



SWINDON CARERS CENTRE

Carer Involvement and Exclusion Policy [CB4-P2]

Policy Statement

Swindon Carers Centre want to ensure that carers are involved in helping to plan our services, recognising that individuals will want to contribute in different ways as and when their caring role allows. We also want carers to feel enabled to provide feedback on other services that affect them and / or the person(s) they care for.

Swindon Carers Centre is an inclusive organisation. We believe that, in order to achieve our mission of improving the wellbeing of carers in and around Swindon, appropriate behaviour and mutual respect for everyone accessing our service is necessary.

Carer Involvement

Principles

Our vision: Creating a community where carers are recognised, valued and supported.

Our key message: Carers at the heart of everything we do.

One of our overall strategic aims is to ensure Swindon Carers Centre is:

- An agent for carer involvement, irrespective of their individual circumstances and impact of their caring role, so carers can be involved in influencing service development at all levels

To achieve this, we have identified the following as one of our key priorities:

- To improve the “carer voice” we will increase carer involvement opportunities

From this, we will include specific actions around carer involvement in our annual business plans.

We involve carers in the development of our **Strategic and Business Plans**, through a range of means to enable as many carers as possible to take part, including surveys, focus groups, information in our newsletters and on social media, events for carers, and feedback from existing carer forums.

Our carer forums include:

- Young Carers Forum
- Young Adult Carers Forum
- Young Carer Media Group
- LD Carers Group
- MH Carer reps group

We also hold a number of events for carers, in partnership with Swindon Borough Council, Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group, Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust, Great Western Hospital and other statutory and voluntary organisations. These include events to mark Carers Rights Day, Carers Week, and other ad hoc events e.g. the Transitions Roadshow.

Our Senior Leadership Team (SLT) visits carer groups in the community to listen to their views and use them to influence service delivery.

A representative from Swindon Borough Council (SBC) visits some of our groups and social activities to learn more from carers about the services that SBC commission from us, and about other services that carers may come into contact with.

We work closely with staff from statutory and voluntary organisations to share knowledge about services e.g. by inviting them to attend staff meetings, or by attending their team meetings. This also provides an opportunity to raise awareness about carers and their rights.

Additionally, we support carers:

- To be involved in commissioners' consultations about carers services, and other services, e.g. those used by the person they care for
- By providing information about other organisation's carer forums e.g. AWP Care Forum, LD Partnership Board, Carers Trust online forums
- By representing them on the Healthwatch Advisory Group and the Loneliness and Isolation Group

We also gather feedback from carers about their contact with our services, or about developments to our services, for example:

- Feedback forms after a carers assessment or period of 1:1 support, attending a carers activity or training
- Feedback forms after outings and events
- Annual survey of parents of young carers
- Annual survey of carers accessing the Carer Support Line
- Through social media, including our Twitter and Facebook pages
- Consult carers over Swindon Carers Centre's digital provision and development

We will raise awareness of carers' rights, and encourage carer involvement through our outreach work, and programme of training and awareness for employers, education, health and social care professionals.

Carer Exclusion Statement

The decision to exclude a carer from any aspect of our service, either permanently or for a fixed period of time, is never taken lightly and will therefore only be taken as a last resort:

- In response to serious or persistent breaches of Swindon Carers Centre's **Code of Conduct Agreement**
- If allowing a carer to remain in our groups and activities or other areas of our service would seriously harm the welfare of others

Roles and responsibilities

Swindon Carers Centre will provide a safe, relaxed, equal, and efficient experience for all of our Carers.

The decision to exclude a carer for both a fixed period of time or permanently from an area of

Swindon Carers Centre's service can and will only be taken by the CEO or, in their absence, a member of the senior leadership team or staff to whom they have delegated the authority to exclude.

Deciding whether to exclude a carer

The decision to exclude a carer must be lawful, reasonable and fair.

Swindon Carers Centre will not discriminate against any person on the basis of any of the protected characteristics and gives careful consideration to the fair treatment of carers from groups who may be vulnerable in any way.

All registered carers will agree and sign a **Code of Conduct Agreement** before taking part in activities.

An appropriate adult will countersign a **Code of Conduct Agreement** for young carers.

Swindon Carers Centre will always support carers to adhere to the **Code of Conduct Agreement** and enjoy equal and fair access to our service.

Failure to adhere to this agreement could result in a verbal warning, written warning or exclusion from aspects of our service.

Carers agree to the exclusion process when they sign the agreement;

- 1. Verbal Warning**
- 2. Written Warning**
- 3. Exclusion**

Before reaching a decision to exclude a carer, the CEO or Deputy CEO will:

- Be satisfied Swindon Carers Centre has approached all relevant support agencies before the exclusion policy has been invoked, or the carer has been appropriately signposted
- Consider all relevant facts and such evidence as may be available to support the allegations made, taking into account Swindon Carers Centre's policies and procedures;
- Enable the carer to give his or her version of events;
- Check whether the incident may have been provoked for example, by racial or sexual harassment;
- Take account of any contributing factors that are identified after an incident for example, if a carer has been subject to bullying, suffered a bereavement or has mental health issues;
- Consider the impact of exclusion on certain vulnerable groups, including young carers with additional learning needs;
- Keep a written record of the actions taken, including any interview with the carer. Witness statements must be dated and should be signed, wherever possible;
- Ensure that the decision to exclude is made in line with the principles of administrative law, i.e. that it is:
 - lawful (with respect to the legislation relating Swindon Carers Centre's wider legal duties, including the Care Act 2014, the Children and Families Act 2014 and European Convention of Human Rights);
 - rational;
 - reasonable;
 - fair; and
 - proportionate; and

- establish the facts in relation to the exclusion, applying the civil standard of proof i.e. 'on the balance of probabilities' it is more likely than not that a fact is true, rather than the criminal standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt'.

Exclusions will be used only as a last resort when a range of other strategies have been exhausted.

In exceptional circumstances, where a serious breach of Swindon Carers Centre's **Code of Conduct** has occurred, the CEO or Deputy CEO might consider it appropriate to permanently exclude a carer from one of our service areas, e.g. Groups and Activities.

Such circumstances might include:

- Where there has been serious actual or threatened violence against another Carer or member of staff;
- Sexual misconduct;
- Using or supplying an illegal drug;
- Carrying an offensive weapon;
- Any severe form of bullying including racist or homophobic bullying; and/or any action resulting in a serious health and safety issue.

In cases where a criminal offence has taken place, the police and, where appropriate, Social Services or any other outside agency involved with the carer may be informed.

If the CEO/Deputy CEO decides to exclude a carer permanently, they will inform the trustee board and the Local Authority Commissioning Officer at the earliest possible opportunity.

The CEO/Deputy CEO will ensure that the carer or appropriate adult of a young carer is informed of the exclusion and the reasons for it in writing. They will inform them of their rights to appeal the exclusion and send a copy of our **Complaints Policy [CB7]**.

This could be delegated to a member of the Senior Leadership Team, on the authority of the CEO.

If a carer appeals against the decision, the Chair of Trustees will review the CEO/Deputy CEO's decision and verify if it was fair, reasonable and absolutely necessary.

The CEO/Deputy CEO's decision should be final.

Reintegration

A reintegration meeting with the carer, appropriate adult for a young carer, the CEO or Deputy CEO and a member of Swindon Carers Centre's Management Team will be held as soon as is possible.

Upon return from a fixed period exclusion, a new **Code of Conduct Agreement** will be discussed, agreed and signed. This will identify the issues leading to the exclusion and outline a clear set of expectations for a dignified and successful reintegration.

A range of additional strategies and resources to support the reintegration process for the carer may be identified.

Alternatives to exclusion

Swindon Carers Centre is committed to using exclusion only as a last resort. Alternatives will always be considered e.g. risk assessments and control measures, change of activity or venue, open discussion, or restorative justice processes.

Carers will always remain supported by Swindon Carers Centre during a period of exclusion and will never be excluded from our services for minor incidents, as we always seek to resolve issues before they become serious incidents.

Review Statement

This policy has been prepared considering prevailing legislation and recognised good practice. New legislation requirements or changes in current legislation may necessitate the review of this policy document. The company will continue to review and amend all/part of this policy on a regular basis. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that the copy of the policy being referred to is the most up-to-date version.

Further Information

If you would like further information on any aspect of this, or any other HR policy, please contact your line manager.

Related Documents

- Code of Conduct Agreement
- Strategic and Business Plans

Related Policies

- Complaints Policy [CB7]