



freedom care
raising the standard of care - improving quality of life

Visitors Policy & Procedure

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Record reviews and any relevant changes or amendments and reasons in the box below:

Date	Version	Changes Made/Reason for Changes

Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy and procedure is to enable flexibility to people visiting our services whilst ensuring the dignity, privacy and safety of our service users is maintained at all times
- 1.2 To ensure that there are systems in place to manage the safety of visitors and residents
- 1.3 To offer guidance for staff in relation to potentially hostile behaviour from visitors
- 1.4 To support service users to have choice and control over who visits them and offer staff guidance on how to manage situations where visitors are on the premises but the service user does not wish to see them
- 1.5 To offer all visitors the relevant information regarding their visit and outline their responsibilities in relation to their own and others health and safety

Statement

Freedom Care recognises and values the important role family members, carers and friends play in our service users lives. We want them to feel welcomed and embraced by Freedom Care and its staff at times which are convenient to them and the service user they are visiting. Family members will be given access codes (where relevant) to enable them to come and go freely from the service. We will not operate any schedules relating to visiting times but would ask that visitors are sensitive to the needs of others within the service and do not visit during the night or at unreasonably early times unless this has been arranged with the Manager of the care home. With the individual service user's consent, we want family members to be involved in planning their care and welcome their feedback, both positive and negative. Where relevant we aim to support family members and consider this to be an integral part of our service. Freedom Care are aware that there will be other visitors to the service to include visiting professionals, contractors, waste collection companies and other stakeholders. We want all visitors to the service to have a positive experience, to feel welcomed and to understand how to maintain their own and others safety. All visitors to any of our sites are entering our service users home and, as such, the needs and wishes of our service users will always remain paramount. Freedom Care will always respect any decision made by a service user to not meet with their visitor and will try to manage this with the visiting individual as sensitively as possible. Visitors to the service should also recognise that sometimes, our service users can behave in a manner which they may find upsetting, this can include verbal and physical aggression. There may be times where visitors have to use alternative entrances/exits to the building to maintain their own safety or where a visit has to change location to ensure the safety of the visitor(s) and the safety and/or dignity of our service users. This Policy should be read in conjunction with Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and Safeguarding Children Policy & Procedure.

Changes in current legislation and/or social policy may require this Policy & procedure to be reviewed.

Policy

- 2.1 This Visitors Policy is intended to ensure that all visitors to the building understand their own responsibilities on our premises and to ensure that visitors, staff, service users and other individuals safety, privacy and dignity are maintained at all times
- 2.2 The Policy will offer information about times of visiting, access to areas within the building, fire safety, protection of vulnerable adults and information about comments and complaints
- 2.3 The Policy & Procedure will be readily available for staff in both electronic and hard copy

Procedure

3. Visiting Times

- 3.1 Visiting Professionals, contractors, hygiene/waste management and other visitors will be expected to make arrangements with Managers or staff within the care home and to visit during daytime hours (0800-1800) to minimise disruption to our service users. There may be occasions these arrangements are amended as dictated by the needs of the service - any arrangements outside of these visiting times will be authorised by the Registered Manager
- 3.2 In the event of an emergency (i.e. boiler breakdown) visitors will be enabled to go to the site outside of the usual hours outlined above. This will be arranged by the Manager, Maintenance Manager or their delegate and the usual procedure for visitors will be followed
- 3.3 Family members, carers and friends can visit without prior notice to Freedom Care Staff at reasonable times during the day and evening - consideration must be given to the impact on other residents and where it is felt that the visit is detrimentally impacting on another service user within the home the visit may need to be moved to another area of the building or a different location
- 3.4 If there is a necessity for a family member, carer or friend to visit during the night or very early in the morning, arrangements should be made with the Registered Manager or their delegate

4. Expectations of Visitors

- 4.1 All visitors should behave in a respectful manner towards all service users and staff during their visit
- 4.2 Visitors should listen to staff advice and guidance whilst they are on the premises to ensure their own safety
- 4.3 All visitors will be expected to sign in and out of the visitors book, this is essential in relation to staff monitoring who is inside the building and in the event of a fire to enable staff to safely evacuate all people in the building
- 4.4 All visitors should familiarise themselves with the information in the reception area relating to evacuation in the event of a fire, toilets/hand washing facilities, challenging behaviour etc.

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4.5 All visitors should respect the confidentiality of the service users who reside in our care homes

4.6 Any visitor who behaves in a threatening or offensive manner towards any staff member or service user will be asked to leave the premises and any actual violence will result in the Police being called

5. Identification

5.1 Visitors to the service who are admitted by staff will be asked for their identification before being given access to the home and service users

5.2 All visiting professionals should have photographic identification available. This should be checked by the staff member allowing them access who should feel satisfied that the professional is able to access the building

5.3 If the visiting professional does not have ID, they will be asked to provide an office contact number to enable the staff member to ring and confirm that they are a legitimate professional visitor. Mobile numbers will not be an acceptable form of verification.

5.4 If the staff member cannot confirm the identity of the visitor, they should contact their Manager to discuss this with them. The Manager may delay or refuse entry to the premises until the individual's identity can be confirmed. Visiting professionals should not feel offended by these actions as this is to ensure that our service users are safeguarded and protected

5.5 If the visiting professional states that they are from the CQC, they should be asked to show their 'Warrant Card'. There have been 'bogus' CQC inspectors who have visited Care Homes and had access to confidential data and information. It is critical that staff check both sides of the Warrant Card which should have a photograph on the reverse of the visiting officer and be signed by either the current Chief Executive of CQC David Behan or the previous Chief Executive Cynthia Bower. If the card is signed by Annie Walker (Chief Executive prior to Cynthia Bower) it is bogus and staff should NOT allow the individual(s) access to the building

5.6 If a staff member is unsure about the warrant card being shown to them by the visitor, they should politely decline entry to the building and seek guidance from their Manager

5.7 Regular or known visitors to the building (such as family members, advocates, named social workers etc.) do not need to produce ID if they are allowed access by a familiar staff member

5.8 Family members, carers who visit and have access without staff assistance will not need to show ID as they enter the building

5.9 All visitors, including family members and carers, should be prepared to show identification if asked by a staff member at any time during their visit; this is not intended to offend people but, as we employ a number of staff who may not all recognise the visitor, their paramount concern has to be the safety of our service users

5.10 If staff members see someone unfamiliar in the building who is not escorted by another staff member they should feel comfortable asking them who they are and what they are doing in the building - better to double check and ensure the safety of our service users than feel concerned about offending people and leaving our service users exposed and vulnerable

6. Behaviours

6.1 Due to the nature of the service users we provide care for, visitors should be aware that they may encounter behaviours which are diverse and on occasion, challenging including verbal and physical aggression

6.2 If a visitor is found to be causing or exacerbating anxiety, distress or behaviours in the individual they are visiting, staff members will politely ask them to leave. This will be documented in the daily notes and contact made with the visitor to discuss the visit and potentially re-arrange where appropriate. This also applies to family members, carers and friends

6.3 If there are numerous occasions where the service user is distressed by a specific visitor, the staff member will report this to the Manager who may suspend future visits pending an investigation into the service user's needs and wishes. The Manager will update the visitor accordingly

6.3 If a staff member is concerned about how a visitor is treating a service user they can stop the visit and should then refer to our Safeguarding Policy & procedure

7. Signing in & out/Visitors passes

7.1 All visitors will be required to sign into the visitors book -this will ensure we know who is in the building should there be an evacuation and enables staff to monitor who is on the premises

7.2 All visitors will be issued with a visitors pass which they will be expected to wear throughout the duration of their visit, this will make them easily identifiable meaning staff will be aware they are a legitimate visitor to the premises

7.3 The visitors pass should be handed back in at the end of the visit and the visitor should sign out of the visitors book giving the time they left the premises

8. Access

8.1 Visitors will have access to communal areas of the building and, with the consent of the service user, their individual bedroom/apartment

8.2 Visitors will not have access to service users bedrooms who they are not visiting or the main staff office without express permission

8.3 If any service users are experiencing a difficult time and demonstrating behaviours to include verbal or physical aggression, it may be necessary for staff to divert the visitors away from specific areas of the building. Staff will advise the visitor that this is to ensure their own safety and to protect the privacy and dignity of the service user

8.4 If the presence of a visitor in a communal area of the home is causing distress for another service user whom they are not visiting, staff may move them to another location in the building

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8.4 Service users have the right to refuse to see a visitor, including family members and this will always be respected by staff. Staff will speak to the visitor, being sensitive if this is a family member or carer, and advise them that the individual is not able to see them at this time. Where appropriate they will try to arrange a further visits for a different date/time

9. Smoking

9.1 Visitors should be asked to smoke in the designated smoking area to the exterior of the building

9.2 If visitors are smoking in areas other than the designated smoking area, staff will show them to this area or politely ask them to extinguish their cigarette

9.3 E cigarettes can be smoked in the designated smoking area and in other outdoor spaces but should not be smoked inside the building

10. Infection Control

10.1 All visitors will read the information on entry to the building which informs them where handwashing facilities are located

10.2 If required staff will make antibacterial hand gel available for visitors

10.3 In the event of an outbreak of infectious disease within the care home, there may be temporary restrictions put in place around visiting arrangements to reduce the risk of exposure and spread of infection

11. Fire Safety

11.1 All visitors will read the information on entry to the building which advises them about evacuation routes and assembly points

11.2 In the event of evacuation, staff will ascertain that all people are present including visitors from the information in the visitors book

10.3 Staff or the Fire Service will advise visitors when it is safe to re enter the building

12. Children

12.1 If children are visiting the service, they must be accompanied and supervised by a responsible adult at all times

12.2 Visits with children should be arranged in advance with either the Manager or Staff members. Wherever possible, if a visit has been scheduled but it is not appropriate for the child to enter the care home at the specified day/time due to the home being unsettled, staff will contact the responsible adult in advance and arrange an alternative visit

12.2 Staff may refuse entry to visitors with children if they arrive and the home is unsettled or there are behaviours which may present as a risk. This will be done politely and arrangements made for the visit to happen at another time

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12.3 The responsible adult accompanying the child will remain responsible for their behaviour and safety throughout the duration of their visit. Staff are not able to look after children in the service due to the nature and demands of their job. Any requests for staff to look after children will be politely declined

12.4 If staff have any concerns about the wellbeing of a child or witness treatment which causes them to be concerned, they should follow the Safeguarding Children Policy & Procedure

13. Contractors

13.1 Contractors will attend the premises via arrangement with either the Maintenance Manager, Registered Manager, Area Manager or Company Director

13.2 Contractors will submit the relevant information for the contractor's file (insurance certificates, health & safety information etc.)

13.3 If working in service user populated areas (communal areas, bedrooms) they will be accompanied at all times

13.4 There is a separate sheet for regular contractors to sign in and out of the building located in the Contractor's file in the Manager's office

14. Comments, Suggestions & Complaints

14.1 All visitors will read the information on entry to the building which informs them about how to make suggestions and/or complaints

14.2 If any visitor wants further information, staff will provide them with the complaints leaflet (suitable for the individual's level of understanding)

14.3 If a visitor wishes to make a complaint, staff will provide them with a complaints form and a complaints leaflet (suitable for the individual's level of understanding)

Appendices

Please see separate document for appendices to this Policy & Procedure