



Our Philosophy of Care and Participation Strategy

for
Service Users & Carers

Introduction

We at Carers Direct Ltd pride ourselves on offering a highly professional Care At Home Service.

We provide outstanding personal care and support to service users who require such support in their own homes in order to remain independent.

Our Philosophy of Care

Our philosophy is to provide high quality services that are flexible and responsive to individual needs, always ensuring the following:

Dignity and Respect

Understanding and respecting service users' needs and preferences, and treating them with dignity.
Ensuring privacy and avoiding unnecessary intrusion.
Treating people fairly and without discrimination.

Responsive, Compassionate Care

Providing flexible support that adapts to a service user's changing needs.
Providing support delivered by those who really care and who are sensitive to each service user's needs.
Ensuring regular reviews of care needs, involving the service user at all times.
Responding to service user queries in a timely manner.
Protecting service users from neglect, abuse, or avoidable harm.

Realising Potential

Helping service users with their right to achieve all they can, as independently as they can.
Supporting people to make informed choices, including taking personal risks.
Assisting service users to participate fully in their community.

Carers Direct Ltd will strive to preserve and maintain the dignity, individuality and privacy of all service users, and in so doing will be sensitive to the service users' ever-changing needs.

Such needs may be medical or therapeutic (for physical and mental welfare), cultural, psychological, spiritual, emotional and social, and service users are encouraged to participate in the development of their individualised Care Plans in which the involvement of family and friends may be appropriate, and which is greatly valued.

About Our Participation Strategy

This Participation Strategy is for you – the people who use Carers Direct Ltd, your Carers and our staff who support you.

Carers Direct Ltd has a long tradition of partnership working with service users and carers.

This Strategy aims to build on our previous work and to help us to develop a more consistent approach to service user and carer participation.

Who are 'Service Users'?

The term 'Service User' includes:

- People who use our services;
- People who may use our services in the future;
- User groups and organisations that support and represent the interests of people using our services.

Who are 'Carers'?

Carers look after family members, partners or friends who are in need of help because they are ill, frail or have a disability.

Why do we want to involve Service Users and Carers?

There are many good reasons to involve service users and carers. These include:

- To give a real say in the service we offer and the way we provide them;
- To make sure we tailor our services to meet your individual needs;
- To make sure we provide outstanding services - that are friendly, fair, and useful;
- To make sure our services support your dignity and independence.

What is 'User Participation'?

User participation is about talking and listening to Service Users and Carers and involving you as partners in the decisions that affect your lives.

Examples include:

- Involving Service Users in decisions about your own health and social care needs and how these are to be met.
- Asking service users for your views on the usefulness and friendliness of our information.
- Inviting Service Users to take part in regular service reviews, and creating user opportunities where you can have your say about the service we offer.

We believe that service users have a right to have your say, to enjoy choice and control, and to share in decision making about your service.

We have legal duties and responsibilities with which we must comply. As a result, we may sometimes need to make decisions that may go against the views of service users. If this happens, we will clearly explain our actions as well as your right to appeal or make a complaint.

Having set out some of these limits to user participation, we are committed to providing outstanding personal care and support, and making sure that service users are at the centre of all that we do - and the way we do it.

What are our Participation Principles?

In involving Service Users we will:

- Treat you with respect and dignity.
- Work and make decisions with you.
- Be fair and just with you.
- Make sure that you are encouraged and supported to speak your mind and have your say about our service.
- Make sure that we are always user-friendly and that all our participation activities are accessible to you.
- Be clear with you on what you are being asked to be involved with, how your views will be used, and when you will be informed of the results.

Where are we now?

There are a number of areas where we already include user participation in the way we work. Examples include:

- Our Information Pack, which sets out what quality standards people can expect when they receive our service.
- Our care management policies and procedures, which set out user's rights in the assessment and care planning process.
- The Care Inspectorate questionnaires, where Service Users and Carers can feed back their experience of being supported in their own home.
- Carers Direct's own questionnaire, where people are encouraged to give their views on how well they think we are doing. (We will collate the responses and send all our service users the feedback from the questionnaires: this is a very important exercise for us in our constant drive to continually improve and develop our services.)
- Telephone or email enquires regarding the quality of care received.
- Quality assurance visits.
- Invitation to meet with the Coordinator or Care Manager at any time to discuss development and improvement of the service.
- Ongoing staff training supervision and appraisal.
- Spot Checks.
- Complaints procedure.
- Team Meetings, encouraging suggestions for improvement.
- Service User reviews.
- Feedback from, and collaboration with, other health and social care professionals.

What are the Aims of our User Participation Strategy?

Our User Participation Strategy has the following 3 main aims:

1. To develop service user participation.
2. To develop standards and targets so that our progress can be measured and reviewed.
3. To give feedback on progress with the development of our standards and targets.

What are we doing to meet these 3 Aims?

1. In terms of developing User Participation we are:
 - Developing plans to fill unmet needs and gaps,
 - Creating opportunities for Service Users to be involved in checking our public information to make sure it is easy to read and useful.
 - Helping service users to have their say through advocacy support.
 - Publicising this User Participation Strategy to make sure that all staff are aware of what it says and understand their part in making it happen.
2. In terms of developing Standards and targets we have:
 - Moved to a systematic approach to user participation so that we always expand and extend the things we do well, and improve on those areas that need to be developed.
3. In terms of giving Feedback on progress with the development of our standards and targets we are:
 - Making sure that the results of participation and consultation are used to improve the services we provide and how we provide them.

- Create opportunities and support for service users to comment on the quality and usefulness of the services provided to them.

Who makes this happen?

All those involved have a role in making the Strategy happen:

- The Service Users & Carers

Service Users & Carers are at the heart of the Strategy and have a critical role in helping us to continue to develop user-friendly, accessible and fair services.

- Our Staff

Our staff are a key part of making the Strategy happen. We make sure that Service Users are informed of their rights and the standards we work to. Staff also support service users to take part in their services and contribute to the planning and development of services. In addition, staff are encouraged to participate directly in the planning processes of Carers Direct Ltd.

- Our Care Manager and Director

Our Care Manager and Director continue to assure that the way we offer our service, as set out in our Philosophy of Care, includes essential arrangements for user participation, and that staff implement this Participation Strategy and receive appropriate support and training.

- Quality Assurance and Development

Our Care Manager and Director take the lead in making sure that all those involved are supported to make this Participation Strategy happen and to check and report on progress made.

Setting and reviewing targets

This Strategy will be checked regularly to make sure that it keeps up with the needs of service users, and also that it is fully up to date with our policies and procedures.

Progress made in delivering this Strategy will be reported in our annual self-evaluation.