

Statement of Expectations of service users and carers

“A good care worker is someone who listens to you and takes you sincerely and puts what you have said into practice.”

Consultation with service users and carers in the UK has informed care standards and resulted in the following statement of expectations. In their practice, social care workers should take into account the views of people who use services and their carers as expressed here. The report is divided into the following sections: the ideal care worker; values; skills; knowledge; implications for managers.

Quotations from service users and carers are included in italics.

The Ideal Care Worker

This is what service users and carers wanted of care workers:

Ideal care workers go out of their way for you, try to understand what it's like for the service user and carer; they are happy and interested in their work and knowledgeable about their jobs and sources of help. As people they are friendly, diplomatic, interested, patient and responsible. They are good communicators who listen and don't try to follow their own agenda... Ideal care workers are people you can trust.

Values

- **Respect** – show respect for the dignity and privacy of the individual; place value on the person.
 - *A good care worker is someone who respects you as a person.*
 - *... someone you can trust who will be honest with you and not bullshit you.*
 - *They show they care for you not like an idiot in a wheelchair.*
 - *I felt worth something and that I could make a difference.*
 - *It's my house, not your house.*
- **Choice** – provide realistic choices.
 - *They tell you what choices you've got. They would sit down and tell you what one thing would be like and the other... It's fair – you know what can happen.*
 - *They let you choose things, your clothes and that.*
 - *What is a choice?*
 - *It's important to be able to choose things for the unit.*
- **Being non-judgemental** – don't judge people; avoid making assumptions about them.
 - *They listen to me and are non-judgemental.*
 - *If you see behaviour that you think is difficult there could be lots of different causes. Don't label it “challenging behaviour”, look for why it's happening.*
 - *Keep an open mind.*

Values (cont.)

- **Inclusion and Empowerment** – involve and empower service users and carers as much as possible.
 - *Treat us as allies.*
 - *Involve us in decisions.*
 - *Work with people to support the gaining or regaining of personal or political power.*
 - *Don't talk about us without us.*
- **Confidentiality** – respect confidential information.
 - *They listen and respect confidences so that I feel comfortable enough to tell the truth.*
 - *You should always ask permission before you discuss confidential information with anyone else and explain why you want to discuss it. You should only pass on confidential information without permission if someone is in danger, or if the law requires it.*
 - *If it's not too big a deal they should keep secrets but if it's that bad they should tell someone else.*

Skills

- **Communication** – This is one of the main skill areas emphasized by both service users and carers.
 - *They help you and listen to you.*
 - *Staff listen to you when things are really bad.*
 - *They are good communicators who listen and don't try to follow their own agenda.*
 - *The best ones impart information clearly and simply with no jargon.*
 - *They explain things to you in a good way.*
 - *They help us to effectively share relevant information.*

Service users and carers also asked that care workers:

- are aware of a variety of communication methods
- Check back that the worker's understanding is correct
- Don't talk down to the client
- Provide precise, clear and accurate communication

b) Other Skills

Care workers should:

- Have good practical skills
 - *They should be fit for everyday tasks.*
 - *If you cut yourself they will give you first aid*
 - *They must be able to do the things I'm unable to do myself.*
- Place service users and carers at the centre of the assessment and care planning process
 - *Meetings should be at a time convenient to us.*
 - *They should keep focused on the needs of who they are trying to help.*
 - *Service users should be given the opportunity to be actively involved in assessment as they wish.*

b) Other Skills (cont.)

Care workers should:

- Pay particular attention to the ending of a relationship
- Be clear headed in an emergency
 - *They gave help and support in times of personal crises.*
 - *They should be calm in any situation.*
- Enable people to live as independently as possible and, if necessary, advocate on their behalf
 - *A good care worker cuts through red tape and just gets on with it.*
 - *They should be able to speak for me.*

Knowledge

Care workers should:

- have knowledge of services and legislation relevant to users and carers' needs
- know about the benefit system and sources of funding, or who to refer to if they don't
- know about the Health and Social Services Organisations
- know when and whom to ask for extra help
- know about the people they are caring for
- know about the roles of other people in relation to meeting service user and carer need
- understand their limitations
- know how to identify their limitations
- know how to identify the frustrations of the service user
- have up-to-date knowledge
 - *We would like to be sure that workers really understand human development and caring at every stage of life.*
 - *A care worker must do everything they can to find out the information the person may need*

Implications for Managers

Managers should:

- ensure the availability of information e.g. of other services, of ways of meeting needs of people for information
- provide good supervision so that workers know that they can seek additional advice and support when they don't have the knowledge and skills to respond to individuals and key people
- provide for training of workers, for example, in anti-discriminatory practice.
 - *They should be there most of the time to see how things are going and see if the people are being listened to; reading up on everything, doing money stuff and organising trips.*

Source: Taken from a UK joint review of "Care National Occupational Standards and Awards", which in Scotland has been superseded by "Health and Social Care Standards. My Support, my life".