

Contingency Policy

What do we mean by Contingency?

We mean here a set of circumstances including emergencies which may occur and as a result Deafblind Scotland would take steps as a Service Provider to maintain a Guide/Communicator Service to deafblind people.

Policy Statement

Deafblind Scotland exists to work with and for deafblind people in Scotland. Deafblind Scotland is committed to a high standard of service delivery to deafblind people and is striving to improving services to deafblind people, including Deafblind Scotland's own Guide/Communicator Service. The Guide/Communicator Service is underpinned by the Guide/Communicator **Code of Practice** and is further characterised by its flexibility.

Guide/Communicator Service

All attempts are made to deliver assignments of the Guide/Communicator Service as and when these are booked by and for deafblind people, friends, family or advocates on their behalf. All Service-users receive a Guide/Communicator Service Information Pack outlining the commitment by Deafblind Scotland to deafblind people. Within this is contained a protocol for booking Guide/Communicators; it is explained that last minute bookings are difficult to organise because of prior scheduling of Guide/Communicators who are a sizeable but still limited workforce. Deafblind Scotland will aim to cover medical assignments first, as Medical appointments are viewed generally as a priority.

Where a Guide/Communicator is unable to fulfil an assignment the office will aim to cover this assignment with another Guide/Communicator, and so on until the assignment may be covered. Where this is unsuccessful, Deafblind Scotland may invoke the policy and the flexibility of utilising office staff as Guide/Communicators. All office staff undergo training in Communication and Guiding Skills to equip them with the knowledge and practical skills in working with deafblind people. This provides a second line Guide Communication workforce should it need to be deployed.

The Guide/Communicator Service strives to cover all booked assignments where possible. Occasionally it will occur that this may not be possible; in this instance Deafblind Scotland may try to re-schedule the appointment.

Holiday Contingencies

On public holidays when there is an abridged service, priority is given to:

- Those deafblind people who are most vulnerable, living alone. There is a 'most vulnerable' list based on those living alone and with complex needs in relation to health or communication.
- Medical appointments

- Other emergencies which may occur

When the office is closed and there is a problem with the service, or in the event of the guide/communicator not having arrived, the service-user has an out of hours number to contact. For other emergencies the service-user should contact out of hours social work or the emergency services.

Emergency Contingencies

The Guide/Communicator Service monitors individual contingencies as and when these arise, and lessons from and solutions to such events discussed within the service. Deafblind Scotland generally would monitor other contingencies and work with Social Work and other emergency services to ensure that the needs of deafblind people could be best met during such events. See Business Continuity Plan Policy for specific contingency measures.

Deafblind Scotland Contingency Arrangements

Fire/evacuation

Deafblind service-users in the community

In the event of a fire/evacuation, Guide/communicators whilst escorting deafblind service-users in the community shall follow the fire/evacuation advice and procedure of the relevant host venue, e.g. Colleges, hospitals, shops, residential home or public transport.

In the event of a fire in the deafblind person's own home, where there is unlikely to be a formal procedure, the first priority must be to get everybody out safely. Particular attention must be paid to occupants with disabilities and every assistance given in order to facilitate a quick and safe exit.

The Guide/communicator will contact emergency services where this has not been already done, and follow the procedure and advice of these upon arrival.

It is the Guide/communicator's responsibility to maintain their own safety. However, if it is reasonably feasible to maintain basic safety of the deafblind person, then this should be carried out whilst ensuring no jeopardy to himself or herself or the service-user.

Whilst supporting a deafblind service-user within Deafblind Scotland premises, the following is relevant:

Fire Safety equipment will be regularly tested and maintained, and records kept.

Fire evacuation procedures will be carried out annually and details recorded.

Details of fire risk assessments, which take into account deafblind persons, will be available locally.

In the event of fire, all buildings (offices/shops/etc) will be immediately evacuated, and a staff member will dial 999

It will be the responsibility of the Fire Warden to ensure that the area has been completely evacuated.

All staff and visitors should assemble at the assembly point indicated on the fire regulations notice.

It will be the responsibility of the Fire Warden to ensure that all staff and visitors have been accounted for.

Fire exits and escape routes will be kept clear at all times.

In the event of a service-user becoming injured/requiring hospital admission:

In the event of a deafblind service-user becoming injured/requiring hospital admission, the guide/communicator shall contact the appropriate emergency services or if able to do so and the injury is minor, transport the deafblind person to hospital.

The guide/communicator shall inform their line manager as soon as this becomes opportune.

The guide/communicator will remain with the deafblind service-user to provide the deafblind service-user with appropriate communication and information support whilst in the medical setting, until otherwise advised by their line manager.

The guide/communicator will advise medical staff on the most appropriate communication method any information and communicate with hospital staff if appropriate.

The guide/communicator will communicate any relevant information to member's family, if this is the service-user's expressed wish.

The guide/communicator will take note of visiting hours and other relevant information, including when the deafblind service-user next requires communication and information support from the service.

The guide/communicator will keep their line manager informed of any relevant details for appropriate advice in order to support the deafblind person.

Cessation of the care service:

It is Deafblind Scotland's policy to procure a Guide/communicator service for all those deafblind people who require and wish one. Deafblind Scotland has rarely if ever had a service withdrawn from a service-user.

Occasionally a funding agency will no longer fund a service, in which case, Deafblind Scotland would encourage the funding agency to write to the service-user to explain the reasons for the termination of this funding.

Deafblind Scotland would monitor the situation and seek to re-instate the service if this is deemed necessary, by contacting the funding agency, or seeking alternative methods of funding this service.

Deafblind Scotland would remind Local Authorities of their duty of care responsibilities where appropriate.

In the event of persistent and sustained poor behaviour by the deafblind service-user Deafblind Scotland may consider terminating a service. Poor behaviour would include:

- Inappropriate touching
- Breakdown of the working relationship with more than one Guide/communicator
- Refusing to co-operate with safe working practices
- Physically threatening behaviour

In the longer term, a service-user may be in need of more comprehensive medical and social services support, of which Deafblind Scotland's Guide/communicator service could only play a component support role.

In such an instance it may be deemed appropriate that the service-user would still be provided with communication and information support whilst the individual was in a period of convalescence, advanced specialist support or treatment.

If a service-user was to go out of care service and not return

- Deafblind Scotland's client group are dual sensory impaired adults living in their own homes in the community. As such they are responsible adults and would not be deemed to have left Deafblind Scotland's care service, rather their own homes. However some service users are more vulnerable than others. In such instances Deafblind Scotland would co-operate in any way possible with all relevant social and policing agencies to help support the location of the individual and to maintain the deafblind individual's safety and security, where this was the relevant issue.
- It is not Deafblind Scotland's policy to maintain profiles and photographs of its deafblind membership.