CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................................................. 3
2. POLICY SCOPE ................................................................................................................................. 4
3. PRIVACY, DIGNITY AND RESPECT ............................................................................................... 5
4. STANDARDS OF PRACTICE .............................................................................................................. 5
5. ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS ....................................................................................................... 6
6. COMMUNICATION ............................................................................................................................ 8
7. TRAINING AND AWARENESS .......................................................................................................... 9
8. IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY ....................................................................................................... 9
9. MAINTAINING THE POLICY ............................................................................................................. 9
10. CROSS REFERENCE ....................................................................................................................... 9
11. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ......................................................................................................... 9
12. REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY .............................................................................................. 10
Policy on Privacy, Dignity and Respect

1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the policy is to provide NHS Highland staff with guidance and expected standards of practice in the promotion of privacy, dignity and respect, which affects all healthcare users. NHS Highland is committed to providing high quality care to all healthcare users at all times. Responsibility for protecting healthcare users' privacy, dignity and respect does not lie with one individual or group but with all NHS Highland staff at every level.

NHS Highland is eager to ensure that all healthcare users will feel that they are treated with dignity and respect, and that their right to privacy, dignity and respect is upheld and actively promoted at all times.

Privacy, dignity and respect are a high priority on quality improvement agendas. E.g. NHS Highland HEAT Targets.

Respecting privacy and dignity is not an addition to care provision, but an integral part of high-quality care.

For the purpose of this policy:

Privacy refers to, “freedom from intrusion and embarrassment and relates to all Information and practice that is personal or sensitive in nature to an individual. Privacy is a key principle, which underpins human dignity, and remains a basic human right and the reasonable expectation of every person.” Human Rights Act, 1998

Dignity, “is concerned with how people feel, think and behave in relation to the worth or value of themselves and others. To treat someone with dignity is to treat them as being of worth, in a way that is respectful of them as valued individuals, being of equal value and worth irrespective of differences such as age, race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, social background, health or marital status, disability, religion or political conviction.” NHS PIN Policy – Dignity at Work

Respect, “is positive regard shown to a person as a human being as an individual, by others, and demonstrated as courtesy, good communication, taking time and equal access.” NHS Spiritual Care Policy, 2009

Following the inclusion in Better Health, Better Care Action Plan (2007, Scottish Government,) and results from several surveys e.g. (2007, Picker Institute), privacy, dignity and respect are high priorities for healthcare users and healthcare providers. These surveys indicate that satisfaction with care is inextricably linked with privacy, dignity and respect; therefore these should be an integral part of the delivery of individualised care.

Privacy, dignity and respect are built into the care delivered as well as the environment in which it is delivered. Staff should deal sensitively with the various circumstances in which privacy, dignity and respect may be infringed. However, in all areas of this policy, clinical emergency should be given priority.
2. POLICY SCOPE

Recognising and enabling an individual’s right to privacy, dignity and respect are an essential part of best practice and accepted as a right by healthcare users, carers and all NHS Highland staff. This policy will outline expected standards of practice.

This policy was devised to ensure all healthcare users receiving care within NHS Highland have their rights to privacy, dignity and respect acknowledged. These will be promoted at all times by all staff irrespective of role and purpose and within the resources available.

Current equality legislation places the responsibility on the organisation to prevent discrimination and harassment and show how it is ensuring equitable services. Providing care that ensures the dignity of healthcare service users, respects the diversity of the population and the individual needs of these users is how the NHS shows it is meeting its requirements.

The privacy, dignity and respect policy clearly relates to the ways in which healthcare users and their carers are to be treated while being cared for by NHS Highland. The scope of the behaviours and values outlined in this policy is by no means to be confined simply to the healthcare users and carers. It is recognised that, as healthcare workers, all NHS Highland staff should display values and behaviours which promote privacy, dignity and respect to each other, and throughout the organisation.

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3. PRIVACY, DIGNITY AND RESPECT

Aims / Objectives

3.1 This policy is to be applied to all healthcare users in order to meet individual need by recognising and preventing barriers to care. These barriers can be related to stereotyping and stigma associated with age, ethnicity, disability, faith, sexual orientation and gender.

3.2 All NHS Highland staff should, at all times, treat healthcare users, their relatives and/or carers in a manner that makes them feel valued and respected and act in a way that maintains their privacy, dignity and respect.

3.3 All healthcare users should receive care in a manner which recognises their individual values, beliefs and personal relationships. The personal space of healthcare users, their relatives and/or carers should be respected at all times and likewise NHS Highland staff should expect healthcare users, their relatives and/or carers to grant them the same courtesy.

3.4 All healthcare users should be cared for in an environment that actively promotes their privacy, dignity and respect.

3.5 All healthcare users’ information is confidential. Specifically all information about diagnosis and care will, in the first instance, be discussed with the healthcare user or their legal guardian as privately as possible. This information will only be shared with others following the agreement of the healthcare user. However, while it is important that a healthcare users’ right to confidentiality is respected, it is also important to ensure that this does not result in a failure to provide healthcare users with the appropriate care.

   NHS Spiritual Care Policy, September 2009  
   Human Rights Act 1998 Ref: Dignity and Autonomy in Care  
   NHSH Interpretation and Translation Guidance, 2009 Ref: Roles and Responsibilities when working with Interpreters  
   Data Protection Act 1998 Ref: access, use and handling of patient data

3.6 Within care settings, private and accessible rooms should be available for healthcare users, their relatives and/or carers to discuss their concerns with each other or NHS Highland staff. When the care setting is in the healthcare users’ own home the selection of a suitable room will be negotiated between the practitioner and healthcare user, taking into consideration privacy, dignity and respect.

4. STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

Environment

4.1 Healthcare users care should not just maintain the privacy, dignity and respect of individuals but actively promote privacy and dignity issues locally, according to each unique area of practice.
4.2 NHS Highland staff should care for individuals in a smoke free, clean, safe, accessible and welcoming environment that actively promotes and maintains individuals’ rights.
Cross reference to NHSH Smoking Policy
Cross reference to Infection Control Policy
Cross reference to Health and Safety Policy

4.3 Personal space should be respected and protected. Disturbances and interruptions to healthcare users should be minimised.

4.4 NHS Highland staff should inform all healthcare users about the Mobile Phone Policy relevant to the area of practice. In particular the use of photographing and making video recordings when using mobile phones in hospital.
Cross reference to Mobile Phone Policy

4.5 NHS Highland staff should avoid displaying healthcare users’ personal information in public areas, unless this information is required for maintaining and promoting the healthcare users’ safety. The use of clear and appropriate information on records and in the bed area should be used to ensure staffs are aware of any sensory impairment a healthcare user may have and adjust care and support accordingly.
Cross reference to Confidentiality Policy
Cross reference to Data Protection Policy

4.6 The privacy, dignity and respect of healthcare users should be maintained at all times, through the effective use of private rooms, curtains, screens, blankets and appropriate clothing.
Cross reference RCN Defending Dignity Policy

4.7 Consideration should be made to minimise offensive odours and unsightly stains, through the prompt cleaning of soiled areas and the prompt removal of used commodes, urinals, bedpans etc.
Cross reference to Infection Control Policy
Cross reference to Health and Safety Policy

4.8 Healthcare users must clean their hands after using bedpans, commodes, urinals and toilets to protect not only themselves but others.
Cross reference to Infection Control Policy
Cross reference to Hand Hygiene Policy

4.9 Healthcare users should be given access to a choice of appropriate foods, e.g. ethnic/religious choices, vegetarian/vegan and age appropriate. Support should also be provided when assessed as appropriate to ensure that food can be consumed.
Cross reference to Food, Fluid and Nutrition Policy
Cross reference to Religion and Belief Matters Booklet
Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
Disability Discrimination Act 2005
4.10 NHS Highland staff should attempt to ensure that all healthcare users have protected mealtimes, free from ward rounds, investigations, phone calls, noise and visitors. There will be genuine exceptions to this and these will be managed at the discretion of the person in charge of the clinical area but not to the detriment of the healthcare user.
Cross reference to NHS Highland Visiting Hours Policy
Cross reference to Food, Fluid and Nutrition Policy

5. ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

5.1 NHS Highland staff are personally accountable for ensuring that they promote and protect healthcare user’s well-being. Staff should also recognise and prevent any barriers to access and support because of stereotyping, or stigma associated with age, ethnicity, disability, faith, sexual orientation and gender.
Cross reference to
Disability Equality Duty 2005
Race Equality Duty 2000
Gender Equality Duty 2006
Equality Act 2006

5.2 NHS Highland staff should ensure that healthcare users feel valued and do not experience any negative or offensive behaviour. NSH Highland should ensure that they are positively promoting equality and diversity.
Cross reference to
Disability Equality Duty 2005
Race Equality Duty 2000
Gender Equality Duty 2006
Equality Act 2006

5.3 The preferred name which the healthcare user wishes to be known should be determined and recorded.

5.4 NHS Highland staff should be easily identified by healthcare users by the use of nationally agreed uniform policies and NHS Highland name badges.
Cross reference to Uniform Policy

5.5 NHS Highland staff should be aware of the possible negative effect of non-verbal communication/body language and gestures.

5.6 NHS Highland staff should be aware of the needs of healthcare users for whom English is not their first language.
Cross reference Translation Services

5.7 Healthcare users’ physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual needs should be determined and regularly reviewed.
Cross reference World Health Organisation 1998 Statement
Spiritual Care Policy 2009
5.8 Healthcare users should never be left without clothing or a covering when bed bathing to maintain their privacy, dignity and respect.

5.9 NHS Highland staff should ensure that all healthcare users are able to dress and undress in privacy.

5.10 Healthcare users should always be adequately dressed or covered prior to leaving the clinical area for any reason, so that their privacy, dignity and respect are maintained.

5.11 NHS Highland staff should encourage healthcare users, who are able to do so, to bath, shower and toilet themselves, with minimal supervision, unless a risk has been identified.

5.12 Where a need is identified, healthcare users should be offered assistance e.g. spectacles, prosthetics, hearing aids, dentures etc.

5.13 NHS Highland staff should be aware of healthcare users’ sensitivities with regard to personal contact/touch and personal boundaries. In particular, these issues might arise as a result of gender, culture and ethnicity.

5.14 Requests by healthcare users and carers, to be treated by a member of staff of a specific gender or religion will be considered, according to availability of staff and/or resources.

5.15 NHS Highland staff who visit healthcare users in their own homes should act as guests, ensuring that entering the property and using the facilities are with the permission of the healthcare users and or carers.

6. COMMUNICATION

6.1 NHS Highland staff should introduce themselves on initial contact with healthcare users and/or carers, stating their names and roles.

6.2 All communication between NHS Highland staff and healthcare users should be in a manner that displays respect for their individuality.

6.3 The clarity of any written information or leaflets should follow guidelines set by the Policy on Management of Policies and Procedures.
6.4 NHS Highland staff should ensure that they are aware of the communication needs of healthcare users and are able to ensure that any communication is understood by the healthcare user.
Cross reference Communications Policy
Cross reference Consent Policy
NHSH Accessibility Guidance

6.5 Clear explanation should be given to the healthcare users by the appropriate staff member, before any action or procedure is commenced.
Cross reference Consent Policy

6.6 NHS Highland staff should restrict conversations involving patient information, to areas where others cannot hear.
Cross reference Confidentiality Policy
Cross reference Data Protection Act 1998

6.7 NHS Highland staff should also restrict conversations involving their own personal information to non-clinical areas.

6.8 Any written information regarding healthcare users (e.g. patient notes) should be treated with privacy and respect, with high regard to confidentiality.
Cross reference Confidentiality Policy
Cross reference Data Protection Act 1998

6.9 NHS Highland staff should clearly identify themselves and/or make their presence known before entering screened areas or rooms.

6.10 NHS Highland staff working in the community should clearly identify themselves and their roles, before entering the healthcare users’ home.

6.11 Where formal translation services are required, the organisation has a legal responsibility to provide interpretation where required or requested by the healthcare user. Professional interpreters should be used at all times.
Cross reference Interpretation and Translation Guidance

7 TRAINING AND AWARENESS

What about training and awareness?

e.g. The NHS Highland Board is responsible for ensuring that NHS Highland staffs receive the following in order to support the delivery of this policy. It is the responsibility of the line managers to ensure that their staff have access to the following:

- Induction Programme
- Clinical Governance
- Equality and Diversity Awareness Sessions
Policy on Privacy, Dignity and Respect

- Health and Safety Training

8 IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

8.1 The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that all Corporate Support is made available to assist in the implementation of this policy.

8.2 All NHS Highland staff are accountable for their behaviours and have an individual responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

8.3 It is the responsibility of all NHS Highland staff to ensure that the core principles of this policy are implemented and embedded within their working environment.

9 MAINTAINING THE POLICY

The maintaining of this policy will rest with the Clinical Governance Team, and all of its respective governance.

10 CROSS REFERENCE

The cross references link the NHS Highland Intranet http://intranet.nhsh.scot.nhs.uk/Pages/Default.aspx

11 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Impact assessed by Natalie Morel on the 4th February 2009. Recommended changes have been made to this document.

12 REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY


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Policy on Privacy, Dignity and Respect


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