Dual Diagnosis Policy

PRN-170: Dual Diagnosis Policy

CAREHOPES™

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1. Policy Statement

CAREHOPES™ is committed to ensuring that employees possess an appropriate level of awareness, knowledge, and understanding of dual diagnosis and co-existing conditions that may affect service users.

CAREHOPES™ recognises that individuals may experience more than one condition simultaneously, resulting in increased vulnerability, safeguarding concerns, communication challenges, and support needs.

This policy establishes CAREHOPES™ expectations regarding Dual Diagnosis Awareness Training and the safe management of dual diagnosis situations within the employee's professional role and level of competence.

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2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote awareness of dual diagnosis.
- Improve employee understanding of complex needs.
- Support safeguarding practices.
- Improve risk identification.
- Strengthen communication and engagement.
- Support person-centred practice.
- Improve service quality and outcomes.
- Ensure employees work within professional boundaries.

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3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Companions
- Healthcare Assistants
- Support Workers
- Wellbeing Support Workers
- Community Support Workers
- Coordinators
- Supervisors
- Managers
- Volunteers
- Third-party providers where applicable

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4. Definition of Dual Diagnosis

For the purpose of this policy, dual diagnosis refers to the presence of two or more co-existing conditions that may affect an individual's wellbeing, behaviour, communication, decision-making capacity, support needs, or vulnerability.

Examples may include:

- Mental health condition and learning disability
- Mental health condition and autism
- Mental health condition and substance misuse
- Dementia and mental illness
- Brain injury and mental illness
- Learning disability and substance misuse
- Autism and anxiety disorders
- Mental illness and physical health conditions

Employees must understand that dual diagnosis presentations are often complex and individualised.

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5. CAREHOPES™ Approach

CAREHOPES™ promotes:

- Person-centred practice
- Equality and inclusion
- Trauma-informed approaches
- Safeguarding-first principles
- Positive behavioural support
- De-escalation techniques
- Dignity and respect
- Multi-agency collaboration

Employees must treat every service user as an individual and avoid assumptions or stereotypes.

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6. Training Requirements

Employees may be required to complete:

- Dual Diagnosis Awareness Training
- Mental Health Awareness Training
- Learning Disability Awareness Training
- Autism Awareness Training
- Safeguarding Training
- Suicide Prevention Awareness Training
- Communication Skills Training
- Positive Behaviour Support Awareness

The level of training required will depend on the employee's role.

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7. Employee Responsibilities

Employees must:

- Recognise potential indicators of dual diagnosis.
- Work within their competence.
- Follow safeguarding procedures.
- Report concerns promptly.
- Maintain professional boundaries.
- Record observations accurately.
- Participate in required training.
- Seek advice where unsure.

Employees must never:

- Diagnose conditions.
- Explain medical diagnoses to service users.
- Provide clinical treatment.
- Alter medical care plans.
- Recommend medication changes.
- Present themselves as healthcare professionals unless appropriately qualified and employed in such a role.

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8. Recognising Possible Indicators

Possible indicators may include:

- Rapid changes in mood
- Anxiety
- Withdrawal
- Communication difficulties
- Confusion
- Emotional dysregulation
- Repeated safeguarding concerns
- Vulnerability to exploitation
- Self-neglect

- Substance misuse concerns
- Challenging behaviour
- Social isolation

Employees must remember that observations do not confirm a diagnosis.

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9. Safeguarding Responsibilities

Dual diagnosis may increase vulnerability to:

- Abuse
- Neglect
- Self-neglect
- Exploitation
- Financial abuse
- Discriminatory abuse
- Domestic abuse
- Social exclusion

Employees must escalate concerns immediately using safeguarding procedures.

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10. Professional Boundaries

Employees must remain within their role.

Employees must never:

- Diagnose service users.
- Interpret clinical test results.
- Provide therapy unless specifically employed and qualified to do so.
- Provide medical advice.
- Interfere with treatment plans.
- Challenge instructions from regulated healthcare professionals without following appropriate escalation procedures.

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11. Communication and Engagement

Employees should:

- Use clear communication.
- Adapt communication methods where appropriate.
- Allow additional processing time.
- Use supportive language.
- Demonstrate patience and empathy.
- Promote inclusion.

Employees must avoid:

- Stigmatising language.
- Discriminatory behaviour.
- Assumptions regarding capacity or competence.

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12. Multi-Agency Working

Where appropriate, employees should cooperate with:

- GPs
- Mental health services
- Social workers
- Learning disability teams
- Community healthcare professionals
- Families and advocates

Employees must follow confidentiality and information-sharing procedures at all times.

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13. Supervisor Responsibilities

Supervisors must:

- Monitor training compliance.
- Support employee development.
- Provide supervision and reflective practice.

- Support safeguarding escalations.
- Identify workforce competency gaps.
- Ensure staff work within their role boundaries.

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14. Third-Party Provider Responsibilities

Third-party providers must:

- Demonstrate appropriate awareness of dual diagnosis.
- Follow safeguarding requirements.
- Work within their competence.
- Cooperate with CAREHOPES™ procedures.
- Report concerns promptly.

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15. Monitoring and Compliance

CAREHOPES™ will monitor compliance through:

- Training records
- Supervision
- Appraisals
- Audits
- Incident reviews
- Safeguarding reviews
- Quality assurance processes

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16. Breach of Policy

Failure to comply with this policy may result in:

- Additional supervision
- Further training
- Corrective action plans
- Disciplinary action

- Suspension
- Termination of engagement
- Referral to professional or regulatory bodies where applicable

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17. Related Policies

- Duty of Care Policy
- Mental Capacity and Deprivation of Liberty Policy
- Suicide Prevention Policy
- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Professional Boundaries Policy
- Wellbeing Monitoring Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy

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18. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Annually
- Following legislative changes
- Following safeguarding reviews
- Following significant incidents
- Following updates to professional guidance