

SD-14

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Communication

Approved by:

[Signature]

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Carriglea Cáirde Services

Procedures Manual

Title: COMMUNICATION

1.0 Scope

1.1 The Services' strategy on communication with all stake-holders

2.0 Aims and Values

2.1 To ensure effective and timely two-way communication between all stakeholders involved in the services – i.e. service users, management, board members, staff, families, regulatory bodies, funders, union representatives and the wider community.

2.2 To ensure that service users have access to information - provided in a format appropriate to their communication needs.

2.3 To improve communications and develop person centred, accessible methods of communication with service users.

2.4 To ensure effective communication between staff regarding matters concerning the well-being of service users.

3.0 Contents

6.0 Policy Statement

7.0 Communication with Service Users

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SD-61 Video Communication and Telehealth
C4-10 Checklist of Nonverbal Pain Indicators
DisDAT (Disability Distress Assessment Tool)
ISBAR Communication Tool
Service User Meeting Form
Staff Communication Book /House Diary
Night Report Book
Community Houses Report Book
File for Staff Notices/Memo's

5.0 Responsibilities

5.1 Management and all staff.

6.0 POLICY STATEMENT:

6.1 All communications should:

- Be relevant, accurate, sensitive and timely
- Enable meaningful engagement with relevant stakeholders
- Ensure that staff/representatives of Carriglea Cáirde Services listen to service users and families/advocates; act on information received when appropriate and provide relevant feedback.
- Reflect the principles of confidentiality, data protection, Freedom of Information and other relevant legislation (*see Policy on Information Governance, Confidentiality, Data Protection and Freedom of Information*)
- Reflect the core values and objectives of Carriglea Cáirde Services.
- Be respectful and courteous at all times.

6.2 All forms of electronic communications, e.g. e-mail must be in accordance with the services policy on *E-mail and the Internet (See HR-09)*.

6.3 All communication via the telephone should be in compliance with the services policy and Procedure on *Answering the Telephone*.

6.4 Carriglea Cáirde Services posts relevant information on its website and also on its face-book page.

6.5 The Board of Directors of the Services has developed a Communication Strategy which is available on Carriglea Cáirde Services website.

7.0 COMMUNICATION WITH SERVICE USERS

7.1 Good communication is a human right and it plays a key role in allowing service users to lead empowered lives. The way in which staff communicate with service users should be inclusive, so that those with communication difficulties are not discriminated against in any way.

7.2 Staff should take the time to explain information to service users – do not assume that your message has been understood. Also, staff must make every effort to interpret what the service user wishes to communicate. When communicating with service users staff should:

- Make good eye contact
- Listen and do not interrupt when a service user is speaking
- Try not to rush the person or tell them to hurry up.

Staff should be satisfied that a service users is giving consent for any care or activities which they are about the support them with before proceeding. See policy on *Capacity and Consent*.

7.3 Staff must ensure to use appropriate language when referring to or speaking with service users – e.g. pet names should not be used unless at the explicit request of

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the service user. Age appropriate and adult language should be used at all times when conversing with service users.

- 7.4 Easy to read material, picture communication systems and other accessible forms of communication should be used in accordance with service users' requirements.
- 7.5 Personal communication books and/or *Service User Daily Report Records* are used on behalf of service users, when appropriate, to communicate between the Services and families or between day and residential services.
- 7.6 Good communication is important in allowing service users to be actively involved in decision making. Service users must be listened to and given an opportunity to make a comment or complaint if they so wish. All staff should ensure that service users feel able to complain without fear of retribution. (*See Comments and Complaints Procedure*).
- 7.7 When discussing personal or private information with a service user the privacy and dignity of the person must be respected by ensuring that others (including other service users) cannot hear the conversation.
- 7.8 When discussing personal or private information regarding a service user with colleagues on a need to know basis, the privacy and dignity of the person must be respected by ensuring that others (including other service users) cannot hear the conversation (e.g. when giving hand-over reports).
- 7.9 Where required, service users are facilitated to access and supported to use assistive technology and/or aids and appliances to promote their capacity to communicate. Various forms of information technology can also be use to communicate remotely. See policy on *Video Communication and Telehealth*.
- 7.10 Any specialist communication needs and methods of communication specific to a service user should be documented in his/her *Person Centred Plan* and made known to all staff who support the person. LAMH or other sign language systems may be used to aid communication with those who have hearing difficulties.
- 7.11 Service users' key worker have an important role in facilitating communication and information sharing (*see policy Key-working*).
- 7.12 Service users who wish to participate, should be supported to attend regular service user meetings in their homes/day service. At these meetings service users' views on all aspects of their lives including activities should be sought, with additional communication supports provided to people with communication challenges. Information should be provided by staff on matters including visitors, new housemates or schedule changes. This forum should also be used to communicate advice on values, rights, HIQA Standards, health and safety and relevant policies e.g. comments and complaints and bullying policies. Notes should be taken at these meetings, recorded on a *Service User Meeting Form* or meeting book and issues highlighted by service users should be actioned as appropriate (*see Policy on Service user Meetings/Provision of Information*).

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- 7.13 Service users should be kept informed of developments/changes in the Services. They should be informed of daily arrangements such as, menus, which staff are rostered on duty, activities, etc. Where appropriate, this information should be displayed daily for service users' information.
- 7.14 Taking the time to ensure effective communication with service users is very important as failure to meet their communication needs can result in behaviours that challenge and failure to meet the overall needs of service users.
- 7.15 Service users with communication difficulties need to be observed for indications of pain or discomfort. The *Checklist of Nonverbal Pain Indicators*, the *DisDAT (Disability Distress Assessment Tool)* and other recognized tools are used to monitor pain or distress when it is suspected that a service users may be suffering pain or distress but not be able communicate their discomfort.
- 7.16 Service users are facilitated to access a telephone and appropriate media such as television, radio newspapers and the internet. See Policy and Procedure for *Service User Access to TV and use of the Internet and Social Media*.
- 7.17 Service Users have an opportunity to give feedback on the quality of the service they receive by completing an annual *Service User Satisfaction Survey*.
- 7.18 The services of a Speech and Language Therapist may be sought to enhance service users' communication skills. However, there is limited availability of such services via the public health system.

8.0 COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF

- 8.1 All policies, procedures and other relevant information in relation to the operation of the services will be communicated to staff.
- 8.2 All new staff are inducted in accordance with the provisions of the *Staff Induction and Probation Policy*.
- 8.3 Carriglea Cáirde Services aims to have good lines of communication with staff representatives – e.g. Union representatives.
- 8.4 Two-way communication between management and staff is crucial to the effective operation of the services. Staff will be communicated with by way of regular team meetings, memorandums (via in house e-mail or hard copy) which should be filed in the *File for Staff Notices* other location agreed by the manager and noted in *Staff Communication Book/House Diary*. In certain circumstances staff members may be communicated with individually via their personal e-mail address.
- 8.5 *Staff Communication Books* are used to inform staff of current information in relation to their area of work. All memorandums and written staff communications, including those sent via e-mail, should be printed, signed and dated by the recipient and kept in date order, (with the most recent to the front), in a *File for Staff Notices*. It is the responsibility of all staff to read any new

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memorandums and the *Staff Communication Book/House Diary* when they come on duty.

- 8.6 In residential houses on campus, there is a *Night Report Book*, which is a duplicate book in which day staff record significant events and give one copy to the person in charge at night. The Senior Services Manager-Clinical Governance Lead has a separate communication book to communicate information between herself and the senior person responsible when she is off duty.
- 8.7 In the community houses, staff report via-mail or verbally daily to the manager who records the information in the *Community House Report Book*.
- 8.8 In certain circumstance, when feasible and appropriate, staff can use Microsoft Teams and other video conferencing facilities to communicate remotely.
- 8.9 Carriglea Cáirde Services welcomes feedback from staff in relation to any aspect of service delivery and welcomes suggestions for ways to improve communication. Suggestions can be given at team meetings or given to any member of the Quality Committee.

9.0 STAFF HANDOVER PROCEDURES

- 9.1 The most senior staff taking up duty between day/night shifts in any house must:
- Read the *Staff Communication Book*
 - Check the *House Diary* for appointments
 - Check the staff rota to ensure sufficient staff are on duty.
 - Receive a verbal report from staff finishing the previous shift (in a place where confidentiality can be maintained) on matters concerning the well-being of the residents and other matters relating to the house.
 - Ensure that any locum/agency staff are familiar with the procedures in place in the house.
- 9.2 Staff handing over at the end of shift should:
- Inform staff taking up duty about any concerns that have been recorded about residents in their *Daily Report Record* and any follow-up action that may be required. See policy and procedure on *Service User Daily Report Records*.
 - Ensure that relevant information is entered in the *Staff Communication Book/House Diary*.

10.0 COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

- 10.1 The staff of Carriglea Cáirde Services work in co-operation with all individual service users' families or other service users representatives in the best interest of the service user.

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- 10.2 Family members or special friends are invited to be involved in service users person centred plans and are informed of significant events relating to the service users' life/activities in accordance with the wishes of the service user.
- 10.3 All families are invited to general information evenings pertaining to developments in the Services twice per year.
- 10.4 Family members are facilitated to participate in a family forum where families can support each-other and discuss issues as a group.
- 10.5 Relatives Satisfaction Surveys are conducted annually and any suggestions or comments made by relatives are noted and used as part of review of the quality of services provided.

11.0 COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

- 11.1 Managers and staff of the Services will communicate with external bodies, within the designated authority of their particular role and responsibility. These bodies include the HSE, HIQA, the independent advocacy service, the Revenue Commissioner, the Pensions Authority, the Local Authority, the National Incident Management Agency, the Housing Agency, the Health & Safety Authority, Waterford Institute of Technology, the Irish Council for Social Housing, the Charities Regulator, the Federation of Voluntary Bodies and other statutory and voluntary services.
- 11.2 Any requests for interviews, statements or information requested by the media in relation to the services must be referred to the Chief Executive or the Chairperson of the Board of Directors. Please refer to the Board of Directors Media policy which is available on the services web-site.
- 11.3 Any article, presentation or photograph in relation to the Services, may not be published externally in any format without the permission of the Chief Executive.
- 11.4 Any photograph of a service user may not be used in any publication without the appropriate consent form being completed.
- 11.5 Staff must always be mindful of the terms of the Freedom of Information Act and the Data Protection Act, in relation to any request from a third party for personal information about a current or former service user or staff member. (*See Policy on Information Governance-Confidentiality, Data Protection and Freedom of Information*).
- 11.6 Staff must always be mindful of the appropriate use of the Services headed notepaper/stationery. Carriglea Cárde Services headed stationery may only be used for official communications in relation to the services.

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- 11.7 Representatives of Carriglea Cáirde Services engage with a wide range of individuals, businesses and sporting organisations in the local community in order to further community integration for people with a disability.
- 11.8 Information is provided to all stakeholders and the public via the Organisation's web-site. This information includes details of the services provided, a history of the Services, Annual Reports, Strategic Plans, Organisation Structure, Freedom of Information, Policies and Procedures documents, information on vacancies and e-tendering. Information is also available on the services face-book page.

12.0 USE OF NOTICE BOARDS

- 12.1 Personal information in relation to service users should not be displayed on notice boards in any area of the Services, except in exceptional circumstances deemed necessary by the manager.
- 12.2 The manager of each area should review the information displayed on notice boards regularly to ensure that information displayed is appropriate and to ensure that out of date information is removed.
- 12.3 The permission of a senior manager must be obtained in order to post any notices which are unrelated to the business of the services on the services notice boards.

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