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Code of Conduct for Healthcare Support Workers and Adult Social Care Workers in England

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As a Healthcare Support Worker or an Adult Social Care Worker, you make a valuable and important contribution to the delivery of high quality healthcare, **care and support**.

Following the guidance set out in this Code of Conduct will give you the reassurance that you are providing safe and **compassionate** care of a high standard, and the confidence to challenge others who are not. This Code will also tell the public and people who use health and care services exactly what they should expect from Healthcare Support Workers and Adult Social Care Workers in England.

As a Healthcare Support Worker or Adult Social Care Worker in England you must:

1. Be **accountable** by making sure you can answer for your actions or **omissions**.
2. **Promote** and **uphold** the privacy, **dignity, rights**, health and **wellbeing** of people who use health and care services and their carers at all times.
3. Work in **collaboration** with your colleagues to ensure the delivery of high quality, safe and compassionate healthcare, care and support.
4. Communicate in an open, and **effective** way to promote the health, safety and wellbeing of people who use health and care services and their carers.
5. Respect a person's right to confidentiality.
6. Strive to improve the quality of healthcare, care and support through **continuing professional development**.
7. Uphold and promote equality, **diversity** and inclusion.

Purpose

This Code is based on the principles of protecting the public by promoting best practice. It will ensure that you are 'working to standard', providing high quality, **compassionate** healthcare, **care and support**.

The Code describes the standards of conduct, behaviour and attitude that the public and people who use health and care services should expect. You are responsible for, and have a duty of care to ensure that your conduct does not fall below the standards detailed in the Code. Nothing that you do, or **omit** to do, should harm the safety and **wellbeing** of people who use health and care services, and the public.

Scope

These standards apply to you if you are a:

- **Healthcare Support Worker** (including an Assistant Practitioner) in England who has a patient-facing role (where they don't already have a Code that applies to them). The intention is not to prescribe the roles that this Code of Conduct applies to but to have a Code that can apply to as many roles as possible where the Healthcare Support Worker is having contact with patients.
- **Adult Social Care Worker** in England. This could either be in an independent capacity (for example, as a Personal Assistant); for a residential care provider; or as a supported living, day support or domiciliary care worker. The Code does not apply to Social Work Assistants.

How does the Code help me as a Healthcare Support Worker or an Adult Social Care Worker?

It provides a set of clear standards, so you:

- can be sure of the standards you are expected to meet.
- can know whether you are working to these standards, or if you need to change the way you are working.
- can identify areas for continuing professional development.
- can fulfil the requirements of your role, behave correctly and do the right thing at all times. This is essential to protect people who use health and care services, the public and others from harm.

How does this Code help people who use health and care services and members of the public?

The Code helps the public and those who use health and care services to understand what standards they can expect of Healthcare Support Workers and Adult Social Care Workers. The Code aims to give people who use health and care services the confidence that they will be treated with **dignity, respect** and **compassion** at all times.

How does this Code help my employer?

The Code helps employers to understand what standards they should expect of Healthcare Support Workers and Adult Social Care Workers. If there are people who do not meet these standards, it will help to identify them and their support and training needs.

Glossary

You can find a glossary of terms and key words (shown in **bold** throughout the Code) at the end of the document.

1. Be accountable by making sure you can answer for your actions or omissions

Guidance statements

As a Healthcare Support Worker or Adult Social Care Worker in England, you must:

1. be honest with yourself and others about what you can do, recognise your abilities and the limitations of your **competence** and only carry out or delegate those tasks agreed in your job description and for which you are **competent**.
2. always behave and present yourself in a way that does not call into question your suitability to work in a health and social care environment.
3. be able to justify and be **accountable** for your actions or your **omissions** – what you fail to do.
4. always ask your supervisor or employer for guidance if you do not feel able or adequately prepared to carry out any aspect of your work, or if you are unsure how to **effectively** deliver a task.
5. tell your supervisor or employer about any issues that might affect your ability to do your job **competently** and safely. If you do not feel **competent** to carry out an activity, you must report this.
6. establish and maintain clear and appropriate professional boundaries in your relationships with people who use health and care services, carers and colleagues at all times.
7. never accept any offers of loans, gifts, benefits or hospitality from anyone you are supporting or anyone close to them which may be seen to compromise your position.
8. comply with your employers' **agreed ways of working**.
9. report any actions or **omissions** by yourself or colleagues that you feel may compromise the safety or care of people who use health and care services and, if necessary use **whistleblowing** procedures to report any suspected wrongdoing.

2. Promote and uphold the privacy, dignity, rights, health and wellbeing of people who use health and care services and their carers at all times

Guidance statements

As a Healthcare Support Worker or Adult Social Care Worker in England you must:

1. always act in the **best interests** of people who use health and care services.
2. always treat people with **respect** and **compassion**.
3. put the needs, goals and aspirations of people who use health and care services first, helping them to be in control and to choose the healthcare, **care and support** they receive.
4. **promote** people's independence and ability to **self-care**, assisting those who use health and care services to exercise their rights and make informed choices.
5. always gain **valid consent** before providing healthcare, **care and support**. You must also **respect** a person's right to refuse to receive healthcare, **care and support** if they are capable of doing so.
6. always maintain the privacy and **dignity** of people who use health and care services, their carers and others.
7. be alert to any changes that could affect a person's needs or progress and report your observations in line with your employer's **agreed ways of working**.
8. always make sure that your actions or **omissions** do not harm an individual's health or **wellbeing**. You must never **abuse**, neglect, **harm** or exploit those who use health and care services, their carers or your colleagues.
9. challenge and report dangerous, abusive, discriminatory or exploitative behaviour or practice.
10. always take comments and complaints seriously, respond to them in line with **agreed ways of working** and inform a senior member of staff.

3. Work in collaboration with your colleagues to ensure the delivery of high quality, safe and compassionate healthcare, care and support

Guidance statements

As a Healthcare Support Worker or Adult Social Care Worker in England you must:

1. understand and value your contribution and the vital part you play in your team.
2. recognise and **respect** the roles and expertise of your colleagues both in the team and from other agencies and disciplines, and work in partnership with them.
3. work openly and co-operatively with colleagues including those from other disciplines and agencies, and treat them with **respect**.
4. work openly and co-operatively with people who use health and care services and their families or carers and treat them with **respect**.
5. honour your work commitments, agreements and arrangements and be reliable, dependable and trustworthy.
6. actively encourage the delivery of high quality healthcare, **care and support**.

4. Communicate in an open and effective way to promote the health, safety and wellbeing of people who use health and care services and their carers

Guidance statements

As a Healthcare Support Worker or Adult Social Care Worker in England you must:

1. communicate **respectfully** with people who use health and care services and their carers in an open, accurate, **effective**, straightforward and confidential way.
2. communicate **effectively** and consult with your colleagues as appropriate.
3. always explain and discuss the care, support or procedure you intend to carry out with the person and only continue if they give **valid consent**.
4. maintain clear and accurate records of the healthcare, **care and support** you provide. Immediately report to a senior member of staff any changes or concerns you have about a person's condition.
5. recognise both the extent and the limits of your role, knowledge and **competence** when communicating with people who use health and care services, carers and colleagues.

5. Respect people's right to confidentiality

Guidance statements

As a Healthcare Support Worker or Adult Social Care Worker in England you must:

1. treat all information about people who use health and care services and their carers as confidential.
2. only discuss or **disclose** information about people who use health and care services and their carers in accordance with legislation and **agreed ways of working**.
3. always seek guidance from a senior member of staff regarding any information or issues that you are concerned about.
4. always discuss issues of disclosure with a senior member of staff.

6. Strive to improve the quality of healthcare, care and support through continuing professional development

Guidance statements

As a Healthcare Support Worker or Adult Social Care Worker in England you must:

1. ensure up to date compliance with all statutory and mandatory training, in agreement with your supervisor.
2. participate in **continuing professional development** to achieve the **competence** required for your role.
3. carry out **competence-based** training and education in line with your **agreed ways of working**.
4. improve the quality and safety of the care you provide with the help of your supervisor (and a mentor if available), and in line with your **agreed ways of working**.
5. maintain an up-to-date record of your training and development.
6. contribute to the learning and development of others as appropriate.

7. Uphold and promote equality, diversity and inclusion

Guidance statements

As a Healthcare Support Worker or Adult Social Care Worker in England you must:

1. **respect** the **individuality** and **diversity** of the people who use health and care services, their carers and your colleagues.
2. not **discriminate** or condone discrimination against people who use health and care services, their carers or your colleagues.
3. **promote** equal opportunities and inclusion for the people who use health and care services and their carers.
4. report any concerns regarding **equality**, **diversity** and **inclusion** to a senior member of staff as soon as possible.

Glossary of terms

ACCOUNTABLE: accountability is to be responsible for the decisions you make and answerable for your actions.

AGREED WAYS OF WORKING: includes policies and procedures where these exist; they may be less formally documented among individual employers and the self-employed.

BEST INTERESTS: the Mental Capacity Act (2005) sets out a checklist of things to consider when deciding what's in a person's 'best interests'.

CARE AND SUPPORT: care and support enables people to do the everyday things like getting out of bed, dressed and into work; cooking meals; seeing friends; caring for our families; and being part of our communities. It might include emotional support at a time of difficulty or stress, or helping people who are caring for a family member or friend. It can mean support from community groups or networks: for example, giving others a lift to a social event. It might also include state-funded support, such as information and advice, support for carers, housing support, disability benefits and adult social care.

COLLABORATION: the action of working with someone to achieve a common goal.

COMPASSION: descriptions of compassionate care include:, dignity and comfort: taking time and patience to listen, explain and communicate; demonstrating empathy, kindness and warmth; care centred around an individual person's needs, involving people in the decisions about their healthcare, care and support.

COMPETENCE: the knowledge, skills, attitudes and ability to practise safely and effectively without the need for direct supervision.

COMPETENT: having the necessary ability, knowledge, or skill to do something successfully.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: this is the way in which a worker continues to learn and develop throughout their careers, keeping their skills and knowledge up to date and ensuring they can work safely and effectively.

DIGNITY: covers all aspects of daily life, including respect, privacy, autonomy and self-worth. While dignity may be difficult to define, what is clear is that people know when they have not been treated with dignity and respect. Dignity is about interpersonal behaviours as well as systems and processes.

DISCRIMINATE: discrimination can be the result of prejudice, misconception and stereotyping. Whether this behaviour is intentional or unintentional does not excuse it. It is the perception of the person discriminated against that is important.

DIVERSITY: celebrating differences and valuing everyone. Diversity encompasses visible and non-visible individual differences and is about respecting those differences.

EFFECTIVE: to be successful in producing a desired or intended result.

EQUALITY: being equal in status, rights, and opportunities.

INCLUSION: ensuring that people are treated equally and fairly and are included as part of society.

MENTOR: mentoring is a work-based method of training using existing experienced staff to transfer their skills informally or semi-formally to learners.

OMISSION: to leave out or exclude.

PROMOTE: to support or actively encourage.

RESPECT: to have due regard for someone's feelings, wishes, or rights.

SELF-CARE: this refers to the practices undertaken by people towards maintaining health and wellbeing and managing their own care needs. It has been defined as: "the actions people take for themselves, their children and their families to stay fit and maintain good physical and mental health; meet social and psychological needs; prevent illness or accidents; care for minor ailments and long-term conditions; and maintain health and wellbeing after an acute illness or discharge from hospital." (Self care – A real choice: Self care support – A practical option, published by Department of Health, 2005).

UPHOLD: to maintain a custom or practice.

VALID CONSENT: for consent to be valid, it must be given voluntarily by an appropriately informed person who has the capacity to consent to the intervention in question. This will be the patient, the person who uses health and care services or someone with parental responsibility for a person under the age of 18, someone authorised to do so under a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) or someone who has the authority to make treatment decisions as a court appointed deputy). Agreement where the person does not know what the intervention entails is not 'consent'.

WELLBEING: a person's wellbeing may include their sense of hope, confidence, self-esteem, ability to communicate their wants and needs, ability to make contact with other people, ability to show warmth and affection, experience and showing of pleasure or enjoyment.

WHISTLEBLOWING: whistleblowing is when a worker reports suspected wrongdoing at work. Officially this is called 'making a disclosure in the public interest' and may sometimes be referred to as 'escalating concerns.' You must report things that you feel are not right, are illegal or if anyone at work is neglecting their duties. This includes when someone's health and safety is in danger; damage to the environment; a criminal offence; that the company is not obeying the law (like not having the right insurance); or covering up wrongdoing.

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http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/829/page/49729

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http://www.healthworkerstandards.scot.nhs.uk/pages/profCurrUnreg.htm

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