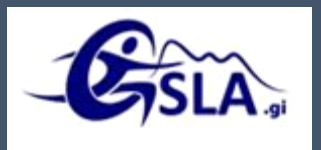


LIAISING WITH FAMILIES OR CARERS POLICY AND EMPLOYEE GUIDELINES

Code of Conduct and Guidance notes to all GSLA employees when liaising
with family or carers of GSLA Service Users





LIAISING WITH FAMILIES OR CARERS OF OUR SERVICE USERS POLICY AND GSLA EMPLOYEE GUIDELINES AND CODE OF CONDUCT

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EQUALITY, INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The Gibraltar Sports and Leisure Authority (GSLA) endeavour to provide the community with the best possible sports and leisure facilities, and development programmes, in order to cater for the majority of the needs of Sports Associations, Educational Establishments and our community as a whole.

The GSLA, is of the view, that opportunities should be open to all. We are committed to providing services which embrace inclusivity, diversity and promote equality of opportunity. Our goal is to ensure that these commitments are embedded in to our day to day working practices with our employees, supporting Public Service Department, Agencies and Contracted Services, Sports Associations, and our Service Users.

During the development of our policies and procedures the GSLA will conduct an equality assessment and give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment or victimisation to advance equality of opportunity and ensure good relationships with individuals who share a protected characteristic as defined under the Equal Opportunities Act 2006. The GSLA will take any appropriate action, to safeguard and protect, and will report any negligence or irregularity of behaviour, in this respect, through the appropriate channels.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Within the GSLA communication plays an instrumental role and is a core aspect of good working relationships and our relationships with service users. Being able to communicate effectively is a skill that has a range of benefits, perhaps most importantly, it helps to deliver person-centred support and assistance and an enhanced service.

Being able to liaise with our Service Users, their families/guardians and carers, and communicate well with them helps to ensure that we can carry out our role effectively. It will enable us to find out service users' needs, provide a good service delivery, and also helps build good relationships with our work colleagues, service users, their families or carers.

Being able to communicate effectively is crucial for having good relationships with your service users, their families and carers. You will be able to find out their needs and wishes and avoid any potentially distressing misunderstandings and miscommunications. What's more, if you communicate effectively with a service user, they are much more likely to connect with you and have confidence in what you tell them and put their trust in you.

Communicating poorly with service users can have a range of consequences. For example, if you adopt closed body language such as crossing your arms, they may feel like you are unapproachable or unfriendly. Similarly, if you miscommunicate and share inaccurate information, a person's support could be affected, or trust issues would likely arise. We all have to be conscience of our behaviour.

2. CODE OF CONDUCT

As a GSLA employee you will be expected to abide by the GSLA Collective Agreement, Code of Conduct and its policies and procedures. When liaising with Service User's, their families/guardians or carers, you must always conduct yourself in an appropriate and respectful manner as outlined below:

- Make sure that your conduct and behaviour does not damage the public perception and trust of the GSLA and the Service we provide.
- Be aware that your conduct and behaviour outside of working hours may impact your professional reputation and image
- Do not claim that you have knowledge, skills, qualifications and experience which you do not have.
- Be honest about your role with the service users, carers and others.
- Make sure that your personal appearance is appropriate for your practice/ placement/work environment.
- Do not answer any questions that you have no knowledge about, approach your management for support
- Provide constructive feedback and accept constructive feedback
- Report all matters involving the concerns of the Service User, their family/guardian or carer to Management

- Abide and follow all GSLA policies, guidelines and procedures
- Treat everyone equally and do not discriminate against anyone because of your personal views.
- Keep relationships with service users, their families/guardians and carers professional.

3. CONFIDENTIALITY

All GSLA employees are subject to all GSLA rules, policies and procedures with regard to the confidential information and business as contained in Section 44 of the GSLA Collective Agreement. This includes any information in respect to our Service Users their families/guardians and carers. Therefore, you must:

- Keep information about service users and carers confidential, and only use it for the purpose for which it was given.
- Follow Gibraltar Data Protection Regulations and GSLA policies and guidelines on confidentiality.
- If any confidential information raises concern about the safety or wellbeing of a Service User, you should discuss this promptly with your line manager and escalate the matter to GSLA Senior Management immediately.
- Treat service users and carers as individuals, respecting their privacy and dignity.
- Make sure that you have consent from service users, their family/guardian or carers before you disclose any sensitive, medical or delicate information

4. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

GSLA employees are expect to conduct themselves in a respectful and approachable manner when dealing with Service Users, their families/guardians and carers. You must be aware of your behaviour and of the use and tone of language you may display. GSLA employees are expected to:

- Be polite and considerate to service users, their families/guardians or carers.
- Listen to service users and carers and take account of their requirements and make your Line Manager and Senior Management aware of these if necessary
- Take all reasonable steps to make sure that you can communicate appropriately and effectively with service users, families/guardians and carers.
- Communicate effectively and co-operate with other members of staff to benefit service users, family/guardians and carers needs.
- Use all forms of communication appropriately and responsibly, including social media and networking websites, GSLA webpage and HM GoG Internet and our internal methods of communication by using GSLA Circulars and the HM GoG Intranet. All in keeping within the parameters of your responsibility.

- Use of the HIMAMA Online and Mobile App for the appropriate communication and information sharing with all Stay and Play Family Members/Guardian/Carers.
- Use official departmental emails and phone numbers keeping your contact within the remit of your normal working hours unless in a case of emergency.
- Do not contact a Service User, their family/guardian or carers with your private email or phone number and avoid contacting them outside of official working hours unless this is in a personal or private capacity.
- You may need to keep a record of a conversation or take note of any action that may need to be taken. Make sure that the records you keep are clear and accurate.
- In the event of an incident or accident you may use the appropriate reporting process to record this. Please refer to GSLA employee guidelines when reporting and incident/accident involving a Service User.

IMPORTANT TO NOTE: That when liaising or communicating on behalf of a child the information should only be given to the person that has given consent to receive or disclose such information. This will be the person listed as the responsible contact on their application to use our facilities or take part in our organised events and activities. For Stay and Play Service Users this would be done via our HIMAMA app and in case of emergency or concern directly with the Service Users listed contact/family member/guardian or carer.

Listen to your Service User, their family/Guardian/Carer

Give people enough time to communicate and don't rush them. For certain individuals, such as some who have learning disabilities, they may take longer to process information and gather their thoughts, so giving them plenty of time is crucial. Additionally, there may be some people who have reduced energy levels, such as if they are in hospital with illness, who may need a bit longer to think before they respond. Ensure that you are guided by the individual and communicate at a pace that is comfortable for them.

Ask Questions

Don't be afraid to ask if you don't quite understand what someone is saying, rather than guessing what you think they mean or making assumptions about what you think they've said. For example, concluding that someone has expressed they want their care to be delivered in a certain way based on assumptions can be damaging if they meant something completely different.

Similarly, if you haven't heard someone, ask them to repeat themselves rather than pretending to hear or guessing what you think they said. Physical barriers to communication, such as the use of face masks, can make this especially difficult, so ensure that you ask questions to avoid any miscommunications or misunderstandings.

Listen to More Than Just Words

Bear in mind that communication is about so much more than simply what somebody says. It also includes:

- **Tone of voice** – this is about the way somebody speaks. Tone of voice is important for conveying meaning; if somebody is feeling low they may speak in a monotonous tone, or if somebody is excited their tone may be more varied and enthusiastic.
- **Pace** – this refers to the speed at which somebody speaks. For example, somebody may speak quickly if they are excited.
- **Body language** – this can be open or closed. Closed body language, such as fiddling or turning away, can indicate that someone is disinterested or nervous.
- **Gestures** – these can emphasise what is being said or act as an alternative to speech. For example, somebody may use hand movements to express or emphasise what they are feeling.
- **Facial expressions** – these can show emotions or reactions, such as smiling when you are happy or raising your eyebrows when you're interested.

However, it's important not to make assumptions about how somebody is feeling or what they're trying to communicate. Avoid making assumptions and ensure you take the interaction as a whole, asking questions if you are unsure.

5. REPORT ANY SAFETY OR SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

If at any time it is felt that there may be a safety or safeguarding concern or risk to the Service User this should be immediately be reported to the GSLA Designated Safeguarding Officers and the provisions of the GSLA Safeguarding Policy will be activated if this is necessary.

GSLA Designated Safeguarding Leads Contact Details:

Senior Lead for Safeguarding

Name: Reagan Lima

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Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

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