

Nutrition and Hydration Policy

Statement and Purpose of the Policy

Nutrition and hydration are essential to health and well-being. When well managed they provide a vital contribution for people recovering from illness and for those at risk of malnutrition. We recognise the importance of meeting the individual nutritional and hydration needs of Clients. Meeting such needs relies upon effective nutritional assessment and the provision of a nutritious and balanced diet. However, we recognise that it also relies upon a wide number of other factors including ensuring that food is appetising, well presented, varied, in line with personal preferences/ likes, timely, served at the correct temperature, not hurried, and with appropriate support and encouragement.

Where it is part of their role within the care plan Care Workers/Mental Health Support Worker must make sure that people have enough to eat and drink to meet their nutrition and hydration needs and receive the support they need to do so. Clients must have their nutritional needs assessed and food must be provided to meet those needs.

1. Identifying and Recording Needs

At assessment we will:

- Carry out routine nutritional screening when Client's care plans are drawn up. They will record the dietary needs and preferences of individuals and any assistance they need at mealtimes and ensure Care Workers/Mental Health Support Worker act on this, this is recorded on the front sheet and in the visit-by-visit care plan.
- Ensure any intolerances or allergies are flagged in the care plan on the front sheet
- Ensure any cultural or religious requirements are flagged in the care plan.
- Record all preferences in the care plan. If the Client does not have the capacity to state their preferences, then advice should be sought by the LPA, friends or family (please see Mental Capacity Act policy for further information).
- Report any issues that they identify to the management team, such as weight loss, who will seek medical assistance
- Review Client needs as their health needs change

2. Meeting the Needs

- Ensure where safe to do so that adequate methods of hydration are available to Clients when Care Workers/Mental Health Support Worker are not present i.e. jugs of water and cups left close at hand
- Refer the person for professional assessment via the GP if screening raises particular concerns (e.g. speech and language therapy for people with swallowing difficulties,

occupational therapy for equipment such as special plates and cutlery, dietician for special dietary needs relating to illness or condition, physiotherapist to assess physical needs and posture, dentist for ill-fitting dentures or tooth issues).

- Make food look appetising. If the texture of food needs to be modified seek advice from the speech and language therapist. Not all food for people with swallowing difficulties needs to be puréed. Keep different foods separate to enhance the quality of the eating experience.
- If necessary, record food and fluid intake daily and act on the findings.
- Make sure food is available and accessible between mealtimes, where there isn't a requirement for Care Workers/Mental Health Support Worker to support feeding.
- Aid people who have difficulty eating. Offer finger food to those who have difficulty using cutlery and provide adapted crockery and cutlery to enable people to feed themselves where appropriate.
- Care Workers/Mental Health Support Worker must ensure that the client is in the most appropriate position for eating and is comfortable before assisting the client with eating and drinking.
- Care Workers/Mental Health Support Worker should sit down with the client whom they are going to help with eating and drinking, and not stand over them. The person should be encouraged and helped to wipe their hands and mouth whenever necessary and enabled to retain as much independence as possible.
- Clients should be given time to eat; they should not be rushed.

Document Control

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