
Key Workers (or Link Workers) in Supported Living (England) Policy

Please note that all policies are templates and should be amended to fit your requirements.

Introduction

This policy would apply where the care service uses key (named) workers. It should be adapted in line with the individual provider's ideas and use of key or link workers (either term can be used). Appointing a key worker is a recommended approach in supported living arrangements where a person is receiving continuous care and support from a number of people or team at different times, including night care. The key worker (which can also be a shared role) becomes the single point of contact to address any concerns and issues arising from the person's care and support plan.

Key or link working aims to achieve:

- promotion of individualised care and support that effectively meets needs and choices
- an effective system for assessing and managing risks
- a sound basis for the development of professional relationships with people using the service
- an opportunity for greater accountability for the care a person receives
- a sound framework for monitoring the quality of a person's care and support
- a sound framework for implementing human rights, equality, diversity and inclusion and anti-discrimination policies
- a rewarding and clear framework for staff and people using the service to work within.

Policy Statement

This care provider is committed to the idea that each person receiving our support should have a specific, named key worker who is responsible for co-ordinating their care and with whom they can build a firm professional relationship.

The care service understands that the use of a specific, named key worker to work with each person needing care is accepted as best practice.

This document sets out the values, principles and policies underpinning the home's key worker approach. It should be followed by all staff and volunteers.

Our approach is in line with the person-centred principles and requirements described in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 and the accompanying statutory guidance.

Policy Content

- Each new person using our service has a named member of care staff responsible for coordinating their support, hereafter known as a “key worker” (or link worker if used).
- People new to the service will be involved in choosing who their key worker will be wherever possible.
- The key worker’s overall aim will be to co-ordinate and facilitate the care and support provided for their named people.

Roles

- The specific functions of each key worker will vary but their overall role will be to co-ordinate the support and care provided for the individual assigned to them.
- The key worker will keep the rest of the care staff team informed about any changes in the plan of care for their assigned people receiving care.
- The key worker will be responsible to the registered manager (or other named manager or suitably qualified person) and will work under their guidance and supervision.
- Key working can operate as a shared role and set of responsibilities. Where this happens joint key workers are expected to be clear about their respective responsibilities and to communicate closely with one another. A line manager or suitably qualified person will be appointed to supervise the joint key working arrangements and to check on their effectiveness.

Key or Link Worker Responsibilities (As applicable)

Overall responsibility for care lies with the registered manager who will delegate responsibilities to the key worker as set out below.

General responsibilities (as applicable)

The key worker will be responsible for:

- taking the lead in all matters concerning the named person/persons they support
- communicating closely and sensitively with the named person/persons they support
- taking the lead in the development of a person-centred plan of care for the person/persons they support and communicating with other members of the staff team through staff meetings and supervision sessions regarding individual needs, developments or changes to that care
- monitoring that the care and support from other care workers is consistent in its approach

- acting as a recognised contact point for other care professionals involved in providing services for the individual, including where safeguarding issues have been raised
- liaising with colleagues, advocates, friends and families of the person/persons they support, including where there are concerns and issues arising in relation to a person's tenancy agreement
- discussing and identifying with the registered manager any changes or difficulties being experienced or additional resources required.

Care planning and reviews

In relation to person-centred planning, the key worker is specifically responsible for:

- setting up the individual's care reviews
- inviting the people who the person using the services wishes to attend
- drawing up the agenda
- ensuring that action needed to achieve goals set during the review is followed through by named individuals.

Co-ordinating role

The key worker typically helps the person receiving their support to maintain contact with their family where appropriate and acts as the main link with them.

If the key worker and the family are unable to agree about any matter relating to the person, this should be discussed in the first instance with the registered manager.

Where a person has an external facilitator for their care planning and reviews and setting up meetings, key workers will usually take less of a lead role and support the facilitator as required.

Training

All care staff expected to perform in a key worker role are appropriately trained and experienced in care planning and needs assessment.

All new staff and volunteers have the key worker policy explained to them during induction.

Staff new to care work are not expected to become key workers until assessed as being competent to carry out the role and only after gaining further experience on completion of their Care Certificate and further training.

Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or where changes are made over the use of key workers.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Policy review date: _____
