

Working Hours Policy

Statement of Purpose

Serenta Homecare is committed to ensuring that working hours are managed in a way that promotes the health, safety and wellbeing of employees whilst maintaining the delivery of safe, effective and person-centred care. The Company recognises that appropriate working hours, adequate rest and effective rota planning contribute to the wellbeing of employees and the continuity of care for Clients.

This policy sets out Serenta Homecare's approach to working hours, staff availability, rota management and compliance with the Working Time Regulations 1998.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Serenta Homecare, including Care Workers, Mental Health Support Workers, Senior Care Workers, and Care Coordinators, office based staff and Managers.

Working Hours

Serenta Homecare operates a flexible staffing model to meet the varying needs of the people we support. Care Workers and Mental Health Support Workers are employed on zero-hours contracts. Upon successful recruitment, employees will agree their regular availability with Serenta Homecare, and this availability will be used by the Care Coordinators when preparing staff rotas and allocating care visits.

Employees are expected to work within their agreed availability. Where an employee wishes to make either a temporary or permanent change to their availability, they must notify the Care Coordinator with a minimum of four weeks notice wherever reasonably practicable. This allows sufficient time for rota planning and helps ensure continuity of care for Clients. Where exceptional circumstances prevent four weeks notice from being given, employees should notify the Care Coordinator as soon as possible. Serenta Homecare will make every reasonable effort to accommodate the requested change; however, changes cannot always be guaranteed due to operational requirements.

Office-based employees are employed on contracted hours, which are detailed within their Contract of Employment. Employees are expected to work these contracted hours unless alternative arrangements have been agreed in advance with their Line Manager.

Rota Management

Serenta Homecare prepares staff rotas in advance wherever possible. Rotas are planned using employees' agreed availability alongside the needs of the service, taking into account Client preferences, continuity of care, travel time and staffing levels.

Due to the nature of domiciliary care, rotas may need to be amended at short notice to accommodate new care packages, hospital discharges, changes in Client needs, staff sickness or other unforeseen circumstances. Employees are expected to regularly check their rota using the Company's electronic care planning system and to notify the office immediately if they identify any discrepancies or are unable to attend a scheduled visit.

Working Time Regulations

Serenta Homecare is committed to complying with the Working Time Regulations 1998. Employees will not normally be expected to work more than an average of 48 hours per week unless they have voluntarily signed a Working Time Opt-Out Agreement. Employees who choose not to sign an opt-out agreement will not be disadvantaged in any way.

Care Coordinators will monitor working hours to reduce the risk of excessive working time and fatigue and will ensure that employees receive the appropriate rest periods wherever reasonably practicable.

Rest Breaks

Employees are entitled to statutory rest breaks in accordance with the Working Time Regulations 1998. Where a shift exceeds six hours, employees should receive a minimum uninterrupted break of twenty minutes. Employees should also receive adequate daily and weekly rest periods between shifts wherever reasonably practicable.

Whilst Serenta Homecare recognises that unforeseen events within the community may occasionally delay breaks, every reasonable effort will be made to ensure employees receive their entitlement as soon as operationally possible.

Travel Time

As a domiciliary care provider, travel between Clients forms part of an employee's working day and is considered working time. Rotas are planned to allow reasonable travel time between visits; however, employees must inform the office immediately if traffic, adverse weather or unforeseen circumstances are likely to delay their arrival at a Client's home.

Additional Hours

Due to the changing nature of care provision, employees may be offered additional hours to cover annual leave, sickness absence, emergency care packages or changes in

Client needs. For employees employed on zero-hours contracts, the acceptance of additional hours is voluntary unless otherwise agreed.

Serenta Homecare will endeavour to distribute additional work fairly whilst maintaining continuity of care for Clients and ensuring employees do not work excessive hours.

Fatigue and Safe Working

Serenta Homecare recognises that fatigue can affect both employee wellbeing and the quality of care delivered. Care Coordinators will therefore consider working patterns, travel time and consecutive shifts when allocating work.

Employees also have a responsibility to inform their Line Manager if they believe they are too fatigued or unwell to work safely. Where concerns are identified, appropriate adjustments will be considered to protect both the employee and the Clients receiving care.

Secondary Employment

Employees who undertake employment with another organisation must inform Serenta Homecare. This enables the Company to ensure compliance with the Working Time Regulations and to monitor overall working hours where necessary to reduce the risk of fatigue.

Timekeeping

Employees are expected to attend work punctually and complete all scheduled visits as allocated. If an employee anticipates being delayed for any reason, they must contact the office immediately so that alternative arrangements can be made where necessary and Clients can be kept informed.

Exceptional Circumstances

There may be occasions, such as severe weather, major incidents, business continuity arrangements or emergency care requirements, where employees are asked to work alternative hours or amended shift patterns. Serenta Homecare will make every reasonable effort to ensure employees continue to receive appropriate rest periods whilst maintaining the safe delivery of care.

Responsibilities

The Registered Manager is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively and that Serenta Homecare complies with employment legislation relating to working hours.

Care Coordinators are responsible for planning rotas using employees' agreed availability, ensuring safe staffing levels and communicating any changes to employees in a timely manner.

Employees are responsible for working within their agreed availability or contracted hours, providing appropriate notice of any changes to availability, accurately recording working hours and informing the office of any delays or concerns that may affect the delivery of care.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if changes to legislation, CQC guidance or operational requirements make this necessary.

Document Control

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Author: Fran Beardsmore