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1.0	Quality, Compliance & Training Manager	New policy to cover client communication	All in SHS

Table of Content

POLICY

1. DOCUMENT ASSOCIATION:

List of other document/standards/Forms etc. that reference/relate to this procedure.
- *Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) National Quality Standards: Residential Services for People with Disabilities, 2013*
- *Associated HIQA Guidance Documents: Guidance - Communicating in plain English, Adults*
- *Health Act 2007 – S.I. No. 367 of 2013*

- SHS Human Rights Policy RRC Structure

2. ACRONYMS/ ABBREVIATIONS:

Listing of abbreviations used within this document:

SHS	*Sunbeam House Services*
CSM	*Client Services Managers*
DCSM	*Deputy Client Services Manager*
SSM	*Senior Services Managers*
AAC	Augmentative and Alternative Communications
AT	Assistive Technology
SGD	Speech-generating device
PP	Personal Plan

3. POLICY STATEMENT:

Sunbeam House Services (SHS) promote a Total Commuications approach. Total Communications is an approach used to create successful and equal communications between human beings with different langauge perception and/or producion. The use of Total Communications means that SHS is willing to use all means of communicaitons available to an individual (for example non-verbal communications, verbal communications / speech, signing, photographs, symbols, objects, written words, assistive technologies) to understand and be understood. All forms of communication are equally valued and promoted.

SHS support people in ways that are person centred. All staff endeavour to better understand the perferred communicaitons methods of the people they support. Successful communications involves a two way flow of information and requires messages both non-verbal and verbal to be both understood and experssed. It involves working with individual clients, their fmailies and significant others to reduce the impact of these difficulties and increase independance, choice, participation and relationships.

Supporting Total Communications requires that we understand each person's unique way of getting their message across. This can vary from person to person, and can depend on the person's level of spoken language, their eye contact and their body language. It is important that each individual is recognised as having their own particular way of communicating.

Communciation faciliates our client's self-expression so that they can:

- Make choices
- Give consent
- Self-advocate and act independently
- Create and sustain relationships
- Understand and be understood
- Access and give information
- Engage in supported employment
- Experience positive communications

All attempts at communication by our clients should be acknowledged . It is the responsibility of all staff to identify opportunities in the client's everyday life that can maximise and reinforce their attempts at communication.

4. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this document is to set out the Organisation's policy on the use Total Communications. The roles and responsibilities of staff at all levels of the organisation are listed.

5. SCOPE:

Every client's human right to communicate is promoted and facilitated. SHS is committed to supporting our clients to exercise their rights in their daily lives.

Each person has the right to:

- Request desired objects, actions, events and people
- Refuse undesired objects, actions or events
- Express personal perferences and feelings
- Be offered choices and alternatives
- Reject offered choices
- Request and receive another person's attention and interaction
- Ask for and receive information about changes in their routine and environment
- Receive intervention to improve communication skills
- Receive a response to any communication, whether or not the communication partner can fulfil the request
- Have access to recommended AAC (augmentative and alternative communications) and other AT (assistive technology) services and devices at all times
- Have ACC and other AT devices that function properly at all times
- Be in environments that promote communication
- Be spoken to with respect and courtesy
- Be spoken to directly and not be spoken for or talked about in the third person while present
- Have clear, meaningful and culturally and linguistically appropriate communicaitons

The assessment of communication needs of an individual requiring support from Sunbeam House Services should be carried out at time of referral, following this assessment an understanding of the methods of communication and devices required, electronic or otherwise is achieved. A clear plan of action is then developed by the Client Service Manager in order to obtain or train the person being supported and staff in the use of same. Clients communication requirements/needs are to be reviewed continually.

AAC is a term used to describe ways of communication apart from speech. All of us use AAC for example, when we use facial expressions to communicate. For people with language impairments, particular communication methods and systems have been developed either to supplement speech or to provide an alternative to speech. One example is a speech-generating device (SGD).

A speech-generating device (SGD) is an electronic aided communication system for people. It provides voice output and enables a person to use pictures, symbols, words and phrases to create messages.

SHS will support the Total Communicaitons needs of our clients in the following way:

- Provide advice, guidelines and training for staff supporting clients with communication needs.
- Referrals to be made to such services as Speeach & Language where required and in line with current SHS process.
- Every non-verbal client has a communications profile in their Personal Plan (PP). This documents information about their ability to understand, perferred methods of expression, how they react when they do not understand, information about their hearing and vision, perferred topics of conversation and their communication partners.
- Picture, symbol and object communications systems are promoted and encouraged to support communication where appropriate.
- SHS ensure that environments are set up in such as way that all forms of communication are supported and respected.
- SHS facilitates the appropriate use of augmentative and alternative communication methods (signs, symbols, photos, gestures, object cues) for clients who use little or no speech or need other methods to support their speech.
- Clients are given opportunity and assistance to make choices using their own perferred communications methods.
- Staff should provide clear information to clients supported about what is happening throughout their day by using objects, pictures, symbols or words to illustrate activity and time, depending on the person's individual needs / perferences.
- Staff should display accessible staff rotas to inform clients who is working in their area each day.
- Total Communication Strategies should be used to support clients in keeping with best practice including HIQA Standards e.g.
  - o Each person exercises choice and control in their daily life in accordance with their perference (Standard 1:3 HIQA 2013)
  - o Each person has access to information, provided in a format appropriate to their communication needs (Standard 1:5 HIQA 2013)
  - o People ….. are given clear information in a format and language they can understand when any proposed action is being considered, in order to help them make informed choices and decisions (Standard 1:6.4 HIQA 2013)

SHS will endeavour to make the spoken and written information we use easier to understand and read.

6.ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

All SHS staff.

Staff are clear about their role in using Total Communications.

All direct support staff:

- To be aware of the clients they support preferred communications method(s).
- To implement all recommended individual communication guidelines, plans and strategies.
- To attend training provided around communications were needed.

CSMs (Day, Residential and Respite)

- To understand what is meant by Total Communications and how this should be implemented with regard to their locations and receive necessary training in this regard.
- To support the development and maintenance of a Total Communications environment.
- To ascertain the support and training needs of staff.
- To make appropriate referrals to such external services as Speech and Language, physiotherapy (for complex needs) where necessary, through the correct process.
- To ensure implementation of recommended communication guidelines, plans and strategies.

SSM

- To assist in producing information in "easy read" format.
- To promote a multi-disciplinary approach to supporting Total Communications throughout SHS.
- To assist in sourcing assistive technology solutions for people with communication and learning needs.