



Risk Management Policy

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Fair Deal Risk Management Policy

(Understanding, assessing and managing risk in the lives of the people supported by Fair Deal)

Introduction

Fair Deal is firmly committed to supporting people to be independent, make choices and take risks. Risk cannot, nor should it be eliminated from the lives of the people supported by Fair Deal. Life is about risk, as Helen Keller said:

Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature, nor do the children of man as a whole experience it. Avoiding danger is no safer in the long term than outright exposure. Life is a daring adventure or nothing.

This well used quotation from Helen Keller points to an undeniable truth: avoiding danger is no safer in the long term than outright exposure, in other words we have to learn how to live with risk and danger if we want to live a full and fulfilling life. Helen and Andy Alaszewski, explain risk in relation to people with learning disabilities, thus today, the importance of the opportunities afforded by ordinary living and enabling people with learning disabilities to take risks is readily acknowledged. However, the right to an ordinary life for people with learning disabilities has and, in many ways continues to be a hard-fought battle. It was only in the last decade of the twentieth century that most of the learning disability hospitals in Scotland were finally closed. Prior to this it was not universally acknowledged that institutional care does not provide people with a risk free environment in which they can contentedly live out their lives, despite the best attempts of social commentators such as Edgerton, Goffman, Wolfensberger, and more recently Tyne and O'Brien, to draw attention to the rigid, repressive and frequently abusive regimes within institutions.

This policy is concerned with protecting the rights of the people using Fair Deal's services to make choices, whilst ensuring that they are supported to make informed choices, develop an awareness of risk and weigh up the possible consequences to preferred courses of action.

Risk in its various guises has a long and chequered history in association with people with learning disabilities. The early development of state concern and intervention in the lives of people with learning disabilities by the end of the 19th Century was justified in terms of the risks posed by people with learning disabilities and society; and the safety and security that institutions provided. Paradoxically the attack on institutional care especially in learning disability hospitals focused on the failure to manage risk effectively, as they neither provided a stimulating environment nor protected individuals from harm or exploitation. (Person Centred Planning and Care Management, Paul Cambridge, Steven Carnaby, JKP 2005)

Fair Deal Statement on Managing Risk

Fair Deal is fully committed to supporting the people using Fair Deal services to be independent, make choices and take risks. Within the Charter of Rights & Responsibilities, Fair Deal commits to asking people about what they need and helping them to make choices and decisions about their lives. In practice this means:

- Talking to people about trying out new and different things
- Helping people to work out what risks may be around and supporting them to make safe choices
- Giving people enough help and support to do what they want to do, provided that the risks are not greater than the benefits
- Involving people in identifying and recording their support needs in their person centred support plan and in any later reviews
- Supporting people to get better at the things they already do for their-selves

- Helping people to you learn new things

Fair Deal believes that:

- Trying new things is important for everyone and that people who use Fair Deal services should be encouraged to try new things and to lead as rich, varied and independent a life as possible
- Trying new things means having a more satisfying and fuller life, but it also means taking risks. Fair Deal believes that taking risks is part of everyday life
- It is important to balance everyday risk taking with safety

Supporting people to try new things, take risks, and keep safe must be tied into the person-centred planning process

Person Centred Planning

First of all, staff will work with individuals to develop their Person-Centred Support Plan. Staff will:

- Spend time finding out what is important to the person and how they like to spend their time
- Talk to people about the help they need to do the things that are important to them
- Help people to identify activities and situations which are risky

An acceptance of risk and a non judgmental and thoughtful approach to supporting people will lead to an understanding of what is important to the people we support and why they make particular choices in their lives. The most effective means of minimising and managing risk is by working in partnership with the people using our services. Such partnership working can only be effective when we are able to understand the choices people make in the wider context of their lives.

Identifying, Assessing & Managing Risk

Risk is inherent in everyday life, in providing support services to people with learning disabilities; Fair Deal's challenge is to achieve the right level of protection for people without unnecessarily reducing opportunities for an ordinary life or allowing unnecessary danger. Sound risk management relies on an ability to firstly identify risk clearly and secondly rate the level of risk, is the risk severe or minimal, temporary or ongoing, and thirdly identify actions that can be taken to minimise the identified risk/s. In order to support this process Fair Deal have a clear risk assessment process **When assessing risk staff must follow this procedure** (see appendix 1 Fair Deal risk management process and pro forma) In supporting people with learning disabilities to lead an ordinary life we are accepting a degree of risk and working with the person (and their family members/practitioners from other agencies) to reduce risk rather than prevent it completely. It is therefore vital for Fair Deal to be able to demonstrate that in assessing and managing risk **defensible decisions** have been made. According to Monaghan (1993) – defensible decisions are made when:

- All reasonable steps are taken
- Reliable assessment methods are used
- Adequate information is collected and thoroughly examined
- Decisions are recorded
- Staff work within policies and procedures
- Staff communicate with others and seek information they do not have

Staff must therefore bear this in mind when assessing risk, and planning strategies in order to reduce/manage risk. It is important to ensure that all stakeholders including the person and his/her family members/advocate are involved in the assessment of risk and

strategy/actions agreed to minimise risk. The person's care manager must always be involved in this process.

Responsibility to Employees

Fair Deal's responsibility to employees is detailed in the Fair Deal Health and Safety Policy; this policy also provides some general guidance on identifying and, managing specific risks related to people we support.

End of Policy

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Amendment History

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