

REFERENCE NUMBER OF DOCUMENT:	11.2.373.01
COMMITTEE IDENTIFICATION:	Galago Directors
SECRETARIAT:	MS
DOCUMENT TYPE:	External Policy
DOCUMENT LANGUAGE:	E
THIS POLICY IS FOR:	Staff including Agency Workers (temporary workers), Commissioners and Service Users

SUPPORTING INDEPENDENCE WITH HOLIDAYS

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SUPPORTING INDEPENDENCE WITH HOLIDAYS POLICY

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To ensure that Service Users are enabled to maintain the ability to enjoy independence on holiday.
- 1.2 To ensure that Nursing Direct consistently meets the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) Key Lines of Enquiry (Safe, Effective, Caring, Responsive and Well-led) and the associated Quality Statements, in line with regulatory requirements.
- 1.3 Relevant Legislation
 - The Care Act 2014
 - Equality Act 2010
 - The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014
 - Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
 - Mental Capacity Act 2005
 - Data Protection Act 2018
 - The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) (Amendment) Regulations 2012

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 Roles Affected:
 - Registered Manager
 - Other management
 - Staff including Agency Workers
- 2.2 People Affected:
 - Service Users
- 2.3 Stakeholders Affected:
 - Family / Next of Kin
 - Advocates
 - Representatives
 - Commissioners
 - Local Authority / ICB

3. OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 Service Users are supported appropriately to enjoy holiday experiences.

4. POLICY

- 4.1 Nursing Direct recognises the importance of independence and enjoyment of leisure activities as part of a holistic service.
- 4.2 Nursing Direct will support Service Users to experience and enjoy holidays in a variety of environments and forms, in line with their individual preferences, choices, abilities and needs.
- 4.3 Nursing Direct will provide the right information in the most accessible format for individuals to make informed choices about holidays, where they have the capacity to do so.

5. PROCEDURE

- 5.1 The Registered Manager is responsible for the management of this policy.
- 5.2 Staff including Agency Workers will enable Service Users to have a variety of holiday experiences, such as:
 - Staying with friends or relatives
 - Self-catering accommodation
 - Package tours
 - Hotels
 - Bed and breakfast
 - Specialist disability holiday accommodation as appropriate to ability and need

- 5.3 Individual Care Plans will show an assessment of the Service User's abilities to access holiday activities. This will include:
- Communication and social skills
 - Mobility
 - Understanding of money and budget
 - Exercising choice
- 5.4 If the Service User has been assessed as lacking the capacity to make decisions around the level of Care needed, or cannot protect themselves from the risk of abuse, a best interests decision may be made in deciding whether they should go on the holiday, and/or be accompanied.
- 5.5 A risk assessment will be carried out to consider the level and type of care required, as well as detailing that consideration has been given to the potential for abuse.
- Accessible information will be shared with the Service User
 - Staff including Agency Workers must allow them time to digest the information which must include the risks and benefits of the holiday. This will ensure that informed choices can be made by the Service User
 - The Service User's consent must be sought regarding the arrangements including the use of their data
- 5.6 Any holidays that are taken will be risk assessed prior to their commencement to ensure that both staff including Agency Workers and Service Users remain safe. Particular attention should also be given to international travel, where additional restrictions may apply.
- 5.7 All staff including Agency Workers who accompany Service Users on holidays will be fully briefed on the risk assessments and Care Plans for the Service User. Staff including Agency Workers must attend any additional training required before accompanying Service Users on holiday.
- 5.8 Where services are commissioned by Local Authorities, CCG's and other service users or a health authority, they must be fully involved in the decision and approve Nursing Direct accompanying the Service User prior to any holiday taking place.
- 5.9 Nursing Direct will communicate with stakeholders and commissioners of services in accordance with the Service User's consent and adhere to data protection legislation.
- 5.10 Service Users will be assisted to access their own personal funds for holidays. This will include support to access transport, banks, post offices and cash machines as appropriate. All staff including Agency Workers handling funds will be expected to adhere to the Service User's Finances policy and procedure.
- 5.11 Wherever possible, the staff including Agency Workers care will be discreet and proportionate, to enable the Service User to have a positive community presence and to maintain, develop and promote independence.
- 5.12 Service Users will be fully involved in any shopping as part of the preparation for their holiday as well as during the holiday. This may include making and using shopping lists, purchasing items such as clothing and toiletries and choosing gifts for their family and friends.
- 5.13 Initial Planning & Engagement**
- 5.13.1 Kick-off meeting with service user and family / advocates to discuss:
- Destination, accommodation type, travel arrangements, and trip duration.
 - Planned / potential activities on-site and off-site.
 - Service user's personal goals for the trip (independence, socialisation, relaxation, cultural experience).
 - Cultural, dietary, and religious considerations.
- 5.13.2 Review destination country profile:
- Security and travel risks (consult Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office guidance).
 - Access to healthcare facilities, including local hospital, pharmacy, and A&E contact details.
 - Vaccination requirements, travel health advisories, and infection control measures (e.g., COVID-19, malaria).
- 5.13.3 Check and record passport validity and visa requirements for both the service user and staff.
- 5.13.4 Agree on payment responsibilities for meals, activities, and incidental expenses before proceeding.
- 5.14 Risk & Compliance Preparation**
- 5.14.1 Review RADAR incident report for the past 12 months to identify recurring risks or care trends.
- 5.14.2 Review candidates' compliance ensure it is up to date, including all competencies.
- 5.14.3 Complete a new risk assessment specific to the trip:
- Accommodation accessibility (stairs, lifts, bathroom adaptations).
 - Environmental hazards (climate, terrain, water safety).
 - Travel risks (flight times, transfer arrangements, fatigue management).
 - Safeguarding considerations, including potential exposure to exploitation or abuse abroad.
 - Contingency planning for trip curtailment or emergency return to the UK.
- 5.14.4 Prepare a new care plan specific to the trip if adjustments are required
- 5.14.5 Adjust for time zone, daily routines, medication times, and activity participation.
- 5.14.6 Include protocols for medical incidents abroad (who contacts who, how decisions are made).
- 5.14.7 Confirm commissioned staffing ratio and have a contingency plan if staff become ill or unavailable.
- 5.15 Legal & Insurance Requirements**
- 5.15.1 Verify travel insurance for the service user:
- Full copy of the policy, highlighting medical cover, emergency repatriation, and COVID-19 cover (if relevant).
 - Check for exclusions related to pre-existing medical conditions.

5.15.2 Nursing Direct to arrange appropriate travel insurance for staff, covering:

- Public liability.
- Professional indemnity.
- Medical and repatriation costs.

5.15.2 Obtain written consent forms for:

- Data sharing with travel providers and insurers.
- Emergency medical treatment abroad.

5.16 Document Review & Approval

5.16.1 Hold second meeting with service user/family:

- Walk through the new care plan and risk assessment in plain language.
- Ensure they understand risks, benefits, and safeguards.
- Obtain formal written sign-off.

5.16.2 Hold staff briefing session:

- Walk through care plan, risk assessment, emergency action plan, and rota.
- Confirm pay, expenses, shift breaks, and professional conduct expectations.
- Reiterate that it is a working duty – no alcohol or off-duty excursions during working hours.
- Issue paperwork such as: Financial transaction logbook, emergency contact list, itinerary, relevant medical and consent documentation.

5.17 Pre-Trip Safety & Contingency Checks

5.17.1 Final review of:

- Bookings (accommodation, travel, activities).
- Accessibility requirements.
- Medication supply and storage compliance with travel regulations.
- Equipment checks (hoists, oxygen tanks, wheelchairs).

5.17.2 Establish daily communication plan:

- Who the lead staff member checks in with at Nursing Direct HQ and when.

5.17.3 Have a clear escalation protocol for:

- Medical emergencies.
- Lost or stolen travel documents.
- Behavioural incidents.

5.18 Sign-Off & Submission for Insurance

5.18.1 Send the following to the Responsible Individual and Registered Manager for review and onward submission to the insurance company:

- Finalised Care Plan.
- Trip-Specific Risk Assessment.
- RADAR Incident Report (12 months).
- Meeting minutes (service user/family and staff).
- Copy of travel insurance policy (service user and staff).
- Itinerary with emergency contacts.

5.19 Post-Trip Review

5.19.1 Hold debrief meeting with staff and service user/family:

- Review positives, challenges, and any incidents.
- Log lessons learned into RADAR.
- Update policies or procedures as required.

5.19.2 File all documentation in service user's care record for CQC compliance.

5.20 Staff including Agency Workers will be reminded prior to escorting a Service User on holiday, that they are working and it is not a holiday for them. Staff including Agency Workers must therefore not be drinking alcohol and must be able to respond to the Service User's needs in the same way they do while the Service User is at home. Staff including Agency Workers failing to adhere to the policies of Nursing Direct may face disciplinary action.

5.21 Staff including Agency Workers need to be aware of the suite of associated policies and procedures at Nursing Direct that relate to supporting Service Users whilst on holiday. The Registered Manager will ensure that staff including Agency Workers have access to these.

6. DEFINITIONS

6.1 Staff including Agency Workers

6.1.1 Staff

Denotes the employees of Nursing Direct Healthcare Limited.

6.1.2 Agency Workers

Refers to individuals who are contracted with Nursdoc Limited or another employment business as an Agency Worker (temporary worker) provided to Nursing Direct Healthcare Limited to perform care services under the direction of Nursing Direct.

6.2 **Nursing Direct**

Nursing Direct, also known as Nursing Direct Healthcare Limited, is the entity regulated by the CQC (Care Quality Commission) and responsible for the care service provision, contracted to provide homecare services to service users in their homes, in placements, essential healthcare facilities and in the community.

6.5 **Nursdoc Limited**

As the sister company to Nursing Direct Healthcare Limited, Nursdoc Limited acts as an employment business, specialising in providing staffing solutions to the healthcare sector.

6.6 **CQC (Care Quality Commission)**

CQC throughout this policy, the term "CQC" refers to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) which is the independent regulator of health and social care in England.

6.7 **Risk Assessment**

A risk assessment is a process that looks at what might cause harm to people and from this determining whether reasonable steps are being taken to prevent that harm


6.8 **Informed Choice**

An informed choice means that a person has the information and support to think the choice through and to understand what the reasonably expected consequences may be of making that choice

OUTSTANDING PRACTICE

To be "outstanding" in this policy area you could provide evidence that:

- Creative ideas have been explored to ensure that all Service Users have the opportunity to experience a holiday, and that holidays feature regularly within the year
- Service User feedback shows a positive impact from holidays

COMPLETED DATE:	15.12.2025
SIGN OFF DATE:	15.12.2025
REVIEW DATE:	15.12.2026
SIGNED:	 Marc Stiff – Group Managing Director