

NUTRITION POLICY

Policy Statement

It is the aim of Complete Care Agency Limited to provide, where required, a high quality service to provide support for service users who have dietary needs or who require help and support with cooking or eating or drinking. The aim of Complete Care Agency is that service users should be enabled to receive food that is nutritious and well prepared, to be able to make an informed choice about what they wish to eat, and to receive appropriate assistance with eating and/or drinking where needed.

Scope

Complete Care Agency believes that access to high quality meals, snacks and drinks is a fundamental right of all people and no less those who require home care support. Complete Care Agency understands that a nutritious diet, which includes access to adequate drinks, is a key element in achieving a healthy lifestyle. It understands that many service users who require home care need assistance in establishing a healthy diet and others suffer from a dietary deficiency, such as malnutrition or obesity. Complete Care Agency therefore believes that all service users should be assessed and helped to make a real choice to achieve a healthy and nutritious diet.

Complete Care Agency also considers that mealtimes represent an important part of the day for many. Thus the organization expects its care staff to endeavour to ensure that mealtimes are as relaxed, pleasant and enjoyable as possible.

Complete Care Agency recognises that freedom of choice is very important in this area and that service users should be free to choose, wherever possible, what they want to eat, when they want to eat and where they want to eat. Where service users cannot make these choices they will rely on the service helping them by giving them access to a wide range of varied and healthy food options that they are known to like.

Complete Care Agency understands that independence is a key part of living with dignity and will try to encourage and help all service users to be as independent in feeding themselves as possible for as long as they possibly can.

All meals prepared by Complete Care Agency must be compliant with food safety legislation, including the requirements of the **Food Safety Act 1990**.

In addition to the above legislation, Complete Care Agency also recognises that the provision of access to a wholesome and healthy diet is also an important part of compliance with the registration requirements of the Care Quality Commission.

CQC requirements

Essential Standards requirements

Nutritional care is covered by Regulation 14 of the **Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2010** which states the following:

(1) Where food and hydration are provided to service users as a component of the carrying on of the regulated activity, the registered person must ensure that service users are protected from the risks of inadequate nutrition and dehydration, by means of the provision of:

(a) a choice of suitable and nutritious food and hydration, in sufficient quantities to meet service users needs

(b) food and hydration that meet any reasonable requirements arising from a service user's religious or cultural background and

(c) support, where necessary, for the purposes of enabling service users to eat and drink sufficient amounts for their needs.

(2) For the purposes of the regulation, "food and hydration" includes, where applicable, parenteral nutrition and the administration of dietary supplements where prescribed.

The regulation is supported by Outcome 5 of the Essential Standards of Quality and Safety which states that service providers who provide food and drink as part of their service should:

- Reduce the risks to service users of poor hydration or nutrition
- Encourage service users to have an appropriate and suitable nutritional intake
- Facilitate appropriate nutritional screening and assessment
- Facilitate referral for specialist assessment where required
- Ensure that food is handled, stored, prepared and delivered in a way that meets the requirements of the **Food Safety Act 1990**
- Provide choices of food and drink for people to meet their diverse needs
- Provide appropriate, skilled and sensitive help and assistance with eating and drinking where this is required.

Fundamental Standards requirements

Subject to Parliamentary approval, the draft Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 will replace the Essential Standards with new Fundamental Standards from April 2015.

The draft legislation, set out for consultation in *Guidance for providers on meeting the fundamental standards and on CQC's enforcement powers*, includes Regulation 14: Meeting Nutritional and Hydration Needs

Regulation 14 states that, where the service is designed to meet such needs, the nutritional and hydration needs of service users must be met.

To meet the requirements of this regulation, the CQC state that providers must assess each service user's nutrition and hydration needs on an ongoing basis and provide food and drink (including parenteral nutrition and dietary supplements) to meet them, including accommodating any religious/cultural needs and reflecting their preferences.

The desired outcome is that the health, safety and welfare of service users in relation to their nutritional needs are met.

Policy

Complete Care Agency believes that every service user has the right to a varied and nutritious diet that provides for all of their dietary needs and offers health, choice and pleasure.

Therefore, in Complete Care Agency:

- All service users will have a suitable needs assessment conducted at the start of their care which will include a simple assessment of their nutritional and dietary needs, including any help they may need with cooking, eating or drinking. The assessment should be carried out by a senior member of staff with appropriate training and skills and should be recorded in the service user plan of care. Actions required by care staff will be agreed with the service user, their families or representatives, and will also be entered into the plan.
- Any new service user with special nutritional needs identified during assessment will be, with their agreement, referred to their GP. Where a service user is already under the care of a specialist, such as a dietician or a speech and language therapist, the service will do all it can to work together with the specialist and cooperate with all agreed plans of care.
- Examples of such specialists include:
 - a. Service users with swallowing difficulties may be referred to speech and language therapy services
 - b. Service users who may require specialist equipment such as special plates and cutlery may be referred to an occupational therapist for assessment
 - c. Service users with special dietary needs relating to illness or condition may be referred to a local dietician service.
- Where a service user has a specialist nutritional assessment or screening, the details will be kept in their records and will contribute to their plan of care, including any assessment of hydrational needs.
- During the initial needs assessment and care planning process, each service user will be asked for their individual food and drink preferences as well as their cultural, religious or health needs and these will be taken into account when planning food choices and when making drinks available. Where a service user is not able to state their needs all efforts will be made to discover

their food preferences by discussion with relatives, representatives, carers or friends.

- Home care staff will be alert to any difficulties that a service user may be having with regards to their nutrition or hydration and will report any worries or concerns to a senior member of staff. Complete Care Agency recognises that common problems that can lead to a person being at risk from poor nutrition or hydration include:
 - a. Dental problems, such as poorly fitting or broken dentures, or mouth or tooth disease
 - b. Depression or other mental health difficulties
 - c. Swallowing problems caused by disease, such as dysphagia resulting from stroke or dementia
 - d. Side effects of medication
 - e. Concerns with drinking relating to continence.
- All service users will be given information and advice on what constitutes a balanced diet to help them make an informed decision about the type, and amount, of food they need to address any risk of poor nutrition and/or dehydration. The information will be provided in a range of different ways and in a manner and format that the person is able to understand.
- Where appropriate and safe to do so, and where it is identified in the plan of care, care staff will help service users to plan and prepare their own meals in order to support their independence.
- Each service user will be offered choices about:
 - a. What to eat
 - b. When to eat
 - c. Where to eat.
- Where the service user requires care staff to choose and plan their meals for them, care staff will change the food choices regularly to provide choice and variety and service users will be asked which choice they would prefer at every meal. In such cases the input of service users and their families and representatives in menu planning will be welcomed. Food and drink options will be designed to provide high quality and popular food which the service user will want to eat and which will provide for all of their nutritional needs, including vitamins and minerals.
- Where necessary menu advice and support will be obtained from a registered dietician to ensure that an adequate nutritional balance is being maintained.
- Home care staff are expected to ensure that mealtimes are unhurried and relaxed with service users being given plenty of time to eat and enjoy their food.
- Food will be presented in a manner that is attractive and appealing.

- Care staff should make drinks available and accessible throughout mealtimes and throughout the day, where possible, especially for service users who are unable to serve themselves with a drink.
- All meals will be cooked, prepared and served according to the high standards required by food hygiene legislation.
- Specialist menu's and therapeutic diets will be supported as required and indicated in individualized plans of care. Where a soft or pureed diet is provided appropriate advice may be obtained from a speech and language therapist and all efforts will be made to ensure that the food is served in an appetising way. Complete Care Agency recognises that service users:
 - a. Should have any special diets or dietary supplements that their needs require arranged on the advice of an appropriately qualified or experienced person.
 - b. Should have access to specialist advice and techniques for receiving nutrition where their needs require it.
- Staff serving meals should report to the manager if a service user does not eat their meals or if their eating habits change.
- Eating difficulties or a need for assistance at mealtimes will be identified within each service user's care plan and a plan of assistance agreed both with the service user and their relatives, where necessary.
- For any service user with a need for assistance with eating, arrangements will be made to help them to feed themselves with dignity. Where a service user is unable to feed themselves then discrete and sensitive assistance will be provided by home care staff.
- The quality of meals and nutrition will be a regular item in staff, service user and relatives surveys and adequate processes and facilities will be offered for both service users and their relatives or representatives to register their views and opinions. A food quality questionnaire will be distributed on a regular basis to ensure that service users are able to provide feedback.

Management Duties

Managers and supervisors at Complete Care Agency have a duty to:

- ensure the delivery of a high quality, safe and nutritious catering service, where it is needed, that meets the needs of service users
- ensure that the specific religious, cultural and nutritional requirements of service users are catered for
- ensure that all care staff involved in serving food are trained in basic food handling and food hygiene
- keep records of all staff training, including the dates of any food hygiene refreshers required

- ensure that the provision of nutritional services are compliant with all available best practice advice and guidelines including:
 - a. latest Care Quality Commission guidance
 - b. nutritional care guidelines for older people published by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)
- regularly audit the quality of the nutritional catering services offered
- monitor complaints and compliments relating to nutrition and mealtimes, taking action as required and fully investigating any complaints
- ensure that service users, and their relatives and representatives, have adequate processes in place to be able to register their opinions and feelings about the food services offered and to have their thoughts listened to and acted upon.

Staff Duties

Home care staff have a duty to:

- understand the importance of mealtimes to the people they look after
- understand the importance of proper hygiene and handwashing in food handling and serving
- assist those service users who require help with eating and drinking using appropriate skills, tact and sensitivity
- monitor the nutritional status of service users over time and report any concerns immediately to a senior member of staff.

Review of this Policy:

Date: 29th January 2016

Review Date: 29th January 2018