
Accompanying Service Users Policy

Turas Training

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1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. Turas is committed to ensuring that the escorting of service users is done in such a way as to respect the dignity and rights of the service user, with full regard to the safety of: staff, service users, family and carers of service users, and members of the public.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. This policy relates to the accompaniment by foot or public transport of service users outside the organisations premises and to the specific situations outlined in 2.2. For information on transporting service users by personal or company vehicle please see the vehicle use policy.
- 2.2. To outline specific procedures related to the accompaniment of service users to:
 - 2.2.1. Hospital
 - 2.2.2. Psychiatric Care
 - 2.2.3. Court
 - 2.2.4. Any other location as agreed with management in advance.
- 2.3. To outline specific situations related to the accompaniment of a minor.

3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and locum workers of Turas.

4. Glossary of Terms and Definitions

- 4.1. For the purpose of this policy, accompaniment is defined as being with or escorting a service user from one location to another, either by foot or in a vehicle.

5. Principles

- 5.1. All procedures outlined in this policy shall be carried out in a manner which respects the dignity and rights of the service user while retaining due regard to the safety and rights of the staff and others involved.
- 5.2. The manager will assess the risks of the proposed journey prior to it being undertaken, specifically considering factors such as gender match and the staff to service user ratio.
- 5.3. Staff accompanying service users must ensure that they have an accessible and working mobile phone in their possession at all times.
- 5.4. All staff should know the service user prior to accompanying them outside of the main premises. If a member of staff feels uncomfortable about accompanying the service user for any reason, they should make this known to the manager at the earliest time possible.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

- 6.1. Management have the responsibility to ensure that:
 - 6.1.1. All staff members are aware of the policy and adhere to its requirements.
 - 6.1.2. Any potential risks have been considered prior to approving the accompaniment.
- 6.2. All staff have the responsibility to:
 - 6.2.1. Comply with the requirements of the policy.
 - 6.2.2. Inform the manager immediately if they are aware of any dangers or concerns.

7. Procedures

- 7.1.1. The manager should consider any risks and put in place responses to any considered significant prior to accompanying service users off site. At the minimum this should include:
 - 7.1.1.1. The gender of the service user,
 - 7.1.1.2. The level of observation required,
 - 7.1.1.3. Any special needs,
 - 7.1.1.4. Who to contact in an emergency.
- 7.1.2. Service users who represent low risk may only require the presence of one member of staff.
- 7.1.3. If the safety of the service user is in question due to threat of violence, they should be transported in a taxi or company vehicle rather than by foot or public transport.

7.2. Accompanying Service Users by Foot

- 7.2.1. In low risk situations, it may be appropriate for one member of staff to accompany a service user off site; however, care should be taken to stay in public areas. For more information see section 7.7 of the "Lone Working Policy"
- 7.2.2. The route should be planned in advance and a timeframe agreed. If staff suspect that they are going to be late, it is important that they phone in to explain why. If staff have not returned within the expected timeframe, and do not phone in, the (name role: manager) should call the mobile phone/ agreed contact number to ensure their safety. If this is not answered, the Gardaí will be informed.
- 7.2.3. In the event that an act of violence occurs when accompanying a service user, for example a fight between the service user and another member of the public, staff should:
 - 7.2.3.1. Stay calm.
 - 7.2.3.2. Get people away from the scene as quickly as possible, while ensuring their own safety.
 - 7.2.3.3. If violence is ongoing then contact the Garda and follow their instructions.
 - 7.2.3.4. Make contact with the service manager as soon as possible.

7.3. Accompanying a Service User to Hospital

- 7.3.1. In the event of a serious medical need which requires immediate intervention:
 - 7.3.1.1. The service should call an ambulance and inform the service user that this has been done.
 - 7.3.1.2. Staff should not try to bring service users to the hospital themselves.
 - 7.3.1.3. If required, appropriate first aid should be administered by a trained person until emergency services arrive.
 - 7.3.1.4. In certain circumstances it may be appropriate to travel with the service users in the ambulance; this should be decided at the discretion of (Name role) and ambulance staff.
- 7.3.2. If the service user's condition is such that it requires them to go to A&E or to a GP but is not serious enough for an ambulance to be called, a taxi should be arranged for transportation. The manager should assess risks to determine if the service user needs to be accompanied and by whom.

7.4. Accompanying a Service User to Psychiatric Care

- 7.4.1. The primary responsibility in these circumstances rests with the mental health services and Gardaí.
- 7.4.2. Where service users are currently psychiatrically ill and pose a threat to themselves or others they should be accompanied to hospital in an ambulance.
- 7.4.3. However, if a referral to a psychiatric hospital has been made by a GP/ Psychiatrist and an ambulance is not deemed necessary by both the doctor and the manager. The service may decide to accompany the individual.
- 7.4.4. In the event that a service user is escorted to psychiatric care in a taxi, they should be accompanied by two members of staff.
- 7.4.5. Under no circumstances will any staff member accompany / transport a service user requiring psychiatric care alone or in their own vehicle.

7.5. Accompanying a Minor

- 7.5.1. When accompanying a service user under the age of 18, two members of staff should be present at all times, or one member of staff and an adult member of the child's family.
- 7.5.2. While being accompanied, a minor is under the responsibility of the service. Staff should ensure that the young person is adequately supervised at all times.
- 7.5.3. Staff should have on them the contact details of parents or guardians.
- 7.5.4. Staff should make all reasonable efforts to seek parental or guardian consent for accompaniments / transportation.