
Escorting and Car Driving for People Who Use a Domiciliary care Service (England) Policy

Policy Statement

This policy sets out the values, principles and procedures underpinning this care provider's approach to supporting and escorting people receiving care using public or private transport, for example to keep employment, educational, recreational and hospital and healthcare appointments.

The policy aim is to maintain the wellbeing of any person using the service in community and social situations and to provide optimal care during any escort period.

The policy is in line with all driving and road safety laws and best practice and the requirements of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 to always provide safe, person-centred care that fully meets the needs of people using a care service.

This care provider works on the basis that those using their care services should be able to keep appointments and maintain contacts with their families, friends, representatives and local community groups as they wish. There should be no restrictions placed on community activities provided that appropriate support and arrangements can be made.

Some people using the service will be able to maintain contacts or keep hospital and other healthcare appointments on their own or with help of friends and family. Others could need support from their care workers or might only be able to take part in activities without such support.

This policy applies mainly to instances where support workers and approved volunteers recruited by the care service are required to be escorts. It does not apply where relatives and personal friends are the escorts chosen or agreed by the person using the service, where the arrangement will be less formal; though, in these instances the care provider will be mindful of its duty of care and consider each situation to ensure safe escorting.

Support Staff (and Approved Volunteers) Escorting Procedures

The care provider considers that having regular contact with family, friends and the wider community is a crucial part of living a fulfilled and healthy life particularly for people receiving care who might otherwise be discriminated against or excluded on account of their disabilities and impairments. Accordingly, the care provider will do its best to provide all appropriate opportunities for people using its service to maintain and develop such outside contacts if desired, including people who can benefit from these only with support from their support workers.

In this care service the following applies.

- Support will be provided whenever a particular person receiving care wishes or agrees to take part in community and other activities where it is indicated as beneficial in their care plan and a risk assessment indicates that it is safe.
- Only appropriately trained and competent staff who know the person and understand their needs should provide such support.
- The support provided will take into account the purpose of the activity, the outcomes to be achieved from it and all safety considerations.
- The support required for the visit or activity be agreed with the person receiving care (or as a best interests decision where the person does not have mental capacity to decide) to ensure that it is adequate to maintain their wellbeing. This should include any drugs or medication required and any special needs the person might have.
- Care workers will be responsible for ensuring that the person is prepared for the escort and that appropriate transport is available with aids and appliances that might be needed.
- To ensure the safety of both the person receiving care and the escorting member of staff, staff should always carry a mobile phone and be aware of how to use it. All escorts should carry a list of emergency phone numbers.

Prior to the occasion, the support workers responsible should check the following.

- The person receiving care and others involved are aware of the purpose of the activity and their permission has been gained.
- They are competent to provide the support needed in all respects of the activity.
- Necessary equipment and medication are available for use during the activity.
- Accompanying support staff are fully aware of the person's needs during the activity and know how to manage any assessed risks.
- The care service the appropriate insurance cover in place where required, including vehicle insurance.

Transport Procedures

Where a support worker uses their own car to escort a person receiving care or transport owned by the care service, the following arrangements and procedures apply.

- There must be a prior agreement made between the care provider and support staff for them to act as drivers for people using the service or as escorts either using their own cars or transport owned by the care provider.

- The reasons for using care workers as drivers or escorts must be stated in the contracts of the people using the service/on their care plans, which should also include any limiting conditions.
- If car driving or escorting is to be a duty of support workers, it should be clearly stated in their job descriptions, when it will be expected that on appointment (or inclusion in the job description) they will be competent drivers.
- Any agreement must be based on assessments of all risks to the safety of everyone involved including: to the passengers, drivers, vehicles used, weather and driving conditions and emergency arrangements. Risk assessments should include medication issues and general health and safety hazards that might be present.
- Care staff should be given specific moving and handling training, where required, to support people using the service in safely accessing their vehicles, which might include transferring from a wheelchair to a car seat, etc. They should also be given training over any particular access/parking issues that they might have to address as drivers.
- All drivers must have an up to date driving license, no history of being an unsafe driver and full insurance cover. Vehicles must be roadworthy, taxed and properly insured for the purpose and against loss, damage and personal injury and have seat belts that conform to current regulations.
- Otherwise, support workers should only consent to carrying out driving duties if they regard themselves as competent, confident and content to carry out these duties, which includes being comfortable and confident in driving safely with a person or people using the service as passengers.
- They should also be assured that any passengers will comply with all required safety procedures such as wearing seat belts; or if being driven the driver will not drive and use a hand held mobile phone or engage in similar unsafe behaviour. As drivers, support workers must not use hand held mobile phones or engage in any unsafe driving practices.
- Where it has not been built into a care worker's job description and the support worker does not consider he or she is suitable to act as driver for a person using the service for any reason the care service will make alternative arrangements such as getting another driver or taxi service. This would not prevent a support worker who does not drive from acting as an escort within these alternative arrangements if this has been agreed as needed in the interests of the person using the service.

Manager's checklist

To form an agreement for support workers to act as escorts/drivers, the following questions will be answered.

1. Is it clear what the purpose of the driving/escorting is in relation to the individual plans of care/service agreements?

2. Is the driver of the vehicle to be used to transport a person or people using the service fully licensed to drive the vehicle?
3. Is the vehicle being used fully taxed, insured and safe to drive with an up-to-date MOT where required?
4. Has the nominated driver any history of unsafe driving that would put anyone in the vehicle at risk?
5. Are the duties involved written into the care workers' job descriptions and contracts?
6. Have the support workers involved given their consent to driving people using the service?
7. Are all parties comfortable with the proposed arrangements?
8. Who in the care service will be monitoring and reviewing the arrangements?
9. Are all the necessary safeguards in place to ensure all involved will be safe?
10. Is the care service satisfied that it has exercised its duty of care to both people using the service and to its employees involved in these arrangements?

Training

All staff are provided with training covering basic information about individual care planning and the support of social activities.

Support staff on escort duty are trained in risk assessing personal safety and security.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Policy review date: _____
