

Policy Number 11

Dignity and Privacy Policy

The A24 Group will ensure that Agency Workers respect Service Users privacy and dignity and ensure that they receive the care needed, without undue interference.

Prior to entering the premises of a Service User, Agency Workers must knock, speak through the door and wait to be given entry, unless the agency worker has been provided with keys, or access codes, and prior permission to enter. (Where entering with keys is the standard and routine procedure then this will be entered on the Service User's *Personal Care Plan*).

Entry without permission is only acceptable in a clear emergency situation or where there is concerns regarding the safety of the Service User.

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

Although the holding of keys is generally to be avoided, A24 may, on occasion, be given a set of keys by the Service User or their advocate so that Agency Workers employed by A24 may gain access in order to provide services. In such cases the Service Users will be asked to sign a written agreement prepared by the A24. This agreement is kept on the Service User's file in the agency's office. In all cases A24 will confirm with the Service User that it is holding duplicate and not original keys, and that original keys, and that originals are kept securely either in the Service User's home or some other suitable place.

Where keys are kept by the agency, then records will be kept of all key holders and the agency will ensure that keys are coded in such a manner that ensures that only the agency can link the keys to a particular Service User.

All keys are kept securely by the agency worker, never attached to case notes or files, and returned to the agency's locked "key cabinet" when not in use.

Keys are not to be left, for example "under the door mat" next to the front door, or similarly oblivious hiding places, and must not be given to any person for "safekeeping" (or any other purpose) unless authorised by the agency.

In cases of loss or theft of keys, the first priority is the safety and security of the Service User. A24 will discuss with the Service user an alternative security arrangement.

The security of entry codes have the same priority as security of keys and A24 will ensure that entry codes for the Service User premises are not written down in such a manner that the information may be linked to the Service User. Service User access codes may be changed and the agency will seek to discuss this possibility with the Service User if it is believed that security has been compromised.

If entry cannot be gained by the Agency Worker, A24 advise Agency Workers to remain calm. There may be a number of different reasons for this situation occurring, and a process of elimination of the obvious reasons will eventually determine whether a more serious situation exists.

If the Agency Worker has been provided with keys and they have been disabled, for example, from the inside, then this indicates, almost conclusively, that someone is in. If the Agency Worker is unable to gain the attention of the Service User and suspects that something may be wrong, then the Agency worker is advised to contact the Police without delay. In other situations the assistance of

neighbours, friends, cares etc will be sought before determining that the situation may be an emergency, and calling the police.

In the event that a Service User is discovered, upon arrival of the Agency Worker, to have had an accident, or an emergency situation arises, the Agency Worker will assess the situation and if judged serious, the Agency Worker is instructed to call the emergency services. All events of this type are to be recorded in the homecare record.

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 right and promote interest by "Respecting and maintaining the dignity and privacy of service users".

Agency workers must abide by the Company's Confidentiality Policy at all times. This precludes our Agency workers from divulging information about anything they have seen, heard or read about Service Users. Agency Workers may discuss any concerns about a Client's wellbeing or safety. If we need to speak to a third party about our Service Users care, we will seek permission before doing so, except where we are unable to do so while responding to an emergency or where we have a legal obligation to do so. Agency workers are made aware of this policy and any failure to observe the principles outlined will lead to disciplinary action.

When accompanying a client to the toilet, assisting with bathing, dressing or other intimate tasks, Agency Worker must maintain a client's dignity and privacy, only undertaking those tasks that the Service User is clearly unable to do.

Wherever possible the Service Users wishes will be respected concerning the sex of the Agency Worker assigned, (in particular where a *Genuine Occupational Requirement* is evident) when intimate care is to be provided.

All actions undertaken by A24 Agency Workers are completed with the express wish of the client and are conducted in such a way that the Service User does not feel undervalued or inadequate.

Confidentiality and Privacy in relation to Social Media

Privacy relates to the service users expectation and right to be treated with dignity and respect. Service user/agency worker relation is built on trust, therefore the service user needs to be confident that their most personal information and basic dignity will be protected by the agency worker. Any breach of such a nature, even inadvertent, damages the service user/agency worker relationship and may tarnish the company's image.

Any patient information learned by the agency during the course of treatment must be safeguarded by that agency worker. Such information may only be disclosed to other members of the health care team for health care purposes.

Confidential information should be shared only with the patient's informed consent, when legally required or where failure to disclose the information could result in significant harm.

The use of social media and other electronic communication is increasing exponentially with growing numbers of social media outlets, platforms and applications.

The Internet provides an alternative media for agency workers to share workplace experiences, particularly events that have been challenging or emotionally charged.

Without a sense of caution an agency worker may indulge in disclosing too much information and therefore violating a service user privacy and confidentiality. Instances of inappropriate use of electronic media are considered a serious breach of the company's policies.

Service Users have the right to:

- Have their needs properly assessed, and to have those needs met on a consistent basis, 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;
- 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;
- Be treated in a manner which promotes dignity, wellbeing and understanding.
- Make a complaint about any aspect of the service they are receiving; BNA has a comprehensive complaints procedure in place that is there to ensure we are in a position to safeguard the interest of the Clients and candidates. A copy of our Complaints Procedure can be obtained from our website www.bna.co.uk

A24 will make every effort to ensure that the rights defined above are met on a consistent basis and that staff receive adequate training Protection of Vulnerable Adults, (POVA) on an annual basis.

END OF POLICY