



HOLIDAYS AND OUTINGS POLICY

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The importance of holidays and outings

A holiday is generally understood to refer to any activity involving an overnight stay in accommodation that is not the normal place of residence of a service user. It can be just for one or two days or for a week or two and may even involve travel abroad.

An outing is a trip away from the service user's home but not involving an overnight stay.

Remaining socially active is a key part of living with dignity and independence for service users. Getting out of their home means that service users can visit family and friends and enjoy a break from their regular routine. Many people in receipt of support from JRH Support would lack the ability to travel on their own and would only be able to do so if they were accompanied by a support worker.

While some people prefer to stay at home and avoid social contact, it is commonly accepted that the benefits of an active social life for service users will include:

- Improved general health and wellbeing
- Slower decline in physical and mental capacities
- Greater self-esteem and satisfaction with life.

Holidays and trips allow service users the chance to experience new things, meet new people and do things they enjoy. While some service users will enjoy accessing organised holidays through companies or charities that specialise in breaks for disabled people, or join in group holidays, others may prefer to organise trips independently.

Outings and activities

The frequency of meals out, trips and activities should be addressed via the service user's support plan, taking into account issues such as health, social inclusion, their individual choice and their finances.

Staff should ensure support is being delivered according to the support plan. This will address any potential for abuse (e.g. staff making decisions rather than service users about outings, or deciding that it may be easier to go out for a meal rather than supporting someone to prepare it).

Staff should always look for ways of reducing the cost of any staff activity or transport costs. This principle should always be applied to helping service users get value for money.

Staff costs

Service users are not expected to pay for the costs of staff food or refreshments when on duty in the service user's home. This includes takeaways, tea, coffee etc.

Where staff are accompanying a service user out for a meal or a trip, it is anticipated that the service user will pay the cost of the meal or trip for the staff member/s accompanying them. The support plan will record individual's specific decisions around this. If a service user has been assessed as lacking the capacity to make such decisions around financial expenditure, then a best interest decision should be recorded in the support plan about such expenditure.

If a service user does not wish to, or is unable to afford to pay for staff meals; then staff should, wherever possible still support the individual to eat out. In these circumstances staff should sit with the service user and politely turn down an offer of food from waiting staff.

If a service user is paying for a staff meal, the staff member should always try to have the cheapest meal option and no more than one drink. This should be agreed with the individual service user before the trip takes place and documented in running records.

Transport

Service users should be supported to use public transport where appropriate and feasible, and supported to access bus passes etc.

Where staff use their own cars, they must have appropriate insurance cover – i.e. business insurance.

If staff use their own cars, service users may be asked to pay a mileage contribution of 31p per mile. This must be agreed beforehand with a member of the leadership team and must be in an individual's support plan. Staff must never accept this contribution directly from the service user and service users should not pay for fuel. All mileage should be recorded by staff using the mileage form on the staff section of the Company website. JRH Support will subsequently invoice the service user for the mileage used and pay the staff member on pay day.

Holidays

Approval for a holiday must be obtained from a senior manager before any arrangements are made. Dates and destinations must be proposed well in advance so the appropriate arrangements can be made. Final arrangements will have to be agreed by the manager of the property and a risk assessment completed.

In advance of any holiday booking, a Team Manager must complete a 'Service User Holiday Proposal' form. The form can be found using the following link - <https://zfrmz.com/I0tRPxNBqTFVp2JXlqW2>

The proposed costings must be worked out, identifying any staff costs, e.g. holiday, transport, subsistence etc. Agreement on how these are to be met must be reached in advance of the holiday and documented.

The amount of daily support hours must also be agreed in advance of the holiday. This is likely to be more than the service user is normally funded for, so it should be established who will pay the cost of this.

Service users should be supported to explore a range of holiday options, including different types of holiday, different locations etc. This may be with family or friends, on their own, or where there are no other options available or the service user chooses, with direct support from JRH Support staff.

Service users should be assisted to budget for holidays and make realistic choices regarding what they can afford or where they may need to reduce expenditure on day-to-day expenses in order to be able to budget appropriately.

Service users are expected to pay for flights and basic accommodation costs for a support worker. However, staff should ensure that value for money is sought. Service users should NOT be expected to pay for all food or drinks for support staff whilst on holiday. Acknowledgement of the usual costs for staff of providing their own meals and drinks should be balanced with any additional cost of having to buy them 'away from home'.

Agreement regarding an appropriate level of contribution from the service user should be made as part of the holiday arrangements. This may vary depending on whether the service user wants to eat out and needs support to do so or whether the staff member would be able to cook for themselves etc.

While on holiday

For beach and 'sunshine holidays, staff should ensure that the people they are supporting are adequately protected against sunburn.

Extra vigilance is required for water activities. While assisting vulnerable adults in any water activity at the beach, staff should remain in the water with them and ensure that no individual is left unsupervised. Such activities should only take place on safe beaches where lifeguard supervision and safety equipment are available.

Individual service users should never be left unsupervised while using a private swimming pool, jacuzzi or hydrotherapy pool unless this has been assessed as being safe and a risk assessment has been completed by a competent member of staff.

Records should be maintained of all financial transactions and wherever possible, receipts should be requested and logged against the transaction.

Staff should not drink alcohol whilst on duty accompanying people on holidays, and they should have appropriate rest periods.

Staff are expected to behave in a responsible, professional manner at all times while accompanying service users. Any staff member who does anything that could bring JRH Support into disrepute or endanger people in their care should be subject to appropriate disciplinary procedures.

Staff selection

Most staff should be able to accompany service users on day trips or visits with suitable flexibility on staff rotas. However, not all staff will be agreeable to overnight stays or holidays. Gender is an obvious issue, especially where personal care is concerned, and service users should also be given a choice about who accompanies them on holiday.

Accompanying a service user outside of their home does not take any particular skills above and beyond those that a support worker should possess, but patience and understanding will be needed, particularly if anything goes wrong. Staff will need to keep a cool head and be able to think on their feet. The independence and freedom of choice of the service user should be respected at all times and this might require negotiation and sensitivity, particularly if the service user's wishes might expose the party to risk.

If the service of accompanied holidays is offered then a list of staff that are agreeable to such arrangements should be compiled

Safety and security

The Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974 makes the employer responsible for the health, safety and welfare at work of its employees all the time they are involved in the work of the employer. Employees are also under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of anyone who may be affected by their activities. This includes staff involved in supporting outings and holidays.

Many support staff accompanying a service user on an outing or a simple holiday will do so alone. Such lone working can bring with it an element of risk. Staff working alone in potentially isolated conditions have no immediate backup or support and so are at a greater general risk, including injury through an accident or illness or as a result of aggression or violence directed towards them.

Younger or less experienced staff are often at a greater risk than more experienced staff when working alone. Such workers also need to rely on their own judgment and initiative and may be at a greater risk of making mistakes or errors that could prove costly to the organisation.

Lone workers should not be at more risk than other employees. This may require extra risk-control measures to be put into place, such as additional supervision, protective equipment, better means of communication (e.g. mobile phones), or means of raising the alarm in case of emergencies.

Managers should take steps to ensure that all lone working is properly assessed for risk, including accompanied outings and holidays. They should check the adequacy of control measures used and review the risk assessment from time to time to ensure it is still adequate. Points to be covered will comprise:

- Safety and security on the holiday
- The appropriateness and safety of accommodation arrangements
- The appropriateness and safety of travel arrangements
- Financial arrangements and risks
- Communication and supervision
- Emergency protocols.

It is essential that staff are trained to know what to do in an emergency. Without a clear protocol for action, the result can be dangerous delay and indecision, especially where staff are lone workers.

The emergency plan might need to include:

- The process to send money to the holiday destination
- Back-up staff who are able to travel to the destination at short notice
- Arrangements in the event that a member of staff must accompany a service user home, or to hospital, etc.

The responsible manager should ensure that sufficient planning and thought has been given to the holiday and that the staff involved are competent enough to deal with any emergencies, such as a medical emergency. In particular, this applies to staff accompanying service users on overseas holidays, as normal communication links may be restricted and make it difficult for staff to seek advice.

Staff and service users on outings and holidays should be encouraged to take simple common-sense security precautions. They should try to keep to “safe” areas when on holiday and heed any government travel advice or restrictions. On foreign holidays they should:

- Pack and label their own cases
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash
- Avoid putting passports, money or other valuables in one place, such as a handbag or wallet
- Beware pickpockets, muggers and mobile phone thieves
- Keep hotel or accommodation doors locked
- Keep medication in their prescription bottles or packets for customs checks
- Be familiar with the local laws and customs

Valuables should not be left lying around in the holiday accommodation where thieves can see them easily through windows.

Holiday File

Prior to going on holiday with service users, managers should prepare a ‘Holiday File’ and make sure all relevant staff are aware of it and it is taken on the holiday. Most of the information will be accessible on the Company software, but if there will be no internet access paper copies should be used.

The file should include the following:

- Support plans and risk assessments (if no internet access)
- Financial transaction sheets (if no internet access)
- Running records sheets (if no internet access)
- MAR sheets
- Addresses and contact details of local hospitals, emergency dentists.
- Emergency contact details of next of kin (if no internet access)

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