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**Dignity and Privacy Policy**

**[Date of Issue]**

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# Introduction

This policy will support and guide staff in the delivery of personal care routines that ensure the client's privacy and dignity are always respected. One fundamental human right for any person, is the right to privacy and dignity in treatment, which [Company Name] will support in all personal care procedures.

[Company Name] is committed to the delivery of high quality and safe care and so have designed policies that reflect the current legislation, guidelines and responsibility for promoting privacy, dignity and respect for all clients receiving support for personal care.

# Policy Statement

[Company Name] are committed to ensuring that dignity and privacy is maintained at all times with all personal care procedures, and that all staff involved in the provision of direct personal care or personal care management are kept up to date with the relevant current standards and guidelines. Staff will have the appropriate knowledge, skill and ability to carry out personal care in a dignified, respectful manner while upholding client privacy always.

**The key policy principles include:**

* To define privacy and dignity as it applies to personal care procedures.
* To ensure that care provided is always mindful of privacy and dignity.
* Clients will have their rights exercised while receiving personal care from [Company Name].
* To comply with all current legislation, guidelines and standards of care as set out by UK law concerning privacy and dignity in personal care.

# Scope

This policy applies to all healthcare staff who provide direct client care on behalf of [Company Name]. [Company Name] is fully responsible for monitoring personal care practices and supporting staff involved in direct personal care procedures, including assessment, planning, delivery and review, in line with the standards for best practice.

# Definitions

**Dignity:** "Dignity is concerned with how people feel, think and behave in relation to the worth or value of themselves and others. To treat someone with dignity is to treat them as being of worth, in a way that is respectful of them as valued individuals." (The Royal College of Nursing (RCN)'s definition of dignity)

**Privacy:** for the purpose of this policy, privacy will be defined as and referred to as freedom from intrusion or invasion.

**Personal Care:** is a term that describes supporting clients with personal hygiene, toileting, continence care, dressing and grooming.

# Procedures

With all personal care procedures staff should:

* be mindful of safety, consent, dignity, privacy, respect, effective communication, transparent record-keeping, working within their scope of practice and current legislative standards and guidelines, and all care should be person-centred and holistic
* introduce themselves when meeting the client for the first time
* wear identity badges
* be courteous and kind, demonstrating a positive and respectful attitude
* be competent and knowledgeable in their work, approaching the task confidently and thoroughly explaining the procedure to the client before personal care starts
* ask the client how they wish to be addressed (e.g., Mr, Miss, Ms, Mrs or first name).

To promote dignity and privacy in personal care, the following elements must be upheld and practised within the staff's scope of practice:

* **Promote independence**

Self-care and client independence must be promoted where it is deemed safe and appropriate. Where a person is capable and able to meet their own hygiene needs, this should always be promoted as the first choice.

* **Consent**

Gain the informed consent of the client. If verbal consent is impossible (e.g., if the client lacks capacity for consent for any reason), gauge the general acceptance or non-acceptance of the task and proceed in line with guidance from the Mental Capacity Act and DoLS Policy, as well as the Advocacy and Decision-Making Policy.

* **Assessment of needs**

Ensure a person-centred approach and assess what the client can do independently and what level of support/assistance they require. This ensures you do not expect too much from them or equally do too much for them and, therefore, dampen their independence. Be aware that a client’s capabilities can fluctuate as their independence declines or improves.

* **Safety**

Staff must maintain a safe environment and assess the risks involved in meeting the personal care needs of a client beforehand. Individual client risk assessments must identify any potential hazards and/or client specific risks. Any equipment used must be working correctly and safely and maintained in line with the manufacturer’s instructions. Dependent clients should never be left alone in a potentially hazardous environment (e.g., the bath). A safe ratio of staff to clients must always be maintained and staff should be knowledgeable of and conform to [Company Name]’s health and safety and risk policies.

* **Comfort**

Every effort will be made to ensure client comfort.To ensure this, any equipment should be comfortable and non-restricting. Staff should routinely ask the client whether they are comfortable.

* **Planning personal care**
	+ ensure that you have all the required equipment prior to undertaking any personal care procedures
	+ give special consideration to clients who may not feel changes in temperature or pain/pressure.

* **Non-verbal clients**

Always apply empathy and think of how the client may feel. Ensure ongoing and consistent communication.

* **Skin integrity**

Observe for frail or dehydrated skin that can tear easily, as well as growths, rashes, unusual marks or any symptoms that were not present on initial assessment. Personal care should be viewed as an opportunity to observe a clients health, condition and to note any issues. Any changes to skin integrity must be reported and documented.

All areas of the body requiring personal care should be gently cleaned, including any oral care. If the client cannot clean the oral cavity themselves, staff will perform oral care for them.

# Dignity

[Company Name] will foster and promote an environment where equally powered relationships are shared as follows:

* staff will conduct themselves in a professional manner and behaviour, providing clients with choice and using a respectful language
* staff will advocate autonomy, allowing the client the right to have and feel in control over their care
* staff will always treat clients with dignity and protect their modesty.

Best practice will be quality-driven, safe, person-centred, effective and respectful of the client’s dignity and privacy. This will be ensured by:

* closing any doors, pulling curtains or closing bed screens to protect privacy and prevent others from entering during any personal care
* not asking the client to take off more clothes than is needed for the task, and covering them with a towel or appropriate clothing while they wait for personal care
* all staff abiding by [Company Name]’s Chaperone Policy where appropriate
* providing staff with training on safeguarding practices, along with how to identify and report any suspected signs of abuse
* any assistance with activities or daily tasks, such as cleansing or support with eating and drinking, being provided discreetly and with the dignity of the client in mind
* providing reassurance to clients, who may feel embarrassed or frustrated that they cannot meet their own hygiene needs, that their privacy will be maintained
* respecting any client decisions and lifestyle choices
* raising client’s sense of worth to increase their level of dignity
* providing clients with choice, as if this is stripped from them, their dignity will be compromised
* always addressing the client in a friendly manner using empowering language and at eye level.

As dignity is important in personal care, so too is personal care important in dignity and, as such, clients will be supported to groom their appearance to maintain their dignity. Dignity is strongly linked with respect and staff at [Company Name] will provide a respectful approach to personal care for all clients, as all clients deserve to be cared for or supported in a respectful and dignified manner. Staff will communicate and deliver care with a respectful tone and remember that they already may feel vulnerable as a client. Respect can be shown by:

* asking the clients opinions and ascertaining their wishes
* speaking in a dignified manner, appropriate volume and soft tone
* respecting the clients right to absolute confidentiality
* at the end of life, leaving adequate time for the deceased and their family to say goodbye in a quiet, private atmosphere, where possible
* a smile and pleasant approach
* courtesy, honesty and respect
* building professional, trusting relationships from the start
* when supporting clients with dressing and grooming, allowing for self-expression, and encouraging the client to choose their clothes and express their style.

# Privacy

Staff at [Company Name] will ensure that privacy in personal care is maintained at all times by recognising that:

* every client is entitled to privacy, including privacy of care records, bathroom privacy and privacy to speak with their loved ones without intrusion
* intrusion and invasive procedures can strip a clients privacy. Staff will always strive to give as much privacy as possible to clients and their families. Keeping a low volume when discussing a clients condition, allowing private time for clients personal phone calls and visits, etc.
* leadership will exemplify good practices in the privacy of clients. Management will lead with a dignified approach towards personal care and through the promotion of best practices for maintaining confidentiality in personal care
* client confidentiality should be maintained as per current legislation relating to Data Protection Acts and current standards and guidance
* if [Company Name] requires the use of surveillance, it will be used in the best interest of the client and in line with the Care Quality Commission's guidance and related legislation
* [Company Name] will endeavour to segregate sleeping areas and bathroom facilities for opposite-sex clients
* clients have different beliefs and cultural values that need to be respected.

# Toileting and Continence

Privacy and dignity must be maintained in all aspects of toileting and continence, as follows:

* where a client requires assistance, always provide a high level of privacy and dignity in caring for their toileting needs
* close toilet doors and do not have several members of staff in the bathroom at once
* encourage clients with continence promotion. Offer bedpans, commodes or trips to the toilet at regular intervals. Regular toilet trips can promote continence, which in turn promotes dignity
* staff will always encourage using the toilet over incontinence pads, where possible
* some incontinent clients will wear pads, where this is the case, they should be changed regularly, and the area should be kept clean and dry. Incontinent clients are at risk of developing pressure sores and staff should refer to the Prevention of Pressure Ulcers Policy
* some clients may be very embarrassed to be wearing incontinence wear, and staff at [Company Name] are placed in a prime position to promote a positive self-image
* where the client is catheterised, staff will ensure regular catheter care
* stoma bags/colostomy sites should be cleaned using aseptic techniques. Staff should remember that this may be a challenging time for the client, especially if the stoma is new. Exercise empathy and make them feel secure and comfortable by talking to them and providing reassurance.

# Promoting Independence

* staff will promote independence with personal care, advocating client control and autonomy
* staff will promote a positive self-image
* respectful communication is a fundamental building block for positive attributes, such as dignity and positive self-image. Staff should listen to the client and provide a person-centred approach that respects the clients preferences and wishes. Communication is an integral core element of all personal care and must be performed in a dignified manner with the clients privacy and respect upheld.

# Communication

* staff will respect the client as a person. Communicate the planned procedure before it occurs, seek informed consent, explain the tasks and use a respectful tone
* staff will actively engage in conversation with the client, if the client wishes, which may make them feel at ease. When more than one staff member is assisting with personal care, they will not 'talk over' the client. Include the client in all conversations. Use the time to get to know what is going on with the client.

**All staff will refer to and work in line with the Essence of Care 2010 guidance regarding Respect and Dignity:** [**https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\_data/file/216702/dh\_119966.pdf**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/216702/dh_119966.pdf)

# Monitoring

To ensure this policy remains both useful and current, regular auditing processes will take place. The Registered Manager is responsible for the investigation, reporting and recording of any incidents relating to personal care procedures and policies at [Company Name].

# Associated Policies and Procedures

* Chaperone Policy
* Confidentiality Policy
* Consent Policy
* End of Life Policy
* Equality and Diversity Policy
* Promoting Continence Policy
* Restraint Policy
* Safeguarding Policies

# Legislation and Guidance

**Relevant Legislation**

* The Care Act 2014
* Data Protection Act of 2018
* Care Standards Act (2000)
* Mental Health Act (1983) - Code of Practice (revised) & Mental Health Act 2007.
* Mental Capacity Act 2005
* Human Rights Act (1998)
* Equality Act (2010)
* Gender Recognition Act (2004)
* Public Sector Equality Duty (2011)
* Protection from Harassment Act (1997)
* Data Protection Act of 2018

**Guidance**

* SCIE (2006) Dignity in Care guide
* NHS Review (2008) Lord Darzi Report: High-Quality Care for All
* DoH (2010) Essence of Care
* DoH (2010) Essence of Care - Respect and Dignity
* NHSI (2019) Delivering Same-sex Accommodation
* The Sex Discrimination (Amendment of Legislation) Regulations (2008)
* NHS - <https://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/patient-led-assessments-care-environment-place/>
* Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014: Regulation 10 <https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/regulations-enforcement/regulation-10-dignity-respect>
* Dignity Champions: <https://www.dignityincare.org.uk/Dignity-Champions/Becoming_a_Dignity_Champion/?fbclid=IwAR0jl3V92kdIxb6byHireqAFXG-yqxO4DtV3bJCglIv55FV5XWH-FENulic>
* <https://rcni.com/hosted-content/rcn/continence/impact-and-dignity#:~:text=%22Dignity%20is%20concerned%20with%20how,RCN's%20definition%20of%20dignity1>

# Summary of Review

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Version | 1 |
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