

Policy 1.16

Dignity and Privacy

The A24 Group will ensure that the way in which its affairs are conducted, and the care it delivers to each and every client, reflects very best practice towards establishing relationships which are founded in respect for one another, and the right to have privacy and dignity recognised and maintained.

Procedure

General Social Care Council (GSCC) – Code of Practice

The agency ensures that all care workers registered are supplied with a personal copy of the GSCC's Code of Practice for social care workers, and that they abide by this code. Para 1.4 of the code states that social care workers must protect the rights and promote interests by "Respecting and maintaining the dignity and privacy of service users".

Confidentiality

The A24 Group and its staff will respect and protect all confidential information concerning its clients, at all times, and that:

All clients will be provided with the agency's statement on confidentiality.

This statement outlines the obligations placed upon the agency to safeguard confidential information; describes the circumstances whereby the agency may disclose confidential information, together with the circumstances where express consent is required, and finally the client's right to object to any disclosure.

The agency's care staff are also given a copy of this statement.

Any failure to observe the principles outlined will lead to disciplinary action which, in more serious or repeated cases, may lead to the employee's dismissal.

Where abuse or neglect is suspected then the agency and its staff are required to place the welfare and best interests of the client at the forefront of their actions at all times, and to report their suspicions immediately.

Entering Premises

Prior to entering the premises of a client, care workers must knock, speak through the door and wait for permission to enter. Entry without permission is only acceptable in a clear emergency situation, where there are concerns regarding the safety of the client, or where this has been approved in advance, and is incorporated into the client's *Care Plan*.

Where the client is deaf, or otherwise incapable of indicating their willingness to, and acceptance of, the care worker's entry, then some other approach must be agreed and adopted at the time the service begins.

Personal Care Needs

Personal care needs can arise because of age or level of ability and usually involve toileting and medication. The agency and its staff will respect the client's wish for privacy and the preservation of dignity at all times.

In each case:

- The care worker must be made aware of the nature of the care needs;
- The views of the client on support and assistance will take precedence, unless otherwise explicitly stated in the *Care Plan* or concerns arise in relation to health and safety;
- The client will have an individual care plan drawn up with details of the personal care needs and how these are to be addressed;
- If appropriate, written instructions from a professional person as to the nature of the care required may be obtained;
- When accompanying a client to the toilet, assisting with bathing, dressing or other intimate tasks, care staff must endeavour to maintain a client's dignity and privacy, only undertaking those tasks that the client is clearly unable to do.

Wherever possible the client's wishes will be respected concerning the sex of the care worker assigned, (in particular where a *Genuine Occupational Requirement* is evident) when intimate care is to be provided, although there is no automatic reason why a client should raise concerns about a care worker of the opposite gender.

Promotion of Privacy and Dignity

The agency recognises that most interactions between care workers and their clients demonstrate some form of dependence upon the care worker, and obligations exist therefore to ensure that a code of conduct is observed which ensures that all actions undertaken:

- a) are with the express wish of the client;
- b) are conducted in such a way that the client does not feel undervalued or inadequate;
- c) protect privacy and dignity;
- d) promote respect between the care worker and the client.

Without limiting the extent of the code of conduct in any way, such protection must be observed in relation to some of the more common activities associated with domiciliary care, such as: -

- Dressing and undressing;
- Bathing, washing, shaving and oral hygiene;
- Toilets and continence requirements;

- Medication requirements and other health related activities;
- Manual handling;
- Eating and meals;
- Handling personal possessions and documents;
- Entering the home, room, bathroom or toilet.

Clients' Rights

The agency will ensure that the rights of clients are respected at all times. Specific attention is drawn to the following list of rights, which are to be observed at all times.

Clients have the right to:

- Have their needs properly assessed, and to have those needs met on a consistent basis, and to a defined level of quality;
- Receive written information about the care they are receiving, together with its cost;
- Exercise an appropriate degree of control over their lives;
- Make informed choices and to take decisions;
- Make a complaint about any aspect of the service they are receiving;
- Receive care, attention, and services on an equal basis with all others;
- Be protected from any abuse or conduct which is detrimental to their wellbeing and health;
- Privacy;
- Be treated in a manner which promotes dignity, wellbeing and understanding.

The agency will make every effort to ensure that the rights defined above are met on a consistent basis, that staff receive adequate training, in, for example, Protection of Vulnerable Adults, (POVA), and will include representative "Quality Statements" in its Quality Assurance Programme.