

Gentle Care HCS Ltd



Service User Guide

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You can contact the agency office on:

020 8427 5855

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Section 1 – About Gentlecare HCS Ltd

1.1 Gentle Care Aims & Objectives

It is our belief that most people who require social care services prefer to remain at home whenever possible, thereby preserving a sense of independence, security and stability in their life.

In order to assist such individuals to secure the best quality of life Gentle Care Home Care Services is dedicated to providing the highest standard of care and support. The delivery of care is discussed with the client and we aim to provide services in a manner, which is acceptable to and valued by each client.

We aim to ensure that the dignity, self-respect and self-determination of the client is protected and due consideration taken with regard to the wishes and needs of the client. We will work towards enhancing the feeling of security and independence of every person we provide care for.

To meet these service user needs, our Care Service is designed to achieve the following objectives:

- ◆ To deliver a service of the highest quality that will improve and sustain the client's overall quality of life. In this respect the HOME CARE Service is designed to meet the Certification requirements of the ISO 9000 Quality Standard (latest edition), but in a people-oriented fashion.
- ◆ To ensure that the service is delivered flexibly, attentively and in a non-discriminatory fashion while respecting each client's right to independence, privacy, dignity, fulfilment, and the rights to make informed choices and to take risks.
- ◆ To offer a variety of services including assistance with getting up, washing, bathing, dressing, toileting, preparation of meals, feeding, laundry, cleaning, ironing, shopping, going to bed, collecting pensions, respite care and bed making.

- ◆ To manage and implement a formal programme of staff planning, selection, recruitment, training and personal development to enable client care needs to be met.
- ◆ To monitor and supervise staff through on site visits and supervisions, office meetings, and formal annual appraisals.
- ◆ To ensure that each client's needs and values are respected in matters of religion, culture, race or ethnic origin, sexuality and sexual orientation, political affiliation, marital status, parenthood and disabilities or impairments.
- ◆ To ensure that the Care Service in whole is delivered in accordance with agreed Purchasing Contracts/Care Agreements.
- ◆ To match the nominated Care Worker as closely as possible with the client, and respecting the need to change the Care Worker in the event of subsequent non-compatibility.
- ◆ To undertake a Risk Assessment of environmental Health & Safety hazards within the home of each new client, and to ensure that areas of concern are duly reported to the Purchaser/Service User.
- ◆ To ensure that all Service Users receive written information on Gentle Care HCS Ltd complaints procedure and how to use it.

1.2 Gentlecare Service Users

By and large, we provide services to people that have been assessed by a social worker as needing care support services in their own home or elsewhere in the community. In short, we provide help to people of all ages and needs.

In some cases, we undertake services by private arrangement with you. In these instances, we will assess your care needs ourselves.

1.3 The services Gentlecare provide

Gentlecare offers help and assistance in various aspects of care detailed below. In all cases these services are controlled through the policies and procedures detailed in our Quality Management System. All Gentlecares polices and procedures are available at any stage upon request (see page 7 ‘Contacting Us’). As far as possible, carers are encouraged to carry out tasks with clients rather than for them. The services you receive will depend on the care plan that has been agreed with you, but may include the following:

Health & Medical Care Services

Our care or support workers are permitted to give medication to our service users. However, this is strictly in accordance with our Medication Policy and procedure. There are strict rules for handling your medication, and the circumstances under which assistance may or may not be given. The care or support worker may offer the following assistance when indicated on the care plan:

- ✓ Verbal reminders to take medicine
- ✓ Opening dosset boxes or blister packs
- ✓ Ensuring that medicines are within the expiry date, are taken at the prescribed intervals, and in the correct dosages
- ✓ Noting any out-dated medicines and arranging for these to be returned to the chemist
- ✓ Collect prescriptions

When assistance with medical care is included in the care plan, an agreement needs to be in writing and signed by you, the care manager and prescribing practitioner where appropriate. In addition, when care workers are administering medication they must complete a medication record kept on the file in your home. All staff involved in assisting with or administering medication are required to complete a Medication Course.

Domestic Services

Our care workers can perform domestic tasks on your behalf. These may include shopping and/or light cleaning.

Provision of meals & Dietary care

As part of a package of personal care (see below), our care workers may prepare hot meals, snacks and drinks for you.

Personal Care Services

These services include assistance to wash, bathe, dress, eat, use toilet etc. Such services are delivered in a manner that is sensitive to maintain your modesty and dignity.

Social Care Services

If you have mobility problems or are socially isolated, our care workers may be able to help you with collecting benefits or prescriptions for medicines.

In some special cases, we may provide befriending or escort services where our support worker helps you to develop and maintain social relationships. If you have a learning disability or mental health needs, we may provide support to help you develop your social skills

Child Care Services

We are able to assist you if you require childcare services including respite care for children with physical and learning disabilities.

1.4 Gentlecare Statement of Purpose

Part of the policy documentation that we are legally obliged to have in place is a 'Statement of Purpose'. This 'Statement of Purpose' is a summary of our organisation and services. This includes our aims and objectives (see 1.1 above), the names and qualifications of our registered manager, the competencies of our care workers, the types of services that we offer (see 1.3

above) and details of our complaints procedure (see section 5 of this service user guide).

Wherever any part of the Statement of Purpose changes, we ensure that all circulating copies of the Statement of Purpose are updated within 28 days of that change.

Naturally, there is more to our service provision than a few pages stating our purpose, therefore, our Statement of Purpose should be read and applied in conjunction with our wider policies, procedures, practices and protocols. If you wish to view the full version of this document, please ask a member of staff at our office (see contact details – part 5).

1.5 The Care Process

Referral

Unless you have made a private arrangement for care services with Gentlecare, your case will normally be referred to us by a social worker or other member of the Social Services Department at your local authority. If you are being discharged from a stay in hospital, the hospital's Social Work department may make the referral to us.

Needs Assessment

As part of the preparation for your service, a Needs Assessment will be undertaken to ensure that the care plan that is designed matches your particular requirements. The assessment will be undertaken by a social Worker unless you are purchasing your service privately from GentleCare (in which case our qualified field supervisors will visit to discuss your needs).

Your Service User Plan

A Care Plan, or Service User Plan, is the key document for your care. The Care Plan determines the type of service you will receive based on the Needs Assessment. Care planning is continuously reviewed because people's needs change, sometimes on a daily basis, and we have to respond to these changes

to make sure that we are delivering the right care. We will always seek your opinions and input when developing the Care Plan, and making changes and amendments to it, to ensure that you are fully satisfied with the care you receive from us.

We also recognise the value in involving your family members, relatives and friends in your Care Plan, and we will always (with your permission) invite your family and friends to participate in the care planning process.

Service User Folder

Following assessment and finalisation of the agreed Care Plan requirements, Gentlecare will prepare an individual Client Folder to be kept at your home. The Client Folder will contain the following documentation:

- A copy of the Care Plan.
- The dates and hours of service to be provided, and frequency.
- Risk Assessment & Manual Handling Assessment.
- Copy of client Medication Record Sheet.
- Copy of client Income & Expenditure Record Sheet.
- Copies of the Client Daily Report Sheet.

On a daily basis, the Client Daily Report Sheet will be up-dated by the Care Worker with details of the tasks completed for each visit together with any further observations. In addition, if the Care Worker administers medication or carries out a shopping call for you, Record Sheets will be completed as appropriate.

As we start to work for you, we will be generating records of visits and tasks performed on a daily basis. You have the right to have access to these Care Plans and records at any time. Please understand that your Care or Support Worker will need to notify our office of any changes in your condition, or any accidents that you may have had, to ensure that we maintain the best care options for you.

Monitoring & Reviews

We understand that your needs are likely to change over time. In order that your Care Plan is suited to your changing needs, regular reviews of your Care Plan will be made, in consultation with your Social Services department (unless your service is privately purchased). If necessary, and by agreement with all the parties involved, changes may be made to your plan so that the service you receive better meets your requirements.

Furthermore, you will be visited at least twice yearly, once with the carer present and once without to ensure that the services are adequate for you. During at least one of these visits, a risk assessment will be carried out to ensure that the care plan is still adequate.

1.6 Contract Terms & Conditions

If your service has been arranged through Social Services, you will probably have had an assessment to determine whether you must contribute to the cost of your care. If payments are to be made by you, this will be arranged by your Social Worker.

If your care has been organized privately through Gentlecare, you will have signed a contract with us. Your copy of this contract includes the individually agreed rates that you will be charged for the services we provide for you plus detailed information on payment etc. You are urged to read your contract carefully before signing.

1.7 Hours of Business

Gentlecare provides its services twenty-four hours a day, three hundred and sixty-five days a year. Our offices are open between 8.00am and 6.00pm every day, but in an emergency you can contact our out-of-hours coordinator at any time of the day or night (see below).

1.8 Contacting Us

You can contact us through our offices twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week on the telephone number shown on the front cover of this handbook.

Alternatively, you may write to us at the address shown in the back of this handbook.

If you wish to make a complaint about your services or you wish to offer a complaint, please refer to Part 5 of this handbook.

1.9 Insurance

Gentlecare hold the following insurances, which cover us for most accidents, injury to persons and damage to property:

Employer’s Liability Insurance

Insurer: Royal & Sun Alliance
Extent of cover: £10,000,000

Public Liability (Third Party) Insurance

Insurer: Royal & Sun Alliance
Extent of cover: £5,000,000

If any stage you feel that Gentlecare HCS Ltd is responsible for injury to your person or damage to your property, please contact the office to discuss this matter (contact telephone number for office on the cover of this booklet).

Section 2 – About Gentlecare HCS Ltd

2.1 How We Maintain Our Standards

Policies

Every aspect of running and managing our business is set out in a comprehensive set of policy documents. These policies ensure that we meet the statutory requirements for running a domiciliary care support service,

and cover all aspects of staffing, managing, caring for our Service Users, and the preservation of health and safety standards where appropriate. All of our policies are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are kept up-to-date. A complete set of our policies is held in our office and you may consult these at any time upon request.

Our Quality Management System

We have embodied quality in everything we do as an organisation. We define “quality” as delivering a service of care appropriate to each individual Service User’s needs. We have a comprehensive Quality Auditing System, which requires all of our policies and work practices to be audited at least annually to ensure that we maintain the standards we have set ourselves. Any “non-conforming” areas are corrected and reviewed for any other action that we may need to take to ensure that the problem is not repeated in the future.

As part of our quality system, we must frequently monitor and assess the services we provide. From time to time we may visit or telephone you to discuss the service you are receiving. Furthermore, each year we conduct a ‘customer satisfaction survey’ to gauge how well you are receiving our services. We thank you in advance for your help in providing this information to us and hope that you understand that checking on our services is an essential part of our work.

External Inspections

In addition to our own internal audits we also receive regular inspections from the local offices of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) to ensure that we are operating, as we should. Copies of any announced or unannounced inspection reports will be available to you upon request.

Section 3 – Further Information You Need To Know

3.1 Confidentiality

In the course of their duties staff of Gentle Care HCS will be privy to confidential information concerning clients' private affairs:

It is a condition of employment within Gentle Care HCS that such information shall not be disclosed to any unauthorised third party without the express consent of the client, or if the client is unable to judge, the client's immediate family or advocate.

Confidential information will not be sought from a client unless expressly in the interest of that client, i.e. to enable a better Care Plan to be developed.

The client shall be kept informed at all times of the outcome of confidential discussions by the Care Staff concerning them.

It is the Policy at Gentle Care HCS that the client has the right of access to their personal records at any time.

Care staff will always consult their immediate supervisor or manager if they are unclear with respect to any item concerning confidentiality, or when made privy to confidential information that may have legal and / or criminal connotations.

Please note that in order to comply fully with the Care Standards Act, our records may be inspected by a member of the Commission for Social Care Inspection. The law permits the CSCI to examine confidential records, but please be assured that the information contained within them will never be passed on by Gentlecare or the CSCI for any purposes other than the requirements of the Act. In addition, under the Data Protection Act 1998 you may request to access any information we hold on you.

Any breaches of this Policy will be dealt with under an established and documented Disciplinary Procedure.

A breach of confidentiality is considered to be gross misconduct. The penalty for gross misconduct will be summary dismissal (without notice), but exceptionally a Disciplining Manager may recognise that there have

been strong mitigating circumstances and the issue of a final written warning would be more appropriate.

If you feel at any time that your confidentiality may have been breached, we encourage you to pursue a complaint according to our normal complaints procedure as described in Section 5 of this booklet.

As we respect your privacy and confidentiality, we ask that you too respect the confidentiality and privacy of our staff.

3.2 Client's Charter

It is important that you are aware of the company's clients' charter, which follows the United Kingdom Home Care Association's (UKHCA) clients' code of practice and is stated in full below:

You have a right to expect that:

- ◆ Your dignity as a human being will be respected.
- ◆ You can decide exactly what type of service you receive and you will have a full say in decisions over the provision, extent and timing of any care planned.
- ◆ You will be asked by the Care Manager for any comments or suggestions to improve the Care Service, to be actively involved in the review of their individual Care Plans, and to have these suggestions reviewed by the management of the Organisation and acted upon where possible
- ◆ Your care plan will be reviewed regularly
- ◆ You have the right to say who, and whom you will not, have in your home. We will not insist on you having a care worker with whom you are unhappy.
- ◆ You will be given full information about how our services operate, about the costs involved and exactly what those costs cover.
- ◆ All information about you will be kept confidential. If we need to speak to a third party, such as your doctor or district nurse about you, we will ask your permission before doing so, except in an emergency

or crisis. All information maintained by us about you will be made available to you on request.

- ◆ You have the right to complain about our service without fear of any intimidation, recrimination or reprisals. We have a detailed procedure to deal with complaints and you are entitled to, and should have received, a copy of this.
- ◆ You will not be the subject of discrimination on any grounds such as race, colour, language or religion.
- ◆ Care workers introduced by us will act in such a way as to promote and safeguard your well-being and safety and will abide by the requirements of the clients' charter to ensure your rights are respected.
- ◆ Care workers will act with honesty and integrity and will respect your property and your home.

3.3 Advocacy

Gentlecare makes every effort to be as helpful to you as possible so that you fully understand how your services are provided and feel that you can approach us to discuss your service at any time. We do realize, though, that some people may have difficulty communicating or may be confused, bewildered or overawed by the services they are receiving and the processes surrounding the provision of care. If you feel this way, you may benefit from the use of an advocate.

An advocate (or advocacy service) is a person with an understanding of your services that can represent you voluntarily or professionally in any communications with Gentlecare, or indeed with your local authority, your social worker or any other body or person.

There are many different sorts of advocacy service available. If you feel that you would benefit from an advocate, contact your local Gentlecare office on the number shown on the front of this booklet and we will be able to put you in touch with an advocacy scheme.

3.4 Service Users Responsibilities

As a Service User you must undertake not to do any act or omission which will put, or is likely to have the effect of putting Gentlecare directly or indirectly in breach of any of the Employment Protection and Other Relevant Laws (as defined below) in respect of any Worker supplied to you by Gentle Care, and you will at all times use your best endeavours to ensure that such laws are complied with.

As a Service user it is your responsibility to notify Gentle Care of any risks to the health and safety of the Worker of which you become aware and agree that Gentle Care may notify the Worker accordingly. Further, you undertake that you will take all reasonable measures to ensure that such risks are removed.

In addition, it is your responsibility to provide us with any information necessary to monitor and manage health and safety to you and others working with you. You may be required to answer questions about your health or your home to provide us with information on these matters.

3.5 Gentlecare Responsibilities

In respect of the Services, Gentlecare: -

- shall ensure that the Worker has the relevant qualifications, authorisations, training, experience and ability for the assignment for which he/she is supplied; and
- shall ensure that the Worker engaged in the provision of the Services holds adequate professional indemnity insurance cover; and
- warrants that the Services will be carried out and performed with reasonable skill and care.
- shall carry out health and safety assessments to monitor and manage health and safety risks.

All warranties, conditions or other terms implied by statute or common law are excluded to the fullest extent permitted by law. Except in relation to death or personal injury caused by the negligence of Gentle Care and/or its Workers, Gentlecare excludes any liability (whether direct or indirect, contingent or consequential including, without limitation, loss of goodwill, profit, contracts, business opportunity or revenue) for any costs, claims, damages, demands or expenses in connection with the Services provided.

3.6 Care at Night

Where agreed, we can offer you a flexible service in respect of caring for you at night or through the night:

- Night duty – awake - this service is for Service Users who require frequent attention during the night.
- Night duty – sleeping – this service ensures that the Service User is not left alone during the night. We do require that a bed be provided for the Care or Support Worker, who will expect to sleep.

3.7 Cover for Staff Absence

Inevitably, there are times when a care worker cannot attend work due to illness or other personal circumstances or because they have taken annual leave. In such circumstances we will always ensure that a suitable replacement worker is sent to you.

If, for any reason, your care worker fails to arrive at your home when you expect them to, we urge you to contact the office straight away so that the matter can be investigated and resolved (see ‘Contacts’ section at the back of this booklet).

3.8 Harassment & Abuse

You and our staff have the right not to be subjected to abuse or harassment, whether physical, verbal, sexual, financial, psychological, racial or sectarian. If you feel that a member of our staff has subjected you to harassment or abuse, you are urged to pursue the matter by making a complaint (see section 5 of this booklet).

Our staff are trained to recognise signs of abuse against Service Users and will always report any suspicions to a manager at the local office. We will never take a report of suspected abuse any further without your knowledge.

3.9 Domestic & Home Help Services

If it has been agreed as part of your care plan, your Care or Support Worker will be willing to undertake light domestic tasks such as vacuuming, dusting and general cleaning, washing up, and personal laundry. The Care or Support Worker can also help with managing other tasks around your home, subject to certain restrictions which will have been discussed with you when your Care Plan was drawn up.

3.10 Dress

Gentlecare's workers do not wear uniforms, but they are expected to dress in a manner appropriate to the tasks they carry out. Care or Support Workers are instructed to wear flat-soled shoes and clean, non-restricting clothes. If you feel that your Care or Support Worker is inappropriately dressed, call the number on the front of this booklet and let us know.

3.11 Gifts & Gratuities

Our job is to ensure that you are looked after to the best possible standards and that you receive the best possible care. We are rewarded enough when we receive compliments from our Service Users. There is no need to offer any gifts, tips or gratuities; indeed we are unable to accept them. Your understanding in this matter is appreciated.

3.12 Handling Monies, Pensions & Financial Matters

Gentlecare encourage Service Users to manage their own financial affairs unless prevented from doing so by incapacity or disability. However, it is recognized that some handling of Service Users financial matters may be unavoidable if care duties involve assistance with shopping or pension collection. However, there are strict procedures, which must be followed.

All handling of monies must be accounted for in writing. A record for Income & Expenditure (found in your Service User Folder in your home. See 1.5) must be completed in which all transactions involving the handling of client's monies are recorded. Both the Service User and the Care or Support Worker must sign and date the entry. If you are unable to sign, the record, must be completed by a relative or representative on your behalf.

All purchases made for Service Users', made with monies given directly by you or issued from the office will be covered by appropriate receipts as proof of purchase.

3.13 Identity Cards

All our care support staff are issued with identity cards to protect you from bogus callers. If a person that you do not recognise calls at your home claiming to be from Gentlecare, **DO NOT ALLOW THEM IN WITHOUT CHECKING THEIR ID**. If necessary, call the telephone number on the front of this booklet to check that the person calling is genuine.

If you are particularly nervous about answering your door, it might help to agree a special password that your Care or Support workers can use to reassure you that it is them at the door and not a bogus caller. If you agree such a password (or even a special coded knock on a door or window), be sure to let us at the office know in case we need to send a replacement worker when your usual worker is ill or on holiday.

3.14 Keys

If you are unable to answer the door to your Care or Support Worker because of restricted mobility, it may be necessary for Gentlecare to hold a key or keys to your property so that your Care or Support Worker can get in.

If keys are to be handed over to Gentlecare in this way, you will need to complete Key Record form to protect your security. The office can discuss this with you if necessary.

Please also see the section on ‘Proscribed Duties’ (3.15).

3.15 Personal Care

Your Care or Support Worker will be able to undertake personal care services such as helping you to get up in the morning, washing, dressing, going to the toilet, bed-making, helping you to go to bed at night, etc. The Care or Support Worker can also help you to take any medicines that have been prescribed for you by your doctor, subject to certain limitations, which will be explained to you.

3.16 Personal Services

If it has been agreed as part of your care plan, your Care or Support Worker can help you with personal tasks such as preparing shopping lists and doing the shopping for you, managing personal affairs such as birthdays and other anniversaries, and with your permission can collect your pension for you. Your exact needs will have been identified when your Care Plan was developed.

3.17 Preparation of Meals & Snacks

If agreed in the care plan, your Care or Support Worker will prepare your breakfast, your mid-day meal, evening meal or supper, and any other snacks and drinks that you may need during the day. The Care or Support Worker will be able to sit with you for conversation or companionship while you have your meals.

3.18 Pets

Subject to agreement, your Care or Support Worker will be able to feed your pet if needed (please see Part 4 of this booklet).

3.19 Proscribed duties

Our Care or Support Workers are forbidden from performing certain tasks for various reasons. Care or Support Workers are **NOT** permitted to:

- Administer medication to you. They may hand you your medication, but you must take it yourself. A full copy of our medication policy is available on request from our office.
- Become actively involved in medical/nursing care. They may assist you if you perform your own nursing tasks, but they are not trained nurses and cannot undertake nursing tasks.
- Accept keys to your home without the knowledge of the local office. Certain forms must be completed if keys are held. In order to protect you, we need to keep track of any keys held by Care or Support Workers.
- Accept or hold your money, except in accordance with our policy on Handling Service Users' Money and Property (a full copy of this is available upon request from the office). Care or Support Workers should not take your money for an exceeded period of time.
- Borrow money or lend you money.
- Take any responsibility for looking after your valuables.
- Sell or otherwise dispose of your belongings.

- Become involved in syndicates (such as the lottery or football pools) with you.
- Accept food from you which they would normally provide for themselves (i.e. meals). Furthermore, your care or support worker should not eat their own food in your home without your permission.
- Undertake cleaning duties outside those specified in your Care Plan.
- Smoke or consume alcohol while in your home, even if invited to do so by you. Please do not ask your Care or Support Worker to join you for a drink or cigarette. If you think your Care or Support Worker has been drinking or using drugs, please contact us on the office number on the front of this booklet.
- Bring other members of their family, e.g. children, or any other unauthorised person into your home.
- Bring pets into your home.
- Accept gifts of any value from you, including money. This does not include the normal hospitality of a cup of tea, etc, if you choose to offer it.
- Accept any direct payment from you, including money. This does not include the normal hospitality of a cup of tea, etc, if you choose to offer it.
- Sell you any personal goods or services.
- Make use of your property, e.g. the telephone, for their personal use.

- Carry out their duties in an unoccupied house. If you are absent when the Care or Support Worker calls, and assuming that they have a key, then they must report this immediately to the office.
- Discuss the personal affairs of other Gentlecare Service Users with you.
- Become involved in writing or witnessing your will or any other legal document or become a beneficiary of your will.

3.20 Withdrawal of Service

Gentlecare recognises and defends your right to live your life in the way you see fit. However, we do expect that you will afford your Care or Support Worker the same respect that they afford you. It is very unusual that we have to withdraw services and we strongly believe that it is always preferable to find ways of controlling or managing such challenges to the service. However, sometimes, under certain extreme circumstances, we may be forced to withdraw your service if:

- The health and/or safety of a care worker is jeopardized. Such risks may include:
 - Physical violence towards a care worker.
 - Threats of physical violence towards a care worker.
 - Repeated or unreasonable verbal abuse towards a Care or Support Worker.
 - Sexual, racial or other harassment towards a care worker.
 - The presence of aggressive or dangerous animals.
 - Infestation or dangerously poor hygiene in your home.
- You continually fail to permit access to your home.
- Continual accusations of theft, abuse, or other misconduct are made which are proven unwarranted.

- You do not meet your financial commitments to Gentlecare HCS Ltd (if you have any).

Be assured that we will not withdraw your service until:

- All concerned parties (e.g. Social Workers, Care Managers, family members) have been consulted and all other reasonable avenues of resolution have been explored and exhausted (and records made of this).
- The terms of any contract under which the withdrawal is being considered have been examined and taken into account.
- The exclusion from Service has been agreed by the Gentlecare Operations Director.

Section 4 – Health & Safety

4.1 Working with you to make your home a safer place

We ensure the health and safety of our staff so they are not injured or made ill by the things we do or do not do. We also ensure that you are not harmed by anything our staff do or not do.

We and other employers do this by carrying out risk assessments. This means that we examine everything our staff do, and assess whether any party could be harmed. Where there is a chance that someone could be

harmed, we work out ways to prevent that happening, and then run checks to make sure our preventive measures are working. To do these risk assessments properly, we (and your Care or Support Worker) will need to ask questions that you might think are unnecessary. We promise you that we will not ask questions unless we need to. In theory, we could simply assume the worst in all situations, but that would make our service more expensive, less efficient, and rather “unfriendly”.

Please bear with us when we ask questions. If you think we’ve gone too far, you are welcome to discuss this with the Branch Manager at our office.

Please be aware that we have instructed our staff to tell us if they consider that anything in your home or in their work is dangerous. We cannot be everywhere, so we rely on our staff to tell us when greater or different safety precautions are needed.

4.2 Health & Safety Information for Service Users

Gentlecare Home Care Services recognizes its health and safety duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HASAWA). Because we are working with you, and in your home, there are things we must ask you to do to protect your own and your Care or Support Worker’s health and safety. If you, or your relative(s) or representative would like to discuss these in more detail, the office manager will be happy to assist.

Abuse

If you ever feel that you are being abused physically, verbally, psychologically, sexually or financially (this includes bullying) or because of your race, religion or sexual orientation by your Care or Support Worker or anyone else, you are encouraged to contact your local office. Any information you supply will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Accidents

If you have an accident while our staff are with you, we will need to investigate it and learn lessons. We will share those lessons with you, your relative(s) or your representative. We would be grateful if you would tell us about any other accidents you have. Accidents are often warning signs and so we might have to alter or increase the care we provide to you.

Bathing

Because it can be difficult to tell how hot the bath is, we would encourage you to purchase an anti-scald plug to protect you from extremely painful and possibly fatal injury. Your Care or Support Worker can help you obtain a plug. Finally, while your Care or Support Worker will respect your privacy, he or she may need to check that you are still well: if they do need to look in on you, we will discuss it with you first.

Carbon Monoxide

Carbon Monoxide is a poisonous gas which is produced when fires or boilers do not get enough air, or when the exhaust gases go back into a room. We would ask you to ensure all your rooms have enough fresh air, and never block up a vent. We would also advise you that we have instructed our staff to neither work nor sleep in a room with an inadequately ventilated fire or similar appliance.

If your gas appliance is old and has not been serviced or checked by a competent engineer we would advise that you fit a carbon monoxide detector complying with British Standard BS 7860. Please be advised, though, that these detectors are only warning devices and are not totally reliable – it would be safer to have your appliances properly serviced.

Boilers, heating systems and appliances should be installed and regularly serviced by a CORGI registered gas fitter, and chimneys and flues need to be regularly swept if they are to be reliable.

Chemicals

If you would like us to buy cleaning chemicals on your behalf, we will work out a list of your preferences. We will also ask if you are allergic to any chemicals (such as biological washing powder) so that we do not inadvertently harm you.

Unless you never have children in your home, we would recommend that chemicals are kept locked up or well out of their reach. If you have chemicals with damaged labels or packaging, or which have been put into other containers, or which are simply very old, we would advise that you dispose of them, and ask you to note that we prohibit our staff from using such chemicals.

We have given our staff instructions about using chemicals safely. Sometimes this will involve working with the doors and windows open, or moving pets to another room, turning on noisy extractor fans, etc. We apologise in advance if you are bothered by these necessary precautions.

Clinical Waste

Medication that is out of date or no longer needed must be returned to a pharmacist for disposal: putting medicines in the bin or down the toilet can be dangerous, to people and to the environment. If you are not able to go to a chemist's yourself, your Care or Support Worker will be happy to do this for you

Electric Blankets

When you use your blanket, please be sure you know what type it is, and understand the instructions. For instance, older under-blankets are only for warming up the bed and have to be switched off before you get into bed. This style of blanket has to be kept flat, so you can leave it where it is during the summer (switched off of course) or move it onto a spare bed.

Please be aware that it is dangerous to use an electric blanket if it is wet, creased or rucked-up. It is also dangerous to try to dry an electric blanket by switching it on. Obviously, it would also be dangerous to use a hot water bottle with a blanket that is switched on.

An electric blanket should usually be checked by an expert every three years. Local councils often offer this service in winter:

We would advise that you have your blanket checked or replaced if:

- it is over 10 years old;
- it displays the old BEAB safety mark;
- there are scorch marks anywhere;
- it should have tie tapes, but they are missing or damaged;
- the flex is worn or damaged;
- any connections are loose; or
- you are in any doubt.

If you do decide to buy a new electric blanket, we would advise that you make sure (1) it is new, and not second-hand; (2) it has a CE Mark; and (3) it has a feature to prevent overheating.

Electricity

If you notice any of the following danger signs, we would recommend that you ask a qualified electrician to check your wiring:

- hot plugs and sockets;
- fuses that blow for no obvious reason;
- flickering lights;
- brown scorch marks on sockets and plugs.

Frayed flexes, or flexes where the thick insulation does not go right inside the appliance (or plug) are also dangerous and should be repaired.

Our staff have been instructed not to use faulty electrical appliances and for your own safety and convenience, you should dispose of or repair such items. Staff have also been instructed to use a power breaker when using electrical appliances in your home. This device protects the care worker from electrical faults.

We would recommend that you should always use the correct fuse for an appliance, and should remove plugs that are not being used at night (except those that are in use).

Please be advised that it is dangerous to: overload sockets; allow electric light bulbs to touch anything that can burn easily; join flexes or cables together without using an approved adapter or connector. Finally we recommend that you should keep flexes away from the cooker and edges of work surfaces, to protect them from damage.

Food Preparation

If we buy or prepare food for you, we would not want to give you something you do not like or cannot eat, so we will ask you about your preferences, food allergies and dietary restrictions.

From time to time, our staff may ask to through your cupboards as we have instructed them to check for foodstuffs that might be out of date and no longer safe to eat.

Gloves and Aprons

Please do not be offended if your Care or Support Worker seems to wear rubber gloves and aprons. We have instructed our staff to wear this basic protective equipment for a range of circumstances. Sometimes it is to protect them from medicines or cleaning chemicals, sometimes to protect them from having chemicals or just water soak through their clothes, sometimes so that whatever they are handling remains absolutely clean. We appreciate that it can look rather clinical, but it does help to protect you too and saves a lot of fuss.

Illness

So that we can provide you with appropriate care, we would be grateful if you would tell us when you are or have recently been unwell – even if you think it is due to the side-effects of medication.

Lifting and Handling

If we are required to assist with your transfers, we will carry out a lifting and handling risk assessment. Please understand that this may involve a lot of questions and discussion, but it is important as Care or Support Workers can be badly injured in these tasks.

If you have purchased your own hoist, we would advise that you have them regularly inspected by the manufacturer. We would ask that you keep the instructions and fault reporting procedures to hand so that our staff may consult them.

Medication

We would be grateful if you would tell us as much as you can when we ask you about your medications. We need to know why you are taking the medications, how they are to be stored, how often they are to be taken, daily dosage and details of the person prescribing your medication. Without this information, we will not be able to provide the best care, and might not take the right action in an emergency.

Please be aware that our staff are not permitted to advise you on what remedies or tablets to take, and that any changes to your medication must be recorded in your care plan.

Pets

We will ask you about pets because some of our Care or Support Workers may have allergies or phobias. We would ask you to ensure that your pet has regular visits to the vet to ensure that it remains reasonably healthy, that it keeps off the kitchen work-surfaces and that it does not cause problems for our staff. We would advise that we may ask you to arrange for your pet to be removed (perhaps taken for a walk, or just placed in another room) while our Care or Support Worker is at work.

Section 5– Making Your Views & Comments About The Service

5.1 Your Opinions on the Service We Provide

We value your views and opinions on the service that Gentlecare HCS Ltd provide. We firmly believe that only by asking the users of our services can we obtain the information that we need to enable us to continually improve our services. Part of our on-going commitment to quality is to ask you to complete a simple annual questionnaire about your views of the service. We do however welcome comments from you at any time.

5.2 Compliments

Compliments are always gratefully received; we see them as a measure for us reaching our standards. Staff who receive high ratings in annual appraisals are rewarded for performing especially well and your compliments, especially those submitted in writing will influence these ratings.

Please find a Gentlecare compliment on page 35 of this booklet.

5.3 Complaints

A complaint is anything that involves dissatisfaction with the service you are receiving. It may be about how a member of staff has dealt with you or about the quality or dependability of the service.

Unfortunately, we don't get things right all the time, and we need you to tell us when we fall short of expected standards. If you have a complaint please speak to your Care or Support Worker. If the problem cannot be solved to your satisfaction please telephone our office (please see telephone number at the front of this booklet). If you would like someone to assist you in the making of your complaint, you can ask the person dealing with it for this to happen or elect someone of your choosing.

All complaints will be taken seriously and be properly investigated with a right of appeal/review.

OVERVIEW OF GENTLECARES COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

How Complaints Can Be Made

A complaint can be made in person, by telephone or in writing. Please find Gentlecares complaint form on page 34 of this booklet.

Does a complaint need to be in writing?

It is best if you complain in writing as this enables the member of staff dealing with the complaint to address it properly. If you are unable to write down your complaint, you may ask someone else to - a relative or friend for example. Alternatively you can phone the Care Coordinator of Gentlecare Home Care Services and they will note the complaint.

Can I get help?

If you want someone to assist you in the making of your complaint, you can ask the person dealing with it for this to happen or elect someone of your choosing.

What Our Staff Will Do When A Complaint Is Made

On receipt of a complaint office staff will:

- give the complainant their name
- accept the complainant's right to complain
- listen to what the customer has to say
- be calm and polite – arguing will only make matters worse
- acknowledge the complainant's point of view
- establish what outcome they are seeking from the complaint
- not make any promises which can't be kept
- refer to the office manager if they are uncertain how to deal with the complaint

All complaints received will then be logged in the complaints register along with the outcome if it has been resolved.

The Investigation Process

If the complaint has not been resolved the office will take it up and investigate. Investigation of the complaint will commence within 5 working days. The investigation may include:

- an on-site visit (where appropriate)
- examination of records and files
- interviews with staff concerned with the case
- review of policies and procedures
- contact with the customer

All complaints will be dealt with as quickly as possible. In the event of a formal complaint being made it is Gentle Care's intention to acknowledge the complaint in writing within 48 hours of receipt and to investigate and respond within a further five working days. There may however be unforeseeable delays may occur in which case acknowledgement and investigation will take place as soon as possible. This target will apply to each stage of the formal procedure.

Please be reassured that the receipt of a complaint will never jeopardize the service you receive.

The contact details for Gentlecare HCS Ltd office are as follows:

Gentlecare HCS Ltd
1st Floor
Aspect Gate
College Road
Harrow

Middlesex
HA1 1BH

Tel: 020 427 5855

The services we provide and the work we carry out is monitored and overseen by the Commission for Social Care Inspection. Should you have a complaint, compliment or query we would encourage you in the first instance to take the matter up with our office (contact details above). Otherwise, you may contact your local branch of the Commission for Social Care Inspection at the following address:

Commission for Social Care Inspection
Harrow Office
4th Floor Aspect Gate
166 College Road
Harrow
London
HA1 1BH

Tel: 020 8420 0100

For details of how to contact your local Social Services department or your local Health Authority, please contact our office as above for information.

For general advice and information on home care services, you may also wish to contact the GSCC (General Social Care Council) on 020 7397 5800 (Monday to Friday).

Complaint No.

GENTLECARE
COMPLAINT FORM

Name:

Address:

Telephone No.

Date

My complaint is: (please provide as much detail as possible i.e. what occurred, dates and times, where it happened, who was involved.)

(Continue over the page if necessary)

This complaint has already been dealt with informally Yes No
If Yes by: Name..... Date:.....
(Please provide details)

Date received

Date acknowledged (must be within 48hrs)

Date investigation commenced (must be within 5 working days)

Please complete this form and send it to:

The Care Coordinator

GentleCare Home Care Service

1st Floor, Aspect Gate, 166 College Road, Harrow, HA1 1BH

Copy to complaints file?

Client file?

GENTLECARE
COMPLIMENTS FORM

Name:

Address:

Telephone No.

My compliment is (dates and times, where it happened, who was involved.)

(Continue over the page if necessary)

Any action necessary?

Please complete this form and send it to:

The Care Coordinator

GentleCare Home Care Service

1st Floor, Aspect Gate, 166 College Road, Harrow, HA1 1BH

Copy to Complaints file?

Client file?