Social Isolation Reduction Policy

PRN-131: Social Isolation Reduction Policy
Company Name: AI Auto-Tech Ltd
Trading/Business Name: CAREHOPES
Company Registration Number: 15556946
SIC Code: 88100 – Social Work Activities Without Accommodation for the Elderly and Disabled
Email: admin@carehopes.com
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1. Policy Introduction

CAREHOPES, the trading name of AI Auto-Tech Ltd, is committed to reducing social isolation among service users by providing safe, meaningful, and person-centred companionship. Social isolation is a significant risk factor for poor mental health, loneliness, reduced wellbeing, and diminished quality of life.

This policy outlines how companions identify isolation, support social engagement, promote community participation, and maintain professional boundaries while ensuring safeguarding compliance.

2. Key Principles

- **Person-centred:** Support must reflect the service user's preferences, interests, and goals.
- **Safety-focused:** All activities must comply with safeguarding and risk-management rules.
- **Respectful:** Interactions must uphold dignity, autonomy, and cultural sensitivity.
- **Empowering:** Companions encourage independence and confidence.
- **Holistic:** Social isolation is addressed through emotional, social, and environmental support.
- **Non-duplication:** Companions must not duplicate services provided by external professionals.
- **Accountable:** All observations and activities must be documented accurately.

3. Policy Statement

CAREHOPES ensures that:

- Social isolation risks are identified and documented
- Companions support meaningful social engagement

- Activities are safe, appropriate, and person-centred
- Staff maintain professional boundaries
- Safeguarding rules are followed at all times
- Cultural and personal preferences are respected
- Staff avoid proxy working or unauthorised shift swapping
- Documentation is factual, objective, and secure

4. Purpose

- Reduce social isolation and loneliness
- Promote wellbeing, confidence, and independence
- Support safe community participation
- Provide clear guidance for companions
- Strengthen safeguarding and risk management
- Ensure consistent, high-quality companionship

5. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Agency workers
- Zero-contract workers (**PRN-149**)

It covers social isolation reduction in:

- Private homes
- Community settings
- Public spaces
- Group companionship
- Multi-staff working environments
- Digital environments

6. Related Policies

PRN-107 Care and Support Planning Policy PRN-108 Community Participation Policy PRN-109 Companionship Standards Policy PRN-110 Cultural Competence Policy PRN-112 Data Protection and GDPR Policy PRN-113 Deprivation of Liberty Awareness Policy PRN-143 Wellbeing Monitoring Policy PRN-145 Working in Pairs and Multi-Staff Working Policy PRN-146 Working with Other Social Workers and Carers Policy PRN-147 Proxy Working Principle PRN-148 Use of Personal and Service Users Gadget Policy PRN-150 Working with Vulnerable Children Policy

7. Understanding Social Isolation

7.1 Definition

Social isolation refers to:

- Limited social contact
- Lack of meaningful relationships
- Reduced community engagement
- Emotional loneliness
- Withdrawal from social activities

7.2 Indicators

Companions must be alert to:

- Withdrawal or avoidance
- Low mood or sadness
- Lack of motivation
- Reduced communication
- Fear of social environments
- Loss of confidence
- Signs of emotional distress

8. Reducing Social Isolation

8.1 Person-Centred Engagement

Companions must:

- Tailor activities to the service user’s interests
- Encourage social interaction
- Support confidence-building
- Respect cultural and personal preferences

- Promote autonomy and independence

8.2 Community Participation

Companions may support:

- Walks
- Coffee outings
- Social clubs
- Cultural events
- Religious gatherings
- Community centres
- Educational activities

All activities must be risk-assessed and follow PRN-108.

8.3 Emotional Support

Companions may:

- Provide conversation
- Offer reassurance
- Encourage expression
- Support confidence and self-esteem

Companions must avoid:

- Counselling
- Therapy
- Clinical advice

9. Safeguarding Requirements

Companions must:

- Follow PRN-143 and PRN-150
- Maintain boundaries with vulnerable adults and children
- Avoid unsupervised contact with children
- Follow gender-based allocation rules
- Report concerns immediately
- Document safeguarding risks accurately

If external professionals already provide a service:

- Companions must skip that service
- Document: *"Service already being provided by other service: {name of service}."*
- Avoid duplication
- Escalate concerns to management

10. Prohibited Conduct

Companions must **not**:

- Provide personal care
- Provide clinical or therapeutic support
- Attend private family events unless authorised
- Engage in physical sports
- Transport service users without approval
- Share personal contact details
- Engage in proxy working
- Swap shifts without TC approval
- Force participation in activities
- Restrict movement or freedom

11. Multi-Staff Working

Companions must:

- Follow PRN-145
- Identify the Lead Companion
- Maintain communication
- Avoid splitting up unless safe
- Document multi-staff involvement

12. Documentation Requirements

Companions must document:

- Activities completed
- Locations visited
- Observations

- Social engagement levels
- Safeguarding concerns
- External professionals present
- Multi-staff involvement
- “Service already being provided” entries

Records must be factual, objective, and securely stored.

13. Roles and Responsibilities

13.1 Trustees

- Oversee governance and compliance

13.2 Senior Management

- Ensure social isolation reduction strategies
- Approve policy changes

13.3 DSL

- Review safeguarding concerns
- Provide guidance and training

13.4 Managers

- Support staff
- Conduct risk assessments
- Review documentation

13.5 Staff

- Follow standards
- Maintain boundaries
- Report concerns
- Document accurately

14. Non-Compliance

Non-compliance may include:

- Boundary breaches
- Safeguarding failures
- Proxy working

- Poor documentation
- Unsafe behaviour
- Failure to follow care plans

Consequences may include:

- Retraining
- Formal warnings
- Suspension
- Termination
- Referral to safeguarding authorities

15. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required due to:

- Legislative changes
- Safeguarding updates
- Organisational changes
- Audit findings