Loneliness and Social Connection Policy

PRN-86: Loneliness and Social Connection 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 recognises loneliness as a significant public health and wellbeing issue affecting elderly adults, disabled individuals, people with long-term conditions, and socially isolated persons. Loneliness can impact mental health, physical health, cognitive functioning, and overall quality of life.

This policy outlines how companions support service users in reducing loneliness, strengthening social connection, and promoting emotional wellbeing through safe, ethical, and person-centred companionship.

2. Key Principles

- **Compassion:** Loneliness is approached with empathy and sensitivity.
- **Person-centred care:** Support is tailored to individual preferences, abilities, and cultural backgrounds.
- **Boundaries:** Companions maintain professional boundaries while offering emotional presence.
- **Safety:** Safeguarding remains central to all interactions.
- **Inclusion:** Social connection is supported in culturally respectful and accessible ways.
- **Empowerment:** Service users are encouraged to build confidence and independence.
- **Consistency:** Companions provide reliable, predictable emotional support.

3. Policy Statement

CAREHOPES is committed to reducing loneliness and enhancing social connection through:

- Meaningful conversation
- Emotional support
- Social engagement activities
- Community participation
- Digital inclusion support
- Cultural and spiritual connection
- Encouraging independence and confidence

Companions must always uphold safeguarding, professional boundaries, and organisational values.

4. Purpose

- Reduce loneliness among service users
- Strengthen emotional wellbeing
- Promote safe social interaction
- Support community participation
- Encourage meaningful connection
- Provide structured companionship interventions
- Ensure safeguarding and professional boundaries

5. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Contractors
- Agency workers

It covers loneliness support delivered in:

- Private homes
- Community settings
- Digital environments
- Transport and travel

- Overnight companionship
- Holiday companionship

6. Related Policies (Selected ONLY from relevant categories)

Specialist Care & Support

- **PRN-031** Emotional Intelligence Policy
- **PRN-059** Person-Centred Support Policy
- **PRN-135** Relationship-Centred Care Policy
- **PRN-020** Compassionate Practice Policy
- **PRN-117** End-of-Life Support and Compassion Policy
- **PRN-096** Check Up on Client Policy

Client & Service User Interaction

- **PRN-011** Client Engagement Policy
- **PRN-012** Client Interaction & Communication Policy
- **PRN-076** Service User Participation and Feedback Policy
- **PRN-074** Service User Engagement Participation and Co-Production Policy
- **PRN-138** Service User Involvement Policy
- **PRN-109** Companionship Standards Policy

Community, Culture & Inclusion

- **PRN-036** Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- **PRN-110** Cultural Competence Policy
- **PRN-108** Community Participation Policy
- **PRN-141** Values and Culture Policy

Safeguarding & Protection

- **PRN-003** Adult Safeguarding Policy
- **PRN-136** Safeguarding Children Policy
- **PRN-144** Child Abuse Policy
- **PRN-070** Safeguarding Reporting and Escalation Procedure

Digital & Information Governance

- **PRN-114** Digital Inclusion Support Policy
- **PRN-112** Data Protection and GDPR Policy
- **PRN-023** Confidential Information Management Policy
- **PRN-024** Confidentiality Policy

7. Definitions

Loneliness: A subjective feeling of isolation or lack of meaningful connection.

Social Connection: Interactions that promote belonging, emotional support, and engagement.

Companion: A trained staff member providing emotional, social, and practical support within professional boundaries.

8. Companion Responsibilities

8.1 Emotional Support

Companions must:

- Listen actively
- Provide reassurance
- Encourage expression of feelings
- Maintain calm, respectful presence

8.2 Social Engagement

Companions may support:

- Conversation
- Shared activities
- Reading, games, music
- Walks or outings
- Cultural or spiritual practices

8.3 Community Participation

Companions may encourage:

- Local groups
- Social clubs
- Faith communities

- Cultural events
- Volunteering opportunities

8.4 Digital Connection

Companions may support:

- Video calls
- Messaging apps
- Online communities
- Digital literacy

8.5 Professional Boundaries

Companions must **not**:

- Form personal relationships
- Provide personal contact details
- Engage in romantic or intimate behaviour
- Accept inappropriate gifts
- Create dependency

8.6 Safeguarding Awareness

Loneliness may indicate:

- Neglect
- Domestic abuse
- Social isolation
- Cognitive decline
- Mental health concerns

Companions must report concerns immediately.

9. Supporting Different Types of Loneliness

9.1 Emotional Loneliness

Support includes:

- Conversation
- Emotional reassurance

- Reflective listening

9.2 Social Loneliness

Support includes:

- Community engagement
- Group activities
- Digital connection

9.3 Cultural Loneliness

Support includes:

- Cultural practices
- Language-specific engagement
- Faith-based connection

9.4 Situational Loneliness

Examples:

- Bereavement
- Illness
- Disability
- Life transitions

Support includes tailored emotional and social interventions.

10. Safeguarding Considerations

Loneliness increases vulnerability. Companions must:

- Monitor for signs of abuse
- Report concerns immediately
- Avoid creating dependency
- Maintain professional boundaries
- Support autonomy and independence

11. Documentation & Record Keeping

Companions must document:

- Emotional wellbeing observations

- Social engagement activities
- Safeguarding concerns
- Changes in mood or behaviour

Records must be stored securely.

12. Training Requirements

Staff must receive training in:

- Emotional intelligence
- Loneliness awareness
- Cultural competence
- Safeguarding
- Trauma-informed practice
- Professional boundaries

13. Policy Review

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

- Legislative changes
- Safeguarding updates
- Organisational changes
- Public health guidance