



**PRIME
CARE
SUPPORT**

Prime Care Support Ltd

Service User Guide

This guide has been designed to clearly inform you of the services Prime Care Support can offer and support you with.

If you require more information or assistance, we will be more than happy to help you. You can call the offices at any time for any reason – even an informal chat. Alternatively, you may wish to speak to a branch manager to discuss your individual situation or needs.

If you want to visit us, an appointment is not always necessary however, it's often useful to make one to ensure a manager is available.

**Bedfordshire (Head) Office
21 –23 Princes Street
Dunstable
Bedfordshire
LU6 3AS**

**Tel: 01582 601501
Email: Dunstable@primecare.co.uk**

**Day Opportunities Centre
Unit 1, The Maltings,
Manor Road,
Rowsham,
Buckinghamshire
HP22 4QP**

**Tel: 01296 680444
Email: Rowsham@primecare.co.uk**

SERVICE USER GUIDE

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| <i>THE REGISTERED PROVIDER/ REGISTERED LOCATIONS</i> | 3 |
| <i>SERVICES WE PROVIDE</i> | 3 |
| <i>OUR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES</i> | 4 |
| <i>MAINTAINING AND PROMOTING YOUR INDEPENDENCE</i> | 5 |
| <i>CUSTOMER CHARTER</i> | 5 |
| <i>WHAT HAPPENS NEXT</i> | 7 |
| <i>YOUR CARE WORKERS</i> | 8 |
| <i>CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CARE WORKERS</i> | 8 |
| <i>TIME OF CALLS AND CONTINUITY OF CARE WORKERS</i> | 9 |
| <i>TELEPHONES/CALL MONITORING SYSTEM</i> | 9 |
| <i>KEY HOLDING AND ACCESS</i> | 9 |
| <i>SMOKING AND ALCOHOL AT WORK</i> | 10 |
| <i>CONFIDENTIALITY</i> | 10 |
| <i>DATA PROTECTION AND ACCESS TO RECORDS</i> | 10 |
| <i>INSURANCE</i> | 10 |
| <i>EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES</i> | 10 |
| <i>WITHDRAWAL OF CARE SERVICES</i> | 11 |
| <i>HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES</i> | 11 |
| <i>MOVING AND HANDLING POLICY (SUMMARY)</i> | 11 |
| <i>HANDLING SERVICE USER'S FINANCES</i> | 12 |
| <i>COLLECTION OF PENSIONS</i> | 12 |
| <i>SAFE GUARDING SERVICE USER'S PROPERTY</i> | 12 |
| <i>SAFEGUARDING OF VULNERABLE ADULTS (SOVA)-SUMMARY</i> | 14 |
| <i>ASSISTANCE WITH MEDICATION (SUMMARY OF POLICY)</i> | 15 |
| <i>PAYMENT OF SERVICES & PRICES</i> | 16 |
| <i>QUALITY ASSURANCE</i> | 17 |
| <i>OUR COMMITMENT</i> | 18 |
| <i>COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE</i> | 19 |
| <i>FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE STAGES</i> | 20 |
| <i>LOCAL AUTHORITY NUMBERS FOR REPORTING ABUSE</i> | 21 |

SERVICE USER GUIDE

Prime Care Support Ltd is a family run business and has been a leading provider of high quality home care in the community since 1994. The Company registration number is 351590. Please take time to read and understand this guide as it contains some important information on how we provide the service to you and what expectations are for yourself as a service user and us as a provider. Some of our policy information is referred to although in a simplified format. This is to make the document easier to read. If you require the full versions of our policies – or need anything explaining in further detail, please drop us a line.

THE REGISTERED PROVIDER/ LOCATIONS

Bedfordshire Office
21-23 Princes Street
Dunstable
Bedfordshire
LU6 3AS

Telephone: 01582 601501

Email: Dunstable@primecare.co.uk

Day Opportunities Office
Unit 1, The Maltings
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Buckinghamshire
HP22 4QP

Telephone: 01296 680444

Email: Rowsham@primecare.co.uk

Prime Care Support Ltd is registered to provide the following regulated activities:

- Personal care

Prime Care Support Ltd is registered to provide services to the following:

- Older People.
- Younger adults.
- Children 0-18 years.
- People with mental health.
- People with physical disability.
- People with sensory impairment.
- People with dementia.

The Managing Director/Responsible Individual is Jason Drury who has 20 years extensive experience and knowledge in managing community care services.

The Registered Manager of Prime Care Support is Emma Alder. They both have many years of experience in managing community care services.

SERVICES WE PROVIDE

Prime Care Support offers a full spectrum of services to meet your needs and choices.

Supporting you with Personal Care

- Getting out of bed, washing and dressing.
- Hair care, make up, shaving, oral care.

SERVICE USER GUIDE

- Toileting.
- Assistance with medication.
- Getting ready for bed.
- Night sitting.
- Visits to check all is well with the individual.

Supporting you with Domestic Tasks

- Cleaning and tidying your house.
- Assisting with meal preparation.
- Helping you with your laundry.

General Support

- Escorted shopping.
- Sitting service.
- Prescription collection.
- Acting as a companion.
- Assisting with errands.
- Dog walking.
- Feeding and caring for pets.
- Filling forms.
- Writing letters.
- Gardening.

All our services are delivered to meet your individual needs and ensure that you remain independent and free to make decisions within your own home.

OUR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To provide all service users with the highest possible standard of care with emphasis on independence, choice and dignity.
- To work with service users and relevant others to ensure person-centred, outcome based support plans.
- To respond appropriately to changes that affects the service user's physical, mental or psychological health.

SERVICE USER GUIDE

- To support people to remain at home and remain as independently as possible.
- To carry out regular quality monitoring of people and use the results to make immediate changes when required.
- To ensure staff are adequately trained to meet people's needs and choices.
- To strive for continuous improvement.

MAINTAINING AND PROMOTING YOUR INDEPENDENCE

Whilst supporting you, all care workers are encouraged to maintain, promote and maximise your independence wherever possible. As they carry out their duties, care workers will respect the privacy and dignity of you and your family and maintain confidentiality at all times.

CUSTOMER CHARTER

This Charter is designed to inform and support the people who use our services and to understand what service standards they may expect from us.

Our Conduct: We promise to:

- Put the needs of Customers first at all times when we are on duty.
- Be caring, kind and considerate to Customers whether face to face or over the telephone.
- Respect the privacy, dignity and chosen lifestyle of all our Customers.
- Respond to the needs of Customers by following their support plan and all the Company policies and procedures at all times.
- Protect Customers by recording, reporting and acting appropriately on any information we are given from whatever source.
- Respect and support our colleagues at all times, inside and outside of the Company.

When you contact us:

- We will be polite, courteous, respectful and fair at all times.
- We will respect your confidentiality.
- If you telephone us we will answer your call with the standard greeting and giving our names.
- We strive to answer your enquiry immediately. If the person you need is unavailable we will take a message and ensure that someone, who can assist you, returns your call as soon as possible.
- We will explain your rights and responsibilities.
- We strive to communicate with you in the ways that you prefer.
- We will acknowledge your complaints within 5 working days and ensure that you are kept fully informed. We aim to resolve any complaint within 28 days.

SERVICE USER GUIDE

When we communicate with you we will:

- Respond in a way that is helpful to you. Where we know there is a need, we can provide written information in large print. We can communicate in writing in your first language if you prefer.
- Keep you informed about things that we do and the decisions we take that may affect the service you receive from us.

If you visit us we will:

- Greet you quickly and politely.
- Ensure that you are seen on time if you have made an appointment with us.
- Meet with you in private areas to discuss confidential issues.

When management visit you at home, we will:

- Make an appointment that is also convenient to you, and arrive on time.
- Inform you as soon as possible if we are unable to keep the appointment.
- The only exception to us making an appointment with you is for us to spot check the performance of our staff. You may have chosen not to allow us to do this when you have had your initial visit and again each year as we review your support plan with you. If you decide that you do not want to allow this after initially agreeing we are happy to accommodate your wishes.
- Show you identification before entering your home.
- Enter your home in your preferred way.

If we get things wrong, we will:

- Apologise for our mistake and put it right as soon as possible.
- Inform you of your right to complain, and how to do so.
- Investigate your complaint and inform you of our findings and what we have learned from our mistakes.
- Keep you informed of progress.
- Always welcome your views, feedback and suggestions about how we can improve our services.

Your involvement

We want you to give us your views to help us to improve and shape our services, and to have an influence on the major decisions that we make by:-

- Providing a range of opportunities to comment on the services that you receive or would like to receive.
- Providing you with feedback on how the views of our customers have influenced decisions.
- Providing opportunities to be more directly involved in ways that are helpful to you.

SERVICE USER GUIDE

You can help us by:

- Being honest, polite and respectful to our staff and those who undertake work on our behalf.
- Allowing us to log in and out using free calls from your landline.
- Letting us know how you want us to contact you.
- Informing us if you require assistance such as written information in large print or other formats/languages.
- Letting us know if things have gone wrong.
- Making an appointment if you wish to meet with a specific member of staff.
- Keeping appointments or letting us know if you are unable to do so.
- Telling us what you think of the support you receive, both good or bad.
- Settling outstanding payments (if you are self-funding of course) when they are due and letting us know, as soon as possible, if you have any queries or problems in making payment.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

After receiving the initial referral either privately or from your Social Worker, we will contact you to arrange a convenient time to visit you. You may choose to have a family member, friend or advocate with you to assist you when we visit.

We will carry out a care needs assessment in conjunction with you. We also carry out a number of risk assessments to ensure your, and the care workers health and safety. The risk assessment may identify risks that will need to be minimised to ensure your visits can be carried out in a safe manner.

A personal support plan will be drawn up to reflect the way you have chosen your care and support to be carried out. It will also identify the outcomes you have chosen to achieve.

Copies of the documents within this file - your care needs assessment, risk assessments and support plan, will be stored electronically on a password protected database residing on our computer system. You are welcome to view the information concerning you at any time. Please refer to our Privacy Policy within this file to see how and why we store your personal data.

If you wish, during the initial assessment the assessor will go through the service user guide with you.

Your service user guide will be stored electronically on a password protected database but will be accessible to you and your family by sending a request via the method stated in the documentation left with you.

We will select a suitable care worker or care workers to meet your assessed needs and choices.

Once care commences we hope that you will build a relationship of trust with your care worker, but if at any time you are dissatisfied with your care provision please contact the relevant Prime Care Support office.

SERVICE USER GUIDE

When it is convenient for you, there will be an annual visit by an assessor at a prearranged time and date to review your outcomes and update where necessary the support that we provide for you. Of course if your wellbeing changes and you require more or less support, a review will be arranged to meet your needs. The review also provides you with the opportunity for you to provide feedback on the service you receive. This will also be supplemented by telephone reviews.

You will also receive an annual survey form to complete, which is part of our quality process. This can be completed and returned anonymously if you prefer to do so. This allows us to monitor the quality of our services and make any improvements if they are required.

YOUR CARE WORKERS

Applicants are put through our vigorous recruitment process, comprising of an interview, two references and an enhanced Criminal Records check. Only applicants who have passed each stage of the process successfully will be employed.

New employees attend a classroom based 5-day induction training course which covers many different subjects including Moving and Handling, Infection Control, First Aid, Food Hygiene, Medication, Child Protection and Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults.

After the classroom induction, care workers shadow an experienced care worker in the community for a period of time. You may occasionally have additional carers attend your visit whilst they are completing this training' and they are 'signed off', by an assessor when they are deemed to be competent. Specific training courses are available to staff working with service user groups who may have specialised needs and individual training sessions with certain service users is sometimes necessary.

Care workers are issued with identification badges which they should carry at **all** times. These badges have a photo of the care worker on it and contact numbers of your local office. Care workers may also wear an easily identifiable blue or white uniform which should be worn at certain times. Please do not let anyone into your home who does not have the appropriate identification.

Care workers carry disposable gloves and aprons which they will use for all care tasks. This is standard practice and a precautionary measure for our staff to reduce infection risks.

Care workers may log in and out of your house either by scanning the QR code or NFC Tag in your documentation or using your telephone. It would be very helpful if we have use of your wifi but it is not essential. Any logging calls made on your phone are free and let us know in the office that your care worker has arrived safely and is staying the appropriate amount of time. On rare occasions, we may ask you to sign a timesheet if there is a problem with the system.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR CARE WORKERS

- Care workers will behave in such a way as to promote and safeguard the service user's well-being and safety.
- Care workers will act in a professional manner with honesty and integrity and will respect the service user's property and home.
- Care workers will not bring unauthorised people or pets into the service user's home.

SERVICE USER GUIDE

- Care workers are not permitted to accept gifts from service users or their friends or relatives. In exceptional circumstances, agreement may be sought from the local office manager for the acceptance of a small token of appreciation such as chocolates.
- Care workers or members of their families are prohibited from acting as witnesses or signatories to wills or any other legal document. Please do not leave any items or money to the care worker (or any other person employed by us) in your will.
- Care workers are not permitted to lend to or borrow anything from a service user. They are also forbidden from buying or selling anything to a service user, which includes agency or catalogue shopping. Participating in gambling syndicates such as lotteries are also prohibited.

TIME OF CALLS AND CONTINUITY OF CARE WORKERS

We will endeavour to provide you with a care worker within 30 minutes either side of the time that has been requested for your visit/visits. Please bear in mind that the allocated time given to each service user, may occasionally run later to do heavy traffic conditions, staff sickness or unforeseen circumstances.

We will try to provide you with a regular care worker/s for the majority of your care package. If your regular care worker is absent through either sickness or holiday, we will endeavour to provide you with another suitable care worker and preferably one who has visited you before.

We shall try to keep the number of care workers to a minimum. However over weekends and holiday periods this may be more difficult to achieve.

Our priority is always to cover your care requirements with a care worker who has skills and abilities to meet your needs. Please note, as part of our diversity policy we cannot specify the gender of your care worker.

TELEPHONES/CALL MONITORING SYSTEM

Care workers are not permitted to use your telephone for their own personal use, except for logging in and out of the monitoring system or for emergencies. The logging system is a free service and ensures compliance with our contracts with the local council. Care workers should not be taking personal calls on their mobile phones whilst in your house except in real emergency situations.

KEY HOLDING AND ACCESS

Our company policy states that care workers are forbidden to hold keys. Access arrangements will be discussed at the initial visit and alternative arrangements discussed to 'key holding' for example the installation of a key safe.

If we are unable to gain access to your home at the time that has been arranged, we will contact the person named as your emergency contact number. If we are unable to speak to your emergency contact person, we will contact your social worker or suitable representative (such as Social Services or the Police) to ensure that no harm has come to you.

SERVICE USER GUIDE

Do not hide keys near your home as thieves are adept at finding the most secret of hiding places.

SMOKING AND ALCOHOL AT WORK

Our care workers are NOT allowed to smoke or vape in your home. Please do not allow any of your care workers to smoke in your home. **Service users must refrain from smoking or vaping in front of care workers while they carry out your visits and ideally should refrain from doing so 1 hour prior to the care visit starting.**

Care workers are not allowed to consume alcohol during working hours.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Care workers must abide and adhere to the company's Confidentiality Policy. This policy protects you and your family from divulgence of anything heard, seen or read about you in their work situation.

Sometimes care workers are legally obliged to pass on certain information on a need to know basis where your or a care worker's health and well-being is at risk. If a third party does need to be contacted on your behalf, we will seek to ask your permission to do so except where responding to an emergency.

DATA PROTECTION AND ACCESS TO RECORDS

You are entitled to have access to your records kept in the Prime Care Support office under the Data Protection Act of 2018. This act prohibits us from disclosing information from your personal file to unauthorised persons.

Should you require access to the information on your file please contact the office in writing with your request.

Please refer to our Privacy Policy in this file to see how and why we store your personal data.

INSURANCE

Prime Care Support holds full employers and public liability insurances as required by law. It is the service user's responsibility however to ensure that their private property is insured against damage and general wear and tear including damage caused by carers whilst undertaking normal duties. See the Terms and Conditions of Service for full details.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Prime Care Support operates an equal opportunities policy which is adhered to in our recruitment procedures and the delivery of the service. This ensures that our work practices treat people fairly and equally regardless of their race, colour, nationality, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, marital status, disability or age.

Any cultural requirements will be discussed at the initial care needs assessment. Prime Care Support actively promotes working conditions and environment that discourages harassment and intimidation both to its care workers and service users.

SERVICE USER GUIDE

WITHDRAWAL OF CARE SERVICES

Rarely do we have cause to withdraw our care services from a service user. The conditions that result in this action being taken usually revolve around health and safety issues, unrealistic expectations of our service, or occasionally due to unacceptable behaviour by a service user or family member. Prime Care Support has a zero tolerance approach towards anyone who demonstrates abusive behaviour to a staff member. With self-funding service users, persistent non-payment of invoices may result in this action being taken.

No cancellation of service will be undertaken without firstly exploring every avenue to resolve the issue of conflict.

HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

Please remember that it is your responsibility to be at home when your care worker visits at the allocated times. If you are not responding and we haven't been informed, we will have to instigate an emergency procedure to check that you are well. This entails contacting your next of kin if we receive no response we will contact emergency services.

At the initial visit, risk assessments will be carried out to identify any apparent risk to you or your care worker. Should any risks be identified either then or during your ongoing care, the issues will be discussed and a solution identified. Service users are requested to inform Prime Care Support office if any risk should come to their attention which could affect themselves or their care worker's health and safety. Care workers can refuse to carry out tasks where they consider that they or a service user's health and safety may be compromised.

If a care worker suspects that a service user has suffered harm, abuse or injury from any source, they are required to report the incident immediately to a member of the management team at the office. Care workers are trained to recognise differing types and causes of abuse.

Care workers should also report any incidents or bad practice by another member of staff, which could affect either service user, care worker or bring the company reputation into disrepute.

MOVING AND HANDLING POLICY (SUMMARY)

Prime Care is committed to reducing risks during manual handling operations and fully complying with current legislation in accordance with Manual Handling Operations Act (1992).

A risk assessment will be completed by an assessor at commencement of service.

It is company policy to avoid manual handling and wherever possible use mechanical hoists and equipment. Where this is not possible, we will use accepted moving aids. Where the need for the manual handling of people by care workers cannot be avoided, Prime Care Support shall take the appropriate measures and use the correct means or provide care workers with such means in order to reduce the risks involved.

SERVICE USER GUIDE

If two care workers are assigned to complete a task it is important that no one care worker attempts to carry out a moving and handling task independently. If one care worker is running late due to unforeseen circumstances, their colleague may assist in the preparation of their duties but **MUST NOT** commence the moving and handling procedure until their colleague arrives.

If a service user's mobility deteriorates, an updated moving and handling risk assessment must be undertaken.

Prime Care Support considers reviews and feedback to be an essential part of the service user's care. Whilst formal reviews are required at prescribed intervals, we encourage staff to carry out reviews on an ongoing basis.

HANDLING SERVICE USER'S FINANCES

It is **STRICTLY FORBIDDEN** to accept or handle ANY money from a service user without being part of an agreed support plan.

All money, cheques and other financial matters must be handled with care, honesty and integrity at all times.

On no account should your P.I.N. be passed to a care worker.

Any problems relating to your finances must be reported immediately to the Manager at Prime Care Support.

The Office invoices self funding service users on a four weekly basis. Care workers must not accept any cash or cheques from Service users on behalf of the Company, except with the express permission of management. Care workers must on no account use store loyalty cards for their own benefit. Failure to observe this rule will result in strict disciplinary action.

Care workers should only become involved in service user's finances or handle money as part of an agreed support plan.

All contact with service user finances must be documented and signed by both care worker and service user.

COLLECTION OF PENSIONS

This can only be done as part of a signed agreed support plan.

The Company discourages care workers from carrying and managing large sums of money, particularly more than one week's pension.

A written record should be maintained of all transactions including receipts.

SAFE GUARDING SERVICE USER'S PROPERTY

Whilst performing their duties for service users, care workers must be respectful of their property at all times. If we are required to clean or move valuable items, ensure that you



SERVICE USER GUIDE

have given permission to do so. Care workers must not handle cash belonging to you without specifically being requested to do so, as part of your agreed support plan.

SERVICE USER GUIDE

SAFEGUARDING OF VULNERABLE ADULTS (SOVA)-SUMMARY

It is the policy of Prime Care Support Ltd to protect its service users in accordance with the 'Safe Guarding of Vulnerable Adults' guidance and procedures (SOVA) as published by the Department of Health in association with the Care Quality Commission, in order to meet the statutory requirements of the Care Standards Act 2000.

We endorse the following definitions given by the Department of Health:

'A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 or over who is or maybe in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability age or illness; and who or is or maybe unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him of herself against significant harm or exploitation.'

Forms of abuse include:

Physical abuse - includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.

Sexual abuse - includes rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting.

Psychological abuse - includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

Financial/material abuse - includes theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Neglect and acts of omission - include ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating;

Institutional Abuse – May take the form of repeated incidents of poor or unsatisfactory professional practice through to widespread or persistent ill treatment or gross misconduct.

Discriminatory abuse - includes racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

All staff will be trained to understand the above definitions via Induction and refresher courses in order to:

Ensure the safety, well-being and respect of the vulnerable adult's rights.

Comprehend their responsibilities and duties as a Care Worker, Co-ordinator, Senior Manager.

Be vigilant in protecting the vulnerable adult.

SERVICE USER GUIDE

Responsibilities and Duties

Care Staff - It is the responsibility and duty of all staff to identify and report any suspected abuse. The Company procedure must be followed and adhered to at all times in respect of reporting suspected abuse of a vulnerable adult.

Managers - It is the responsibility and duty of all managers to respond appropriately to any reported suspicion of abuse made by a staff member, and inform all the relevant governmental agencies.

LOCAL AUTHORITY NUMBERS FOR REPORTING ABUSE

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Central Bedfordshire Council | 0300 300 8122 |
| Luton Borough Council | 01582 547660 / 01582 547659 |
| Buckinghamshire County Council | 0800 137 915 |

We politely ask that neither you or your family get upset if we make a safe guarding referral on your behalf. We have a legal responsibility to report any suspected instances of abuse and sometimes things may get over reported. We like to err on the side of caution and this way we ensure we catch things as they happen.

ASSISTANCE WITH MEDICATION (SUMMARY OF POLICY)

Care workers will:

- Be aware of and follow Prime Care Support Ltd.'s medication policy to ensure the safe assistance with medication to a service user within their own home.
- Attend training sessions when asked to do so.
- Administer eye, ear or nose drops and creams and lotions.
- Request training for any situation for which the worker does not feel suitably prepared.
- Inform the line manager of any changes in circumstances to the service user.
- Prioritise their visits for service users who need support with time-sensitive medicines.
- To seek the consent of the service user each time the care worker assists with medication.
- Maintain the service user's rights to dignity and independence at all times.
- Keep all information about a service user's medication and treatment confidential.
- Never introduce, sell, offer advice or recommend any form of medication, remedy or preparation, including homeopathic and herbal.
- Dispose of unwanted medication in a safe way in accordance with the policy.

We will NOT undertake any of the following medication related tasks:

- Making up of dosset boxes/sealed dosage containers or fill monitored dosage boxes with medication. Assist with medication taken from a family filled dosset box.

SERVICE USER GUIDE

- Give any medicines by any method other than orally or external application, unless staff have received specific, certified training.
- Administer prescribed medication, unless staff have received specific training (Prime Care Support's medication course).
- Give injections.
- Cut toenails & finger nails.
- Change dressings.
- Suppositories.
- Insert or withdraw urinary catheters, nasogastric tubes or wound drains.
- Insert or withdraw feeding tubes.
- Administer 'controlled drugs' or those substances regulated by the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 (as amended). Controlled drugs will only be administered once a risk assessment has taken place and medication plan drawn up.
- Assist with Buccal Midazolam unless staff have received specific, certified training.
- Assist with nebulisers unless staff have received specific training.
- Assist with oxygen, unless staff have received specific training.
- Prepare and assist medication via PEG, unless staff have received specific certified training.
- Cut, crush or split medication unless agreed with pharmacist/GP and branch managers.

Your Care Worker Must:

- Be fully trained in our medication policy and procedures, before carrying out any assistance with service user's medication.
- Request training for any situation for which the worker does not feel suitably prepared.
- Immediately report any changes to service user's medication.
- Fully complete the medication record form.
- Inform line manager of any changes in circumstances to the service user.
- To seek the consent of the service user each time the care worker assists with medication.
- Check the medication record form to ensure the medication has not already been administered.
- Inform line manager if the service user refuses to take their medication.
- Report immediately to line manager of any dose of medication that has been missed.
- Report concerns immediately to line manager if a service user has self-overdosed.
- Dispose of surplus medication only via a pharmacist.
- Check that the service user has swallowed the medication.

If you require any further information, please request our full medication policy from the relevant office.

PAYMENT OF SERVICES & PRICES

SERVICE USER GUIDE

If the local council has commissioned us to provide a care and support package for you, the council will either fund the full cost or part of the cost of your care package.

The council may invoice you directly. Please speak to the Social Worker that arranged your care package for further information.

If you have contacted the company directly to arrange a private care package, you will be invoiced on a four weekly basis at our current charges.

We also support payment streams such as Direct Payments, Individual Support Funds, pre-paid payment cards, credit/debit cards, cheques and direct debits.

Visit prices range from £10.00 upwards dependant on the call type and duration.

QUALITY ASSURANCE (SUMMARY)

Prime Care Support is committed to delivering a quality service to all of our service users.

We have set and understood goals to achieve customer satisfaction which enables service users to achieve the best quality of life possible whilst living within in their own homes.

We will achieve this by the effective recruitment, training and development of our staff and by tried and tested policies and procedures.

Each employee has a responsibility to communicate with both service users and others involved in the provision of their care, and also with the company to ensure this service is not compromised in any way.

SERVICE USER GUIDE

OUR COMMITMENT

Prime Care Support is committed to the provision of quality care services and this is instilled in staff via our quality assurance systems.

Our quality assurance systems cover the following areas:

- Recruitment of staff.
- Training of staff.
- Management of staff.
- Delivery of service.
- Monitoring of the service.
- Auditing of the service.
- Continuous improvement of service delivery.

We monitor the service by utilising the following methods:

Regular communication

The office team is in regular communication with service users, care workers, relatives, care managers, district nurses and advocates. This allows any issues/concerns to be addressed in a timely manner.

Service user reviews

These are carried out as a minimum annually but are often carried out more frequently if the need arises. This provides the service user with the opportunity to have a face-to-face review and discuss their support plan and if the service is meeting their expectations/outcomes.

Care worker supervision

Unannounced spot checks are carried out on care workers working in the community. Regular supervision and annual appraisals are also carried out.

Complaints/Compliments

As part of our quality assurance systems we have a standard complaint, comment and compliments form that is completed by office staff. We keep a record of complaints and how they have been addressed.

Annual quality survey

Our annual quality survey identifies areas for improvement in our service delivery and provides service users with the opportunity to make suggestions and comments. Each year an action plan is created from the results of the survey to help improve our quality.

Continuous improvement of service delivery

Our quality assurance systems identify areas of good practice and highlight the areas that need to be improved upon. They assist us with understanding the needs of the people or organisations that we serve, ensuring we meet their defined outcomes. The processes allow us to collect and analyse data, facilitating effective decision making and improvements.

SERVICE USER GUIDE

COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE (SUMMARY)

Our aim:

Prime Care Support is committed to delivering quality services and working in an open and accountable way that builds the trust and respect of all our stakeholders.

One of the ways in which we can continue to improve our service is by listening and responding to the views of our customers and stakeholders and in particular by responding to complaints and putting mistakes right.

Therefore we ensure that:

- Making a complaint is as easy as possible.
- We treat complaints as clear expressions of dissatisfaction with our services which call for an immediate response.
- We deal with them promptly, politely and always in a confidential manner.
- We respond in the right way – for example, with an explanation, or apology where we have got things wrong, or information on any action we have taken etc.
- We learn from complaints and use them to improve our services. We review our complaints policy and procedure annually.

We recognise that many concerns will be raised informally, and dealt with quickly.

We endeavor to:

- Resolve informal concerns quickly.
- Liaise with an advocate, family member, friend or neighbour in relation to the concern.
- Keep matters low key.

An informal approach to a complaint may be appropriate. If concerns cannot be satisfactorily resolved informally, then the formal complaints procedure should be followed.

Formal Complaints

The formal complaints procedure is intended to ensure that all complaints are handled fairly, consistently and wherever possible resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

Prime Care Support's responsibility will be:

- Acknowledge the formal complaint in writing.
- Respond within a stated period of time.
- Deal reasonably and sensitively with the complaint.
- Take action where appropriate.

A complainant's responsibility is to:

- Raise concerns promptly and directly to the registered manager of the branch.
- Explain the problem as clearly and as fully as possible, including any action taken to date.

SERVICE USER GUIDE

- Allow Prime Care Support a reasonable time to deal with the matter.
- Recognise that some circumstances may be beyond Prime Care Support's control.

Responsibility for Action: All employees of Prime Care Support.

Confidentiality

Except in exceptional circumstances, every attempt will be made to ensure that both the complainant and Prime Care Support maintain confidentiality. However, the circumstances giving rise to the complaint may be such that it is not possible to maintain confidentiality. Should this be the case, the situation will be explained to the complainant.

Monitoring and Reporting

On a monthly basis Prime Care Support monitors all concerns and complaints. Reports of concerns and complaints are made available to Social Services and The Care Quality Commission.

FORMAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE STAGES

Stage 1

In the first instance, if you are unable to resolve the issue informally, you should write or email the registered manager of the branch you receive your service from so they have a chance to put things right. In your letter, you should set out the details of your complaint, the consequences for you as a result, and the remedy you are seeking.

You can expect your complaint to be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt. You should get a response and an explanation within 28 days of receipt.

Stage 2

If you are not satisfied with Prime Care Support's response to the complaint then you can contact to the relevant Social Services Department, the CQC or LGO, details of which are on the next page.

Useful Local Authority addresses:

Buckinghamshire County Council
(Aylesbury)
County Hall
Walton Street
Aylesbury
Bucks
HP20 1VA

Telephone: 0845 3708090

Luton Borough Council
Town Hall
George Street

Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House
Monks Walk



SERVICE USER GUIDE

Luton
Beds
LU1 2BQ

Chicksands
Shefford
SG17 5TQ

Telephone: 01582 546000

Telephone: 0300 300 8000

LOCAL AUTHORITY NUMBERS FOR REPORTING ABUSE

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Central Bedfordshire Council | 0300 300 8122 |
| Luton Borough Council | 01582 547660 / 01582 547659 |
| Buckinghamshire County Council | 0800 137915 |

Once your complaint has been fully dealt with by Prime Care Support and you are not satisfied with the outcome, you can refer your complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) and ask for it to be reviewed. The LGO provides a free, independent service.

The LGO Advice Team can be contacted for information and advice, or to register your complaint:

Telephone: 0300 061 0614

Email: advice@lgo.org.uk

Website: www.lgo.org.uk

The LGO will not usually investigate a complaint until the provider has had an opportunity to respond and resolve matters.

Our service is registered with and regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The CQC cannot get involved in individual complaints about providers, but is happy to receive information about our services at any time. You can contact CQC at:

Care Quality Commission National Correspondence
Citygate, Gallowgate
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 4PA

Telephone: 03000 616161

Website: www.cqc.org.uk/contactus.cfm