



# First Choice

Selection Services

HEALTHCARE DIVISION

# STAFF HANDBOOK

[www.first-choice-rec.com](http://www.first-choice-rec.com)



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# First Choice Selection Services Limited

Recruitment Consultancy

## WELCOME NOTE

Welcome to First Choice Selection Services. We are pleased you have chosen to join us, we look forward to working with you and finding you suitable placements.

This handbook provides you with information, policies and procedures for you to read, understand and adhere to whilst working with us. It also provides information on things that will be of importance to you, deadlines to meet and benefits you have.

As a new member of First Choice Selection Services, we hope you have a successful and prosperous career with us. If you have any queries about the contents within this booklet, please direct them to one of our Healthcare Consultants in your local branch.

## MISSION STATEMENT

First Choice Selection Services is a diversified staffing organisation dedicated to providing the highest quality staffing services with the greatest value to our clients. We focus on providing temporary healthcare staffing solutions. We do this by providing quality care that meets the total needs of the patient whose care can be safely and effectively managed in the facility's environment without regards to race, sex, religion, or age.

We aim to provide 24-hours service as a contribution towards easing staffing problems, whilst being recognised as a leader in quality, being patient-centered, and a cost effective healthcare agency. We will strive to be the premier healthcare agency dedicated to and recognised for our passion and commitment to serve, help, and enhance the quality of care for patients/ residents while providing a professional service.

### **Our agency will be dedicated:**

- To cherish and protect the independence and dignity of our clients by providing unsurpassed care, service and respect
- To maintain the highest standards possible for our clients
- To maintain the highest ethical standards
- To treat every applicant as an individual
- To ensure that we match the skills and characteristics of the applicant with the clients requirements
- To improve current services we offer, and develop new services tailored to the needs of our clients
- To provide exceptional rehabilitation services while meeting the needs of the individuals we serve
- To be recognised as a dynamic, well-established healthcare nursing staffing agency of choice
- To provide outstanding customer service through our collaborative partnerships with the facilities we serve
- We are caring people here to help the elderly, sick or incapacitated with a commitment to excellence.

## BEFORE YOU START WORK

### Roles Of Workers

#### NURSE

A nurse is a healthcare professional who is focused on caring for individuals, families, and communities, ensuring that they attain, maintain, or recover optimal health and functioning. A nurse's role involves assessing, planning, implementing, and evaluating care independently of physicians, and they provide support from basic triage to emergency surgery.

Nurses may practice in hospitals, clinics, physician offices, private homes, schools, pharmaceutical companies (usually as researchers), industry (occupational health settings), schools, retirement homes, hospice facilities and long-term care facilities. Some nurses may also advise and work as consultants in the the healthcare, insurance, or legal industries.

#### CARE ASSISTANT

Care assistants provide practical help and support to people with physical and learning disabilities in a range of environments, such as residential homes, day centres or schools.

Care assistants work to assess the level of care a client needs, working with other health and social care professionals to draw up a care plan for the client. The care assistant aids the client and their families with the client's personal, social and domestic care, carrying out tasks as varied as washing, shopping or supporting them with recreational activities. Care assistants may be based in a nursing or residential home or they could work in the community, visiting clients in their own home. Care assistants work with children, the elderly, and clients with physical or learning disabilities, supporting them on a weekly or daily basis as required.

#### SOCIAL WORKER

Social workers help improve peoples lives in some way. The services they can provide often differ. Social workers will undertake assessments of clients needs and case history. They often support families in the process of change and implementation of care.

Their role involves helping someone deal with a financial crisis, a housing emergency, or an unexpected medical diagnosis. They often work with people in crisis situations, and then follow up with them to make sure that the situation has improved

### **Induction**

All candidates, appropriate to their profession must complete several training courses on an annual basis. You must also have an Access NI check carried out annually. Nurses must all be registered with NMC and care staff must be registered with NISCC.

The candidate must ensure that he/she has received current annual training relative to Client handling, health and safety awareness, fire awareness, basic food hygiene, COSHH, first aid and CPR, infection control, safeguarding vulnerable people, dementia awareness, challenging behaviour awareness and conflict management.

There may be other matters arising under new legislation or regulations, for which further training may be necessary for particular roles. If so, this is the staff members' duty to adhere to this.

Such training may be provided by First Choice Selection Services or any other appropriately accredited provider of training, the cost of which shall be borne by the employee. Evidence of such training must be provided by the employee to First Choice Selection Services. Evidence must be in the form of certification which incorporates details of the contents of each course attended. In the event of failure by an employee to receive annual training, or to provide First Choice Selection Services with adequate certification First Choice Selection Services may terminate employment. Shifts will not be offered to employee's unless all training is up to date; refusal to update mandatory training will result in First Choice Selection Services terminating employment.

### **ACCESS NI – Criminal Convictions**

Legislation requires agencies to obtain an Access NI check for all our employee's and potential employee's. Access NI checks from previous employers are not acceptable and these checks are carried out on an annual basis. Please be aware that our Clients may insist we inform them in writing of any criminal convictions you may have before accepting you for an assignment. We will only provide this information with your consent. Our own response to criminal record information will depend upon its seriousness and nature.

You are advised to inform us of any criminal convictions that may appear in future Access NI checks. The cost of Access NI checks are borne by the employee.

### **NNMC (Nurse)**

The National Midwifery Council (NMC) sets standards and guidance for practice. All nursing staff must be registered and are required to provide first choice selection services with a copy of their registration PIN letter. This must be renewed annually and the cost is borne by the employee.

### **NISCC**

All Care Assistants/Social workers are required by law to register with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC). Registration with the NISCC recognises the workers commitment to providing quality services for those who need it most. It shows they are suitably trained, professional in their practice and accountable for the work they do. The cost of registration with NISCC is borne to the employee.

### **Union**

As a healthcare worker of First Choice Selection Services, we strongly recommend that you belong to a union, which provides professional indemnity. This can be done online.

### **Availability**

Once the healthcare worker has completed the registration stage and has been cleared as ready to work by the relevant authority, they must inform First Choice Selection Services of what hours they are available to work each week. First Choice Selection Services will allocate work within this given availability. In order for us to provide our clients with exceptional service delivery, healthcare workers must inform us of any changes to their availability as soon as possible. Regular contact should be maintained to ensure work is secured and that you are not contacted unnecessarily.

### **On call service**

We provide an on call service on weekdays between 5.30pm and 8.30am and all day at the weekends and Bank holidays. The purpose of the on call service between 17.30 - 08.00 and all weekend and bank holidays is for Emergency use only and for situations that may arise during these hours. It is not to be used to update availability. All other working matters can be dealt with during our normal working hours, which are 8.30-17.30. Please do not text us as we will not receive these messages.



## ASSIGNMENTS

### Timekeeping

Please make every effort to ensure you arrive at and leave all bookings at the agreed time. If for any reason there are changes to your shift these must be communicated directly to the office. It is essential to give us 24 hours notice if you are unable to attend or have to cancel a shift, as this will allow us sufficient time to re-cover the shift with another employee, **EXCEPT** in the case of untoward circumstances.

**You must always contact First Choice Selection Services if you are cancelling shifts, by ringing the direct office number or out of hours number. Texting is not acceptable under any circumstances.**

### Pre bookings

If you are booked directly by a unit or ward you **MUST** contact First Choice Selection Services and advise. **Failure to do may result in payment being delayed.**

### Requirements for Assignments

You must prepare for your Assignment by ensuring that you know and understand the exact details of your assignment. Allow plenty of travel time.

You must ensure you arrive 15 minutes before your assignment start time if you are going to a ward/unit you are not familiar with.

Contact First Choice Selection Services if:

- The duty manager changes your area of work – if you are a registered nurse you must be competent and confident to work in the area you are being changed to.
- You are unable to attend or are going to be late
- You finish your assignment either early or late
- Your availability changes

### Standards of Conduct

Employees of First Choice Selection Services must at all times maintain the highest professional standards and comply with the policies, procedures and requirements of the Client's work place, comply with the codes of conduct of any professional organisation to which they belong, and comply with provisions of employee's Guidelines.

The employee agrees that during every assignment and afterwards, as appropriate, he/she will:

- Co-operate with the Clients staff and accept any direction, supervision or instruction of any person in the Clients organisation to whom he/she is responsible and conform to the Clients rules and regulations.
- Be present at the times stipulated by the Client. Staff are advised to arrive 15 minutes before an Assignment commences.
- Take all reasonable steps to safeguard his/her own safety and of any other person who may be affected by his/her actions on the Assignment.
- Not engage in any conduct detrimental to the interests of the Client.
- **Receive an appropriate handover and induction.**

No employee should ever enter into a personal relationship with any client they are caring for. This includes friendship or sexual relations. No employee should accept money or gifts from a client. Doing so will result in disciplinary action being taken.

### **Uniforms**

Employee's will be required to wear a First Choice Selection Services uniform at all times. The only exceptions to this condition are:

- Where the client provides their own uniform
- Where the client does not wish one to be worn
- When you are required to wear scrubs i.e. OR or ED

Each employee must wear, during any assignment, an appropriate employee identification badge provided by First Choice Selection Services that must be visible on your person at all times. This must be updated on a yearly basis to ensure all numbers etc are correct.

First Choice Selection Services provide each healthcare worker with one tunic and one identification badge prior to commencing their first assignment. This is free of charge. The worker may purchase any additional uniform desired thereafter at the cost of £15.00. Trousers and shoes are to be supplied by the individual employee.

Uniforms are to be clean and ironed at all times. Uniforms must be changed daily and washed at a temperature of 60°C. On occasion, Client's may request that a uniform is not worn; in these circumstances, the Client's wishes are respected.

Uniforms are NOT to be worn to and from work. All employees must change into their uniform and out of their uniform in the workplace.

To comply with Health and Safety at Work Regulations, the following are to be adhered to:

- Wrist or Hand jewellery is not to be worn during assignments, apart from plain band ring. A watch must be either pinned on the uniform or placed in your pocket.
- Shoes to be laced and low heeled, black or navy. If trainers are to be worn, they must be black or navy.
- No flip-flops, no crocs, no sandals, no pumps and no boots.
- Trousers must be black or navy, no jeans or leggings or track suit bottoms
- identification badges must be worn at all times
- Staff should keep fingernails short and clean and must not wear false nails or nail varnish. Long hair must be secured above the collar.

### **Arriving For Work**

On arrival or during Assignment:

- Introduce yourself to the nurse in charge or co-ordinator.
- Identify the emergency exits, assembly points & location of equipment.
- Receive a verbal handover from the previous shift nurse/care assistant.
- If you are unsure, pass on questions asked by patient and their family to the nurse in charge.
- Always take the initiative. Ask if you can help, tidy or restock or spend quality time with your patients.
- Practice universal precautions at all times to protect both yourself and the patients. Please read the N.I. Regional Infection Prevention and Control Manual which is available online at [www.first-choice-rec.com](http://www.first-choice-rec.com)
- Ensure documentation on all patient records and charts is thorough, and give a clear and concise hand over to the staff on the next shift.

### **Poor Performance**

At First Choice Selection Services we provide the highest calibre of staff and pride ourselves on the reputation that we have built up over the years. We carry out regular progress reports to ascertain suitability, reliability and professionalism between you and our clients. We also carry out annual appraisals to assess performance and agree a personal action plan with employee's.

Performance whilst at work is an on going assessment with contact between First Choice and all clients undertaken continually. Therefore all employee's are monitored and repeated poor performance or incidents will result in your employment with First Choice Selection Services being terminated.

### **Risk or Incident Reporting**

Under the Management of Health and Safety Regulations (1992) you have a legal duty to report all accidents and incidents. If during the course of your work you identify a risk to health and safety or welfare of your self, and/or that of your colleagues/patients/clients, you have a duty to report this. In the first instance it should be reported to the person in charge of the establishment to which you are assigned, and to First Choice Selection Services afterwards. We will advise you on the best course of action. You will likely be asked to submit a written report documenting the situation.

### **Risk Assessments**

It is each employees duty to carry out risk assessments prior to carrying out any task. You must assess the task involved, the necessity of it, your own individual capabilities, the load of anything you may be moving and that the environment is clear for you to do so.

If you feel any task is unsafe or may cause harm you should not carry out this task.

### **Fitness to Practice**

It is important for your own health and those in your care that you are fit to practice whenever you attend an assignment. You must declare your fitness to practice or otherwise when you accept an assignment. You must also let us know if you are or have become pregnant, have acquired an illness or injury before or during an assignment including the occurrence of vomiting, diarrhoea or rashes. It may be necessary to inform the client of a change in your health so that the necessary precautions can be taken.

Should your doctor's referral letter declare you unfit for work then your placement will be terminated until declared otherwise. Due to the importance of your fitness to practice, First Choice Selection Services reserves the right to request a certification of fitness to practice from your GP at any time during your employment or request for employment.

## **Immunisation**

You must keep the following immunisations/screenings up to date:

- Hepatitis B
- Varicella (Chicken Pox)
- Rubella (German Measles)
- Mumps
- Measles
- Tuberculosis
- Hepatitis C (if EPP)
- HIV (if EPP)
- Tetanus

Any boosters or new vaccinations should be recorded on your Immunisation record. You need to disclose details on your application form and fax or post proof of vaccination to us. Documented proof is required for all immunity status. Without proof of immunisation we will be unable to offer you assignments.

## **YOUR PAY**

### **Timesheets**

The employee shall deliver to First Choice Selection Services his/her timesheets, with Assignment details and signed by an authorised representative of the Client at the end of each week. A week for this purpose is Saturday to Friday inclusive. The deadline for the submission of timesheets is 11.00pm Sunday if you want to be paid the following Friday. You are paid weekly. It is not acceptable to hold timesheets for a later date.

Deadlines for timesheets may change around bank holidays - we will inform our employee's in advance if this is the case.

Some of our clients operate different weekly systems, from a Monday to a Sunday. If you are assigned placements in these locations you will be informed as to when your timesheet must be with us.

A copy of your timesheet should always be left with the location that you work.

### **Payments**

First Choice Selection Services makes payments to the employee in respect of fees earned by him/her with the Client on a weekly basis or at such longer or shorter intervals as may be agreed.

The hourly rate will be paid for each hour worked during an Assignment (to the nearest quarter hour) to be paid weekly in arrears, subject to deductions in respect of the following matters:

- National Insurance contributions.
- PAYE, Income Tax, and any other deductions, which the Employment Business is required by law to make in respect of temporary workers.

Payments are made directly into your bank/building society accounts by BACS (Please make sure we have the correct details).

**It is your responsibility to ensure your timesheet is legible, completed correctly and has been authorised and signed. Failure to do so could result in delayed payment.**

In particular please ensure:

- Your time sheet reaches First Choice Selection Services by 11.00pm on Sunday to ensure payment on the following Friday of the following week
- You clearly indicate whether you are a CA, Senior CA, Social Worker Band 5, Social Worker Band 6 or RGN
- You clearly indicate if assignment is a special or In charge
- You clearly indicate clients name, ward department or location
- You give your full name
- You complete the sections on breaks and total hours worked. You deduct your breaks and then enter the total hours worked (if no break taken this must be indicated).
- You use 24 hour clock format for shift patterns

Other notes:

- Faxed or emailed (scanned) timesheets are accepted.
- Time sheets can be downloaded from our website
- Pre-signed time sheets will not be processed

## **Holiday Pay**

Under the Working Time Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1998 (as amended), the employee as a temporary worker is entitled to 5.6 weeks paid leave per annum, pro rata. All entitlement to leave must be taken during the course of the year in which it is accrued, and none may be carried forward to the next year. For the purpose of calculating entitlement to leave under this clause, the leave year is the calendar year commencing from the date of your first assignment.

The right to have paid leave accrues in proportion to the amount of time worked continuously during the leave year by the employee on assignments through First Choice Selection Services. The amount of payment to which the employee is entitled in respect of such leave is calculated in accordance with, and in proportion to, the number of standard hours, which he/she works on Assignments.

Where the employee wishes to take any leave to which he/she is entitled they should notify First Choice Selection Services in writing of the dates of the intended absence. The amount of notice, which the employee is required to give, is a minimum of four weeks.

## **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **Training**

First Choice Selection Services is committed to providing the highest quality service to all of our clients. In order to ensure this quality of service we recognise that it is essential for all healthcare workers to undergo training and development that equips them to perform their work competently. It is also mandatory to regularly attend certain training courses

First Choice Selection Services is responsible for ensuring that healthcare workers are provided with access to appropriate education, training and development and must provide evidence of training for our records. First Choice Selection Services can offer all mandatory training if you need to avail of this service. The cost is the employee responsibility. Training from elsewhere must be approved by First Choice and must include course contents on the certificates provided to us. Certificates are the only acceptable form of recognition of having attended a course.

Mandatory training for First Choice Selection Services Healthcare workers are:

- Client Handling
- Health and Safety Awareness
- Fire Awareness
- Basic Food Hygiene
- Coshh
- First Aid
- CPR
- Infection Control Awareness
- Safeguarding Vulnerable People
- Dementia Awareness
- Challenging Behaviour Awareness
- Conflict Management

All training must be updated yearly without exception. Healthcare workers should also be prepared to undergo any further training necessary for their continual professional development as per NMC and NISCC guidelines.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Complaints Policy**

Our objectives are:

- To fulfil the responsibilities of an agency as outlined in various legislation.
- To have in place a system that will ensure that:
  - (a) Issues raised are effectively and promptly addressed
  - (b) Where unsatisfactory performance is identified action is taken to prevent a recurrence.
- To ensure that all staff are aware that First Choice Selection Services is committed to delivering a high standard of service and that it values complaints as a means of persistently assuring quality.  
As one of our employee's you are entitled to make a complaint at any time. If you have a problem with one of our office staff or a nurse/carer please follow the steps below:
- Discuss the complaint if appropriate with the individual concerned.
- Contact the Complaints Officer at First Choice Selection Services to verbally discuss concerns and potential solutions.



If on reflection the complaint requires further investigation or referral to the Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC) or the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) please write a formal statement giving an accurate and detailed account of the complaint. If further investigation is initiated the Complaints Officer at First Choice Selection Services will:

- Respond to your formal written complaint within 3 working days and resolved within 28 days.
- Ensure that all parties involved are advised of the complaint/claim in writing.
- Where appropriate implement the First Choice Selection Services Disciplinary Policy.
- Where necessary arrange an appropriate time for all parties concerned to meet and have the Complaints Officer, or Area Manager present throughout.
- Facilitate parties bringing Legal, or Union representatives to any necessary meetings.
- Advise all parties of the outcome of conclusions in writing, stating action taken and future monitoring. (Copies of the above will be kept in relevant files.)
- Refer you to our licensing authority, the RQIA, or independent arbitrators (whichever you prefer) should your complaint not be concluded to your satisfaction.

We will endeavour to ensure that all parties associated with any complaint are treated fairly throughout the complete complaints process.

First Choice Selection Services aims to use its complaints procedure to ensure that the highest standards of service delivery are maintained and will endeavour at all times to ensure that all complaints are investigated thoroughly and resolved fairly. We encourage informal as well as formal complaints and would appreciate constructive comments on our services from all levels.

## **Dealing with Unsatisfactory Performance Policy**

In the event that First Choice Selection Services is unhappy with the performance of an employee, for example following a complaint from a Service User or colleague, or as a result of repeated lateness, frequent cancellation of shifts or rudeness, the Nurse or Branch Manager will contact the employee to discuss it. It may be necessary to withhold work whilst the investigation is being carried out, depending on the seriousness of the situation. At the meeting, the employee will be given the opportunity to explain his/her actions or to provide his/her account of events. It may then be necessary for the Branch /Nurse Manager to make further enquiries.

Once all enquires are concluded, the action taken may be to:

- Find no reason for any further action
- Request improved performance
- Terminate membership on the grounds of unsuitability.

Termination of employment is obviously the last resort and wherever possible, First Choice Selection Services will seek to resolve performance issues with the employee.

A few examples of misconduct are shown below, but these are purely indicative and do not represent an exhaustive list. They should be regarded as indication only.

### **Minor/ serious misconduct:**

- Poor timekeeping
- Unexplained absence
- Repeated short notice cancellation
- Failure to carry out instructions set out by First Choice Selection Services

### **Gross Misconduct:**

- Dishonesty
- Physical violence
- Deliberate damage to service user's property
- Breach of confidentiality
- Theft
- Harassment
- Discrimination
- Sleeping On Duty

## **Disciplinary Actions**

If after the disciplinary action is deemed appropriate, it will take one of the following forms; -

### **Warnings**

First warning will be given for misconduct or failure to achieve the required standard of work performance. Where appropriate training and mentoring to improve standards of performance will be advised. When a first warning is issued, a time limit of not more than one year will be applied. After expiry, the warnings should be removed from the file and written confirmation of the removal sent to the worker.

Final warning may be given if there is no improvement following a first warning or if there is a repetition of the original offence, or a similar offence. A final warning may be issued without a first warning in serious cases. Final warnings will remain on file for two years. After expiry, the warnings should be removed from the file and written confirmation of the removal will be sent to the worker.

In exceptional circumstances of serious misconduct or poor performance which cannot be ignored for future disciplinary purposes a review of the final warning will take place after two years, the results of which may be that it is extended for a further two years. The healthcare worker may however ask at any stage after the initial period for the warning to be reviewed by a manager and removed from the file.

### **Dismissal**

Dismissal can result if:

- During a period of final warning a healthcare worker commits the same or similar offence.
- A care worker commits an act of professional or gross misconduct. In this circumstance, the worker will be summarily dismissed.

All regulatory bodies will be informed as deemed necessary.

### **Termination of Employment Policy**

Termination of healthcare workership is obviously the last resort and wherever possible, First Choice Selection Services will seek to resolve performance issues with the worker. Employee's may terminate their employment with First Choice Selection Services at any time.

If an employee wishes to take up any appointment with a Client introduced by First Choice Selection Services within 6 months of

termination of employee, the employee must notify First Choice Selection Services in writing as a fee in that regard will be due to First Choice Selection Services by the Client unless the Client has given notice to First Choice Selection Services to engage the employee for a hire period specified in the contract between First Choice Selection Services and the Client. First Choice Selection Services may, at its absolute discretion, either restrict the availability of Assignments, or not make Assignments available for such period of time as First Choice Selection Services considers appropriate, or terminate employment, where the employee does not make himself/herself available for any Assignment(s) or does not comply with any obligation of the employee under this contract, including (but not limited to) the requirement for annual training.

In the event of failure by an employee to receive annual training or to advise First Choice Selection Services that such training has been received, the Employment Business may terminate employment.

### **Whistleblowing Policy**

First Choice Selection Services is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. This policy is therefore designed to enable employees to disclose information, which the individual believes shows malpractice. The policy is intended to cover concerns which are in the public interest including:

- A criminal offence
- Failure to comply with legal obligations
- Financial malpractice
- A miscarriage of justice
- Danger to health and safety of persons/environment
- Significant damage to the environment
- Professional malpractice
- Concealment of information relating to the above

The policy is designed to offer protection to those employees who disclose such concerns provided the disclosure is made:

- In good faith
- In the reasonable belief of the individual making the disclosure that it tends to show malpractice

The Agency will treat all disclosures in a sensitive manner, keeping the identity of the individual making the allegation confidential so long as it does not hinder or frustrate the investigation.

Individuals are encouraged to put their name to any disclosure made. Concerns expressed anonymously may be considered less credible. Factors considered will be:

- The seriousness of the issues raised
- The credibility of the issues raised
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources

If an individual makes an allegation in GOOD FAITH, which is not confirmed by subsequent investigation, no action will be taken against the individual. In making a disclosure the individual should exercise due care to ensure accuracy of information. If, however, an individual makes malicious or vexatious allegations and particularly if he/she persists with making them, disciplinary action is likely to be taken against the individual.

All disclosures should be made in writing to the Area Manager of First Choice Selection Services, or another senior member of the management team, who will consider the information and will take advice on the investigation routes, which could include:

- Investigating the matter internally
- Involving Inspecting Authorities
- Referring the matter to the Police

The investigation will be carried out in accordance with the Agency's Complaints Procedure and/or any existing Local Authority/Regulatory Guidelines. Where a disclosure is made the person or persons against whom the disclosure is made will be told of it. They will be allowed to comment before any investigation or any further action is concluded.

As a result of this investigation other internal procedures may be invoked, such as the Disciplinary Procedure.

The outcome will be to confirm what, if any further action will be taken or what, if any, further investigation is required. The conclusion to the investigation will be communicated to the person or persons whom the disclosure is made and to the person making the disclosure. A record of all disclosures made and subsequent actions taken will be made and retained for a specified period of time should you need to report anything the responsible bodies and their details are cited below:

## REGULATORY AUTHORITY

The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority  
9th Floor Riverside Tower  
5 Lanyon Place  
Belfast  
BT1 3BT  
Telephone: 028 9051 7500  
Fax: 028 9051 7501  
Email: [info@rqia.org.uk](mailto:info@rqia.org.uk)  
Website: [www.rqia.org.uk](http://www.rqia.org.uk)

### Useful Contacts

Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) Tel: 020 7637 7181  
Recruitment and Employment Confederation Tel: 020 7462 3260  
Royal College of Nursing (RCN) Tel: 020 7409 3333  
Regulatory and Quality Improvement Authority Tel: 028 9051 7500  
Unison Tel: 0845 3550 845

### PSNI

Emergency	999
Non Emergency	0845 600 8000
General Enquiries	0845 600 8000

### Equality and Diversity Policy

First Choice Selection Services strives for high standards both as a provider of work and services. In doing so, we recognise the need for encouraging diversity and wholeheartedly support a policy of equal opportunities in all areas of our work and responsibilities.

We expect all who work with or for First Choice Selection Services to comply with anti-discrimination legislation, for example applicants, care workers, office staff and client/s.

### Rights of Individuals Policy

First Choice recognise that all people our healthcare staff care for whilst on shift have a right to privacy, respect, freedom of speech, choice and dignity. All members of the First Choice team must respect these rights and ensure that these rights are promoted at all times. Any client we care for must also have the right to make choices for themselves as far as is reasonably practicable, including the right to take certain risks.

## **Confidentiality Policy**

We are committed to maintaining confidentiality. Healthcare workers are expected to respect information given to them by Clients and handle information in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

As third parties, the Clients family and friends do not have the right to any information unless the Client has explicitly given his/her permission for the information to be shared.

If a Client gives information in confidence to a healthcare worker, which the healthcare worker considers he/she must disclose to another party, the healthcare worker must initially inform the Client of his/her intentions and advise to whom the information will be given. It is also important that the manager is informed of the situation.

You must undertake confidentiality procedures with all information that: -

- is or has been acquired by you during, or in the course of your employment, or has otherwise been acquired by you in confidence,
- Relates particularly to our business, or that of other persons or bodies with whom we have dealings of any sort, and
- has not been made public by, or with our authority, shall be confidential, and (save in the course of our business or as required by law) you shall not at any time, whether before or after the termination of your employment, disclose such information to any person without our prior written consent.
- Healthcare workers are not permitted to talk about shift arrangements to service users or other workers.

You are to exercise reasonable care to keep safe all documentary or other material containing confidential information, and shall at the time of termination of your employment with us, or at any other time upon demand, return to us any such material in your possession.

## **Mobile Phone Policy**

The Human Rights Acts 1998 places a duty on the healthcare worker to respect patients privacy and to protect confidentiality. Therefore the use of mobile phones for making/receiving calls or taking photographs is strictly prohibited whilst on duty. They must be kept on silent and only used during breaks.

## **Health and Safety Policy**

First Choice Selection Services is committed to ensuring that the health and safety of all healthcare workers and clients are protected as far as possible in accordance with the Health and Safety Act 1974. First Choice Selection Services is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment and makes adequate resources available to ensure statutory Health and Safety obligations are met.

You must not take any action which could threaten the health and safety of yourself, other employees or clients.

Protective clothing and other equipment which may be issued must be worn. Once issued these are your responsibility.

You should report all accidents and injuries, no matter how minor, to First Choice Selection Services.

## **COSHH Policy**

First Choice Selection Services recognises managing the risks associated with hazardous substances and is highly committed to complying with all legislations and that we have a duty of care to workers and those who would be affected by such activities.

A hazard is something that has the potential to cause harm or ill health to someone.

First Choice Selection Services requires all workers to strive towards doing the following:

- To identify the substances that are used within assignments which could be potentially hazardous
- Introduce solutions and precautions to reduce these risks.
- Develop further control measures to prevent and/or risks of someone being harmed or being exposed to harm.
- To create and maintain records during assignments and document these in the provided Client Care plan.

All healthcare workers must wear protective clothing in the form of disposable gloves and aprons.



## **Smoking Policy**

Smoking is not permitted in our offices, or inside any location that you may be sent to work. Smoking is only permitted on allocated breaks. You are not permitted to smoke in unauthorised areas or vehicles. You must make yourself aware of each locations smoking policy.

## **Fire Safety Awareness Policy**

As an agency worker it is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with the fire safety policy and evacuation procedure of the building you are working. Things to consider;

- Types of service users/clients you are caring for – Are they mobile, do they have learning disabilities, dementia etc.
- The escape routes (these should be clearly marked with green signage and offer the shortest route to a place of safety).
- Assembly points if evacuation is necessary.
- Alarm systems – You need to know where these are located.
- Your own safety – Never put yourself at risk if in doubt get out and wait on the emergency services.
- Under no circumstances return to the building until you are instructed to do so by the fire authorities.

## **Administration of Medicines Policy**

First Choice Selection Services is committed to ensuring that the highest standards regarding the administration of medications are adhered to by our nurses at all times. It is our ultimate goal to protect the public through the application of professional standards.

Our policy and guidelines are same as the Nursing and Midwifery Council Guidelines for the Administration of Medicines and the Code of Professional Conduct. It is intended that this policy establishes principles of safe practice in the management and administration of medicines.

It will not cover every situation that may be encountered but gives guiding principles on the application of professional judgement. The best interest of patients is the central tenet of this policy. Cognisance of Client's local policies must also be taken into account by employee's and it is therefore crucial that employee's familiarise themselves with these. The word "patient" referred to in this policy relates to any person receiving medication, irrespective of the care environment.

Please read your NMC Standards for Medicines Management – available via the NMC website.

First Choice Selection Services expects all trained nurses to follow their Code of Conduct as outlined by the Nursing and Midwifery council, copies of which can be downloaded via NMC website.

### **Record Keeping Policy**

The employee should be able to recognise and demonstrate the following aspects of good record keeping:

- Records should be legible and readable
- Abbreviations should only be used where there is reference to agreed meaning
- Mistakes should be rectified with a single crossing out
- Records should contain only what is relevant to their purpose
- Records should be clear and concise
- Good use of headings, spacing and numbering
- Records should be factual and checkable
- Information should make clear reference to whom it relates and who is making the recording
- Always write in black ink

Where employee's do not make written records, or have difficulties in producing written records e.g. because of visual impairment or dyslexia, managers will need to ensure that the employee understands ways of accessing appropriate support to enable their input to be produced on a written or audible manner

### **Infection Control Policy**

There are various steps to protect yourself, your patients and your colleagues from cross-infection.

- HAND WASHING – the most important control measure.
- ALL cuts or breaks in the skin should be covered with a waterproof dressing.
- TUNICS should be changed regularly, especially if contaminated with blood or body fluids.
- PROTECTIVE CLOTHING must be worn

## Hand Hygiene Technique

- During clinical work, wear sleeves above the elbows. REMOVE any hand or wrist jewellery.
- Use running warm water to wet your hands
- Rub hands together vigorously to lather all surfaces of hands and wrists, paying particular attention to thumbs, fingertips and finger webs.
- Wash vigorously for 15 seconds. Follow steps 1-7 of the seven-step technique without adding more water.
- Rinse hands thoroughly.
- If there are lever taps turn off water using elbows. If lever taps are not present first dry hands thoroughly, then turn off the taps using a fresh paper towel.
- Dispose of towels into domestic/household waste bag, using the foot pedal to prevent recontamination of your clean hands from the lid.
- Apply hand cream regularly.

Standard or universal precautions should be taken with all patients regardless of diagnosis or infection status. Standard precautions are designed to reduce the risk of transmission of micro organisms that may or may not be a recognised source of hospital acquired infection (HAI).

All healthcare workers must comply with these precautions to prevent cross infection occurring and to protect themselves from potentially infective micro organisms.

Wear disposable gloves and aprons when:

- In contact with blood or body fluids, secretions, excretions and contaminated items i.e. linen dressings.
- Before touching mucous membranes and non-intact skin.
- When in direct contact with the patients and handling infected items, dressings etc. or working around the patient's bed e.g. bed making.
- In instances when splashing or contamination may occur e.g. handling bedpans, cleaning procedures etc.
- Should always be changed after the risk of contamination is likely and always before carrying out an aseptic technique.
- When serving food.

Clinical Waste Disposal is vital in healthcare. The following should be followed:

- Dispose of all clinical waste promptly into the recommended container.
- All waste containers should be no more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  full.

- All waste containers must be sealed and tagged to identify the source before removal.

### **Moving and Handling Policy**

First Choice Selection Services are committed to maintaining the good health and well being of all those working within the agency and want to avoid unnecessary illness and absence from work as a result of manual handling injuries.

First Choice Selection Services will fully comply with the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and subsequent legislation statutory regulations and approved codes of practice.

First Choice Selection Services ensures that all our healthcare workers adhere to the Manual Handling Operators Regulations 1992.

**Manual Handling Operations are defined as the transporting or supporting of a load by hand or bodily force, including lifting, putting down, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving.**

Duty of Employers is to assess the manual handling operations all staff carry out and to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all employees.

They should provide:

- Safe working systems and equipment
- Information, instruction and training
- Safe environment

No employer may demand that a task be carried out by a person who is not fit or able to do it safely. Duty of Employees are to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and anyone else who may be affected by their acts and assess the risk of all activities. You must also:

- Use equipment for its intended purpose only
- Co-operate with systems provided for staff safety
- Advise employer of any medical problems which would place them at risk of injury
- Inform employer when hazardous handling activities are witnessed
- Report any accidents, incidents and near misses at work

Healthcare workers must adhere to safe moving and handling practices at all times, as a failure to do so will be deemed as a Health & Safety risk and be dealt with as a disciplinary matter. At no time should a worker endanger the health of themselves or others. If unsure of moving and handling practices, the worker should contact the Nurse in charge for clarification.

All moving and handling equipment should be checked on a regular basis and in good working order at all times and/or a replacement must be found to allow carers to continue working safely.

### **Handling Food Policy**

Food safety involves taking all reasonable care to protect food for anything that could cause injury, harm or death to the consumer. As a food handler it is essential that you are aware of the basic principles of good practice when producing food. The following rules must be followed;

- Temperature of foods must be monitored.
- You must follow good hygiene and cleaning procedures.
- Follow policy on uniforms and jewellery. You must not wear your uniform to and from work and must have a clean uniform each day. You must not wear jewellery with the exception on a plain band.
- You must know the symptoms of food poisoning and its controls and not to handle food if you suspect you have food poisoning.
- You must report faulty equipment to a senior member of staff.
- Carry out duties showing all reasonable care to follow the food safety legislation.

### **Safeguarding of Vulnerable People Policy**

The abuse and exploitation of vulnerable people is an issue that has become more and more prominent in recent years in terms of public awareness. First Choice Selection Services have developed a policy and procedures on the Safeguarding of Vulnerable People which detail the processes that must be followed in the event of a suspicion or allegation that a vulnerable adult is at risk of abuse, exploitation or neglect.

First Choice Selection Services acknowledge the right of vulnerable people to live a life free from violence and abuse and are fully committed to upholding these rights by ensuring that all staff, including managers, office staff and care workers are trained and adhere to First Choice Selection Services strict Safeguarding of Vulnerable People Policy.

## **Definition of a Vulnerable Adult**

“A person aged 18 years or over who is, or may be, in need of community care services or is resident in a continuing care facility by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness or who is, or may be, unable to take care of him or herself or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.”

## **Definition of Abuse**

“The physical, psychological, emotional, financial or sexual maltreatment or neglect of a vulnerable adult by another person. The abuse may be a single act or repeated over a period of time. It may take one form or a multiple of forms. The lack of appropriate action can also be a form of abuse. Abuse can occur in a relationship where there is an expectation of trust and can be perpetrated by a person/persons, in breach of that trust, who have influence over the life of a dependent whether they be formal or informal carers, staff or family members or others. It can also occur outside such a relationship.”

## **Types of Abuse, signs and Symptoms**

- **Physical Abuse** (this can include inappropriate restraint or use of medication)

Series of unexplained falls or major injuries. Injuries/bruises at different stages of healing. Bruising in unusual sites e.g. inner arms, thighs, abrasions, and teeth indentations, injuries to head or face. Service User very passive.

- **Sexual Abuse**

Change in behaviour. Overt sexual behaviour or language. Difficulty in walking or sitting. Injuries to genital areas.

- **Psychological Abuse**

Withdrawal, depression, cowering and fearfulness, change in sleep patterns, agitation, confusion, change in behaviour, change in appetite or weight.

- **Financial or material Abuse**

Unpaid bills. Basic needs are not met. Lack of money on a day-to-day basis.

- **Neglect and acts of omission**

Absence of food, heat, hygiene, clothing, comfort. Preventing Service Users to have access to services. Isolation, absence of prescribed medication.

- **Institutional Abuse**

Inability to make choices or decisions. Agitation if routine is broken. Disorientation. Patterns of changing behaviour.

- **Discriminatory Abuse**

Low self esteem, withdrawal, depression, fear and anger.

Incidents of abuse may be multiple, either to one person in a continuing relationship or service context, or to more than one person at a time.

Any or all types of abuse may be perpetrated as the result of deliberate intent and targeting of vulnerable people, negligence or ignorance.

### **Symptoms**

Various common symptoms of abuse would include:

- Afraid of making decisions
- Doesn't want to go out
- Sleeping problems
- Low self-esteem
- Loss in self-confidence
- No longer laughing
- Depressed
- Unwilling to eat and feeling afraid

### **Vulnerable Adult Rights**

The rights of vulnerable adults to live a life free from neglect, exploitation and abuse are protected by the Human Rights Act 1998. Specifically, a vulnerable adult's right to life is protected (under Article 1); their right to be protected from inhuman and degrading treatment (under Article 3); and their right to liberty and security (under Article 5). All vulnerable adults are entitled to:

- Access to information and knowledge
- Choice
- Confidentiality
- Consent
- Dignity and respect
- Equality and diversity
- Fulfilment
- Independence
- Privacy
- Safety
- Support

## **Reporting Procedures**

Everyone working with vulnerable people has a duty to report suspected, alleged or confirmed incidents of abuse. This should be reported to the Nurse in charge and documented.

## **Protecting and Safeguarding of Vulnerable Children Policy**

The welfare of the child is paramount and there is a moral obligation on everyone who comes into contact with children to provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

First Choice Selection Services is dedicated to practising the protection of vulnerable children. All staff and workers at First Choice Selection Services recognise and accept the responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm and how to deal with instances or allegations of abuse/harm as and when they may arise.

Everyone who comes into contact with children and families in their everyday work, including people who do not have a specific role in relation to child protection, have a duty to safeguard and promote the well-being of the children.

Information recorded about any concerns, disclosures or allegations is confidential and the rights of both the victim and the alleged perpetrator should be protected. However, this should not over-ride the legal principle that the welfare of the child is paramount as their right to be protected from harm. Information of a confidential nature should be communicated only on a 'need to know' basis. Accurate allegations of abuse or misconduct will be investigated and may lead to exclusion from the agency. Behaviour which is found to be in breach of the Code of Conduct or abuse of a child by a member of staff will be treated as gross misconduct and may result in dismissal.



### **Candidate Declaration**

This handbook contains important guidance for your time of employment with us. Please sign below to show you accept its contents.

Please sign below to state that:

I have received and agreed to abide by the contents of the First Choice Selection Services Employee handbook. I understand all the information contained therein and will retain this handbook for future reference.

I have also received a copy, read and understood First Choice Selections Services Terms and Conditions and agree to abide by these.

**I have also read and understood the NMC'S or the NISCC'S code of practice (dependent on category of staff) and agree to abide by these at all times.**

Print Name:

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Profession:

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Signature:

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**For Further Information  
Contact the Healthcare Team in your Local office**

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