

Working With People at Signposts - useful information

Policies:

Q. What are Policies?

A. They are the framework which describes what an organisation does and how it does it.

With clear, workable policies, staff and clients will have clear guidelines as to what the service offers and how it is offered. They are there to maintain safety and comply within the law.

Q. What would happen if we didn't have Policies?

A. No one would know what was right, wrong, allowed, disallowed. So they are there to protect you as a worker and people accessing services.

New people joining the organisation work to the same policies as every one else - smoother, consistent service.

With policies, procedures are developed - these tell us how to implement (put into action) the policies. These are followed by everyone. E.g. If in doubt - ask a line manager.

Q. So if a policy is written - does it stay on the shelf forever and a day?

A. No - it is a flexible working document and should be looked at regularly and altered accordingly.

May come about as a result of a member of the team finding a particular procedure doesn't work in a certain case.

Q. Who writes or decides on the policies?

A. The main Constitutional Policy is usually decided by the Management or Executive Body, but the information necessary for the Policies concerned with the day-to-day running management of the service may have come from the staff and management teams.

Examples of Policies found in Organisations:

Induction Policy - for new staff

Complaints Policy - for handling complaints

Equal Opportunities - Recruitment of Staff and volunteers; conditions of employment, etc.

Health and Safety - requirements regarding premises, staff, volunteers, users

Confidentiality - Access to information, breach of confidentiality

Access for Disabilities - what is in place

Child Protection - Procedures to follow, what to do, where to go

Lone Person Working - Safety measures in place

Q. Does everyone have access to Policies in the workplace?

A. Yes - all available on premises and as part of induction procedure; if in doubt, ask.

Safety:

Q. How does we keep safe as an individual and as part of a team?

A. Communication: Listen - you learn a lot
Keep Talking- let others know where you are and when you'll be expected to return
Use a mobile phone to call in

Personal Safety: Risk Assessment before home visiting
Don't put yourself at risk, i.e. Child Protection issues
Lone Working Policy
Health and Safety Guidelines and Lone Working Pointers

Confidentiality: Don't talk outside the team or work environment about clients or issues

Respect: Respect each other
Respect others points of view, beliefs and values
Cooperative working brings positive results

Handling Conflict and Aggression:

1. Coping with difficult behaviours:

Q. Everyone is different. We all behave and act differently to different situations. We expect others to accept our ways, BUT when the situation becomes conflicting and/or aggressive, what can we do?

A. The aggressive person focuses exclusively on their rights, their needs, their feelings and forgets how you may be feeling!

They become demanding and sometimes threatening.

It is usually short term, fast, furious, unpredictable and explosive behaviour.

Q. How would you feel?

A. Hurt, scared/afraid, resentful, defensive; you may also begin to feel aggressive.

Q. What should you do?

A. Tell the client you can see they are upset and it would be better if you called back another day.

Ask the client to 'stop please' to show them you are not willing to listen to them anymore.

Ask another member of the team to accompany you on your next visit to see the client.

When you visit again, make it clear to the client that you won't accept that kind of behaviour.

Listen for any 'triggers' and try and avoid/divert confrontation.

Consider if the person is 'vulnerable' and discuss with your Line Manager.

NEVER:

- Shout back at the client
- Become angry yourself
- Become critical of their behaviour - this provokes further aggression

Don't stay if you don't feel safe

Have some useful strategies:

'I've left some papers in the car - I'll just get them'

'My daughters been sent home from school - I've got to fly'

'I've got a meeting back at the office in 10 minutes'

Don't ignore verbal threats or warnings of violence - the client may mean it!

Don't try to battle it out on your own

Don't be a martyr

2. Behaviours in the Workplace:

To communicate well with colleagues we must put across our opinions, beliefs and needs in a non-aggressive way.

To do this we need to be **ASSERTIVE**. We can then express our likes and dislikes clearly in a non-demanding way. Your colleagues will always know 'where they stand' if you are always open, honest and straight forward.

You should try and:

- Listen well and focus on what people are saying to you - not on how you feel
- Remember your body language - it says a lot about you
- Watch your tone of voice
- Stick to the point and be direct
- Be prepared to work it out together to get what you want = compromise
- You have a right to say 'no'
- Accept valid, constructive criticism. E.g. 'I agree with you - I've made a complete mess of it - perhaps you can suggest how I could have done it better?'

3. Manipulative Behaviour:

This type of behaviour can be:

4. Cunning, sly, devious
5. Very controlling of others, i.e. using sarcasm and sulking
6. Two-faced, i.e. pleasant to your face, unpleasant behind your back

Remember:

- You never know where you stand with a manipulative person
- You have to be constantly working out what is going on
- May create a situation where they set you up to fail
- Can be attention seeking
- Will try anything
- Can lead to bullying
- Always speak to your Line Manager if you have any worries

Vulnerable People:

Q. What is a 'Vulnerable Person'?

A. Someone who is/or is in need of Community Care Services by reason of mental or other disability; age or illness

Someone who is/or maybe is unable to take care of him/herself

Someone who is/or maybe is unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or exploitation

Terms used:

Disaffected: Not getting anything out of life, isolated

Social Exclusion: When people and/or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, poor health and family breakdown

Poverty: People in a low income household living on or below the low income threshold

People who spend their days isolated, unhappy and depressed are on a kind of 'hamster wheel' - everything in their life is at low ebb; they can't seem to ever make things better for themselves, no matter what they do.

These are the people who are seldom remembered and included, perhaps because they 'don't fit in' or 'others may not feel at ease in their company'.

These people have feelings too about not being accepted; they may know they are disliked by others.

Yet, these are the people who need help to socialise; to get away from the daily routine; to get out of the house; to talk to someone who will listen and not judge; to have a laugh and a joke and make new friends; to learn a new skill or show others their skills.

They are a very special group of people and require a very special kind of support.

People who may be Vulnerable:

- Women who are/have suffering/suffered Domestic Violence
- Young people who have been thrown out of their home

- Pregnant teenagers
- Homeless people (sleeping rough)
- Old, confused people
- Offenders (recently released and alone)
- People who misuse drugs/alcohol/substances
- People with mental health problems
- People with a learning/developmental disability
- People with a physical disability

All vulnerable people are to be protected from abuse of any kind and action taken against those who deliberately abuse vulnerable adults.

Safeguarding Children

Extracts taken from NCH Foundation Course, 2004:

Quote:

"The safeguarding of children from harm and abuse is a very complex area and one in which it is unsafe for any of us to believe we will ever know everything there is to know about the subject".

Quote:

"The best practice in safeguarding children from harm and abuse depends on teamwork involving everyone regardless of the status or position in a project, team or organisation".

Quote:

"There is a more holistic approach in dealing with abuse instead of the immediate response of past years. We have to recognise that we are more likely to get a more comprehensive assessment of need and service provision if we engage with the whole family".

Quote:

"All children have the RIGHT to be safeguarded from all exploitation; from physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and from neglect"

- Read the 'Child Protection Policy' and 'Vulnerable People Policy'
- Know where they are kept
- Always pass on any worries/concerns to your Line Manager - don't keep them to yourself. Follow Signposts procedures at all times.

Remember:

- A FACT is a thing certainly know to have occurred or be true
- An INTERPETATION is the representation of a thing or event, according to one's conception of it.
- An OPINION is a judgement or belief based on grounds short of proof
- PASS IT ON...

Pointers for Lone Working in the Office and on Home Visits

Office:

Keep the external door locked, but leave the key in the door to let callers in.

Never open a building to the public if you are working alone.

Check any identification or ask for documents (e.g. tradesmen or other agencies)

Ring and check with supervisor for further guidance if necessary (as outlined below).

Home Visiting:

Take a mobile and leave it switched on during the visit.

Make sure someone in the office knows where you are going, your mobile number and the time you expect to finish the visit/return to the office.

Arrange a check-in call for a certain time if you have not returned or made contact with the office.

Use the risk assessment form for all home visits, lone or other wise. Always do joint initial visits if possible.

If possible, gain additional information before setting off (e.g. from other professionals or agencies) and use in risk assessment.

Telephone Numbers:

In an emergency, i.e. if you are completely ALONE, dial 999 for the Emergency Services (Police, Ambulance, Fire Service)

If you need information and advice or assistance, dial:

- 01524 419021 for Signposts Main Office
- 07825 207021 for Pamela Beswick, Chief Executive
- 07825 207022 for John Heath, Deputy Chief Executive
- 07825 207023 for Sharon Calverley, Project Director - Community Development/Engagement
- 07825 207024 for Sue Edwards, Project Director - Adults and Older People
- 07825 207025 for Sue Earnshaw, Project Coordinator - Parenting
- 07825 207035 for Ruth Paterson, Project Coordinator - Every Child Matters
- 07825 207059 for out of hours emergencies