

Nutrition Policy (Scotland)

Policy Number	85
Version	2
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Date Issued	27th June 2022
Date of Review	01st June 2023
Next Review Date	01st June 2024
Approved by	OneCall24 Policy Team

Summary

This policy details how to support individuals with their nutrition and hydration requirements, as well as how to monitor what their requirements may be. It has been reviewed and an additional definition added. References also checked to ensure they remain current.

Purpose

OneCall24 Limited recognises that good nutrition plays a vital role in wellbeing and health, and that malnutrition or dehydration can have a huge impact on the physical and mental health of the Client and their ability to carry out everyday activities. This policy provides a framework to ensure good nutrition and hydration for Clients that is acceptable to the individual, whilst ensuring that assessment and individualised plans of care identify risk, choice and promote independence.

The aim of OneCall24 Limited is to comply with legislation, regulation and best practice standards, in particular, The Healthcare Quality Strategy for NHSScotland as well as the Oral Health and Nutrition Guidance for Professionals 2012

This policy must be read in conjunction with Choking Policy and Procedure at OneCall24 Healthcare Limited

OneCall24 Limited understands the importance to meet the legal requirements set by the following legislations and guidelines:

- Equality Act 2010
- The Healthcare Quality Strategy for NHSScotland
- Oral Health and Nutrition Guidance for Professionals 2012
- Food in Hospitals: National Catering and Nutrition Specification for Food and Fluid Provision in Hospitals in Scotland. Edinburgh: The Scottish Government; 2008
- Clinical standards - Food, fluid and nutritional care in hospitals. 2003
- Food Safety Act 1990
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000

Scope

- The following roles may be affected by this policy:
 - Registered Manager
 - Other management
 - Care staff
- The following Clients may be affected by this policy:
 - Clients
 - The following stakeholders may be affected by this policy:

- Family
- Representatives
- External health professionals

Objectives

OneCall24 Limited recognises the importance of having safe, high-quality food and nutrition available for all Clients, regardless of age, gender, faith or cultural and social background and ability or disability.

OneCall24 Limited promotes an inclusive culture which empowers clients to have choice in all aspects of their nutrition and hydration management, whilst staff have the competence to monitor and assess for malnutrition and dehydration across all Clients.

Policy

- Care Workers and Nurses will be trained and have the competence to support Clients safely and compassionately, within the realms of their role and responsibility. As a minimum, all staff will create and maintain a safe environment that supports Clients with food and drink and will adapt according to need such as:
 - Enteral Tube Feeding is indicated when oral feeding is unsafe or insufficient. This is a specialised liquid feed which is placed directly into the gastrointestinal tract.
 - Parenteral Nutrition Is a highly specialised liquid nutrition which is administered into the circulatory system via central access lines.
 - Special Diets including Therapeutic Diets Food or fluid which has had its nutrients or texture modified to meet the nutritional needs of a patient.

This forms part of their medical treatment to prevent or alleviate symptoms or improve nutritional status.

- Care Workers and Nurses will offer encouragement and practical assistance at mealtimes as required, whilst always maintaining privacy and dignity especially when assisting Clients.
- OneCall24 Limited will make sure that all staff will ensure that all Clients are treated equally and free from discrimination or exclusion. Where specific dietary requirements are requested to meet cultural or religious beliefs, these will be met.
- Arrangements will be made for any special diets or dietary supplements to be available to clients following the advice of an appropriately qualified or experienced healthcare professional. Care Workers and Nurses will be given the knowledge, experience and skills to provide nutritional support that meets the needs of Clients. Advice and guidance will be available to support Clients to make informed decisions around managing their nutrition and hydration needs.
- Care Workers and Nurses will seek expert, timely advice from appropriately trained professionals where there is an identified need to enhance oral intake, manage artificial nutritional support or manage complex medical conditions that may require modifications to diet or fluids.

- OneCall24 Limited also recognises that during times of uncertainty, such as the coronavirus pandemic, nutrition and hydration support to Clients must continue in line with the latest government guidelines and regulations.

Procedure

Nutritional Screening

At the point of the Care Plan assessment, information will be gathered and recorded in relation to nutritional and hydration preferences as well as gathering a medical history, information about food allergies and conditions that may affect the Client's ability to eat and drink independently.

Staff will use the Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool (MUST) to assess for the risk of malnutrition and must refer to the 'Forms' section of this policy.

A Care Plan will be produced for all Clients that details the wishes, preferences, abilities and support required in relation to meeting nutrition and hydration needs. The Client will be encouraged to be as fully involved as possible. In the absence of the ability of a Client to be involved, decisions will be made in accordance with the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 and staff must refer to this policy for further guidance.

Food and fluid charts, when introduced, must be used for an agreed period of time on an individual needs basis, to ascertain behaviours and patterns that can form management strategies to be recorded within the Client's Care Plan. A selection of charts can be found in the 'Forms' section of this policy.

Where applicable, arrangements must be put in place to ensure that the Client has access to food and fluids when the Care Worker is not visiting.

Communications

Care Workers and Nurses will establish professional relationships with Clients Service Users to enable a greater understanding of their wishes, preferences and choices. This will be recorded within the Service User's Care records. For Service Users who are proven to lack the capacity to be involved in planning their care, staff will adhere to the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000. Staff will seek the views of family members regarding the Service User's needs and preferences and refer to life history for further information.

Clients will be fully encouraged and provided with the opportunity to feel included in discussions about their needs and wishes in relation to food and nutrition. This will be achieved by ascertaining feedback and suggestions at every opportunity.

Where a Client is unable to eat or drink, or is demonstrating signs of deteriorating health due to reduced intake, a referral to the GP will be made and recorded. Care Workers are responsible for ensuring that any referrals are followed up and actioned.

Supporting a Client to Eat and Drink

All food preparation processes will comply with food safety legislation and systems will be in place to enable and promote choice in diet selection.

Positioning

Where Clients require full support, the staff member will sit at eye level and position themselves in front or slightly to one side of the Client whom they are helping. However, if this is too much of a distraction for the Client they are helping, staff must position themselves at their side.

Ideally, Clients will be supported to sit in a chair for mealtimes. However, for Clients who are bed bound, the bed must be set at a 90-degree angle (unless clinically contraindicated).

Equipment

Specialised equipment will be readily available for the Client as identified in each individual Care Plan. Equipment will be checked before use to ensure it is clean, well maintained, fit for purpose and serviced, where this is required.

Staff must refer Clients to appropriate healthcare professionals such as the Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist or Dietitian for support and guidance with managing concerns in relation to supporting Clients to eat and drink.

Management of Malnutrition

- Staff will, in the first instance, follow the MUST guidelines and report any concerns in relation to malnutrition to Philomena Odumenya (Registered Manager)
- Consideration must be given as to the possible reasons and causes for the assessed malnutrition risk. The reasons may be that the Client needs assistance with feeding, has difficulty swallowing or has other health issues not directly related to diet
- Where concerns continue, further advice must be sought from the Client's GP or dietitian

Hydration

Staff must encourage fluid intake for all Clients (unless indicated otherwise, e.g. fluid restrictions in place), and offer a selection of hot and cold drinks during visits and when requested.

Recommended fluid intake varies (NHS Choices recommends 6-8 glasses per day) therefore it is important for staff to establish what is normal for the Client. This information will be recorded in the Care Plan so that all staff are aware and can respond if they have concerns.

For those Clients who are unable to advise staff on what is normal for them, a fluid chart must be kept for 3 days to try and establish a pattern of preferred fluid intake. This can then form the basis of the Care Plan which must be reviewed as patterns and behaviours change.

Staff need to also be aware of some of the common reasons as to why Clients do not drink enough (e.g. fear of not getting to the toilet on time, unable to support themselves etc.) and work with the Client to resolve some of these issues.

Medical advice must be sought if a Client has particular health problems that affect the maintenance of good hydration, which may require fluid restriction and close monitoring.

Staff need to be trained to look for the signs of dehydration (resources are available within the 'Further Reading' section of this policy), record these concerns and report them to the Lead Clinician.

Clients with Swallowing Difficulties

Staff will support Clients who have swallowing difficulties and must refer to the Choking Policy and Procedure for more detail around the use of a modified diet and thickeners.

Any new changes to a Client's swallow function will be reported to the GP and documented. Advice will be sought from the Speech and Language Team as to how Onecall24 Healthcare Limited can support the Client.

Artificial Nutrition and Hydration Support

Philomena Odumenya (Registered Manager) will ensure that will ensure that the workers of One Call 24 have an understanding of when the Clients require artificial support to meet their nutrition and hydration needs, this is met by competent, trained staff with the following available:

- A detailed individual Care Plan that provides clinical guidance on the oral and enteral nutrition regimes and support required, who to contact for support and guidance, a protocol for out-of-hours management and how to respond to changes in condition
- Sufficient and well-maintained stocks and supplies of equipment
- Evidence of staff competence and training in the required areas
- PPE and appropriate management of infection control

All regimes will be prescribed by an appropriate specialist healthcare professional or the Client's GP.

Supporting Clients who are Obese or Bariatric

- If not already done so and with the agreement of the Client, advice must be sought from a dietitian as soon as possible. If a Client chooses to attempt to lose weight, the dietitian can give suitable guidance for safe weight loss
- Staff must never assume that an overweight Client must be on a calorie-reducing diet without discussing this with the Client first and making them aware of the risks of being obese. Client choice is paramount and this must be taken into account at all times

Training and Education

- New Care Workers will be expected to complete the Skills for Care: Care Certificate as part of their induction at Onecall24 Limited. This includes the completion of Unit 8: Fluids and Nutrition, which will provide a foundation to their knowledge
- Ongoing, staff will be expected to maintain and develop their knowledge and development further. This will be delivered and offered by different means which could include formal training, or delivery via discussion through team meetings and supervisions
- A range of resources will be available to support staff and access to this policy and the suite of associated documents will be available via the mobile app or desktop
- Staff should make use of e-learning training available

Audit and Review

- The audit programme for nutrition and hydration will be overseen by Philomena Odumenya with the support of her team and will include audits of the care records and staff performance
- Client feedback will be sought through various means such as direct discussion and through satisfaction surveys
- Philomena Odumenya will also make use of the Mock Inspection Toolkits available to demonstrate meeting the nutrition and hydration needs of a Client

Key Facts - Professionals

Professionals providing this service should be aware of the following:

- An up-to-date and current Care Plan will be in place to identify the Client's specific nutrition and hydration needs and preferences
- All care and support surrounding nutrition and hydration will be provided in a person-centred way that promotes the Client's independence, choice and dignity
- Providing Clients with optimal nutritional care is an integral part of their support and the provision of appropriate food and fluids to meet their needs is essential to maximise individual health outcomes
- Regardless of diet type, foods must be presented in an appetising manner and it must be emphasised that mealtime visits are seen as a meaningful and pleasant experience
- Malnutrition and obesity are high-risk areas and staff must have the skills to assess, monitor and support the Client to manage this

Review

This policy statement will be reviewed annually as part of our commitment to upholding professional standards. It may be altered from time to time in the light of legislative changes, operational procedures or other prevailing circumstances.