

Autonomy & Independence Policy

MOONSTONE CARE UK will ensure that care workers assist service users in making their own decisions; being in control of their own lives; and are supported in maintaining their independence. We aim always to balance the protection of service users from unnecessary risks with the promotion of independence and choice, in accordance with Department of Health Guidance Independence, Choice and Risk: A Guide to Best Practice in Supported Decision Making.

Care Needs Assessment

We recognise the importance of the initial contact and the care needs assessment which must be undertaken before we start to provide a service and we do everything we can to empower service users from the very outset of our working with them. MOONSTONE CARE UK will ensure that care workers communicate with service users in their first or, where agreed, their preferred language, this will be achieved through our skills mapping procedures.

Information

MOONSTONE CARE UK workers and managers will enable service users to make decisions in relation to their own lives, providing information and assistance and support where needed, thereby enabling service users a considerable degree of choice, independence and freedom. We 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. We always try to provide information in formats and languages which make it accessible to the individuals to whom it is addressed.

Choice

We know that choice has become increasingly important for service users and we attempt to advance this principle throughout our operations. We ensure that every service user who receives our service has positively opted to use our agency. We 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. We are particularly sensitive to matching workers and service users where issues of gender, culture or ethnicity play a role.

Care and Support Workers

MOONSTONE CARE UK will ensure that care workers carry out tasks with the service users not for them, minimising the intervention and supporting service users to take risks, as set out, in the service users' care plan and not endangering health and safety. The Care workers providing care and support on a day-to-day basis aim to carry out their tasks in co-operation with service users so that the service user can exercise their own discretion, initiative and control. Care workers will work within a risk assessment framework and the risk assessments are recorded in the service user's plan.

Care workers wherever possible will communicate with service users in their first or preferred language so as to maximise empowerment of people using the service.

Personal Finances

Where requested, the agency will ensure that service users are encouraged, empowered and enabled to control their personal finances unless prevented from doing so by severe mental incapacity or disability, always respecting the privacy and confidentiality of documents to which we have to have access.

Personal Files

With the permission of service users, MOONSTONE CARE UK, will make sure that service users, or their relatives or representatives are able to see their personal files kept on the premises of the agency, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and are informed in writing that these files may be reviewed as part of the inspection and regulation process.

Limitations to a Service User's Chosen Lifestyle or Human Rights

In the best interest of service users, the agency will ensure that we only intervene on choices of lifestyle or on the human rights of service users in exceptional circumstances such as to prevent self-harm or self-neglect, or to prevent abuse or harm to others to be consistent with the agency's responsibilities in law. We would always act within MOONSTONE CARE UK's policy on restraint, and in the best interests of the service user. These limitations will be recorded in full within the risk assessment plan and entered in the care plan of the service user.

Service Users who Lack Mental Capacity

We respect the rights of service users who have been assessed as lacking capacity to take certain decisions or who are thought to lack that capacity by considering their best interests at all times. We do this by ensuring that we implement fully the Code of Practice for the Mental Capacity Act 2005. In relation to maintaining service users' autonomy and independence, this entails involving them as fully as possible in every decision needed concerning their care and the services this agency provides. (See also Mental Capacity Act Policies on Deprivation of Liberty, Handling Money and Working with Service users).

Working with Service Users' Relatives and Carers

Service users and their relatives and representatives are kept fully informed about the service they receive and are provided with information in an appropriate manner. We insist on having the service user's permission before dealing with anyone on their behalf or releasing confidential information to others. Where appropriate we treat service users' relatives and carers as partners in the provision of care.

Advocacy

Service users and their relatives or their representatives are informed by the agency when requested, about independent advocates who may act on their behalf and about self-advocacy schemes. The Agency works cooperatively with advocates.