

Out of Hours Policy

Introduction

An Out of Hours system is in place to provide advice and support to staff and service users out with office hours. Primarily Friday 4pm – Monday 9am and from 5pm to 9am each weekday. Times may vary for example, public holidays, however staff will be advised of any adjustments as situations arise.

Policy Aims

This policy aims to provide clarity, for staff and service users, as to the purpose of Out of Hours and when to contact the appropriate person.

Allocation

A rotation of experienced staff provide a 'first level' Out of Hours service. A weekly rota of Out of Hours staff is completed and distributed to those partaking in the Out of Hours, on an annual basis.

The Head of Operations and Service Manager provide a 'second level' Out of Hours service.

Contacting

The Out of Hours phone (07715 421388) is passed to the allocated member of staff each Monday or when agreed within the Out of Hours team.

In the first instance, contact should always be made with the first level Out of Hours person. Staff should contact the Out of Hours person to phone in sick for that day. Service users would contact the Out of Hours person to cancel or make changes to their support for that day. The Out of Hours person is responsible for coordinating any changes required to staffing or service users support times. They will also advise and support staff when dealing with emergency situations.

Specific circumstances where the first level Out of Hours person MUST be informed immediately/as soon as practicably possible:

- Medical/health concerns / accidents or incidents involving members or staff which require medical attention or hospital treatment/attendance.
- Safeguarding concerns.
- If a service user goes missing.
- Guide/Communicator cannot gain access to service user.
- Death of a service user
- Complaints from service users, families, stakeholders or the public (only if it cannot wait for an email to be sent to management to receive the next working day).
- Where any emergency service has to be summoned.
- If a service user requires communication support in an emergency.

The first level Out of Hours person will only contact the second level Out of Hours person as required e.g. in the case of:

- Incidents resulting in Emergency Services being contacted (hospital admission, police attendance, fire or death.), or those which are reportable to RIDDOR / the Care Inspectorate.
- Safeguarding concerns.

Appropriate Support

The majority of Out of Hours support provided will consist of providing advice over the phone. However, in the case of more serious circumstances, support may take the form of:

- The Out of Hours person making phone calls e.g. to family members, service users, staff
- The Out of Hours person attending to support a service user (this would not be a regular requirement but may very occasionally happen).

When providing support, reference should be made to the appropriate organisational policies and procedures e.g.:

- Absence & Attendance Policy
- Accident and Incident Policy
- Adult Support and Protection Policy
- Bullying & Harassment Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Driving for Work Policy
- Guidelines for Guide Communicators Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Loneworking Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Working in Severe Weather Policy

Recording

Any telephone calls/texts received by the Out of Hours person must be recorded on the Out of Hours reporting template each week. This provides evidence of calls including advice provided as well as addressing any issues raised. This report should then be sent to the service co-ordinators, Head of Operations and Service Manager; this will then be saved in the Out of Hours folder within the sharedrive.

Communication between staff and the Out of Hours person should be shared with the next person on the Out of Hours rota, if there is anything relevant/outstanding that needs to be passed on for the following week.

Payment

Out of Hours Payment should be claimed for on a monthly basis, in line with payroll timescales, using the Expenses Claim Form.

Additional payments can be claimed for covering the Out of Hours phone during bank holidays.

Where the Out of Hours person is required to travel to support out with their normal working hours, time and travel expenses will be reimbursed through payment.