

SUNBEAM HOUSE SERVICES POLICY DOCUMENT



Policy Name Communication with Clients Policy

Effective Date 27 June 2023

Document Control

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Version Control

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1.0	QCT Manager	New policy to cover client communication	All SHS
2.0	QCT Manager	Section 3. Wording changed from language to different communication approaches. Section 5. Scope. Wording, Support Plan is inserted. Wording Personal Profile folder is inserted. Sentence changed to. SHS strive to provide environments are set up in such as way that all forms of communication are supported and respected in so far as is reasonably practicable.	All SHS

Policy Sign Off

CEO Name	CEO Signature	Date
John McCormack (Interim CEO)		27 June 2023

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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:

<i>SHS</i>	<i>Sunbeam House Services</i>
<i>CSM</i>	<i>Client Services Managers</i>
<i>DCSM</i>	<i>Deputy Client Services Manager</i>
<i>SSM</i>	<i>Senior Services Managers</i>
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 Communication approach. Total Communications is an approach used to create successful and equal communications between human beings with different communication approaches. The use of Total Communications means that SHS is willing to use all means of communication 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 preferred Communication 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 expressed. It involves working with individual clients, their families and significant others to reduce the impact of these difficulties and

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increase independence, participation and relationships. Develop and enhance choice-making skills

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.

Communication facilitates 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 of a Total Communication philosophy and approach across SHS services. 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 in line with their will and preference. 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 preferences and feelings
- Be offered choices and alternatives
- Reject offered choices

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- 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.
- Have ACC and other AT devices that function properly.
- 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 via their support needs assessment, following this assessment an understanding of the methods of communication and devices required, electronic or otherwise is achieved. If the person is deemed as benefitting from the services of SLT, a referral can be made to the SLT Service, with the client's consent (where practicable).

A support plan 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 Multi-modal communication needs of our clients in the following way:

- Provide advice, guidelines and training for staff supporting clients with communication needs.

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- Referrals to be made to such services as Speech & Language where required and in line with current SHS process.
- Every non-verbal client has a communications profile in their Personal Profile Folder. This documents information about their ability to understand, preferred methods of expression, how they react when they do not understand, information about their hearing and vision, preferred topics of conversation and their communication partners.
- Picture, symbol and object communications systems are promoted and encouraged to support communication where appropriate.
- SHS strive to provide environments which are set up in such a way that all modes of communication are supported and respected in so far as is reasonably practicable.
- 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 preferred communication method.
- Information should be provided to clients about their daily routine, activities and social opportunities available in a clear, coherent and accurate manner by incorporating symbols such as objects of reference, picture symbols, written words, social stories and easy-to-read information to supplement verbal information, where possible and appropriate to do so.
- Staff should display a staff picture board to inform clients who is working in their area each day.
- SHS staff will formally request assistance from a language interpreting service as required to support the multi-lingual needs of individual attending SHS services.
- Total Communication Strategies should be used to support clients in keeping with best practice including HIQA Standards e.g.
 - Each person exercises choice and control in their daily life in accordance with their preference (Standard 1:3 HIQA 2013)
 - Each person has access to information, provided in a format appropriate to their communication needs (Standard 1:5 HIQA 2013)
 - 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.

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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 client's specific communication needs, their preferred and optimum mode of communication i.e. visual aids, social stories, audio / video
- To implement all recommended individual communication guidelines, plans and strategies.
- To attend training provided around communications where needed.

CSMs (Day, Residential and Respite)

- To understand what is meant by a Total Communication approach and how to implement recommended communication strategies and supports to individual clients in their designated areas 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 Communication environment.
- To ascertain the support and training needs of staff.
- To make appropriate referrals to services such as Speech and Language, Assistive Technology, Behaviour Support Services, Occupational Therapy, Advocacy Services, and all other relevant services which may be beneficial to supporting and enhancing a person's communication skills presently and in the future.
- To ensure implementation of recommended communication guidelines, plans and strategies.

SSM

- To assist in producing information in "easy read" in compliance with National Easy-to-Read policies and guidelines.
- To promote a multi-disciplinary approach to supporting Total Communication throughout SHS.
- To assist in sourcing assistive technology solutions for people with communication and learning needs.

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