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**Continuity of Care Policy**

**[Date of Issue]**

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# Introduction

The policy acts as a guide for staff at [Company Name]. Each staff member will operate within their scope of practice and will endeavour to maintain the skill, training, and knowledge to carry out care of a very high standard.

Continuity of care is important for both staff and clients. Patients tend to trust healthcare professionals that they know, and professionals may be able to predict disease trajectory, progression or read signs that the client is deteriorating if they are aware of the client’s baseline.

# Policy Statement

[Company Name] is fully committed to a caring approach based on the concept of continual support, care from the same person to the same client as much as is possible, and a structure of both management and relationship continuity of care.

The policy will comply with all national legislation and guidance related to care and continuity of care in the UK.

# Scope

This policy and the procedures apply to all staff supporting continuity of care with [Company Name]’s clients. The Registered Manager will take responsibility for the policy and promote a service based on concepts of continued care, respectful relationships, and trust.

# Procedures

At the heart of [Company Name] is the relationship between staff and client. Good communication, respect and quality care will be the building blocks for excellent service delivery.

In compliance with all legislation and national guidelines, including the Health & Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014, [Company Name] will employ sufficient numbers of staff to ensure continuity of care is maintained.

Continuity of Care is a process involving client and multidisciplinary team members. [Company Name] will adopt a coordinated team approach to client care. High-quality care will be delivered by trained and competent staff. A core fundamental concept to this care will be continuity.

Continuity of care involves building continued individualised care between staff and clients, building a trusting relationship, and building knowledge about each other.

Continuity of care will be an essential component of general care. Continuity of care becomes especially important as people age. With age often comes multipole morbidities and complex conditions.

[Company Name] will achieve continuity of care by implementing the following practices.

* Ensuring all team members at [Company Name] involved in the client’s care will be familiar with their needs and how they like to be supported.
* Where possible, the same staff members will support the client.
* Where the same staff member(s) is/are unavailable, a good handover is required. A clear exchange of relevant information should take place in a concise and informative manner.
* Staff will be trained on the principles of continuity of care.
* Regular attendance and absence policies will be in place to ensure enough staff are always available to care for clients, without too many changes too. The hiring of temporary staff shall be kept to an absolute minimum.
* Ensuring good communication practices are in place.
* Development and implementation of individualised care plans that are updated regularly, keeping all staff aware of care needs and status.
* Health records will be maintained with updated information and any changes/notes to be documented, so all staff are aware of the client’s needs, condition, support requirements etc.
* Staff will use all technological devices and electronic communication systems to full use to coordinate care and communicate efficiently.
* All staff will be aware of who the client’s usual care team are.
* Sufficient time will be allowed for clients and staff to get to know each other and for reviews/consultations.
* Staff at [Company Name] will employ knowledge on what continuity of care means and how it affects the client.
* All efforts to match suitably qualified and skilled staff with patients will be made. [Company Name] will endeavour to match up staff that appear to have similarities or get on well with that client and likewise trying to match clients with suitable staff will be a priority.

Continuity of care is often simply referred to as seeing the same member of staff that the client usually sees. Continuity of care also involves processes and continued communication in a coordinated model. [Company Name] will use a system whereby in as far as is possible, relationships between staff members and patients will be familiar and consistent. Patient-centred care will be practised, allowing patients dictate the support needed and that way patients drive continuity of care.

[Company Name] will strive to promote holistic care, ensuring staff know the patient individually. Trying to keep the same staff member with the same client for as long as possible. However, there may be times staff need to change, such as:

* if a staff member is sick
* if a staff member is on annual leave
* if the client asks for their carer to be changed
* if the staff member moves away or leaves
* if a non-professional relationship has developed between the two
* if for any reason the staff member cannot support the client
* other reasons which will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Continuity of care can be:

* relationship continuity – seeing the same people or team
* management continuity – management and coordination of care
* informational continuity – continuity of patient records and information.

Relationship continuity involves clients being encouraged to develop and maintain good therapeutic relationships with one or more medical professional that supports their care.

Management continuity involves the client at the core of their treatment and all the decisions that accompany that treatment.

The benefits of Continuity of care are well documented and include:

* promotion of patient safety
* building trusting relationships
* easing anxiety as the client gets to know the staff member supporting them, so it is not a new face daily
* providing coordinated transitions between different facilities and departments
* clients who receive continuity have better healthcare outcomes
* clients have been proven to have higher satisfaction rates
* being more cost-effective.

These benefits will be the rationale for this policy, and the outcomes [Company Name] will strive to achieve.

# Monitoring

To ensure this policy remains both practical and current, regular auditing processes will take place. Any adverse issues or poor patient outcomes related to this policy will be investigated.

# Related policies and procedures

* Care Planning Policy

# Legislation and Guidance

**Relevant Legislation**

* The Care and Support (Continuity of Care) Regulations 2014 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/2825/made>

**Guidance**

* NICE People's experience using adult social care services <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs182/chapter/Quality-statement-3-Continuity-of-care-and-support>
* Care and Support Statutory Guidance under the Care Act 2014 <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/506202/23902777_Care_Act_Book.pdf>
* Providing Continuity of Care in General Practice
* [Continuity of Care (rcgp.org.uk)](https://www.rcgp.org.uk/clinical-and-research/our-programmes/innovation/continuity-of-care.aspx)

# Summary of Review

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| --- | --- |
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