Zero Contract Policy

PRN-162: Zero Contract 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, operates a **Zero Contract Workforce Model** for companions who provide companionship services on a flexible, non-fixed-hour basis. This model allows staff to accept shifts based on availability while ensuring that all safeguarding, legal, and operational standards are upheld.

This policy outlines the rules, expectations, and safeguarding controls that govern zero-contract working arrangements, including shift acceptance, cancellations, emergency cover, and the strict prohibition of unauthorised shift swapping or proxy working.

2. Key Principles

- **Flexibility:** Zero-contract staff choose shifts based on availability.
- **Safety:** All shift allocations must comply with safeguarding and legal requirements.
- **Accountability:** TC must know exactly who is providing companionship at all times.
- **Integrity:** Staff must represent themselves honestly and professionally.
- **Compliance:** All shift changes must be approved by TC management.
- **Zero tolerance:** Unauthorised shift swapping or proxy working is prohibited.

3. Policy Statement

CAREHOPES ensures that zero-contract staff:

- Accept shifts voluntarily

- Perform their duties personally
- Do not delegate or send substitutes
- Do not swap shifts without TC approval
- Report emergencies requiring shift cover
- Maintain professional boundaries
- Follow safeguarding and allocation rules
- Document concerns and incidents accurately

Zero-contract staff must **not**:

- Allow another person to attend a shift on their behalf
- Swap shifts privately
- Misrepresent who is providing companionship
- Perform tasks outside companionship scope
- Ignore safeguarding restrictions
- Follow external instructions that conflict with TC policy

4. Purpose

- Provide a clear framework for zero-contract working
- Prevent misrepresentation and fraudulent activity
- Protect service users from unknown or unauthorised individuals
- Ensure TC maintains full safeguarding oversight
- Support staff flexibility while maintaining legal compliance
- Prevent criminal liability arising from unauthorised substitution

5. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Zero-contract staff
- Casual workers
- Flexible workers
- Bank staff
- Temporary staff

- Any staff working without fixed contracted hours

It covers:

- Shift acceptance
- Shift cancellation
- Emergency cover
- Staff-to-staff shift swapping
- Proxy working
- Safeguarding restrictions
- Allocation rules
- Multi-staff working
- Group companionship

6. Related Policies

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

Operational Delivery

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

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

7. Zero-Contract Working Rules

7.1 Voluntary Shift Acceptance

Zero-contract staff may:

- Accept shifts based on availability

- Decline shifts without penalty
- Request additional shifts

All accepted shifts become formal commitments.

7.2 Mandatory Attendance

Once a shift is accepted:

- The staff member is responsible for attending
- Failure to attend without notice is misconduct
- Emergency cancellations must be reported immediately

8. Emergency Shift Cover Procedure

If a staff member cannot attend due to:

- Illness
- Emergency
- Unforeseen circumstances
- Personal commitments

They must:

- Notify the on-call manager or TC management immediately
- Disclose the staff member willing to cover (if applicable)
- Wait for TC approval
- Allow TC to reassign the shift formally

TC must approve all shift swaps.

9. Strict Prohibition of Unauthorised Shift Swapping

Zero-contract staff must **not**:

- Privately swap shifts
- Ask another staff member to attend without approval
- Allow someone else to represent them
- Send a friend, family member, or known professional
- Attend a shift under someone else's name

Any unauthorised swap is:

- Misrepresentation
- Gross misconduct
- Fraudulent activity
- A safeguarding breach
- Potentially a criminal act

10. Legal and Safeguarding Justification for TC-Only Shift Allocation

CAREHOPES is the **only authority** permitted to allocate, reallocate, or approve shift swaps because TC alone holds **full staff profiles**, including:

- DBS status
- Right-to-work documentation
- Legal eligibility to work with children or adults
- Gender-based safeguarding restrictions
- Allocation restrictions for specific service users
- Disciplinary history
- Ongoing investigations
- Risk flags
- Professional limitations
- Training compliance

Other staff **do not have access** to this information and therefore **cannot safely determine** whether they are legally or professionally permitted to work with a particular service user.

Some staff may be:

- Legally restricted from working with children
- Restricted from working with certain adults
- Prohibited from working with specific service users
- Under investigation
- Suspended
- Awaiting DBS clearance
- Not trained for certain risk categories

- Not authorised for multi-staff or high-risk environments

If a staff member privately swaps a shift with someone who is **not legally permitted** or **not authorised** to work with that service user, it creates:

- A serious safeguarding breach
- A misrepresentation of identity
- A risk of harm to the service user
- A risk of criminal liability
- A risk of regulatory violation
- A risk of insurance invalidation

Therefore:

Only TC management may approve shift swaps, reallocations, or emergency cover.

Any shift swap that occurs **without TC approval** is:

- Misrepresentation
- Gross misconduct
- Fraudulent activity
- Potentially a criminal act

11. Proxy Working Prohibition

Zero-contract staff must **not**:

- Delegate duties
- Allow substitutes
- Permit anyone to act on their behalf
- Represent another staff member
- Attend shifts under false identity

Proxy working is:

- A safeguarding breach
- A violation of professional boundaries
- A breach of legal compliance
- Grounds for dismissal

- Potentially criminal

12. Documentation Requirements

Zero-contract staff must document:

- Emergency cancellations
- Shift cover requests
- Proxy-working attempts
- Safeguarding concerns
- “Service already being provided” entries
- Any communication with TC management

Records must be factual, objective, and stored securely.

13. Training Requirements

Zero-contract staff must receive training in:

- Zero-contract responsibilities
- Proxy working principles
- Safeguarding
- Professional boundaries
- Fraud prevention
- Multi-staff working
- GDPR and confidentiality

14. Policy Review

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

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