Working in Pairs and Multi-Staff Working Policy

PRN-157: Working in Pairs and Multi-Staff Working 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
Version Number: V01 20260815
Date of Review: (August 2026)

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1. Policy Introduction

CAREHOPES, the trading name of AI Auto-Tech Ltd, is committed to ensuring the safety, wellbeing, and professional integrity of staff and service users. "Working in Pairs and Multi-Staff Working" refers to **any situation where more than one staff member is allocated to work together with a client**, including:

- Two staff
- Three staff
- Four staff
- Larger multi-staff teams
- Group companionship sessions
- Multi-staff allocations for complex needs
- Multi-staff allocations for high-risk safeguarding cases

This policy ensures that all multi-staff working arrangements are safe, structured, professional, and aligned with safeguarding principles.

2. Key Principles

- **Safety first:** Multi-staff working reduces risk and increases protection.
- **Scalable:** Applies to any number of staff working together.
- **Risk-based:** Multi-staff allocation is determined by risk assessment.
- **Professionalism:** Staff maintain boundaries and conduct at all times.
- **Accountability:** Multiple staff provide mutual oversight.
- **Support:** Staff support each other emotionally and practically.
- **Consistency:** Procedures apply uniformly across all group sizes.

3. Policy Statement

CAREHOPES ensures that multi-staff working ("Working in Pairs and Multi-Staff Working") is used:

- When risk assessments identify elevated risk
- When safeguarding concerns are present
- When service users require additional support
- When environments are unpredictable or unsafe
- When staff request additional safety measures
- When mandated by management or the DSL
- During group companionship sessions
- During complex behavioural or emotional support sessions
- When working with vulnerable children or adults under PRN-136, PRN-144, PRN-150, PRN-143

Multi-staff working must always remain professional, structured, and aligned with organisational values.

4. Purpose

- Protect staff from unsafe environments
- Strengthen safeguarding for vulnerable adults and children
- Provide mutual oversight and accountability
- Support staff during complex or high-risk sessions
- Ensure safe delivery of companionship services
- Support staff confidence and wellbeing

5. Scope

This policy applies to:

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

It covers multi-staff working in:

- Private homes
- Community settings
- Public spaces
- Transport
- Overnight companionship
- Holiday companionship
- Group companionship
- High-risk environments

6. Related Policies

Safety, Health & Risk Management

PRN-046 Health and Safety Policy PRN-069 Risk Assessment Policy PRN-054 Lone Working Policy PRN-053 Lone Working and Community Visits Procedure PRN-147 Proxy Working Principle PRN-140 Staff Safety Policy

Safeguarding & Protection

PRN-003 Adult Safeguarding Policy PRN-136 Safeguarding Children Policy PRN-144 Child Abuse Policy PRN-150 Working with Vulnerable Children Policy PRN-143 Working with Vulnerable Adults Policy PRN-116 Domestic Abuse Policy PRN-131 Prevent Duty Awareness Policy PRN-129 Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Policy PRN-070 Safeguarding Reporting and Escalation Procedure

Conduct, Ethics & Behaviour

PRN-014 Code of Conduct Policy PRN-015 Code of Ethics PRN-099 Professional Boundaries Policy PRN-004 Anti Harassment & Anti Discrimination Policy PRN-139 Staff Conduct and Behaviour Policy

Operational Delivery

PRN-109 Companionship Standards Policy PRN-017 Companion Charter PRN-018 Companion Completion Checklist

7. Definitions

Working in Pairs and Multi-Staff Working: Any situation where **more than one staff member** works together with a client, including group companionship.

Group Companionship: A structured companionship session involving multiple staff and one or more clients.

Mutual Oversight: Staff observing and supporting each other to maintain safety and professionalism.

8. When Multi-Staff Working Is Required

Multi-staff working is mandatory when:

- A risk assessment identifies elevated risk
- There is a history of aggression, violence, or intimidation
- Safeguarding concerns are active
- Service users display sexually inappropriate behaviour
- The environment is unpredictable or unsafe
- Staff feel unsafe working alone
- Management or the DSL instructs multi-staff allocation
- Working with certain children under PRN-136, PRN-144, PRN-150
- Working with vulnerable adults experiencing crisis
- Group companionship sessions are planned
- Complex behavioural or emotional support is required

9. Staff Allocation Rules for Multi-Staff Working

9.1 Gender-Based Allocation (Safeguarding Controls)

Multi-staff working must follow the same safeguarding allocation rules defined in:

- PRN-136 Safeguarding Children Policy
- PRN-144 Child Abuse Policy
- PRN-150 Working with Vulnerable Children Policy

This includes:

- Male companions only working with male children unless strict conditions are met
- Female companions permitted to work with all children
- Transgender staff allocation rules
- No proxy working under any circumstances

Multi-staff working does **not** override safeguarding allocation rules.

10. Responsibilities of Staff Working in Multi-Staff Teams

10.1 Shared Responsibilities

All staff must:

- Maintain professional boundaries

- Support each other's safety
- Communicate respectfully
- Observe service user behaviour
- Report concerns immediately
- Document the session accurately
- Avoid splitting up unless safe and agreed
- Maintain consistent messaging and behaviour

10.2 Lead Companion

One companion will act as the **Lead Companion**, responsible for:

- Coordinating the session
- Ensuring safety procedures are followed
- Managing communication with the office
- Completing documentation

10.3 Supporting Companions

All additional companions will:

- Provide oversight
- Support safety and risk management
- Assist with activities
- Observe interactions for safeguarding purposes

11. Conduct During Multi-Staff Working

Staff must:

- Remain professional at all times
- Avoid personal conversations unrelated to the session
- Avoid discussing confidential information in front of service users
- Maintain clear boundaries
- Avoid contradicting each other in front of service users
- Present a unified, consistent approach

12. Safeguarding Considerations

Multi-staff working strengthens safeguarding by:

- Providing multiple observers
- Reducing risk of boundary breaches
- Supporting vulnerable adults and children
- Preventing escalation of aggression
- Ensuring immediate response to concerns

13. Documentation & Record Keeping

Records must include:

- Names of all companions present
- Reason for multi-staff working
- Observations
- Safeguarding concerns
- Actions taken
- Communication with authorities (if applicable)

Records must be stored securely.

14. Training Requirements

Staff must receive training in:

- Multi-staff working procedures
- Safeguarding
- Conflict de-escalation
- Professional boundaries
- Trauma-informed practice
- Communication and teamwork

15. Policy Review

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

- Legislative changes
- Safeguarding updates
- Organisational changes
- Incident trends