



Autonomy and Choice

Revised March 2013

Autonomy

Care service name: Wellbeing Residential Group

Policy Statement

Wellbeing Residential Group believes that every service user has the right to freedom and choice over how they wish to live their lives and, furthermore, believes that they should be enabled to live with as much independence as is possible.

Aim of the Policy

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles and policies underpinning this care service's approach to the autonomy and independence of its service users.

The Care Service's Understanding of Autonomy

The care service understands autonomy to be the freedom to choose and the right to live an independent life. It understands autonomy to cover basic choices such as the following.

1. Choice of how a resident wishes to be addressed.
2. Choice of times of going to bed and getting up.
3. Choice of what to eat and drink.
4. Choice of use of time (i.e. of recreational activities).
5. Choice in relation to the arrangement of their own environment.
6. Choice of who to associate with.
7. Freedom to manage their own finances.
8. Freedom to control access to their accommodation.
9. Freedom to self-administer their own medication.

The care service also recognises its legal and moral duty to protect and care for service users, some of whom are vulnerable and may not always be capable of making choices that are in their or any other service users' best interests. It will, however, ensure that such service users are enabled to exercise as much choice as possible, eg having access to people and services that help them to express and exercise whatever choices they can make.

All these aspects should be clearly documented within the service users' individual care plan and the completion of risk assessments in place where risk of harm is apparent but in line with the resident's choice to take risk.

The Care Service's Approach to Autonomy

The care service's approach to autonomy is to ensure that its service users have as much freedom of choice in their lives as is possible within a communal, care environment, so long as that freedom does not expose them, or any other service user or member of staff, to unacceptable risk. In particular the care service will do the following.

1. Enable and help service users to handle their own financial affairs for as long as they wish to and as long as they are able to and have the capacity to do so.

2. Inform service users and their relatives and friends of how to contact external agents such as advocates and voluntary representatives who will act in their interests should they wish.
3. Encourage service users to bring personal possessions with them into the home, the extent of which will be agreed prior to moving in.
4. Give service users full access to their own personal records in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Care service staff should remember the following.

1. Always be aware of and respect service users' rights to make their own decisions.
2. Avoid being overprotective or patronising to service users.
3. Never attempt to bully or use force to coerce service users to do anything that they do not wish to do.
4. Remember their duty to protect service users and to ensure a safe environment for them to live in.
5. Always offer every service user:
 - a. the choice of how they wish to be addressed
 - b. the choice of when they want to go to bed and get up
 - c. the choice of what they want to eat
 - d. the choice of how they want to use their time
 - e. the choice of how they wish to maintain their environment
 - f. the choice of who they wish to associate with
 - g. the freedom to manage their own finances wherever they are able to do so
 - h. the freedom to control access to their accommodation
 - i. the freedom to self-administer their own medication (if assessed as safe to do so).

If for any reason a member of staff perceives the need to limit or restrict any of these choices and freedoms, the reasons should be discussed with the care service manager and a suitable entry written into the service user's notes.

Training

All staff will be trained to recognise service users' rights and understand the issues around autonomy and freedom.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Policy review date: _____