

Privacy and Dignity Policy

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Version Tracking

Version	Date Ratified	Brief Summary of Changes	Owner
1	23 November 2018	Amendments to reflect updated ISO 9001 2015 compliance	JP
16/1	1 April 2020	Annual issue update	JP
17/1	April 2021	Annual issue update	JP
17v2	26 Nov 2021	Scheduled review, no amendments required	JP
V2	Nov. 2022	Scheduled review, no amendments required	MBrad
V3	Jan.2024	Unscheduled review to revise policy ownership	PG

Purpose of this Document

This document outlines the policy of Agincare in relation to providing services which respect the privacy and dignity of any person dealing with our organisation. This policy will support staff in ensuring that the privacy and dignity needs of people who use services are considered and ensured during any contact(s) with Agincare Services. Agincare has a crucial role to play in creating an environment in which human rights are respected. A fundamental aspect of human rights is an individual's right to privacy and dignified care and support

Policy Statement

This policy incorporates many of the recommendations from the Department of Health document, Essence of Care (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/essence-of-care-2010>) and it should be adhered to by all staff employed who are in contact with people who use the service and their carers.

This policy is based on the belief that everyone should be treated with respect and dignity in an environment which maintains personal privacy and protects modesty.

This policy applies to all people using our services irrespective of their age, ethnicity, social, cultural, psychological and physical status requirements. All Agincare policies, procedures and training start with the premise that people are to be treated with respect and their dignity maintained

Agincare adopts the SCIE (Social Care institute for Excellence) Dignity challenge which is a call to arms to care providers to meet the 10 principles of care in their services to people. The Dignity Challenge attempts to create an understandable and tangible way of explaining what 'Dignity' looks like in the context of treating people with respect in a care setting.

High quality care services that respect people's dignity should:

1. Have a zero tolerance of all forms of abuse.
2. Support people with the same respect you would want for yourself or a member of your family.
3. Treat each person as an individual by offering a personalised service.
4. Enable people to maintain the maximum possible level of independence, choice and control.
5. Listen and support people to express their needs and wants.
6. Respect people's right to privacy.
7. Ensure people feel able to complain without fear of retribution.
8. Engage with family members and carers as care partners.
9. Assist people to maintain confidence and a positive self-esteem.
10. Act to alleviate people's loneliness and isolation.

Dignity champions

Managers and staff are encouraged to register as a Dignity Champion (www.dignityincare.org.uk) where they will find a wealth of resources and support, and where local Dignity Networks can be found. Agincare's Dignity Champion Resources pack is available in the document management system (Sharepoint). A Dignity Champion is someone who believes passionately that being treated with dignity is a basic human right, not an optional extra. They believe that care services must be compassionate, person centred, as well as efficient, and are willing to try to do something to achieve this.

Dignity Champions are willing to:

- stand up and challenge disrespectful behaviour rather than just tolerate it;
- act as good role models by treating other people with respect, particularly those who are less able to stand up for themselves;
- speak up about Dignity to improve the way that services are organised and delivered;
- influence and inform colleagues;
- listen to and understand the views and experiences of people.

Assessing health and welfare needs, planning and delivering care

We recognise that the assessment process can be very intrusive. We are obliged to ask questions about the most intimate areas of a person's life and it is helpful at the outset of our contact to meet with a person in their own private environment where possible. We will do everything possible to limit the discomfort a person can experience at this stage and to provide all possible reassurances about the nature of our operations generally and particularly the confidentiality of our information systems and the sensitivity of our workforce.

Some people will wish a carer or representative to be present during the assessment, but we do not assume that they will necessarily be privy to all of the information the person has to provide about themselves and we respect the privacy and confidentiality of the person. If it seems helpful, we will arrange for some parts of the assessment to take place with them alone.

Following assessment, a care and support plan is co-produced with the person who will be receiving a service, this document details the care and support that will be provided. It is paramount that people have sufficient information about the service in order to provide informed consent without which we cannot provide a dignified or respectful service. The Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice must be considered when obtaining consent to care and support as it may be necessary to evidence the 'best interest' decisions made for the person where they lack the capacity to make decisions or consent to care and support or some aspects of it. The process of making a best interest decision must include the views of others such as the person's *involved* family and consider what they might have consented to and considered respectful prior to them losing capacity.

Handling personal information within the organisation

When information about people who use services is required to be passed between staff, it will always be treated with respect. Arrangements for processing, handling and storing data are based on the need to retain a person's privacy as much as possible. (See also Agincare's policies on Confidentiality, Information Sharing and Data Protection)

Behaviour of Employees

We know that some people have forms of address for themselves to which they are particularly attached, or conversely forms they find particularly offensive. Our employees will make note of and observe such individual preferences. They will always address a person by their chosen name and know that the acceptable usage may vary between people or over time.

We recognise that the carrying out of some tasks, particularly those relating to intimate personal care places a person's privacy and dignity at severe risk. We undertake that our employees will be professional, respectful and mindful in such situations.

Employees have been instructed to be alert to the potential invasion of privacy involved in handling a person's possessions or documents, and will always respect the boundaries set, and be led by the person.

The following list is not exhaustive but provides some 'common sense' guidance to help maintain a person's privacy and dignity

- When doors are closed staff will 'knock' and gain permission before entering
- 'Vacant' and 'Engaged' signs on toilet and bathroom doors indicate occupancy and staff, people using services and visitors must respect these signs.
- A person incapable of helping themselves will never be left without a covering to maintain their decency, even during bed bathing and changing of linen/night attire
- A person who is incapable of helping themselves will be assisted to put on spectacles, insert hearing aids and dentures, as required
- If photographs / digital images are taken e.g. images of pressure ulcers, it is important to ensure that privacy & dignity is maintained such as covering unaffected areas with a towel.

Cultural impact

We are aware that there may be particular issues related to privacy and dignity dependent upon the person's religion, culture or heritage. We seek to make our staff alert to potential areas of sensitivity that they may encounter in their work and we encourage people to draw to our attention any particular matter of which we should be aware. Specific cultural preferences will be identified at assessment and will be respected by all staff in delivery of care.

Contractual impact

Agincare's policies and procedures are to be followed in conjunction with the requirements of the contracts under which you provide services. There may be occasions where the contract contains requirements which appear to contradict or be in addition to, standard Company policy. In these instances you are to:

- If the requirement is in addition to standard Company policy - adhere to the terms and conditions of your contracts
- If the requirement is lesser than standard Company Policy - follow Company policies and procedures

If you require any further clarification, please contact the Commercial Department for guidance

Training

The management team of Agincare believe that, in order to provide a quality service, Agincare requires high quality staff who are suitably trained, supervised and supported.

Agincare policies and procedures are referenced in the induction programme and are available for staff in their work place (Care Home or Branch office). Staff will be informed of how to access all policies, procedures and related documentation and of how to seek further advice regarding Agincare's agreed ways of working. Staff should be provided with regular updates to encourage continuous improvement and include latest good practice.

Agincare is committed to provide an ongoing programme of support for all staff. This includes supervisions, appraisals and training which will be in line with company policy, contractual obligations and current best practice.

REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

Review of this document is recorded on the controlled index and reviewed annually as part of the management review process.

Policy Review Group

Date: January 2024