



Link Option Agency Services Ltd
69 Brooms Road, Luton, England LU2 0JR
info@linkoptionservices.com
Tel: +44 7858510061

LINK OPTION AGENCY SERVICES LIMITED HANDBOOK

Welcome to Link Option Agency Services Ltd. This handbook provides you with details of the relationship that exists between us and you as a Temporary/ Permanent Worker whilst on assignment. You will find included statements, policies and procedures that are relevant to your work placements and will detail what is expected of you. It should be read in conjunction with your Terms and Conditions. This document is not intended to replace internal policies and procedures of our clients. We feel that a clear understanding of responsibilities will lead to a successful and safe working relationship. We are committed to providing a high-quality service to both our clients and yourself, therefore it is essential you familiarize yourself with the contents of this handbook.

Please keep this booklet as you may find the information useful as a source of reference now and whilst working with Link Option Agency Services Ltd. If any of the sections are unclear, or if you have any questions please contact us.

Our address is:

69 Brooms Road, Luton, England LU2 0JR

Telephone:

Email: info@linkoptionservices.com

Our normal office opening hours are: Monday – Friday
09.00 – 17.00

We are operating a 24 hours on-call services and the telephone contact number is:

Tel: +44 7858510061

Once you have completed the Registration process with Link Option Agency Services Ltd, one of our team members will contact you to confirm you are ready to commence work. We will be in the position to not be able to offer you any work until the full registration process has been completed.

Induction, Mandatory Training & CPD (Continuing Professional Development) As well as briefing you on general issues and procedures, we will provide you with the following mandatory training covering:

Moving & Handling

Health and Safety

Risk Incident Reporting

Information Governance

Complaints Handling

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

Basic Life Support

Fire Procedures

Lone Worker Training

Conflict Resolution

Safeguarding Children

Infection Control

Link Option Agency Services Ltd will support you to complete your mandatory training through a third party.

It is important that you keep your skills and knowledge up to date. Therefore, you are required to take part in regular learning activities and CPD. We will assist you both practically and financially during your time with us. CPD activities include the purchase of relevant books, attending courses and



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conferences or subscription to journals. You must complete mandatory training on an annual basis. We can also organise mandatory training for you, just contact one of our team members for more details. You can also source your own training courses and use the CPD allowance to fund it.

Risk Incident Reporting:

Under the Management of Health and Safety Regulations of 1992 you have a legal duty of care to report all accidents, incidents and near misses. These regulations impose a duty on employers to perform risk assessments on all work activities. If during the course of your work you identify a risk to the health, safety or welfare of your own personal safety, and/or that of your colleague/patients/clients/residents, you have a duty to report this. In the first instance, it should be reported to the person in charge of the department to which you are assigned, and to us. You will then be instructed if further action is required i.e. to complete an incident report form. You will need to adhere to the local Policies in place regarding incident Accident Reporting as well.

If for any reason you consider yourself to be at risk working in a "lone worker" situation, please contact us immediately so that a further risk assessment can be performed and arrangements can be made to ensure safe systems of work and your personal safety.

Lone Workers Information:

Lone workers are those workers who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. Lone working is not governed by a specific legislation but a wide range of legislation may apply depending on the nature of the work involved. In all instances the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations of 1992 will apply. Generally, within the healthcare industry, lone workers can be regarded as those who work on a mobile basis such as community/district nurses, domiciliary homecare workers etc., or those personnel who work outside of normal hours e.g. Domestic, porters, security etc. In all cases where a worker is expected to work alone a risk assessment should be performed by the client and steps taken to reduce risk to the lowest practicable level. The risk assessment should address:

Whether the work can be performed safely by a single person

What arrangements are required to ensure the lone worker is at no more risk than employees working together.

Violence and Aggression:

It has been recognised for some time now that workers in a hospital or healthcare setting work within an environment where there is potential for threat, aggression or violence. Violence and aggression can be defined as including the following circumstances:

Minor assaults including situations where physical contact and/ or injuries occur which require first aid treatment

Threats with an offensive weapon without physical injury

Aggravated assault resulting in injury requiring medical assistance

Threatening behaviour which could include verbal abuse or threats, and or fear arising from damage to the physical environment

Assault resulting in serious injury and/or death.

Any violent, abusive or threatening behaviour is unacceptable. You must report any incident immediately to the person in charge and also to us. The establishment where you are working the assignment will have policies for dealing with such incidents, and an incident report form should be completed both at the place of work and by us. Remember, all staff members have an obligation under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to have regard for their own health, safety and welfare at work, and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions.



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The Caldicott Protocols:

The Caldicott review was commissioned due to the development of information technology and its capacity to disseminate information about patients/ service users both rapidly and extensively. An essential component of the clinical consultation in the provision of health care is confidentiality. All healthcare workers have stringent requirements with regard to confidentiality of patients within their care. However, information given about patients underpins the efficient operation of the Health Service, and it is important that confidentiality does not impede upon the provision of efficient patient care. Therefore, the Caldicott review devised protocols and recommendations, which assume the appointment of a Caldicott Guardian who is created to safeguard and govern the users of patient information within Healthcare organizations. Caldicott guardians are senior health professionals. You are required to familiarise yourself with the local policy on confidentiality within the establishment where you have been placed on assignment.

Complaint Handling:

From time to time it may be the case that you receive a complaint from a client, patient or other person. If you are on an assignment, please report any complaints to a senior person in the department you are working and document all details of the complaint. You must also report the complaint to Love All Healthcare. We operate a detailed complaints policy specifically for use when on assignment, which you will be provided with on request. If you personally are the subject of a complaint you will also be asked to record details as part of an investigation and in some circumstances, it may be necessary to suspend you from duty whilst the investigation is in process. We recommend that you should make your defence society aware should you be subject to or asked to participate in any complaint or incident investigation. Any complaints of misconduct against individuals may be reported to the relevant Professional Body if deemed appropriate by our Clinical Lead.

Infection Control:

Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) and Clostridium Dificille are the most common within the health settings. MRSA exists on the hands or in the nose of around one third of the healthy population and is usually harmless. It can however prove fatal if it enters the bloodstream of an already weakened patient. It is usually transmitted by touch. The single most effective measure for preventing MRSA contamination and controlling infection is washing hands before and after every patient contact. In addition please:

1. Use liquid soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub when washing hands - -make sure it comes into contact with all areas
2. Ensure that you are 'bear below the elbow' during contact with patients or use clinical areas. This means that sleeves should be rolled up and all watches and jewellery must be removed
3. Wear disposable gloves and aprons when attending for any patient care (please see internal policy with regards to wearing PPE) (sterile gloves should only be worn when performing aseptic techniques
4. Dispose of gloves and aprons after use
5. Cover cuts or breaks in your skin or those of patients/ clients with waterproof dressings

If you come into contact with a patient who is later found to be contaminated with MRSA, it may be necessary to attend screening. During this time and before you have been declared clear fro MRSA, we may be restricted in the assignments we can offer you due to the risks of infection.

Conduct and Requirements for Assignment:

We expect all Temporary and Agency Workers to act I a professional manner at all times. We particularly ask you to pay special attention to:



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1. Punctuality
2. Standards of dress and courtesy
3. Quality of care and clinical procedures
4. Consideration and respect for patients/ residents, and all members at work place
5. Confidentiality and integrity

Please make every effort to ensure you arrive at and leave all bookings at the agreed time, confirmed in your booking confirmation. If, for any reason, you are unable to attend a booking you should contact us as soon as possible. Lateness may have a serious effect on services and achieving important key performance targets. Please attend all bookings with your current photographic ID badge. Please also take proof of registration with your Registered Body as the client may wish to see this prior to your assignment beginning. Mobile phones, unless working in the Community, should be switched off for the duration of your assignment. For assignments, you are responsible for your own actions when completing assignments, co-parenting with colleagues and managers for the care of patients and clients. You should comply with all reasonable requests, using your professional judgement at all times. If you have any questions about your work, please try to resolve these locally at first or seek advice from us. You should not smoke at work or attend work under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs.

In addition to the above please abide by your Standards and Code of Conduct from your regulatory Body (GMC/ HPC/ NMC/ GPhc)

On arrival at a new booking, please take the opportunity to familiarise yourself with the local policies and procedures. In particular, please be aware of the following, where relevant:

1. Resuscitation procedure
2. Hot spot movement
3. Violent episode policy
4. Procedure for alerting security staff
5. Policy for administration and assistance with drugs
6. Complaints handling

Where possible, we encourage members to visit their potential workplace prior to starting work. If you have any queries regarding correct local procedures, or are uncomfortable carrying out any of the duties you have been asked to perform, please raise these issues with the senior person on duty as first step. We also expect you to report any accidents, incidents or near misses to your line manager as well as us. If you do not find a particular placement to your liking please let us know so we can find you alternative work.

Availability:

You can let us know your availability for work by calling the office or e-mailing us. Please give us as much notice as possible of your availability. We will also contact you to discuss placements coming in that suit your skills so please remember to update your contact details with us whenever you change them. If your availability changes for any reason let us know so we can update our database.

Working for Link Option Agency Services Ltd:

Rates of pay – Link Option Agency Services Ltd offer competitive pay rates which will vary according to grade and specialty. Each time you are offered an assignment you will be advised of the applicable pay rate.

Attendance/ Punctuality – If you accept a placement you must arrive on time. If you cannot attend, you must inform us as soon as practicable. Remember you can contact us on the number above 24 hours per day.



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Cancellations – Due to the nature of temporary work our client’s requirements may change resulting in cancellation of your placement. In some cases, this can occur at short notice. The Love All Health Care Ltd practice will contact you as soon as possible in the event of any cancellations.

Fitness to Practice & Immunizations:

It is important for your own health and of those in your care that you are fit to practice whenever you attend an assignment. You must declare your fitness to practice or otherwise when you accept an assignment. You MUST advise Link Option Agency Services Ltd if you are or if you become pregnant. If you are concerned that your assignment involves unnecessary risks to your health or fitness, or that of your unborn child, please do not hesitate to contact us. If you are pregnant we are required to perform a health and risk assessment for all expectant mothers. You are required to keep the following immunizations up to date:

1. Hepatitis B
2. Varicella (Chicken Pox)
3. Rubella (German Measles)
4. Tuberculosis
5. Measles
6. Hepatitis C

Any boosters or new vaccinations should be recorded on your immunization record. You need to disclose details on your application form and provide details of any vaccination to us. Documented proof is required for Hepatitis B, Varicella, Rubella, Measles and Tuberculosis. Without proof of immunization we will be unable to offer you certain assignments.

AIDS/HIV:

You should be aware of and abide by the requirements of HSC 1998/ 226 “Guidance on the Management of AID/ HIVE Infected Health Care Workers and Patient Notification”

If you believe you may have been exposed to HIV infection in any way you should seek medical advice from your GP or an Occupational Health Department and, where appropriate, undergo diagnostic HIV antibody testing.

If you are found to be infected, you must again seek guidance from your GP or Occupational Health Department.

If you are found to be HIV positive and perform or assist with invasive surgical procedures you must stop this immediately and seek advice from your GP or Occupational Health Department regarding what action, if any, should be taken.

Please be aware that it is the obligation of all health workers to notify their employer and, where appropriate, the relevant professional regulatory body, if they are aware of HIV positive individuals who have not heeded advice to modify their working practice. Please note the above guidance does not supersede current Department of Health Guideline (In particular HSC 1998/226) or local practices.

Medical Fitness:

Due to the importance of your fitness to the practice, we reserve the right to request a certificate of fitness to practice from our Occupational Health Service. Our clients may also ask that you undergo a medical examination before commencing work for them. In these cases, future placements may be dependent upon your compliance with this request and its outcome, providing it was made with good reason.

CRB/ DBS DISCLOSURE:



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It is our policy to obtain a Criminal Record Disclosure (CRB) or a Disclosure Scotland (DS) for our Temporary Workers. Please be aware that our clients may insist we inform them in writing of any criminal convictions you may have before accepting you for an assignment _ we will only provide this information with your consent. We cannot be held responsible should clients decline your services following refusal to comply with this request or disclosure of a criminal conviction. Our own response to criminal record information will depend upon its nature and seriousness and will be in line with our policy on the recruitment of ex-offenders.

Timesheets:

Run from Monday to Sunday. Please submit your timesheet to us for each week worked. We run our main payroll on Wednesday and therefore we require your timesheet before this although deadlines may change around bank Holidays.

Payments are made directly into your account by BACS (Please make sure we have the correct details). It is your responsibility to ensure your timesheet is legible, completed correctly and has been authorized and signed by your manager – payment may be delayed if this is not the case. If you have been given a reference number for your shifts please ensure that these are included on your timesheet. Please use a separate timesheet for each working week and each new client you are placed with. Link Option Agency Services Ltd treat any attempt to falsify any of the information on your timesheet very seriously. All suspicions of fraud must be reported to Link Option Agency Services Ltd, your line manager on placement.

Appraisals:

Give us an opportunity to consider with you your performance at work and will be completed periodically. They are also an opportunity for you to raise any concerns or issues you may have. Appraisals are carried out based on feedback received from clients. We will review this with you as required.

SOP (Standard Operating Procedures):

You will find our Health and Safety, Whistleblowing, Environmental and Equal Opportunities SOP's on the downloads section of our website. Below you will find further information on SOP's. These SOP's are not intended to replace any policies or procedures issued by any of our clients or organization on with which you may be placed on assignment.

Medication SOP:

Please follow the policies and procedures issued by the client or organization where you are placed on assignment. In addition to this please also ensure you follow the standards set out by your regulatory body.

Equal opportunities:

We will offer Temporary and Agency Workers and will treat any allegations of discrimination with the utmost seriousness. In accordance with these principles Members may not discriminate on the grounds of:

1. Race
2. Ethnic Origin
3. Nationality
4. Colour
5. Religion or Belief
6. Gender
7. Sexual Orientation
8. Marital Status
9. Disability



Health and Safety:

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, it is your duty to:

1. Take reasonable care for the health and safety at work of yourself and any other people who might be affected by your acts or omissions.
2. Co-operate with your employer and others to enable them to comply with statutory duties and requirements. Not intentionally or recklessly misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 further requires you to: a) Use any equipment, etc. provided in the interests of safety, b) Report any shortcomings in the protection arrangements for health and safety.
3. When on assignment, it is the client's responsibility to familiarize you with their own Health and Safety [policy and procedures, and with locations of fire escapes, first aid contact person etc. We cannot be held responsible for the suitability of work stations used by our clients. If you express concern over the Health and Safety arrangements of your employing client, we will ask the client to investigate and, if possible, to make improvements. If you refuse to work for a client on Health and Safety grounds, we will attempt to find you other employment without prejudice.

Confidentiality:

Any patient information obtained by you during the course of your duties is confidential and should not be disclosed to any third party if it is not legitimately in connection with their treatment or any other official investigation. Please take care with patient records when on assignment to ensure that they are not in undue danger of being accessed by unauthorized individuals. Patients/ Clients information should only normally be shared with their consent - you should make sure patients/ clients understand that their information may be shared with various members of the team providing care. It is a patients/ clients decision what information should be shared with their family or others. Where a patient/ client is considered incapable of giving consent, please consult relevant colleagues. Where a patient/ client has withheld consent, disclosures of information may only be made if:

1. They can be justified in the public interest (normally where the disclosure is essential to protect the patient/client or someone else from risk of significant harm.
2. They are required by law or court order.

You should act in accordance with local and national policies if there is an issue of child protection.

Record Keeping, Data Protection and the Freedom of Information Act:

Good records are essential to safe and effective patient care and should be:

1. Clear, legible and indelible
2. Factual and accurate
3. Written as soon after the event as possible
4. Signed, timed and dated
5. Records should be:
 6. A) Be written with the involvement of the patient, client or their carers where possible
 7. Be written in terms the patient or client can understand
 8. Be consecutive
 9. Identify problems that have arisen and action taken to rectify them
 10. Show care planned, decisions made, care delivered and information shared

Please be aware that full records are essential should any questions be raised about the care and standards of care delivered. For more detailed information, please see the relevant professional membership body's guidelines.



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In addition to the above, you should adhere to the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. In brief, anyone processing personal data must comply with the eight enforceable principles of good practice.

Data must be:

1. Fairly and lawfully processed
2. Processed for limited purposes
3. Adequate, relevant and not excessive
4. Accurate
5. Not kept for longer than necessary
6. Processed in accordance with the data subject's rights
7. Secure
8. Not transferred to countries without adequate protection

For further information, please see: <https://www.gov.uk/data-protection>, from which the above guidance is reproduced.

Where our clients grant you access to their computer systems, these must only be used as authorised and not to gain access to any other data on programs. In general, please ensure that you:

1. Keep any passwords safe
2. Keep to the client's policies and procedures
3. Log off immediately after use specifically

You must:

Observe any local policies and procedures regarding passwords, floppy disks, CD ROMs and data storage/ transfer, not loading any programs on to the computer. Not access any information service or bulletin board including the internet without specific prior authority from your line manager. Not download any files or connect to any network or other computer equipment without prior authority as above.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 came into force January 2005 and gives any person legal rights of access to information which is held by a public author. This should be taken into account during records keeping and particular attention paid to notes recorded on computer systems. In addition, you must also be aware that recordings of telephone calls may be monitored for training and quality purpose.

Consent:

In accordance with GMC and relevant professional membership bodies, you must obtain the consent of a patient before giving any treatment or care. Consent must be 1) Given legally 2) given voluntarily 3) Informed patients/ clients are assumed to be legally competent (that is they can understand and retain treatment information and use it to make an informed choice) unless otherwise assessed by a suitably qualified practitioner. The exception to this rule is in the case of an emergency where a treatment is necessary to preserve life and the patient/ client is unable to give consent. In all cases, you must be able to demonstrate you are acting in the patient's best interest. If a patient/ client is no longer legally competent, decisions should be based on previous consent/ non-consent in a similar situation providing there is no reason to believe they have changed their mind, or their known wishes. Otherwise, treatment should be in their best interests. In the case of children (those aged under 16 in England and Wales), the involvement of those with parental responsibility is usually necessary – you should be aware of legislation and local protocol. It is not usually acceptable to seek consent for a procedure, that you will not be performing yourself unless you have been specifically trained for that area of practice. All discussions and decisions relating to consent should be documented in the patient's/ client's records. Where consent is withheld, you should follow the policy in force at your assignment location.



Allegations of Abuse:

We will take seriously any allegations of abuse. If we receive complaints of this sort against you, we may not be able to assign you whilst a full investigation is performed. Ultimately, if allegations are well founded, we may not be able to offer you work in the future. Where allegations are sufficiently serious, we may need to report you to the relevant professional body and/ or the police depending on the allegation. Appeals against any decisions made by or staff in these matters can be made to the Director of the Company, whose decision will be final. Should you in the course of duty suspect that abuse is taking place you should inform your line manager immediately. In the case of caring for service users in their own homes, you must report any suspicions of allegations of abuse immediately to the Director of the Company. There are strict guidelines to be followed in reporting abuse under the Department of Health guidance "No Secrets" and a full report will need to be made prior to investigation.

There are many different forms of abuse:

Physical, including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanction 2) sexual, including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting 3) psychological, including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks 4) financial or material abuse, including theft, fraud, exploitation, and pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits 5) Neglect or acts of omission, including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating 6) discriminatory abuse, disability and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

Whistleblowing:

We operate a "Whistleblowing policy", which encourages a culture of openness within our organization and aims to prevent malpractice. With the introduction of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 all workers now have legal protection from and form of retribution, victimization or detriment as a result of publicly disclosing certain serious allegations of malpractice. The SOP will apply in all cases where a staff member genuinely and in good faith believes that one of the following sets of circumstances is occurring, has occurred or may occur within their line of duty;

- 1) A criminal offence has been committed or is likely to be committed 2) A person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which he or she is subject 3) A miscarriage of justice has occurred is occurring or is likely to occur 4) The health and safety of any individual has been, is being or is likely to be endangered 5) The environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged 6) Information tending to show any matter falling within any one of the preceding paragraphs has been, is being or likely to be deliberately concealed.
- 2) Anyone who wishes to raise or discuss any issues which might fall into the above categories he/she should contact their consultant in the first instance who will treat the matter in confidence. It is likely that a further investigation will be necessary and he/she may be required to attend a disciplinary or investigative hearing as a witness. Where the concern involves the member of our own staff then the concern should be raised with the Director of the Company. All complaints will be viewed seriously and treated confidentially. Everyone should be aware that if any disclosure is made in bad faith (for example, in order to cause disruption within the organization), or concerns information which you do not substantially believe is true, or indeed if the disclosure is made for personal gain, then such a disclosure may constitute gross misconduct for which summary dismissal is the sanction.



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Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults:

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all staff who, during the course of their employment has direct or indirect contact with children and families and vulnerable adults, or who have access to information about them, have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. There is a duty on organizations to make appropriate arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. Also, government guidance makes it clear that it is a shared responsibility, and depends upon effective joint working between agencies and professionals that have different roles and expertise. It is your responsibility to undertake the appropriate safeguarding training annually and to make yourself familiar with the safeguarding policies for every placement you attend abide by them. Any concerns you have about safeguarding must be reported to the appropriate Safeguarding Officer at your placement.