



BROTHERS OF CHARITY SERVICES IRELAND

POLICY ON COMMUNICATION WITH INDIVIDUALS SUPPORTED BY THE SERVICES

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Ethos

We are committed to working with people with an intellectual disability to claim their rightful place as valued citizens. Inclusion is a fundamental principle that underlies all aspects of our work. We believe in the intrinsic value of every person and we aim to further the dignity of all associated with our services.

We continue the Brothers of Charity Services tradition of being open to the best contemporary influences. We want to be inspired by the most creative ideas and to ask how we give them concrete expression.

The Brothers of Charity Services Ethos (2001), Going Forward Together.

1.0 Introduction

The Brothers of Charity Services Ireland endeavour to offer services/supports in local communities. This enables each person who is supported by our services to positively engage in the social and economic life of their local towns and villages and in doing so, develop a range of relationships that enhance their quality of life. Our responses are based on the recognition of each person (who is supported by our service) as an individual, an equal citizen with equal rights and an absolute respect of that status. We, therefore, support each person to live their lives based on their own personal visions and choices, to identify and select their personal goals in life and to develop their personal plan to achieve those goals.

2.0 Policy Statement

- 2.1 The Brothers of Charity Services Ireland recognises that every individual supported by the Services has a right to effect, through their communication, all aspects of their lives. All forms of communication are equally valued and promoted and each person has the right to have their message understood and acted upon. The Services are committed to clear and effective communication across the organisation underpinned by the belief that effective communication:

- Assists individuals supported by the Services in making informed choices towards a full and valued life,
- Promotes good quality service provision

3.0 Purpose

- 3.1 The purpose of this policy is uphold the right to communicate and be heard of each individual supported by the Brothers of Charity Services Ireland (BOCSI) and to promote a Total Communication approach where all forms of communication are equally valued and promoted.

4.0 Scope

- 4.1 This policy applies to all staff of Brothers of Charity Services Ireland (BOCSI) as well as students, volunteers and others who support individuals in our services.

5.0 Legislation/other related policies

- Health Act 2007 (Care and Support of Residents in Designated centres for Persons (Children and Adults) with Disabilities Regulations 2013)
- The Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015.
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities (2006).

6.0 Glossary of Terms and Definitions

- 6.1 **Total Communication** refers to a philosophy not a method. It works towards creating equal and successful communications between individuals with different levels of language skill. It is a willingness to use all methods of communication available in order for each person to understand and be understood.
- 6.2 **The Services** refer to the Brother of Charity Services Ireland.
- 6.3 **Staff** refers to all persons paid or unpaid who support individuals in our services.
- 6.4 **Communication Partner** refers to all those who interact with the person supported.
- 6.5 **Communication Environment** refers to anywhere communication takes place and the interaction between the person supported, their communication partner and the physical environment.
- 6.6 **Accessible information** refers to information provided in a range of ways so the individual has the opportunity to acquire the information. It can be in the form of an Easy Read document, video, object based etc.

7.0 Roles and Responsibilities

- 7.1 It is the responsibility of all Senior Management, i.e. Services Managers, Team Leaders, Heads of Department to:
- Ensure that all staff understand fully the content of this policy and their responsibility in implementing it.
 - Promote a culture that supports a Total Communication environment.
 - Ensure that Staff can avail of identified training.
- 7.2 It is the responsibility of all staff providing direct support to individuals to:
- Be aware of their role in implementing this policy and provide the people they support in services with the daily opportunities to communicate with a range of communication partners and across environments.
 - Promote a culture that supports a Total Communication environment.

8.0 General Principles

- 8.1 The Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities highlights the need for state parties to take 'all appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities can exercise the right to freedom of expression and opinion, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas on an equal basis with others and through all forms of communication of their choice.' Staff must recognise that each person supported by the Services has their own individual way of communicating and ensure that their right to communicate is promoted and facilitated.
- 8.2 The Services are committed to facilitating individuals supported to exercise their rights to communicate. Individuals supported by the Services will be spoken to directly and respectfully and will be supported in good communication environments where there are genuine opportunities for communication with other people including peers.
- 8.3 Staff will work in partnership with the person, their families and significant others to reduce the impact of communication difficulties and increase independence, choice, participation and relationships.
- 8.4 Supporting successful communication for individuals must be in line with relevant current legislation for example the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015 and best practice principles of person centred planning approaches.
- 8.5 As part of each person's individual plan there should be a Communication Section. This will concisely document information relating to the person's ability to understand, preferred methods of communication and any communication supports required by the person.
- 8.6 The Person Centred Plan must be available to the individual and/or their representative in a format that is accessible for them in line with their information and communication abilities.
- 8.7 If a person requires support from Speech and Language Therapy they should be supported to make a referral to the relevant SLT service.
- 8.8 LAMH© is the recognised sign system for people in Ireland who have communication difficulties. Staff supporting individuals for whom LAMH© is recommended, will be facilitated to attend approved training.
- 8.9 Staff must provide clear information to individuals supported about what is happening throughout their day and provide opportunities for choice making by using objects, pictures, symbols or words depending on the individual's needs/preferences.
- 8.10 While recognising the individual needs of each person, where possible BOCSI will support the national move towards the use of a standard image or object. This will allow for more flexibility and support transitions between settings.
- 8.11 Written communication needs to be in an accessible format, of which 'Easy to read' documents are one. For many people supported, further work is needed to make information accessible for the individual. Where possible individuals

supported by the Services must be involved in the production of easy to read information and documents.

- 8.12 The policies and procedures of the Services directly relating to individuals supported should be made available in an accessible format.

8.13 Provision of Information to Residents

- Individuals living in a designated centre will have a copy of the Statement of Purpose available to them and their representatives.
- Individuals living in a designated centre will be provided with information, in a format that is appropriate to their needs, relating to the service they are receiving. This will include information on
 - Facilities and Services provided
 - Terms and conditions related to residency
 - How to access inspection reports
 - Visiting arrangements
 - Arrangements for residents' involvement in the running of the centre.
 - Fire drill procedures.
- Staff will ensure that each individual, in accordance with their wishes, age and nature of disability, has access to advocacy services and information about their rights.
- Staff will ensure that each person and their representative are provided with a copy of the Complaints Procedure which is in an accessible and age appropriate format and includes the appeals procedure.

9.0 Revision and Audit

- 9.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years or if necessary amended in light of experience of its operation and changing legislation and/or guidance from appropriate bodies.

10.0 References / Bibliography

- Health Act 2007 (Care and Support of Residents in Designated Centres for Persons (Children and Adults) with Disabilities) Regulations 2013
- IASLT Speech and Language Therapy provision for adults with an intellectual disability and communication needs: Definition, Service provision and Recommendations for change 201
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities (2006).