



This document outlines the general Terms and Conditions of employment and is a confidential document between you and West Limerick Independent Living.

Employee Handbook

This Handbook is designed to acquaint employees with West Limerick Independent Living

WEST LIMERICK INDEPENDENT LIVING CLG



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Category: Operational Policies

Subject: Employee Handbook

Responsible for Review of this Policy: West Limerick Independent Living CLG Board

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Welcome

As an employee of West Limerick Independent Living, you will receive a written Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment also referred to as a Contract of Employment. This document outlines the general Terms and Conditions of Employment and is a confidential document between you and West Limerick Independent Living. Please read this Employee Handbook and accompany policies carefully and sign it. This signifies your acceptance of the Terms and Conditions under which you are employed. You should retain a copy of this document and a copy will be retained by the Company.

Handbook Introduction

This Handbook is designed to acquaint employees with West Limerick Independent Living and to provide employees with information about working conditions, benefits, and policies affecting employment. Employees are required to read and be familiar with this Handbook.

The information contained in this Handbook applies to all employees of West Limerick Independent Living. It is considered a condition of ongoing employment that the policies and procedures described in this document are followed. However, nothing in this Handbook alters an employee's legal status.

Individual employees are responsible for reading, understanding, and complying with the provisions of this Handbook. West Limerick Independent Living's objective is to provide employees with a work environment that is constructive to both professional and personal growth. As such, all employees should address questions relating to this document and or their contracts to management as soon as they arise.

Changes to Handbook

This Handbook supersedes all previous versions and memos that may have been issued from time to time on subjects relating to policies and procedures.

However, since like any business, this one is subject to change, West Limerick Independent Living reserves the right to interpret, change, suspend, cancel, or dispute with or without notice all or any part of our policies, procedures, and benefits at any time. As such, amendments to this Handbook may be made from time to time and a copy of any such amendments shall be furnished without delay to employees.

No individual supervisor has the authority to change policies at any time. If an employee is uncertain about any policy or procedure, he/she should speak with his/her direct supervisor at the earliest possible time. West Limerick Independent Living operates a non-discriminatory policy in both its service operation and employment practices.

Information on West Limerick Independent Living

The Independent Living philosophy originated from the very first Centre for Independent Living (CIL) established in Berkeley, California in 1972. That CIL was developed by a group of people with disabilities, to support the



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development of a new perspective on disability – one that focused on the empowerment and civil rights of people with disabilities. It supported and encouraged individuals to live independently in the community.

“Independent Living is not doing things by yourself.....it is being in control of how things are done.”
(Disability activist, Judy Heuman)

The Social Model of Disability

The Independent Living (IL) philosophy promoted a ‘social model’ of disability – with the premise that people with disabilities have a right to actively participate in and contribute to society as equals and without dependence on family, institutions, or charity.

The social model recognises that people with disabilities are prevented from achieving their full potential by the attitude of society, as well as environmental obstacles such as restrictions in their access to public transport, entertainment, and public places, and in education and employment.

The focus is not on rehabilitating the individual with a disability therefore, but on rehabilitating society and the environment, to make it accessible and create inclusion for the person with a disability as a consumer rather than as a patient. It is recognised that the real experts when it comes to designing services are those with the closest possible experiences of the issues - people with disabilities.

What is the Philosophy of Independent Living?

The philosophy of IL espouses living like everyone else - having control of one's own life, having opportunities to make decisions that affect one's life and being able to pursue activities of one's own choosing, regardless of disability.

It means “the right of all persons regardless of age, type or extent of disability to: live in the community, as opposed to living in an institution; have the same range of choices as everyone else; participate in the social, economic and political life of their communities; have a family; live as responsible respected members of their communities with all the duties and privileges that this entails, and; unfold their potential.” (Adolf Ratzka, Disability Activist 2002)

Independent Living therefore is not just concerned with the routine physical tasks of day-to-day life but is more about a way of life. It is about self-actualisation; taking control of one’s own life; exercising choices; taking responsibility while also allowing for the dignity of risk and the freedom to fail. It is also a social and political movement that is changing the way services are provided and the role people with disabilities play in society.

West Limerick Independent Living CLG Overview

West Limerick Independent Living is a not-for-profit company established in 1997 by a small group of people, many of whom have a disability. The company's main aim is to ensure that people with disabilities achieved independent living and full participation in society. Over the past two-decades West Limerick Independent Living is working to develop high quality Personal Support Service for people with disabilities in the Midwestern area of Ireland. West Limerick Independent Living is one of the largest providers of Personal Assistants Services to people with disabilities in Limerick.



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Personal Assistance Services

It was recognised that in practical terms, Personal Assistance was at the core of Independent Living, and the early days of CIL's in Ireland were greatly concerned with creating a consumer-controlled Personal Assistance (PA) service.

A PA is someone who provides a person with a disability with physical assistance to help them in all aspects of daily life from personal care, household tasks, assistance in college or the workplace, driving and interpretation. The PA role is to assist, not to provide care for or tell the person with a disability what is best for them. PA services enable the person with a disability to make their own decisions and be in control of their own life, opening opportunities in education, employment, socially etc.

Today there are approximately 20 CIL's nationwide, operated by people with disabilities at a local level, they still have a vital advocacy role in representing members and supporting them with their integration into mainstream living. Many CIL's provide Personal Assistance (PA) services, funded through Community Employment schemes and/or Health Service Executive funding.

How PA Services Work

Essentially a PA service is a service for persons with significant disability who need assistance in aspects of daily living, at home, travelling, at work, college or socially. The individual first identifies what his/her needs are, facilitated assessment. The identified need then determines the level of service required (i.e., number of hours and how many PAs each person needs) to enable a person with a disability to achieve independent living.

Following assessment, the person with a disability is approved for an agreed number of PA hours per week. The service is funded through the HSE in different areas of the country and is currently administered through a number of service providers, e.g., CIL's, Enable Ireland, and the Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA). The person with a disability has an agreement with one of these providers and the service provider recruits Personal Assistants, sometimes in conjunction with the person with a disability.

The person with a disability may provide some of the training, FETAC Level 5 Health Care is a requirement, and the service provider provides essential health and safety training. Fundamental to the achievement of independent living for each person is the support to enable them to manage their own service with support and training where identified. Although the PA is employed by the service provider, the person with a disability act as the PA's line manager, determining the work to be done and the hours of duty in conjunction with the Service Coordinator.

Summary of Functions – Roles Within the Organisation

Company Board

The Board of West Limerick Independent Living has final responsibility for all organisational decisions. The board of director's role is to ensure that the organisation's prosperity by collectively directing the organisation's affairs



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while meeting the appropriate interests of its members and other relevant stakeholders and complying with all necessary legislation and regulation.

In addition, the board is required to set high standards of governance, transparency, and accountability, even though the board serves on a voluntary basis, the directors of the not-for-profit organisations are obliged to make themselves aware of the organisation's obligations and to ensure that it operates effectively and efficiently and that they behave with integrity.

Manager

The Manager is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the company which include supervise and manage the overall performance of staff. Analysing, reporting, giving recommendations and developing strategies on how to improve services. Achieve business and organization goals, visions, and objectives. Identifying problems, creating choices, and providing alternatives courses of actions.

The Manager's leadership role entails being ultimately responsible for all day-to-day management decisions and for implementing the Company's long- and short-term plans. The Manager acts as a direct liaison between the Board and management of the Company and communicates to the Board on behalf of management.

Service Coordinator

The role of the Service Coordinator is to co-ordination and administrates the personal support service delivered by the company. The service coordinator functions as the single point of contact for clients and personal assistants. This role includes supporting clients to directing the work of their personal assistants as identified in service needs assessment and service agreement. The role also involves assist in the coordination of the organisations health and safety and management system.

Financial Officer

The Financial Officer is responsible for the financial health of our company by managing our financial procedures. Duties involve planning budgets, participating in audits, monitoring transactions, and preparing invoices.

Office Administrator

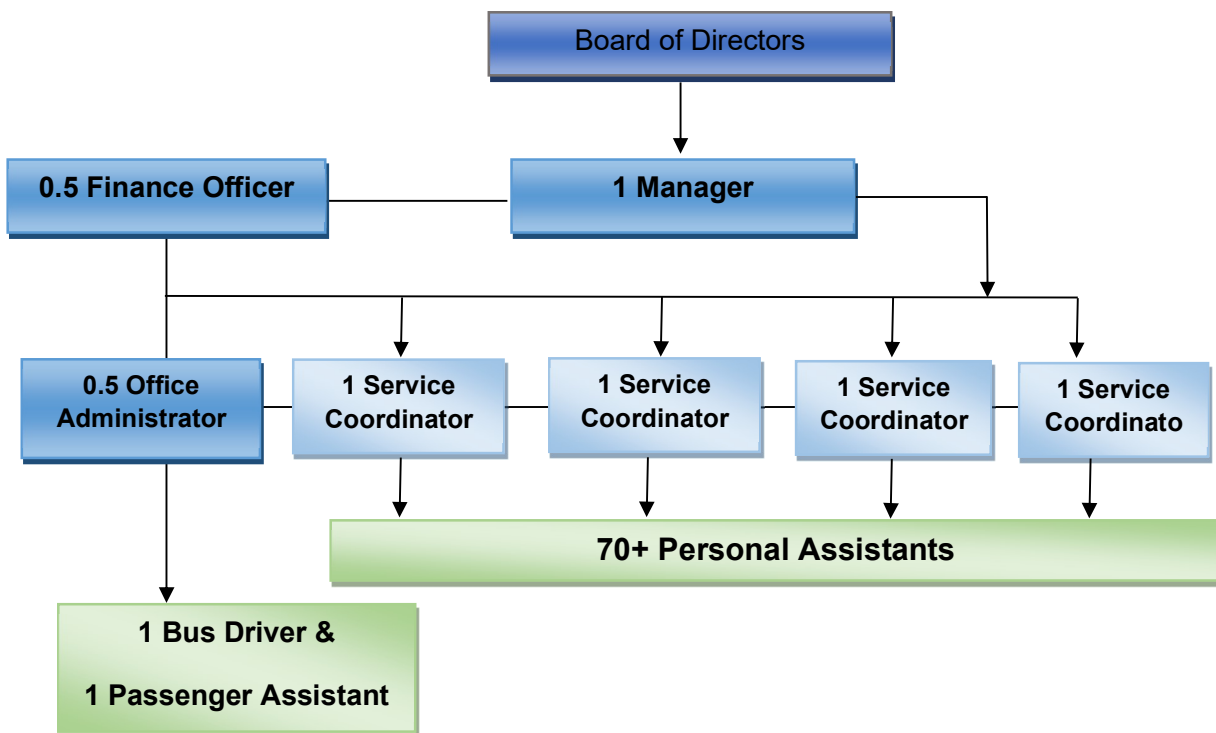
The Office Administrator provides a comprehensive range of high-quality administrative support within the West Limerick Independent Living office to ensure all day to day activities operate efficiently and effectively.



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Company Organisation Chart – Organisational Structure

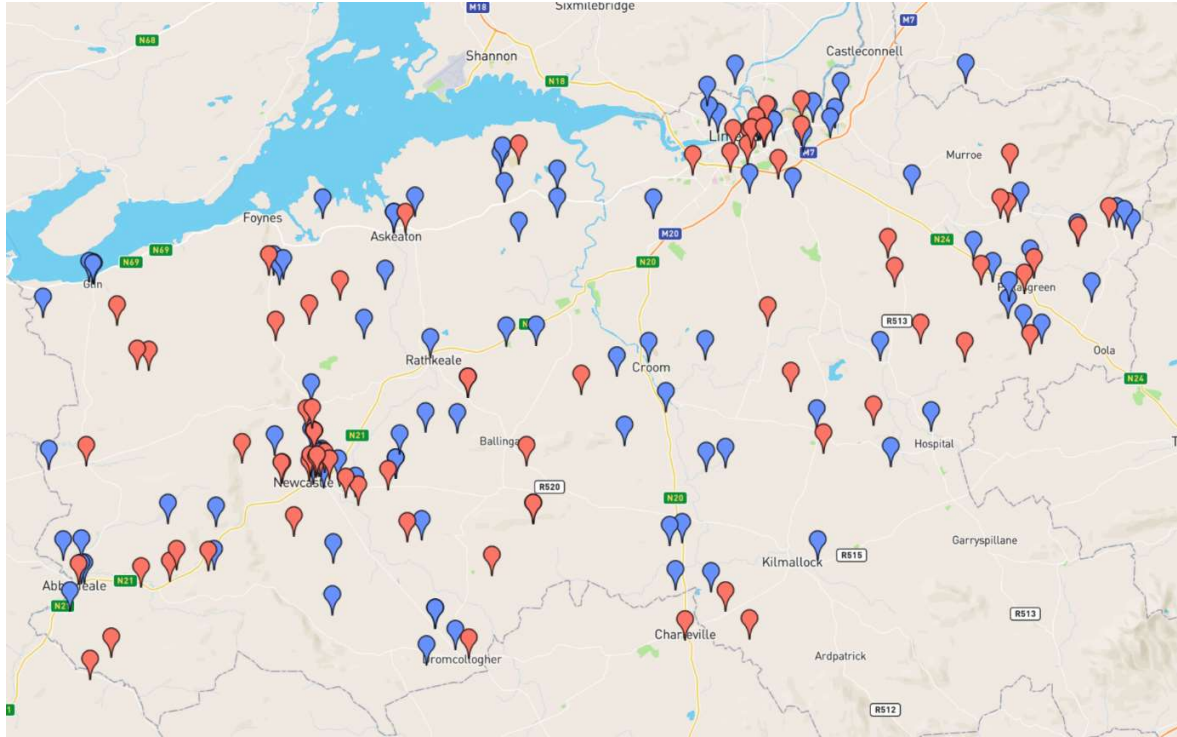
West Limerick Independent Living is a company limited by guarantee, established in 1997 to develop and deliver personal support services to people with disabilities across Limerick City & County, as well as projecting a positive image and perception of people with disabilities.





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Map of Service Area

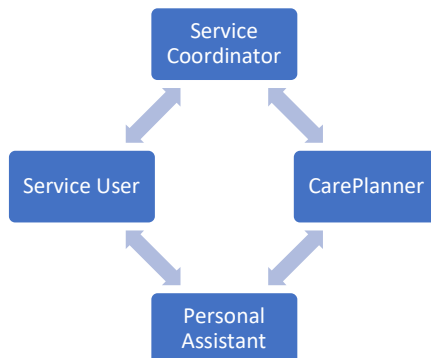


(PA's in Red and Clients in Blue)

Supervision

Given the unique working conditions of the Personal Assistant (lone worker) supervision becomes even more significant as it offers a source of valuable support to the lone worker. This can be carried out when checking the progress of the work, it takes the form of periodic site visits combined with discussions in which issues are raised. The extent of the supervision is directly related to the risk assessment and care plan.

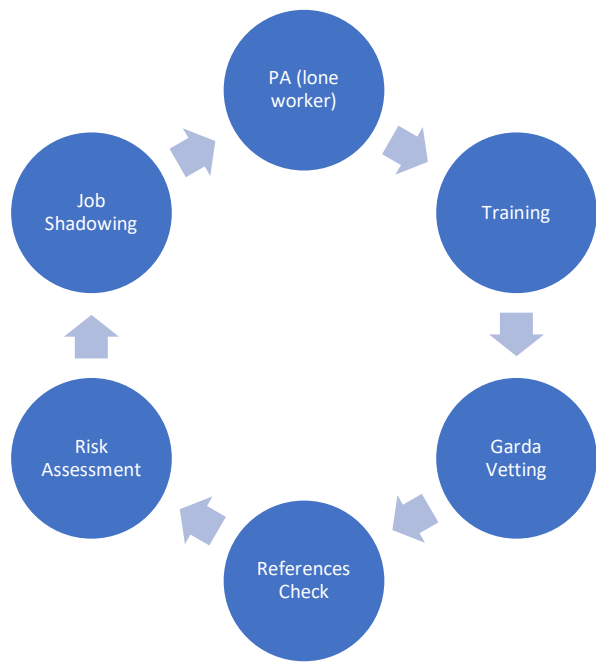
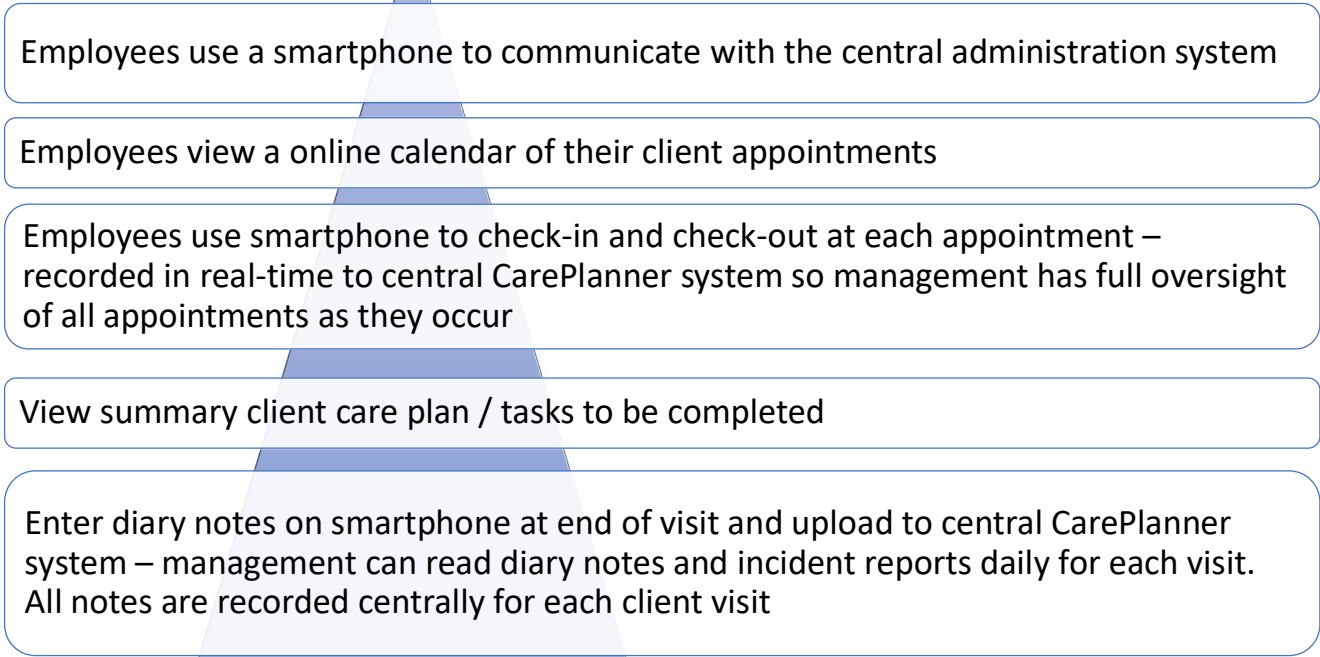
Regular contact between the service coordinators and the lone worker is standard practice as it fosters good reporting, communication, and supervision. This coupled with online management system (CarePlanner) and regular contact with service users ensures that any service-related issues can be addressed in an effective manner.





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Supervision On Line (Care Planner)





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HR POLICIES

Standard Opening Hours

The office is generally open for business from 9.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. Monday to Friday. Closed for lunch from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. and our on-call emergency phone number is 085 806 4306

Induction

West Limerick Independent Living endeavours to ensure that new appointees are familiarised with the demands and opportunities of their roles, with basic modes of working within the organisation, patterns of relationships, and procedures for ensuring a safe and healthy working environment is enjoyed by all. To welcome new employees and equip them with all the information they need, an induction programme will commence within a week of joining the organisation.

The programme entails:

- Familiarisation with office and or service location layout
- A talk on the history and philosophy and work of West Limerick Independent Living
- Introduction to other staff
- A talk on Health and Safety in the organisation
- The provision of other information required on an individual basis to facilitate effective performance as a staff member.

During this programme the employee is invited to ask questions and to enquire about any outstanding issues pertaining to their appointment.

Human Resources Overview

The realm of Human Resources encompasses a wide array of matters, including compensation, benefits, employee relations, and working conditions, among others. Within the framework of West Limerick Independent Living, all issues falling under this umbrella are overseen by the Service Coordinator, Manager, and, if required, the Officers of the Board of Management. Comprehensive information regarding relevant policies and procedures can be found in this handbook, along with the attached policies. Should you have any inquiries, please direct them to the Service Coordinator or Manager as your primary points of contact. We are committed to promptly addressing staff members' queries, while also ensuring that responses are accurate and thoroughly validated, if necessary.

Reference Letters

If you require letters for the following, please contact Administration, in advance:

- ✓ Mortgage ✓ Tenant ✓ Student ✓ Jury Duty ✓ Driving Test ✓ Eyesight Test

If you have any other general HR queries, please refer to the relevant section of this document or discuss your query with management.



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Health Service Executive (HSE) Code of Conduct for Provider Personnel

The Provider (West Limerick Independent Living) have a code of conduct in place, with notification of same to all Provider Personnel that reflects the principles outlined below: -

In the performance of their duties the Provider must and shall procure that its Provider Personnel:

1. Maintain the high standards of service delivery by:
 - a. discharging responsibilities conscientiously, honestly, and impartially.
 - b. always acting within the law; and
 - c. performing duties with efficiency, diligence, and courtesy.
2. Observe appropriate behaviour at work by:
 - a. dealing with the public sympathetically, fairly, and promptly; and
 - b. treating colleagues with respect.
3. Maintain the highest standards of probity by:
 - a. conducting themselves with honesty, impartiality, and integrity.
 - b. never seeking to use improper influence never seeking to use political influence to affect decisions.
 - c. implementing and abiding by guidelines in respect of offers of gifts or hospitality; and
 - d. avoiding conflicts of interest.
4. Act in good faith toward and in the best interests of the Executive by:
 - a. supporting the Executive and its personnel in the performance of its functions.
 - b. promoting the goals and objectives of the Executive and not undermining any of them through action or omission.
 - c. ensuring any actions taken maintain public confidence in the Executive.
5. Act impartially in the performance of their duties.
6. Carry out duties in a party-political neutral manner. Public political activities should not, under any circumstances, be undertaken while undertaking services for the Executive.
7. Ensuring that views or actions taken related to public political activities are not presented or interpreted as official comment on behalf of the Executive.
8. Respecting the constraints of the law.
9. Must not improperly disclose information gained in the course of their work.
10. Respecting the privacy of medical or personal information of patients/service users, Provider Personnel, or other health service business.
11. Maintain the highest standards of service in all dealings with the public.
12. Have due regard for State resources to ensure proper, effective, and efficient use of public money.
13. Show respect for colleagues, patients and service users including beliefs and values.
14. Not use their position to benefit themselves or others with whom they have personal or business ties.
15. Not engage in outside business or activities which would in any way conflict with the interests of their function.



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16. Not receive or accept benefits of any kind from a third party which might reasonably be seen to compromise personal judgement or integrity. All gifts and benefits received must be disclosed to a more senior manager or designated person.
17. Not accepting hospitality of any kind from a third party which might reasonably be seen to compromise personal judgement or integrity. Every care must be taken to ensure that any acceptance of hospitality does not influence, or be seen to influence, the making of decisions; and
18. Ensure clear and appropriate standards are in place and notified to all Provider Personnel in relation to all the above.
19. Employees who are convicted of criminal offences or given the benefit of the Probation Act when tried for a criminal offence, must report that fact to their employer. The employee must make such a report to his/her manager.

Staff Code of Conduct

West Limerick Independent Living is committed to ensuring that a person's involvement with the organisation is a positive and pleasant experience. The purpose of this code is to set out conduct that is expected of all staff and all workers are responsible for making sure that their conduct does not fall below the standards set out in this code and that no action or omission on their part harms the wellbeing of service users. (The term staff member refers to staff, volunteers, and students on work placements.)

West Limerick Independent living has developed a **Child Protection and Welfare Policy** to underpin the commitment of the organisation to promote the welfare and protection of children. It is policy of West Limerick Independent living to regard the welfare of children as being of paramount importance and to ensure that its services are equipped to prevent harm to children and where it occurs to intervene urgently to prevent any harm from escalating. Every West Limerick Independent living staff member, shall ensure, that each child in contact with the service is safe from harm. Each staff member has responsibilities under **Children First** to promote the welfare and protection of every child who attends our services. Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 is the national policy to promote the welfare of children and protect them from abuse or harm.

West Limerick Independent Living therefore require all staff to adhere to the standards set out in this Code of Conduct and where staff fail to meet these standards disciplinary action, including dismissal will be taken.

All Staff are required to:

- Be honest and trustworthy.
- Communicate in an appropriate, open, accurate and straightforward way.
- Respecting confidential information
- Be reliable and dependable.



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- Honour work commitments, agreements, and arrangements and, when it is not possible to do so, explain why.
- Declare issues that might create conflict of interest.
- Adhere and comply with all policies and procedures.
- Use established processes and procedures to challenge and report dangerous, abusive, discriminatory, or exploitative behaviour and practice.
- Inform your supervisor where the practice of colleagues may be unsafe or adversely affect standards of care.
- Help service users to make complaints, taking complaints seriously and responding to them or passing them to the appropriate person.
- Maintain clear and accurate records as required by procedures established for your work.
- Work openly and co-operatively with colleagues and treat them with respect.
- Recognise and respect the roles and expertise of workers from other agencies and working in partnership with them.
- Follow practice and procedures designed to keep you and other people safe at work.
- Meeting relevant standards of practice and working in a lawful, safe, and effective way
- Informing West Limerick Independent Living or the appropriate authority about any personal difficulties that might affect your ability to do your job competently and safely.
- Seek assistance if you do not feel able or adequately prepared to carry out any aspect of your work, or you are not sure about how to proceed in a work matter.
- Undertaking relevant training to maintain and improve your knowledge and skills and contributing to the learning and development of others.

You must not:

- Abuse, neglect or harm service users, PA's or colleagues
- Exploit service users, PA's or colleagues in any way
- Abuse the trust of service users and PA's or the access you have to personal information about them or to their property, home or workplace.
- Discriminate unlawfully or unjustifiably against service users, PA's or colleagues.
- Condone any unlawful or unjustifiable discrimination against service users, PA's or colleagues.
- Put yourself or other people at unnecessary risk.
- Behave in a way, in work or outside of work, which would call into question your suitability to work in social care services.
- Form inappropriate personal relationships with service users, professional boundaries must be maintained. Boundary violation can be as innocent as sending a Christmas card to a service user or calling them on a personal phone to an inappropriate sexual or financial relationship.



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The following behaviours are in breach of the Code of Conduct:

- Theft
- Corruption
- Misuse of telephone, email, internet, and other facilities
- Viewing or downloading of pornography
- Criminal conduct
- Breach of confidentiality
- Assault, verbal abuse or threatening behaviour of service users, volunteers, fellow staff, or the public
- Abuse of alcohol and drugs
- Nonadherence to health, safety, and hygiene standards
- All forms of bullying, sexual abuse and/or harassment and discrimination
- Lack of respect for people with disabilities, volunteers, fellow staff, and the general public
- Adherence to good practice regarding reliability and commitment
- Gross negligence

Breaches of this code of conduct is considered to be very serious and following a full investigation may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Health and Safety

Employee Health and Safety Responsibilities at Work

Employees are legally obliged to take care of their own health and safety as well as the health and safety of others at work and this include the following duties of care:

- ✓ Co-operating with your employer to facilitate compliance with necessary health and safety requirements, which includes the company safety statement.
- ✓ Wearing and using protective clothing and equipment, where nature of the job requires and not misusing or interfering with them.
- ✓ Promptly informing your employer of anything which may cause a danger to the health and safety of anyone.

All employers are legally obliged, as far as is reasonably practicable, to ensure the safety, welfare, and health of their employees physical and mental well-being at work and others who might be affected such as clients, visitors, and contractors. Employer duties include:

- ✓ Providing a safe workplace including the maintenance of all equipment and machinery
- ✓ To devise safe systems of work
- ✓ To provide training, instruction, supervision, and information, as required, to ensure the safety of those in the workplace.



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- ✓ To eliminate or control hazards and where this is not practicable, provide suitable safety training, protective clothing or safety equipment where necessary.
- ✓ To devise and communicate action plans to be used in case of emergency.
- ✓ To provide and adequately maintain facilities for the welfare of employees.
- ✓ To provide the services of a competent person with responsibility for health and safety matters.

West Limerick Independent Living as an employer will consult with employees regularly and keep them up to date with all aspects of health and safety in the workplace, this would include considering your suggestions concerning health and safety.

West Limerick Independent Living Safety Statement

West Limerick Independent Living's Safety Statement is a statement that identifies the risks and hazards of the workplace and states how these will be eliminated, controlled, or protected against in order that a safe workplace is ensured for employees. It is important that all employees of West Limerick Independent Living are familiar with the Safety Statement. The Safety Statement is readily available to all employees on the company website www.limerickcil.com a copy is given to the employee on induction, also available in office.

Management Safety Policy

The company Safety Statement, in accordance with Section 20, Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, outlines the policy of WEST LIMERICK INDEPENDENT LIVING in relation to the management of health and safety. WEST LIMERICK INDEPENDENT LIVING is committed to managing and conducting their work activities in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health, and welfare at work of their employees including fixed term employees and temporary employees and other individuals at the place of work (not being their employees).

This will be achieved by the following.

- ✓ The provision and maintenance of welfare facilities and arrangements;
- ✓ Determining and implementing appropriate preventative and protective measures;
- ✓ Taking account of the general principles of prevention;
- ✓ The provision of adequate emergency plans, procedures and measures;
- ✓ Reporting prescribed accidents and dangerous occurrences to the Health & Safety Authority; and so far, as is reasonably practicable;
- ✓ Preventing any improper conduct or behaviour;
- ✓ The design, provision and maintenance of a safe place of work, including safe means of access and egress;
- ✓ The design, provision and maintenance of safe plant and machinery, articles and substances;
- ✓ The provision of safe systems of work;



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- ✓ The provision of appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision;
- ✓ Performance of ongoing hazard identification and risk assessments;
- ✓ Uses of standards, codes of practice, guidelines, or industry practices;
- ✓ Providing and maintaining suitable protective clothing and equipment;
- ✓ Investigation of accidents and dangerous occurrences;
- ✓ Obtaining, where necessary, the services of a competent person to advise on health and safety.

The detailed arrangements for achieving these objectives are set out in the main body of the Safety Statement. Ms. Margaret O'Connor has overall responsibility for health and safety at the West Limerick Independent Living, Enterprise Centre, Sheehan Road, Newcastle West, Co Limerick. Day to day management of health and safety is the responsibility of management personnel. Employees share a responsibility with management in ensuring their own safety while at work. This Safety Statement requires the co-operation of all staff, service users, visitors, contractors, and others to enable WEST LIMERICK INDEPENDENT LIVING to discharge its responsibilities under law.

WEST LIMERICK INDEPENDENT LIVING is committed to upholding the standards outlined in this Safety Statement. The aims of the Safety Statement are to ensure sufficient resources are allocated to Safety Management. No safety measures taken by WEST LIMERICK INDEPENDENT LIVING involve financial cost to our employees. All employees and contractors will be made aware of and have access to this Safety Statement. The Safety Statement will also be available to third parties where appropriate. Employees are encouraged to put forward suggestions for improvement to this document. The Safety Statement will be reviewed and amended periodically.

Signed: *Ben Lenihan*
Chairman

Date: *May 2023*

Covid 19 Phased Return to Work Policy

Introduction:

These guidelines and policy are designed to ensure everyone acts pragmatically and responsibly to ensure the health and safety of all employees and business continuity as we return to the office.

Updates:

This policy will be regularly updated in line with reviewed guidelines from the HSE, Irish Government and our workplace practices. You are required to keep up to date with any relevant policy changes which are communicated to you.

Our Duty of Care:

The Company is morally and legally obliged to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety, health and welfare of all employees, clients, visitors, and the general public. As an employee you are obliged, by law, to safeguard



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yourself and your work colleagues by complying with the regulations set out in the Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.

The Company will continue to take all necessary and appropriate measures to protect the health of our employees. To comply with this duty of care the Company:

1. Conducted a risk assessment of the business and implemented measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19.
2. Continue to closely monitor the HSE and Government guidelines in respect to the health and safety of our employees and our customers/patrons/guests/suppliers.
3. Make informed decisions in relation to the health and safety of our team.
4. Continue to provide a safe place and system of work, by ensuring that common work areas are clean and sanitised regularly and that appropriate hand washing facilities are available.
5. Continue to issue regular instructions concerning hygiene in the workplace. Employees will continue to be reminded of their obligations through effective and direct communication such as, by the posting of notices in the workplace or by sending out appropriate e-mails.

Your Responsibilities:

- You are required to stay at home from the workplace if you are feeling ill.
- If you have been in contact with someone who has contracted or suspected to have contracted COVID-19. You are required to follow the most up to date information from the government regarding close contacts, in accordance with your vaccination status.
- Comply with all training provided.
- Stay informed and continue to follow advice from the HSE and the WHO (World Health Organisation) inside and outside of the workplace.
- Do not behave in any way that could breach Company policy about health and safety and that may put yourself and others at risk.
- You are requested to report any travel during authorised leave or time off work.
- Use PPE which has been provided and change this regularly.
- Wash your hands thoroughly and often.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze.
- Put used tissues into a bin and wash your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Avoid close contact with people who are unwell.

Worker Representative:

The Company has appointed a lead worker representative, who oversees monitoring adherence to all COVID-19 protocols, policies, and safety standards together with the implementation of new measures. This person is Margaret O'Connor, email: margaret@limerickcil.com phone: -069-77320.

This person will be responsible for communicating health and safety advice and for reporting back to management on any non-compliance, improvements, and any other areas of concern where further action will then be taken if necessary.



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Employees will be made aware of the Company's worker representative upon the Return-to-Work Induction Training. The Company endeavours to work closely with our worker representative to ensure that all actions in this policy are fully adhered to ensure the suppression of COVID-19 in our workplace.

Social Distancing

Although the requirement to maintain a 2-metre physical distance and to adopt pods of 6 for indoor events have been removed. However, this continues to be good practice and so should be adopted where practical.

Suspected Case in Work:

If you have been in contact with someone who has contracted or suspected to have contracted COVID-19. You are required to follow the most up to date information from the government regarding close contacts, in accordance with your vaccination status.

An employee should not attend work if they are experiencing any symptoms of Covid-19. However, should an employee start to develop symptoms during the working day they must notify the Company COVID representative (named above) as soon as they begin to feel unwell.

Hand Hygiene:

Employees must regularly wash their hands with the soap provided. Particularly;

- After coughing and sneezing,
- Before and after eating,
- Before and after preparing food,
- If in contact with someone who is displaying any COVID-19 symptoms,
- Before and after being on public transport (if using it),
- Before and after being in a crowd,
- When arriving and leaving the workplace/other sites,
- Before and after having a cigarette or vaping,
- When hands are dirty

To ensure proper hand hygiene when washing, you should;

- Wet your hands with warm water and apply soap.
- Rub your hands together until the soap forms a lather.
- Rub the top of your hands, between your fingers and under your fingernails.
- Do this for about 20 seconds.
- Rinse your hands under running water.
- Dry your hands with a clean towel or paper towel and dispose of in the waste bins provided.

Hand shaking should be avoided by all employees/contractors/visitors/suppliers due to the efficiency of how germs spread through contact from one person to the next. Although hand shaking has been widely accepted in



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our organisation, due to COVID-19, the Company now deem it necessary to prohibit handshaking for the foreseeable future.

Respiratory Hygiene:

Good respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette is always expected of all of our employees. When coughing or sneezing you must cover your mouth and nose with a tissue and dispose of it in a waste bin immediately afterward or, cough and sneeze into the bend of your elbow. Using your hands to guard a cough or sneeze should be avoided. Employees are continued to be reminded of the appropriate washing of hands and sanitisation. It is expected that all employees make themselves familiar and strictly adhere to any hygiene guidance that the Company have implemented.

Cleaning:

Cleaning will be carried out at regular intervals to ensure we maintain the highest standard of hygiene.

PPE:

PPE is provided to employees proportionate to the role and risks/ hazards identified as part of that role. Training is provided on the use of PPE and employees are expected to adhere to this training. Employees are required to wear and use PPE provided correctly. While it reduces certain exposures, it is still expected that all employees continue to maintain proper hand and respiratory hygiene together with adhering to other preventative measures that are in place. PPE needs to be consistently and properly worn when required. In addition, it must be regularly inspected, cleaned, maintained, and replaced as necessary. Please notify management of any concerns regarding the PPE immediately.

Breach Of Policy

All employees are expected to strictly adhere to this policy and continue to respect government guidelines inside and outside of the workplace. Breach of this policy, or actions contrary to public health advice which puts yourself and your colleagues at risk will render you liable to disciplinary action, where sanctions may be up to and including termination of employment.

West Limerick Independent Living's Health and Safety Evacuation Procedure

West Limerick Independent Living's Health and Safety Evacuation procedure exists so that in the event of any emergency all employees and visitors can be evacuated in a quick and safe manner. On commencing new employment, the West Limerick Independent Living employees will be informed of the company's evacuation procedure. Employees will be required to adhere to this procedure and obey any order given by company appointed fire officers. Fire wardens and safety representatives should be selected and clearly identified to staff. In addition to the office evacuation procedure, employees should also make themselves aware of evacuation procedure for client's residences.

What should an employee do if an accident/ incident occurs?



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In the event of an accident or incident within the workplace, immediate safety is paramount. Prioritize the well-being of all individuals involved and take necessary actions to prevent further harm. Once safety is ensured, promptly report the incident to your supervisor, manager, or designated safety personnel, providing accurate details. If there are injuries requiring medical attention, seek help promptly. Document the incident if safe to do so, including photographs and witness information. Complete an incident report form as guided by your supervisor. Cooperation with any investigations is essential, as is following established company protocols. Maintain open communication about your recovery and any work-related needs. Reflect on prevention measures and contribute insights for ongoing safety improvements. Always respect the confidentiality of those involved. At West Limerick Independent Living, safety is a collective effort, and by taking these steps, we work together to maintain a secure work environment.

Personal Assistant Working Policy

It is the policy of West Limerick Independent Living that all reasonable and practicable steps are taken to ensure the health, safety & welfare of all persons it employs, by providing a healthy and safe environment and employing safe systems of work.

The objective of this policy is to establish the way in which we ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of Personal Assistant employees working in the homes of our Service Users. The provisions of the Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 1989 and the Safety, Health, and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 1993 apply to all places of work, including workplaces outside the conventional office.

The organisation aims to minimise and manage the risks to which Personal Assistants may be exposed because of carrying out their responsibilities. Personal Assistants responsibilities may include physically assisting Service Users in and out of bed, helping them to shower, dress and eat, along with transporting them to appointments and shops.

The following procedure will be adopted:

- Each Personal Assistant will be carefully assessed via a checklist to ensure his or her suitability for the role.
- As manual handling is an inherent part of the Personal Assistants role, if prior to commencing his or her duties, a Personal Assistant does not have in date manual handling training certificate, full manual handling training will be given. This training is outsourced to a Health and Safety Training company. Prior to onsite training, Manual Handling e-Theory has to be completed on HSE Land. Training takes place over a one-day session. Refresher training is mandatory and will be provided every three years to all Personal Assistants.
- The Service Users level of ability will be assessed to determine the magnitude of the Personal Assistants responsibilities.
- As caring for each Service User requires Personal Assistants to work in many different work environments, a risk assessment will be carried out for each 'Service User Home' in consultation with the assigned Personal Assistant. This will involve a risk assessment of the manual handling tasks carried



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out by the Personal Assistant and a risk assessment of their work environment. This will help generate recommendations for improvements.

Lone Worker Policy

All West Limerick Independent Living staff must report any incidents to their Service Coordinator immediately. However, in cases of emergency staff must consider their own safety first and immediately contact the Gardaí if necessary.

Definitions and Abbreviations:

Lone Worker: A lone worker is any employee who works by themselves without close or direct supervision. This includes, but is not limited to, the following employees:

- Any employee who works alone with a Service User and cannot be seen directly by other West Limerick Independent Living employees.
- Drivers
- West Limerick Independent Living employees', who work away from their office base, for example research workers, or employees who travel to work with groups of Service Users away from their office base.
- West Limerick Independent Living employees who work alone with Service Users in their own homes.
- West Limerick Independent Living employees working out of hours.

Risk Assessment

West Limerick Independent Living understands that carrying out full risk assessments prior to assigning services is essential to good risk management. Any staff member that is placed in a working position that makes them vulnerable must be risk assessed. Where working practices cannot be adapted to prevent staff working on their own the position must be risk assessed.

For employees working from the West Limerick Independent Living Office base this risk assessment will include:

- Safe access and site security
- Communication procedures in the event of an emergency
- Safety of office equipment for individual use

Risk assessments for lone workers providing home care must include:

- Client risk assessment where applicable
- Logging in and out of their calls via Care Planner App
- Communication procedures in the event of an emergency
- Arrangements for client visits



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- Travel arrangements between appointments
- Reporting and communication procedures
- Personal safety

Incidents

- The incident must be reported to the West Limerick Independent Living Service Coordinator at the earliest opportunity.
- Any incident involving a client must be fully recorded in the client's file.
- A full debrief will be conducted with all staff involved in a serious lone worker incident.
- Following any serious lone worker incident, the staff member in question will be offered the appropriate HR supports and counselling services if necessary.

Training

West Limerick Independent Living recognises that lone workers need to be capable of dealing with any untoward or violent incidents and that they must be provided with the appropriate levels of training to ensure their personal safety. All training and information will be provided to minimise the risk to the lone worker.

Timekeeping

- All office-based staff are required to leave details of their work diary for the day on the centralised office diary system.
- All lone PA's and Home Care Workers are required to login and logout of Care Planner App on their phone to notify their Service Coordinator when arriving and after leaving each appointment.

Prevention

Any staff delivering services away from the West Limerick Independent Living office or staff delivering services within the client's home should:

- Ensure all appointment are recorded in their Care Planner App on their phone including the length of the appointment and the time it is expected to conclude.
- Always carry their mobile phones on them.
- Should have an emergency out-of-hours contact number made available to them. Out of Hours number 085 8064306.
- Park their car as close to the building they are visiting as possible, ensure that it is parked in a well-lit area and with no valuables in sight.
- Should not carry large sums of money or medication with them.
- Contact the West Limerick Independent Living Service Coordinator if they feel unsafe continuing with an appointment.
- Ensure that a risk assessment has been carried out and that it has been deemed safe for one worker to deliver services to the client.



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- Always carry personal identification i.e., ID Badge.
- Wear shoes and clothing that do not hinder the ability to run in the event of an emergency.
- Ensure that your vehicle has sufficient fuel and that it has been well serviced.
- Always follow the person who answers the door into the house, where possible, and avoid taking the lead.
- If there are any unknown individuals at the premises when you arrive always be cautious, remain alert and look for anything that may cause a problem.
- Exercise calm judgement and act with discretion in deciding how to react to a particular situation but if you feel uneasy abandon the visit, return to your vehicle, and contact your Service Coordinator immediately.
- Be aware of any obstacles that may prevent you leaving the premises quickly in the event of an emergency.
- In the event of a fire alarm activating exit the building immediately with the Service User.
- Report any delays to your Service Coordinator.
- LEAVE IMMEDIATELY IF YOU FEEL THREATENED, RETURN TO YOUR VEHICLE, CONTACT YOUR SERVICE COORDINATOR OR RING OUT OF HOURS PHONE 085 8064306
- Carry your car keys with you when returning to your car and lock the vehicle as soon as you enter.

Dress and Personal Hygiene

All employees are expected to have good standards when it comes to dress and personal hygiene, fingernails should be kept short and neat, long hair should be neat and tied back and no jewellery should be worn apart from a wedding band. Employees should wear the dress appropriate to their role; flat comfortable closed toe shoes should be worn which protect employees' feet from falling objects. As such, you must keep yourself neat, tidy, and presentable at all times. Your dress and personal grooming should reflect the variety of situations in which you might find yourself. Please keep in mind that even if the clients wear casual attire, they may have a different expectation of you, as a service provider.

Food Safety & Hygiene Policy

This policy outlines our commitment to ensuring that all Personnel required to handle food as part of their responsibilities do so in a hygienic manner and that food prepared is always safe for human consumption. All employees are asked to adhere to the following guidelines to maintain the highest possible standards of hygiene in the operational procedures of food preparation and service within the Service Users homes:

1. Always wash your hands thoroughly before preparing food, after handling raw meat and vegetables, after coughing/ sneezing or using a handkerchief, after using toilet and after handling pets.
2. All cuts and sores should be covered with waterproof dressings before handling food.
3. Never cough, sneeze or smoke near food.
4. Clean work surfaces, equipment and utensils with hot water and detergent.
5. Prepared food should be kept covered and either piping hot or very cool.
6. Thaw frozen foods completely before cooking unless the instructions specifically state "cook from frozen". Cook all food according to the manufacturer's instructions.



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7. Avoid cross-contamination of foods, i.e., letting hands or raw foods come in contact with cooked foods or storing raw and cooked foods together.
8. Store all refuse in covered containers.
9. Check the 'best before date' on food before using.
10. Always cook food thoroughly.
11. Re-heating of food is not recommended, but if unavoidable, make sure it is reheated until piping hot all the way through. Food should never be re-heated more than once.

Food poisoning can have serious consequences especially for the very young, the elderly and those who are already ill. Symptoms of food poisoning include one or more of the following:

- Stomach pains.
- Diarrhoea.
- Vomiting- this can often be accompanied by fever with headache and shivering.

The management of West Limerick Independent Living are committed to good food hygiene and would like to remind employees that you are welcome to bring any lapses of hygiene in a Service Users home to their attention.

Hygiene and Infection Control Policy

Maintaining an effective level of hygiene is one of the most important and regularly implemented practices in a service. Effective hygiene measures and practices to assist services to protect all persons from, and minimise the potential risk of, disease and illness. A service should be committed to protecting its service users and employees through the implementation and monitoring of simple hygiene and infection control strategies.

The service promotes hygienic practices and prevents the spread of infections by implementing the following strategies:

- effective handwashing;
- hygienic cleaning techniques;
- handling, storage and disposal of body fluids;
- maintenance of a hygienic environment;
- knowledge of infectious diseases and exclusion guidelines;
- Amric Covid Training on HSE-Land and is compulsory for all employees

When to wash your hands:

- If your hands are dirty If you have been in contact with blood or body fluids (faeces, vomit, spit, pads, pus and urine)
- If you use the toilet
- Before and after you touch a person



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- Before you eat, prepare food and after you have touched raw meat.
- After you have cleaned your house
- After you feed or touch pets
- After any farming or gardening
- After you handle waste or rubbish
- After you wash soiled clothes
- After you cough or sneeze

Important: You should always cover cuts with waterproof plasters. You should also use hand cream to prevent cracks and breaks in the skin. This will help stop germs getting into the skin.

1. Personnel wear neat, untorn and appropriate clothing
2. Good personal hygiene, including hair and body cleanliness, is practiced.
3. Fingernails are clean and trimmed and no nail polish.
4. Hair is neat and off the collar.
5. Personnel follow strict clothing and linen handling procedures to avoid contaminating their clothes.
6. Disposable gloves are worn when handling contaminated equipment.
7. Suspected infections are reported so appropriate action can be taken.
8. All jewellery on hands are removed and washed.

Employees should ensure to follow the procedures below to ensure appropriate hygiene and infection control in service user's homes.

1. Dentures are kept in a clean denture cup labelled
2. Comb and brush are separate from toothbrush.
3. Oral hygiene brush is in a separate sanitary container.
4. Bedpan and wash basin are clean and separated.
5. Bedpan/urinal covers are available.
6. All equipment is clean and sanitized after use.
7. Soiled clothes are removed.
8. Bar soap is kept in a clean container and labelled.
9. Bed, Rails and Mattress Supportive devices (pillows, linen, etc.) are clean, no dirt or dust.
10. Clothes are clean and Odor-free
11. Wheelchairs, Commodes, Storage and walkers are clean.
12. Tubs, Handwashing sink, showers and shower chairs are clean and in good repair.
13. Toilet seats and other equipment are clean and in good repair.

The management of West Limerick Independent Living are committed to good Hygiene and Infection Control and would like to remind employees that you are welcome to bring any lapses of hygiene in a Service Users home to their attention. When required, Personal Protective Equipment should be used. Personal Protective Equipment should be available in all Service Users homes, PPE is provided by West Limerick Independent Living, it is PA's



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responsibility to manage their stockpile of PPE appropriately and advise office or Coordinator if stock needs replenishing.

Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Safety of Personal Possessions

Employees of West Limerick Independent Living are reminded to safeguard all personal possessions during their employment. Every effort will be made by West Limerick Independent Living to ensure the protection of personal property of employees in the company offices and other work locations, however, employees are ultimately responsible for their belongings. All employees should be sure that their own personal insurance policies cover the loss of anything occasionally left at the office or place of work. West Limerick Independent Living does not assume responsibility for loss or damage of employee's personal property.

Smoking Policy

With effect from Monday 29 March 2004 smoking of tobacco products is prohibited in the workplace by law under the Public Health (Tobacco) Act 2002. Consequently, all premises in the Republic of Ireland will be no smoking premises. Smoking in Company buildings is prohibited under law. Smoking is a hazard and a health and safety risk and under no circumstances is smoking permitted, by employees, customers, or visitors on Company premises. Breaches of this policy will be treated as an extremely serious offence and will be dealt with under the firm's disciplinary procedure.

If you visit clients in their own homes, ask the service user (or anyone else present with them) not to smoke for at least an hour before a home visit, nor during the visit, and to allow you to ventilate the rooms you work in by opening the windows. Electronic Cigarettes (e-cigarettes) is not permitted within West Limerick Independent Living facilities, their use by client's, staff and visitors is prohibited, this also applies in client's homes during work hours.

Life Long Illness/ Medical Condition Policy

It is West Limerick Independent Living's policy to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of staff at all times and all health and safety practices have been developed to comply with current legislation. The recruitment policy and practices reflect that West Limerick Independent Living is an equal opportunities employer.

Any staff member who has a life-long illness or medical condition is required to notify management on commencement or during employment of the following information:

- Details of any medication or special procedures required in the event of an emergency;
- Contact details in the event of an emergency if these details differ to standard contact details held on personnel file.



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All information relating to an illness or condition will be dealt with confidentially by West Limerick Independent Living. Staff who have a life-long illness or medical condition will be entitled to coverage under West Limerick Independent Living’s sick leave entitlement subject to length of service.

Health Related Issues

Employees, who become aware of any health-related issue, including pregnancy, should notify the Manager of their health status where it impacts their role. This policy has been instituted strictly to protect the employee and all details are treated in absolute confidence.

A written “fitness to work” from the employee’s doctor is required at the time or shortly after notice has been given. The doctor’s note should specify whether the employee is able to perform regular duties as outlined in his/her job description.

Employees Requiring Medical Attention

In the event an employee requires medical attention, whether injured or becoming ill while at work, the employee’s personal doctor must be notified immediately. If it is necessary for the employee to be seen by the doctor or go to the hospital, a family member will be called to transport the employee to the appropriate facility. If this is not possible a member of staff will accompany the incapacitated employee (where possible). ***All incidents of this nature should be recorded on an incident report form.***

Alcohol and Drugs Policy

The Company is committed to providing a safe and productive workplace for its employees. In keeping with this commitment, the following rules regarding abuse of alcohol and drugs have been established for all staff members, regardless of rank or position, including both regular and temporary employees. The rules apply during working hours to all employees of the company while they are on company premises or elsewhere on company business.

- The manufacture, distribution, possession, sale, or purchase of controlled substances of abuse on company property or in working hours is prohibited.
- Being under the influence of illegal drugs, alcohol, or substances of abuse on company property and/or in working hours is prohibited. This includes suffering the aftereffects of alcohol and drug consumption.
- Working while under the influence of prescription drugs that impair performance is prohibited. (This should be discussed with management)
- Concealing drug paraphernalia, equipment, a product, or material that is used or intended for use in concealing an illegal drug, or otherwise introducing into the human body an illegal drug or controlled substance is also strictly prohibited.

Illegal drugs are defined as:



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Any drug or derivative thereof whose use, possession, sale, transfer, attempted sale or transfer, manufacture, or storage is illegal or regulated by law. Or, any drug, including – but not limited to – a prescription drug, used for any reason other than that prescribed by a medical practitioner, or inhalants used illegally.

West Limerick Independent Living defines being under the influence as:

- A state of not having the normal use of mental or physical faculties resulting from the voluntary introduction into the body of an alcoholic beverage, drug, or any other substance of abuse.

Employees with side-effects from alcohol consumption or drugs will be considered unfit for work and failing to adhere to the company's Alcohol & Drugs Policy. As a result, the employee concerned will be subject to disciplinary action.

Considering this, the Company views the consumption of alcohol or taking drugs during the working day (e.g., lunch times) to be inappropriate in a Company striving for excellence and the highest levels of service.

Any individual, who suspects or knows that they have an alcohol or drug related problem, is actively encouraged to seek help and treatment voluntarily. Individuals who come to the notice of colleagues through observation or through the Disciplinary Procedure as having an alcohol or drug related problem, will be offered the opportunity to seek diagnosis.

Where individuals commit misconduct or serious misconduct, or their efficiency at work becomes affected through overindulgence of alcohol or drug abuse, action under the disciplinary procedure will be taken up to and including dismissal.

Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy

Under the Safety, Health, and Welfare Work Act, 2005, while at work all employees are required to ensure they are not under the influence of any intoxicants to the extent that he/she is in a state as to endanger his/her safety, health or welfare at work or that of any other person.

Intoxicants include alcohol or drugs or any combination of drugs or alcohol, whether illegal or legal, whether prescribed or not.

This policy applies to all employees across the Company and at all levels. This covers all types of drugs, intoxicants, or alcohol, including the use of medically prescribed or pharmaceutical medication.

Please note that it is the employee's obligation to report for work in a fit state to fulfil the duties for which they are employed, and to drive and operate safely in accordance with the law at all times.

The Safety, Health, and Welfare Act, 2005, states that if reasonably required by his or her employer, an employee must submit to any appropriate, reasonable and proportionate test for intoxicants by, or under the supervision of a registered medical practitioner. The Company therefore upholds its legal right to:



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- Test all employees prior to starting with the company during the pre-employment medical which will form part of the conditional offer of employment.
- Carry out periodic random testing on employees during employment.
- Carry out testing when the Company has reasonable suspicion that a staff member is abusing any of the drugs, alcohol, or substances or intoxicants.

These tests will be carried out by a third party; however, a member of Management will also be present during these tests.

Failure, refusal, or noncompliance of an employee shall be considered gross misconduct and may result in disciplinary sanctions up to and including dismissal notwithstanding that any subsequent test may test negative for alcohol or other stimulants or drugs.

The following tests which will be conducted include:

- Alcohol: urine sample, breathalyser, blood sample or salivary swab.
- Drugs: blood or urine sample.

You will be tested for the following - but please note this is not an exhaustive list:

- Cannabis
- Cocaine
- Opiates (Heroin, Morphine etc.)
- Benzodiazepines (Valium etc.)

We would like to note the following advice about prescription and over the counter medicines. Solpadine, Nurofen Plus, Xanax and Ativan are some of the medicines that will show up on the test.

- Once your driving is not impaired, please continue taking these as needed/prescribed.
- If your driving is impaired by taking a form of medication you should not drive.
- If you have any concerns or doubts about your driving when taking medication, then you should consult your doctor or pharmacist.
- You should also inform your manager or HR if you have any concerns. Please note that this information will be held in the utmost confidence.

In the interest of health and safety, should an employee be suspected of being under the influence of drugs, intoxicants, or alcohol they may be suspended on full pay until appropriate tests can be arranged. The Company will monitor all incidents and use of this policy and will review the effectiveness of this policy and procedures annually.

Right to Search Policy

It is a condition of employment that any employee, at any time, may have their belongings and work area searched at the request of Management. The employee accepts that once this request is made the search can be extended to their belongings, lockers, and automobiles. Two members of Management may carry out such a search and



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such a check are not an accusation of theft or any wrongdoing, it is merely part of the official Company Policies relating to security. Any employee being searched has the right to be accompanied by another employee if they so wish. Desks are not private and are subject to search or surveillance. All phone calls and e-mails executed on Company equipment are subject to scrutiny.

Any employee found in unauthorised possession of articles belonging to the Company, a colleague or a client will be suspended pending a full investigation. Should the investigation foster a reasonable belief on the part of the Company that a theft or other serious breach of security has taken place, such an employee may be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure with sanctions up to and including dismissal and may be reported to An Garda Síochána. The Company will draw all appropriate and reasonable inferences from any refusal to co-operate fully with any search request.

Stress Policy

West Limerick Independent Living adheres to the Safety, Health, and Welfare at Work Acts, 1989 and 2005 which requires employers to identify and safeguard against all risks to health and safety, including stress. Workplace stress arises when the demands of the job and the working environment on a person exceed their capacity to meet them.

Causes of stress in the workplace include:

- Poorly organised work;
- Faulty work organisation;
- Poor working relationships;
- Poor communication at work;
- Ill defined work roles;
- Highly demanding tasks;
- The threat of violence.

Safeguarding health and safety from the effects of stress is based on the same approach as that of any other hazard:

- Identification of potential problems;
- Assessment of risks;
- Implementation of safeguards;
- Monitoring the effectiveness of safeguards.

West Limerick Independent Living will utilise the following Methods of Managing Stress:

- Ensure that management is aware of the potential causes of stress and the early warning signs.
- Ensure that all complaints that may be related to stress are listened to and appropriate measures taken.
- Where management are aware that a workload or conditions of work are particularly stressful, measures should be taken to reduce the workload or improve conditions.



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Employees are asked to contact management if they feel they are suffering from workplace stress.

Counsellor

West Limerick Independent Living provides assistance in relation to counselling/support for employees. Should you have required the services of a counsellor please contact your Manager or Service Coordinator.

Clean Workplace and Environment

To comply with Health and Safety regulations West Limerick Independent Living runs a clean desk policy. This means that no documentation should be left out or unattended in the office environment. All workspaces should be clean and clear, and this includes kitchenette in office space.

Non-compliance with this policy is a disciplinary matter.

Manual Handling Briefing Sheet

Manual handling training will be provided to all employees involved in manual handling tasks. Please follow these guidelines:

- Report any pre-existing relevant medical conditions to your manager, for example, back conditions, other muscular injuries, recent operations, pregnancy, etc. Failure to do so may result in work being allocated to you that is beyond your capability, putting you at risk, and represents a breach of your contract of employment.
- Check the environment for tripping hazards, poor lighting, spillages, etc. as anything of this nature increases the likelihood of a loss of balance whilst carrying and correcting that loss can easily strain muscles and cause injury.
- Make use of mechanical aids such as hoists, checking visually that they are in satisfactory condition.
- Limit the load to that which is suitable for the individual and/or the equipment being used, do not over-strain to lift or move something which does not feel immediately comfortably within your capability.
- Avoid and minimise stooping, stretching, and twisting.
- Grasp objects firmly, and lift keeping the back and neck straight, using the legs and bending the knees to achieve the lift – one medical advisor refers to this as the “bottom out” method of lifting, try it and you’ll see what he means!
- Lift smoothly, do not jerk the load.
- Share tasks with colleagues, if they are capable, but remember that two people cannot lift twice the weight of one (there are losses associated with co-ordination).
- Take regular breaks.
- Report any problems with the size or frequency of load, the environment, or the equipment available to the manager.



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Safe Driving Policy

This policy defines the conditions with which employees must agree prior to using their own vehicle for driving on West Limerick Independent Living business.

West Limerick Independent Living accepts no liability or responsibility for any accidents or incidents in which an employee is involved while travelling on company business.

Permission to use your own car on West Limerick Independent Living business must first be obtained from your Line Manager.

Staff using their own private motor vehicles to do the company business must indemnify West Limerick Independent Living in relation to any accident. Business Class 2 is required.

Vehicle

When required by West Limerick Independent Living to use your vehicle for company business, you are personally responsible to ensure that:

- Your vehicle is fully insured, which includes Indemnity to West Limerick Independent Living.
- You have an up-to-date Tax and Vehicle Test Certificates as per legal requirements.
- an Approval for Travel form has been signed which is stored in your employee file.
- Your car has been fully maintained and is in roadworthy condition.
- Your vehicle is not overloaded with materials.
- You follow the Rules of the Road, driving regulations and speed limits at all times.
- You have a driver's licence which legally permits you to drive, and you do not exceed the maximum number of penalty points (currently 12)

When travelling significant distances, or over several days, maximum use must be made of public transport, wherever feasible, in order to reduce tiredness and stress associated with driving long distances.

Mobile phones

In accordance with Government regulations, mobile telephones are not to be held on person or used while driving. You are personally responsible to ensure that:

- You do not have your mobile phone switched on whilst driving, unless placed in a fixed in-car hands free set. Mobile phones which are not fixed in car hands free kit, should either be switched off, or have all calls diverted to voicemail or the office.
- You do not carry mobile phone on your person whilst driving unless it is switched off.
- Should you need to make or receive a phone call, you park your car prior to activating your handset.
- You are required by West Limerick Independent Living to abide by these details of this policy whilst driving on company business.



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- The company accepts no liability or responsibility for any accidents or incidents in which an employee is involved while travelling on company business.

Failure to comply with the Safe Driving Policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Visitors in the Workplace

To provide for the safety and security of employees, visitors, to the facilities at West Limerick Independent Living must sign-in, and sign-out at the reception desk. Authorised visitors will be escorted to their destination and must be always accompanied by an employee.

Terms and Conditions of Employment

Employment Contracts Explained

Any offer of employment is made conditional upon the receipt of satisfactory references, Garda Vetting checks and verification of qualifications. Contracts of employment set out the minimum terms and conditions between the employer and the employee about a particular position within the organisation. It clearly defines what is expected of both parties, the employer, and the employee, in the employment agreement.

Providing an employment contract is a legal requirement and it also allows for transparency in the workplace. Terms and conditions of employment will be provided to employees within 5 days of commencement of employment.

All terms and conditions of employment in West Limerick Independent Living are within statutory requirements. Generally, all employees of West Limerick Independent Living will have signed their contract of employment prior to starting work with the West Limerick Independent Living.

Contract Changes

Whenever a change is made or occurs in any part of the contract issued by the employer, the employer will notify the employee, in writing, of the nature and date of the change as soon as possible but no later than one month after the change takes place.

Under normal circumstances the employee will be consulted regarding changes of this nature. The requirement to notify employees of change does not apply if it arises from a provision of statutes, statutory instruments or other laws, administrative provisions, or collective agreements.

Probation

A probationary period enables the employer to establish that the employee can do the job and can work effectively within West Limerick Independent Living. All employees are subject to probationary period of six months. Periods of statutory leave during the probationary period will have the effect of lengthening the probationary period by the duration of the leave. The Probationary period ends at the prescribed time and/or upon completion of a satisfactory appraisal.



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The company reserves the right at its sole discretion, to terminate your employment for no reason, or simply because one party forms the view that the intended employment is, for whatever reason, not something with which they wish to continue. During the probationary period, the Company Disciplinary Procedure does not apply unless in cases of misconduct.

West Limerick Independent Living will provide all organisational-specific training and on the job experience necessary to facilitate the employee to meet, at least, the minimum standards of competency in the role for which they were employed.

During this probationary period either party may terminate the contract by giving the other party one week's notice. The Disciplinary policy does not apply during the probationary period unless in cases of misconduct.

Garda Vetting

West Limerick Independent Living is committed to the protection and welfare of our service users, staff, and volunteers. As part of this commitment West Limerick Independent Living will comply with relevant legislation and recommended best practice in recruitment and selection procedures for both employees and volunteers, and will conduct Garda Vetting, where appropriate, as part of this process.

Garda Vetting is just one of several elements that West Limerick Independent Living implements to ensure the protection and safety of the children and / or vulnerable persons in our services. Appropriate recruitment screening (including interviews, reference checking), child protection and health and safety procedures, etc. will be implemented along with Garda Vetting.

An individual will not work / volunteer with children or vulnerable persons in West Limerick Independent Living until their Garda Vetting has been completed and the results conveyed to the organization's Garda Vetting Officer by the Liaison Person. It will be an offence to start a person in relevant work before Garda Vetting is completed.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

All information in the vetting process will be held in a manner consistent with West Limerick Independent Living Data Protection policy. West Limerick Independent Living also complies fully with good practice regarding the secure storage, handling and use of the Vetting Bureau disclosures and personal vetting information as per Data Protection Policy and legal obligations under Data Protection Legislation.

Full details of West Limerick Independent Living Garda Vetting Policy can be found on the company website.

Working hours

The hours an employee is expected to work will be set out prior to commencement of employment and may change subject to circumstances outside of West Limerick Independent Living.



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Standard Lunch and Rest Breaks

Employee lunch breaks are in line with statutory requirements. The Organisation of Working Time Act (1997) stipulates that you will not be required to work continuously for more than 4½ hours without a break of at least 15 minutes. If you are required to work more than six hours, you will be entitled to a 30-minute break (which may include the first break). West Limerick Independent Living operates within the confines of this legislation. Further details in relation to breaks are included in your contract of employment.

If you do not get an opportunity to take your break(s), you should inform your Manager in writing immediately and no later than within seven days.

Calculation of Salary

An employee will have his/her rate of pay detailed in their Contract of Employment which will be signed when the employee commences employment with West Limerick Independent Living.

Time Management (CarePlanner) App must be completed (log in – log out) for each work shift so that hours worked can be processed to ensure all employees are paid correctly.

Method of Payment

Employees' salaries, net of all required and any authorised voluntary deductions, are paid bi-weekly by electronic funds transfer. Payment of wages is on a Thursday in arrears for the period Monday to Sunday of the previous two weeks. The pay reference period is bi-weekly.

Salaries are paid directly into employees' bank accounts or certain accounts in selected building societies. West Limerick Independent Living reserves the right to change the payment method and interval.

West Limerick Independent Living reserves the right, unless prohibited by law, at any time during employees' employment, and in any event on termination, to deduct from their salary any overpayments or monies due from them to West Limerick Independent Living.

Pay Slips

A statement of pay is issued by email, the pay slip will detail all additions to the basic pay. Deductions will also be detailed on the employee's pay slip. Only statutory deductions such as PRSI and PAYE and any deduction for which the employee has given his/her written consent will be deducted from the employee's salary unless overpayments or monies are to be paid to West Limerick Independent Living. Should an employee believe that there has been a mistake in the calculation of the amount payable, he/she should immediately contact the person in charge of Payroll. West Limerick Independent Living will advise employees of any adjustments to salary for any overpayments or underpayments in advance of them being made.



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Payroll Deductions

Deductions both agreed and those required by law will be made, i.e., tax withholdings, USC, PAYE, PRSI. The Company shall be entitled to suspend employment with pay in the event of the Employee refusing to obey a lawful order including (but not restricted to) those given to comply with the Company's statutory obligations. The Company reserves the right, and the Employee shall irrevocably authorise the Company, at any time during the Employee's employment, or in any event upon termination, to deduct from the Employee's wages/salary and/or any other monies due to the Employee, an amount equivalent to any of the following: -

- i. any overpayment of wages, salary, remuneration or other payment made to the Employee during the Employee's employment with the Company.
- ii. the amount of any expenses claimed by the Employee and paid but subsequently disallowed by the Company.
- iii. any cost of repairing any damage to or loss of property of any fines or charges imposed upon or any other loss sustained by the Company or any third party, caused by the Employee's breach of contract or breach of the Company policies and procedures or as a result of the Employee's negligence or dishonesty.
- iv. Any balance of monies owed to the Company due to any agreements made between the Employee and the Company.

Salary Confidentiality

Employees are required to respect the privacy of others and to keep their own salary and benefit matters private.

Overtime

Employees will be informed of what hours they are expected to work and any changes to these agreed hours will be discussed with the employee.

The West Limerick Independent Living's policy is that all overtime will be scheduled in advance, discussed with and authorised by Service Coordinator. Unauthorised overtime will not be recognized by the company. Management will regularly review whether there is a need to work overtime hours.

The Time Management (CarePlanner) App should be utilized to record (log in – log out) for every work shift, ensuring accurate documentation of hours worked.

Arrangements in relation to overtime will be outlined in your contract of employment.

Training and Development Policy

Training

The Company reserves the right to require you to attend any training course, if regarded as appropriate.

Any mandatory training required by law to carry out the role will be provided free of cost, count as working time and where possible take place during working hours.



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The employer will also cover the cost of mandatory training not required by law for all employees. Any specific brand training will be covered by the employer. The employer will have the final sign off on what training courses each employee can attend.

The Company encourages all employees to develop themselves to their fullest potential, so that a person may develop within the Company itself. We value our employees highly, and actively encourage, develop and motivate you to develop and achieve personal goals in line with our standards. In addition, we believe that training at all levels, which will increase the efficiency of the Company and fulfil the employee's individual aspiration in relation to his or her growth. To fulfil this policy, we constantly review the training needs of our employees and all training programmes. In addition, we endeavour to provide career opportunities for employees who wish to progress within.

If an employee leaves the Company within a period of 6-12 months of completing training not required by law the employer will deduct any training costs incurred from the employee's final pay.

Continuing Professional Development

The Company may fully or partially finance training programs on your behalf where it is expected that both the Company and you will mutually benefit from this investment. If a training program is identified, a Training agreement will be put in place setting out the terms and conditions of the arrangement.

Educational assistance will be at the discretion of management and business needs will be assessed when making decisions regarding the same.

Incomplete Courses

If an employee fails to complete the course or pass a test, then the organisation reserves the right to be reimbursed for the course fees and any other associated expenses including repaying the company the amount of any retest.

Leaving the Company

In recognition of the investment made on their behalf by the Company, employees who have completed a training program are liable to repay the following amounts should they decide to leave the company within the following periods:

Time since completing program:	Repayment:
Within 12 months	25%
Within 6 months	50%
Within 3 months	75%



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Any deviance from this reimbursement by Company employees will be solely at the discretion of the Manager.

Pensions

Under the requirement of the Pensions Amendment Act 2002, the Employee has the right to contribute to a PRSA. West Limerick Independent Living through Irish Life Assurance PLC offers employees a pension scheme. Further information on all aspects of West Limerick Independent Living's Pension Scheme, including scheme booklets, is available from the Office Administrator.

Appraisals

Appraisals allow the employee and the employer to monitor the development of the employee's proficiency in the role.

The purpose of an appraisal is:

- To reflect on how the worker is fulfilling his/her role.
- To affirm what the worker has achieved over the period and his/her strengths in the role.
- To clarify the expectations of the West Limerick Independent Living's management
- To identify and discuss opportunities for improvement and difficulties.
- To decide on what changes the worker needs to make.
- To develop a clear overview of the role and how it fits into the organisation.
- To review the employee's job description and agree changes if necessary.
- To identify training needs.
- To set goals and targets over the next period.
- To identify ways in which management may need to change in relation to the employee.

Any staff appraisal undertaken should be seen as supportive and empowering. The employee and West Limerick Independent Living management should have the opportunity to fill out appraisal forms before the review/appraisal meeting. This provides the opportunity to record the key issues for discussion. Appraisal forms may be provided to employees approximately two weeks prior to the appraisal meeting.

The agenda for the appraisal meeting will be clarified and agreed upon by the employee and their supervisor prior to the beginning of the appraisal meeting. If an appraisal or review has been carried out on a previous occasion, the new appraisal meeting will partly include a review and evaluation of progress made since the last meeting and new employee objectives will be set for the forthcoming period of business. The employee should talk through their appraisal thoroughly with their supervisor.

The employee will get the opportunity to ask questions and clarify any comments made by the appraisers. Both parties should explore areas of areas for improvement and difficulty and identify specific support and training where appropriate.



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Agreement needs to be reached on the development of work-related goals for the coming period. All decisions and actions will be recorded i.e., what actions are to be taken by both appraisee and appraiser as well as any development and training required. The appraisal objectives can be revisited throughout the year through ongoing support supervision.

Parallel Employment

You should inform the Company of any alternative employment you may have with another employer prior to commencement of employment with the Company. Should you wish to work for another employer outside of the work schedule with this Company, permission must be requested in writing. The Company will only restrict you from working for another Employer where it is proportionate and based on objective grounds. Where an incompatibility restriction is imposed, you will be provided with details of the restriction in a written statement along with the objective grounds on which it is based.

In the event that you are granted written permission from the Company in respect of the above, you are required to ensure that the number of hours worked in any such business or employment taken together with the number of hours worked for the Company under this contract shall not exceed on a daily or weekly basis those permitted under the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997; in this regard, you are required to keep the Company fully informed in writing from time to time of the hours worked in any such other business or employment.

Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Policy

Client and company confidentiality must be always maintained. Employees will not disclose any confidential information relating to West Limerick Independent Living or its client's or suppliers to people not working within West Limerick Independent Living.

Certain company information is highly confidential and in the interests of our clients and the business of the West Limerick Independent Living Limited, all employees are asked to respect confidentiality.

Confidential information and personal data include (but is not limited to) financial information, commercial information, technical information, sales and marketing information, employee information, client addresses, telephone numbers and lists and trade secrets. This also includes discussing clients with anyone who is not an employee of the Company.

In the interest of employee confidentiality only authorised persons will have access to personal data held by the West Limerick Independent Living on employees.

You may not remove any documentation which is the property of the Company, or which contain any confidential information or personal data from the Company's premises at any time without proper advance authorisation and in line with the regulations as outlined for removing any company property from the office.



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- All documents and materials, created, produced, or received by an individual in either hard copy or electronic format in the course of employment with West Limerick Independent Living remain the property of West Limerick Independent Living and must be returned to the Office Administrator of West Limerick Independent Living upon cessation of employment with the company in the interest of confidentiality.
- For those who are commencing employment or are in continuing employment with the Company, we do not permit the use of any confidential information or personal data to be used during our business which has not been obtained in line with the GDPR. Any confidential information or personal data which is used in our Company has been and must continue to be obtained fairly and transparently.
- Employees who have moved from another employment to ours are not permitted to carry with them any client lists or anything of that nature which consists of personal data for the intention of using them whilst in our employment.
- Likewise, employees are not permitted to use any confidential or personal data for a purpose to which the data was not originally collected. This restriction applies to the employee both during and after the termination of employment and without any time limit.

The Company implements appropriate physical and technical security measures against unauthorised access to, or alteration, disclosure, destruction, or unlawful processing of confidential or personal data and against the accidental loss or destruction of such data or information.

Any deliberate breach of confidentiality will be regarded as a matter of gross misconduct. A failure to follow this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal in line with the Company's Disciplinary Procedure.

Further details in relation to obtaining and processing of data and confidential information are available in the Company Data Protection Policies.

Criminal Offences

Employees are required to notify West Limerick Independent Living within 48 hours of being charged with an arrestable offence irrespective of whether it relates to their employment. Failure to do so may result in Disciplinary action and may lead to dismissal.

Remote/Hybrid Working Policy

The company supports remote working in appropriate circumstances either occasionally, to respond to specific circumstances or to complete tasks, or in some cases on a regular part-time basis.

Eligibility:

An employee will become eligible to request remote working upon completing at least 26 weeks continuous service for the company.



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If an employee's request to work remotely is rejected, the employee in question may not reapply to work remotely for at least 12 months.

Employee Requests

Permission to work from home must be sought from management in writing. Any request to work from home will be considered having regard to the needs of our business, the needs of the employee and the requirements of the Code of Practice.

An employee submitting a request for remote working must include the following information in their written request:

- Proposed remote working location.
- Proposed start date for the remote working arrangement.
- Proposed number, and timing, of working days to be worked remotely.
- Expiration of the remote working arrangement where applicable.
- Reasons why the employee is requesting remote working arrangement.
- Where an employee has previously made a request for remote working, they must provide the date of the most recent previous request.
- A self-assessment of the suitability of the proposed remote working locations regarding specific requirements for carrying out the job such as:
 - Data protection and confidentiality,
 - Minimum levels of internet connectivity,
 - Ergonomic suitability of proposed workspace
 - Any equipment or furniture requirements

This request must be submitted to the employer as soon as is reasonably practicable and no later than 8 weeks before the proposed commencement of the remote working arrangement.

The employee may be requested to provide further information in writing and may be required to meet to discuss the request.

Withdrawing The Request:

An employee wishing to withdraw a request for remote working must do so in writing to the company and prior to the agreement being signed by both employer and employee.

The company may deem a request withdrawn where an employee fails to provide additional documentation sought by the company or fails to comply with an invitation from the company for meeting or discussion of the request, and in each case where the time limit for the company to respond has passed.

The company will acknowledge the date of the request withdrawal to the employee in writing.



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Where an employee withdraws a request or has a request withdrawn, the restriction on resubmitting an application within 12 months would not apply and instead, after 30 days from the date of the company's notice, another application for remote working can be submitted to the company.

Timeline

The company will reply, as soon as reasonably practicable but, not later than 4 weeks after receipt of the request or where the company is having difficulty assessing the viability of the request for a remote working arrangement, the company may extend the 4-week period by a further period not exceeding 8 weeks. The company will provide a notice in writing to the employee advising the employee that the 4-week period is to be extended.

Declining The Request:

Where the company is refusing the request, a notice will be provided in writing informing the employee that the request has been refused and the reasons for the refusal. This notice will be provided as soon as is reasonably practicable and no later than 4 weeks after receipt of the request or no later than 12 weeks where the company is having difficulty assessing the viability of the request.

The company may reject a request from an employee to work remotely for any of the following reasons:

- The Nature of the work not allowing for the work to be done remotely
- Cannot reorganise work among existing staff.
- Potential Negative impact on quality of business product or service
- Potential Negative impact on performance of employee or other employees
- Burden of Additional Costs, considering the financial and other costs entailed and the scale and financial resources of the company
- Concerns for the protection of business confidentiality or intellectual property
- Concerns for the suitability of the proposed workspace on health and safety grounds
- Concerns for the suitability of the proposed workspace on data protection grounds
- Concerns for the internet connectivity of the proposed remote working location.
- Concerns for the commute between the proposed remote working location and company's onsite location
- The proposed remote working arrangement conflicts with the provisions of an applicable collective agreement
- Planned structural changes would render any of the previous points applicable
- Employee is the subject of ongoing or recently concluded formal disciplinary process.

Appeal:

An employee will have the right to appeal the decision made by the company. The employee can utilise the company's grievance procedure to appeal the decision.

Please note that employees are obliged to exhaust the internal procedures before proceeding to a third party.



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An employee will not be penalised in any way for exercising their right to request remote working.

Approving the Request

Should the company approve the request, an agreement will be prepared and signed by the employer and employee. This agreement will be retained by the company and a copy of the agreement provided to the employee.

If the company approves a request for remote working, we will provide the following:

- Exact details of the proposed remote working arrangement
- Proposed start date for arrangement
- Where approval is for a trial or temporary period, the proposed end date.
- Where it is to be for an indefinite duration, details of any ongoing review requirement.
- Details of any equipment to be provided by the company or allowances payable to the employee to cover costs associated with remote working.

Changes to Remote Working Arrangements

After the date on which an agreement is signed by the company and the employee (whether the approved remote working arrangement has commenced), the employer and the employee can agree in writing to postpone the arrangement, to alter the period of the arrangement, or to alter the form of the remote working arrangement.

The employee can also request in writing to return to the original working arrangement any time after the agreement is signed setting out the reasons for wanting to return and the proposed date of return.

The company will consider the request having regard to the company needs, the employee needs and the code of practice and will respond in writing to the employee either approving or refusing the request as soon as is reasonably practicable and not later than 4 weeks after receiving the request. Should the company refuse the request the reasons will be set out in the written response. Alternatively, the company may propose an alternative date of return.

The employee will be entitled to return to their original working arrangement held immediately before the approved remote working arrangement.

Termination of the Remote Working Arrangement

If after the remote working arrangement is approved and the agreement is signed between the company and the employee, regardless of whether or not the arrangement has commenced, the company may terminate the agreement by notice in writing to the employee specifying the grounds on which the arrangement is terminated and the day the employee must return to work giving the employee 4 weeks' notice, having regard to the needs of the company, the employee's needs and the requirements of the code of practice.

The company may terminate the agreement where, it is having, or would have, a substantial adverse effect on the business for the following reasons:

- seasonal variations in the volume of the work concerned,



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- the unavailability of a person to carry out the duties of the employee,
- the nature of the duties of the employee, or
- any other matters relevant to the substantial adverse effect on the operation of the business

Before the company sends notice to the employee to terminate the remote working arrangement the company will write to the employee outlining the reasons for terminating the arrangement and the employee, within 7 days of receiving the notice, may reply to the company outlining their reasons for continuing with the agreement which the company will duly consider before making the decision whether to terminate the remote working arrangement.

Where an employee has been granted permission to work remotely, the following applies:

Equipment

The systems and equipment required to allow you to work safely and productively will be reviewed as part of your request.

The company will provide remote employees with equipment that is essential to their job duties, such as laptops, headsets and mobile phones (when applicable). The company will not provide secondary equipment (e.g. printers and screens.)

Equipment that we provide is company property. Employees must keep it safe and avoid any misuse. This equipment and any information stored on it should be recognized as valuable organisational information assets and safeguarded appropriately. You must take reasonable steps to protect Company assets that you may have at home from theft, damage or misuse.

Specifically, employees must:

- Keep their equipment password protected.
- Use it only for the purposes for which we have provided it.
- Take reasonable care of it and use it only in accordance with any operating instructions and our policies and procedures.
- Store equipment in a safe and clean space when not in use.
- Follow all data encryption, protection standards and settings.
- Refrain from downloading suspicious, unauthorized or illegal software.

Please refer to the Company I.T. Policy/Security Policy/Remote Access Policy for further details.

Ergonomics

The employee must submit a self assessment including an assessment of the ergonomic suitability of proposed workspace, as part of their request. The company is committed to its duty to fulfil the requirements of care in providing a safe place of work. Where reasonable adjustments are already made at an employee workstation, such as ergonomic and/or personalised equipment, that same help, support and protection shall be afforded to homeworkers as far as reasonably practicable.



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Health & Safety

The company aims to ensure that the same health and safety standards that apply in the office also apply when working remotely.

All employees who work at home have duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act in the same way as other employees. You must take reasonable care of your own health and safety and that of anyone else who might be affected by your actions and omissions. You must attend any health and safety training sessions, read our policy and undertake to use equipment safely. If you have any concerns, please advise management.

You must ensure that your working patterns and levels of work both over time and during shorter periods are not detrimental to your health and wellbeing. You must use your knowledge, experience and training to identify and report any health and safety concerns to your Line Manager in accordance with our Health and Safety policy.

The company will ensure appropriate risk assessments are undertaken.

Confidentiality & Data

The confidential nature of the business must be observed at all times. Whilst working from home it is your responsibility to ensure the security of our data and to understand the Company's policy in this regard.

General GDPR Rules for Remote Working

Below are our rules to keep personal data safe when working away from the office.

Devices

- Take extra care that devices, such as USBs, phones, laptops, or tablets, are not lost or misplaced,
- Make sure that any device has the necessary updates, such as operating system updates (like iOS or android) and software/antivirus updates.
- Ensure your computer, laptop, or device, is used in a safe location, for example where you can keep sight of it and minimise who else can view the screen, particularly if working with sensitive personal data.
- Lock your device if you do have to leave it unattended for any reason.
- Make sure your devices are turned off, locked, or stored carefully when not in use.
- Use effective access controls (such as multi-factor authentication and strong passwords) and, where available, encryption to restrict access to the device, and to reduce the risk if a device is stolen or misplaced.
- When a device is lost or stolen, you should take steps immediately to ensure a remote memory wipe, where possible.

Emails

- Follow our company policies around the use of email.
- Use work email accounts rather than personal ones for work-related emails involving personal data.
- Before sending an email, ensure you're sending it to the correct recipient, particularly for emails involving large amounts of personal data or sensitive personal data.

Cloud and Network Access



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- Where possible only use our trusted networks or cloud services, and complying with our organisational rules and procedures about cloud or network access, login and, data sharing.
- If you are working without cloud or network access, ensure any locally stored data is adequately backed up in a secure manner.

Paper Records

It's important to remember that data protection applies to not only electronically stored or processed data, but also personal data in manual form (such as paper records) where it is, or is intended to be, part of filing system.

- Where you are working remotely with paper records, take steps to ensure the security and confidentiality of these records, such as by keeping them locked in a filing cabinet or drawer when not in use, disposing of them securely (e.g., shredding) when no longer needed, and making sure they are not left somewhere where they could be misplaced or stolen.
- If you're dealing with records that contain special categories of personal data (e.g., health data) you should take extra care to ensure their security and confidentiality, and only remove such records from a secure location where it is strictly necessary to carry out your work.
- Where possible, you should keep a written record of which records and files have been taken home, in order to maintain good data access and governance practices.

Support

Should you encounter any problems or difficulties whilst working remotely, please contact your manager immediately.

Abuse of Remote Working Arrangement

If the company has reasonable grounds for believing that the employee is not discharging their duties fully while on an approved remote working arrangement, then the company will write to the employee proposing to terminate the arrangement outlining the grounds for termination and stating that the employee can respond to the employer within 7 days of receiving the notice. The company will give due consideration to representations made by the employee before deciding whether or not to terminate the arrangement.

If the company decides to give notice of termination of the remote working arrangement this will be done in writing outlining in summary the grounds for termination of the arrangement and stating the day on which the employee must return to work which will be no later than 7 days following the receipt of the written notice.

The employee will return to the original working arrangement on the day specified in the notice.

Further Information

If you are unclear about any aspects of this policy, please ensure to seek clarification from your manager. This policy is subject to change in line with the provisions of any future legislation and the Code of Practice.



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Dignity and Respect at Work

Acceptable Behaviour

All employees have a responsibility to maintain a suitable, safe, and comfortable working environment for themselves and their colleagues. West Limerick Independent Living is fully committed to maintaining a non-discriminatory working environment, which is free from harassment. All employees are expected to maintain a high standard of behaviour and have a personal responsibility to behave in a manner, which is not offensive to others.

Allegations of harassment will be taken very seriously, and you are reminded that all forms of harassment are, in fact, unlawful. In addition to disciplinary action within the company, individuals may also be held personally liable for such conduct, including, in some cases, criminal prosecution. *This policy forms part of the terms and conditions of employment.*

West Limerick Independent Living recognizes the stress and anxiety caused by harassment and has always been committed to ensuring that employees are free to work in an environment which is free from harassment and bullying. Accordingly, the company wishes to assure all employees that harassment or bullying of any kind, including sexual harassment, will not be condoned. Disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, depending on the circumstances, will be taken against any employee found guilty of such conduct. In addition, the company has a legal obligation to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to prevent bullying, sexual harassment, and harassment.

General Equality Policy

West Limerick Independent Living is committed to ensuring that all employees, contractors, and job applicants receive equal opportunity in all aspects of their relationship with the organisation irrespective of gender, marital or family status, race, sexual orientation, religious belief, membership of the traveller community, age, or disability.

This includes consistent and objective standards in recruitment, selection, appraisal, compensation, training, and personal development.

Recruitment and Selection

- It is the company's intention to recruit high quality candidates whose skills and experience are most suited to the position.
- Job advertisements will not discriminate, and all positions will have an agreed job specification.
- Any qualifications or requirements attached to a job which directly or indirectly restricts those who may apply will only be retained if they can be justified as essential for the effective performance of the job.



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- The reasons for selection or rejection of applicants will be recorded and the records retained in accordance with legislation.

Training and Development

All employees will be encouraged to develop to their full capacity. Training and development opportunities will be made available where relevant to job performance to all those who qualify based on skills, experience, potential and qualifications marked against objective criteria. Training will also be provided to meet all necessary health and safety issues.

Advancement depends on assessment of individual performance, potential and the business need for people at the next level.

Compensation and Benefits

The salary review process will be undertaken annually, and an adjustment may be made. Any adjustment will be made based on individual performance and the market rate for the job. Eligibility for benefits will be applied consistently across the organisation.

Breach of Policy

We believe that all individuals must be treated fairly and without discrimination and accordingly all employees are required to comply with this policy. Any instance of discrimination should be reported immediately to senior management or to your immediate manager.

In the event of a formal complaint, the West Limerick Independent Living Grievance policy will be applied.

Bullying Policy

Introduction

This policy is designed to assist the Company in providing a work environment free from workplace bullying as well as to ensure that any employee who feels that they have been subject to inappropriate behaviour, as defined in this policy, may raise the matter, and have it resolved in an appropriate manner.

The Company is fully committed to providing a positive working environment, free from any form of bullying behaviour, for all employees working with us. It is fundamental to our ethos of dignity and respect for others in the working environment that staff members should be free from any activity or behaviour that adversely affects the dignity of people in the workplace. This policy applies to all employees whether they are in a fixed location, at home, or mobile. An act of bullying may occur outside the work premises or normal working hours provided the perpetrator was acting in the course of employment, for example on a training course or work-related social event.



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Bullying behaviour can have a devastating impact on staff in the workplace and is totally unacceptable. Every employee is responsible for promoting a positive workplace free from bullying behaviour. Both the management and staff of the Company have a shared responsibility to ensure that this type of behaviour is not tolerated within the organisation.

Any complaint involving bullying behaviour, which comes through the identified complaints procedure, will be dealt with promptly and fairly.

Bullying in the workplace will not be tolerated by the Company under any circumstances. This policy provides for prompt, fair, confidential, and effective redress for targets of bullying.

Application

All employees will be expected to comply with this policy and Management will take appropriate measures to ensure that bullying does not occur. Every employee both staff and management have a shared responsibility for promoting a positive workplace free from inappropriate behaviour and in particular bullying.

This policy applies to all employees whether they are in a fixed location, at home, or mobile or attend work associated events such as meetings and Company outings, whether on the premises or off site.

The policy applies to dignity and respect not only by fellow employees but also by a client, supplier or other business contact to which an employee might reasonably expect to come into contact within the course of their employment.

Breaches

Appropriate disciplinary action, including dismissal for serious offences, will be taken against any employees who violate this policy.

Definition of Bullying

Workplace Bullying is repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity at work.

An isolated incident of the behaviour described in this definition may be an affront to dignity at work but, as a once off incident, is not considered to be bullying. Complaints regarding an isolated incident should be handled under the Company's Grievance Procedure.

Workplace bullying allegations should meet the criteria of an on-going series of accumulation of seriously negative targeted behaviours against a person or persons to undermine their esteem and standing in a harmful, sustained way. Bullying behaviour is offensive, on-going, targeted and outside any reasonable 'norm'.



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A pattern and trend are involved so that a reasonable person would regard such behaviour as clearly wrong, undermining and humiliating. It involves repeated incidents or a pattern of behaviour that is usually intended to intimidate, offend, degrade or humiliate a particular person or group of people - but the intention is not important.

Bullying behaviour also occurs in many guises and reveals itself through obvious and direct methods as well as in less direct and subtle forms.

Behaviours Likely to Constitute Bullying

Bullying can include conduct offensive to a reasonable person, e.g., oral or written slurs, physical contact, gestures, jokes, displaying pictures, flags/emblems, graffiti or other material which state/imply prejudicial attitudes which are offensive to fellow employees.

Other behaviours which can constitute bullying could be one or more of the following. This list is not exhaustive.

- Exclusion with negative consequences
- Verbal abuse/insults
- Being treated less favourably than colleagues in similar roles
- Belittling a person's opinion
- Disseminating malicious rumours, gossip or innuendo
- Socially excluding or isolating a person within the work sphere
- Intrusion - pestering, spying or stalking
- Intimidation/aggressive interactions
- Excessive monitoring of work
- Withholding information necessary for proper performance of a person's job
- Repeatedly manipulating a person's job content and targets
- Blaming a person for things beyond their control
- Use of aggressive and obscene language
- Other menacing behaviour

What is Not Bullying?

- Once off behaviour is not bullying, however it may be an affront to dignity at work and the employee is still encouraged to raise this and seek resolution.
- The employee may consider the Grievance or Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policies in this instance if the inappropriate behaviour complained of does not fall within the scope of this policy.
- Inappropriate behaviour in isolation does not in itself fall within the level of distress required for it to be considered bullying.
- Behaviour considered bullying by one person may be considered routine or acceptable interaction by another, so the 'reasonableness' of behaviours over time must be considered.



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- Disrespectful behaviour, conflicts and disagreements is not of itself bullying. There are various workplace behavioural issues and relationship breakdowns which are troubling, upsetting and unsettling but are not of an adequate level to meet the criteria required for a bullying case.

Bullying does not include:

- Expressing differences of opinion strongly.
- Offering constructive feedback, guidance, or advice about work-related behaviour which is not of itself welcome.
- Ordinary performance management.
- Reasonable corrective action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of employees (for example managing a worker's performance, taking reasonable disciplinary actions, or assigning work).
- Workplace conflict where people disagree or disregard the others' point of view.

This list is not exhaustive.

Procedures

There is both an informal and formal procedure to deal with the issue of bullying at work. Any investigation should be completed as quickly as possible.

Contact Person

The Company has appointed Contact Persons, Laura Mulqueen and Precious Madubeko, for any employee who wishes to enquire about complaint procedures to assist the resolution of a matter. The Contact Persons responsibilities are to sign post you by:

- Listening,
- Offer guidance on options available to you in line with the appropriate procedures.

This is on a strictly confidential basis.

Contact Persons are trained appropriately on the Company's policies and procedures. Contact Persons are subject to agreement of terms which include confidentiality and objectivity.

The Contact Person will have no role in the investigation, outcome or appeal of any formal complaint or any further involvement in the details of the complaint, should it progress to that stage.

Informal Procedure

It is often preferable for all concerned that complaints of bullying are dealt with informally whenever possible. Sometimes, the person responsible for the behaviour may not even be aware that he or she is causing such offence



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to others. Making him or her aware of the same often times leads to a positive response to a request to cease behaving in such a manner.

This is likely to produce solutions that are speedy and effective. Thus, in the first instance, an employee who believes that they are the subject of bullying could ask the person responsible (“the Respondent”) to stop the offensive behaviour.

Raise the issue informally with the person responsible for the behaviour, the Respondent, pointing out that their conduct is unwelcome, offensive, or interfering with work. This should be done calmly, focusing on the facts and impact on the employee personally.

If an employee finds it difficult to approach the Respondent directly, they should seek help and advice on a confidential basis from their manager or a Contact Person on how to resolve the issue.

Secondary Informal Procedure

If matters cannot be resolved at an initial informal level, the employee may decide to invoke the secondary informal procedure. If the employee decides to take the secondary informal route, then the Company will nominate an appropriate person to oversee this process. This will not be the same Contact Person who assisted at the informal stage.

- The complaint should be set out in writing. If the complaint is made verbally, a written note of what is complained of will be taken by the Nominated Person and a copy given to the Complainant for verification.
- The Nominated Person (who may be a trained manager or a person from the Contacts Person list, but not the Contact Person the Complainant spoke with already), will establish the facts, the context of the complaint and the next course of action in dealing with the matter.
- If the complaint potentially satisfies the definition of bullying and includes specific examples of the alleged behaviour, the person complained of will be presented with the written complaint by the Nominated Person and be invited to respond.
- A method will be agreed to progress the issue to resolution so that both parties can return to a harmonious working environment. This will require both parties meeting together with the Nominated Person to discuss the complaint and the responses to it. The Nominated Person will make no assumptions about the culpability of the Respondent at any time when assisting the Complainant with the complaint.
- The Nominated Person may deem it necessary to put in place an on-going monitoring process to ensure the alleged behaviour has ceased. This may involve; regular check-ins with both parties for a period of time specified, additional meetings, temporary alternative working arrangements, or any other measures appropriate to the situation.
- The Nominated Person will keep a record of each stage; complaint, meetings, agreed actions and signed records of meeting(s).



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If the behaviour complained of does not meet the definition of bullying, an alternative approach will be put in place under the Harassment or Grievance procedure, or any other appropriate policy and a rationale recorded.

If there are no examples given by the Complainant, it will be deemed that there is no complaint to be answered by the Respondent and therefore the complaint cannot proceed as the person complained of has no recourse to rebutting an accusation that doesn't provide specific details. However, if an issue has occurred as perceived by either party, the parties will make every effort for positive relations going forward.

Line managers will be kept informed on the process as it progresses, where necessary and on a strictly confidential basis.

Mediation

The Company recognises that mediation is an effective form of conflict resolution. It is a process whereby an independent, neutral mediator assists parties to come to an agreement through collaborative engagement. It is not about blame, but about understanding the conflict and finding agreed ways of future interaction and behaviour. The most important principles of mediation are that it is voluntary, impartial and confidential. It can be a very effective process for addressing issues and interpersonal disputes. Mediation requires the voluntary participation and co-operation of the parties to the complaint. Where mediation is availed of, the following applies:

- An independent mediator will be appointed.
- Mediation does not deny the right to a full investigation at a later date.
- The information that arises in mediation is confidential and cannot be used later in an investigation.

Formal Procedure

Where the employee deems it appropriate to skip the informal stage due to the nature of the complaint, or where the informal stage(s) did not resolve the matter, the employee may utilise the formal process. The Company may also deem it inappropriate for a complaint to proceed under the informal procedure, depending on the seriousness of the matter.

Preliminary Screening

When a formal complaint is submitted under this policy, it will first undergo a preliminary screening by an appointed manager or HR to ensure that the conduct falls to be investigated as per the Bullying Policy. If the preliminary screening establishes that the complaint is not to be investigated under this policy, a recommendation will be made to the employee to review other applicable procedures such as Harassment or Sexual Harassment Work Policy or Grievance Procedure, etc. If the complaint already underwent a Secondary Informal Stage and it



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was established that the complaint satisfies the definition of bullying and it included specific examples of the alleged behaviour, no Preliminary Screening will be required to proceed to the Formal Investigation.

Formal Investigation

In order to raise a formal complaint, the employee must submit their complaint in writing to their immediate manager, or if not appropriate to do so, any other member of management.

The complaint should be confined to outlining the details, witnesses, dates, times and any other relevant information to assist the proper investigation of the complaint.

An Investigation Manager will be appointed to investigate the complaint, to establish the facts and decide whether on a balance of probabilities, that there is a “case to answer” in relation to the complaint.

- The investigation should be governed by terms of reference. The parties will be provided with these terms of reference. If any party has a disagreement with the terms of reference this must be stated at the commencement of the process for resolving in advance.
- The investigation will include investigation meeting(s) with both the Complainant and the Respondent and any witnesses, as necessary. All participating employees should be informed in writing in advance of the investigation meeting(s) about the purpose of the meeting(s), the complaint that is investigated, the time and venue of the meeting(s) and their right to be accompanied.
- Witnesses should sign their statements and it should be explained when taking statements that their statement will be shared with both parties.
- The Respondent will be notified in writing of the nature of the complaint, given a copy of the allegation, informed of their right to representation and will be provided with an opportunity to respond to any allegations made in the complaint.
- No assumptions will be made about the culpability of the Respondent during the course of the investigation.
- A record of all relevant discussions which take place during the course of the investigation will be maintained by the appointed Investigation Manager. Both parties will be given copies of these notes together with any witness statements taken and provided with an opportunity to comment on the notes and any statements provided.
- The appointed Investigation Manager will outline their decision in a written report stating the reasons as to whether there is “a case to answer” regarding the complaint based on a balance of probabilities.
- Both parties will be given a copy of the investigation written report.
- The outcome of this process could be any of the outcomes outlined below.
 - Case to Answer: If it is established there is “a case to answer” against the Respondent, it may be decided to progress the matter through to the Disciplinary Procedure. This may lead to a disciplinary sanction up to and including dismissal. No recommendations should be made in the report.



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- No Case to Answer: If it is established there is no case to answer, the complaint will not proceed to through to the disciplinary stage, however recommendations may be made, such as the provision of further training, more effective promotion of the organisation’s policies, etc.
- Non-Employee: If the investigation concludes that there is “a case to answer” then the report will recommend whether appropriate sanctions may be imposed such as the termination of contracts, suspension of service, or exclusion from the premises.
- Malicious or Vexatious: Where it is deemed on occasion, that a complaint has not been made in good faith, this will be treated very seriously. This may lead to disciplinary sanctions up to and including dismissal for the employee who made such a complaint on this basis.

Appeal

Both the Complainant and the Respondent have the right to appeal against the outcome of this process. Employees will be advised who will be appointed to hear their appeal, which will involve a person at a suitable level not previously involved in the process. All appeals should be made in writing within five days from the date on which the decision is communicated to the employee. Employees will be required to set out the grounds for their appeal in writing.

At the appeal meeting the employee will be given the opportunity to explain the basis of their appeal. The person appointed to hear the appeal may ask further questions and seek clarification on the grounds of appeal. At the conclusion of the appeal process, a decision whether or not to uphold the appeal will be confirmed in writing to the parties.

This is the final step in the internal process and the decision made by the designated member of management is final.

Other key aspects of the policy:

- **Representation:** during the Formal Investigation an employee will have the right to be represented by a work colleague. An employee may not be represented by any other person or body unconnected to the Company.
- **Third Party:** The Company reserves the right to outsource any stage of the policy to an appropriate external third party.
- **Confidentiality:** it is important that any employee who is involved in this process or who is aware of an ongoing process, directly or indirectly, should maintain absolute confidentiality on the matter.
- **Data Protection:** in order to comply with its obligation under employment legislations the Company reserves the right to refer any grievance matters to outsourced professionals/ HR Consultancy. Any information forwarded may be processed by those parties. Information will be made available to the WRC / The Department of Social Welfare / Revenue should they so request the same. The principles of GDPR will be maintained at all times.



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- **Working while a complaint is investigated;** the employee concerned who made the complaint should continue to work normally, until matters have been fully exhausted and resolved. However, depending on the nature and seriousness of the circumstances, appropriate interim arrangements can be made to facilitate the employees concerned to work in another location, where it is possible, pending the outcome of the process. Depending on the circumstances and seriousness, this might include alternative line management structure, change of workstations, or requesting Respondent to stay at home on “suspension” as per the disciplinary procedure where the complaint is of a serious nature, pending an investigation on fully paid leave. Any such measure does not amount to a penalisation or sanction on any of the parties concerned.
- **Cooperation:** all employees are required to cooperate and fully assist with any ongoing investigation into a complaint. Failure or refusal to attend or cooperate with scheduled meetings without reasonable notice or reasonable explanation will be considered a failure to comply with a reasonable instruction and may result in a disciplinary sanction.
- **Timeline:** investigations will be conducted as quickly as is reasonably practicable taking fairness into account for all parties involved.
- **Witnesses:** it will be deemed a disciplinary offense in itself to intimidate, pressurise, or conspire with any witness(es) who are required to partake in an investigation into a complaint.
- **Reasonable Accommodation:** The Company will provide reasonable accommodation to employees who may need adjustments to participate in the process.
- **Victimisation:** Retaliation or Victimisation of any kind against an employee for raising a complaint or taking part in an investigation concerning this policy work is a serious disciplinary offence. An employee will not be victimised or subject to sanction, for example, for making a complaint in good faith, giving evidence as part of the process, or by giving notice of an intention to do any of the above.
- **Non-employees:** bullying by other employees and non-employees such as clients, customers, and business contacts will not be tolerated and could lead to disciplinary action (in the case of employees) and other sanctions, for example the suspension of contracts or services, or exclusion from premises (in the case of non-employees).

The policy and procedures will be updated to take account of changes in the law.

Workplace Free from Bullying Is Everyone’s Responsibility

All employees working in the Company are responsible for ensuring that bullying does not occur at any level in the organisation.

We all want to foster a positive, harmonious and supportive work environment and ensuring dignity at work does not prevent normal good humoured consensual interaction between work colleagues. However, care needs to be taken not to cross the line into unacceptable behaviour, which is offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or



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insulting. Where a colleague indicates that certain behaviour is unacceptable; the individual involved in the behaviour should desist immediately.

Management has a particular responsibility to ensure that the workplace remains free from all forms of bullying, to establish and maintain appropriate standards of behaviour in the workplace and to deal promptly and fairly with complaints of bullying.

If you need to invoke this policy, be assured you will be supported.

Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policy

Introduction

The policy of our Company is to treat all employees in a consistent manner, with respect and dignity and to provide an environment free from harassment and sexual harassment.

The Company is fully committed to providing a positive working environment, free from any form of harassment or sexual harassment, for all employees working with us. It is fundamental to our ethos of dignity and respect for others in the working environment that staff members should be free from any activity or behaviour that adversely affects the dignity of people in the workplace. This policy applies to all employees whether they are in a fixed location, at home, or mobile. An act of harassment or sexual harassment may occur outside the work premises or normal working hours provided the perpetrator was acting in the course of employment, for example on a training course or work-related social event.

Harassment and sexual harassment can have a devastating impact on staff in the workplace and those types of behaviours are totally unacceptable. Every employee is responsible for promoting a positive workplace free from harassment or sexual harassment. Both the management and staff of the Company have a shared responsibility to ensure that this type of behaviour is not tolerated within the organisation.

The objective of this policy is to inform all staff of their rights and responsibilities under the policy and to promote awareness among staff of the steps that they may take if they feel they are encountering problems in this area.

Any complaint involving harassing behaviour, which comes through the identified complaints procedure, will be dealt with fairness and sensitivity and in as confidential a manner as possible.

Harassment and sexual harassment by employers, employees and non-employees such as clients, customers, students, and business contacts will not be tolerated and could lead to disciplinary action (in the case of employees) and other sanctions, for example the suspension of contracts or services, or exclusion from premises (in the case of non-employees).



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Harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace will not be tolerated by the Company under any circumstances. This policy provides for prompt, fair, confidential and effective redress for targets of harassment and sexual harassment.

Application

All employees will be expected to comply with this policy and Management will take appropriate measures to ensure that harassment and sexual harassment does not occur. Every employee both staff and management have a shared responsibility for promoting a positive workplace free from inappropriate behaviour and in particular harassment and sexual harassment.

This policy applies to all employees whether they are in a fixed location, at home, or mobile or attend work associated events such as meetings and Company outings, whether on the premises or off site.

The policy applies to dignity and respect not only by fellow employees but also by a client, supplier or other business contact to which an employee might reasonably expect to come into contact within the course of their employment.

Breaches

Appropriate disciplinary action, including dismissal for serious offences, will be taken against any employees who violate this policy.

Definitions and Scope

Harassment

Harassment is further defined in the Employment Equality Acts, 1998-2015 as any form of unwanted, inappropriate conduct relating to any of the discriminatory grounds which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. Such unwanted conduct may consist of acts, requests, spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material.

Harassment is linked to the nine discriminatory grounds (race, religious belief, age, sexual orientation, disability, civil status, membership of the traveling community, gender and family status) and is outlawed in the workplace and in the course of employment.

The Employment Equality Act 1998 prohibits harassment by an employer, another employee or by clients, suppliers or business contacts of the employer. A single incident may constitute harassment and behaviour may constitute harassment of an employee even though it is not directed specifically at that employee.

The following list of examples of harassment is illustrative not exhaustive:



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- Verbal harassment - jokes, comments, ridicule or songs;
- Written harassment - including graffiti, text messages, emails, social media or internet posts;
- Physical harassment - jostling, shoving or any form of assault;
- Intimidatory harassment - gestures, posturing or threatening poses;
- Visual displays such as posters, emblems or badges;
- Excessive monitoring of work;
- Isolation or exclusion from social activities; and
- Unreasonably changing a person's job content or targets.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment is defined in the Employment Equality Act, 1998-2015 as all unwelcome and sexually, or otherwise on the gender ground, offensive, humiliating or intimidating actions involving acts of physical intimacy, spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written material or pictures, or requests for sexual favours.

Sexual harassment is outlawed in the workplace and in the course of employment by the employer, an employee or by clients, suppliers or business contacts of the employer.

The conduct at issue may not be specifically directed at a particular employee but nevertheless has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person.

Many forms of behaviour can constitute sexual harassment. In addition, a single incident may constitute sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment includes behaviours like those in the following list, which is illustrative and not exhaustive:

- Physical conduct of a sexual nature - this may include unwanted physical contact such as unnecessary touching, patting or pinching or brushing against another employee's body, assault and coercive sexual intercourse;
- Verbal conduct of a sexual nature - this includes unwelcome sexual advances, propositions or pressure for sexual contact, continued suggestions for social contact outside the workplace after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome, unwanted or offensive, suggestive remarks, innuendo or lewd comments, graffiti, written materials, emails, text messages or social media posts;
- Non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature - this may include the display of pornographic or sexually suggestive pictures or objects. It may also include stalking, indecent exposure, leering, whistling or making sexually suggestive gestures; and
- Gender-based conduct - this includes conduct that denigrates or is abusive of an employee for reasons related to his or her sex such as derogatory or degrading abuse or insults which are gender based. This



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might include conduct that insults or degrades an employee because she is pregnant or because s/he is transgender.

Protection from harassment and sexual harassment extends to:

- sexual harassment and harassment by co-workers, clients, customers and other business contacts;
- beyond the workplace to work-related conferences and training and may extend to work-related social events and social media sites;
- different treatment of an employee because s/he has rejected or accepted the sexual harassment or harassment;

It is for an employee to decide what behaviour is unwelcome irrespective of the attitude of others.

Employees are encouraged to challenge harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace.

Employees who, for example, make a complaint, support a Complainant, or who give evidence in proceedings, will not be victimised.

Responsibilities

Management

Management and others in positions of authority are responsible to ensure that harassment does not occur and that complaints are addressed promptly. Management will:

- provide good example by treating all in the workplace with courtesy and respect;
- promote awareness of the organisation's policy and complaints procedures;
- be vigilant for signs of harassment and take action before a problem escalates;
- respond sensitively to an employee who makes a complaint of harassment;
- explain the procedures to be followed if a complaint of sexual harassment or harassment is made;
- ensure that an alleged perpetrator is treated fairly;
- ensure that an employee making a complaint is not victimised for doing so; and
- monitor the situation after a complaint is made to prevent recurrence.

Employees

Employees must respect the dignity of others in the workplace. Employees contribute to a harassment-free work culture by co-operating with management to eliminate harassment from the workplace. Harassment by employees constitutes misconduct and may lead to disciplinary action.



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Non-Employees

Harassment by non-employees such as service users, including clients/customers, students and business contacts will not be tolerated and may lead, for example, to termination of contracts, suspension of services, exclusion from a premises or the imposition of other sanctions.

Training

The Company is committed to training managers, supervisors and all staff on strategies to prevent harassment. This normally happens at induction and through appropriate awareness-raising initiatives. This training aims to identify the factors which contribute to a working environment free of harassment and to familiarise participants with their responsibilities and problems they are likely to encounter. This training is especially important for those members of staff primarily responsible for implementing the policy and processing complaints.

Complaints Procedures

There is both an informal and formal procedure to deal with the issue of harassment and sexual harassment at work. Any investigation should be completed as quickly as possible.

Contact Person

The Company has appointed Contact Persons, Laura Mulqueen and Precious Madubeko, for any employee who wishes to enquire about complaint procedures in order to assist the resolution of a matter. The Contact Persons responsibilities are to sign post you by:

- Listening,
- Offer guidance on options available to you in line with the appropriate procedures.

This is on a strictly confidential basis.

Contact Persons are trained appropriately on the Company's policies and procedures. Contact Persons are subject to agreement of terms which include confidentiality and objectivity.

The Contact Person will have no role in the investigation, outcome or appeal of any formal complaint or any further involvement in the details of the complaint, should it progress to that stage.

Informal Procedure

It is often preferable for all concerned that complaints of harassment or sexual harassment are dealt with informally whenever possible. Sometimes, the person in question may not even be aware that his or her behaviour is causing offence to others. Often times a positive response may be received when asking to cease the behaviour in an informal manner.



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This approach is likely to produce solutions that are speedy and effective. Thus, in the first instance, an employee who believes that they are the subject of harassment could ask the person responsible (“the Respondent”) to stop the offensive behaviour.

- Raise the issue informally with the person who seems to be creating the problem, the Respondent, pointing out that their conduct is unwelcome, offensive or interfering with work. This should be done calmly, focusing on the facts and impact on the employee personally.
- If an employee finds it difficult to approach the Respondent directly, they should seek help and advice on a confidential basis from their manager or a contact person on how to resolve the issue.
- Having consulted with an appropriate person, the employee may request the assistance of the manager or contact person in raising the issue with the Respondent.
- A meeting between the parties will be facilitated by an appointed manager, in an informal manner so that both sides have an opportunity to discuss their issues.
- The aim is to get the Respondent to understand the effect that their alleged behaviour has had on the employee and overall to get a commitment from the Respondent that it will not happen again.
- The aim is also to ensure that both parties can work together, positively going forward and ensure there is a commitment from both sides on agreed outcomes.

Mediation

The Company recognises that mediation is an effective form of conflict resolution. It is a process whereby an independent, neutral mediator assists parties to come to an agreement through collaborative engagement. It is not about blame, but about understanding the conflict and finding agreed ways of future interaction and behaviour. The most important principles of mediation are that it is voluntary, impartial and confidential. It can be a very effective process for addressing issues and interpersonal disputes. Mediation requires the voluntary participation and co-operation of the parties to the complaint. Where mediation is availed of, the following applies:

- An independent mediator will be appointed.
- Mediation does not deny the right to a full investigation at a later date.
- The information that arises in mediation is confidential and cannot be used later in an investigation.

Formal Procedure

Where the employee deems it appropriate to skip the informal stage due to the nature of the complaint, or where the informal stage(s) did not resolve the matter, the employee may utilise the formal process. The Company may also deem it inappropriate for a complaint to proceed under the informal procedure, depending on the seriousness of the matter.



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Preliminary Screening

When a formal complaint is submitted under this policy, it will first undergo a preliminary screening by an appointed manager or HR to ensure that the definitions of harassment or sexual harassment have been met. If the preliminary screening establishes that the complaint is not to be investigated under this policy, a recommendation will be made to the employee to review other applicable procedures such as Bullying or Grievance Procedure etc.

Formal Investigation

In order to raise a formal complaint, the employee must submit their complaint in writing to their immediate manager, or if not appropriate to do so, any other member of management.

- The Complaint should be confined to outlining the details, witnesses, dates, times and any other relevant information to assist the proper investigation of the complaint.
- An Investigation Manager will be appointed to investigate the complaint, to establish the facts and decide whether on a balance of probabilities, that there is a “case to answer” in relation to the complaint.
- The investigation should be governed by terms of reference. The parties will be provided with these terms of reference. If any party has a disagreement with the terms of reference this must be stated at the commencement of the process for resolving in advance.
- The investigation will include investigation meeting(s) with both the Complainant and the Respondent and any witnesses, as necessary. All participating employees should be informed in writing in advance of the investigation meeting(s) about the purpose of the meeting(s), the complaint that is investigated, the time and venue of the meeting(s) and their right to be accompanied.
- Witnesses should sign their statements and it should be explained when taking statements that their statement will be shared with both parties.
- The Respondent will be notified in writing of the nature of the complaint, given a copy of the allegation, informed of their right to representation and will be provided with an opportunity to respond to any allegations made in the complaint.
- No assumptions will be made about the culpability of the Respondent during the course of the investigation.
- A record of all relevant discussions which take place during the course of the investigation will be maintained by the appointed Investigation Manager. Both parties will be given copies of these notes together with any witness statements taken and provided with an opportunity to comment on the notes and any statements provided.
- The appointed Investigation Manager will outline their decision in a written report stating the reasons as to whether there is “a case to answer” regarding the complaint based on a balance of probabilities.
- Both parties will be given a copy of the written investigation report.
- The outcome of this process could be any of the outcomes outlined below.



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- **Case to Answer:** If it is established there is “a case to answer” against the Respondent, it may be decided to progress the matter through to the Disciplinary Procedure. This may lead to a disciplinary sanction up to and including dismissal. No recommendations should be made in the report.
- **No Case to Answer:** If it is established there is no case to answer, the complaint will not proceed to the disciplinary stage, however recommendations may be made, such as the provision of further training, more effective promotion of the organisation’s policies, etc.
- **Non-Employee:** If the investigation concludes that there is “a case to answer” then the report will recommend whether appropriate sanctions may be imposed such as the termination of contracts, suspension of service, or exclusion from the premises.
- **Malicious or Vexatious:** Where it is deemed on occasion, that a complaint has not been made in good faith, this will be treated very seriously. This may lead to disciplinary sanctions up to and including dismissal for the employee who made such a complaint on this basis.

Appeal

Both the Complainant and the Respondent have the right to appeal against the outcome of this process. Employees will be advised who will be appointed to hear their appeal, which will involve a person at a suitable level not previously involved in the process.

All appeals should be made in writing within five days from the date on which the decision is communicated to the employee. Employees will be required to set out the grounds for their appeal in writing.

At the appeal meeting the employee will be given the opportunity to explain the basis of their appeal. The person appointed to hear the appeal may ask further questions and seek clarification on the grounds of appeal. At the conclusion of the appeal process, a decision whether or not to uphold the appeal will be confirmed in writing to the parties.

This is the final step in the internal process and the decision made by the designated member of management is final.

Other key aspects of the policy

- **Representation:** During the Formal Investigation an employee will have the right to be represented by a work colleague. An employee may not be represented by any other person or body unconnected to the Company.
- **Third Party:** The Company reserves the right to outsource any stage of the policy to an appropriate external third party.
- **Confidentiality:** It is important that any employee who is involved in this process or who is aware of an ongoing process, directly or indirectly, should maintain absolute confidentiality on the matter.



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- **Data Protection:** In order to comply with its obligation under employment legislations the Company reserves the right to refer any grievance matters to outsourced professionals/ HR Consultancy. Any information forwarded may be processed by those parties. Information will be made available to the WRC / The Department of Social Welfare / Revenue should they so request the same. The principles of GDPR will be maintained at all times.
- **Working while a complaint is investigated:** The employee concerned who made the complaint should continue to work normally, until matters have been fully exhausted and resolved. However, depending on the nature and seriousness of the circumstances, appropriate interim arrangements can be made to facilitate the employees concerned to work in another location or from home, where it is possible, pending the outcome of the process. Depending on the circumstances and seriousness, this might include alternative line management structure, change of workstations, or requesting the Respondent to stay at home on “suspension” as per the disciplinary procedure where the complaint is of a serious nature, pending an investigation on fully paid leave. Any such measure does not amount to a penalisation or sanction on any of the parties concerned.
- **Cooperation:** All employees are required to cooperate and fully assist with any ongoing investigation into a complaint. Failure or refusal to attend or cooperate with scheduled meetings without reasonable notice or reasonable explanation will be considered a failure to comply with a reasonable instruction and may result in a disciplinary sanction.
- **Timeline:** Investigations will be conducted as quickly as is reasonably practicable taking fairness into account for all parties involved.
- **Witnesses:** It will be deemed a disciplinary offense in itself to intimidate, pressurise, or conspire with any witness(es) who are required to partake in an investigation into a complaint.
- **Reasonable Accommodation:** The Company will provide reasonable accommodation to employees who may need adjustments to participate in the process.
- **Victimisation:** Retaliation or Victimisation of any kind against an employee for raising a complaint or taking part in an investigation concerning this policy work is a serious disciplinary offence. An employee will not be victimised or subject to sanction, for example, for making a complaint in good faith, giving evidence as part of the process, or by giving notice of an intention to do any of the above.
- **Non-employees:** Harassment or sexual harassment from other employees and non-employees such as clients, customers, and business contacts will not be tolerated and could lead to disciplinary action (in the case of employees) and other sanctions, for example the suspension of contracts or services, or exclusion from premises (in the case of non-employees).
- **Statutory rights:** Invoking the complaints procedure will not affect employee’s right to make a complaint under the Employment Equality Acts, 1998-2015. The statutory time limits will not be paused pending the outcome of the investigation and shall continue to run.

The policy and procedures will be updated to take account of changes in the law.



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Workplace Free from Harassment and Sexual Harassment Is Everyone's Responsibility

All employees working in the company are responsible for ensuring that harassment and sexual harassment does not occur at any level in the organisation.

We all want to foster a positive, harmonious and supportive work environment and ensuring dignity at work does not prevent normal good humoured consensual interaction between work colleagues. However, care needs to be taken not to cross the line into unacceptable behaviour, which is disrespectful, unwelcome or offends them or makes them uncomfortable. Where a colleague indicates that certain behaviour is unacceptable; the individual involved in the behaviour should desist immediately.

All employees are responsible for ensuring that harassment and sexual harassment does not occur at any level in the organisation. It is also the responsibility of all staff to make themselves familiar with this policy and to treat their colleagues with respect and dignity.

Management has a particular responsibility to ensure that the workplace remains free from all forms of harassment and sexual harassment, to establish and maintain appropriate standards of behaviour in the workplace and to deal promptly and fairly with complaints of harassment and sexual harassment.

If you need to invoke this policy, be assured you will be supported.

Working Time and Leave Policies

Timekeeping Policy

West Limerick Independent Living expects that every employee will be regular and punctual in attendance. This means being at your place of employment, ready to work, at their starting time each day, the Care Planner App should be used to login-out of shifts. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on other employees and on West Limerick Independent Living.

If you know that you will be unable to attend, or are going to be late, please contact your Service Co-ordinator or Manager immediately no later than one hour before your normal starting time through the on-call mobile phone in emergencies, phone number is 085 806 4306. No voicemails to be left on the on-call phone. In the case of leaving a voice-mail message on coordinators phone a follow-up call must be made later that day. Manager / Service Coordinator's phone number is 069 77320.

Repeated late arrival means that your colleagues must cover for you and the client service as well as the overall operation is adversely affected.

A failure to follow the company's Timekeeping Policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal in line with the company's Disciplinary Procedure.



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Working Time Recording Policy

In order to comply with its obligation under the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 and to ensure an accurate account of people's movements for Health and Safety purposes, the Company is required to ensure that all employees comply with Working Time Recording procedures.

To comply with this legislation the Company has introduced Care Planner, an app that allows PA's to log in and out for their shifts. Failure to comply with time/clocking procedures may result in you not being paid, as it may not be possible to record when you attended or finished work. It is important that you log in only when you are at clients house ready to start work. When you are finishing your shift, or leaving the premises please log out.

Remote Clocking

The Company's clocking system supports remote clocking. You will be asked to comply with this if you are working away from the premises. The system requires that you download an app on your phone and that you log in through the app.

Information gathered by the Working Time Recording procedures will be processed for payroll purposes, therefore, it will be forwarded to our payroll / account's supplier. This information will be made available to the WRC / The Department of Social Welfare / Revenue should they conduct an audit or review of the business. This information may be forwarded to our legal / HR service provider if issues arise in relation to hours of work for disciplinary purposes.

Right to Disconnect Policy

Introduction

The health and wellbeing of our employees is of the utmost importance to the Company, and we encourage and support all employees in prioritising their own wellbeing as well as in balancing their working and personal lives whether they work traditionally, flexibly, or remotely.

The Company has implemented a Right to Disconnect policy, which includes best practice guidance around wellbeing, working hours, the use of technology and more. This policy is drafted in line with the Code of Practice on Right to Disconnect, 2021.

The purpose of this policy is to support our employee's Right to Disconnect while recognising that occasionally legitimate reasons arise when it is necessary to contact them outside of normal working hours.

Disconnecting from work is vital for your wellbeing, and to help you achieve a healthy and sustainable work-life balance. The Company recognises that every employee is entitled to switch off outside of their normal working hours and enjoy their free time away from work without being disturbed, unless there is an emergency or an agreement to do so exists, for example while the employee is 'on call'.



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The Company maintains an open-door policy with regards to work related or personal problems which are always treated in the strictest confidence. If we, as management, can be of assistance in resolving such problems relating to your Right to Disconnect we will make time for you and listen sympathetically. The Company is committed to promote a system of open communication within the workplace and encourages all employees to utilise this system in full.

The Company entrusts the management team in ensuring that employees are not being contacted outside of work unless there is an emergency or an agreement to do so, however, should you feel that you are being consistently contacted and expected to respond outside your normal working hours, please do not hesitate to contact the Manager.

Wellbeing Awareness

All employees are encouraged to plan and carry out a leisure activity when they finish work. This is particularly important for remote workers to create separation from the end of their workday and the beginning of their personal time.

All employees are encouraged to monitor their working hours and to take breaks in accordance with the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997 (OWTA 1997). Such breaks should be taken away from work devices. In line with section 13 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 all employees are required to take reasonable care for their own health and well-being.

Employer and Employee Obligations

All employees and management team play an important part in creating a culture where the whole team feels they can disconnect from work- and work-related devices.

Employer Obligations

The Company is responsible for providing detailed information to employees on their working time, in accordance with the Terms of Employment Information Act, 1994 - 2014. The Company is responsible for ensuring that employees are informed of what their normal working hours are reasonably expected to be under the Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2018. The Company is responsible for ensuring that employees take rest periods, in accordance with the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997.

The Company is responsible for ensuring a safe workplace, including revision of the risk assessment and, where necessary, their safety statement in line with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and taking account of their obligations under section 8(2)(b) of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. This extends to 'managing and conducting work activities in such a way as to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, any improper conduct or behaviour likely to put the safety, health and welfare at work of his or her employees at risk'.



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The Company is committed to not penalising any employees for acting in compliance with any relevant provision or performing any duty or exercising any right under section 27 of Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005.

Employee Obligations

- Every employee is responsible for ensuring that they manage their own working time.
- In line with section 13(1)(a) of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, every employee should take reasonable care to protect their safety, health and welfare and the health and safety of co-workers, while at work.
- Every employee is responsible for cooperating fully with the Company time and attendance management system including employees performing work remotely.
- Every employee has a duty of being mindful of their work colleagues', and all other people's Right to Disconnect (e.g., by not routinely emailing or calling outside normal working hours).
- Every employee has a duty of notifying their manager, in writing, of any statutory rest period or break to which they are entitled to and were not able to avail of on a particular occasion and the reason for not availing of such rest period or break.
- Every employee has a duty of being conscious of their work pattern and aware of their work-related wellbeing and taking corrective action if necessary.

The Role of Managers

The management team play a crucial role in the implementation of this policy and should demonstrate clear commitment to ensuring employees' Right to Disconnect through leadership, leading from the front as well as identifying and addressing any issues that arise in a timely manner. The Company will provide them with appropriate training, guidance, and support to ensure their success.

It is the responsibility of the managers to recognise and take corrective action when an employee's inability or reluctance to disconnect appears to be linked to excessive workload, performance issues, or whether organisational culture is a contributing factor. In such circumstances, managers must ensure that employees have clear goals and deliverables that, other than in exceptional circumstances, can be delivered during normal working hours.

Working Hours

Due to the nature of our business, the Company recognises that normal working hours will differ from person to person. However, it is noted that regardless of the differences in normal working hours, each employee has an equal Right to Disconnect as per this policy.

The Company reasonably expects that all employees disconnect from work emails, messages, and other communications, outside of their normal working hours and during annual leave. However, there are occasional



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legitimate circumstances when it may be necessary to contact employees outside of normal working hours, including but in no way limited to:

- Establishing availability for rosters
- In the event of having, at short notice, to cover an absence of a work colleague due to illness.
- Where unforeseeable circumstances may arise,
- Where an emergency may arise,
- Where business and operational reasons require contact out of normal working hours.

The Company recognises that business and operational needs may dictate that there will be situations which clearly require some out-of-hours working by some employees depending on the service being provided, the employee's role, the needs of the clients and the unique requirement of critical services and as agreed in an employee's terms of employment.

Communications

Where possible, e-mails should be checked or sent only during normal working hours.

Due to varying patterns of work in the Company, some employees may send communications at times which are outside of the normal working hours for other employees, e.g., nights or weekends. In these circumstances, the following guidelines should be followed:

- Employee sending the e-mail should give due consideration to the timing of their communication and potential for disturbance, and the recipient should understand that they will not be expected to respond until their working time recommences.
- No employee should not feel that they must respond to social communications from colleagues outside of their working hours.
- The Company does not see social media platforms such as Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter as approved methods of communication, however, where they are utilised by employees themselves, they should not feel that they must respond to social media communications from colleagues outside of their working hours.
- Where a manager sends communications outside agreed working hours, unless business and operational needs dictate that an immediate response is required, a statement will be attached to the correspondence outlining the expectation of a response. For example, 'E-mailing now suits my flexibility, but I do not expect a response or action outside your own working hours'



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- Managers should speak to an employee if they notice that they are sending emails at odd hours– this may be a sign that they are finding it difficult to manage their workload or disconnect.

Company Meetings

The Company respects employee’s time by only inviting them to meetings where they play an active role, have something to contribute or where some important information needs to be communicated to them.

Working Across Global Time Zones

The company recognises that working across different time zones and international travel may result in colleagues connecting at different times outside of normal working hours to complete their objectives. This does not mean that the recipient needs to respond in the same time period. Where colleagues are communicating across different time zones the following guidelines should be adhered to:

- Where possible, the sender should give due consideration to the timing of their communication and potential for disturbance, and the recipient should understand that they will not be expected to respond until their working time recommences.
- When communicating with a colleague in a different time zone, outside of their regular working hours, a statement should accompany the correspondence outlining the expectation of a response. For example, ‘While it suits me to send this email now, I do not expect a response or action outside your own working hours’.

Raising Concerns

All employees and managers should manage the Right to Disconnect in a manner that is respectful of the other’s rights and expectations and in the context of the relevant legislation and good workplace relations generally. They should also be conscious of the fact that due to business and operational needs and depending on a number of factors, including the role of the employee, clients’/customers’/guests’ needs, nature of the business, etc., that circumstances may occasionally arise where communications are sent and received outside of employee’s normal working hours.

When contact outside normal working hours becomes the norm, this needs to be addressed.

At times an employee may feel that their Right to Disconnect is not being respected or that their workload is such that they are not able to disconnect at the end of their normal working day. Examples of such situations might include:

- Being contacted regularly outside of normal work hours.
- Being expected to regularly work through lunch or other breaks.



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- Being penalised for not being available out of normal working hours or favourable treatment for employees who stay connected out of hours.

While in no way diminishing the issue or its effects on individuals, the Company believes that an informal approach, in line with the Company Grievance Procedure, can be effective in providing resolution.

If an informal process has not been successful, then the remaining options under the Grievance Procedure may be utilised. An employee may decide, for whatever reason, to bypass the informal procedure and doing so will not reflect negatively during any formal process.

Data Protection

In order to comply with its obligation under employment legislation, the Company reserves the right to refer Right to Disconnect matters to outside professionals/ HR consultants for advice. Any information forwarded may be processed by those parties. Information will be made available to the WRC / The Department of Social Welfare / Revenue should they request same.

Absences from Work Policy

We attach great importance to attendance and punctuality, as these are essential for the smooth running of the Company. You are required to be at your place of work and prepared for work at the scheduled roster time.

Unplanned absences always cause extra work for your colleagues, so you should only be absent from work if you are unwell, taking an approved holiday, or have your Manager's permission.

Unauthorised absence will render you liable to disciplinary action.

Advising absence

If you are unable to attend work due to illness or incapacity, you must inform your Service Coordinator or Manager **by telephone** not less than one hour before you are due to start work on the first day of such absence through the on-call mobile phone in emergencies, phone number is 085 806 4306. In the case of leaving a voice-mail message, a follow-up call must be made later that day. Manager / Service Coordinator's phone number is 069 77320. **Notification by text message, email or voicemail will NOT be acceptable.** If you are too ill to contact your Service Coordinator or Manager, you should decide for someone to do so on your behalf. You should also advise of your anticipated date of return to work. If you are unsure as to when this might be, you must contact your Service Coordinator each morning before 10.00 a.m. or if the absence spans several weeks, each Monday before 10.00 a.m.

Sickness Certification and Medical Examination



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On your return to the office following a period of absence due to illness or incapacity a medical certificate covering the entire period of absence must be provided. In the case of absence lasting more than one week, medical certificates must be sent in to your Service Coordinator each week to cover the entire period of absence.

The medical certificate should contain the following:

- The name and address of the doctor and the patient.
- The date of issue (the company will not accept retrospective certification)
- A statement that the patient is or was under the care of the doctor.
- The opinion of the doctor that the patient is incapacitated as a result of either accident or illness.
- The expected duration of the absence
- The signature of the Medical Practitioner (not a rubber stamp).

Should there be more than 6 uncertified days or 6 spells of absence in any 12-month period or if management has concerns that there is an unacceptable pattern in absences the employee may be asked to attend the company doctor for an assessment of their condition.

In either case, you agree to give your consent to such an examination and to any medical report resulting from the examination being given to management.

Sick Pay Policy

The Company will fulfil its obligations in relation to statutory sick pay provisions.

The Company operates a sick pay scheme over and above the statutory requirements, details of which are as follows: The Company will pay up to 6 days of full pay in respect of certified absence in a 12-month period. The sick pay scheme runs from January 1st to December 31st every year.

This scheme of payment is provided to employees should they be forced to be absent from work because of genuine illness.

Managers are required to investigate thoroughly where appropriate before authorizing payments.

Payments will be withheld in cases of abuse and disciplinary action taken against individuals concerned up to and including dismissal.

Payment of wages and salaries during absence through illness or injury are strictly based on the rules outlined below.

The following rules apply to the Scheme:

- A doctor's medical certificate is required for any absence due to illness or injury on the first day of



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absence.

- If no certificate is produced, sickness salary in relation to any such leave will not be discharged.
- Staff members are expected prior to the end of each and any day's absence due to sickness to personally phone the office and speak to their Manager to update the office of their status.
- You must submit a Certificate weekly thereafter in respect of any continuing absence are required to maintain contact with the Company.

Once statutory sick pay is exhausted the sick pay scheme will not cover absences relating to traffic accidents, substance abuse, sporting accidents, injuries occurred in another employment or while carrying out work elsewhere (e.g., family farm, home DIY etc.)

Please note that Doctor's certificates that are backdated or retrospective will not be accepted by the office under any circumstance.

The Company will continue to comply with legislation in respect of sick pay and will amend this policy if, and when, revisions are made to the legislation.

An employee who has a certified illness and is absent with a sick certificate for more than 3 days may qualify for Illness Benefit payment from the Department of Social Protection.

Engaging with the Company During Absence

During any period of medically certified absence from work, you are required to engage in reasonable communications with Management/HR. This is in order to ensure the lines of communication remain open between you and the Company for the following justified reasons;

- To greater understand what the Company can do to help facilitate your return to work.
- To help you ease back into to the workplace if you have been absent for a pro-longed period.
- For operational and planning purposes.

Engaging with the Company during medically certified leave may include;

- Company meetings, where appropriate.
- Communication through appropriate means; telephone or email.

Failure to Engage with the Company

It is a condition of your employment with the Company that you maintain lines of reasonable communication open between you and the Company during any period of medically certified absence.



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Compliance with this policy is contingent on your reasonable engagement with us. The following circumstances do not constitute engagement on your part;

- a. Failing to submit medical certificates and/or communicate with us in relation to your absence.
- b. Failing to attend Company arranged Doctor appointments.
- c. Submitting medical certificates but failing to; attend Company Doctor appointments and/or failing to engage in company meetings.

In any event where section c above applies, the Company may, after exercising all reasonable efforts to request your engagement, cease accepting medical certificates issued by you until such a time that you engage with the Company.

You will be communicated to regarding the same and be given 5 days to get in contact with the Company before your absence may be deemed unauthorised.

We sincerely hope that this will not be necessary, and the Company will make every reasonable attempt to engage with you in advance of the above being taken.

Failure to abide by any of the above regulations will be classed as unauthorised absence and may lead to disciplinary action in line with the Disciplinary Procedure.

Annual Leave and Sick Leave

You also accrue statutory annual leave during periods of absence due to certified sick leave. Annual leave accrued during sick leave must be used within 15 months of the statutory leave year in which it was accrued. If your employment ends during this 15-month period, then you shall receive pay in lieu of the accrued (but not taken) statutory leave.

Public Holidays and Sick Leave

Full time employees who are on sick leave on a Public Holiday are entitled to benefit for that Public Holiday. Part-time employees who are on sick leave during a Public Holiday are also entitled to benefit for the Public Holiday, provided the employee had worked for at least 40 hours in the previous five-week period. Employees on sick leave for more than 26 consecutive weeks (or for more than 52 weeks due to an occupational injury) will not be entitled to the Public Holiday benefit if they are absent from work immediately before the Public Holiday.

Notifiable Illnesses

It is a rule that you must report immediately any contagious or infectious diseases. This includes gastro-enteritis, food poisoning, any form of illness resulting in diarrhoea or vomiting, any specific conditions such as a septic cut



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or boil, skin diseases and ear or throat infection. If you suffer any such upset on holiday, you must report it to your Manager on your return. You must also report to your Manager if anyone in your household contracts a contagious or infectious disease, and in all cases, you should obtain a Doctor's clearance before returning to work.

Returning to work after a long-term illness

You should keep in contact with your Manager if you are absent for a long period of time and you are required to submit medical certificates on a weekly basis. If you wish to return to work after a long-term illness, you will be required to meet with a doctor of the company's choice in order that your capability to return to your role can be assessed. You agree to give your consent to such an examination and to any medical report resulting from the examination being given to management and made available to your Board of Directors. If you are capable of returning to work but not to the same role or on the same conditions, management will consider the situation to see if it is practicable to find a suitable alternative within the company. The company cannot guarantee suitable alternative work will be available, however it will endeavour to make reasonable accommodation where possible. Where such alternative work cannot be found it may have no alternative but to terminate your employment.

Return to Work Cert

An employee, prior to returning to work, must submit a certificate from the Doctor declaring the employee's fitness to return to normal work under normal conditions on the specified date.

Return to Work Meeting

Management reserves the right to conduct a return-to-work meeting on a case-by-case basis.

Medical Assessment

The Company reserves the right to refer you for a medical assessment by a doctor nominated by us, whose opinion shall be final.

Review

Management will review the continuing employment of any employee who is persistently absent due to illness or injury.

Confidentiality

All information gathered in relation to your absence will remain confidential.

Non Compliance With/Abuse of Absence from Work Policy

Failure to comply with any requirement of this policy may lead to the instigation of disciplinary procedures. Absence/s from work whether or not medically or self-certified which show an unacceptable pattern or which, in the opinion of the organisation, are not reasonable may lead to serious disciplinary procedures up to and including termination.



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Medical/Dental Appointments

Except in emergencies, you must inform your Service Coordinator in advance of any medical or dental appointment during work hours. Wherever possible, appointments should be arranged for times outside of your normal working day.

Annual Leave and Public Holiday Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all employees enjoy the benefit of their annual leave entitlements, reflecting West Limerick Independent Living's commitment to the health and welfare of all its employees.

The annual leave entitlement and holiday pay for each employee is set out in the contract of employment in accordance with the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997. The West Limerick Independent Living holiday year runs from 1 January to the 31 December. Annual leave entitlement is calculated on a pro-rata basis for any year in which the employee has not worked the full holiday year.

Full-time employees - All full-time employees (i.e. those contracted to work the standard 40-hour week) will be eligible for holiday entitlements on an accrued basis equal to a minimum of 20 days per leave year.

Part time employees - If you are contracted to work less than 35 hours per week, you will accrue 8 per cent of hours worked as holiday hours subject to a maximum of 4 working weeks per year.

Fixed term employees - Your core holiday entitlement will be pro rata according to that portion of the holiday year that you are an employee of West Limerick Independent Living.

Public holidays - Employees are entitled to public holidays in addition to holiday entitlements accrued as above. West Limerick Independent Living observes the following public holidays in the Republic of Ireland:

- New Year's Day
- St. Brigid's Day
- St. Patrick's Day
- Easter Monday
- First Monday in May
- First Monday in June
- First Monday in August
- Last Monday in October
- Christmas Day
- St. Stephen's Day

All full-time employees who comply with normal statutory qualifying criteria are entitled to public holiday benefits.

Part-time /Casual employees who have worked at least 40 hours in the 5-week period ending on the day before the public holiday are also entitled to public holiday benefits.

- If you work on the public holiday, you will receive an additional day's pay.



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- If you are not rostered to work on the public holiday you are entitled to be paid the equivalent of one fifth of your average weekly hours. This may be calculated by reference to the hours worked over the previous thirteen-week period.

Employees on maternity leave, adoptive leave, paternity leave, parental leave, parents leave, health and safety leave and the first 13 weeks of carers leave maintain their public holiday leave entitlements for the duration of the absence.

Absences affecting annual leave

Absences from work (other than maternity leave, adoptive leave, parental leave, force majeure leave or annual leave etc) may reduce your entitlement to annual leave (including public holidays).

For example, at the organisation's discretion periods of sick leave, depending on the length of any sick leave, may not be included when calculating annual leave entitlement.

Procedure for holiday requests

Holiday requests should be made to your Manager or Service Coordinator, giving as much notice as possible and this should not be less than 2 weeks. Ideally you should give twice the length of the holiday being requested in notice i.e., if you request a two-week holiday, you should give four weeks' notice. When requesting holidays please use the holiday form located on the company website. Holidays will be granted depending on leave requests submitted by other PA's ahead of time and dependent upon service capacity.

All holidays must be authorised by the Manager and your request will be facilitated as far as possible with regard to your work. To avoid disappointment or cancellation you are strongly advised not to book your holiday before agreement has been given.

Before you go on holiday, you must have a brief meeting with your PSS Coordinator, setting out any important matters which might arise in your absence and naming the person who has agreed to keep matters under review during that time.

Unused holiday entitlement and overrunning holiday entitlement

You are expected to use all your holiday entitlement in the holiday year in which it accrues if at all possible.

West Limerick Independent Living acknowledges that some individuals will accumulate large holiday balances and in such cases those individuals are expected to make an effort to clear their balances over a reasonable period of time.

With the consent of your Manager, you may carry forward up to 2 days' holiday from one holiday year to the next. Any accrued but unused holiday at the end of the holiday year in excess of this limit will be lost and the firm will not make any payment to you in respect of such holiday.



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New Employees

In the event that you commence work for West Limerick Independent Living during the holiday year, your core holiday entitlement for that year will be calculated pro rata to your annual entitlement.

In order to comply with legislation, we are required to retain information on your employee file regarding your annual leave entitlement for a period of three years. This will be required for time and attendance purposes in accordance with the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997.

Leaving West Limerick Independent Living

If under the terms of this policy you have accrued but not used your full holiday entitlements as of your date of termination of employment, you will be paid in lieu of that entitlement.

If you have taken more holidays than have accrued, a deduction will be made from your final salary of a cash sum equivalent to payment for the number of days holiday taken but not accrued.

If you cease to be an employee of the organisation during the week ending on the day before a public holiday and have worked for the 4 weeks preceding that week, you will be entitled to an additional day's pay (subject to tax and statutory deductions) in respect of that public holiday.

Holidays must not be taken during your period of notice, except with the prior approval of your Manager (and subject to the requirements of the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997).

Carers Leave

Carer's leave is given in accordance with current legislation. Subject to certain notification requirements, the right to take Carer's leave applies to any employee (male or female) who has one year's continuous employment with the organisation as at the date of commencement of that leave. Such leave is unpaid and may be taken for the purpose of caring personally for a "relevant person" for a maximum period of 104 weeks. For full details of this leave, please contact Management.

Compassionate Leave Policy

In the unfortunate event of a death in the family, the Company will grant time off. The maximum time off allowed with pay is 2 working days for immediate family and 1 working day for non-immediate family. Immediate family consists of spouse or partner, children, parents and siblings and those of your spouse. Non-immediate family are grandparents, uncles, or aunts. Additional time off without pay should be authorised with the Manager. If the funeral takes place on a non-working day or during annual leave, time off or payment will not be granted.



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Force Majeure Leave Policy

You are entitled to paid leave where for urgent family reasons, owing to the injury or illness of an immediate relative (child, spouse or partner, brother or sister, parent or grandparent), your immediate presence at the place where that person is, is indispensable.

The maximum entitlement is restricted to 5 working days in any period of 36 consecutive months of which a maximum of 3 days is permissible in any period of 12 consecutive months. Absence for part of a day is counted as one day of force majeure leave.

By its very nature, it is rarely possible to give advance notice of the need to take force majeure leave. However, as soon as practicable you should contact your manager/supervisor to advise that you will not be coming into work and, as soon as possible after taking the leave, you must complete the Force Majeure Leave Notification Form and return to management.

The Organisation will inform employees if their application for Force Majeure Leave has been successful and will hold records of all Force Majeure Leave taken by Employees.

Abuse of force majeure leave is a serious disciplinary offence which will be dealt with under the organisation's Disciplinary policy.

Jury Service Policy

Jury service makes a valuable contribution to the community and we support all employees who are called for jury service. If you are called for jury service, you must inform your manager/supervisor of that fact and of the date and expected duration of the service. You must also send a copy of your Jury Summons to your manager for records.

We may also require you to produce a letter from the Registrar confirming the days on which you actually attended for jury service. Subject to these requirements, full pay will be continued during jury service.

Maternity Leave Policy

West Limerick Independent Living wants your time at work while you are pregnant, your maternity leave and your return to work to progress as smoothly as possible. The legal rules applying to maternity leave can appear complicated. We have therefore tried to make this policy as straightforward as possible. However, should you require any further information, please approach management in absolute confidence.

All female employees who are pregnant, have recently given birth or are breastfeeding have legal entitlements.

If you are pregnant you are entitled to minimum maternity leave of not less than 26 consecutive weeks. This entitlement is subject to you:



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- Notifying your employer in writing of your intention to take maternity leave as soon as is reasonably practicable but no later than 4 weeks before your maternity leave begins
- Producing at the time of notification a medical or other appropriate certificate confirming the pregnancy and giving the expected date of confinement.

If you have taken the minimum statutory maternity leave of 26 weeks you are also entitled to a maximum of 16 weeks additional unpaid maternity leave which must commence immediately after the end of the maternity leave.

What are employee's rights when on fixed term contract?

An employee's contract ends on the last day of your fixed term contract and not on the last day of your maternity leave.

What about ante-natal and post-natal leave?

Employees are entitled to paid leave for ante-natal and post-natal care. The employee must give the employer at least 2 weeks' notice before each appointment except in the case of the first appointment.

How are employees paid while on maternity leave?

Employees are entitled to maternity benefit payable by the state for 26 weeks, provided that they are employed by the employer immediately before the first day of the maternity leave and satisfy certain PRSI contribution conditions.

What are the PRSI contribution conditions?

One of the following requirements must be satisfied if an employee is to qualify for maternity benefit:

- An employee must have at least 39 weeks PRSI contributions paid in the 12-month period prior to the first day of maternity leave or
- An employee must have at least 39 weeks PRSI contributions paid since first starting work

Return to Work

Employees are required to provide at least 4 weeks' written notice of their intention to return to work following leave. This notice should confirm the intended return to work date. Failure to notify the Company of your intention to return may result in you losing the right to return to work. Where possible employees will return to the position held immediately prior to the commencement of leave (provided this was their normal position), however where this is not feasible, he/she may return to work to suitable alternative employment that is no less favourable in terms and conditions.

Annual Leave and Public Holidays

Annual leave and public holiday benefits will continue to accrue during the period of maternity leave and additional maternity leave.



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For further information on the below and any other details on Maternity Leave in West Limerick Independent Living please speak to the Manager.

1. Ante-natal and post-natal care
2. Sickness
3. Maternity Leave entitlement and State Maternity Benefit (“SMB”)
4. Before you go on Maternity Leave – notice requirements.
5. What happens if my baby is born before I have started my maternity leave?
6. What happens if my baby is born later than expected?
7. What if my child is hospitalised during my maternity leave or additional maternity leave.
8. Bonus
9. Breastfeeding
10. Health and Safety

Adoptive Leave Policy

Scope

This policy applies to all employees and provides protection and leave entitlements for both adoptive mothers and fathers (qualifying adopters). A qualified adopter is either:

- The sole adopter, in the case of a parent who is adopting a child on their own, or
- The nominated parent in the case of an adopting couple.

The adopting couple can choose who should take the adoptive leave – that is who will be the nominated parent. An adopting couple means a married couple, a couple who are civil partners or a cohabiting couple adopting a child.

Entitlement

In line with current legislation, all qualifying adopters are entitled to avail of up to 24 weeks adoptive leave. Leave commences on the actual date of placement.

Additional Adoptive Leave

An additional period of up to 16 weeks leave may be taken at the discretion of the qualifying adopter immediately following the initial adoptive leave period.

Adoptive Leave Applications Procedure

A minimum of 4 weeks’ written notice is required from an employee intending to avail of adoptive leave and/or additional adoptive leave prior to the expected date of placement. In the case of an Irish adoption a certificate of placement should be forwarded within 4 weeks of the date of placement. In the case of a foreign adoption, a



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declaration of eligibility and suitability must be produced as soon as reasonably practicable, with a certificate of placement to be forwarded as soon as it is received by the employee.

Leave to Attend Classes and Meetings in Advance of the Adoption

Any employee involved in the adoption process is permitted to avail of paid time off to attend pre-adoption classes and meetings which they are obliged to attend, provided the meetings are held within the state. 2 weeks written notice of the first request must be provided. Evidence of the requirement to attend the class or meeting may be sought by the Company.

Leave in Advance of Foreign Adoptions

In the case of a foreign adoption, an adopting mother or sole male adopter may avail of some of their additional leave before the placement of the child for the purposes of familiarisation with the child in advance of the adoption. 4 weeks written notice of this intention must be provided, and a declaration of suitability and eligibility must also be supplied. This entitlement is in addition to the time permitted to attend classes and meetings in the state.

Payment

The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection will be responsible for making the adoptive benefit payment if the employee has the relevant social insurance (PRSI) contributions. This is unpaid leave by the Company.

Return to Work

Employees are required to provide at least 4 weeks written notice of their intention to return to work following leave. This notice should confirm the intended return to work date. Failure to notify the Company of your intention to return may result in you losing the right to return to work. Where possible the employee will return to the position held immediately prior to the commencement of leave (provided this was their normal position), however where this is not feasible, the employee may return to work to suitable alternative employment that is no less favourable in terms and conditions.

Annual Leave and Public Holidays

Annual leave and public holiday benefits will continue to accrue for the period of adoptive leave and additional adoptive leave.

Parental Leave Policy

Parental Leave provides parents with time off from work to care for their children. This policy explains your legal entitlement to Parental Leave and the procedures necessary to exercise it.



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Eligibility

The right to take Parental Leave applies to any employee (male or female) who has one year's continuous employment with the organisation as at the date of commencement of Parental Leave and who is the natural or adoptive parent of a child. (There are limited exceptions to the requirement to have one year's continuous service; please contact management if you need more information.)

Entitlements

Subject to the notification requirements set out below, if you are eligible, you may take up to 26 weeks' Parental Leave in respect of each child. This leave is to be taken before the child's twelfth birthday or sixteenth birthday if the child has a disability or long-term illness. In the case of adoption of a child who is aged between ten and twelve years at the time of adoption, the leave must be taken within two years of the adoption order.

Leave may be taken either as a continuous block or two separate periods of a minimum of six weeks each. If the leave is taken in this way, there must be at least ten weeks between each separate period. The leave may only be broken up over a period of time with the consent of the Company. A week's leave means five days' consecutive absence from work, with a pro rata entitlement for part-timers.

If you are entitled to Parental Leave in respect of more than one child, no more than 26 weeks' Parental Leave may be taken in any 12 month period (this restriction will not apply in the case of multiple births).

Notification requirements

You should inform your manager of your intention to take Parental Leave as soon as you reasonably can. In any event, in order to qualify for Parental Leave, you must give the Manager written notice of your intention to take it not later than 6 weeks before the proposed date of commencement of that leave. Notice must be given in the standard Parental Leave Notification Form, and then sent to management.

On receipt of your application the Manager will check that you are eligible for Parental Leave. You are therefore required to include with the Notification Form a copy of the child's birth certificate or other satisfactory evidence (e.g. adoption order) of your relationship to the child. You are also required to confirm whether you have already taken Parental Leave in respect of the child while with a previous employer. We may require you to ask their previous employer for a written statement confirming whether or not you have availed of Parental Leave while employed with that employer.

Where Parental Leave is granted, not later than 4 weeks before the commencement of that leave, the organisation will provide you with written confirmation specifying the date of commencement of the leave, its duration and the manner in which it will be taken.

Once signed, the confirmation note cannot be changed unless both the Company and the employee agree to the change.



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Postponement by the employer

Before a confirmation note is signed, the Company can postpone Parental Leave for up to six months where the Company considers granting the leave would have a substantial adverse effect on the operation of the business. Situations where this might be necessary include:

1. Where the Employer is unable to find a replacement for the employee before they go on leave; or
2. Where a significant proportion of staff have asked to take Parental Leave at the same time.

The Company will give written notice of the postponement, stating the reason for it and when the postponed leave may be taken. This will be done within six months from the date of the original date requested. If, because of the postponement, the employee's child reaches the age threshold the employee will retain his/her right to parental leave.

Protection of rights

While you are on parental leave, all statutory and contractual employment rights are protected except the right to remuneration and superannuation benefits/ contributions.

PRSI Record

You are advised to contact your local Social Welfare Office on return from Parental Leave to ensure your PRSI record is continuous and reflects the period of Parental Leave taken.

Returning to work

Employees taking parental leave have the right to return, as far as reasonably practicable, to the job in which they were employed before their absence or, if this is not reasonably practicable, a suitable alternative. Every effort will be made to return employees to the same or similar position to the one held prior to parental leave. It will not be on less favourable terms and conditions than those which would have applied to the employees had they not been absent. Sometimes it may not be practicable to reinstate employees to a job similar to their former position, and an alternative will therefore be offered. In such circumstances the Employer will take account of qualifications and experience of the employee. The job will not be on less favourable terms and conditions than the job formerly held.

Paternity Leave Policy

Ante-Natal Classes

Where possible, expectant fathers should arrange to attend antenatal classes outside of your normal working day. However, if this is not practicable, you are entitled to paid time off to attend the last two antenatal classes in a set of ante-natal classes. Please note this is a once-off entitlement i.e. you are only entitled to it in respect of one



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child. You must give the Manager at least two weeks' notice of the times and dates of the classes and provide a copy of your appointment card or other appropriate document indicating the time and date of the classes.

Special Leave

Fathers are also entitled to take up to three days' paid special leave during or after the birth of your child or at the adoption of a child. Such leave should be taken in agreement with your manager/supervisor and must be taken within the first month following the date of the child's birth or adoption. If you require further information regarding Paternity Leave, please contact your Manager.

Statutory Paternity Leave

New parents (other than the mother of the child) are entitled to paternity leave from employment following birth or adoption of a child for the purposes of enabling the employee to provide, or assist in the provision of, care to the child or to provide support to:

- the mother of the child
- the qualifying adopter
- to entitle a surviving parent to employment leave on the death of a relevant parent.

The Paternity Leave and Benefit Act 2016 provides for statutory paternity leave of 2 weeks to be taken as one continuous period of two weeks.

Employees on Fixed-Term Contract

Employees on fixed-term contracts are entitled to Paternity Leave. However, if the contract is due to expire during a period of Paternity Leave, the leave and any entitlements to benefit expire on the same day. There is no entitlement to return to work following the leave.

Notification and Confirmation of Paternity Leave

Paternity leave must usually be applied for in writing at least 4 weeks in advance. However, the Company will allow for relaxation of the normal notification period in cases where the date of confinement occurs four or more weeks before the expected date, subject to a minimal notification period of 14 days.

At the time of notification, or as soon as reasonably practicable afterwards, the employee must give the Company a copy of the medical certificate confirming the pregnancy of the expectant mother and confirming the expected week of confinement of the expected mother.

In the case of adoption (other than intercountry adoption effected or to be effected outside the state) notification, in writing, of the expected day of placement is required as soon as reasonably practicable. A copy of the certificate of placement issued to the adoptive parent/s must be supplied as soon as possible but no later than 4 weeks after the date of placement.



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In the case of intercountry adoption effected or to be effected outside the state notification, in writing, of the expected day of placement is required as soon as reasonably practicable. A copy of the applicable declaration of eligibility and suitability issued to the adoptive parent/s must be supplied as soon as possible but no later than 4 weeks after the date of placement.

Taking the Leave

Paternity Leave can be taken at any time commencing on the date of the birth (or placement in the case of an adoption) and ending not later than 26 weeks thereafter. The period of Paternity Leave will commence on the date the relevant parent selects in his/ her notification, but it cannot commence earlier than the date of confinement or the day of placement and cannot be later than 26 weeks after that date.

Postponement

Paternity Leave may be postponed (either in whole or in part) in the event of hospitalisation of the child. In such an event the relevant parent will be allowed to select another date at which the paternity leave will take place.

Postponement in the Event of Hospitalisation of the Child

If the child who the Paternity Leave relates to is hospitalised the relevant parent can submit a written request to their employer for the postponement of their paternity leave.

If the employer agrees to this request the relevant parent may postpone the leave, but it must be taken in one continuous period commencing not later than 7 days after the discharge of the child from hospital or such other date the employer and relevant parent agree to.

Postponement Due to Sickness of the Relevant Parent

In the event that the relevant parent becomes sick prior to the commencement of the leave, he/she must notify the Company in writing of their wish to postpone the leave and they must provide medical certificate confirming the illness. In such an event the absence will be treated in the same manner as any absence from work of the relevant parent due to sickness. The relevant parent must notify their employer in writing of their intention to take their postponed leave as soon as reasonably possible but not later than the day the postponed leave begins.

Transfer of Leave

Transfer of leave to the mother (or other surviving parent) is possible where a father or other relevant parent dies while having an entitlement to paternity leave that has not been used.

Return to Work



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Where possible the employee will return to the position held immediately prior to the commencement of leave (provided this was their normal position), however where this is not feasible, the employee may return to work to suitable alternative employment that is no less favourable in terms and conditions.

Annual Leave & Public Holidays

Annual leave and public holiday benefits will continue to accrue for the period of Paternity Leave.

Payment

Your entitlement to pay and superannuation during paternity leave depends on the terms of your contract of employment. Employers are not obliged to pay employees who are on paternity leave. You may qualify for Paternity Benefit from the Department of Social Protection if you have sufficient PRSI contributions.

Parent's Leave Policy

Scope

This policy applies to all employees and provides protection and leave entitlements for relevant parents. The leave only applies to adoptions or babies born from 1 November 2019.

Relevant Parents

A "relevant parent" for clarification purposes is:

- the qualifying adopter
- the spouse, civil partner or cohabitant of the qualifying adopter
- a married couple of the same sex,
- a couple that are civil partners of each other, or
- a cohabiting couple of the same sex,
- a parent of the child,
- the spouse, civil partner or cohabitant, as the case may be, of a parent of the child,
- a parent of the child under section 5 of the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015 where the child is a donor-conceived child within the meaning of Part 2 of that Act;

Purpose

The purpose of Parent's Leave is to enable you as a parent to provide, or assist in the provision of, care to the child during the first two years since birth or first two years since child's placement through adoption.

Leave



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The total Parent's Leave entitlement is 7 weeks per relevant parent. The leave can be taken as a block of 7 weeks, or separate weeks of leave. The leave cannot be taken in any other way and must be used within 2 years of the adoption or birth of the baby. Parent's Leave cannot be transferred between parents – except in specified circumstances such as the death of one of the parents.

Notice

To avail of Parent's Leave the employee must give the employer 6 weeks' notice in writing and provide evidence in the form of a copy of the birth cert or adoption confirmation.

Refusals

The request can only be refused if the employee is not entitled to it.

Postponement

The Company can postpone the Parent's Leave for up to 12 weeks for the following reasons:

- Seasonal variations in the volume of work
- No replacement to carry out your work
- The nature of your duties
- The number of other employees also taking parent's leave
- Any other relevant matters.

Annual Leave & Public Holidays

Annual leave and public holiday benefits will continue to accrue for the period of Parent's Leave.

Payment

The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection will be responsible for making the benefit payment if the employee has the relevant social insurance (PRSI) contributions. Parent's Benefit is only paid once for both single and multiple births. For example, if you have twins or adopt 2 children at the same time, you get one payment. This is unpaid leave by the Company.

Domestic Violence Leave Policy

We recognise that domestic violence is a serious issue and can have a significant impact on the physical and mental well-being of individuals.

For this policy and in line with the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023, domestic violence is defined as violence, or threat of violence, including sexual violence and acts of coercive control committed against an employee or a relevant person by another person.



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Domestic abuse has significant impacts on people affected by it, which can also impact their work attendance, performance, and productivity. In some cases, abuse can occur during work time or through work communications channels. The workplace can also be a place of safety and support for the individual. The importance of maintaining employment and independent income as a basis for recovery cannot be underestimated.

As an organisation, we are committed to providing a safe and supportive work environment for our employees and offering support to affected employees.

Domestic violence and abuse can occur within any relationship, although women are affected disproportionately. This policy is applicable in all cases regardless of gender or sexuality.

Purpose:

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Provide for a period of paid time away from work for an employee who has experienced, is experiencing, or, is at risk of experiencing domestic violence and abuse.
- Promote a workplace culture that facilitates disclosures of domestic abuse.
- Support employees through a range of policy provisions, including paid leave.
- Support employees subjected to domestic violence and abuse in maintaining employment.
- Promote a safe work environment for all staff.

Scope:

This policy applies to all permanent, full-time, part-time or temporary employees who have experienced domestic violence in the past and/or who are currently experiencing domestic violence. This policy also applies to an employee whose presence is needed to support a relevant person, who is a victim of domestic violence.

How to Access the Provisions of this Policy:

An employee who may benefit from employer support under this policy is encouraged to raise the issue with their line manager if appropriate. In addition, the following persons ('designated person(s)') Laura Mulqueen Service Co-ordinator and Margaret O'Brien, Manager have a primary role in the company in responding to disclosures of domestic violence and abuse. They have received appropriate training on responding to disclosures, the provisions of the policy, and their limits in providing support.

Disclosures:

The person responding to a disclosure will:

- Listen and respond in a non-judgmental and compassionate manner.
- Support the employee in making their own decisions.
- Provide practical support as appropriate (see: Supports available).

In line with good management practice, it is a manager's responsibility to be mindful of the well-being of their team members, and issues impacting on well-being. Where a manager has concerns regarding well-being, the manager may, if appropriate:



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- Consider asking open questions in a private setting to allow the employee to disclose their experience if they wish to do so.
- Seek support from or refer the employee to a designated person, while being mindful of confidentiality (see: Confidentiality).
- Where a disclosure is made, provide or support access to available support as appropriate (see: Supports available).

Working from Home

Working from home can have a negative impact on employees subjected to domestic abuse. It is important that managers stay attuned to the well-being of employees when they work remotely. This, and other relevant factors, should be borne in mind where employees wish not to work remotely (where normally encouraged by the employer). Where possible, opportunities to work in a separate physical location will be encouraged and requests facilitated.

Disclosing to a Colleague

If an employee discloses to a colleague, the colleague will treat the disclosure in a supportive, non-judgmental, and confidential manner and bring this policy to the attention of the disclosing employee. It is not appropriate for the employee receiving the disclosure to pass on any information to others, including to managers or another designated person, without the consent of the disclosing person except in very limited cases (see: Confidentiality).

No Requirement to Disclose

For the sake of clarity, there is never any obligation on an employee to disclose that they are currently or have in the past been subjected to domestic violence.

Confidentiality:

Domestic violence and abuse should always be discussed in a private and confidential space.

All information regarding domestic violence will be kept confidential and shared on a need-to-know basis only and ideally with the consent of the employee concerned. For example, information may be shared with administrative staff dealing with domestic violence leave. Only information necessary to carrying out those roles/ tasks will be shared.

The Company may retain in the employee's personnel file:

- Administrative data such as approval of domestic violence leave
- Records of domestic violence leave will be kept for a period of three years as required by the legislation.

The above records will be stored securely, kept strictly confidential, and retained only for as long as necessary.

Colleagues to whom a disclosure is made (initial or as part of risk management) are required to keep confidentiality. Improper disclosure of information may be subject to disciplinary action.



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There are limited occasions where confidentiality cannot be maintained. These are:

- Where there is a requirement under law.
- When ordered by a court.
- Where it is necessary to share the information to protect the safety of employees and/or the public.

In these circumstances, the employee will be informed of the reasons why confidentiality cannot be maintained, the information will be shared on a need-to-know basis only, and care will be taken to ensure that the sharing of information does not put the employee at greater risk. In any of these instances where confidentiality cannot be maintained, the employee will be encouraged to contact a specialist domestic abuse service for support.

Supports Available

Domestic Violence Leave:

Entitlement

The Company will grant up to 5 days of paid domestic violence leave in any period of 12 consecutive months.

These days may be consecutive or non-consecutive days.

Should an employee be absent for part of a day during which he or she is required to work on that day shall be deemed to be one day of domestic violence leave.

The purpose of the leave is to enable the employee who has in the past or is currently experiencing domestic violence or, to enable the employee to assist the relevant person who has in the past or is currently experiencing domestic violence, to do any of the following in relation to the domestic violence experienced by him or her:

- seek medical attention,
- obtain services from a victim services organisation,
- obtain psychological or other professional counselling,
- relocate temporarily or permanently,
- obtain an order under the Domestic Violence Act 2018,
- seek advice or assistance from a legal practitioner,
- seek assistance from the Garda Síochána,
- seek or obtain any other relevant services.

For the purposes of eligibility for domestic violence leave the person who commits domestic violence against an employee or relevant person must be:

- the spouse or civil partner of the employee or relevant person,
- the cohabitant of the employee or relevant person,
- a person who is or was in an intimate relationship with the employee or relevant person, or
- a child of the employee or relevant person who is of full age and is not, in relation to the employee or relevant person, a dependent person.



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A relevant person in relation to an employee is:

- the spouse or civil partner of the employee,
- the cohabitant of the employee,
- a person with whom the employee is in an intimate relationship,
- a child of the employee who has not attained full age, or
- a person who, in relation to the employee, is a dependent person.

A dependent person means any child of the person, or in respect of whom the person is in loco parentis, who is not of full age, or, if the child has attained full age, is suffering from a mental or physical disability to such an extent that it is not reasonably possible for him or her to live independently of the employee or relevant person.

Pay

The employee will be paid full pay for each day on which the employee is absent from work on domestic violence leave.

Procedure

The employee will be required to complete a Domestic Violence Leave Request Form confirming the date(s) on which he/she is proposing to take domestic violence leave. This form must be submitted to your manager as soon as is reasonably practicable.

It is recognised that in certain circumstances advance notice of this leave may not be possible. In circumstances where notice is not feasible the employee will be required to complete a Domestic Violence Leave Request Form as soon as reasonably practicable after taking the domestic violence leave confirming that he or she has taken such leave and the dates on which it was taken.

Where advance notice is not possible, the employee is still required to notify their manager of their intention to take or remain on domestic violence or other leave for this purpose as soon as reasonably practicable and preferably at least one hour in advance of their starting time in line with the Company's normal absence procedures.

Referrals

A list of domestic abuse specialist organisations is available in Appendix: Specialist Services and Workplace Contacts. This information will be provided to employees disclosing domestic abuse. Where appropriate, the employee will be supported to access a safe physical space and/or method of communication from which to contact these services.

Conduct in the Workplace:



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Employees will be held accountable for their conduct in the workplace, in work time, or through work equipment. Where domestic violence and abuse is committed in the workplace, disciplinary procedures may be invoked with potential sanctions up to and including dismissal.

Employees who knowingly facilitate domestic violence, for example by providing access to equipment or information in respect of another employee, such as contacts/location/shift pattern, will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Changes to this Policy

This policy will be kept under review to include any changes in legislation and good practice.

APPENDIX SPECIALIST SERVICES AND WORKPLACE CONTACTS

Specialist Domestic Violence and Abuse Services

Women's Aid

Women's Aid operates the 24hr National Freephone Helpline for victims-survivors of domestic violence. Support can also be accessed through the Instant Messaging Support Service, available on the relevant websites.

1800 341 900

www.womensaid.ie

www.toointoyou.ie

Men's Development Network

Men's Development Network operates the Male Advice Line, the national Freephone Helpline offering confidential advice and support to male victims-survivors of domestic abuse.

1800 816 588

www.mensnetwork.ie

Local Services

There are specialist domestic abuse services located in towns right across Ireland. Details of your local service can be accessed through these websites.

www.safeireland.ie

www.stillhere.ie

www.womensaid.ie/get-help/support-services/find-support-locally/

Other Services



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Dublin Rape Crisis Centre

National Sexual Violence 24hr Helpline:
1800 77 8888
www.drcc.ie

Local Rape Crisis Centres
www.rapecrisishelp.ie

LGBT Ireland National LGBT
Helpline: 1800 929 539
www.lgbt.ie

An Garda Síochána
112 or 999

Leave for Medical Care Purposes Policy

As a Company we are committed to providing a supportive and compassionate work environment and recognise there are times that employees may need to take time off in order to provide care or support to a person in need of significant care or support for a serious medical condition. This policy outlines the entitlement, notification process, confirmation requirements, and record-keeping obligations for both employees and employers. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that employees can take the necessary time off work to care for their loved ones while also protecting the interests of the business.

Scope:

This policy applies to all permanent, full-time, part-time or temporary employees.

Purpose:

The purpose of the leave is to enable employees to take leave without pay for medical care purposes for the purposes of providing personal care or support to a person who is in need of significant care or support for a serious medical condition.

The person that is in need of significant care or support owing to the persons disability, illness or injury must be one of the following persons:

- a person of whom the employee is the relevant parent;
- the spouse or civil partner of the employee;
- the cohabitant of the employee;
- a parent or grandparent of the employee;
- a brother or sister of the employee;
- any other person who resides in the same household as the employee.



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Entitlement to leave for medical care purposes is limited to circumstances where the Employee is present at the place where the disabled, ill or injured person is.

Entitlement

The Company will grant up to 5 days of unpaid leave for medical care purposes in any period of 12 consecutive months.

These days can be consecutive or non-consecutive.

Leave for medical care purposes cannot be taken in a period of less than one day.

Should an employee be absent for part of a day during which he or she is required to work on that day shall be deemed to be one day of leave for medical care purposes.

Procedure:

The employee must complete the Leave for Medical Care Purposes Form and give to their manager as soon as is reasonably practicable outlining when the employee intends to take the leave.

In emergency circumstances where notice is not feasible the employee should complete the Leave for Medical Care Purposes Form immediately on their return to work after taking such leave.

Where advance notice is not possible, the employee is still required to notify their Manager at least one hour in advance of their starting time in line with the Company's normal absence procedures.

The form will state

- start date and duration of the leave
- outline the facts which entitle the employee to the leave
- be signed by the employee

The Company will confirm to the employee in writing that the form has been received.

Additional information may be requested from the employee in relation to

- the employee's relationship with the person in respect of whom the leave for medical care purposes is proposed to be taken or was taken,
- the nature of the personal care or support required to be given by the employee to the person concerned,
- relevant evidence relating to the need of the person for the significant care or support concerned which may be either a medical certificate signed by a medical practitioner stating that the person is, or was, in need of significant care or support for a serious medical reason or if no medical certificate can be provided evidence that the employer may reasonably require to show that the person concerned is, or was, in need of significant care or support for a serious medical reason.



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The Company will retain the form on the employee file and the employee must also keep a copy of the form.

Retention of Records:

The Company will keep a record showing the period of employment of each employee and the dates and times upon which each employee was on Leave for Medical Care Purposes. These records will be retained for 3 years.

Suspected Abuse of this Policy

Suspected abuse of this policy is subject to investigation as provided for in the Disciplinary Procedure Policy. This may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Employment Rights Protection

All your employment rights, except remuneration, are protected while you are on leave for medical care purposes. You will return to your normal job on completion of the period of leave.

Changes to this Policy

The Company reserves the right to amend this policy and will give one month notice of any changes.

Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures

Disciplinary Policy

The Disciplinary Procedure is designed to provide an objective and consistent process to address issues of misconduct, capability competence or qualifications, or failure to meet company standards relating to behaviour or performance.

In all cases of discipline, the employee will have the right to a fair hearing.

The matter(s) will be fully and fairly investigated; you will be informed of the reason for the discipline and have full right to reply.

The Company will always strive to be balanced, not to pre-judge and to apply discipline in a consistent and honest manner.

Suspension

In cases of serious misconduct, management will carry out a full investigation. You may be suspended, with pay, pending a full investigation.

Location

Disciplinary investigations will always be carried out in a suitable private area.



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Representation

At all times throughout the disciplinary procedure, you will have the right to express your views and to have a work colleague/trade union representative of your choice present if you so wish. The presence of your witness (outlined above) may aid you in airing your views, ensuring you get a fair hearing.

Separation of Process

The Investigation process is a three-step process which will be carried out by three separate members of the Management team and it will be in accordance with the Principles of Natural Justice.

Information relating to the Investigation (including but not limited to the: Investigation Report and the Invite to the Investigation) will be transferred to the Disciplinary Manager.

Relevant information relating to the investigation will be passed to:

- Witnesses (if necessary)
- The Disciplinary Manager

Third Party

The Company reserves the right to appoint a third party to conduct the disciplinary process.

Confidentiality

All individuals involved in the disciplinary procedure should maintain absolute confidentiality on the subject.

Working Under Protest

Should a dispute arise in relation to the handling of a disciplinary, it is agreed that the employees concerned will continue to work normally (under protest if necessary) pending resolution and exhaustion of the agreed disciplinary procedure.

Cooperation

Failure to attend scheduled disciplinary meetings without giving reasonable notice and a reasonable explanation will in itself be considered a disciplinary matter.

Timeline

Any investigation will be completed as quickly as possible whilst ensuring fairness to both parties.



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The Procedure consists of:

Informal Counselling

Management will normally adopt an approach involving coaching and advice in relation to minor infringements and will try to find positive means of resolving problems, in order that the morale and potential of the individual will not be damaged.

Where there is an incident of minor misconduct, or a minor reduction in satisfactory performance, the Manager may, in the first instance, discuss it with the team member and give guidance on how to improve. This is called informal counselling.

Counselling team members is a normal part of a manager's role and should not be viewed as something which inevitably leads to disciplinary action.

If performance and/or conduct has not been sufficiently improved or she/he has failed to meet any of the Company's performance or conduct standard within the specified time scale, then the formal procedure will be invoked as outlined below.

Investigation

In all cases of poor performance and/or conduct an investigation will be held.

- The team member will be invited to attend an Investigation Meeting.
- The team member will be advised in advance via the investigation invitation where the allegation exists.
- The team member will be given the opportunity to respond in the Investigation Meeting.
- Witnesses may be invited to attend a Witness Investigation Meeting to provide an account, if necessary.
- The Investigation Manager (conducting the investigation meeting) may decide to progress the issue to the disciplinary hearing stage if the allegation is founded.
- The Investigation Manager will draft a report (Investigation Report) on their findings.

Disciplinary Hearing

- The Investigation Manager will provide the report to the Disciplinary Manager.
- The team member will be invited to attend a disciplinary hearing and will be provided with a copy of the report.
- The team member will be given the opportunity to respond to the investigation report.



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- The Disciplinary Hearing Manager will take time in which to decide on the appropriate outcome of the investigation.
- The outcome of the disciplinary hearing will be confirmed to the team member in writing following the meeting.

Sanctions

The Company reserve the right to skip stages of the below sanctions in line with the severity of the breach of company procedures.

- **Stage 1 - Verbal Warning:** An employee whose work, conduct or attitude becomes unsatisfactory will be given a verbal warning by his/her manager. This warning will be recorded in the employee's personal files.
- **Stage 2 - Written Warning:** If the employee's conduct, performance or attitude remains unchanged or further incident requiring disciplinary action arises, the manager will give a second warning. This warning will be confirmed in writing to the employee and a copy also kept in the employee's personal file.
- **Stage 3 - Final Written Warning:** On this occasion or further incident requiring disciplinary action arising, the employee will be given a set period of time to improve performance and will be informed of the consequences if no improvement occurs or further incident requiring disciplinary action arises. This written warning will be issued to the employee and a copy kept on the employee's file.
- **Stage 4 - Demotion (if applicable), Suspension or Dismissal:** If the time limit set at the final written warning stage expires and there is no evidence of significant improvement on the part of the employee or further incident requiring disciplinary action has arisen, then the employee will be suspended or dismissed, as deemed appropriate by management.

Warning Timeframes

A Verbal Warning is valid for a period of 6 months from date of issue. Written and Final Written Warnings are valid for a period of 12 months from date of issue.

Serious Misconduct

If you are guilty of serious misconduct, you will be:



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- Given a final warning or
- Demotion (if applicable) or,
- Suspended from duty without pay or
- Dismissed from your employment.

NOTE: In cases of serious misconduct, management will carry out a full investigation. You may be suspended pending full investigation.

The following list contains the principle matters under the heading of Serious Misconduct. Any other acts, omissions, negligence or breaches of normal codes of discipline, if considered serious, will be dealt with under the heading of Serious Misconduct.

- Theft or fraud or attempted theft or fraud if proven to our satisfaction. This applies equally to the property of the Company suppliers, staff members, clients and social committee/fund.
- Breach of our Honesty Policy.
- Unauthorised personal use of the Company facilities or resources. Selling, attempting to sell or promoting the sale of non-office merchandise while on our premises.
- Wilful damage to the Company property/equipment or the property of another staff member, client or supplier.
- Failure to comply with our Safety and Health Regulations and to comply with responsibilities as an employee under the Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Act 1989. This will include Dangerous practice whilst on our premises including horseplay or smoking/vaping in any area where smoking/vaping is not allowed.
- Negligent practice in the use of equipment such as working without guards or working in a generally unsafe manner.
- Breach of our policy on illegal drugs/substance abuse.
- Physical assault or fighting whilst on the Company premises.
- Making or supporting false allegations.
- Accidents/injury at work.
- Absence from work without leave (unless bona fide sickness supported by medical certificates).
- False or misleading explanations for absence.
- Wilful and unreasonable refusal to obey a legitimate instruction given by a Supervisor, Department Manager or other member of Management.
- Abusive threatening or insubordinate behaviour towards Management or other staff.
- Rudeness to clients at any time i.e., breaches of Client Care Policy.
- Bullying.
- Making malicious or vexatious complaints against the Company and/or other parties
- Misuse of computers or the internet or their use for personal use.



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- Sexual Harassment.
- Misuse of the Time Management system.
- Conduct which brings our good name into disrepute.
- Conviction by a Court of Law for any serious criminal offence considered damaging to the Company or our employees.
- Unreasonable refusal to attend job related training programmes/courses.
- Failure to complete properly defined documentation procedures and/or falsification of such documents.
- Giving false or misleading information on your employment application form.
- Making or supporting false allegations of personal injuries.

The above list is not exhaustive or exclusive.

Appeal

You will have the right to appeal against any disciplinary action taken against you. Either party can appeal the decision of the formal investigation in writing within ten working days. This will be conducted by the Appeal Manager.

You will have only one right of appeal and the outcome of this appeal is final. If the employee is unhappy with the outcome of the disciplinary investigation further to the appeal, the issue may be processed through the normal industrial relations mechanisms. Please note that employees are obliged to exhaust the internal procedures before proceeding to a third party.

Employee Files

Any expired sanctions will be removed from your employee file.

Data Protection

In order to comply with its obligation under employment legislations the Company reserves the right to refer disciplinary matters to outside professionals/ HR consultants for advice/ investigation. Any information forwarded may be processed by those parties. Information will be made available to the WRC / The Department of Social Welfare / Revenue should they request same.

The principles of GDPR will be maintained at all times.

Grievance Procedure

For various reasons, grievances can arise between the Company and its team members, and between team members and team members. When such grievances arise, it is in everyone's interest to have them resolved without delay. For that reason, the Company has developed this Grievance Procedure so employees know what to do should they be dissatisfied about any aspect of employment with the Company.



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Grievances can occur for a number of reasons in the workplace including but not limited to:

- terms and conditions of employment
- health and safety
- personal relationships at work
- bullying or harassment and sexual harassment
- new working practices
- working environment
- organisational change
- equal opportunities

Should grievances arise, the Company is committed on a day-to-day basis to their resolution in an open, fair, frank and timely manner and at the earliest possible stage of this procedure. It is expected that the vast majority of grievances will be resolved prior to these steps being taken through our 'open door' approach to problem solving, as it is in management's interest to ensure each employees well-being. However, it is recognised that on occasions where this does not happen, this procedure must be followed.

There is both an informal and formal procedure to deal with any employee grievances.

Should a dispute arise in relation to the handling of a grievance, it is agreed that the employees concerned will continue to work normally (under protest if necessary) pending resolution and exhaustion of the agreed Grievance Procedure.

Employees should be aware that for any complaints relating to Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment, they should refer to the Bullying or Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policies. It is noted that at all times Contact Persons are available to employees should they need clarification on which policy to invoke.

Informal Procedure

While in no way diminishing the issue at hand or the effects on individuals, an informal approach can often resolve matters. As a general rule therefore, an attempt should be made to address grievances as informally as possible by means of an agreed informal procedure.

Generally, for issues around work-related problems such as decisions about pay, benefits, holidays and health and safety, you should raise the matter verbally with your line manager as soon as possible.

The objective of this approach is to resolve the difficulty with the minimum of conflict and stress for the individuals involved.

Should the issue be in relation to personal relationships or how you have been treated by a co-worker or manager and it potentially does not meet the definitions of Bullying, Harassment or Sexual Harassment, the following approach should be taken.



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Any employee who has a grievance should explain clearly to the Respondent (if applicable) how their behaviour is affecting them and that they wish for the behaviour to cease.

- In circumstances where the Complainant finds it difficult to approach the Respondent directly, he or she should seek help and advice, on a strictly confidential basis, from a Contact Person.
 - Our Contact Persons are **Laura Mulqueen** and **Precious Madubeko**.
 - At this stage the Contact Person should listen patiently, be supportive and discuss the various options open to the employee concerned.
 - This could involve the Contact Person approaching the Respondent on the Complainant's behalf and advising them that an informal complaint has been received against them.
 - The Contact Person will explain the nature and seriousness of this complaint to the Respondent (if applicable) outlining the grievance policy to them.
 - A meeting between the parties will be facilitated by an appointed manager, in an informal manner so that both sides have an opportunity to discuss their issues.
 - The aim is to get the Respondent (if applicable) to understand the effect that their behaviour has had on the Complainant and overall to get an apology and commitment from the individual that it will never happen again.
 - In addition, the aim is to ensure that both parties can work together going forward and there is a commitment from both on agreed outcomes.

A Complainant may decide, for whatever reason, to bypass the informal procedure. Choosing not to use the informal procedure will not reflect negatively on a Complainant in the formal procedure.

Mediation

The Company recognises that mediation is an effective form of conflict resolution. It is a process whereby an independent, neutral mediator assists parties to come to an agreement through collaborative engagement. It is not about blame, but about understanding the conflict and finding agreed ways of future interaction and behaviour. The most important principles of mediation are that it is voluntary, impartial and confidential. It can be a very effective process for addressing issues and interpersonal disputes. Mediation requires the voluntary participation and co-operation of the parties to the complaint. Where mediation is availed of, the following applies:

- An independent mediator will be appointed.
- Mediation does not deny the right to a full investigation at a later date.
- The information that arises in mediation is confidential and cannot be used later in an investigation.



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Formal Procedure

Where the employee deems it appropriate to skip the informal stage due to the nature of the complaint, or where the informal stage(s) did not resolve the matter, the employee may utilise the formal process. The Company may also deem it inappropriate for a complaint to proceed under the informal procedure, depending on the seriousness of the matter.

Formal Grievance Investigation

In order to raise a formal complaint, the employee must submit their complaint in writing to their immediate manager, or if not appropriate to do so, any other member of management.

- The complaint should be confined to outlining the details, witnesses, dates, times and any other relevant information to assist the proper investigation of the complaint.
- An Investigation Manager will be appointed to investigate the complaint, to establish the facts and decide whether on a balance of probabilities, that there is a “case to answer” in relation to the complaint.
- The investigation should be governed by terms of reference. The parties will be provided with these terms of reference. If any party has a disagreement with the terms of reference this must be stated at the commencement of the process for resolving in advance.
- The investigation will include investigation meeting(s) with both the Complainant and the Respondent (if applicable) and any witnesses, as necessary. All participating employees should be informed in writing in advance of the investigation meeting(s) about the purpose of the meeting(s), the complaint that is investigated, the time and venue of the meeting(s) and their right to be accompanied.
- Witnesses should sign their statements and it should be explained when taking statements that their statement will be shared with both parties.
- The Respondent (if applicable) will be notified in writing of the nature of the complaint, given a copy of the allegation, informed of their right to representation and will be provided with an opportunity to respond to any allegations made in the complaint.
- No assumptions will be made about the culpability of the Respondent (if applicable) during the course of the investigation.
- A record of all relevant discussions which take place during the course of the investigation will be maintained by the appointed Investigation Manager. Both parties will be given copies of these notes together with any witness statements taken and provided with an opportunity to comment on the notes and any statements provided.
- The appointed Investigation Manager will outline their decision in a written report stating the reasons as to whether there is “a case to answer” regarding the complaint based on a balance of probabilities.
- Both parties will be given a copy of the written investigation report.
- The outcome of this process could be any of the outcomes outlined below.
 - **Case to Answer by the Respondent:** If it is established there is “a case to answer” by the Respondent, it may be decided to progress the matter through to the Disciplinary Procedure. This



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may lead to a disciplinary sanction up to and including dismissal. No recommendations should be made in this instance.

- **Case to Answer by the Company:** If it is established that there is a “case to answer” by the Company, the Investigation Manager may suggest a relevant course of action to resolve the grievance. Recommendations may also be made to include for example the provision of further training or more effective promotion of the organisations policies, etc.
- **No Case to Answer by the Respondent:** If it is established there is no “case to answer”, the complaint will not proceed to the disciplinary stage.
- **No Case to Answer by the Company:** If it is established that there is no “case to answer” by the Company, no further action will be taken, however a recommendation may be made.
- **Non-Employee:** If the investigation concludes that there is “a case to answer” then the report will recommend whether appropriate sanctions may be imposed such as the termination of contracts, suspension of service, or exclusion from the premises.
- **Malicious or Vexatious:** Where it is deemed on occasion, that a complaint has not been made in good faith, this will be treated very seriously. This may lead to disciplinary sanctions up to and including dismissal for the employee who made such a complaint on this basis.

Appeal

Both the Complainant and the Respondent (if applicable) have the right to appeal against the outcome of this process. Employees will be advised who will be appointed to hear their appeal, which will involve a person at a suitable level not previously involved in the process. All appeals should be made in writing within five days from the date on which the decision is communicated to the employee. Employees will be required to set out the grounds for their appeal in writing.

At the appeal meeting the employee will be given the opportunity to explain the basis of their appeal. The person appointed to hear the appeal may ask further questions and seek clarification on the grounds of appeal. At the conclusion of the appeal process, a decision whether or not to uphold the appeal will be confirmed in writing to the parties.

This is the final step in the internal process and the decision made by the designated member of management is final.

Other key aspects of the policy:

- **Representation:** During the Formal Process an employee will have the right to be represented by a work colleague/trade union representative. An employee may not be represented by any other person or body unconnected to the Company.



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- **Third Party:** The Company reserves the right to outsource any stage of the policy to an appropriate external third party.
- **Confidentiality:** It is important that any employee who is involved in this process or who is aware of an ongoing process, directly or indirectly, should maintain absolute confidentiality on the matter.
- **Data Protection:** In order to comply with its obligation under employment legislations the Company reserves the right to refer any grievance matters to outsourced professionals/ HR Consultancy. Any information forwarded may be processed by those parties. Information will be made available to the WRC / The Department of Social Welfare / Revenue should they so request the same. The principles of GDPR will be maintained at all times.
- **Working while a complaint is investigated:** The employee concerned who made the complaint should continue to work normally, until matters have been fully exhausted and resolved. However, depending on the nature and seriousness of the circumstances, appropriate interim arrangements can be made to facilitate the employees concerned to work in another location, where it is possible, pending the outcome of the process. Depending on the circumstances and seriousness, this might include alternative line management structure, change of workstations, or requesting Respondent to stay at home on “suspension” as per the disciplinary procedure where the complaint is of a serious nature, pending an investigation on fully paid leave. Any such measure does not amount to a penalisation or sanction on any of the parties concerned.
- **Cooperation:** All employees are required to cooperate and fully assist with any ongoing investigation into a complaint. Failure or refusal to attend or cooperate with scheduled meetings without reasonable notice or reasonable explanation will be considered a failure to comply with a reasonable instruction and may result in a disciplinary sanction.
- **Timeline:** Investigations will be conducted as quickly as is reasonably practicable taking fairness into account for all parties involved.
- **Witnesses:** It will be deemed a disciplinary offense in itself to intimidate, pressurise, or conspire with any witness(es) who are required to partake in an investigation into a complaint.
- **Reasonable Accommodation:** The Company will provide reasonable accommodation to employees who may need adjustments to participate in the process.
- **Victimisation:** Retaliation or Victimisation of any kind against an employee for raising a complaint or taking part in an investigation concerning this policy work is a serious disciplinary offence. An employee will not be victimised or subject to sanction, for example, for making a complaint in good faith, giving evidence as part of the process, or by giving notice of an intention to do any of the above.

The policy and procedures will be updated to take account of changes in the law.



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Technology

Email and Internet Policy

Business Usage

The company is committed to maintaining a professional working environment and, in compliance with legislation, to ensuring that all employees maintain their individual rights to work in an environment based on mutual respect and free of any form of harassment.

To protect West Limerick Independent Living, its employees and clients the following policy has been set out to clarify for all employees what is acceptable use of Email and the Internet.

West Limerick Independent Living's position in relation to the usage of Email and the Internet access is that it is for business/work related purposes and employees are strongly encouraged to use it.

This policy applies to all people who:

- Have access to the West Limerick Independent Living 's systems, or
- Are employed directly by West Limerick Independent Living, or
- Are employed indirectly by West Limerick Independent Living (e.g. temporary employees hired through an agency), or
- Perform work on behalf of the West Limerick Independent Living (e.g. independent contractors).

The right is reserved to change this policy at any time upon written notification being provided to all concerned. Any usage, which is considered inappropriate or contradictory to the above will be dealt with under the company's normal disciplinary procedures.

It is important for employees to be aware that they are responsible for all activities, including Email and Internet usage that occur under their login.

Inappropriate Usage

In using either Email or the Internet employees must not send or permit to be sent, on behalf of the company, any Email message, attachment to an Email, or posting to a bulletin board which:

- May damage West Limerick Independent Living 's reputation or its relationship with clients or providers/suppliers, or which may embarrass or cause any loss to either West Limerick Independent Living or its clients
- Is illegal, defamatory, offensive or damaging, or which may be considered by others to cause distress. Examples may include sexual, racial, religious or other harassment or discrimination



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- Is considered pornographic or offensive be it image, text, cartoon, joke, wallpaper, screensaver or executable
- May infringe intellectual property rights such as copyrights or patents
- May introduce a virus or other malicious software to any West Limerick Independent Living, client or provider network
- Constitutes 'junk' Email, for example non business messages posted to multiple addresses
- Is for commercial purposes, unrelated to West Limerick Independent Living
- Constitutes excessive private use.

In addition, it is completely inconsistent with West Limerick Independent Living's insistence on professional conduct for employees to use the company's computing systems or resources to search for, obtain or store the above information from any external network.

Legal Compliance

West Limerick Independent Living, and you as a West Limerick Independent Living employee, are bound to comply with many legal requirements including copyright laws, privacy and data protection laws and computer abuse laws, therefore;

- Do not use or distribute pirated software (Only management approved software is allowed on West Limerick Independent Living machines)
- Do not provide third parties with access to information that is the property of, or safeguarded by West Limerick Independent Living
- Do not store personal information on individuals without ensuring it is consistent and compliant with relevant legislation.

In the event of litigation against the West Limerick Independent Living, Email communications and Internet access records can be subject to examination by the courts.

Email

Email communications with users, providers, clients and other third parties are treated in the same way as letters or faxes and are subject to the same standards of preparation, review, approval and storage as apply to these other forms of communication. This means the Email communication must:

- Be professionally written and structured using business English
- Be available as required by either: appropriate archiving, using shared mailboxes or printed and put on the physical file as appropriate



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Be restricted as appropriate, i.e. no sharing of inboxes, no auto forwarding rules. This is to respect the senders privacy and expectation that only the designated recipients (or their nominees) will receive the mail. If it is forwarded subsequent to reading, a judgement call has been made.

Email communications are not an instant or secure medium and as such, the use of Email for messages of a confidential, complex or critical nature is not recommended without the careful application of all the appropriate safeguards. Employees must not send or permit to be sent, on behalf of the organisation, any Email message, attachment to an Email, or posting to a bulletin board, which makes representations or expresses opinions purporting to be those of West Limerick Independent Living without the express authority of management.

While virus detection software is in place, particular care must be taken when exchanging attachments with any third party. Do not open attachments that look suspicious or are from an unknown sender. If in any doubt contact management.

Internet

When connected to the West Limerick Independent Living networks, either locally or remotely:

- Personal Internet accounts must not be used
- Connection to a client or third party network must not be made
- Non West Limerick Independent Living Email accounts (e.g. Hotmail, Yahoo) are not to be used for sending or receiving West Limerick Independent Living, user, client or provider information at any time.
- Personal use of these facilities may result in disciplinary proceedings.
- Downloading of illegal images or information may also lead to criminal prosecution.

Strict policing of this policy lessens the chances of systems being hit by computer viruses and, as such it is extremely important that employees understand the importance of adhering to this policy.

Monitoring and Control

Email and Internet usage may be monitored. Blocking software is employed to prohibit access to Internet sites considered inappropriate, though not all accessible sites are necessarily appropriate. In addition, attachments such as executable programs, encrypted files, picture and video formats, sound files, HTML code, zipped files etc. may be blocked.

It must be recognised that the examples cited in this policy cannot be treated as a definitive list. Instances may fall within more than one definition depending on the facts and circumstances of each case.

This policy is designed to facilitate the use of the Internet and Email as powerful business tools within the working environment based on respect and free from any form of harassment. As such all employees should familiarise themselves with it and ensure it is adhered to at all times.



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General

PCs laptops and other mobile devices where provided should not be used for personal purposes except as outlined above. Printing for personal purposes should be limited, and excessive use will be dealt with as a disciplinary offence. Laptops and other mobile devices if provided should be stored in the boot of the employee's car when travelling, and taken indoors rather than left unattended in vehicles.

If a laptop/ mobile device is left in the open in a vehicle it may attract thieves or vandals, resulting in possible damage to the vehicle, and theft of the laptop as well as personal items contained in the vehicle.

Screensavers should not be downloaded from the internet, and only screensavers approved by Management may be used.

Employees should not transfer digital photographs or music, DVD or movie files onto their PC, laptop/ mobile device without prior permission from their Manager. Employees must observe copyright regulations in relation to any content they upload/download to business systems.

The Company's I.T. systems should not be used for the purposes of engaging in secondary employment.

The Organisation's telephone systems should not be used for personal use, without the consent of your Manager. Where an Employee receives a personal call, they should keep the call brief.

If you require further clarification or wish to make any comments in relation to the above policy, please contact management

Social Media, Mobile (Cell and Smart) Phones and Related Technologies

Mobile phone's new capabilities, which include the ability to photograph, video or record other people without them knowing is a direct invasion of privacy and confidentiality. Although not an exclusive list, some specific examples of prohibited social media conduct include posting commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, libellous, or that can create a hostile work environment or could infringe on a service users or their family's privacy and confidentiality.

Employees should not take or post on social media images of service users or their children. Mobile phones cannot be used on company time aside from breaks and lunch and in real emergencies. Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.



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Data Protection

Data Protection Statement

As your employer, West Limerick Independent Living needs to keep and process information about you for normal employment purposes. The information we hold and process will be used for our management and administrative use only.

We will keep and use it to enable us to run the organisation and manage our relationship with you effectively, lawfully and appropriately, during the recruitment process, whilst you are working for us, at the time when your employment ends and after you have left. This includes using information to enable us to comply with the employment contract, to comply with any legal requirements, pursue the legitimate interests of the organisation and protect our legal position in the event of legal proceedings.

On commencing employment you will be made aware of West Limerick Independent Living's clear and open policies about the data processing and the rights of the employees. These policies will include data protection policy and a privacy statement and are available on the company website www.limerickcil.com.

Data Protection Policy

The Company is firmly committed to ensuring personal privacy and compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and best practice guidelines and procedures in relation to all aspects of Data Protection. All staff are required to comply with the GDPR and assist the Company in complying with the Regulation. Staff should protect the privacy and confidentiality of the personal data of customers, suppliers or employees. When dealing with personal data employees must employ the six core principles of Data Protection.

1. Personal Data must be obtained and processed fairly, legally and transparently. The Company will obtain and process personal data fairly and in accordance with statutory and other legal obligation.
2. Personal Data can only be obtained for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner incompatible with those purposes. The Company will only keep personal data for purposes that are specific, lawful and clearly stated.
3. Personal Data obtained must be adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purpose for which it was obtained.
4. Personal Data must be kept accurate and up to date.
5. Personal Data must be kept only for so long as is necessary for the purpose for which it was obtained.
6. Personal Data must be processed in a way that ensures appropriate security including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing, and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical and organizational measures.

Definitions



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Personal Data is “any information relating to an identified or identifiable living person” and includes names, addresses, PPS number, date of birth etc. Special Category Personal Data includes data relating to a person’s racial or ethnic origin, political opinion, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health information or sex life or sexual orientation.

Processing

As employer we process employee data on the following legal bases.

For example

- the performance of the employment contract (e.g., payment of salary);
- compliance with a legal obligation to which the employer is subject (e.g., deduction of taxes);
- to protect the vital interests of the employee (this is intended to cover urgent health or humanitarian situations e.g., sharing personal data with the police to help to protect the data subject); and
- to protect the legitimate interests of the employer (e.g., the transmission of personal data within a group of undertakings for internal administrative purposes).

It is important to note that the company have certain outsourced services such as Payroll etc. and so in order to comply with its legal obligations, the Company reserves the right to forward certain personal data for its employees to the relevant third parties. The company have taken extensive measures to ensure those third parties securely retain this information. Any information forwarded may be processed by those parties. Information will be made available to the WRC / The Department of Social Welfare / Revenue should they request same.

Security

It is important to note that all data will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and the company will take security measures to ensure your personal data is not accessible to anybody other than those who are authorised to have access to the same.

Personal Data

In line with the requirements of the GDPR, personal data should not be collected or retained if it is not needed and/or on the basis that it might be required in the future.

The types of information about individuals that the company collects will be reviewed periodically to ensure compliance with this requirement and in line with this Data Protection Policy.

Each category of personal data will be assessed when determining retention periods as the company may have justifiable reason to retain certain types of personal data.



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Employment Records Policy

As your employer we have a responsibility to retain personal data and sensitive data on your employee file. This is for the purpose of administration and management and also in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. This data includes all relevant information pertaining to your employment including address, telephone number, emergency contact details, educational attainments etc.

- It is important to note that all data will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and the company will take security measures to ensure your data is not accessible to anybody other than those who are authorised to have access to the same.
- Personal Assistants files are kept electronically on our server which is password protected for the access of the manager and Service Coordinators only and a hard copy of all other employee files are stored securely in locked cabinets in the offices of West Limerick Independent Living accessible to the management team only.
- It is of utmost importance that your data is accurate and up to date and so it is your responsibility to notify the company of any changes that might affect your employment file such as a change in address etc.
- Management will ensure to rectify any inaccurate information on your employee file without delay.
- If you have any queries or need any information on your file updated, please ensure to contact your direct line manager immediately.

In line with the requirements as outlined in the GDPR, personal data should not be collected or retained if it is not needed and/or on the basis that it might be required in the future. The types of information about individuals that the company collects will be reviewed periodically to ensure compliance with this requirement and in line with the company's Data Protection Policy.

Each individual's personal data will be assessed when determining retention periods as the company may have justifiable reason to retain certain types of personal data.

You are entitled to have access to relevant personal data held electronically. You are also entitled to have access to any relevant personal data held in structured manual filing systems. Any such request should be made in writing, specifically outlining which personal data you wish to have access to, to your direct line manager. It should be noted that there are exceptions and limitations on the right of access to personal data.

The right of access does not apply in some cases where the needs of civil society may be jeopardised, such as the need to investigate crime effectively, or the need to protect the international relations of the state.

It is important to note that the company have certain outsourced services such as Payroll, HR Consultants etc. and so in order to comply with its legal obligations, the Company reserves the right to forward certain personal data



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for its employees to the relevant third parties. The company have taken extensive measures to ensure those third parties surely retain this information. Any information forwarded may be processed by those parties. Information will be made available to the WRC / The Department of Social Welfare / Revenue should they request the same.

Data Retention Policy

The new GDPR requirements ensure that personal data is not retained for longer than is necessary. We must be able to justify why we are retaining data and so going forward we must ensure that data retention is minimised.

In relation to employment documents, certain employment legislation prescribes a statutory minimum period to retain records which are outlined in the below table:

The table is enclosed for your information.

This table will be used as a guide, but data can be retained longer than is outlined in the table if it can be justified.

Legislation	Data	Time Period
The Employment Equality Acts 1988 – 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVs • Interview Notes • Interview Assessment Forms • Offer Letters • Regrets 	12 months from when the position was filled.
Organisation of Working Time Act 1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records relating to weekly working hours • Holidays • PPS numbers • Statement of duties and the name and address of each employee. 	3 years (for both past and present employees). Responsibility of Payroll and may be extended for revenue requirements.
National Minimum Wage Act 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay records, e.g., payslips showing compliance 	3 years from the date of creation for both past and present employees. Responsibility of Payroll and may be extended for revenue requirements.
Terms of Employment (Information) Act 1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms and Conditions of Employment • Confidentiality Agreements • Code of Conduct • Deduction from Wages Sign Offs 	Duration of employment and for 3 years for past employees. Contract to be retained for 7 years for a past employee.
Parental Leave Act, 1998 as amended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental Leave • Force Majeure 	12 years from the date of the leave for both past and present employees for Parental Leave. 8 years from the date of the leave for both past and present employees for Force Majeure Leave.



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Legislation	Data	Time Period
Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave For Medical Care • Purposes • Domestic Violence Leave • Requests for Flexible Working Arrangement for Caring Purposes • Requests For Remote Working Arrangements 	<p>3 years from the date of the leave for both past and present employees for Leave for Medical Care Purposes.</p> <p>3 years from the date of the leave for both past and present employees for Domestic Violence Leave.</p> <p>3 years from the date of the leave for both past and present employees of an approved Flexible Working Arrangement for Caring Purposes.</p> <p>3 years from the date of the leave for both past and present employees of an approved Remote Working Arrangement.</p>
Parent's Leave and Benefit Act 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents Leave 	2 years
Maternity Protection Acts 1994 - 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maternity Leave 	No set period but recommended to hold for at least 18 months
Adoptive Leave Acts, 1995-2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoptive Leave 	No set period but recommended to hold for at least 18 months
Paternity Leave and Benefit Acts, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paternity Leave 	8 years
Carers Leave Acts, 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers Leave 	8 years
Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records of age for those under 18 years of age 	3 years from date of creation for both past and present employees.
Companies Acts and Taxes Consolidation Act 1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records of tax payment 	6 years for both past and present employees. This will be the responsibility of payroll.
Companies Act 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounting records 	7 years after the end of the financial year for both past and present employees.
Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act (General Applications) 1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records of Accidents and danger • Health and Safety Leave 	<p>10 years from the date of the accident for both past and present employees.</p> <p>No set period but recommended to hold for at least 18 months</p>



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Legislation	Data	Time Period
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disciplinary Records 	<p>For present employees, the duration of the sanction is 12 months.</p> <p>However, there is justification in retaining the sanction if there is a continuation of the poor performance. In the case of a sequence of sanctions up to and including dismissal, the company reserve the right to retain this sequence to illustrate the fair process conducted by the Company should a case be taken against the Company.</p> <p>For past employees, retention of the file for a duration of 3 years.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grievance Records 	<p>For present employees, the duration of the grievance procedure, founded or otherwise is 12 months.</p> <p>For past employees, retention of the file for a duration of 3 years.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence Records 	<p>Absence records must be retained for a duration of 12 months. However, these records will be retained by Payroll for a longer duration.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passports Birth Certs Drivers Licenses 	<p>Should be verified at recruitment stage to ensure the employee is permitted to work in Ireland but it should not be stored on the system.</p> <p>A copy of the driver's licence (if any) should be forwarded to the insurance company/car company.</p>
The Protection of Employment Acts 1977—2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collective Redundancies 	3 Years
Sick Leave Act 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sick Pay Record 	4 Years



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CCTV System Policy

Introduction

The purpose of the CCTV System Policy of West Limerick Independent Living (“the Policy”) is to regulate the management, operation and use of the closed circuit television (CCTV) system (“the System”) at West Limerick Independent Living (“the Company”).

The system comprises a number of fixed and dome cameras located around the company site. The Policy follows the Data Protection Commissioner’s published guidelines and is in accordance with data protection legislation, the General Data Protection Regulation (“GDPR”) when it came into force in May 2018.

The System is wholly owned by the Company.

Copies of this Policy will be available to the public from the Company Office and Company website.

Objectives of the System

- (a) To act as a deterrent against criminal activity affecting property belonging to the company and staff.
- (b) To ensure safeguarding of the premises.
- (c) To increase health and safety of staff, clients and visitors.
- (d) To monitor safety in the workplace.
- (e) To protect the Company in respect to any incidents or allegations of incidents in the workplace.
- (f) To ensure that all company policies are adhered to at all times.
- (g) To ensure safeguarding of stock for theft purposes for the purpose of disciplinary action if there has been a breach of company policies and procedures, or any other misconduct. Any employee subject to disciplinary/grievance action will have the opportunity to review and inspect any CCTV footage used as evidence during the disciplinary/grievance investigation.

The System will not be used to monitor the movements of staff, clients, or visitors. Expectations of reasonable individual privacy will be maintained in line with the principles of GDPR and operation of the system will be mindful that no such infringement is likely to take place.

Statement of intent

The Company will treat the System and all information, documents and data images obtained and used there from as data which may be deemed personal data requiring protection under the Acts.

It is intended that the CCTV cameras will be used to capture images of intruders or individuals damaging property or removing goods without authorization and release this information to and at the request of, the Gardai.



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Information captured as a result of the use of the System will not be used for any commercial purpose. The recorded images shall be stored on data storage device which will only be released to third parties for use in the investigation of a specific crime and with the written authority of the Garda Siochana.

Portable storage containing personal data will never be released to the media or other third parties for any purpose that is not permitted under the Policy without the Data Subject's consent.

The planning and operation of the System has been designed to ensure that it provides maximum effectiveness and efficiency insofar as is reasonably practicable, but it is not possible to guarantee that the System will cover or detect every single incident taking place in the areas of coverage.

Warning signs, as required by the Code of Practice of the Data Protection Commissioner have been placed at all access points to areas covered by the company CCTVs to inform all persons who may be deemed Data Subjects, of the existence of the System.

Operation of the system

For the purposes of the GDPR the Data Controller is West Limerick Independent Living. In practice, the System will be managed by the Manager, in accordance with the principles and objectives expressed in the Policy.

The day-to-day management will be the responsibility of the Manager and be approved by the Company Board of Directors. Other personnel may also be authorised by the Company Board of Directors to view recorded images for the purposes outlined in this policy, e.g. the Service Coordinators

The System will be operated 24 hours each day, every day of the year, except for periods of breakdown or necessary maintenance.

Control Room

The system is secured in the storage area of West Limerick Independent Living which is always locked. In an out of hours emergency happens the Management or Data Controller must be satisfied of the identity and purpose of contractors before allowing access to control cabinet.

During the working day when the Manager's office is not manned the Control cabinet will be kept locked.

Recording procedures

CCTV recording will be always maintained. CCTV Monitors are installed in the following areas and will be used in accordance with this policy:

- (a) Reception area in office
- (b) Other locations are front, rear, and side of office building.

Should this be a remote monitor its use will be restricted to ensure that staff and customer movements are not being monitored or captured continuously.



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CCTV procedures:

- CCTV is stored in the locked storeroom upstairs in West Limerick Independent Living offices. The equipment is programmed to automatically delete images after 28 days.
- CCTV may be viewed by the Gardai when requested to assist them in their duties.
- CCTV required for evidential purposes must be witnessed and signed by the Manager, dated when this happens. A record will be maintained of the viewing of any CCTV to the Gardai or other authorised persons. A register will be maintained for this purpose.
- Should CCTV be required as evidence, this may be released to the Gardai under the procedures described in the above paragraph of the Policy. CCTV footage will only be released to the Gardai on the clear understanding that the recording remains the property of the Company, and CCTV footage and information contained on it are to be treated in accordance with this code. The Company also retains the right to refuse permission for the Gardai to pass to any other person the CCTV footage or any part of the information contained thereon. On occasions when a Court requires the release of original CCTV footage this will be produced as required.

The Gardai may require the Company to retain the CCTV footage for possible use as evidence in the future.

Applications received from outside bodies (e.g. solicitors) to view or release personal data stored on CCTV and held by the Company will be referred to the Company Board of Directors. In these circumstances a copy of the relevant CCTV footage will normally be made available for viewing or released where satisfactory documentary evidence is produced showing that they are required for legal proceedings, a subject access request, or in response to a Court Order.

Breaches of the Policy (including breaches of security)

Any breach of the Policy by the Company staff or any other person with responsibility under the Policy will be initially investigated by the Manager, for him/her to take the appropriate disciplinary action.

Any serious breach of the Policy will be immediately investigated, and an independent investigation will be carried out by nominees of the Company Board of Directors to make recommendations on how to remedy the breach.

Assessment of the System

Maintenance and performance of the system, including random operating checks, will routinely be carried out by the Manager.

Complaints

Any complaints about the Company's CCTV system should be addressed to the Manager.

Complaints will be investigated in accordance with Breaches of the Policy (including breaches of security) paragraphs above.

Any person who might be deemed a Data Subject in relation to the System shall be at liberty to make a complaint directly to the office of the Data Protection Commissioner, Canal House, Station Road, Portarlino, Co. Laois.



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Access by the Data Subject

The Acts provide Data Subjects (individuals to whom "personal data" relate) with a right of access to personal data held about themselves (including images recorded by the System), under the terms of the Acts.

Requests by Data Subjects for such access should be made in writing to the Manager.

The form of access granted may consist of facilities being offered at the Company premises to view the relevant personal data or the release of a copy CCTV footage storing the relevant personal data.

Employees working in Company Service Users Domestic Homes

Individuals who use the Company's services may have CCTV Systems installed in their homes to act as a deterrent against criminal activity affecting their property, belonging or to increase personal safety.

Employees when conducting a home visit in the course of their duties, it is critical to always remember that this is the individual's home, individual domestic homes are exempt from the provisions of the Acts, and while employees have a legitimate expectation of privacy in the workplace, this right must be balanced with the rights of individual Service Users in their domestic homes. Data Protection Commissioner outlined that data protection rights should not be used to trump the rights of particularly vulnerable members of society.

Employees should always adopt the expectation that individual service users may have CCTV systems installed in their homes monitoring and processing of CCTV images. As a service provider the Company has legitimate interests, responsible for safeguarding the health and life of such individual service users in discharging its duties of care and protection and will request when available CCTV footage in the event of a safeguarding concern.

Data Protection

In order to comply with its obligation under employment and health/ safety legislations the Company reserves the right to refer any matters that involve CCTV including but not limited to disciplinary, grievances and/ or any injuries at work etc. to outsourced professionals/ HR Consultants/ insurance companies for advice/investigation.

Any information forwarded may be processed by those parties. Information will be made available to the WRC / The Department of Social Welfare / Revenue should they so request the same.

Leaving Employment

Termination of Employment

When an employment relationship is terminated for whatever reason, it must be carried out in a fair and equitable manner irrespective of the reasons for the termination.

What are the reasons for terminating employment?

The reasons for termination of employment include the following

- Dismissal
- Termination of a Fixed Term or Fixed Purpose Employment Contract
- Retirement



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- Redundancy
- Resignation

Resignation

Employees are entitled to terminate their own employment through resignation. Employees must hand in resignation in writing providing the employer with two weeks minimum notice unless otherwise specified in the employee's contract of employment.

For all employees leaving the company, the following procedures apply:

- Written notification of your resignation must be submitted to your Manager, stating the date of termination of employment..
- Once the letter of resignation is received, a brief meeting will be held to outline departure procedures. This should include details regarding your overtime, holidays, benefits exit interview, etc.
- You will be invited to participate in an exit interview. Your feedback is very important to the organisation and can help us identify what we are doing well and to receiving suggestions for improving employment conditions.

If you have any queries on the leaving process, please contact management.

Dismissal

The Company sincerely hopes that it will not be necessary to dismiss you, however it is noted that fair grounds for dismissal include:

- 1 An incapability for carrying out the work for which the employee was employed
- 2 Incompetence or lack of qualifications to do the work for which the employee was employed
- 3 Unacceptable conduct as outlined by the employer
- 4 Redundancy (where an agreed or fair selection procedure is used)
- 5 A statutory or legal duty requiring employees to cease working or for your employer to dismiss you
- 6 Some other substantial reason

Certain breaches of Company rules and of established custom and practice which may also render you liable to dismissal. For further details of the discipline and dismissal procedure applicable to this employment, the Employee should refer to Disciplinary Procedure. Without prejudice to any other grounds on which the Company may terminate your employment, the Company reserves the right to terminate your employment in the event of you being convicted of a criminal offence, or in the event of you being convicted of a driving offence which involves a suspension of your driving licence which may affect your ability to perform your duties.

Termination of a Fixed Term or Fixed Purpose Employment Contract



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Employees who are employed under a fixed term contract or purpose contract will have their employment terminated when the term specified in the contract has ended or the purpose of the contract has ended or the purpose achieved. All employees dismissed from service in this manner will receive statutory notice of termination.

Retirement

The retirement age for employees is 66 years. Upon an employee's retirement, their employment contract comes to an end. The Company will consult with the employee regarding retirement plans in advance of the employee reaching the retirement age.

Requests to continue working past the age of retirement are reviewed on an individual basis taking the following factors into account:

- Intergenerational fairness
- Motivation and dynamism through the increased prospect of promotion
- Health and Safety
- Creation of a balanced age structure in the workforce
- Personal and professional dignity
- Succession planning

Should employees wish to request to continue working beyond the Company's planned retirement age until a specified date requests should be made in writing to Margaret O'Brien, Manager no less than 6 months before the intended retirement date. A meeting will then be organised between both parties to discuss the employees request not to retire on the intended date of retirement.

Each case will be reviewed on its own merits and decisions to grant continued employment over and above the Company justified retirement age are based solely on business needs. Be aware that requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and the granting of any such request in the past is not a guarantee that any such request will be granted in the future.

Redundancy

A redundancy is a termination of an employee's contract of employment by their employer for a number of reasons. These reasons are fully explained under the Redundancy section of this document. All employees of West Limerick Independent Living are entitled to statutory redundancy once they have completed 104 weeks of service.

Redundancy explained

A redundancy is a dismissal of an employee by their employer for one of the following reasons:

- The business ceasing to operate.
- The workforce being reduced.



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- The employee's job ceasing to exist and the employee will not be replaced either because of rationalisation or re-organisation within the company.
- The employer has decided that the work for which the employee had been employed (or had been doing before his/her dismissal) should, in the future, be done in a different manner and the employee is not qualified or trained to do this job.
- The employer has decided that the work for which the employee has been employed (or had been doing before his dismissal) will in future be done by a person who is capable of doing other work for which the employee concerned is not qualified or trained to do.

It is the Company's intention to avoid redundancies where possible and we would always seek alternative solutions. In the event that your position becomes at risk, you will be informed as soon as possible and consulted with as appropriate.

Redundancy entitlements and payments

Redundancy payments made by West Limerick Independent Living are in line with minimum statutory redundancy payments.

Can employees get reasonable time off to find new employment when on protective notice of redundancy?

During the 2 weeks redundancy notice period, an employee is entitled to reasonable paid time to look for work or make arrangements for training for future employment. The employer is entitled to ask for evidence to verify that this time was spent in the pursuit of these aims.

Lay-off and Short-time

The Company reserves the right to lay you off from work or reduce your working hours where, through circumstances beyond its control, it is unable to maintain you in employment or maintain you in full-time employment. You will receive as much notice as is reasonably possible prior to such lay-off or short-time. No payment will be made for any period of layoff. Payment will only be made for hours actually worked during any period of short time.

General Policies

Personal Telephone Calls

Personal telephone calls should be kept to a minimum and should be taken on the employee's time during specified breaks.



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Telephone Monitoring Policy

The purpose of this policy is to state West Limerick Independent Living's policy regarding telephone monitoring of employees' calls using company resources.

Members of West Limerick Independent Living's management team, or their designees, may listen in on telephone service lines to ensure that employees are being respectful and responsive to client's, or for other legitimate business purposes. Client service calls may also be monitored for training purposes to critique customer service skills and provide feedback for job performance as needed.

Employees may be monitored at any time during business calls without notification. Each employee's written consent to this Employee Handbook and all the policies within will be obtained prior to his or her commencing employment with West Limerick Independent Living, and a signed copy of this consent will be placed in the employee's file.

Callers on West Limerick Independent Living phone lines will also be notified of possible monitoring. If a personal call is identified at any time during the telephone monitoring process, the monitoring will be immediately suspended. However, a continuous excessive level of non-business-related phone calls by an employee will provide a basis for possible disciplinary action.

Disclosure of confidential information and any other recordings of conversations in the workplace by employees without consent by all parties involved in the conversations is prohibited. A violation of this policy is a basis for disciplinary action, as deemed appropriate by management.

Whistleblowing Policy

Our Company is committed to fostering an open environment and a culture of full accountability in the workplace. In this regard we encourage our employees to report any activity, which falls under this policy outlined below.

Whistleblowing occurs when an employee or worker provides relevant information, usually to the employer or a nominated third party, which has come to their attention through work. Relevant information is defined in the Protected Disclosure Act 2014-2022 as:

- I. in the reasonable belief of the worker, it tends to show one or more relevant wrongdoings, and
- II. It came to the attention of the worker in connection with the worker's employment.

It should be emphasised that this policy is intended to assist individuals who believe they have discovered malpractice or impropriety. With this whistle blowing procedure in place, it is reasonable to expect staff to use this process rather than air their complaints outside the organisation. This policy is designed to offer protection to those employees, (past or present, full-time, part-time or temporary), contractors, consultants, agency workers, trainees, interns, those on work experience, shareholders, directors, volunteers and job applicants who disclose such concerns provided the disclosure is made:



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- I. In good faith
- II. In the reasonable belief of the individual making the disclosure that it tends to show malpractice, impropriety, or any breach of company policy and if they make the disclosure to an appropriate person. It is important to note that no protection from internal disciplinary procedures is offered to those who choose not to use the procedure or who breach company policy.

What is a Protected Disclosure:

A protected disclosure is defined as a disclosure of relevant information which came to the attention of a worker in connection with their employment, which in the reasonable belief of the worker tends to show one or more relevant wrongdoings.

A wrongdoing may be considered any breach of the honesty policy as cited above as well as any of the following:

- a criminal offence has been or is likely to be committed;
- a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with a legal obligation;
- a miscarriage of justice has happened, is happening or is likely to happen;
- the health and safety of an individual has been, is being or is likely to be compromised;
- damage to the environment has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur;
- breach of company policies
- An act or omission has been or likely to be committed in relation to public procurement, financial services, products and markets, product safety and compliance, transport safety, protection of the environment, radiation, food and feed safety, public health, consumer protection, protection of privacy and personal data and security of network and information systems.
- Information showing any of the above has been, is being or is likely to be deliberately concealed.

Raising a Protected Disclosure:

The Company has instituted a system for reporting information which in your reasonable belief points to a wrongdoing at work. The Company wishes to ensure that any such wrongdoings are dealt with promptly and fairly. If you become aware of a wrongdoing at work then please inform a Complaints Officer

Ms Precious Madubeko or Alison Oldfield

Tel: 069 77320

Email: precious@limerickcil.com or alison@limerickcil.com

or if for some reason you do not feel comfortable approaching a Complaints Officer about the issue, we have engaged the services of an independent organisation who you can approach (anonymously if you so choose) to report your suspicions, Action HR Services and they can be contacted by email on info@actionhrservices.com or telephone number 086 8144001 in confidence. We will also display this contact information on staff notice boards. They will ensure that your concerns are promptly and fairly investigated.

The worker may also request that a physical meeting be arranged to discuss their disclosure. Should this be the case, the worker should contact the Company using one of the methods above, outlining their request for a meeting. This will be arranged within a reasonable timeframe from the date of making the request.



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Response to a Protected Disclosure:

- A written response to the disclosure will be acknowledged as quickly as possible, or no later than 7 days.
- The disclosure will be assigned to a designated impartial person ('Designated Person') who will be appropriately trained to carry out an assessment of the information.
- The receiver will first pay regard to whether the matter raised should be treated as a protected disclosure, or under another procedure such as the Grievance/Dignity at Work/Harassment or Sexual Harassment procedure.
- Where the matter is being treated as a protected disclosure, further communication with the discloser may be appropriate to clarify or seek further information. It may be possible that the matter can be addressed to the satisfaction of the discloser at this point on foot of a discussion and clarification.
- A further examination or an investigation may be appropriate. Any examination or investigation will be conducted using objective and fair principles with regard to the principles of natural justice. The conclusion of any such examination or investigation will be communicated to the worker making the disclosure, including the basis for reaching such a conclusion, unless doing so would run contrary to other legal obligations including confidentiality, data privacy and privilege. In certain circumstances, a referral to the appropriate external enforcement agency or An Garda Síochána may be appropriate.

Investigation:

The Investigation Manager should follow these steps:

- Full details and clarification of the complaint should be obtained,
- The Investigation Manager should inform the member of staff against whom the complaint is made as soon as is practically possible. The member of staff will be informed of their right to be accompanied by a trade union or other representative at any future interview or hearing held under the provision of these procedures;
- The allegations should be fully investigated by the Investigation Manager with the assistance where appropriate, of other individuals or bodies;
- A judgment concerning the complaint and validity of the complaint will be made by the Investigation Manager. This judgment will be detailed in a written report containing the findings of the investigations and reasons for the judgment. The report will be passed to the Managing Director or another senior manager as appropriate;
- The Managing Director or another senior manager will decide what action to take. If the complaint is shown to be justified, then they will invoke the disciplinary or other appropriate procedures;
- The complainant should be kept informed of the progress of the investigations and, if appropriate, of the final outcome; including the basis for reaching such a conclusion, unless doing so would run contrary to other legal obligations including confidentiality, data privacy and privilege.
- If, having carried out an assessment of the disclosure the designated person decides that there is no evidence that a relevant wrongdoing has occurred, the matter will be closed, and the complainant informed. The designated person may make reference to other internal procedures more suitable to matter, if appropriate.
- Feedback on the outcome of the process will be provided to the complainant within 3-months of the date, extendable to 6-months for complex matters, acknowledging of receipt was given to the complainant.



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- If appropriate, a copy of the outcomes will be passed to the organisation's senior management to enable a review of the procedures.

Safeguards:

A worker who makes a disclosure and has a reasonable belief of wrongdoing will not be penalised by this organisation, even if the concerns or disclosure turn out to be unfounded.

Penalisation includes unreasonable/unwarranted actions such as:

- Suspension/dismissal.
- Disciplinary action.
- Demotion.
- Withholding a promotion or training.
- Ostracism.
- Unreasonable negative performance assessment.
- Untrue negative employment reference.
- Failure to convert a temporary contract into a permanent contract where there is a legitimate expectation of a permanent role.
- Failure to renew or early termination of a temporary contract.
- Harm, including reputational on social media, financial or business loss.
- Blacklisting.
- Early termination or cancellation of a contract for goods or services.
- Psychiatric or medical referrals.
- Discrimination.
- Threats or other unfavourable treatment arising from raising a concern or making a disclosure on the basis of reasonable belief for doing so.
- Cancellation of a licence/permit

If you believe that you are being subjected to penalisation as a result of making a disclosure under this procedure, you should inform your manager immediately.

Principles of Whistleblowing Policy:

- **Confidential:** The organisation will treat all such disclosures in a confidential and sensitive manner. The identity of the individual making the allegation may be kept confidential so long as it does not hinder or frustrate any investigation. However, the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and the individual making the disclosure may need to provide a statement as part of the evidence required.
- **Anonymous Reporting:** A disclosure should not be anonymous. On a practical level it may be difficult to investigate such a concern. We would encourage workers to put their names to allegations, with our assurance of confidentiality where possible, in order to facilitate appropriate follow-up. This will make it easier for us to assess the disclosure and take appropriate action including an investigation if necessary.



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- **Untrue Allegations:** If an individual makes an allegation in good faith, which is not confirmed by subsequent investigation, no action will be taken against that individual. In making a disclosure the individual should exercise due care to ensure the accuracy of the information. If, however, an individual makes malicious or vexatious allegations, disciplinary action may be taken against that individual.
- **Not a Protected Disclosure:** Interpersonal or workplace grievances which include the worker directly are not considered a relevant wrongdoing. Matters for which appropriate procedures exist, for example, Grievance Procedures in regard to an employee's own contract of employment is not a protected disclosure. It is important to note that should you have a concern in relation to your own employment or personal circumstances in the workplace it should be dealt with by way of our Grievance Procedure, Dignity at Work or Harassment and Sexual Harassment Procedures.
- **Victimisation:** The Company will not tolerate the victimisation of any person who discloses a wrongdoing under this procedure. Any such victimisation will be treated as a disciplinary offence.

How the Matter can be Taken Further:

The aim of this Policy is to provide an avenue within the workplace for employees to report concerns or disclosures in regard to wrongdoing internally where these can be dealt with, and we strongly encourage employees to report such concerns. However, we acknowledge that there may be circumstances where an employee wants to make a disclosure externally, and the legislation governing disclosures — The Protected Disclosures Act 2014 -2022 provides for a number of avenues in this regard. It is important to note however that if you are considering an external disclosure, different and potentially more onerous obligations apply depending on to whom the disclosure is made.

Failure to abide by this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal in accordance with the Company Disciplinary Procedure.

Gifts and Hospitality Policy

From time to time clients may offer gifts, hospitality or entertainment to employees with whom they have contact as a result of service delivery. However employees should, subject to the procedures outlined below, avoid the giving or receiving of gifts, hospitality, preferential treatment or benefits which might affect or appear to affect the ability of the donor or the recipient to make an independent judgment on service dealings.

Employees may accept gifts from clients or family members who have worked for West Limerick Independent Living, provided:

- the gift is unsolicited,
- under no circumstances should cash gifts be accepted
- the gift is one of very small intrinsic value (e.g. diary, calendar, bottle of wine/spirits etc.),
- the value of such gifts accepted in a year from any one source does not exceed €100 and
- all gifts should be disclosed to that employee's immediate superior.



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In all other cases, the gift should be returned to the sender, with a note advising that acceptance would be contrary to West Limerick Independent Living policy. Details of returned gifts must be notified at once to the recipient's superior.

Legitimate out of pocket expenses that are incurred by employees while assisting clients during socialising, hobbies, admission fees into cinemas, theatres, clubs, holidays etc., are acceptable and will be paid by relevant service user.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Purchases on behalf of West Limerick Independent Living

Only authorised persons may purchase supplies in the name of West Limerick Independent Living. No employee whose regular duties do not include purchasing shall incur any expense on behalf of West Limerick Independent Living or bind West Limerick Independent Living by any promise or representation without written approval.

Post and Deliveries

Only authorised office staff should open post and deliveries. Post marked "private and confidential", should be opened by addressee only.

Under no circumstances should unauthorised personnel open office deliveries.

Travel and Expenses Policy

You are entitled to reclaim expenses provided they have been legitimately incurred during the course of your employment and you have claimed them under the appropriate policies and procedures.

Travel and expense costs incurred in the performance of approved duties during the course of your employment will be paid in accordance with approved rates.

It is your responsibility to request reimbursement of travel expenses.

Expenses for Personal Assistants are calculated through the phone app and included in wages.

Expenses in relation to Coordinators for the end of previous and the current month must be submitted to their manager/finance department one week before month end.

The Company reserves the right and you irrevocably authorise the Company, at any time during your employment, or in any event upon termination, to deduct from your wages/salary and/or any other monies due to you, an amount equivalent to the amount of any expenses claimed by you and paid but subsequently disallowed by the Employer.

The use of business phones for private use should be minimised.

The Company reserves the right to review call logs and phone bills for business purposes and if a breach is found it may result in the disciplinary process being invoked, resulting in sanctions up to and including dismissal.



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STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Policy for the Administration of Medications

This policy applies to Personal Assistants employed by West Limerick Independent Living and outlines our policy for administering medication to Service Users. The Job Description of a Personal Assistant does not include the administering of medication, therefore all Service Users should self-medicate where possible.

In certain circumstances under the direction and instruction of a Public Health Nurse and with agreement from your Service Coordinator, Personal Assistants can administer medicines that they have been suitably trained to administer are competent, to give. These medications will generally include:

- Medicated creams or ointments;
- Ear, nose or eye drops;

Any Personal Assistant accepting the delegated task must take responsibility for ensuring their actions are carried out carefully, safely and correctly.

In the event that a Service User needs to take the following medication:

- Inhalers and liquid medicines;
- Medicines administered via the rectum, for example suppositories, diazepam (for epileptic seizures);
- Injectable drugs such as insulin;
- Medicines administered through a gastrostomy, for example, a percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy or jejunostomy;
- Administering drugs that require titration, such as warfarin;
- Oxygen.

During the course of a service the following procedure will be adopted:

- 1) Where a Service User can independently self-medicate but requires physical assistance to open bottles, remove tablets etc., the Personal Assistant will inform the Service User that they must directly supervise the removal of medications from packaging at all times. Before selecting the medicine to be administered, the Personal Assistant must:
 - a. check to ensure that the name of the Service User is actually on the medicine;
 - b. check the medicine is in date.
- 2) All medications should be clearly labelled with the correct dosage, route of administration and prescribed times indicated.

Where the Service User requires more than physical assistance to medicate, the Personal Assistant should inform the Service User that is a task for a health professional and they cannot carry out this duty. Incorrect crushing or



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cutting of medication is prohibited; staff should refer any issues or concerns regarding medication to their Service Coordinator and seek advice on how to support the Service user.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Policy for Handling Service Users Money

As an employee of West Limerick Independent Living, during your duties, you may be asked or required to deal with money, for whatever reason, from service users or members of their family. To protect the integrity of our employees and/of West Limerick Independent Living, this policy details the procedures that must be adopted in all such cases to ensure all monies are properly accounted for.

The Manager is responsible for managing this policy. All employees are responsible for the effective operation of this policy and procedures. Employees who are in doubt about the procedure to be followed in a particular case should contact their Service Coordinator or the Manager directly.

Banking

An employee of West Limerick Independent Living can assist a service user to go to their bank (financial institution), assist service user with mobility issues at the banks premises.

Under no circumstances can employees of West Limerick Independent Living, carryout banking tasks on behalf of a service user (lodgements or withdrawals) from a financial institution. Banking tasks including but are not limited to over-the-counter transactions, ATM transactions, internet banking transactions and any other banking technology.

West Limerick Independent Living will treat the following as gross misconduct by any employee:

- Borrowing money from a service user
- Lending money to a service user
- Selling assets on behalf of a service user
- Selling goods or services to a service user
- Coaching service user to include them in their Last Will and Testament for financial gain
- Any other financial transactions deemed inappropriate by West Limerick Independent Living

Shopping/Purchasing Goods

Receipts must be obtained for any items purchased with the service users' finances. All employees dealing with service users money must record the following details:

- The payee's name, the amount received and the purpose for which it has been received.
- Only items requested by the service user must be purchased.



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- While on errands for a service user, the employee of West Limerick Independent Living must not conduct any business for themselves and only a reasonable amount of time must be spent carrying out the duties requested by the service user.
- Employees of West Limerick Independent Living should not under any circumstances lend money to a service user.

A till receipt should be given to the service user for all purchases made on their behalf. Change received should be noted by the service user and where possible, employees will be responsible for ensuring that each service user signs the acknowledged receipt.

Under no personal circumstances should staff use any of the service user's cash for personal purposes. All money given to employees by service users should be attended to carefully and kept in a secure place while in their possession.

The use of any Service User's Cheque Book, ATM Card, Debit Credit Card or any other banking cards for shopping or purchasing goods and services is strictly prohibited.

A breach of this policy will be viewed as gross misconduct and will be subject to dismissal and/or prosecution.

Personal Intimate Care Policy

Introduction

West Limerick Independent Living is committed to supporting people with a wide range of disabilities through the provision of personal support services. This Personal / Intimate Care policy applies to staff in the provision of such care for people availing of our services.

The individual's dignity should always be preserved with the highest level of privacy, choice, control, and respect. Personal / intimate care is a sensitive area and will require staff / supports to be respectful to the individual's needs. As part of our person-centered approach, staff should have sufficient time to get to know the individual and build up a trusting relationship before providing such care.

Policy Statement

It is the policy of West Limerick Independent Living that personal / intimate care is provided to individuals in accordance with our values. It should be delivered in a manner which is directed by the individual and promotes the person-centered ethos of the organization.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support individuals who require assistance with their personal / intimate care needs. It will provide staff with guidance on the provision of such care.



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Scope

This policy applies to staff of West Limerick Independent Living involved in the provision of personal / intimate care for all people in receipt of a personal support service from West Limerick Independent Living.

Definitions

(This section defines the different types of care individuals may require)

Personal Care involves assisting and supporting individuals with their personal presentation. It is of a less intimate nature as it does not invade personal, private or social space to the same extent as intimate care.

Table 1: Examples of Personal Care and Intimate care tasks specifically identified (but not exhaustive) as relevant include:

1	Supported eating	
2	Oral care (brushing teeth)	
3	Shaving or Applying deodorant	
4	Skin care or applying external medication	
5	Hair care	
6	Dressing and undressing (underwear and clothing)	
7	Intimate self-care - toilet or bathroom	
8	Changing soiled continence pads	
9	Bathing or showering - Washing non intimate body parts	
10	Washing intimate parts of the body i.e. genitalia	
11	Menstrual care	
12	Catheter or stoma care	(Only when instructed by Service Coordinator & received appropriate training)
13	Peg Feeding	(Not included in PA duties)
14	Administering rectal medication	(Not included in PA duties)



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Intimate care can occupy a large amount of the day and the way in which it is delivered can significantly affect an individual's quality of life.

It is essential that every person with a disability and older person is treated as an individual when intimate care is being provided and that appropriate time is taken for intimate care. It should enhance the quality of life of the individual receiving care and should be provided as gently and sensitively as possible, while always respecting their privacy and dignity.

The individual receiving intimate care should be encouraged to express choice and to have a positive image of his/her body.

There are some basic principles to be borne in mind when providing intimate care:

1. Individuals should give their consent prior to the provision of intimate care.
2. Individuals have a right to feel safe and secure.
3. All individuals have the right to personal privacy.
4. All individuals receiving intimate care should be respected and valued as individuals. Individuals should be listened to, and their views considered. They should be always treated courteously and know who is assisting them.
5. Individuals have a right to be treated with dignity and respect and a professional approach from staff when meeting their needs.
6. Individuals have the right to information and support to enable them to make appropriate choice.
7. All individuals have the right to be involved and consulted in their own intimate care to the best of their abilities.
8. Individuals have the right to be accepted for who they are, without regard to age, gender, ability, race, culture, or beliefs.
9. All individuals have the right to express their views on their own intimate care and to have such views considered.
10. Individuals have the right to know how to complain and have their complaint dealt with.
11. An individual's personal care plan should be designed to lead to independence.

There may be circumstances where an individual's personal care may need to be carried out in a specific and consistent manner in accordance with their wishes and when appropriate needs to be captured in their Care Plan.

Definitions of Intimate Care

Intimate Care is any task of an intimate nature which the person is unable to undertake for themselves. It is associated with bodily functions and personal hygiene which necessitate direct or indirect contact with intimate parts of the body.

Intimate care tasks specifically identified (but not exhaustive) as relevant include:



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Dressing and undressing (underwear)	
Assistance with use of the toilet	
Changing incontinence wear	
Bathing/showering	
Washing intimate parts of the body	
Changing sanitary wear	
Inserting suppositories/pessaries	(Not included in PA duties)

It is necessary that once intimate care needs are identified and agreed, they must be captured in everyone's Care Plan.

Using the Personal/Intimate Care Plan

When it has been determined that a Personal/Intimate Care Plan is required this should be completed by the individual and/or their representatives, the relevant staff, and the relevant professionals.

Staff / Supports Roles and Responsibilities:

- Every individual has their safety, dignity, privacy and right to exercise choice always respected.
- All aspects of personal / intimate care should be directed and guided by the individual
- All interactions are individualised to promote the health, well-being and fulfilment of the individual
- If, during personal / intimate care, staff / supports accidentally hurt the individual or suspect that the individual has/or is being abused, they must follow the appropriate policies:
 - Incident Reporting
 - Vulnerable Persons at Risk of Abuse National Policy
- In most situations, personal / intimate care is carried out by one staff / support. Where an issue of concern arises for the first time, staff / supports must report to their Service Coordinator and follow organizational procedures.



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Communication

The following are some guidelines which promote best practice in how we communicate:

- Staff ability to communicate well helps to build good relationships with the individual.
- The individual's means of communication will be identified in their Individualized file.
- Staff must seek the individual's consent and be clear about their level of understanding.
- Where an individual cannot give verbal consent, avail of opportunities to clarify their consent and understanding of the process through their preferred methods of communication.
- Before commencing to assist the individual and throughout, explain in a reassuring way what is happening and in a manner that the person understands. In this way, the person is prepared for and can anticipate your assistance.
- Physical contact will be affirming and informed by the knowledge of any sensory preferences.
- Staff should have a knowledge and understanding of any religious or cultural sensitivities related to aspects of intimate care for each person.
- Ensure that non-verbal communication and body language gives the same message as verbal communication.

It is important to ensure that staff are self-critical and aware of their verbal and non-verbal communication. A conflict between these forms of communication may cause confusion and lead to distress.

Consent

- Consent from parents / carer is required for children. It is not a requirement for adults; however, best practice should involve consultation with them where appropriate. They may have invaluable advice and guidance regarding the personal / intimate care needs of their son / daughter / sibling.
- Individuals will usually voice preferences, comment on their own care or see which will inform their plan.
- Where issues remain unresolved for the individual, they can make a formal complaint through the organization's Procedure for the Resolution of Concerns and Complaints to West Limerick Independent Living.
- Consent should be sought from an individual where information regarding their plan is sought from any external agency.



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Sexual Aspects of Intimate Care

- An individual may be sexually aroused while being supported with intimate care. This is a normal and natural physiological response.
- Every effort should be made to ensure that his / her dignity is maintained, and that anticipation or evidence of sexual arousal is treated with sensitivity and respect (i.e. not to speak in a dismissive or derogatory way, not to leave the person exposed if in a sexually aroused state, etc.)
- There are specific types of intimate touch that can stimulate sexual arousal, these should be acknowledged to ensure that the agreed care is identified.
- As a general guideline, physical contact will not be undertaken while someone is sexually aroused.
- Masturbation is a normal sexual expression which may take place in an inappropriate context. To preserve the individual's dignity, he / she should be afforded privacy. This support requirement should be included in the Personal / Intimate Care Plan
- Some individuals may remove their clothing or wear inappropriate clothing in an inappropriate setting. This may or may not be of a sexual nature. To preserve the individual's dignity, he / she should be afforded privacy. This support requirement should be included in the Personal / Intimate Care Plan

Frontline staff should not carry out any holistic therapies such as massage, reiki, aromatherapy etc., only therapists who have a recognized qualification should perform these tasks.

Tasks such as nail care, skin care or any task that requires a recognized qualification should not be carried out by frontline staff.

Safety

- It is sometimes necessary to use equipment while supporting an individual with intimate care.
- Everyone must be assessed for any equipment needs by appropriate personnel, i.e. Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist
- All staff should be trained and competent in using the identified equipment.
- Staff will establish good working practices and should adhere to the organization's procedure on Minimal Handling Regulations and other relevant procedures.



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Policy Summary

This policy is essential, not only to increase knowledge, enhance skills and promote good practice, but also to provide a forum for staff to reassess their own attitudes and values in this sensitive area. The effectiveness of this policy, its contents and our approach will be informed by maintaining and advocating for every individual's right to privacy, dignity, and respect regarding their personal and intimate care.

Policy and Procedure Feedback Form

A Policy and Procedure Feedback Form is available on the West Limerick Independent Living website which will provide an opportunity to comment on any policy/procedure.

Your comments will be forwarded to the person who has the lead for the ongoing development of the policy/procedure.

All comments will be collated by the person responsible and will inform the three yearly review cycle for updating procedures.



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APPENDIX 1 - My Personal / Intimate Care Plan

My Personal / Intimate Care Plan

My name is ____ and this is my Care Plan. It has been drawn up by me and those who support me. It is important that all staff in _____ are familiar with it. It will be shared with those significant others who support me in other settings. Everyone who supports me are aware that this plan is in place and has agreed to it.

Describe the type(s) of care that require/s assistance:

I need assistance in the following areas: e.g. Shower/Bathing

Specify preferred means of communication: _____

Who will provide the support and where will it occur? _____

I may have preferences within my support team as to who I would like to support me with my Personal & Intimate Care. Please respect my wishes and preferences.

Identify the areas where support is not required:

- I can dry myself once I am out of the shower/bath and I like the privacy to do this in my room.
- I can dry and brush my hair independently.

Identify the necessary equipment:

To complete the care areas referred to earlier I will need my wash bag, shampoo, towels, flannel/sponge, hoist and shower chair.

Care Area: Details the steps involved in supporting the person:

Preparing for Bathing

- Engage with me to ascertain my personal preferences.
- Check the bathroom is clutter free and the bath is clean.
- Check all aids and appliances required are in working order. If not in working order, please ensure that the necessary steps are taken to repair/replace the appliances.
- Check shower/bathmat (if required) to ensure it is securely fastened to the base of shower/bath.



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- Wash and dry hands thoroughly and Use gloves and an apron.
- Prepare the shower/bath, running the cold water first before the hot water.
- Before I get into the shower/bath, the person supporting me must check the water temperature with their hand/elbow. The water should feel comfortable warm to the touch.
- Assist me with undressing as required, maintaining my dignity by covering me with a towel.
- Observe the condition of my skin. Note and report any signs of redness, inflammation, bruising, discoloration, or rash.
- During bathing assist me into the shower/bath (if required). It is important to be aware of and adhere to the specific transfer (moving and handling) requirements that I may have and that are in line with my care plan and risk assessment.
- Assist me to wash as required.
- If I can wash myself, leave me, those supporting me should remain within earshot, checking at regular intervals so they can hear me call for assistance, should I need it.
- If required, assist me to wash my hair, using the flannel as an eye guard to avoid getting shampoo in my eyes.
- Assist me in getting out of the bath adhering to my specific moving and handling requirements.
- Cover me with a towel as soon as possible to provide warmth and maintain dignity. Any other comments:

Date plan drawn up: _____

Agreed by: _____

Review Date: _____



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APPENDIX B List of Reference Policies

Manual Handling Regulations (Employee Handbook & Safety Statement) Medication Policy and Procedure (Employee Handbook) and Incident Reporting Policy

Client Falls Management Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to direct the prevention and management of falls and to lessen the severity of associated injuries among West Limerick Independent Living service users.

Scope

The policy applies to all West Limerick Independent Living employees and service users.

This policy replaces all existing policies from the 1/9/2018 onwards. It is due for review annually in line with West Limerick Independent Living quality assurances practices. In the intervening months it kept under continuous monitoring and will be amended reflect any changes in best practice, regulatory regulations or the law as required.

Definitions:

Fall: An unexpected loss of balance resulting in coming to rest on the floor, ground or an object below knee level. This includes slips, trips, falling into other people, being lowered, loss of balance, and legs giving way. If a service user is found on the floor, it should be assumed that they have fallen unless they are cognitively unimpaired and indicate that they put themselves there on purpose.

Employee: An employee is anybody employed by West Limerick Independent Living (paid or unpaid) and includes volunteers.

Work Environment: Employer's premises and other locations where employees are engaged in work related activities or are present as a condition of their employment. It includes the equipment or materials used by the employee during the course of his/her work.

Risk Management Plans: Are tools to document the safe practices used in a service to manage a risk which cannot be eliminated.

Policy

Falls can be a frequent occurrence for people with physical disability, neurological conditions and acquired brain injury and can cause injury resulting in further short or long term disability.



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It is the policy of West Limerick Independent Living to prevent and manage the frequency of falls within its services with the aim of eliminating or reducing the frequency of falls and their impact.

Proactive assessments form part of the West Limerick Independent Living policy for the prevention and management of falls. To assist staff with prevention West Limerick Independent Living assess all service users to identify those at risk using a Falls Assessment Tool.

In the event that a service user fall cannot be prevented it must be reported to the line manager for the area where the event took place and an Event Form must be completed.

On-going monitoring and analysis of data returned on Events Forms is used to inform and develop organisational support, including training and standard operating procedures, which up skill and inform staff on evidence based best practice in falls prevention and management.

This policy forms part of West Limerick Independent Living Service Policies and Procedures.

Specific Responsibilities

Managers:

It is the responsibility of Managers to ensure that Service Management and Staff receive appropriate instruction, information, supervision and support in implementing this policy and procedure.

Service Management:

It is the responsibility of the Service Manager to;

- Ensure arrangements made under the policy are implemented.
- Ensure that this policy is communicated to all staff and they sign a '**read and understood**' form.
- Ensure all service users are appropriately risk assessed.
- Ensure that all service users, employees and volunteers within their service are familiar with the contents of the policy & procedure and receive appropriate instruction, information, supervision and support in implementing this policy and procedure.

West Limerick Independent Living Care Staff:

It is the responsibility of all West Limerick Independent Living staff to make themselves familiar with this policy and procedure and to implement it.

Procedure

Two Falls Assessment Tools are in the appendices of this document:

- a) **Initial Falls Assessment, Appendix 1.**
- b) **Advanced Falls Assessment, Appendix 2.**

Use of the Falls Assessments Tool. Falls Assessment Tools are completed by Service Managers and Service Coordinators.



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Initial Falls Assessment (appendix 1): must be carried out on all West Limerick Independent Living service users. It is aimed at identifying service users who are at risk or who may become vulnerable to falls over time.

Advanced Falls Assessment (appendix 2): must be completed if there is a **YES** answer to three or more of the questions in the Initial Falls Assessment or where a service user has a history of two or more falls in the past 4 weeks and has not had an Advanced Falls Assessment in the past 3 months.

Where an Advanced Falls Assessment is required a full risk assessment which identifies any **specific risk controls required to prevent and manage the risk of falls for this person must be completed.**

When both the risk assessment and the Advanced Falls Assessment are completed the **Service Manager or Service Coordinator will develop a risk management plan.**

The risk management plan will describe the plan the service has developed to support the person to minimise the frequency and potential for injury in the event of the person falling.

Implementation of a risk management plan recognises that, for this person, the only strategies available for the service to eliminate the risk of falling would have serious negative consequences, which would be more detrimental than the risk of a fall for the person, if used.

The strategies outlined in the Risk Management Plan will be incorporated into the mobility section of service user's Care Plan.

All records relating to Falls Assessments and Risk Management Plans are stored in the person's medical history file.

Procedure in the Event of a Service User Falling

Ask the service user if they are hurt and visually examine them to assess if they are hurt e.g. cuts, obvious severe swelling and bruising, obvious broken limb, extreme pain.

If the person is clearly injured, make them as comfortable as possible and call emergency services.

- If there appears to be no obvious injury and the person is clearly indicating they are not hurt, they can be assisted up.
 - Ask the person who has the mobility to get up, to come up onto their hands and knees. Once in this position, bring them a chair and ask them to take their time using the chair to pull themselves into a sitting position.
- (a) If the person does not have the mobility to get up using a chair, they must be hoisted from the floor using a full body sling, which will provide them with head support.
 - (b) Once the service user has been helped up from the floor, check with them again to see if they are hurt or report pain. Do a full body check paying close attention to points of impact to assess for bruising, swelling cuts or lacerations.
 - (c) Ask the person if they banged their head. Report any bang on the head to the GP and seek advice on monitoring the person.



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- (d) Report all cuts, bruises, red marks or swelling seen and record them on the service user's daily communication sheet and ask the person if they wish to see their GP.
- (e) If the pain or swelling on or near the affected area is severe, call the person's GP for advice.
- (f) Complete an Incident Report form reporting the full details of the incident and the action taken to this point.
- (g) Family should be informed of the incident and requested to observe the person for any signs of head injury (headache, unusual sleepiness, and unusual confusion) and any reports of pain, swelling and bruising on the affected area for the **next three days** and to report these to GP and the staff.
- (h) The presence or absence of these signs and symptoms should be recorded in the person's daily communication sheet. The Incident Report form should be returned to the Service Coordinator following the fall.
- (i) Where a service user shows signs of a head injury or is reporting on-going pain in the 12 to 24 hours following the fall, their GP should be advised and requested to see the person, review their injuries and advise staff on the next steps to take.
- (j) If there is any sudden or marked deterioration in the person following a fall the emergency services should be called immediately.

Key indicators:

- Evidence that a copy of this document is available to all care staff, service users and family members.
- Evidence that the policy has been communicated to all staff and they have signed a '**read and understood**' form.
- Evidence that initial falls assessments have been carried out.
- Evidence that advanced falls assessments have been carried out when required.
- Evidence that risk assessments have been carried out where required.
- Evidence that risk management plans have been developed and incorporated into care plans where required.
- Evidence that Event forms have been full completed for fall events.
- This policy replaces all existing policies from 14/09/18 onwards and is due for review annually. It will be reviewed during this time as necessary to reflect any changes in best practice, law, substantial organisational, professional or academic change.

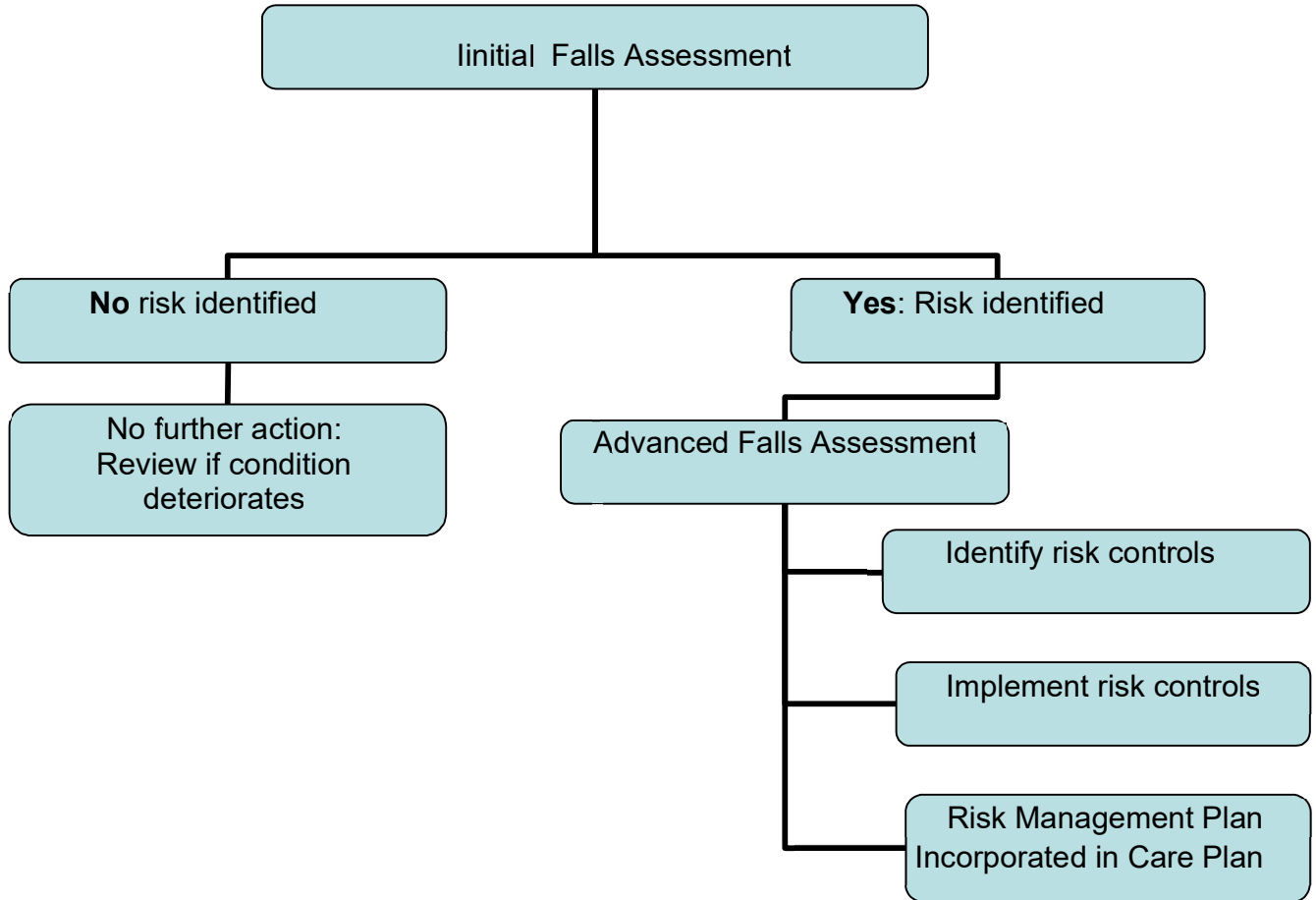
Bibliography:

- Preventing Serious Falls 2010, Nice Guidelines.
- Risk Assessment Protocols, *HSE 2010*.
- Safer, Better Care, *HIQA 2010*.
- Strategy to Prevent Falls and Fractures in Ireland, *HSE 2008*.



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ALGORITHM SUMMARISING THE FALLS PREVENTION PROCESS



Note: This process must be in place for every service user and must be repeated if a service user falls.



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Appendix 1 Initial Falls Assessment Tool

Service User Name: _____ **Address:** _____

INITIAL FALLS ASSESSMENT		YES	NO
1	Is there a history of falling in the previous year?		
2	Does the service user/care staff report problems with dizziness or vertigo?		
3	Does the service user/care staff report problems with muscle weakness which affects the person's balance?		
4	Does the service user report a fear of falling which restricts their movement?		
5	If the service user has a visual impairment, have they reported deterioration in their sight in the past 12 months?		
6	Does the service user have a urinary/bowel frequency or urgency?		
7.	Does the service user / care staff/ family report that the service user can become disorientated or lost in familiar surroundings?		
8.	Is the service user taking two or more of the following a. Antidepressants, sleeping pills? b. Anti-psychotics? c. Diuretics? d. More than four types of medication a day?		
9.	Is this person's moving and handling assessment more than 12 months old?		

If the answer is yes to three or more of the above questions, then progress to the Advanced Falls Assessment (Appendix 2).

Falls Assessment Completed by:

Name (Block Capitals) _____

Date: _____

Position: _____

Signature _____

Reviewed by Service Manager Name:

Name (Block Capitals) _____

Date: _____

Signature _____

Service Users Name	Address:



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ADVANCED FALLS ASSESSMENT: Service user factors				
		YES	NO	If 'YES' the following control measures are required.
1	Has the service user fallen two or more times in the past year?			Review incidents of recent falls and look at measures which can be implemented to reduce potential for further falls.
2	Does the service user have difficulty communicating mobility or continence needs?			Review Communication in the person's care plan with the person. Consider need for further referral to GP and/or a neurological consultant where deterioration in service user's disability is evident.
3	Does the service user frequently visit the toilet?			Review Continence in the person's care plan with the person, consider increasing assistance with and frequency of toileting opportunities and referring the person to the local Continence Promotion Unit/ local Continence Specialist Nurse or PHN for advice on how to support and improve this difficulty for the person.
4	Is there a history of falls when service user is alone, related to toileting?			
5	Is the service user's Moving & Handling plan over 12 months old?			Review the M&H plan and Mobility in the person's care plan with them and update as required.
6	Does the person drink less than 2 litres of water per day on average?			Review Eating and Drinking in the person's care plan with the person and encourage a balanced diet, regular meals and adequate fluid intake.
7	Has the service user been losing weight over last two months?			Review Eating and Drinking in the person's care plan with the person and refer to dietician if losing weight and commence twice monthly weight checks.
8	Is the service user taking more than 2 units of alcohol a day?			Request the service user's GP to discuss with the person the risks of mixing alcohol with medication and provide the person with advice on the immediate and long term falls risk due to dulling of neurological capacity.

ADVANCED FALLS ASSESSMENT Contd : Environmental factors			
SU Name:	Location of Service	Y/N	Possible Control Measures
1. Are the floor surfaces level?			Take any reasonable cost neutral measure to address. If this is not sufficient contact Risk Manager / Health and Safety Officer for advice
2. Are the door thresholds level?			
3. Are the floor surfaces slip resistant?			
4. Is the floor covering in good repair?			
5. Is the footwear and floor covering compatible?			



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Appendix 2: Advanced Falls Assessment Tool

ADVANCED FALLS ASSESSMENT Contd : Environmental factors			
SU Name:	Location of Service	Y/N	Possible Control Measures
6. Is there clutter around the floor area which could cause trip hazards?			Remove all trip hazards and tidy clutter.
7. Are rugs and mats presenting a hazard?			Remove mats and rugs from through ways in room.
8. Are there cables which could present a trip hazard?			Move cables and fix to walls / skirting board in room.
9. Is furniture placed in appropriate positions for use?			
10. Is there sufficient lighting?			Ask the person if the lighting is sufficient for them to see clearly.
11. Is the bathroom layout suitable for use? 12. Are there sufficient grab rails and/or transfer aids? 14. Are hoists safe and suitable for use?			Consider if OT advice would be beneficial.
13. Is there an appropriate means of calling for help?			
15. Are items which are used regularly by the person in accessible positions for them e.g. remote controls / call bell / glasses?			Move into positions that do not require the person to stretch or lean to get them.
CLINICAL ASSESSMENTS REQUIRED			
The following referrals for clinical assessment must be considered following an advanced falls assessment. Please indicate Yes or No if a referral is required by this person.	Yes	No	General Practitioner - For review of Medications Regime and general health. OT – For assessment of independence in activities of daily living. Optician - If the person needs glasses and /or has not been reassessed in the past 6 months. Audiologist - If the person has not had a hearing test in the past 6 months. Chiropodist / Podiatrist – If the person has problems with in-growing toenails, bunions, ill-fitting footwear or problems with sensations in their feet and has not been seen in the past 6 weeks. Physiotherapist - Assessment of balance & mobility.

Risk Management Plan Require Y/N

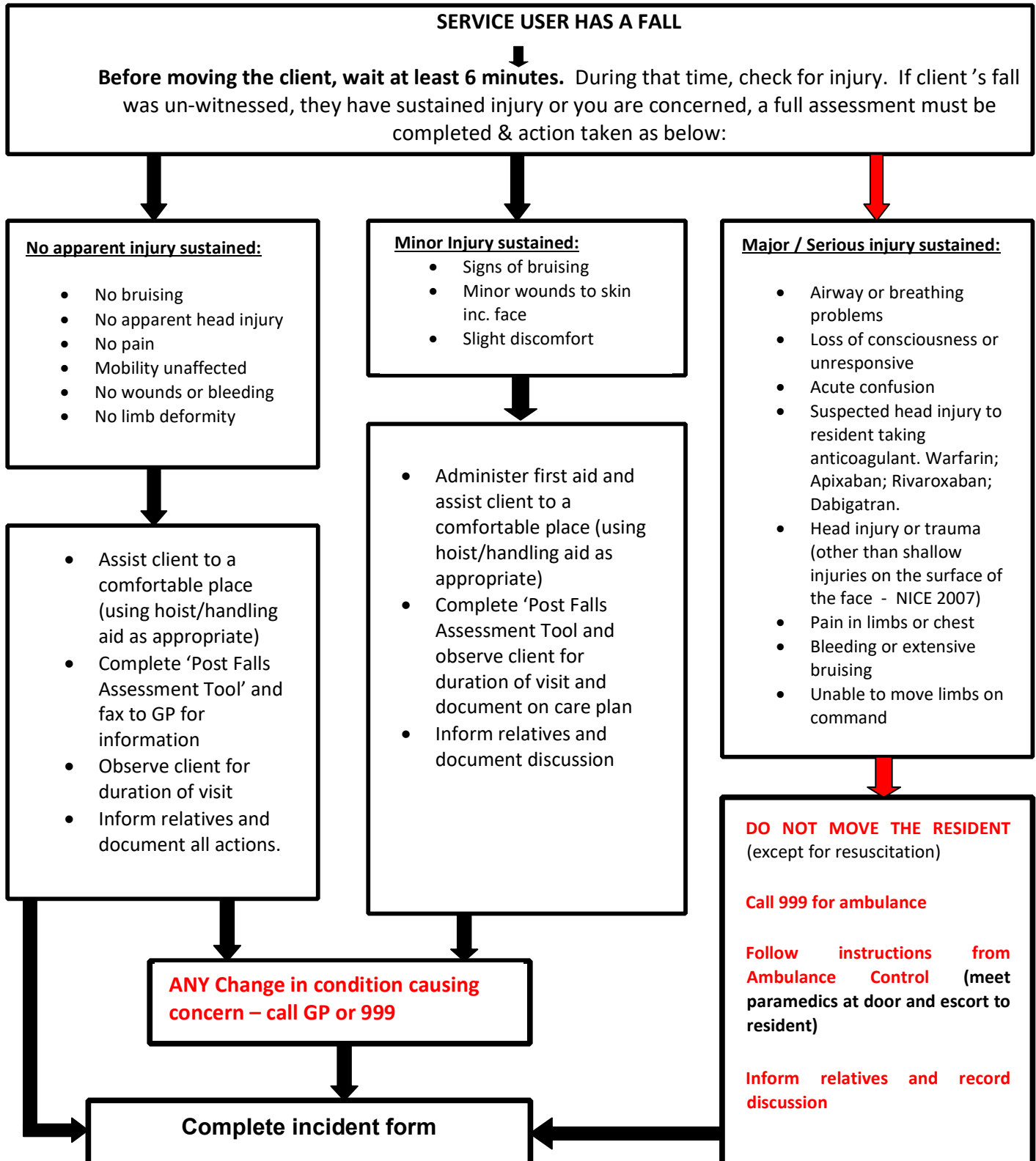
Completed by: (Block Capitals) _____ **Signature** _____ **Date** _____



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Service Manager: (Block Capitals) _____ **Signature** _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix 2: POST FALLS PROTOCOL





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Personal Assistant / Care Assistant Checklist (response to falls)

DANGER	check for dangers, seek advice	999
RESPONSE	unresponsive	999
AIRWAY	compromised airway	999
BREATHING	absent or difficulty breathing	999

- **UNCONSCIOUS** 999
- **REDUCED LEVEL OF CONCIOSNESS** 999
- **HEAD INJURY AND TAKES ANTICOAGULANT** (Warfarin, Enoxaparin, Dabigatran, Rivaroxaban, Apixaban) 999
- **HEAD INJURY / TRAUMA** 999
- **MAJOR HAEMORRHAGE** 999
- **CHEST PAIN** 999
- **OTHER SEVERE PAIN** 999
- **LIMB DEFORMITY** (inc shortening and rotation) 999
- **EXCESSIVE SWELLING AND BRUISING** 999
- **DIZZINESS / VOMITTING** (after fall or head injury) 999
- **FALL GREATER THAN 2 METRES** 999
- **CONDITION** - causing serious concern for staff 999

ADMINISTER FIRST AID AND RESUSITATION APPROPRIATE TO NEED

Do not move the client and follow the emergency treatment and instructions given by Ambulance Control

IF NO REQUIREMENT FOR AN EMERGENCY AMBULANCE RESPONSE

- Administer first aid as appropriate
- Complete the post falls assessment with client (blood pressure and blood sugar - Nurse only)
- Assist client to a comfortable place (using a hoist and manual handling aids as required)
- Inform relatives and document the discussion in the care plan
- Email the completed post falls assessment to the GP Practice
- Observe client for duration of shift and ask family to observe client for 24 / 48 hours using the post fall observation log (blood pressure - Nurse only) - keep in care records
- Complete body map - keep in care records
- Complete incident form and follow incident reporting procedure

IF AN AMBULANCE CLINICIAN HAS ATTENDED THE CLIENT, THERE IS STILL A REQUIREMENT TO FULFILL THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS

- Complete post falls assessment documentation and body map
- Observe client for duration of your shift and ask family to observe client for 24 / 48 hours
- If no family is available seek advice from emergency services
- Inform relatives and document the discussion in the care plan
- Complete incident form and follow incident reporting procedure



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IN ALL CASES WHERE THE CLIENT REMAINS IN THE CARE OF WEST LIMERICK INDEPENDENT LIVING, THE POST FALLS ASSESSMENT TOOL SHOULD BE SCANNED TO THE CLIENT'S GP PRACTICE

POST FALL ASSESSMENT TOOL SCAN & SEND TO CLIENT'S GP WHEN COMPLETE

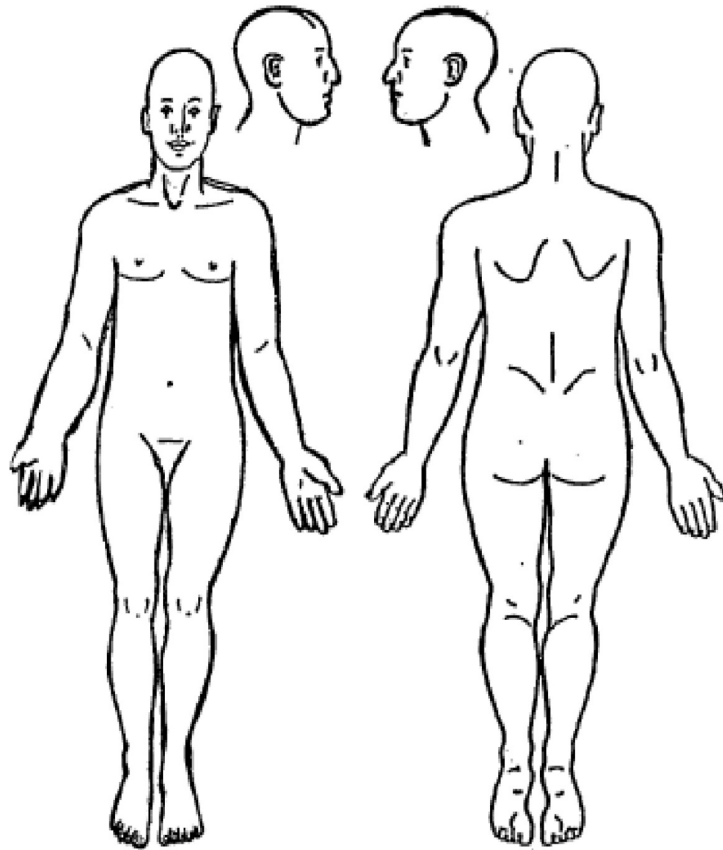
Name of Client		
Date & Time of Fall		
Place of Residence		
Name & Signature of person assessing		Time & Date of Assessment
✓Tick and Sign		
Level of Consciousness	Responsive as normal	
	Less responsive than usual	
	Unresponsive or Unconscious (call 999)	
Pain or Discomfort	No evidence of pain or discomfort	
	Showing signs of pain or complaining of pain	
Where is the pain?		
Injury or Wounds	No evidence of injury, bleeding or wounds	
	Evidence of swelling, bruising, bleeding or deformity/shortening/rotation of limb	
Where is the injury or wounds?		
Movement and mobility	Able to move all limbs as normal for the client	
	Able to move all limbs but has pain on movement	
	Unable to move limbs as normal for the client or there is a major change in mobility	
Conclusion of Assessment		
No apparent injury or minor injury <input type="checkbox"/>	Give first aid treatment	
	Commence observations (use post falls assessment chart and complete body map)	
	Inform Service Coordinator/On-call and relatives	
	Complete an incident form	
Major Injury <input type="checkbox"/>	Give first aid / resuscitate and call 999 DO NOT MOVE THE CLIENT	
	Commence observations (use post falls assessment chart and complete body map)	
	Inform Service Coordinator/On-call and relatives	
	Complete an incident form	



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Body Map – Assessment of Injury (keep in Client’s care plan)

Name of Client		Date of Birth	
Address		Date and time of fall	



Marks or bruising on client’s body (describe mark on map above with date observed)

Clients’ description of any pain/s or non-verbal signs of clients pain with date

Day number following fall, Date & Time	Action taken and Date	Signature



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Post Fall Observation Log

Name of client		Date of Birth	
Address		Date and time of fall	

Observations should be done as soon as possible after the fall, then:

- Every 15 minutes for one hour
- Once half an hour later
- Once one hour later
- Once two hours later
- Every four hours until 24 hours' post-fall. Wake the client up to do the checks. *Do not assume the client is simply asleep.*

Fill in the time observations are due in the 'Time' column on the chart

Date	Time	Reported Pain/ signs	Wounds/ Bruises	Comments	Signature
	ASAP				
	15 min later				
	15 min later				
	15 min later				
	15 min later				
	30 mins later				
	One hour later				
	2 hours later				
	4 hours later				
	4 hours later				
	4 hours later				
	4 hours later				



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Security of the Home Policy

Scope

This guidance sets out West Limerick Independent Living's approach to the security of service users' homes. The intended outcome of this set of documents is that service users are protected and are safe and secure in their own homes whilst receiving a service from West Limerick Independent Living.

Access to the Home

Care/support planners (Service Coordinators) will discuss access arrangements and security of the home with service users during the initial assessment visit. This includes making sure you are safe whilst working; for example, if you have to enter or leave a house in the dark there needs to be adequate lighting. Decisions about how you gain entrance to the home will be documented in the risk assessment and care plan. If you feel unsafe about any aspect of your work, please discuss this with your line manager as soon as possible. Methods of entering a service user's home that leave it vulnerable to crime will not be used.

<p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leaving keys with neighbours • leaving doors unlocked • leaving keys outside the home, for example under a mat • attaching keys to a string behind the letterbox. 	<p>Safe alternatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • door entry code systems • key safe boxes.
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Entry codes and key safe combinations need to be kept secure and confidential at all times and will only be issued to staff on a need to know basis. Never write down combination numbers next to the address to which they apply.

Safekeeping of Keys

It is West Limerick Independent Living's policy not to hold service users' keys. If access problems preclude the provision of care/support, the care planner will firstly discuss alternative arrangements (for example, the provision of a key safe box) and may, in exceptional circumstances, assess whether there is a need to hold keys.

If service user keys are to be held, this will be documented in the risk assessment and care plan as well as on the appropriate key holding authority form. Where keys are held in the West Limerick Independent Living office, they will be kept securely in a locked cabinet. You will be required to:

- collect and return the key at the start and end of each period of care/support
- sign for the key in the key logbook on collection and return.



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Where keeping a key in the West Limerick Independent Living office prevents care from being provided (for example where it is impractical to collect and return keys due to timings or distance), you may be authorised to hold a key. You are not obliged to hold keys in this way, but if you choose not to, you may be excluded from working in a care/support package where this is required. You will not be penalised in any other way.

- If you are required to hold service user keys the care planner will carry out an additional risk assessment, including an assessment of the risk taken by you as a care worker.
- Keys held will only be labelled with a code, never with traceable identification such as name and address, to ensure safety and confidentiality if they are lost or stolen.
- If a service user asks you to hold a key, and you are not authorised to do so in the care plan, you are not permitted to accept the key, but are required to report the matter to your Service Coordinator so that the necessary arrangements can be made.
- In an emergency, speak to your Service Coordinator or the person on call.
- If you use keys belonging to a service user, you need to ensure that you keep them safe at all times.
- Inform your Service Coordinator or the person on call immediately if keys are lost or stolen.
- You are not permitted to get involved in the duplication / cutting of keys on behalf of service users.

Entering and Leaving a Service User's Home

West Limerick Independent Living respects the rights and privacy of primary carers, their families and those with care/support needs. We are aware that our workplace is often the service user's private home and we expect all staff to act as guests during their visit to it. You are also required to make sure that service users are protected, safe and secure in their home during the period you are providing care/support.

When entering the home you will:

- always use the method of entry agreed in the care plan
- knock, ring the doorbell or call out before entry, even if you are letting yourself in
- knock or call out before entering a private room
- show an identification badge on entry. When leaving the home you will:
- offer to check that windows and doors are secure
- check that the door you leave through is closed securely
- replace keys in the key safe box if used.

You will never leave the person with care needs unattended unless it has been assessed and documented in the risk assessment and care plan that it is safe to do so. In an emergency you are required to contact your Service Coordinator or the person on call for advice.



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Identity (ID) Badges

Always introduce yourself and produce an ID badge when presenting yourself at a service user's home. It is a regulatory requirement for you to carry an ID badge with you at all times when working. This may be spot checked by both external and internal inspectors.

If you lose your ID badge or it is stolen you are required to inform your Service Coordinator or the person on call immediately. Your ID badge will be renewed within 36 months of issue. If your badge becomes out of date, please inform your Service Coordinator.

If you leave employment with West Limerick Independent Living you are required to return your ID badge. If you are going to work with people with visual impairments, badges with large print are available. You are also required to introduce yourself verbally in such circumstances.

If a service user has special communication requirements, the care planner will agree and document at the initial assessment clear ways of how the person will be able to identify visiting West Limerick Independent Living staff.

Unauthorised Visitors

You are not permitted to take any unauthorised person/s (including children) or pets into a service user's home.

Emergency Procedures

If you cannot gain access to a service user's home on a scheduled visit:

- Do not attempt to force your way into the home.
- In the case of an obvious emergency, contact the appropriate emergency services, wait for them to arrive and inform your Service Coordinator or the person on call of the situation.
- If there is no obvious emergency, check your diary to make sure you have the right day / time /service user's address.
- Try to raise the service user, for example by knocking several times on the door and windows as appropriate to establish whether they have not heard you or are in difficulty.
- Contact your Service Coordinator or the person on call to check the day and time of the visit and to ensure the person with care needs is not in respite or on holiday. The Service Coordinator or person on call will try to contact the primary carer or person with care needs by phone or may contact the next-of-kin or relevant professionals.

From this point onwards keep in contact with your Service Coordinator or the person on call and be guided by them. Depending on the particular circumstances of the service user/s involved, your Service Coordinator will direct what action you need to take. This may include for example consulting a neighbour to confirm if the service user has gone away.



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If you are still unable to gain access, your Service Coordinator or the person on call will assess the situation in accordance with the person with care needs' disability and history in order to establish whether there is cause for concern regarding their well-being.

- If the person with care needs never leaves the house, your Service Coordinator or the person on call will call the emergency services.
- If the situation is not assessed as an emergency (for example where the person with care needs is low dependency) it may be possible that they have forgotten the scheduled visit. In this case, if no immediate crisis is discovered, your Service Coordinator or the person on call may recommend that you leave a note confirming your visit and asking the primary carer or person with care needs to contact the West Limerick Independent Living office on their return.
- Your Service Coordinator or the person on call will then take the necessary follow-up action, for example arranging for another staff member to return later.

You will need to make a record of your actions and this will be kept on the service user's file in the West Limerick Independent Living office. Your Service Coordinator or the person on call will also keep a record of events and inform the purchaser of care in writing as necessary.

Learning and Development

You are required to sign to indicate that you have received, read and understood the content of the security of the home policy as directed by your Service Coordinator.

On completion of induction, it is your personal responsibility to follow the security of the home guidance. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary proceedings.

Catheter Care Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this standard procedure is to ensure safe practice during the emptying of a urinary catheter bag by West Limerick Independent Living Staff.

Scope

All West Limerick Independent Living Staff may require to provide catheter care.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all staff who manage catheter care to follow this standard procedure. It is responsibility of Service Area Coordinators to ensure Staff are familiar with the standard procedure and to monitor compliance.



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Definitions

N/A

Procedure

Equipment

- Gloves
- Alcohol wipes / paper towel
- Jug preferably with cover (use paper towel if not)

Procedure:

- Wash and dry hands thoroughly
- Apply gloves.
- A separate clean container is used at the time of bag emptying. Contact between drainage tap and container is avoided. Gloves are worn to empty drainage bags and changed after hand washing.
- Explain the procedure to service user. Ensure the privacy and comfort of service user.
- Take all equipment to the service user or take the service user to an appropriate area i.e. bathroom depending on the choice of the service user.
- Protect clothing and surrounding area from spillage.
- Position the jug under the drainage port, (if the drainage bag is on a stand, it does not need to be removed).
- DO NOT ALLOW THE PORT TO TOUCH THE JUG.
- Open the port to empty the bag.
- Close the port when bag is empty.
- Wipe the port with an alcohol swab or paper towel to prevent dripping or build-up of contamination (Nicoll et al., 2004).
- Reposition the catheter bag as necessary to ensure the drainage port is not touching the floor and the tubing is not bent or kinked.
- Engage with the service user to ensure they are comfortable.
- Cover the jug and take to the bathroom.
- Observe the amount of urine, colour, odour, and the presence of blood clots or white thread like particles.
- Discard the urine and thoroughly wash the jug.
- Remove and discard gloves.
- Wash and dry hands thoroughly.
- Record the amount of urine and other observations noted above in the service user notes.
- Report any concerns to the PHN, PSS Coordinator.



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Trouble Shooting Catheter Care Key Points

This information applies only to suprapubic or indwelling urinary catheters. If there is no urine draining into the bag, take the following steps:

This can happen if there are kinks in the catheter or the drainage bag tubing. Firm fitting underwear can sometimes cause kinks; therefore, males are advised to wear loose fitting underwear. Check for and remove any kinks in the catheter or the drainage bag tubing.

Check the position of your catheter and drainage bag. Ensure the bag is positioned below your bladder when you are lying, sitting or standing.

Check that the leg bag straps are fitted correctly and are not causing drainage bag obstruction.

It could also be that your catheter is blocked. CATHETER BLOCKAGE IS AN EMERGENCY AND NEEDS TO BE FIXED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE BY A MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL. (Do not attempt to free the blockage yourself)

You will need to visit your local emergency department immediately if you have performed the above checks and you:

- have abdominal discomfort.
- are feeling the need to pass urine.
- are unable to feel bladder fullness.
- If you are not experiencing abdominal discomfort, or the urge to urinate, increase your fluid intake. Drink 2 glasses of water immediately and if there is no urine drainage after 30 minutes contact your GP or go to an emergency department.

Daily bathing or showering is encouraged.

A closed drainage system is maintained as far as possible. Maintaining a closed drainage system reduces the risk of catheter-related infection (Kunin, 1997)

References:

Mallett, J & Dougherty, L. (2000) The Royal Marsden Hospital Manual OF Clinical Nursing Procedures, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford

Nicol. M., Bavin, C., Bedford Turner, S., Cronin, P. & Rawlings-Anderson, K. (2004). Essential Nursing Skills, Mosby, United Kingdom.

Catheter Care, RCN Guidance for NURSES 2008



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Care of Stomas Policy

Scope

All West Limerick Independent Living Staff may require to provide Stoma care

Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide direction on good practice in the provision of Stoma Care to West Limerick Independent Living Service Users

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all staff who manage stoma care to follow these guidelines. It is responsibility of Service Area Coordinators to ensure Staff are familiar with the guideline's and to monitor compliance.

Definitions

"Stoma" originates from the Greek word meaning "mouth" or "opening". A bowel or urinary stoma is created by bringing a section of the bowel out to the abdominal wall. This is normally done in cases where the urinary or bowel tract beyond the position of the stoma is no longer viable.

- **Colostomy:** This type of Stoma is formed from a section of the large bowel opening from the large intestine to the abdominal wall, so faeces bypass the anal canal.
- **Ileostomy:** This is formed from a section of the small bowel opening from the small intestine to the abdominal wall, so faeces bypass the large intestine and the anal canal.
- **Urostomy:** Connection between the urinary tract and abdominal wall leading to a "urinary conduit" so urine passes straight into a stoma bag and thus bypasses the urethra.

Guidelines

Equipment

- Gloves
- Paper towel
- New Appliances
- Disposable bag
- Relevant Accessories
- Bowl of warm water and disposable cloth
- Soap
- Jug for contents of appliance
- Incontinence sheet



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Procedure

- Ensure privacy for the procedure.
- Explain the procedure to the Service User.
- Ensure the Service User is in a comfortable position.
- Place the incontinence sheet over the clothes and bed clothes to protect them.
- If the bag is drainable, empty the contents into a jug prior to changing it.
- Gently remove the bag from the flange with one hand while securing the flange with the other, (if only the bag is being changed) otherwise remove both gently, while exerting gentle pressure on the surrounding to prevent skin break down
- Gently remove excess faeces/ adhesive from the skin and stoma with damp tissue.
- Examine the skin for soreness/redness/ ulceration.
- Wash and dry the stoma and surrounding skin.
- Apply a new appliance.
- Dispose of soiled materials appropriately.
- Wash and dry hands thoroughly.
- Record in the Stoma Record and report and record any adverse changes; loose watery stool, change in consistency, lumps, itchiness, infection or sensitivity to PHN/ Service Coordinator.
- Contact Stoma Care Nurse if necessary

References:

Mallett, J & Dougherty, L. (2000) The Royal Marsden Hospital Manual OF Clinical Nursing Procedures, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford

Stoma Care Guidelines for Nursing Caring for Patients with a Stoma, 2010, Royal Free Hamstead, London NHS.



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Enteral Feeding Policy

Scope

All West Limerick Independent Living Staff may require to enteral feeding. DO NOT PUT ANYTHING DOWN THE TUBE THAT HAS NOT BEEN RECOMMENDED BY THE DIETITIAN (APART FROM MEDICATIONS WITH APPROVAL FROM PHARMACY).

Personal Assistant's (PA's) do not give any medication via Syringe. Please refer to the Employee Handbook Policy for the Administration of Medications page 68.

PA's can only administer enteral bolus feed when they have been deemed competent by Dietician and copy of competency in PA's file.

Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide direction on good practice in the provision of Enteral Feeding to West Limerick Independent Living Service Users.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all staff who manage enteral feeding to follow these guidelines. It is responsibility of Service Area Coordinators to ensure Staff are familiar with the guideline's and to monitor compliance.

Aim

The aim of the enteral feed policy is to ensure that service user's nutritional and fluid requirements are met, to prevent and treat disease-related malnutrition and complications induced by poor nutritional status. The policy aims to ensure that the safe practice of administration of enteral feed is maintained.

The following items are required:

- Prescribed feed (at room temperature)
- 50 ml syringe
- Alcohol wipes
- Tap water (or sterile water for immunocompromised patients)
- Gloves and apron
- Clean jug

Procedure:

- Wash hands according to the 'Hand Hygiene policy', put on gloves and plastic apron.



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- Flush feeding tube with 30-50 ml of sterile water using the 50 ml syringe.
- Check expiry date of feed and shake container before opening.
- Uncap end of tube
- Remove plunger from syringe and connect to end of tube.
- Fill the syringe with feed using gravity to allow the feed to flow. Open clip-on PEG and allow feed to flow through.
- Prior to syringe emptying, top up with feed until all has been given. Hold the syringe so that gravity is used to allow liquid into the stomach. If necessary, lower the syringe to a lower level to decrease rate of delivery. Do not allow the syringe to be completely empty before adding more feed.
- Flush tube with at least 30 ml or as regime of water.
- Close clip-on PEG tube, syringe and recap PEG/NG tube end.
- Clean syringe if it is to be reused, otherwise discard in clinical waste.
- Store unused feed in a refrigerator, labelled with client's name, date and time of opening, and use with 24 hours.
- Record amount of feed given and flushes.
- Ensure the patient is comfortable observe for signs of feed intolerance (burping, Hiccups vomiting)
- Maintain patient's upper body positioned at a minimum angle of 30 degrees for 1 hour. Ensure they do not lay flat.

Employee Acknowledgment Agreement

It is important that you read the handbook and become familiar with its contents. If you are unclear about anything please consult Management.

Employee Confidentiality Agreement

I hereby acknowledge, by my signature below, that I understand that the confidential information, records, and data to which I have knowledge and access in the course of my employment with West Limerick Independent Living is to be kept confidential, and this confidentiality is a condition of my employment. This information shall not be disclosed to anyone under any circumstances, except to the extent necessary to fulfill my job requirements. I understand that my duty to maintain confidentiality continues even after I am no longer employed.

Unauthorised Disclosure

Approval should first be obtained before any disclosure of confidential information. I understand that the unauthorised disclosure of service users and other confidential information of West Limerick Independent Living is grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.



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Acceptance of the Employee Handbook

I hereby acknowledge, by my signature below, that I have received and read a copy of the West Limerick Independent Living Employee Handbook. I agree to abide by the policies and procedures outlined within the handbook.

The employee handbook and policies and procedures shall be deemed to be part of your contract of employment. The Company reserves the right to alter this handbook including details of benefits, guidelines, conduct and health and safety information from time to time. This handbook may also be subject to changes in employment legislation. You will be notified of such changes on or before the date the change takes place but your statutory entitlements will not be affected at any time. When you have read the handbook, you should sign this page within a week of receiving the handbook. Please return a signed copy of this sheet to the Office Administrator.

A copy of the Employee Handbook was read by: -

Employee Signature: _____

Date _____

Please print your name here in BLOCK CAPITALS: _____