



Working with families Policy

1.0 Purpose and scope

This policy sets out how Notting Hill Genesis (NHG) staff work effectively with our customers' families, friends and carers. It ensures that the families of NHG customers, who live in NHG Care and Support services are appropriately communicated with and involved in decisions and events affecting the customers.

It applies to all accommodation-based support services providing care and support within NHG, including supported and sheltered services. Additionally, this policy covers customers living independently in our Extra care services, where we provide low-level support. This policy does not apply to agency managed services.

This policy has been developed in line with the [Safeguarding Policy](#) and procedures, Code of Conduct, Data Protection Policy and emphasised on the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#), which can all be made available upon request.

2.0 Definitions

Best interest decision - a decision made by applying the Best Interest principle, as set out in the Mental Capacity Act 2005. A Best Interests decision is a decision made for and on behalf of a person who lacks capacity to make their own decision.

Families- For the purpose of this Policy this includes family members, next of kin, partners, distant relatives and friends who have been appointed by the NHG customer.

LPA (Lasting Power of Attorney)- is a legal arrangement and depending on the customer's decision, it provides those who the customer trusts (e.g. family representative, family members, next of kin, partners, distant relatives and friends) with a legal means to step in and carry out their wishes or make decisions about the health and welfare/or property and financial affairs on their behalf, when they are unable, or choose not to do that themselves.

3.0 Our approach

3.1 Establishing good relationships with families

We recognise the importance of family relationships and our role in maintaining those invaluable connections.

For this reason, we work towards building and establishing strong relationships with customers, families and their loved ones. We develop meaningful partnerships with families who are in any way involved in providing and delivering care and support services to NHG customers.

Maintaining appropriate communication with families, offering support to people who need it to maintain and manage family relationships and ensuring that NHG customers benefit from strong social network connections forms the basis of our person-centred approach. To achieve these aims we:

- Require our staff to support family connections and collaborate with agencies and family members involved in delivering person-centred care to NHG customers
- Monitor and review the arrangements between customers and their families, review them annually and update the information as soon as we become aware of change of circumstances
- Review existing arrangements following an incident, safeguarding concern or any other concern that may have an impact or result in a significant change in a customer's health, safety and/or wellbeing. Staff will follow our internal [Safeguarding Policy](#) and procedures where they suspect or have any knowledge of potential safeguarding concerns
- Communicate any significant regulatory changes that impact service delivery with families through our communication channels (e.g. at local meetings when sharing agenda items with families)
- Openly discuss working practices at our services with residents and families and our staff will provide details about how we deliver our care and support provision to customers and their families upon request
- Support our customers' choices and, where possible, take on board the opinions and suggestions from their families.

NHG policies and procedures are based on sector-wide best practice and we fulfil the regulatory and legislative requirements when supporting NHG customers.

We recognise and respects our customers' families individual experiences, cultural background and personal expertise and, when requested, we are happy to support families and those involved in care and support delivery.

3.2 Record keeping

When working with families, we maintain strong recording practices. This allows us to recognise and fulfil, where possible, our customers' wishes.

3.3 Mental capacity

We always assume that a customer has mental capacity. Where we believe a customer may not have mental capacity, we work with the relevant agencies to assess the customer's mental capacity using the Mental Capacity Act 2005 as a guiding principle.

We recognise that, at times, there may be tension between what the family and customer want. In those instances, best interest decisions are made as set out in the Mental Capacity Act and the rationale is discussed with family members.

When a best interest decision has to be made, we always involve the family of the NHG resident. In these instances, and if needed, staff will provide support, advice and will signpost families to useful resources and additional information on regulatory requirements. Staff refer to the Mental Capacity Act guidance and, when necessary, discuss the issue with their manager.

4.0 Developing positive relationships

In order to improve NHG customers' wellbeing, promote an inclusive culture in our services and ensure that we are open and transparent about our approach, we promote working with families and encourage them to be involved. We involve family members in discussions with customers to make an informed decision on how they would like to be involved when delivering care and support. We understand that this might not always be possible, and we ensure that:

- The customer agrees whether their family can be involved and, if so, the level of their involvement
- We respect the family's decisions when they are unable to, or when they prefer not to be involved.

Finding a balance between how we work with families in our services and working with those who are directly involved in providing care and support to NHG customers is central to our work.

We will provide assistance to enable families to work on the practical and everyday aspects of their loved ones living in a NHG Care & Support scheme. We will ensure that the invaluable connections NHG residents have with their families can be maintained.

As we promote positive family relationships and encourage family members to be involved in our customers' care and support provision, we want customers and their loved ones to feel safe and secure in our customers' homes.

5.0 Our role in developing family relationships

NHG recognises that each family has unique dynamics. We support the development of strong family relationships and we work with families to achieve them because they provide stability, promote wellbeing and often bring positive outcomes for NHG customers.

We believe that, in maintaining strong relationships with customers' families, we are able to:

- Promote and encourage customers and their families to engage with us on every level
- Improve our abilities to deliver quality services.

In all instances, we will remain sensitive to how we communicate with families involved in the delivery of services.

6.0 Communication with families

We welcome families and friends of NHG customers at Extra care services and, where it is safe to do so and following the latest [Public Health England guidance](#), we are happy to provide families with a comfortable space in our communal areas to spend time together.

We recognise that family members may have concerns or questions that arise related to service delivery. We are open and transparent about any concerns and we encourage conversation or regular communication with those involved.

We respond to any request as soon as possible and we communicate with families if we are unable to accommodate their request. Where we are not able to provide a definitive response promptly, we provide an update.

7.0 Complaints and feedback

We welcome and provide engagement opportunities for families who wish to be involved in shaping how services are delivered.

We want to be aware of all instances when NHG customers and their families are concerned or dissatisfied with our services. Any customers and/or a family's feedback and suggestions for improvements are taken into consideration and are responded to appropriately.

Where a NHG customer or their family wants to log a formal complaint we refer them to the [Complaints and Compliments Policy](#) and invite them to follow the relevant procedures.

8.0 Privacy and Data protection

We can only share customers' data with their prior written consent or in line with LPA.

We are clear with our customers on what information we will or can share with agencies/staff involved in the delivery of their care.

We record information in line with our [Data Protection Policy](#), which is followed by all NHG staff.

Our staff follow the [NHG CCTV Policy](#) and other relevant policies and procedures when considering safety and security of NHG customers.

9.0 Support planning

We encourage NHG customers to involve their relatives in support and risk management planning, which is where customers' needs, choices and aspirations are discussed, in order to provide customers with the best possible experience.

NHG staff review customers' care and support plans annually or when customers' needs and risks change. Our staff follow the Support Planning and Risk Management Policy and procedures to fulfil that requirement.

We support our customers to be engaged with their families and social networks. NHG respects customers' decisions on who they wish to be involved in the delivery of their care and support needs.

Where customers prefer, we invite families to review meetings, where we provide copies of agreed support plans and risk assessment.

10.0 Legal arrangements

We encourage families to consider having an LPA in place.

A breach of the LPA may be seen as a potential safeguarding concern. In those instances, we will investigate any safeguarding concerns in line with our [Safeguarding Policy](#) and procedures. For more information on LPA visit the external [website](#).

11.0 Personal development and training

NHG has a proactive approach to providing personal development and training opportunities for its staff. We respond positively to a constantly changing environment and, being aware of NHG residents' circumstances, we strive to learn from them and their experiences and aim to improve our offer and provide a person-centred approach.

We want to make sure that our customers' families are involved in the delivery of services as much as possible and we want to ensure that our customers' best interest decision is represented in the process.

We provide our staff with opportunities to develop their skills and to progress in their career through regular training sessions.

Any issues that may arise at the workplace will be dealt with professionally and in accordance with regulatory requirements and best practice.

NHG managers receive training and support to implement policies and support their staff with confidence and sensitivity.

We celebrate and recognise our staff achievements throughout their career progression, and we showcase the diversity of talent at NHG.

We are working towards capturing meaningful engagement in how we design and deliver our services in partnership with others. We encourage customers' families to be involved in shaping the delivery of services we provide, specifically:

- To engage and support in delivering training
- Being involved in developing service delivery and best working practices

- Sharing experiences
- Influencing our policies and procedures or being involved in the wider discussion and planning processes on how we provide person-centred care.

12.0 Reporting, auditing and control

All activities and records relating specifically to the Working with families Policy are monitored, managed and audited by the manager of the service or, in their absence, a senior manager. This information can also be accessed by Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspectors or third parties upon request, when appropriate and in line with data protection principles.

We ensure that our Quality Assurance framework is in place to:

- Provide a regular and systematic monitoring and evaluation of our practices
- Improve quality and standards of life and service provision to NHG residents.

CQC would only inspect NHG Extra Care regulated services, and CQC auditors may approach family members to seek feedback about the service. Customers and families can also leave feedback and comments about the service they received from NHG on the [CQC website](#).

13.0 Our approach

In writing this policy we have carried out assessments to ensure that we are considering:

- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Privacy & Data Protection

We also carry out consultations with our staff, customers and the wider community. To request a copy of these assessments, please email policy@nhg.org.uk

14.0 Reference

- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- The Health and Social Care Act 2008
- The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014
- Human Rights Act
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulations

Document control

Author	Michael Drozynski, Policy Officer
Approval date	19 th May 2021
Effective date	18 th October 2021
Approved by	Policy Group
Policy owner	Assistant Director of Extra Care
Accountable Director	Director of Care & Support

Version Control

Date	Amendment	Version
May 2021	Working with families Policy created	v1.0