Staffordshire Social Care Workforce

CMDT
Care Market Development Team

Handover Guide

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Foreword

This guide has been developed to introduce the subject and further research and learning is recommended to provide a complete understanding. Requirements are often unique to individual care services, and you should consider how best to implement practices.

Introduction

Hand overs are essential for ensuring continuity of care and safety of both people in receipt of care and staff in an adult social care setting. Hand overs are the process of transferring information, responsibility, and accountability from one shift to another.

They are also an opportunity to communicate any changes, issues, or concerns that may affect the quality of care and the well-being of service users and staff.

Preparing the handover

Preparing for the handover is important to ensure all relevant information is handed over to the subsequent shift. It would be beneficial to utilise a standardised document which ensures that all elements relevant for handover are covered.

Issues

Issues can include any events, situations, incidents, or changes that have occurred or emerged during the previous shift.

These may include:

- New or worsening health conditions or symptoms
- New or changed medication or treatment plans
- New or updated care plans or risk assessments
- New or changed preferences or needs
- New or changed behaviour or mood
- New or changed safeguarding concerns
- New or changed staff availability or allocation
- New or changed equipment or supplies
- New or changed environmental or safety issues
- Accidents or injuries that have occurred
- Breakdowns or malfunctions of equipment or facilities
- Security or safety breaches or risks

People

In addition to handing over new issues that have occurred, there will be information relating to people in receipt of care that needs to be handed over as standard. This information should include both how the person has been supported and any anticipated needs or priorities expected for the following shift.

Ensuring agency staff are involved in the hand over process is particularly important as they will be less familiar with individuals and the expectations around care routines.

We would recommend utilising the SBAR methodology for communication information around individuals.

Information that you should include:

- Medication
- Modified diet requirements (following the IDDSI standards)
- Hydration monitoring
- Repositioning needs
- Bowel movement monitoring
- Required welfare checks
- Any other care needs unique to the individual

This should include handing over completed charts relating to the individual and confirmation of routines that need to be followed.

Planned visits

Planned visits by professionals are any appointments, meetings, or consultations that are scheduled to take place during the next shift. These should be discussed at a handover to ensure the next shift is aware of any expected visitors:

These may include:

- Healthcare professionals, such as doctors, nurses, therapists, etc.
- Social care professionals, such as social workers, care managers, advocates, etc.
- Legal professionals, such as solicitors, court officials, etc.
- Regulatory professionals, such as inspectors, auditors, etc.
- Other professionals, such as volunteers, contractors, etc.

Planned visits by professionals should be communicated to the incoming staff clearly, concise, and comprehensive.

Handing over

New issues and information should be communicated to the next shift in a way that is accurate, relevant, and timely.

The following steps can help to achieve this:

- Prepare a written summary or checklist of the new issues on the prior shift, using clear and concise language and following any agreed format or template. A standardised template is recommended.
- Ensure you have sufficient staff coverage for the service so people in receipt of care are not put at risk and care needs are met. This will mean not all staff are involved in the handover.
- Review the summary or checklist with the outgoing staff, ensuring that all the information is correct and complete, and that any questions or clarifications are addressed.
- Share the summary or checklist with the incoming staff.
- Highlight the most important or urgent new issues that require immediate attention or action from the incoming staff.
- Provide any additional information or guidance that may help the incoming staff to understand and respond to the new issues effectively and appropriately.
- Invite any feedback or queries from the incoming staff and answer them as clearly and honestly as possible.
- Feedback to staff who weren't at the handover.

A clear and honest handover will enable the incoming staff to correctly prioritise tasks and manage risks. As previously mentioned, we would recommend utilising the SBAR methodology for communication information around individuals.

In addition to handing over issues and information there may be items that need to be handed over from one shift to another. These could include keys, phones and any other items that need to be held by a individual.

Making a handover successful

Here are some tips and best practices for conducting hand overs between shifts:

- Plan and allocate enough time for hand overs and avoid interruptions or distractions during the process.
- Use a consistent and standardised format or template for hand over documents and ensure that they are updated and accessible to all staff.
- Use clear and concise language, and avoid jargon, slang, or abbreviations that may cause confusion or misunderstanding.
- Use a respectful and professional tone, and avoid blaming, criticising, or judging others.
- Use a positive and supportive attitude, and acknowledge the achievements, challenges, and feedback of others.
- Use a collaborative and participatory approach, and encourage the input, involvement, and feedback of all staff.
- Use a reflective and learning approach, and identify any areas for improvement, development, or training.
- Use a confidential approach and respect the privacy and dignity of others by ensuring private information is not discussed in a location that can be overheard.

Summary

Handovers are essential for ensuring continuity of care and safety of people. Handovers are the process of transferring information, responsibility, and accountability from one shift to another. They are also an opportunity to communicate any changes, issues, or concerns that may affect the quality of care and the well-being of service users and staff.

For further information, please contact cmdt@staffordshire.gov.uk

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