

Policy Writing Guidelines and Template

When writing your own policies, it is important to remember that they must be your policies and relevant to your service. It isn't sufficient to submit published guidance as a 'policy' or plagiarise another services policy and claim it as your own.

This document provides guidance on how to structure your policies. They don't necessarily have to be lengthy or overly detailed - **think quality not quantity**. Bear in mind that each service is unique and operates in its own individual way. Not all services are the same and not all policies are the same. You therefore need to clearly describe what you do and how you do it. Further information on what content to include in specific policies is available on our website at:

http://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/our_work/inspecting_and_regulating_care/independent_healthcare/register_a_new_service.aspx

Once registered, your service will receive regular inspections. As part of the inspection process, an inspector will read your policies to understand what it is you do in your service and how you normally do it. They will use your policies as a starting point to understand how your service operates and 'test' to see if what you say in your policy matches what you do in practice.

Think of yourself as a user of your service... so, as a service user – what would your expectations be? How would you want risks to your safety or wellbeing to be managed? How would you want a complaint to be dealt with? How would you want your information to be stored? How would you want your confidentiality to be respected? How would you want the medication you're given to be carried out, stored, procured etc. How would you want your treatment or procedure to be undertaken? How would you want infection control risks to be managed? How would you want your views and opinions to be taken into account?

The table on page 2 illustrates some examples of policies and their suggested content, to give you a starting point. Please note that these are examples only and not designed as an exhaustive list. It's your responsibility as the registered service provider to make sure you have the right policies for the type of service you provide.

The policy template on page 3 & 4 is an example policy layout and can be used and adapted to suit your service.

| Name and purpose of Policy | Describe ... |
|---|--|
| <p>Complaints Policy:</p> <p>Should set out the procedure followed to receive, record, respond to, investigate and resolve complaints.</p> | <p>Responsibilities (who will acknowledge, respond to and investigate complaints).</p> <p>The process (a service user should follow to make a complaint - e.g. by phone, email, letter, website – include contact details).</p> <p>Recording (how/where a received complaint is recorded).</p> <p>Timescales (e.g. acknowledging receipt of complaint, investigating complaint and providing a resolution).</p> <p>Signposting to the healthcare regulator (make clear that service users can complain to Improvement Scotland at any time. Give full postal address, phone number and email: Healthcare Improvement Scotland Gyle Square, 1 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9EB 0131 623 4342 hcis.ihcregulation@nhs.net</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation (how complaints will be monitored for trends and evaluated to improve the service provided).</p> |
| <p>Clinical Governance Policy:</p> <p>Should set out how you will identify and manage risks to patients arising out of the service you provide.</p> | <p>How you will identify what can go wrong during the treatments & procedures you provide.</p> <p>How you will go about understanding the factors that influence these risks.</p> <p>How you will learn lessons from any adverse events that may occur.</p> <p>How you will ensure action is taken to prevent recurrence.</p> <p>How you will reduce the chance that the identified risks will happen and what systems are in place to ensure this.</p> <p>How you will monitor and measure that the systems you put in place are working.</p> |
| <p>Medicines Management Policy:</p> <p>Should set out how medicines will be procured, received, stored, prescribed, transported, administered and disposed of.</p> | <p>Ordering (where from and how ordered).</p> <p>Receipt/Storage (locked cupboard/fridge, recording, stock checks).</p> <p>Prescribing (how, who by, where recorded).</p> <p>Transportation (if applicable).</p> <p>Administering (records).</p> <p>Disposal</p> <p>Medication errors (how errors will be minimised and, if they occur, how will they be reported and to whom).</p> <p>Audit</p> |

Policy Template

Title of Policy

Name of Company

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Date Effective: | |
| Review Date: | |
| Version No: | |
| Policy Owner / Author: | |

1. Reason for Policy / Purpose of Policy

State why the policy exists / purpose.
Cite any legal or regulatory aims to meet.

2. Policy Statement and Aims

State the policy's intent / why it applies

3. Scope

State who is affected by the policy, e.g. staff, clients, contractors.

4. Definitions

Any relevant definitions, specific to this policy.

| | |
|------|------------|
| Term | Definition |
| Term | Definition |
| Term | Definition |

5. Procedure

Processes to be used for compliance to policy. How the policy requirements will be met.

6. Responsibilities

State who is responsible for implementing this policy and the associated procedures.

7. Enforcement / Compliance

Describe the potential repercussions for not complying with the policy.

8. Related information

List any related policies, website, forms.