & Support Ltd.

All staff will be trained in recognising abuse and carrying out their responsibilities under this policy within six months of their employment. Their training will be updated at least every two years.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd takes great care in the recruitment of staff, carries out all possible checks on recruits to ensure that they are of a high standard, and will co-operate in all Government initiatives regarding the sharing of information on staff who are found to be unsuitable to work with vulnerable people.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd undertakes to work in compliance with No Secrets, the Department of Health guidance on multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults from abuse, as

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well as observing the relevant sections of the National Minimum Standards for Domiciliary Care Agencies and the **Domiciliary Care Agencies Regulations 2002**.

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WHISTLE BLOWING

This document outlines the policy of Harmony Care & Support Ltd in relation to dealing with allegations of abuse of our service users made by members of staff of Harmony Care & Support Ltd against other staff. This process is known as whistle blowing. In the past, the management of Harmony Care & Support Ltd often treated people who reported adversely on their colleagues as trouble-makers, but Harmony recognises that it is staffs that are most likely to observe and be in a position to report on bad practice. Harmony Care & Support therefore try to create an atmosphere of open communication and commitment to high standards of work, within which criticisms can be frankly made and thoroughly investigated.

It is required of staff that they observe Harmony's work carefully and report diligently on anything which causes them concern. Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that teamwork and loyalty to colleagues should not be allowed to deter staff from reporting bad practice when they observe it. Any member of staff who witnesses or suspects abuse by another member of staff should report as soon as possible to their manager.

The manager to whom abuse by a staff member is reported should take the necessary steps under Harmony's policy on abuse. In addition, they should if possible protect the source of the information. If a manager fails to act promptly, suppresses evidence, or is involved in any action to discourage whistle blowing, they may render themselves liable to disciplinary action.

Any member of staff who attempts to prevent a staff member from reporting their concerns to a manager or who bullies, attempts to intimidate or discriminates against a colleague in these circumstances will be dealt with under disciplinary proceedings. A whistleblower who feels themselves to be subject to hostile action from colleagues should inform the manager, who should if necessary take steps to alter the staff member's duties so as to protect them from the hostile action.

Managers must take reports from whistleblowers seriously and investigate all allegations thoroughly. Any allegations against colleagues, however, which are found to be merely flippant or malicious, may render the person who made them liable to disciplinary action.

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CHILD PROTECTION

This document outlines the policy of Harmony Care & Support Ltd in relation to dealing with abuse of our service users.

This document is based on the conviction that: -

- The children we encounter in the course of providing services may be at risk of abuse in varied forms
- Abuse may be committed by the staff of Harmony Care & Support Ltd providing care or by others who are in a trusting relationship with a vulnerable person.
- Harmony Care & Support Ltd has a duty to do everything possible to prevent, report and tackle abuse wherever we encounter it.

It is the duty of all members of staff to be vigilant regarding the welfare of children with whom Harmony have contact in the course of providing services. Staff likely to be contact with children and their families will be trained to recognise the signs of abuse when they occur and to respond in accordance with national and local child protection policies and procedures.

Any member of staff who knows or believes that abuse of a child is occurring has an obligation to report it as quickly as possible to their manager.

If the situation is an emergency, with a child in immediate danger, staff should take urgent action to intervene and call for assistance as soon as possible. They should give any necessary first aid and contact appropriate emergency services if necessary. If the abuser remains present, staff should seek to calm the situation. Staffs have a right to avoid putting him or her at risk of violence or other harm.

When a manager receives a report of suspected, imminent or actual abuse of a child, an internal investigation should be opened as soon as possible, but care should be taken not to prejudice any action to be taken by police or social services. If the suspected abuser is a member of staff of Harmony Care & Support Ltd, the manager should initiate appropriate steps under the disciplinary procedure. Staff will take all possible steps to co-operate with further investigations by social services or the police.

Alongside any internal investigation and action, the situation should be reported as soon as possible to the social services department who will lead a thorough investigation under local abuse procedures, involving other agencies as necessary.

If it is suspected that a criminal act might have been committed, the situation should be reported to the police. Every effort should be made not to interfere with possible evidence.

The contact details of relevant organisations are as follows: -

Social Services

Police

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In instances where an investigation by the social services, police or others against a member of staff of Harmony Care & Support Ltd is inconclusive, the appropriate manager should nevertheless proceed with an internal investigation within the disciplinary policy, should take any necessary steps to safeguard the child as far as possible, and should keep the situation under review in case it becomes possible or necessary to take further action.

All details associated with allegations of abuse will be recorded clearly and accurately. The record will be securely kept and Harmony's rules on confidentiality carefully followed. Reports will be made as required to the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd takes great care in the recruitment of staff, carries out all possible checks on recruits to ensure that they are of a high standard and will co-operate in all government initiatives regarding the sharing of information on staff who are found to be unsuitable to be involved in work which brings them into contact with children.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd undertakes to work in compliance with the Department of Health guidance on multi-agency policies and procedures to protect children from abuse as well as observing the relevant sections of the National Minimum Standards for Domiciliary Care Agencies and the **Domiciliary Care Agencies Regulations 2002.**

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MISSING PERSONS

It is common for some of the service users who Harmony Care & Support Ltd provides care for to be frail, infirm, or limited in their mobility. Some may also be confused or easily disoriented and therefore become easily lost. For these reasons, a service user going 'missing' from their home while under the care of a care worker from Harmony Care & Support Ltd, would be obvious cause for concern as to the service user's safety and should be considered as a potential emergency situation.

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles, and policies underpinning Harmony Care & Support Ltd approach to the discovery that a service user is missing.

Care staff from Harmony Care & Support Ltd should always remain vigilant, and be aware of exactly where service users are at any given time. Service users who are prone to wandering, or who may be at risk of getting lost by reason of their mental state, should have this identified during risk assessment and a suitable entry made in their plan of care. Such service users should be kept under observation as appropriate to the level of risk identified.

Situations where a missing person's report should be made include the following: -

- Where a service user has not returned from or has got lost during an arranged activity or walk
- Where a service user cannot be found in their house or grounds and no prior arrangements have been made to explain their absence.

If it becomes clear that a service user may be missing, it is vital that all the members of staff in Harmony Care & Support Ltd work as a team and follow a clearly defined procedure.

Immediately they suspect that a service user may be missing, care staff at the service user's home or place of care should: -

- Initiate an immediate search of the building and its immediate surrounds
- Contact relatives, friends, neighbours, or other obvious places where the service user may have gone or has been known to go in the past.

If the service user cannot be found during the initial search, then the member of care staff should immediately raise the alarm by informing their manager at the office by the phone. They should pass on relevant information, such as the full details of the service user (it is very important to correctly identify the service user) and full details of the incident, including when and where the service user was last seen, who by and what the service user was wearing. The member of care staff should then remain at the service user's home or place of care in case the service user returns.

Upon receiving a missing person's report the manager should do the following: -

- Make immediate efforts to contact the service user's relatives or carers, if not already done, to inform them of the situation, to gather information and to get advice.
- Contact the police and give full details about the service user, including when and where they were last seen, whom by, what they were wearing and any special risk factors involved. Contact telephone numbers should be given and the manager should remain at the office to co-ordinate Harmony's response and to maintain communications.

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- Co-operate fully with any police search.

Where the police are involved then Harmony Care & Support Ltd registered owners should be informed as soon as possible, as should members of the missing service user's family if they have not already been contacted. Families should be requested to telephone the office or police if the service user contacts them, and relatives should be kept informed at each stage of the search.

The manager should, at the earliest opportunity, fill out an incident form and ensure that the member of care staff at the service user's home has made a full note of events in the service user's notes. Times of actions and decisions should be noted as accurately as possible. On conclusion of the incident, care staff involved should be asked to check the incident form for accuracy and to sign it.

Once the service user has been found, it is essential that all the parties who were advised of the emergency are contacted again and informed that the search has been concluded, including the member of care staff at the service user's home and the police.

At all stages the manager should be sensitive to the needs of members of care staff involved, who may well be upset by the emergency incident, and should provide or arrange any support required, including bringing in extra staff to help or sending someone to 'sit' with the care staff involved, and checking staff are OK before they go home.

If at any stage the manager is unsure of what to do then the registered owner should be contacted immediately for advice.

Upon conclusion of a missing persons incident Harmony Care & Support Ltd should mount a fully enquiry and investigate the incident thoroughly. Harmony Care & Support Ltd registered owner who will also be responsible for implementing any improvements that are indicated should lead investigations.

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HOME SECURITY

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that home care and support workers should ensure the security and safety of service users and their homes at all times when providing personal care.

The aim of Harmony Care & Support Ltd is to ensure that service users are protected and are safe and secure in their home.

Care and support workers should ensure the security and safety of the home and the service user at all times when providing personal care.

- During the initial assessment, when care is planned, the security of the home should be discussed, and an agreement reached about how the home care worker will affect entrance to the service user's home – this should be entered in the Service User Plan.
- Home care staff should: -
 1. Always carry their identification badge and show it to the service user on entry
 2. Always encourage service users to adopt safe home security practices wherever possible. Including using door safety chains, even when they know that the care worker will be at the door and requesting identification.
- Staff should never: -
 1. Agree to leave a key outside a house, in a safe place or on string by the letterbox
 2. Attempt to effect forced entry to the home.
- If it is decided that the care worker should hold a copy of the service user's key then the permission of the service user or their relatives should be made in writing and a suitable entry made to the Service User Plan. Key holding should never be embarked upon without the express permission of the care worker's manager for without an entry being made to the Service User Plan.
- Staff who hold keys for service users should: -
 1. Label the key with a code, never with the name and address of the service user in case the key gets lost.
 2. Be very careful that they keep the key in a safe place at all times
 3. Inform their manager immediately in cases of the loss or theft of keys.

When entering a service user's home, care staff should: -

- Knock or ring the doorbell or call out before entry, even if they hold a key and can let them in.
- Always show their identification badge on entry
- Offer to check that windows and doors are secure before leaving a premises
- Always check that the door is secure as they leave.

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Harmony care & Support Ltd, identity cards are provided for all care and support staff entering the home of service users. The cards should: -

- Display a photograph of the member of staff
- Display the name of the person and employing Harmony Care & Support Ltd in large print.
- Display the contact number of Harmony Care & Support Ltd
- Display a date of issue and an expiry date, which should not exceed 36 months from the date of issue.
- Be available in large print for people with visual disabilities
- Be laminated
- Be renewed and replace with at least 36 months from the date of issue
- Be returned to Harmony Care & Support Ltd when employment ceases.

The following procedure should be followed in cases where the care worker attends premises but cannot get in or receive an answer from the service user. The care worker should: -

- Check in their diary that they have the right day/time/address
- Knock several times and try to raise the service user by calling through the letterbox
- If there is still no answer then the care worker should try phoning the service user to their relatives or get Harmony Care & Support Ltd to call the service user or their relatives
- If the problem is not resolved by phone then the situation should be reported to the care worker's manager who will continue to attempt to contact the service user and/or their relatives
- If there is cause for concern as to the service user's well being then the care worker should report this to Harmony Care & Support Ltd office or the care workers themselves
- On no account should the care worker attempt to effect forced entry to the home; in the case of an emergency, the care worker should always contact the police or an ambulance and wait for them.

KEY HOLDING

Key holding by staff is sometimes an essential part of providing high quality care to certain service users who are infirm or immobile or otherwise are assessed as having difficulty in getting to the door and letting in a home care worker. In such cases it is far safer for the home care worker to hold a key to the home than for the service user to leave a door unlocked or use a similar strategy such as hiding a key outside the house in a known place. Such strategies represent obvious security risks. Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that home care and support workers should ensure the security and safety of service users and their homes at all times when providing personal care and that they must therefore take great care of a service user's key.

The aim of Harmony care & Support Ltd is to ensure that service users are protected and are safe and secure in their homes and that where staff to effect entrance to the home holds keys, those keys are kept securely.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd should: -

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- During the initial assessment, when care is planned, the security of the home should be discussed and an agreement reached about how the home care worker will affect entrance to the service user's home. The home care worker may be asked to hold a key to the service user's home where the service user would find it difficult to open the door for a home care worker because of infirmity, disability, incapacity or mental state.
- Such a decision should only be reached where this represents the best way of effecting entrance for the home care worker and where it represents the best way to ensure the safety and security of the service user.
- If it is decided that the care worker should hold a copy of the service user's key then the permission of the service user or their relatives should be made in writing and a suitable entry made to the Service User Plan. Key holding should never be embarked upon without the express permission of the care worker's manager for without an entry being made to the Service User Plan.
- Staff who hold keys for service users should: -
 1. Label the key with a code, never with the name and address of the service user in case the key gets lost.
 2. Be very careful that they keep the key in a safe place at all times
 3. Inform their manager immediately in cases of the loss or theft of keys.
 4. Always knock on the door and announce themselves before entering a service user's home with a key
- Staff should never: -
 1. Agree to leave a key outside a house, in a safe place or on string by the letterbox
 2. Attempt to effect forced entry to the home.

NOTE: -

Some service users have a key safe box outside their home which is a secure box containing their key. The box can only be opened with a combination or with a master key. This avoids the dangers of a service user hiding a key somewhere outside the house and means that the key is always available. S

Staff who has to use a key safe box should take care with the security of the combination number and keep it secret. In particular, they should never write it down next to the service user's address.

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IDENTITY CARD

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that home care and support workers should ensure the security and safety of service users and their homes at all times when providing personal care.

All care staff will be issued with an identity card (ID card) when they join Harmony Care & Support Ltd. Staff AT ALL TIMES while they are at work and must be returned to Harmony Care when employment ceases must wear the ID.

Harmony Care ID cards will: -

- Display a photograph of the member of staff
- Display the name of the person and employing Harmony Homecare Ltd in large print
- Display the contact number of Harmony Homecare Ltd
- Display a date of issue and an expiry date which should not exceed 36 months from the date of issue
- Be available in large print for people with visual disabilities
- Be laminated
- Be renewed and replaced within at least 36 months from the date of issue

To enter a service user's home care staff should: -

- Knock or ring the doorbell or call out before entry, even if they hold a key and can let themselves in
- Always show their ID card on entry.

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HOME RECORDS

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that all records required for the protection of service users and for the effective and efficient running of Harmony Care & Support Ltd should be maintained accurately and should be up to date, that service users should have access to their records and information about them and that all individual records and Harmony Care & Support Ltd records are kept in a confidential and secure fashion. Harmony Care & Support Ltd also adheres fully to the **Data Protection Act 1998**.

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles, and policies underpinning Harmony Care & Support Ltd approach to record keeping, data protection and access to records.

- With the service user's consent, care or support workers should record, in records kept in the homes of service users, the time and date of every visit of to the home, the service provided and any significant occurrence.
- Where appropriate, records should include: -
 1. Assistance with medication – including time and dosage
 2. Financial transactions undertaken on behalf of the service user
 3. Details of any changes in the service user's or carer's circumstances, health, physical condition, or care needs
 4. Any accident, however minor, to the service user and/or care or support worker
 5. Any other untoward incidents
 6. Any other form information that would assist the next health or social care worker to ensure consistency in the provision of care.
- All records required for the protection of service users and for the effective and efficient running of Harmony Care & Support Ltd should be maintained in an up to date and accurate fashion by all staff.
- Service users should have access to their records and information about them held by Harmony Care & Support Ltd, they should also be given opportunities to help maintain their personal records.
- Individual records and Harmony Care & Support Ltd records should be kept in a secure fashion, should be up to date and in good order; and should be constructed, maintained and used in accordance with the **Data Protection Act 1998** and other statutory requirements.
- Records should be kept in the home for one month, or until the service is concluded, after which time they should be transferred, with the permission of the service user, to the provider of Harmony Care & Support Ltd or other suitable body (eg local authority or health trust, or other purchaser of the service), for safe keeping.

In Harmony Care & Support Ltd staff should: -

- Wherever practical or reasonable, fill in all care records and service user notes in the presence of and with the co-operation of the service user concerned.
- Ensure that all care records and notes, including Service User Plans, are signed and dated.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd

- Ensure that all files or written information of a confidential nature are stored in a secure manner wherever possible.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that access to information and security and privacy of data is an absolute right of every service user and that service users are entitled to see a copy of all personal information held about them and to correct any error or omission in it.

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RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles, and policies underpinning Harmony Care & Support Ltd approach to recruitment.

The aim of Harmony Care & Support Ltd selection procedure is to ensure that the most suitable candidate is chosen for the job and that all applicants receive fair and equitable treatment.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to all job applicants irrespective of race, nationality, sex, union membership, or disability.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd provides employees with an opportunity to indicate their interest in open positions and to advance within Harmony Care & Support Ltd according to their skills and experience. In general, notices of all regular, full and part-time job openings will be posted, although Harmony Care & Support Ltd reserves its right not to post a particular opening.

To be eligible to apply for a posted job, an employee must be performing competently in their present position and have held it long enough to make a significant contribution.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd encourages employees to talk with their supervisors about their career plans and supervisors are encouraged to support employee's efforts to gain experience and advance within Harmony Care & Support Ltd.

An applicant's supervisor may be contacted for an account of an employee's performance, skills, and other factors relevant to any application they may make. Any staffing limitations or other circumstances that might affect a prospective transfer may also be discussed.

All applicants will be sent an application form and a job description. Only applications made using the proper form and received by the advertised deadline will be considered.

Applicants will be short-listed by comparing their application form with the person specification for the job. All short-listed candidates will be offered an interview and given details of Harmony Care & Support Ltd, the position for which they have applied and the terms and conditions of employment.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd practices an equal opportunities policy and wishes to recruit and employ those people who are best suited for the vacancies for which they have applied, regardless of sex, sexual orientation, religion, ethnic origin, race, disability or union membership (or lack of it). To monitor the translation of this intention into practice all application (and their ultimate selection or rejection) will be reviewed.

All employees and applicants will, therefore, be required to complete a sex and ethnic origin form. Brief details of every application will be recorded on the form and the reason for inviting some and not other applicants for interview must also be recorded on it.

All offers of employment are made on condition that satisfactory references are obtained in respect of the applicant. If the references prove to be unsatisfactory, the offer of employment may be withdrawn without Harmony Care & Support Ltd being in breach of contract.

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Applicants should confirm in writing that their present employer might be approached for a reference. If a reference, verbal or written, is deemed unsatisfactory, the appointee should be told and given written confirmation that the offer of employment is withdrawn since the condition to which it was subject has not been fulfilled.

When recruiting new staff, Harmony Care & Support Ltd will refer to the Protection of Vulnerable Adults register and will perform a full police check on the candidates.

Job interviews provide an opportunity for Harmony Care & Support Ltd to get the information it needs about applicants to decide which is most suitable for the position in question. Interviews will not be conducted until a completed application form has been received.

Every attempt will be made to ensure that interviews are conducted under conditions, which are favourable to interviewees giving their best. Interviewers must ensure that they have all the appropriate documentation before the start of the interview. The assessments made by interviewers must be formally recorded on an interview assessment form. Interviewers must not make offers of employment or suggest variations to standard terms and conditions of employment at the interview.

All staff is employed in accordance with the codes of conduct of the General Social Care Council. As the registration of the social care workforce is extended, staff for posts for which registration is mandatory will be employed only on production of satisfactory evidence of their current registration.

Terms of appointment and employment between Harmony Care & Support Ltd and its employees are always confirmed in writing. If, due to exceptional circumstances, a verbal statement of terms cannot be avoided it should always be stated that it is subject to written confirmation.

Formal offers of employment will be made in writing after all short-listed candidates have been interviewed.

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JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND PERSON SPECIFICATIONS

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that an accurate job description and person specification is an essential requirement for every post and for all recruitment purposes. Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that the more accurate that job descriptions and person specifications are, the fairer recruitment will be with all candidates being clear prior to interview as to exactly what is required for the job.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd has a job description is understood to be a written document detailing the main duties and responsibilities of a post, describing a role and what is required to do the job. They should always be written with the job in mind and should not be written to describe any existing individual member of staff or how they do their job. Accurate job descriptions act as: -

- A tool in recruitment – to assist in the writing of job advertisements
- A tool in selection – to help make decisions about who to employ
- A basis of employment contracts – making it clear what is required of a member of staff
- Part of Harmony Homecare Ltd defences in cases of discrimination or unfair dismissal
- A means by which Harmony Homecare Ltd expectations, priorities and values are communicated to new members of staff.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd person specification is understood to be a written document which states the knowledge, skills, and experience that a post holder would be expected to have in order to competently undertake the duties and responsibilities outlined in the job description. It is used for recruitment purposes.

A job description should exist for every role within Harmony Care & Support Ltd and a new job description should be constructed for every new role developed within Harmony Care & Support Ltd. An existing job description should be reviewed whenever a post becomes vacant.

Job descriptions should always be clear and concise and contain the following sections: -

- Job title
- Hours of work
- Criminal Records Bureau clearance level required
- Organisational arrangements
- Job purpose
- Main duties and responsibilities

Person specifications should detail the qualifications, knowledge, and experience that are required to fit the post. These should be listed as either 'essential' to carry out the role in the case of qualities, which must be attained for new candidates, or as 'desirable' in the case of qualities, which can be used in recruitment situations where there are two equally suitable candidates.

Person specifications should contain the following sections: -

- Education, training and qualifications
- Skills and abilitiesexperience.

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CRIMINAL RECORDS

This policy outlines Harmony Care & Support Ltd approach to the recruitment of staff with criminal convictions, the use of criminal record checks and the storage and use of information on convictions disclosed by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). The policy applies to all staff groups and should be given to applicants at the outset of the recruitment process where a CRB request for disclosure of their criminal record will be required as part of the application process.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will: -

- To comply with the law, use the Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) Disclosure Service to obtain information, to enable it to assess the suitability of applicants for employment in positions of trust.
- Comply fully with the CRB code of practice and not discriminate unfairly against any subject of a CRB disclosure on the basis of conviction or other information revealed. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar an applicant from working for Harmony Care & Support Ltd as the nature of a disclosed conviction and its relevance to the post in question will be considered first.
- Comply with the CRB code regarding the secure storage, handling, use, retention and disposal of CRB disclosures and disclosure information and with its obligations under the **Data Protection Act 1998**.

An appointee will be requested to submit to a CRB disclosure request wherever a risk assessment has indicated about the position requires working in a position of trust. For posts where a CRB disclosure will be required, the further particulars of the post will contain an indication that a disclosure will be requested in the event of the individual being offered the position. All subjects of a CRB disclosure request will be made aware of the CRB Code of Practice. Any information revealed in a disclosure that is likely to lead to the withdrawal of a job offer will be discussed with the applicant before the offer is withdrawn.

Where a conviction has been disclosed in an individual's application for a post with Harmony Care & Support Ltd, a discussion will take place at the end of the interview regarding the offence and its relevance to the position. Failure to reveal information relating to unspent convictions could lead to withdrawal of an offer of employment.

The **Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974** provides that ex-offenders are not required to disclose to prospective employers convictions defined as 'spent' under the Act. However, it is Harmony Care & Support Ltd policy to require all applicants to disclose all criminal convictions, both, 'spent' and 'unspent' as they will be working with vulnerable adults in positions of trust.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will: -

- CRB disclosure information will not be stored on an employee's personnel file but will be stored separately in lockable storage with access limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties. A record will be maintained of all those to whom disclosure information has been revealed as it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

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- Disclosure information will only be used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent will have been obtained.
- Once a recruitment decision has been made, CRB disclosure information will not be stored for longer than is necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months to allow for consideration and resolution of any disputes or complaints. If, in exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep such information for longer than six months, consideration will be given to the Data Protection rights of the individual.
- Once the retention period has elapsed, Harmony care & Support Ltd will ensure that any CRB disclosure information is destroyed and, while awaiting destruction, CRB disclosure information will be kept securely.

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APPLICATION OF PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE ADULTS REGISTER

From July 2004 the government is introducing an additional means of protecting vulnerable adults from abuse and neglect in care homes or in receipt of a service in their own homes by the establishment of a list of names of people who are considered to be unsuitable to work with vulnerable adults. This is called the Protection of Vulnerable Adults list (POVA). There has been a similar list of people deemed unsuitable to work with children for many years, which provides the model for this development. This is now called the Protection of Children's Act (POCA) list so that there is now additional protection for all users of care services, which is based on common aims and principles. It is possible that some people may be referred for inclusion on both lists.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd is required to implement the POVA register in one of two ways. Firstly when a person applies for employment here a search will be made to see if he or she has been placed on the POVA register. This will be done by the Criminal Records Bureau, which has access to the register, as part of its checking procedures. At present staff that was appointed before 26th July 2004 do not have to be checked against the POVA list.

Care staffs, which have been appointed after 26th July 2004, will have a POVA check. Also anyone who applies for a care position from a non-care role will need to be checked against the list. The Harmony's management will make application for a check to the Criminal Records Bureau, which will make the actual check as the POVA list is held by the Department of Health. The Harmony Homecare Ltd will link up with any agencies supplying care staff as to the most effective means by which POVA checks can be undertaken.

Secondly, it has also become the Harmony's responsibility to apply to have a name placed on the POVA list if there is evidence that the person in question has harmed or placed at risk of being harmed one of the Harmony's service user. By 'harmed' is meant demonstrably ill-treating a service user or subjecting a service user to one or more forms of abuse as defined in our Protection and Abuse policy. Such behaviour will make them liable to charges of misconduct, which if proven as misconduct will make the person unsuitable for further or future employment with vulnerable adults and by implication in many cases vulnerable children.

The POVA list currently applies to anyone employed in the home that has regular contact with a service user or service user not only as care staff but also in other positions too. Harmony Care & Support Ltd encourages everyone to be in contact with residents, through obviously some more than others. We have decided therefore that our policy will be an inclusive one and we will make every newly appointed staff member in any position and at any level, subject to a POVA check unless it is clear that the person will not or does not have regular contact with residents.

We have adopted this approach because it will be easier to decide who might be excluded than who should be included with reference to the idea of 'regular contact'.

The policy includes any agency or bank staff and any volunteers who work at Harmony Care & Support Ltd from time to time and who have direct contact with service users. The checks could also apply to anyone else we employ on an occasional basis to provide a service, which brings them into regular contact with the service user. Such people will be included where they are contracted in some

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way to provide a service to our home. It will not apply to individuals who are invited in by service users and

Relatives as visitors or under some private arrangement where they have no contract of employment with the home as such.

There is a legal requirement on Harmony Care & Support Ltd management to refer to someone to be placed on the POVA list, where there is evidence that the person has been guilty of misconduct by harming a service user or putting a service user at risk of being harmed during the course of their work and as a result has left the employment of the Harmony Care & Support Ltd

The purpose of the POVA list is then to make sure that anyone who has been guilty of misconduct by harming service users should not be able to obtain employment elsewhere working with vulnerable adults. Being on the list will indicate their unsuitability for such employment.

Examples of how a person may be referred to the list:

- a) Where the Harmony Care & Support Ltd dismisses someone because of misconduct, which harmed or placed at risk of harm a service user or service users.
- b) Where someone employed by the Harmony Care & Support Ltd has resigned, retired or been made redundant but would otherwise have been dismissed because of misconduct under the POVA definition.
- c) Where the person because of their conduct has been considered to have regular contact with service users but who has been transferred to a position, which is not a care position. This is unlikely to be the policy in Harmony Care & Support Ltd since we expect all employees to be potentially able to have regular contact with service users.
- d) Where the person has been suspended or temporarily transferred to a position, which is not a care position, but it has not yet decided whether to dismiss him or to confirm the transfer. Again this is unlikely to be the policy in Harmony Care & Support Ltd.

It is also a requirement that Harmony Care & Support Ltd should refer people who have left our employment, where we have evidence afterwards that they could and could have been charged with misconduct as a result of mistreating a service user or service users.

Any person facing police charges as a result of their misconduct will also be referred for inclusion on the list. It should be noted that suspension from duty as a result of an allegation of mistreatment of service users could potentially result in the person being referred for inclusion on the list, albeit as a temporary or provisional measure. Under these circumstances Harmony Care & Support Ltd will act in this way if it has good grounds for believing that vulnerable adults, either in their home or elsewhere, will be put at risk without the referral being made.

Staff should not become unduly alarmed by the idea of the POVA list. It will only be used where serious misconduct has occurred and where service user is put at risk by action not being taken.

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If you are included on the POVA list wither as a confirmed or provisional listing you may not be offered work in a care position and of course would be unable to continue to work in at Harmony Care & Support Ltd having regular contact with service users.

In the unlikely event of you being confirmed on the list you will be committing a criminal offence if you seek or accept employment as a care worker that brings you into regular contact with vulnerable adults.

You will not be committing a criminal offence if you make an application for a care post but are on the list provisionally – meaning awaiting the outcome of whether you will be confirmed on the list or taken off it. However you still will not be able to take up employment as a care worker while on the list – confirmed or provisional.

If Harmony Care & Support Ltd discovers any of its care workers is on the POVA list it will not be able to continue to employ them in a capacity that brings them into regular contact with service user and the person may face dismissal. This will be written into all contracts of employment made after 26th July 2004.

If you are referred to be placed on the list it does not automatically mean that you will be placed on it even provisionally. It is up to the Secretary of State to decide on the basis of the information supplied whether you should be provisionally on it. The Secretary of State will also decide if you should be placed on the POCA list as well.

If placed provisionally on the list you then have 28 days to put in your reasons as to why you think you should not be confirmed on the list. You will have to put this information in writing. Before your name may be confirmed on the POVA list the Secretary of State will then need to be assured that whoever referred you, e.g. reasonably considers you to be guilty of misconduct, which harmed or placed at risk of harm a vulnerable adult.

If the Secretary of State determines that your name should not be confirmed on the POVA list he will immediately remove the provisional entry from it (and from the POCA list if your name is on that too provisionally).

You and the referring organisation will be notified by ‘special delivery’ of the decision to remove or confirm as soon as it is made.

You will be able to appeal against your inclusion on the list as a confirmed name by making application to an Appeals Tribunal. You will also be able to appeal against provisional inclusion after nine months if you still have not been confirmed. However if you are subject of any civil or criminal proceedings in connection with the allegations of misconduct you cannot apply to the Tribunal until six months after those proceedings have been completed.

There are three ways that you might get your name removed one it has been confirmed.

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- a) You may have your name removed if you can show that there has been some mistake or a miscarriage of justice has taken place resulting in your being placed on the list.
- b) You can lodge an appeal with the Care Standards Tribunal. Beyond that you would have to appeal to the High Court.
- c) You may lodge an application with the Care Standards Tribunal for to have your name removed from the list on the grounds that you are no longer unsuitable to work with vulnerable adults (this is not the same as making an appeal). You will then need to show that you are once more suitable and you would not be placing vulnerable adults at risk if you were re-employed. There are some conditions to be followed here.

If you were under the age of 18 at the time you were included on the POVA list (otherwise than provisionally) you must wait five years before applying for leave of the Tribunal. You can make only one application for leave in any five-year period.

If you were over the age of 18 at the time of inclusion on the POVA list you must have been included (otherwise than provisionally) in the POVA list for a continuous period of 10 years, before applying for leave of the Tribunal. You can make only one application to be removed in each 10-year period.

The following provides a list of information that for example Harmony Care & Support Ltd will have to provide if it is necessary to make an application for someone to be included (provisionally in the first instance) on the POVA list: -

- Full name
- Date of birth
- National insurance number, where known
- Last known address
- Confirmation that the individual occupied a care position
- Full details of the alleged misconduct
- Detailed explanation about how – by his or her misconduct – the individual harmed or placed at risk of harm a vulnerable adult
- Details of any investigations carried out to date – and their conclusions – including copies of relevant papers and details of the provider's disciplinary procedures.
- Details of the action taken against the individual – has he/she been suspended, dismissed or transferred from a care position or other action taken.
- Information on any police involvement
- Details of proposed further action – dates for disciplinary hearings, timetable on further investigations.

NOTE: -

Department of Health Draft Guidance notes that the key to deciding whether a person qualifies as a care worker is the amount of contact they have with vulnerable adults in performing their duties (whatever they might be), rather than their job title or the nature of their job.

As set out in the National Minimum Standards for Domiciliary Care Agencies, the established, ordinary meaning of 'personal care' includes four main types of care.

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1. Assistance with bodily functions such as feeding, bathing, and toileting.
 2. Care which falls just short of assistance with bodily functions, but still involving physical and intimate touching, including activities such as helping a person get out of a bath and helping them get dressed.
 3. Non-physical care, such as advice, encouragement, and supervision relating to the foregoing, such as prompting a person to take a bath and supervising them during this. Emotional and psychological support, including the promotion of social functioning, behaviour management, and assistance with cognitive functions.
-
- a) Full name
 - b) Date of birth
 - c) National insurance number, where known
 - d) Last known address
 - e) Confirmation that the individual occupied a care position
 - f) Full details of the alleged misconduct
 - g) Detailed explanation about how – by his misconduct – the individual harmed or placed at risk of harm a vulnerable adult
 - h) Details of any investigations carried out to date – and their conclusion – including copies of relevant papers (including statements, notes of interviews, minutes of meetings and minutes/notes of disciplinary hearings) and details of the provider's disciplinary procedures
 - i) Details of the action taken against the individual – has he been suspended, dismissed or transferred from a care position or other action taken
 - j) Information on any police involvement (or the involvement of any other agency)
 - k) Details of proposed further action – that is, dates for disciplinary hearings, timetable on further investigations etc; and any other information considered relevant to the circumstances of the alleged misconduct.

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DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION

The aim of Harmony Care & Support Ltd is to promote equal treatment for all employees and service users irrespective of race, colour, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, political belief, disability, age, gender, or marital status. This is managed in compliance with equal opportunities legislation and accepted codes of good practice. Harmony Care & Support Ltd aim to ensure that no job applicants, staff member, volunteer, organisation or individual Harmony provides services to will be discriminated against by us.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd fully complies with the **Disability Discrimination Act 1995** and understands disability discrimination to refer to the treatment of one person more or less favourably than another on the grounds of disability. Harmony Care & Support Ltd understands that such discrimination may be direct or indirect. Direct discrimination is deliberate. Discrimination is indirect when an unnecessary condition or requirement is imposed, whether intentionally or inadvertently, such that the proportion of members of one group who can comply with it is considerably smaller than the proportion of other groups.

In Harmony Care & Support Ltd complies by: -

- Discrimination on the grounds of disability will be neither practised or tolerated
- All employees, of whatever grade or role, are expected to abide by and adhere to the general principle of equal opportunities and to respect the culture, religion, privacy and dignity of others at times.
- Staff will be promoted, employed and treated fairly on the basis of their ability and merits and accordingly to their suitability and nobody will be disadvantaged by a condition or requirement which is not justified by the genuine needs of their job or of the proposed job.
- Advertisements and details sent out to job applicants will include the following statement: 'The organisation is an equal opportunities employer and we welcome applications from all sections of the community'.
- Harmony Care & Support Ltd is committed to challenge any form of disability discrimination it encounters
- Employees or service users with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in Harmony Care & Support Ltd are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of the registered person of Harmony Care & Support Ltd.
- Any breach of this policy should be reported to the registered person, of Harmony Care & Support Ltd, breaches will be dealt with through Harmony Care & Support Ltd disciplinary procedures.

Employees or contracted staff who believe that they are subject to discrimination at work, either by Harmony Homecare Ltd or by another employee, have recourse to Harmony Homecare grievance procedure as set out in their terms of employment. Allegations of disability discrimination will be

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taken seriously by Harmony Care & Support Ltd and failure to comply with this policy or proven acts of discrimination by an employee will be handled under Harmony's disciplinary procedure.

Complainants should record: -

- The details of what happened or of the specific nature of the complaint.
- Details of when and where any occurrence took place
- The names and contact details of witnesses if appropriate.

All complaints should be dealt with as fully confidential.

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OVERSEAS WORKERS

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles, and policies underpinning Harmony Care & Support Ltd approach to the recruitment of foreign workers. Harmony Care & Support Ltd understands that all foreign nationals, other than European Union (EU) citizens and citizen's of certain Commonwealth countries, are subject to immigration control in the UK and will normally require a work permit. Some may also need an entry visa. Citizens of the EU are more or less free to move from one Member States does not apply to them.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd also understands that employing foreign nationals who are not permitted to work in the UK is a criminal offence under s.8. Of the **Asylum and Immigration Act 1996** and can lead to a fine of up to £5000 per person illegally employed.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd is committed to equality of opportunity in its recruitment, selection, and employment practices. To prevent discrimination Harmony Care & Support Ltd treats all applicants in the same way and verifies the eligibility of all new staff to work in the UK in accordance with its recruitment policy.

In order to comply with the **Asylum and Immigration Act 1996** Harmony Care & Support Ltd will: -

- Never discriminate against any candidate who may 'look or sound' foreign
- Treat all job applicants in the same way and during the recruitment process check documents which prove the individual's entitlement to live and work in the UK, such as: -
 1. a current passport from the country of citizenship, with a valid visa if the passport is not from one of the exempt countries.
 2. a certificate of registration or naturalisation as a British citizen
 3. a birth certificate issued in the UK, the Republic of Ireland, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man.
 4. a document issued by a previous employer, the Inland Revenue, the Contributions Agency, the Employment service or the Benefits Agency which states the National Insurance number of the person named
 5. a valid work permit.
- Accept only original copies of these documents (as photocopies may be tampered with)
- Keep copies of all documents with other recruitment files

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CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT OF STAFF

ADDRESS:
NAME OF EMPLOYEE: ADDRESS:
JOB TITLE:

CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

- Your employment will begin on ----- and continued employment will be subject to satisfactory completion of a three-month probationary period.
- The salary for the post is £----- and will be paid monthly in arrears on the ----- of each month directly into your bank or building society account.
- The normal hours of work for the post will be ----- until ----- from ----- . You may be required to work overtime.
- You are entitled to 4.8 weeks holiday pay paid at full pay per year.
- The notice period for termination of employment will be one calendar month from either the employer or the employee.
- Sick pay will be payable according to the sick pay policy in the Staff Handbook supplied to you upon commencement of employment.
- If you have a grievance, you should report this following the grievance procedure in the Staff Handbook.
- You will be required to undertake the job as described in the Job Description in the locations stated.
- You will be required to comply with the code of conduct and practice of the General Social Care Council.
- You will be required to comply with the Staff Handbook. Failure to do so will be considered a disciplinary matter.

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- The disciplinary rules and procedure in the Staff Handbook describe what action will be taken if your performance or conduct does not meet require standards.
- You will be required to notify the agency immediately if you commit or are charged with a criminal offence, including a motoring offence, during your employment.

Please sign below to indicate your acceptance of these conditions and return to me-----

NAME
DESIGNATION
ON BEHALF OF ----- AGENCY
DATE

I accept the foregoing terms and conditions of employment.

SIGNED
NAME (please print)
DATE

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MATERNITY

From April 2007, under the new **Work and Families Act 2006**, statutory pay is increased to 39 weeks (nine months). 'Keeping in Touch' days are introduced to allow women on maternity leave to work up to ten days during their leave period, as agreed with their employer, without losing their right to maternity leave or pay. The period of notice that women returning from maternity leave must give their employers is extended to eight weeks.

It is the policy of Harmony Care & Support Ltd to provide maternity benefits, which comply fully with the law on maternity rights. The policy applies to all female members of staff and aims to inform them of their entitlement to contractual and statutory maternity rights, and to ensure that those rights are understood. The policy was written to comply with all relevant employment law regarding maternity, including the Working Time Regulations and the Employment Bill 2001.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd the following entitlements apply: -

- Ordinary maternity leave for all employees is for a maximum period of 26 weeks regardless of how long they have worked for Harmony. Additional maternity leave is for employees with more than 26 weeks' service and allows for a further 26 weeks to be taken unpaid after the end of the period of ordinary maternity leave. Duration of service is calculated from the start of employment until 14 weeks prior to the expected week of confinement.
- An employee must, wherever possible, give notice in writing of their intended date of starting maternity leave, at least 15 weeks before the expected week of confinement. The member of staff must inform Harmony Care & Support Ltd that she is pregnant, the week her baby is expected to be born, when she wants her maternity leave to start.
- If an employee is absent with a pregnancy-related illness during the six weeks prior to the expected week of confinement, maternity leave will start automatically from the date of absence.
- If the baby is born prematurely, before maternity leave has started, maternity leave will commence on the day the baby was born.
- An employee may not return to work within two weeks of giving birth. This is a requirement of health and safety legislation.
- An employee who intends to return to work at the end of her full maternity leave entitlement is not required to give any further notification to Harmony Homecare Ltd. An employee wishing to return early from maternity leave should give 8 weeks' advance notice in writing.

With the payments during maternity Harmony Care & Support Ltd abides by: -

- Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) for employees is paid for 39 weeks as follows: -
 1. six weeks at 90% of employee's average salary, based on last three month's pay (the Earnings Related Rate)
 2. 33 weeks paid at the set Government rate (the Lower Rate SMP)

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- A MatB1 form signed by a doctor or midwife giving the expected week of confinement must be given to the employer before any SMP can be paid.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd risk assessments of working environments should be routinely carried out in order to be able to protect the safety of mother and child for any member of staff who may become pregnant. Should her working environment or her duties pose a threat to her health and safety, the employee's duties will be modified or alternative work of a suitable nature will be found for her. Should this not be possible she will be suspended from work on full pay on medical grounds?

Harmony Care & Support Ltd a member of staff will be entitled to time off with pay in order to attend antenatal appointments, which may include classes. The relevant authority may require her to produce an appointments card from her clinic.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd during the maternity leave period (paid or unpaid) the contract of employment continues in force. All terms and conditions of employment continue with the exception of stipend or salary. Continuity of service is maintained, and any standard incremental progression, which may take place during the maternity leave period (paid or unpaid) will be implemented. Employees on ordinary or additional maternity leave are entitled to all non-pay benefits provided, as if they are still working.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd

PATERNITY RIGHTS

This policy has been developed to provide you with guidance as to your entitlements and the procedure to follow if requesting paternity leave.

No employee will be treated less favourably, suffer detriment or be dismissed because they request or take paternity leave. However, the misuse of paternity leave – such as the use of leave for reasons other than to care for the child or support the mother, or failure to follow the correct procedure – may result in disciplinary action being taken against you.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd will follow this procedure: -

- Paternity leave is the right to take paid leave to care for a child or support the mother.
- In order to qualify for paternity leave in birth situations you must: -
 1. be the child's biological father, and have, or expect to have, the main responsibility for the child upbringing,
 2. be the spouse or partner of the mother, and have, or expect to have, the main responsibility for the child's upbringing.
- In order to qualify for paternity leave in adoptive situation you must be married to, or the partner of the adopter, and have, or expect to have, the main responsibility for the child's upbringing.
- In both birth and adoptive situations you must: -
 1. have formally informed your manager of your intention to take statutory paternity leave
 2. have provided documentary evidence supporting your right to take statutory paternity leave, if requested by your manager
- Paternity leave is for a maximum of two weeks. You may take the leave in a block of one or two consecutive weeks. Leave must be taken within 56 days of the birth of the child or, in the case of adoption, within eight weeks of the placement.
- In order to take statutory paternity leave after the birth of a child, you must inform your manager of your intention to take leave by the end of the 15th week before the mother's expected week of childbirth. You must tell your manager the week in which the baby is expected to be born, whether you intend to take one or two weeks' leave, the date on which you intend to start your leave.
- In order to take statutory paternity leave after the adoption of a child, you must notify your manager of your intention to take leave no later than seven days after the date on which you received notification from the adoption agency of the match with the child. If the child was adopted from abroad you must let your employer know the date on which you received notification of the placement and the date on which the child is expected to enter the UK.
- Statutory paternity leave may not be taken before the birth or adoption of a child.
- If you fall ill before starting your period of paternity leave, you should postpone it. The 56-day period within which you should take your leave is not extended under these circumstances.

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- You may be entitled to Statutory Paternity Pay (SSP). Your manager will let you know whether you are. Should you not qualify for SSP you may be able to get Income Support while on paternity leave. Your local Social Security Office will be able to advise.
- You are entitled to return to the same job as before, on the same terms and conditions of employment, unless a redundancy situation arises. It is presumed that you will return to work after a period of paternity leave.
- If you cannot return to work at the end of your paternity leave because of illness, you should follow the normal procedures for sickness absence.
- If you do not wish to return to work you are required to give your manager notice in accordance with your contractual notice period.
- On some occasions it may be necessary for your manager to defer your paternity leave. This may occur if, in discussion with your manager, there is a strong organisational reason for deferral. The reasons may include: -
 - A significant number of employees applying for paternity leave at the same time
 - Your role is such that your absence at a particular time may unduly harm Harmony Care & Support Ltd.

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MOBILE PHONE USE

Harmony Care & Support Ltd recognises its responsibility to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to provide and maintain working conditions, which are safe, healthy, and compliant with all statutory requirements and codes of practice.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd maintains the following policies regarding mobile phone use.

- Harmony Care & Support Ltd will provide mobile telephones for business use wherever this is deemed appropriate and approved by the manager of Harmony Care & Support Ltd.
- A mobile phone will be available for security reasons for any staff visiting a service user's home. All staff using such a phone should sign for it and be instructed in its use prior to taking it out. All phones are pre-set with Harmony Care & Support Ltd number in case of emergencies.

All staff issued with a phone should follow the guidance below regarding the use of mobile phones.

- Staff issued with mobile phones by Harmony Care & Support Ltd for use in the course of their work must ensure the security of the phone at all times.
- The use of any mobile phone should be kept to the minimum and landlines used where possible.
- As with the use of other telephones in Harmony Care & Support Ltd, personal (non-business) calls should be avoided and, where this is not possible, should be very short.
- Under no circumstances should mobile phones be used while driving or while using machinery.
- Members of staff should be aware of the possible health risks associated with the excessive use of mobile telephones. These should be observed at all times by staff.
- Only making short essential calls on mobile phones
- Choosing phones with relatively low specific absorption ratings (SAR).
- Keeping the mobile phone away from the body when it is in standby mode
- Only using the phone when the reception is strong.
- All users of one of Harmony Care & Support Ltd mobile phone will be issued with an itemized bill each month. If personal calls are made the member of staff concerned must say which call listing to show which calls were private and submit details of these calls. They will then be charged for them.
- Loss or theft of a mobile phone must be reported to the manager.

It is Harmony Care & Support Ltd policy that business calls from landlines to mobile phones be kept to a minimum as calls to mobile phones cost more than four times as much as calls to a landline.

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In line with legislation, drivers of any vehicle must not use a hand-held mobile phone or similar hand-held device whilst in control of the vehicle. This includes periods when the vehicle is stationary with the engine on. In addition, the Department for Transport has advised that a driver may risk prosecution for failing to have proper control of a vehicle if the driver uses a hands-free phone when driving. If there is an incident, the use of any phone or similar device might justify charges of careless or dangerous driving. For this reason, Harmony Care policy for the use of mobile phones is that neither hand-held nor hands-free models are to be used by the driver whilst any vehicle is under their control and on care. It is therefore recommended that all phones should be switched off whilst driving with voicemail activated to allow messages to be left if necessary.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd

STAFF GRIEVANCE

This policy outlines Harmony Care & Support Ltd in relation to staff grievances.

A grievance is a complaint by a staff member made under specified procedures to draw management's attention to and to have action taken to investigate and, if necessary, redress the unreasonable actions of Harmony Care & Support Ltd, a manager or another staff member.

The **Employment Rights Act 1996** imposes an obligation on employers to specify in their written statements of terms and conditions of employment the person or position to whom employees can apply for the redress of any grievance relating to their employment and how such applications should be made.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd aims to ensure that its staff feel fully involved in the work of the agency and form a cohesive team in the interest of providing high quality services. We therefore wish to identify and deal with any grievances, which a member of staff has relating to the work of colleagues or managers. Harmony Care & Support Ltd believe that this will foster communication between staff and managers, ensure that staff concerns are recognised and dealt with promptly, help managers to identify areas for improvement in the work of the agency, and give early warning of potential sources of more serious conflict.

Procedures relating to grievances, however, must be clearly distinguished from any action taken under the agency's disciplinary policy and procedures, and an appeal against disciplinary decisions will not be treated as a grievance.

If a member of staff feels that there is an issue relating to the behaviour of a manager or another member of staff about which they feel unhappy or uncomfortable they should mention the matter to their immediate supervisor or manager as soon as possible. If the issue relates to the supervisor or manager to whom the staff member would normally have reported or the relevant supervisor or manager is not available, the staff member may approach any other manager.

The person presented with the issue should take steps to investigate and deal with it as quickly as possible in order to resolve the matter before it becomes more serious. They should report back to the employee as quickly as possible on the action they have taken or the reasons for not taking action.

If the staff member is not satisfied that their grievance is being acted on sufficiently seriously or with the manager's decision in relation to the grievance, they have the right to request that their grievance should be dealt with by a more senior manager. In these circumstances the original supervisor or manager should arrange for the staff member to explain their grievance at a higher level. The manager should then review whatever investigation and action has been taken already in relation to the grievance, conduct any further investigation they consider necessary, and report back to both the employee and the original supervisor or manager as quickly as possible on the action they have taken or the reasons for not taking action.

If the staff member is still not satisfied after two tiers of management have considered their grievance informally, the matter should be referred to a very senior manager or a manager specifically designated to deal with personnel issues. This manager should then arrange as quickly as possible for a formal grievance hearing at which all of the relevant facts relating to the issue can be heard and considered.

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The person conducting the hearing should be a manager who has not been involved in the earlier investigations.

At the hearing the staff member should be given the opportunity to present their grievance and their reasons for continuing dissatisfaction. They may produce evidence and witnesses. Any staff or managers who are the subject of the grievance should then be given the opportunity to state their point of view, producing evidence and witnesses as appropriate. Witnesses may be cross-examined on what they say and questioned by the manager conducting the hearing.

After the matter has been thoroughly explained the manager conducting the hearing should consider and announce a decision.

If at any informal or formal stage of the handling of a grievance, the staff member's complaint are found to have substance, the relevant manager should consider what action should be taken to deal with the offending issue. This may take the form of a change of procedure, an apology from another staff member, or in extreme cases the initiation of disciplinary action against the staff member who caused offence. If no action is to be taken the reasons should be explained as fully as possible to the person who initiated the grievance.

The **Employment Relations Act 1999** gives all employees the right to be accompanied by a fellow employee or trade union representative during any stage of a grievance process. The agency undertakes to ensure that any employee assisting another employee under these circumstances will not be dismissed or victimised.

If the subject of the grievance is discrimination or harassment and the staff member making the complaints wishes to remain anonymous, managers should make every effort to conduct their investigations in such a way as to protect the complainant.

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DISCIPLINARY

All employers are unfortunately forced to administer discipline to staff at some time or another. Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that any disciplinary action taken should be aimed at identifying those problems that caused or contributed to the disciplinary action having to be taken, and to assist in correcting them. Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that it is in the interests of all that disciplinary actions are carried out in a prompt, uniform and impartial way and that the main purpose of disciplinary action is to correct the problem, prevent its recurrence and prepare the employee for satisfactory service in the future.

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles, and policies underpinning Harmony Care & Support Ltd approach to staff discipline. The purpose of this policy is to ensure a fair and systematic approach to the enforcement of acceptable standards of conduct and behaviour amongst all employees.

In Harmony Care & Support Ltd disciplinary action may be taken in response to one of the following:

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1. Unsatisfactory performance at work
2. Improper behaviour at work
3. Persistent lateness or absenteeism
4. Misconduct

In Harmony Care & Support Ltd disciplinary action may take one of the following forms depending on the severity of the problem and number of occurrences: -

1. Verbal warnings
2. One or more written warnings
3. Suspension with or without pay
4. Dismissal

Harmony Care & Support Ltd the following procedure applies: -

- For offences other than serious or gross misconduct, the employee's immediate supervisor or manager should first ascertain the facts and review any evidence relating to any breach of rules or discipline. The employee will be interviewed in private and should be asked for an explanation. The immediate manager will then decide upon a course of action.
- If an informal, verbal warning is decided upon then the immediate manager and appropriate notes made in the employee's personnel file should administer this in private.
- If a formal, written warning is required, because an informal warning has already been given for the offence or because of the severity of the offence, only the manager should carry this out. Appropriate notes should be made in the employee's personnel file.
- If the offence is repeated or agreed improvements are not made then a second and final written warning may be issued.

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- If standards improve and there is no repetition of the offence then the employee may request that the warning is removed from their file after 12 months. Harmony Care & Support Ltd reserves the right
- To refuse to remove the offence from the file if it feels that the offence warrants or that there is a likelihood of further transgression.
- An employee may be suspended without pay if Harmony Care & Support Ltd deems them incapable of performing their duties or while investigations take place. A written copy of the suspension should be given to the member of staff by the head of Harmony Care & Support Ltd.
- An employee may be dismissed if: -
 1. They have already received a final written warning and repeat the offence
 2. They have been suspended and Harmony Care & Support Ltd decides that, upon investigation, their offence merits dismissal
 3. They have committed serious or gross misconduct
 4. They have committed an offence that makes their continued employment impossible

Harmony Care & Support Ltd recognises that there are certain types of problem that are so serious they justify either a suspension or, in extreme situations, dismissal, without verbal or written warnings being given.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd the following applies: -

1. Disciplinary matters should be dealt with quickly and fairly
2. An indication should be provided of the disciplinary action that might be taken
3. Managers can issue verbal warnings
4. Only the head of Harmony Care & Support Ltd management can use written warnings and dismissal
5. Employees should be told of the complaint against them and be given full opportunity to state their case before a decision is taken
6. Employees have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or fellow employee of their choice
7. Employees will not normally be dismissed for a first offence, other than gross misconduct
8. No disciplinary action will be taken before there has been a full investigation
9. An explanation of any penalty will be given
10. Employees have a right of appeal

Written warning should state clearly: -

1. The conduct concerned
2. The improvement required and the time limit for this if appropriate
3. The likely consequences of further offences or failure to improve (eg, final warnings, dismissal)

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The warning should be handed to the employee, who should be informed of the right of appeal.

Appeals should not be pursued through Harmony Care & Support Ltd grievance procedure but should be made directly to the head of Harmony. Where a final decision within Harmony Care & Support Ltd is contested, or where the matter becomes a collective issue between management and a trade union, then appeals should be made via an external body such as ACAS.

Records will be kept in the employee's personnel file detailing the nature of any breach of disciplinary rules, the action taken and the reasons for it, whether an appeal was lodged, its outcome, and any subsequent developments. These records will be carefully safeguarded and kept confidential.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd

JOB DESCRIPTION – Support Worker

POSITION: RESPONSIBLE TO:	SUPPOERT WORKER MANAGER
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To share with other staff in meeting the personal care needs of service users in a way that respects the dignity of the individual and promotes independence. Care provided by care assistants is expected to include care that would reasonably be given by members of the service user's own family and is not expected to include tasks that would normally be expected to be undertaken by a trained nurse.

The principle responsibilities of care assistants: -

- To assist service users who need help with getting up in the morning, dressing, undressing, washing, bathing, and the toilet.
- To help service users with mobility problems and other physical disabilities, including incontinence and help in use and care of aids and personal equipment.
- To care for service users who are temporarily sick and needing, for example, minor dressings, bed nursing, help with feeding.
- To help care for service users who are dying.
- To help in the promotion of mental and physical activity of service users through talking to them, taking them out, sharing with them in activities such as reading, writing, hobbies, and recreations.
- To make and change beds, tidy rooms; do light cleaning and empty commodes.
- To inspect, launder and mend service users' clothing,
- To set tables and trays; serve meals; feed service users who need help; prepare light meals and wash up; tidy and clear the dining room.
- To answer emergency bells, the door and the telephone and greet visitors.
- To read and write reports, and take part in staff and service users' meetings and in training activities as directed.
- To perform such other duties as may reasonably be required.
- To comply with Harmony's Care & Support Ltd guidelines and policies at all times
- To report to Harmony Care & Support Ltd any significant changes in the health or circumstances of a service user.
- To encourage service users to remain as independent as possible.

The following personal attributes are considered essential to the post of care worker: -

- Self motivated
- Organised
- Flexible
- caring
- Sensitive to the needs of others and to the sick or infirm
- An active team player but also able to work on own initiative
- A good communicator.

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All staff is required to respect the confidentiality of all matters that they might learn in the course of their employment. All staff is expected to respect the requirements under the **Data Protection Act 1998**.

All staff must ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities under the **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**.

Hours of Work	Full time Part time
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Harmony Care & Support Ltd

JOB DESCRIPTION – AGENCY MANAGER

POSITION RESPONSIBLE TO	AGENCY MANAGER REGISTERED OWNER
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-
- To take joint responsibility with the registered owner as the person-in-charge for day-to-day running of Harmony Care & Support Ltd.
- To promote a caring environment for service users through high standards of professional practice which are conducive to the physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual needs of the service users.
- To ensure that each service user receives care appropriate to their individual need.
- To implement the requirements of the National Minimum Standards for Domiciliary Care Agencies published in accordance with the **Care Standards Act 2000**.

The principal responsibilities of the manager are: -

Day to day running of the agency: -

- To manage the day-to-day running of the agency and to act as person-in-charge whenever asked to by the registered owner
- To provide all relevant information and leaflets to prospective new service users and to visit them in their home for a discussion
- To arrange and assess trial visits
- To decide whether or not the agency is able to meet the personal care needs of any prospective service user and to negotiate an appropriate fee with the purchasing authority, the client, or client's family if not in receipt of local authority assistance.
- To ensure that each new service user receives a written copy of the 'terms and conditions' of engagement and ensure that each service user and, where appropriate, their representative or carer understands them.
- To investigate complaints, take appropriate action and report to the person-in-control and/or the CSCI.
- To liaise with co-operative with NCSC inspectors and inspections.

Service user care: -

- To ensure that the emotional, spiritual, physical, medical and material needs of the service users are recognised, assessed and met.
- To support service users in the taking of decisions in matters which affect their lifestyle.
- To make or contribute to the assessment of need of each service user in conjunction with the service user, relevant professional agencies and, where appropriate, the service user's family, and develop a Service User Plan which provides a satisfactory quality of life for that person.

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- To promote relationships which enable each service user to participate in the life of the local community to the maximum of their ability?
- To ensure the provision of healthcare arrangements, which may include the ordering, recording and, where appropriate, the administration of prescribed medication?
- To be responsible with the person-in-control for the efficient running of the domestic character of Harmony which will include ensuring that the dietary needs of service users are met, ensuring that good standards of food presentation are maintained, ensuring that supplies are ordered and ensuring that good standards of hygiene and cleanliness are maintained.
- To ensure the provision of care including that which may be provided by a competent and caring relative and which may include terminal care, under the direction of the GP and with the support of the community nursing service.

Staff matters: -

- To assist the registered owner with recruitment, appointment and deployment of all staff.
- To assist the registered owner to ensure that there is good communication with and between staff and to arrange staff meetings.
- To ensure that effective induction, supervision and assessment of staff is carried out and that training needs are identified and met.
- To ensure that employment protection legislation is implemented
- To arrange staff rotes.
- Premises: -To advise the registered owner of any malfunction of the heating, lighting, or emergency systems and ensure the security of the premises.
- To ensure that the fire regulations are complied with and advise the person-in-control if there are areas of risk.
- To ensure that legislation and regulations concerning environmental health, infection control, building control, planning and health and safety are complied with, and to advise the person-in-control accordingly where action is required
- To assess service users' homes with regard to health, safety, and infection control issues and provide advice to staff regarding safe and healthy working practices in the field.

Finance: -

- To be responsible for the monitoring and control of day-to-day expenditure within the limits prescribed by the person-in-control.
- To prepare budgets and monthly cash flow reports for the person-in-control and to ensure that adequate accounting and financial records systems are in operation.
- To ensure that service users are, wherever possible, supported in retaining responsibility of their own money and financial arrangements.
- To ensure that, where a service user is assessed as incapable of handling their own financial affairs, their money is handled properly and with the utmost probity and that records are kept of all financial transactions.

The following qualities are considered essential for the post of manager: -

- At least two years experience
- Management qualification or care qualification to NVQ 4
- Able to take responsibility
- Leadership skills

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- Self-motivated
- Organised
- Flexible
- Caring
- Sensitive to the needs of other and to the sick or infirm
- An active team player but also able to work on own initiative
- A good communicator
- Committed to high standards
- Committed to training

All staff is required to respect the confidentiality of all matters that they might learn in the course of Their employment. All staff is expected to respect the requirements under the **Data Protection Act 1998**.

All staff must ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities under the **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**.

hours of Work:

Full Time

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ABUSE/EXCESSIVE USE OF DRUGS AND/OR ALCOHOL IN THE SERVICE USER'S HOME

There might be situation where home care workers encounter difficulties due to excessive drinking or drug abuse taking place in the service user's home and which affect their ability to provide a service in accordance with their contractual obligations and to the standards required. The problem could be in the service user, an informal carer, other family member, friends, or visitors to the home. In these situations it is important the Harmony makes clear its responsibilities and their limits to the service user, to its staff and other professionals and to its service commissioners. Harmony should accordingly develop its response in terms of its concerns not only for the service users' welfare and its contractual obligations to them and to the commissioning service, but also for the health and safety of its staff, who might be put at risk from exposure to the effects of drug and alcohol fuelled conduct.

The situations that are likely to arise may vary. In some instances excessive drinking or drug taking on the part of service users and/or their immediate carers might make it difficult for home care workers to carry out their agreed tasks. Service users might also be putting themselves at risk of further harm as a result of their excessive intakes of alcohol and drugs, which then make it difficult to achieve the outcomes of the care plan.

Harmony should take note of the following points when developing specific procedures to meet the different contingencies that could arise.

When these issues are known at the time of referral they should be subject to a full and rigorous risk assessment and management plan that takes into account both the risks within the service user situation and their likely impact on the home care workers involved and Harmony in general. The implications of the risk assessment need to be understood by all parties involved and built into the contract and the service user plan and the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable risks clearly drawn.

Whenever there is evidence of excessive or inappropriate use of alcohol or drugs, which comes to the attention of Harmony's employees in the course of their work it should have clear procedures as follows.

- The home care workers involved must report any evidence or concerns immediately to their manager.
- The manager should review existing risk assessments and management plans and take action from the outcome.
- Where there is evidence of serious risks to the welfare and safety of anyone involved, Harmony should discuss as a matter of urgency the situation with any other professionals involved. It should also report to the commissioning authority any concerns stemming from any increased risks it can identify to the welfare of the service user, particularly, where the service user is at increased risk from abuse and may be in need of protection under local protection of vulnerable adult policies and procedures.
- Harmony should also concern itself with worker safety and address any issues that might affect its accountability and responsibilities relating to its service contract and the care plan it are following.
- Harmony must ensure that it provides good protection and support for its staff who might be exposed to increasing risk from exposure to such situations and training in the health and safety
- Aspects, for example how to deal with challenging, abusive and potentially violent behaviour from within the service user situation.

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DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that its employees represent its greatest asset. By providing opportunities, facilities and financial support for training, Harmony aims to ensure that all of its employees are in possession of the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to perform their jobs to the highest standard. To this end, Harmony is committed to functioning as a learning organisation, and to providing all of its employees with the opportunity for training and retraining in accordance with their own needs and those of Harmony Care & Support Ltd.

- A training notice board is situated -----where all relevant training information, forthcoming courses, and training opportunities will be posted.
- All new members of staff will be given an induction training programmed that achieves the Skills for care.
- Following their induction staffs are expected to continue their training that will also help them to achieve eventually nationally recognised qualifications.
- Harmony will invest in training that helps to meet the goals of providing a quality service, which are achieved by increasing the knowledge and skills and competencies of its staff to meet the needs of service users.
- The manager will consider requests for and may pose staff attendance at training events in accordance with both Harmony needs and those of the staff members concerned, which can be established from their supervision, appraisal, and annual development plans.
- There will be a programme of in-house training events and discussion, which staff should attend if they are on duty. Details of dates and topics will be posted on the training notice board.
- All staff will have an annual appraisal.
- All staff will have an annual personal training file, which they will keep. In the file they should include details of all training session that they attend. The file will also contain a personal development plan filled in at the same time as the appraisal.
- All staff that wishes to can apply to undertake an NVQ.
Employees who wish to attend a certain course or training event and wish to apply for paid time off or a contribution to the training fee, should address queries about the suitability or availability of training and their eligibility to attend a specific course in particular, to their supervisor or manager.

Harmony will carry out a training needs assessment on an annual basis. This will take the form of questionnaires sent to every member of staff.

Results from the assessment will be combined with Harmony's business plan and with individual staff personal development plans and a training programme identified.

Harmony's managers are also expected to undertake continuing training that is relevant to their roles and tasks and to update their knowledge and skills.

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INDUCTION TRAINING

Harmony is committed to providing an ongoing training and development programme to ensure staff are skilled and competent to provide care to service users. Harmony provides an induction programme for all new staff, which meets the standards described in the Common Induction Standards of Skills for Care.

All new staff will receive induction training within a 12 week timescale to achieve the Common Induction Standards: -

- Understanding principles of care
- Understanding the organisation and role of worker
- Maintaining safety at work
- Communicating effectively
- Recognising and responding to abuse and neglect
- Developing as a worker

Contents will also include topics on: -

- The nature of personal care and the basic skills required
- Core values, including providing a 'needs-led' service
- Code of personal conduct as an employee of Harmony
- Terms and conditions of employment including disciplinary and grievance procedures
- The requirements of legislation
- Policies and working practices of Harmony
- Health and safety training including an introduction to manual handling, infection control and fire procedures.
- General health of service users and the role of care and support staff in monitoring their health on an on-going basis
- Communication skills
- Prevention of any form of abuse or exploitation of the person receiving care or support and 'whistle-blowing'
- Anti-discriminatory practice including cultural awareness
- Standards to which they should work
- Confidentiality
- Gifts and bequests
- Principal activities which must not undertaken
- Contextual knowledge about Harmony for which they are working
- Quality assurance and monitoring.

Every new member of staff will be allocated a 'buddy' – a colleague who can provide informal advice and information and help the staff member fit into Harmony. The buddy will be a colleague of a similar grade and doing a similar job who has at least one year's experience of working with Harmony Care & Support Ltd.

Before working alone with service users for the first time, every new member of staff will receive a three-day orientation, which will include shadowing a colleague working with a service user.

At the end of the induction programme, the manager will meet the staff member and induction buddy to determine what other training and development is required.

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QUALIFICATIONS

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes in providing the highest quality service possible for all of its service users and in creating a relaxed, supportive and comfortable atmosphere in the service user's home where the service user is treated with respect, dignity, and compassion by a well-trained, highly motivated and professionally-led staff group aware of its legal, ethical and moral duties.

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles, and policies underpinning Harmony Care & Support Ltd approach to the staffing of Harmony.

It is the policy of Harmony Care & Support Ltd that: -

- It will recruit and develop a highly trained and qualified workforce to give as high a standard of care to service users as possible.
- It will support staff training and the ongoing continuing education of its staff at all times.
- Staff providing personal care to service users should be at least aged 18
- All trainees should be registered on Skills for Care programme.

Harmony is committed to ensuring the following: -

- Adequate numbers of suitably trained and qualified staff are on duty at all times.
- All professional staff should be suitably qualified and fully adhere to the standards.
- Management and staff should take every reasonable opportunity to maintain and improve their professional knowledge, qualifications, and competence.
- Management should take all reasonable steps to ensure that staff employed by Harmony has no previous history of work inconsistent with a caring profession.
- Management should ensure that anyone on government-sponsored training schemes should not be used as substitute labour otherwise performed by regular staff.

It is the policy of Harmony Care & Support Ltd that all staff should respect our service users and be accessible, approachable and comfortable with service users, good listeners and communicators, reliable and honest, interested, motivated and committed. In addition, they should have the skills and experience necessary for the tasks they are expected to perform, including: -

- Knowledge of the disabilities and specific conditions of our service users.
- Specialist skills to meet our service users' individual needs, including skills in communication.
- Understanding of physical and verbal aggression and self-harm as a way of our service users communicating their needs, preferences and frustrations.
- Understanding of the cultural and religious heritage of each service user
- Techniques for rehabilitation including treatment and recovery programmes, the promotion of mobility, continence, and self-care.
- Appreciation of and ability to balance, the particular and fluctuating needs of individuals and the needs of all our service users.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd

SUPERVISION

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that staff supervision plays an essential role in protecting both staff and service users, in developing and maintaining high care standards and in supporting and developing individual staff. In this regard Harmony Care & Support Ltd expects all member of staff to be supervised in their work and to have an appointed supervisor.

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles, and policies underpinning Harmony's approach to staff supervision.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd understands supervision to be a formal arrangement, which enable each member of its staff to discuss their work regularly with another more experienced member of staff. The more experienced member of staff, known as the supervisor, facilitates the discussion with the less experienced member of staff, the supervisee. Harmony understands the aim of supervision to be to: -

- Identify solutions to problems
- Improve practice
- Increase understanding of work-related issues

All supervision should have three core functions. It should: -

- Provide support to care staff in their work
- Promote personal and professional development
- Promote quality care

The following guidelines must be followed for supervision: -

- All care staff must have a nominated supervisor whose name should be entered in their personal development file. Supervisees should be given to say as to whom their supervisor will be.
- All care and nursing staff should have at least one formal supervision session of at least one-hour duration every three months.
- Supervision time must be planned, protected and uninterrupted. Sessions should be held in private and should be entirely confidential.
- Supervision time should be taken while on duty, but at a time that is convenient or other staff on duty and to service users.
- A contract should be agreed between supervisor and supervisee setting out how they will conduct their supervision sessions.

Many staff likes to make notes during supervision but this should be agreed between supervisor and supervisee beforehand.

Each supervisor will not have more than three supervisees at any one time. Supervisors need to have clinical expertise, where appropriate, excellent interpersonal skills and a facilitative attitude to others. Harmony Care & Support Ltd management will select new supervisors.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd is committed to ensuring that: -

Harmony Care & Support Ltd

- Supervision is available for all registered nursing staff and for all care assistants employed by Harmony Care & Support Ltd.
- Supervisees will be able to influence the selection of their supervisor
- The content of supervision sessions will be confidential
- Supervision or any information revealed during supervision will not be used to assess performance or competence
- Supervision is distinct from managerial processes even when the supervisee wishes to have clinical supervision with their manager.
- Supervisees and supervisors will have training in the process of supervision.

A preliminary session should be planned between the supervisor and supervisee to formally discuss supervision, how it might take place, and what they hope to achieve in supervision

At the end of the negotiated period of individual supervision, the contract should be renegotiated. Individual supervision may now take on a different form and be held less frequently. This should be discussed with the supervisor.

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APPRAISAL

Harmony Care & Support Ltd recognises appraisal to be a method by which a manager or supervisor can objectively and fairly measure or evaluate the performances of a particular employee by holding a formal annual appraisal meeting which involves a review of past and current performance and the setting of objectives and goals for the following year.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd procedure on appraisal is: -

- Every member of care staff will have a personnel file, which will include an appraisal, a personnel development plan and a training record.
- Every member of care staff will have an annual appraisal meeting with their manager or supervisor
- The previous appraisal and personal development plan should be reviewed
- Performance over the previous year should be reviewed and measured against the previous year.
- Objectives or goals for the following year should be agreed and any areas within which the member of staff is expected to or wishes to develop should be noted.
- Requirements for training or development should be discussed and agreed and a personal development plan created covering the year ahead.
- A written record of the appraisal should be made with a copy of the appraisal and personal development plan placed on the personnel file of each care or support worker and another copy held by the worker themselves.
- A six-month review should be held for each member of care staff to check that all is going to plan and to make any necessary readjustments to the plan.
- All managers should be trained in providing appraisal and performances review before they are asked to conduct an appraisal.

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QUALITY

Harmony Care & Support Ltd places a strong emphasis on providing the highest quality service possible for all of its service users. Harmony believes that, no matter how good its present services, there is always room for improvement and Harmony has been awarded with this.

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles, and policies underpinning Harmony Care & Support Ltd approach to quality and high standards.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that having the highest quality care is the absolute right of all of our service users. The continuing aim of Harmony is to provide a professional and efficient service to meet all of the requirements of its service users and the long-term goal of Harmony is to obtain the highest possible level of satisfaction from service users and relatives.

All service users of Harmony should: -

- Expect the highest quality care possible
- Be given a say in the running of Harmony through routine evaluations of each care episode and a larger survey of service user opinion carried out on an annual basis; the survey will be confidential but the results will be published and distributed to all service users and purchasers.
- Be free to complain about any aspect of the running of Harmony and to have their complaints welcomed and acted upon promptly – all complaints will be responded to in writing within ----- working days.
- Be told about planned National Care Standards Commission inspections and should be given unrestricted and private access to inspectors during inspections.

Every member of staff at Harmony Care & Support Ltd, from top to bottom, should demonstrate a total commitment to quality and quality improvement in every aspect of their working day.

- The proprietor and the management team bear the responsibility for establishing, maintaining and implementing a quality management system in Harmony Care & Support Ltd, this system will be based upon a Total Quality Management system whereby standards will be set, changes made to meet those standards and the process reviewed regularly.
- Every employee is responsible for the quality of their work and will be trained to perform their duties to our specified quality standards,
- Contractors employed for specific functions will be required to meet specified standards.
- Harmony Care & Support Ltd will have an annual development plan for quality improvement drawn up as part of its business plan and based upon feedback from service users, staff, relatives, the plan will be costed, will focus upon specific measurable standards and will include named staff as responsible for each objective.

At least one quality audit will be conducted on an annual basis. All data collected during audit will be treated as confidential.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd

COMPLAINTS

Harmony believes that if a service user wishes to make a complaint or register a concern they should find it easy to do so. It is Harmony's policy to welcome complaints and look upon them as an opportunity to learn, adapt, improve, and provide better services. This policy is intended to ensure that complaints are dealt with properly and that all complaints or comments by service users and their relatives, carers, and advocates are taken seriously.

The policy is not designed to apportion blame, to consider the possibility of negligence or to provide compensation.

Harmony believes that failure to listen to or acknowledge complaints will lead to an aggravation of problems, service user dissatisfaction, and possible litigation. Harmony supports the concept that most complaints, if dealt with early, openly, and honestly, can be sorted at a local level between just the complainant and Harmony. If this fails due to either Harmony or the complainant being dissatisfied with the result, the complaint will be referred to the Commission for Social Care Inspection and legal advice will be taken as necessary.

The aim of Harmony is to ensure that its complaints procedure is properly and effectively implemented and that service users feel confident that their complaints and worries are listened to and acted upon promptly and fairly.

The goals of Harmony are to ensure that: -

- Service users, carers, relatives, and their representatives are aware of how to complain and that Harmony provides easy to use opportunities for them to register their complaints.
- A named person will be responsible for the administration of the procedure.
- Every written complain is acknowledged within 14 working days.
- All complaints are investigated within 28 days of being made.
- Harmony responds to all complaints in writing within 28 days of being made.
- Complaints are dealt with promptly, fairly, and sensitively with due regard to the upset and worry that they can cause to both staff and service users.

The complaints manager with responsibility for following through complaints for Harmony is:

Gail Flower
120 Derby Road
Long Eaton
Nottingham
NG10 4LS
Tel: 0115 972 5292

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ORAL COMPLAINTS

- All oral complaints, no matter how seemingly unimportant, should be taken seriously.
- Front line care staffs that receive an oral complaint should seek to solve the problem immediately.
- If staff cannot solve the problem immediately they should offer to get Harmony's manager to deal with the problem.
- All contact with the complainant should be polite, courteous, and sympathetic. There is nothing to be gained by staff adopting a defensive or aggressive attitude.
- At all times staff should remain calm and respectful.
- Staff should not accept blame, make excuses, or blame other staff.
- If an advocate is making the complaint on behalf of the service user it must first be verified that the person has permission to speak for the service user, especially if confidential information is involved. It is very easy to assume that the advocate has the right or power to act for the service user when they may not. If in doubt it should be assumed that the service user's explicit permission is needed prior to discussing the complaint with the advocate.
- After talking the problem through, Harmony Care & Support Ltd manager or the member of staff dealing with the complaint should suggest a course of action to resolve the complaint. If this course of action is acceptable then the member of staff should clarify the agreement with the complainant and agree a way in which the results of the complaint will be communicated to the complainant (i.e. through another meeting or by letter).
- If the suggested plan of action is not acceptable to the complainant then the member of staff or Harmony Care & Support Ltd manager should ask the complainant to put their complaint in writing to Harmony Care & Support Ltd and give them a copy of Harmony Care complaints procedure.
- In both cases details of the complaints should be recorded in the Complaints Book, the service user's file and in the home records.

SERIOUS OR WRITTEN COMPLAINTS

Preliminary steps

- When a complaint is referred on to Harmony Care & Support Ltd manager or is received in writing it should be passed on to the named complaints manager who should record it in the Complaint Book and send an acknowledgement letter within two working days; the complaints manager will be the named person who deals with complaint through the process.
- If necessary further details are obtained from the complainant; if the complaint is not made by the service user but on the service user's behalf, then consent of the service user, preferably in writing, must be obtained from the complainant.
- A leaflet detailing Harmony Care & Support Ltd procedure should be forwarded to the complainant.
- If the complaint raises potentially serious matters, advice should be sought from a legal advisor to Harmony Care & Support Ltd, if legal action is taken at this stage any investigation by Harmony Care & Support Ltd under the complaints procedure should cease immediately.
- If the complainant is not prepared to have the investigation conducted by Harmony Homecare Ltd they should be advised to contact the Commission for Social Care Inspection and be given the relevant contact details.

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Investigation of the complaint by Harmony Care & Support Ltd

- Immediately on receipt of the complaint Harmony Care & Support Ltd should launch an investigation and within 28 days, Harmony Care & Support Ltd should be in a position to provide a full explanation to the complainant, either in writing or by arranging a meeting with the individuals concerned.
- If the issues are too complex to complete the investigation within 28 days, the complainant should be informed of any delays.

Meetings

- If a meeting is arranged the complainant should be advised that they may if they wish bring a friend or relative or a representative such as an advocate.
- At the meeting a detailed explanation of the results of the investigation should be given and also an apology if it is deemed appropriate (apologising for what has happened need not be an admission of liability).
- Such a meeting gives Harmony Care & Support Ltd the opportunity to show the complainant that the matter has been taken seriously and has been thoroughly investigated.

Follow-up action

- After the meeting, or if the complainant does not want a meeting, a written account of the investigation should be sent to the complainant, this should include details of how to approach the Commission for Social Care Inspection if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome.
- The outcomes of the investigation and the meeting should be recorded in the Complaint Book and any shortcomings in Harmony Care & Support Ltd procedures should be identified and acted upon.
- Harmony Care & Support Ltd should discuss complaints and their outcome at a formal business meeting and Harmony Care & Support Ltd manager should audit Harmony Care & Support Ltd complaints procedure every six months.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd

PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that staff need to observe professional boundaries in their relationships with service users and their relatives, friends, visitors and representatives and that behaviour outside those boundaries should be regarded as abusive and a reason for disciplinary action. Harmony recognise that it is often difficult to draw precise lines defining appropriate behaviour, so Harmony encourage staff to be transparent in their dealings with service users and others and to discuss with managers any ambiguities which arise. The starting point is that the needs of service user should be at the centre of our care practice, any relationship with might threatens that objective should be questioned.

The aim of this policy is to lay down the principles and values underlying our approach to professional boundaries in relationships with service users and their relative, friends, visitors and representatives.

This policy applies to all staff of Harmony Care & Support Ltd.

Professional relationships must be distinguished from personal relationships. Although Harmony believes that staff can quite properly gain satisfaction from developing and sustaining relationships with service users, the key consideration should always be the needs of the service user rather than the personal or mutual satisfactions which characterise personal relationships. Staff must therefore on occasions hold back from allowing a relationship to develop a dimension or to a degree, which they personally would find satisfying; in the interests of ensuring that the needs of the service user remain paramount. Any member of staff, who feels that a relationship is developing which might be judged inappropriate, should discuss the situation with the manager. the action to be taken may include varying the staff member's duties in order to limit contact with that person, discussing the situation frankly with the person in order to re-establish appropriate boundaries, or in extreme circumstances controlling an individual's contacts with Harmony Care & Support Ltd.

All staff should be familiar with and comply with the code of conduct and practice of the General Social Care Council, copies of which are supplied to all staff. Breaches of any of these codes by staff will be reported, and Harmony will cooperate with any action taken by a regulatory body.

Although Harmony do not in general seek to regulate the private behaviour of staff, Harmony recognise that on occasions an individual's behaviour away from work may call into question their suitability to work in social care services. It is the responsibility of all staff therefore to behave, both at work and outside, in ways which uphold their own credibility and Harmony's reputation.

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Harmony Care & Support Ltd is committed to achieving a working and living environment, which provides equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, sex, class, sexual orientation, age, disability, or special needs. Harmony is also committed to building a workforce, which is diverse and reflects the community around us.

The aim of Harmony is to promote equal treatment for all employees and service users irrespective of race, colour, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, political belief, disability, age, gender, or marital status, and that this is managed in compliance with equal opportunities legislation and accepted codes of a good home. We aim to ensure that no job applicant, staff member, volunteer, organisation or individual we provide services to will be discriminated against by us.

Harmony understands discrimination to mean the treatment of one person more or less favourably than another on the grounds of race, religion, sex, class, sexual orientation, age, disability, or special need. Discrimination may be direct or indirect. Direct discrimination is deliberate. Discrimination is indirect when an unnecessary condition or requirement is imposed, whether intentionally or inadvertently, such that the proportion of members of one group who can comply with it is considerably smaller than the proportion of other groups.

Harmony is committed to a policy of equal opportunities for all and requires all employees to abide by and adhere to this general principle, and to the requirements of the code of practice laid down by the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality. In particular, in Harmony Care & Support Ltd:

- a) Discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion, class, disability, special needs, sex, marital status or membership or non-membership of a trade union will not be practised nor tolerated.
- b) Harmony expects all employees, of whatever grade or authority, to abide by and adhere to this general principle.
- c) Staff will be promoted, employed and treated fairly on the basis of their ability and merits, and accordingly to their suitability, and no one will be disadvantaged by a condition or requirement which is not justified by the genuine needs of their job or of the proposed job.
- d) Harmony is committed to challenge any form of discrimination it encounters.
- e) In order to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions at the home will be based on merit, qualifications, and abilities.
- f) Employees or service users with questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in Harmony are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of Harmony management or owner.
- g) Any breach of this policy should be reported to the on duty manager or to a senior, responsible member of Harmony staff; breaches will be dealt with through the Harmony's disciplinary procedures.

Employees who believe that they are subject to discrimination at work, either by t Harmony Care and Support Ltd or by another employee, can have recourse to the home's grievance procedure as set out in their terms of employment. Some discriminatory acts may contravene the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 or the Race Relations Act 1976. These and other forms of discrimination will be taken seriously

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by Harmony. Failure to comply with the Equal Opportunities Policy and proven acts of discrimination by an employee will be handled under the Harmony's disciplinary procedure. Complainants should:

- a) Record the details of what happened or the specific nature of the complaint.
- b) Record details of when and where any occurrence took place.
- c) Record the names and contact details of witnesses, if appropriate.

All complaints should be dealt with as fully confidential.

All new staff should be encouraged to read the policy on equal opportunities as part of their induction process. Existing staff will be offered training to National Training Organisation standards covering basic information about equal opportunities and discrimination. Training must cover the following:

- a) The Equal Pay Act 1970
- b) The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (as amended)
- c) The Race Relations Act 1976
- d) The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999.

Staffs are also required to attend on-going, regular equality training updates to ensure that equal opportunities are always part of their work. Equal Opportunities and anti-racism training is compulsory and it is a condition of terms of employment.

All existing staff will undergo training and/or briefing to enable them to meet the requirements of this policy and should be offered advice and guidance to ensure they understand their responsibilities under the law and Harmony's policy.

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RECORD KEEPING

Harmony Homecare Ltd believes the following:

- a) Records required for the protection of service users and for the effective and efficient running of Harmony are maintained, are up to date, and are accurate.
- b) Service users have access to their records and information about them held by Harmony, as well as opportunities to help maintain their personal records
- c) Individual records and home records are kept in a secure fashion, are up to date and in good order; and are constructed, maintained and used in accordance with the **Data Protection Act 1998** and other statutory requirements

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles, and policies underpinning Harmony's approach to record keeping, data protection and access to records

Harmony Care & Support Ltd should be registered under the **Data Protection Act 1998** and all storage and processing of personal data held in manual records and on computers in the home should comply with the regulations of the act. Harmony Care & Support Ltd understands that, according to the **Data Protection Act 1998**, personal data should:

- a) Be obtained fairly and lawfully
- b) Be held for specified and lawful purposes
- c) Be processed in accordance with the persons rights under the DPA
- d) Be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to that purpose
- e) Be kept accurate and up to date
- f) Not be kept for longer than is necessary for its given purpose
- g) Be subject to appropriate safeguards against unauthorised use, loss or damage
- h) Be transferred outside the European Economic Area only if the recipient country has adequate data protection.

The Data user/Data Controller for Harmony Care & Support Ltd
is.....

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that access to information and security and privacy of data is an absolute right of every service user and that service users are entitled to see a copy of all personal information held about them and to correct any error or omission in it.

Staff should do the following:

- a) Ensure that all files or written information of a confidential nature are stored in a secure manner in a locked filing cabinet and are only accessed by staff who have a need and a right to access them
- b) Ensure that all files or written information of a confidential nature are not left out where they can be read by unauthorised staff or others
- c) Wherever practical or reasonable fill in all care records and residents notes in the presence of and with the co-operation of the resident concerned
- d) Ensure that all care records and residents notes, including care plans, are signed and dated
- e) Check regularly on the accuracy of data being entered into computers
- f) Always use the passwords provided to access the computer system and not abuse them by passing them on to people who should not have them
- g) Use computer screen blanking to ensure that personal data is not left on screen when not in use.

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All new staff should be encouraged to read the policies on data protection and on confidentiality as part of their induction process. Existing staff will be offered training to National Training Organisation standards covering basic information about confidentiality, data protection, and access to records. Training in the correct method for entering information in service user's records should be given to all care staff. The nominated data user/data controller for Harmony should be trained appropriately in the Data Protection Act 1998. All staff that needs to use the computer system should be thoroughly trained in its use.

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FINANCIAL

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that its service users have a right to expect that Harmony will be run on a sound financial basis with robust procedures for dealing with money and accounting.

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles, and policies underpinning Harmony's approach to the management of service user's money and finances in Harmony.

- This business has a financial plan for Harmony Care & Support Ltd as part of its business plan which is open to inspection and reviewed annually and includes a current cash flow forecast for the business set over a 12-month period.
- Open, transparent and robust accounting and financial procedures adopted and annually audited by an independent firm of auditors.
- Annual accounts will be prepared and submitted by a professional independent accountant.
- A profit and loss amount
- A balance sheet
- An auditors report signed by the auditor
- A directors' report signed by a director or the secretary of the company
- Notes of accounts
- Insurance cover is in place against loss or damage to the assets of the business
- Insurance cover is in place to cover business interruption costs including loss of earnings
- All care staff will be expected to be covered by their own personal accident and third party liability insurance; insurance details should always be checked upon registration with Harmony Care & Support Ltd.
- Records are kept of all transactions entered into by the registered person and Harmony Care & Support Ltd

The accountant for Harmony Care & Support Ltd is-----

The insurance broker for Harmony Care & Support ltd is-----

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DATA PROTECTION AND ACCESS TO RECORDS

The **Data Protection Act 1998** (DPA) sets standards governing the storage and processing of personal data held in manual records and on computers. The Act works in two ways – giving individuals certain rights, whilst requiring those who record and use personal information to be open about their use of that information and to follow sound and proper practices. Harmony Care & Support Ltd that hold manual or computerised patient or employee records are covered by the **Data Protection Act 1998**, which is administered by the Information Commissioner.

Businesses and organisations should notify the Information Commissioner if they keep personal data on computer. All such organisations must identify a “controller” of data, who is responsible for processing data, i.e. determining the purposes and means of collecting, storing, using, altering, and destroying data.

The information commissioner maintains a public register of data controllers. Each register entry includes the name and address of the data controller and a general description of the processing of personal data by that data controller. Individuals can consult the register to find out what processing of personal data is being carried out by a particular data controller. Notification is the process by which a data controller’s details are added to the register. The **Data Protection Act 1998** requires every data controller who is processing personal data on a computer to notify unless they are exempt. Manual records are exempt from notification under the **Data Protection Act 1998**, but this does not mean that agencies that only process manual records are exempt from the remit of **the Data Protection Act 1998**. Although a home may not need to register with the Information Commissioner, they still need to abide by the law, which is laid out within the Act. It is up to individual businesses whether or not they register. However, any organisation choosing not to register may well have to defend their decision in court if challenged, and failure to inform the Information Commissioner can lead to a considerable fine.

According to **the Data Protection Act 1998**, there are eight main principles under which personal data should be kept and collected. Personal data should:

- a) Be obtained fairly and lawfully
- b) Be held for specified and lawful purposes
- c) Be processed in accordance with the person’s rights under the DPA
- d) Be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to that purpose
- e) Be kept accurate and up to date
- f) Not be kept for longer than is necessary for its given purpose
- g) Be subject to appropriate safeguards against unauthorised use, loss or damage
- h) Be transferred outside the European economic area only if the recipient country has adequate data protection.

One of the most important aspects of the DPA is that personal data may be processed only if the data subject has given his or her consent or if the processing is necessary for the performance of a contract, such as the contract of employment. It is an offence to hold personal data not specified in the register, to use it for purposes other than those specified or otherwise to treat the data in any manner not specified in the register.

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All files kept about service users or staff should be confidential and, according to the **Data Protection Act** “subject access provision”, service users should know what records are being kept about them and why they are being kept. The **Access to Health Records Act 1990**, under which health records were formerly accessed, has now largely been repealed except for sections dealing with access to health records of deceased persons. According to the **Data Protection Act 1998**, service users should be given access to what is said about them in any personal records maintained by Harmony and information should be withheld only in exceptional circumstances. Any decision to restrict access to certain records should be taken at a senior level and in such a case a service user may appeal to the information commissioner if they wish. The commissioner may do one of the following:

- a) Make an assessment as to whether it is likely or unlikely that the data controller in question has complied with the 1998 Act.
- b) Issue enforcement proceedings if satisfied that the data controller has contravened one of the Data Protection Principles.
- c) Recommend that the matter is referred to court alleging a failure to comply with the subject access provision of the 1998 Act.

The need to restrict access to sensitive items contained within the records should never be used to justify withholding access to the remainder.

Where Harmony holds incorrect data on individuals then those individuals have a right to claim damages for any loss suffered as a result of the use of inaccurate or unauthorised data and to apply to the courts to rectify or erase inaccurate data.

Care plans, needs assessments, case reviews and day files are required as legal records of care and the keeping of certain confidential notes and records relating to individual service users are an essential part of the communication and day-to-day running of a Harmony. Issues surrounding access to files can be reduced if the central message of the National Minimum Standards for Care Homes for Older People is applied, namely that Harmony should be fostering an atmosphere of openness and respect, in which residents, family, friends and staff all feel valued and that their opinions and rights matter. This can be done in the case of record keeping by encouraging staff to involve the service user be more actively involved in their own care, but the need for the recording can be explained and understood. By developing an atmosphere of “working together” with the service user anxieties will be greatly reduced.

All data, and particularly sensitive or confidential data, must be stored securely. Manual records such as personnel files and service user care files should be kept in locked filing cabinets, preferably within an office that is locked when unattended. Care must be taken when working on confidential files that they are put away securely and not left out on a desk when people could walk by and see them. Where data is stored electronically on a computer the following steps should be considered:

- a) Check regularly on the accuracy of data being entered
- b) Ensure that the computer system is secure by checking that it has a backup system, that lost data can be recovered and that backups are stored in a safe and secure place.
- c) Ensure that all staff that needs to use the computer system is thoroughly trained in its use.
- d) Ensure that passwords are being used for access to different parts of the system, that these are regularly changed and not abused by being passed on to people who should not have them.

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- e) Use screen blanking to ensure that personal data is not left on screen when not in use by authorised staff
- f) Review the terminal positions to ensure that unauthorised staff or service users cannot casually view personal data on screen
- g) Ensure that confidential or private printouts are stored securely and safely and that they are collected immediately if printed onto a networked printer.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd should have a policy on data protection and access to notes. The policy should establish the general philosophy to the organisation and outline its core principles.

Fit for the Future, the Governments consultation paper on the care standards, makes the point that the existence of, and compliance with, written policies, procedures, records and protocols are also important safeguards for vulnerable people who rely on others for their care and well-being and, ultimately, their safety. Although it admits that the presence of written documents in themselves do not guarantee compliance, it takes the view that they provide a sound framework within which managers can organise care-giving and other aspects of a home's activities, and against which performance can be assessed. Importantly, protocols and policies, especially if worked up and owned by the staff themselves, provide staff with a ready-made set of guidelines which makes their role and duties explicit and, therefore, easier to perform. It also makes it less likely that a home will "get things wrong" because it will be able to rely on tried and tested know-how often developed by experts in the relevant field.

All new staff should be encouraged to read the policy on data protection as part of their induction process. Existing staff should be provided with regular training, which should include sessions on the keeping of records and the recording of notes. Confidentiality should also be covered. All staff that uses the computer system should be trained in its use and be made aware of the data security implications of their work.

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BUSINESS PREMISES, MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that its service users should receive a consistent, well managed, and well-planned service, which is of the highest possible quality.

The aim of Harmony Care & Support Ltd is to ensure that service users receive a consistent, well managed, and planned service and that their staffs are supported by a suitable and appropriate management structure and operational infrastructure.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd policy is: -

- Harmony will work according to a robust and properly constructed business plan, which will set out the strategic direction of Harmony and set goals and objectives for Harmony development.
- The business will operate from permanent local premises which are suitable for the work undertaken and are set up in compliance with all relevant health and safety laws and regulations and fire protection laws.
- The premises will be registered with Companies House as the registered address of Harmony Care & Support Ltd.
- The premises will contain equipment, and resources necessary for the efficient and effective management of the service, all equipment, and fittings must comply with relevant health and safety laws and regulations and fire protection laws.
- There will be a management structure in place which has clear lines of accountability and which enables Harmony to deliver services effectively on a day to day basis and support its staff working in service users' homes; the manager structure will be explained to all staff on induction.
- There will be, at all times, adequate office staff cover to ensure that smooth operation of Harmony Care & Support Ltd and to support care staff, this includes a 24-hour staffed office to ensure support for care staff who attend service users during the night.
- All care staff should know whom in the management of Harmony to contact in an emergency.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT FOR THE AGENCY OFFICE

Harmony Care & Support Ltd believes that environmental issues such as pollution, waste management, energy and water conservation, transport issues and the recycling of resources, should be important items on the agenda of the modern employer. Harmony believes that it has a duty to act in a responsible and ethical way and to work towards contributing to nationally agreed environmental objectives. Harmony understands that the aim of such sustainable development is to maintain the quality of the environment, both now and for generations to come.

- Conservation of energy, wood, paper, horticulture, and water.
- The reduction of pollution, vehicle emissions, asbestos, hazardous substances
- The procurement of supplies and resources from renewable or environmentally friendly.
- Responsible waste management.

In order to improve its environmental management would include:-

- Adopt and implement an environmental and sustainable development policy
- Contracts with purchases and what the policies say
- Conduct a regular audit of its processes and wastes
- Reduce waste levels by reusing whatever can be reused
- Develop a recycling system
- Recycle printer ink cartridges and consumable
- Use energy efficient and low power equipment whenever
- Ensure that all buildings, pipes, and lofts are properly insulated and maintained.
- Conserve power. Turn off essential lights
- Report and repair
- Only use as much water as necessary.
- Ensure that staff is trained to comply with the above.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd

STRESS MANAGEMENT POLICY

Stress in the workplace can be a major factor in reduces staff performance, commitment and motivation, increased sickness absence.

For these reasons Harmony as a responsible employer wishes to address the issue of stress by means of the following policy.

Harmony are committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees. We recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors.

This policy will apply to everyone in the company. Managers are responsible for implementation and the company is responsible for providing the necessary resources.

Definition of Stress:

The Health and Safety Executive define stress as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”.

This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress which can be detrimental to health.

Policy- Key Aims and Objectives:

To increase awareness of stress and the methods available to combat it.

To assist staff and management in managing stress in others and themselves.

To manage problems which do occur and to provide confidential support.

The company will identify all workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to eliminate stress or control the risks from stress. These risk assessments will be regularly reviewed.

The company will provide confidential counselling for staff affected by stress caused by either work or external factors.

The company will provide adequate resources to enable managers to implement the company’s agreed stress management strategy.

Responsibilities Managers:

Conduct and implement recommendations of risks assessments within their jurisdiction.

Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.

Ensure staff are fully trained to discharge their duties.

Harmony Care & Support Ltd

Ensure staff are provided with meaningful developmental opportunities.

Monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded.

Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking.

Monitor holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement.

Attend training as requested in good management practice and health and safety.

Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated within their jurisdiction.

Be vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work

E.g. bereavement or separation.

Occupational Health and Safety Staff:

Support managers in implementing stress risk assessments.

Support individuals who have been off sick with stress and advise them on a planned return to work.

Refer to workplace counsellors or specialist agencies as required.

Monitor and review the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress.

Help monitor the effectiveness of measures to address stress by collating sickness absence statistics.

Employees:

Raise issues of concern with your , line manager or occupational health.

Accept opportunities for counselling when recommended.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Managing Director

Harmony Care & Support Ltd