



# CARER HANDBOOK

**ALEXANDER HOUSE**

*“providing recovery focused support in a therapeutic environment”*





## **CONTACT DETAILS**

**Community Links  
Alexander House  
272 Wetherby Road  
LS17 8NE**

**Office Phone : 2188095  
Residents Phone: 2188975**

**Email the team : [team.alexander@commlinks.co.uk](mailto:team.alexander@commlinks.co.uk)**

**Community Links website : [www.commlinks.co.uk](http://www.commlinks.co.uk)**

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## ALEXANDER HOUSE

Alexander House has six places and provides housing and support for six women and men over the age of 18.

Four of the beds are for residents who stay a maximum of 8 months (Resettlement) and the other two beds are for respite (Prevention) placements which are between two nights and three weeks.

Alexander House is commissioned by NHS Leeds and Supporting people and is managed by Community Links.

## **COMMUNITY LINKS**

Community Links is a Charity offering housing and support to over 500 single homeless people with mental health problems throughout the city of Leeds.

## AIM OF THE SERVICE

The aim of Alexander House is:

- To provide residents with the help and support needed to become as independent as possible in all aspects of their daily life.
- To help the resident access appropriate future accommodation.
- To provide a service that treats each resident as a unique individual with his or her own view on the world.
- To be actively sensitive to and accommodate people from all kinds of backgrounds, cultures and faith.

## CARERS

Partners, family and friends are seen as a valued source of support in the life of the resident and will be actively included at every opportunity.

This will be done in a variety of ways:

- Including Carers in the client assessment as a valuable source of information.
- Encouraging the resident to invite Carers to visit and meet with the residents and staff.
- Formally through an introductory letter and handbook.
- Informally through telephone calls.
- Inclusion in ongoing work undertaken with the resident.
- Invitations to meet with staff.
- Telephone support.

At referral and assessment stage agreements are made with the residents about what information they are happy for us to share with their Carer. All residents will be encouraged to share information directly with the people relevant to their care.

However, some residents do not give us their permission to make contact with their Carer at all; some residents are happy for general information to be shared with their Carer and some residents prefer for their Carer to be fully involved with their welfare whilst they are at the hostel.

As we primarily support residents we have to respect their wishes and this may sometimes mean withholding specific information from Carers. We recognise this can leave Carers feeling left out and worried so we try to be sensitive to this. We endeavour to do our utmost to provide reassurance and general information in a situation where a resident has asked us not to divulge specific information to Carers. Where a resident does not wish information to be shared the staff will request that the resident informs the Carer of this directly. Where it is not possible to share information Carers will be informed of the reason why.

We also accept that Carers equally have the right to confidentiality and that their needs maybe very distinct from the resident. Therefore, we enclose information on the Carers Team who are part of the Leeds NHS Foundation Trust and are a distinct and separate service from Alexander House. The Carers Team are set up to specifically support Carers. We encourage all Carers to contact them for information, support and guidance.

Each sector of Leeds has a Carers Support Group that meet regularly and you can find more information about these groups from The Carers Team. Please do get in touch in with them. If you need support to do so the Alexander House team will be happy to help you.

**ADDRESS** : Carers Team, South Wing, St. Marys House,  
St. Marys Road, LS7 3JX

**TEL** : 0113 2954444

**EMAIL** : [carers.team@leedspft.nhs.uk](mailto:carers.team@leedspft.nhs.uk)

**WEBSITE** : [www.leedspft.nhs.uk/carers](http://www.leedspft.nhs.uk/carers)



## THE STAFF TEAM

The team is made up of:

- A manager
- A deputy manager
- One part time mental health support worker

There is at least one mental health support worker on the premises at all times. There is usually between 3 and 4 workers on duty across the day.

The manager and deputy manager work Monday to Friday usually during office hours.

Alexander House also offers placements to Nursing and Social Work students.



## MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT WORKERS

A mental health support worker may be trained as a nurse or social worker, but this is not a requirement of the post.

More usually they are individuals with a background in support work, either paid or voluntary and can often have experience of being Service Users or Carers themselves.

Central to the recruitment of any worker to Alexander House is the need to possess an excellent attitude towards Service Users and Carers, allied with self-awareness and progressive thinking.



## LIFE AT ALEXANDER HOUSE

Alexander House provides structure to the day of each resident. All residents contribute to and inform the structure of the day.

Each weekday morning residents and staff get together for a meeting. This meeting is at 9.45am and all residents are expected to attend.

This is because:

- Information is exchanged between residents and workers.
- The residents are informed about which members of staff are on duty and any admissions or discharges for that day.
- Residents are expected to inform each other and staff of any visitors they may have and likewise the residents are informed of any visitors expected to the unit.
- It is also an opportunity for residents to take part in discussions and decision-making about general issues around the hostel and have some influence on their surroundings.
- General housekeeping arrangements are made for the day ahead. Every person living or working at the hostel is required to do his or her share of the domestic duties. This will involve some cleaning and cooking a communal meal. These 'chores' will be allocated at the daily meeting. Help is provided when needed.

## THE KEY WORKER ROLE AT ALEXANDER HOUSE

All resettlement residents have a Key Worker and associate worker and all prevention residents have a Keyworker. They are responsible for the resident's welfare whilst at the hostel.

The Key Worker is responsible for:

- Being the point of contact for the resident, Carers and outside agencies.
- Coordinating support within the hostel.
- Developing support plans with residents that reflect their wants and needs.
- Ensuring that any areas of risk are adequately planned for.
- Ensuring the resident attends out patient appointments and gains access to primary care.
- Ensuring that housing applications are made for appropriate move-on for the end of their hostel stay.
- Keeping a point of contact between the medical team, the Care Coordinator and the Alexander House team.
- Assisting the resident to access benefit entitlements and to budget where necessary.
- To ensure that all aspects of the resident are considered, that is, their physical, emotional, spiritual, psychological and social needs.

## PEOPLE INVOLVED IN RESIDENT CARE

- The Consultant Psychiatrist responsible for the resident on admission remains so throughout their stay.
- The resident will normally see their Consultant as an outpatient.
- The resident will normally be on the Care Programme Approach.
- Alexander House staff do not act as Care Coordinators. This role is usually carried out by a Community Psychiatric Nurse [CPN] or Social Worker.

## MEDICATION

The Alexander House staff team acknowledge that medication can be a big issue for residents and their Carers.

The hostel works towards maximising independence and self-reliance. However, the team recognise that there is a need to balance increasing autonomy at the same time as providing appropriate monitoring of medication and mental health.

The ultimate goal for most residents will be that they can medicate independently before leaving Alexander House. However, there will be a number of steps to be taken before this will happen. The following is usual:

- The staff team usually administer medication to the resident when they first come to stay at the hostel. The Key Worker will ensure that the resident understands what medication they are taking, for what purpose and what the possible side effects may be.
- A self-medicating regime will be considered, discussed and put into practice only when the staff and resident feel that they are ready for the responsibility. It is usual that a self-medicating regime is built up over time.
- When enough confidence has been gained the resident will collect their own weekly tablets and keep them within a locked drawer in their bedroom. The resident is made aware that they can review progress at any time and this is also true of the Key Worker and team members.
- At all times the staff will be aware of what medication the resident is prescribed and will monitor/evaluate success with the resident at regular and agreed intervals.
- The Key Worker and team members reserve the right to intervene if issues of risk arise.

Alexander House works to a social model of care. This means that medication is seen as part of the resident's support package alongside other issues such as activities, education, employment, social activities and skill development.

## COMPLAINTS

If there are problems Alexander House is open to feedback.

If a Carer is worried or concerned about anything to do with the care/support of a friend, partner or family member they are urged to talk this through with a staff member at the earliest opportunity.

If this proves unsatisfactory the deputy manager or manager are available on 2188095.

Community Links has a complaints procedure and this is posted on the pin board in the entrance hall along with complaints forms.

## MONEY

Heating, light, laundry, food and council tax is all included in the rent. Funding for the hostel comes from several different sources and as a result each individual resident's personal contribution (rent) differs.

- Rent is usually paid through the Housing Benefit system. Each resident, if claiming Housing Benefit, will be expected to contribute out of their weekly benefits. The rate of the personal contribution that residents are expected to pay differs. This is usually between £ 35 and £50 per week.
- If the resident is on a section guardianship order then either Health or Social Services will usually pay the full rent. In some cases however residents may be expected to make a weekly contribution.
- If the resident is eligible for 117 Aftercare they will pay approximately £ 38- £ 46 per week.
- Benefit payments are often subject to change and each person's income is different and dependent on factors such as age, national insurance contributions, etc. Therefore, prior to residents moving into Alexander House the team will do their utmost to clarify the personal contribution of each individual.
- Residents are expected to look after their own money. Assistance will be given with budgeting where appropriate.
- Prevention places are £46 per week.

## VISITORS

- Every resident is entitled to have visitors.
- Residents may have visitors to stay overnight in their rooms if all other residents have met the visitor before and are comfortable with a guest staying.
- Any visitors not staying overnight are required to leave the premises by 9pm.
- Residents are asked to inform fellow residents and staff when they are expecting a visitor.
- Visits are usually by prior arrangement only and we do not encourage visitors dropping in without prior agreement.

## HOUSE SAFETY

- Residents have their own room keys.
- Workers do not enter resident rooms without permission unless they are worried or there is an emergency.
- Residents staying out later than 10 pm on a weekday and 11 pm on a weekend will need a front door key, which is available from staff on request.
- Residents are required to inform us if they are staying out overnight. This is because staff need to know how many people are on the premises if any emergency situations should arise.
- Also if residents are not back by 10pm on weekdays and 11pm on a weekend they may be reported to the police as 'missing' if there are any concerns for their safety.

## COOKING AND FOOD



- All ingredients are provided by the hostel.
- Residents and staff cook and eat together.
- Support, guidance and advice are given with regard to hygiene, budgeting and cooking skills.
- Residents and staff produce menus and shopping lists together that reflect the individual tastes, dietary and cultural requirements of all residents.
- Residents shop with staff members.
- All residents take turns in cooking for themselves and for others.

## LAUNDRY

The hostel has a laundry room with a washer, drier, iron and ironing board.

Staff will work closely with residents to ensure that they wash their clothes and bed linen.

Washing powder is provided.

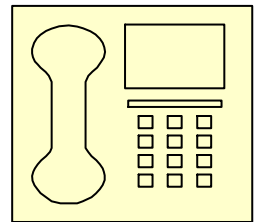
## TELEPHONE

There is a private telephone booth with a pay phone.

The resident's telephone number is 2188975

Staff do not, usually, answer this phone.

If you need to contact someone urgently, please call the office phone on 2188095



## COVER AT NIGHT

There will be one worker sleeping in the house at night, but they are only to be disturbed in the case of an emergency.

The Sleep-In worker goes off shift at 10pm Mondays to Thursdays and on Sunday night. On a Friday and Saturday night the Sleep-In workers goes off shift at 11pm. The Sleep-In worker is then back on shift at 8am every morning.



**If you require this Handbook in another language or format such as audio, large print or Braille then please let us know.**

**If you are unsure about anything in the Handbook or about the residents stay at the hostel OR you would like to know more information please do not hesitate to ask a member of the team.**

**A special thanks to all the Carers who gave feedback on the Handbook to enable us to get it right, THANK YOU!**

