



Expected Standards: Independent Care Professional

Introduction & Purpose

These Standards have been created to ensure every Care Recipient receives the best care in their own home and to help Independent Care Professionals have a positive experience using the Elder Platform. These standards aim to ensure Care Recipients and Customers receive a consistent, high-quality, safe and effective service from Independent Care Professionals using the Elder Platform.

These Standards cannot cover everything that might be relevant. These Standards set out the minimum of what Elder expects from Independent Care Professionals. They also set out what Care Recipients and Customers can expect from Independent Care Professionals.

In addition to being caring, kind, and compassionate, Independent Care Professionals are expected to be reliable, proactive, and honest in everything they do.

While accessing work through the Elder platform, as an Independent Care Professional, you continue to be governed by the terms and conditions you have agreed to with Elder. Terms and conditions may be updated by Elder from time to time, and it is for you to ensure that you check online regularly for those updates.

Failure to comply with these standards may result in losing access to the Elder platform.

1. Promote person-centred care support, independence and active living

We know Independent Care Professionals are committed to providing great care. However, sometimes Care Recipients present with difficult behaviours, or may not want help in providing that care.

Care Recipients have the right to live their own life, on their own terms, in their own home. As a live-in Independent Care Professional you can bring colour to their lives with your own personal, yet professional, experience and empower them to live fully and as independently as possible.

Take time to get to know them, discover their daily routine, and respect their personal boundaries and preferences.

This is particularly important when it comes to personal care - things like washing, grooming, and toileting. It is completely natural for an older person to feel unsure about accepting help with personal care. Therefore, it is really important to build trust and ensure that the support you provide is given in a discreet and dignified way. Involve the Care Recipient in their care by providing them with choice, and asking how they want to be supported with:

- Washing and grooming
- Dressing
- Toileting
- Medication (prompting only, unless other arrangements are made directly with the family)
- Nutrition and Hydration
- Sleep and night time
- Mobility

A big part of live-in care is getting to know the Care Recipient – understanding their likes and dislikes, what hobbies they would like your support with, even what kind of thing they like to watch on television.

As an Independent Care Professional you have the responsibility to help make life as happy and comfortable as possible by:

- Understanding what the Care Recipient enjoys doing
- Planning activities
- Supporting worship
- Going to community activities
- Planning the diary

You will also be supporting the Care Recipient with shopping and household activities. These will include things such as:

- Shopping
- Budgeting with the family and Care Recipient
- Ensuring a safe environment
- Laundry
- Regular cleaning
- Use appliances

If you are responsible for helping with shopping or other activities which involve finances, it is important that you keep an up-to-date, accurate log of money spent. Best practice may include keeping all receipts and accounting for monies in and out. You should never transact with large sums of money or use a Care Recipient, Customer, or other family member's own debit or credit cards. This protects both you and the Care Recipient should queries arise. It is safest to use prepaid cards, top-up cards with low balances, or small manageable sums of petty cash.

2. Be respectful

We expect you to treat everyone with dignity and respect. At Elder we believe in celebrating differences and do not tolerate discrimination or abuse of any kind. Always treat others as you would expect to be treated.

This also means being respectful of the Care Recipient's home and property.

We expect you to leave the placement as you would expect to find it. Therefore, doing the following before you leave a placement is really important:

- **Bedroom** – make sure fresh bedding and towels are available for the incoming Independent Care Professional.
- **Kitchen** – clean surfaces, cupboard doors, hob, empty bins, put away any dishes, etc.
- **Washing** – ensure all the linens, towels and clothes are clean.
- **Washroom** - clean the bathroom sink, mirror, bath and toilet.
- **Meals** - stock the fridge to ensure at least one day's worth of food and supplies are available.
- **Floors** - Hoover and mop the floors.

3. Be reliable, accountable and transparent

Placement Cancellations (“Dropouts”)

Dropouts are when you have been selected for and accepted a placement, and you fail to arrive. We understand plans change, and sometimes things are simply out of your control. However, it’s really important that once your placement has been confirmed, you do everything you can to arrive on time. It is also important that you note the start and end dates of the Placement prior to applying and ensure you are available for the entire duration of the placement stated on the Elder Hub. Last minute cancellations or failure to arrive can put people in danger.

We trust that Care Recipients are in good hands with you. Not showing up could put Care Recipients in danger if we are unable to find another Independent Care Professional in time for the start of the placement.

If you are ever unable to attend the placement or arrive on time, you must inform Elder of any changes as soon as possible, ideally before placement sign-off.

Failure to attend a placement without good reason, or without letting us know is a breach of these Standards and the terms and conditions you have agreed to with Elder.

Time off

Ideally, time off will be planned out in advance, in agreement with the Care Recipient, their family and Customer – this usually happens when the placement starts. Whether you’re a primary or respite Independent Care Professional, during your period away from the placement, it is likely that a replacement Independent Care Professional will take over.

In order to ensure a safe handover (covered below), we do ask that you give the Customer/Care Recipient a minimum of two weeks' notice before booking a long-term break. This allows the Customer/Care Recipient enough time to find another Independent Care Professional to cover the placement via the Elder platform.

Handovers

You must ensure you take time to talk to the new Independent Care Professional to help facilitate a safe and smooth transition in care.

You should share as much information as possible. The minimum information should contain the following details:

- **Care Recipient** – their routines, their likes and dislikes, the things they like to eat, the activities that make them smile, current health concerns and any recent significant changes.
- **The household** – the facilities, any specialist equipment, the Independent Care Professional's accommodation, the kitchen, and bathroom.
- **The local area** – the nearest pharmacy, shopping area, park, bus stop, and anywhere else you feel will be helpful.
- **Emergency contacts**

Handovers must be completed in person, whenever possible to enable the incoming Independent Care Professional to familiarise themselves and to ensure the Care Appraisal is accurate and no relevant information is missing. In exceptional circumstances you may be unable to complete a handover in person; in this instance please be sure to let the other carer and customer know as soon as possible and arrange a phone conversation to discuss the placement.

You should not leave the placement before 2pm on the day of your handover, and the incoming Independent Care Professional should arrive by 12.30pm. Do not leave the placement until handover has been completed.

Travel arrangements

It is your responsibility to make travel arrangements to and from placements in accordance with Elder's Travel Policy ([linked here](#)).

Concerns

Report any concerns immediately. Depending on the nature of your concern, concerns should be raised to the Customer, Care Recipient's health and social care professionals (i.e. social worker, GP, or other specialist), or Local Authority Safeguarding Team. The primary working relationship is between you and the Customer. Should you/the Customer wish to then raise concerns to Elder, you are free to do so. Be open and candid, including when any mistakes have taken place.

4. Communicate clearly and effectively

Whether you are delivering care or looking to secure a placement, it is important to communicate effectively. We expect Independent Care Professionals to maintain polite and professional communication when interacting with Care Recipients and/or Customers, their families, other Independent Care Professionals and the Elder team.

If you are working on a placement and feel the Care Appraisal is not accurate, please inform the Care Recipient, Customer and Elder immediately. You must make Elder aware that the Care Appraisal is not accurate or up-to-date as soon as you can. Open communication about the Care Appraisal helps to ensure and maintain a safe service for all.

Where requested by the Care Recipient or Customer keep accurate, objective, and up to date records of the care and support you are providing. You may consider that it is good practice to keep your own notes as any placement progresses.

Care Recipients

Dignity, respect, and choice should be at the heart of all communication with the Care Recipient. You must make sure that you:

- Maintain the dignity of the Care Recipient
- Meet the physical needs of the Care Recipient
- Keep the Care Recipient safe from harm
- Engage with and talk with the Care Recipient ensuring the Care Recipient can hear and understand you, particularly if sharing important information
- Facilitate choice
- Anticipate the needs of the Care Recipient

Customers/Family Members

We recommend that you share regular updates directly with the Customer and Care Recipient's chosen/authorised family members. Keep them updated about any changing care needs or other events that occur during the placement. It is also good practice to share any positive stories throughout the day. You can either do this by sending a text message, giving them a call, or using the care logs tool. It is your responsibility to direct the Customer to the Care Appraisal for an update if you think the information is not up to date, or the care needs have changed, is either incomplete or wrong.

Other Independent Care Professionals

You will meet other Independent Care Professionals at both the start and end of the placement whilst conducting a handover. Please be polite and professional when communicating with them. Always ensure that important information is relayed clearly and accurately.

The Elder team

The Elder team is here to support you as much as possible.

You may have contact with lots of people from the Elder team throughout your journey, whether you're on a placement, looking for work or taking a well deserved break. We are committed to communicating with you respectfully, professionally, and honestly. So we expect the same from you:

- Be polite and respectful
- Be honest and show integrity
- Be proactive about any issues that arise
- Be reliable and responsive if Elder is trying to reach you
- Try to remain calm and professional when faced with any issues

At any time, if you feel the Care Recipient is at risk of harm, you should discuss it with the family and escalate your concerns to social services, local authority or directly to the police.

5. Be professional and proactive

As an Independent Care Professional, you may be faced with a number of challenges related to entering a person's home, providing care, or getting along with the Customer, Care Recipient and their family.

It is important that you:

- Work cooperatively with the Care Recipient, their families, Customer and others involved in the care and support to the Care Recipient
- Be calm and approachable when dealing with difficult situations
- Be aware at all times of how your behaviour can affect and influence the behaviour of others
- Act with honesty and integrity at all times

- Treat the care recipient, their families, customers and others in a way that does not take advantage of their vulnerability or cause them upset or distress
- Act immediately if you have concerns regarding the care recipient by raising your concerns with the family, customer and other professionals
- You should inform the customer, family and Elder if there are any differences between the care needs of the care recipient and the Care Appraisal as soon as possible
- Encourage the care recipient and/or customer to update the Care Appraisal in a timely manner to ensure the appropriate action can be taken
- You must not consume alcohol or non-prescription drugs whilst on placement
- You must not accept any gift, hospitality or incentive which might be considered as a favour or might be considered excessive or inappropriate from anyone you are supporting or anyone close to them.
- You must not have visitors whilst on placement, unless agreed upon in advance with the person you're caring for, and/or their family and Customer.
- You must not conduct any other business, or be involved in any other trade, or otherwise work from the Care Recipient's home.

It is also important that you present yourself professionally whilst on a placement. This means wearing appropriate clothing, keeping nails trimmed, and tying back long hair when assisting with tasks such as cooking, personal care, and mobility.

If you notice any changes with the Care Recipient that are concerning, you should take proactive steps and communicate and discuss your concerns with the family, Customer and other professionals. Encourage the Care Recipient and/or Customer to update the Care Appraisal, so that the Care Appraisal accurately reflects the needs of the Care Recipient.

Personal Mobile Phone Use

Mobile phones should never be used while you are providing care and support to a Care Recipient. Mobile phones for personal use should only be used when on a scheduled and agreed break unless there is an emergency.

Complaints

Complaints are never easy to receive, and we understand it can be very upsetting. In the event of a complaint it is really important to co-operate and work with Elder to ensure that care delivered is in line with these Standards. It is imperative that you act professionally at all times.

When a complaint has been raised against you, the placement may end prematurely, including immediately, at the wish of the Customer or the Care Recipient. If your placement does end under these circumstances, you should leave promptly and professionally when requested, typically when another Independent Care Professional arrives on site. You will be able to gather your personal belongings from your room, and if appropriate say your goodbyes to the Care Recipient.

On occasion a complaint may lead to Elder restricting you from using the Elder platform. Elder does have the right to restrict or remove you from using the Elder platform at any time, however we will always contact you to let you know what action we have taken and the reasons for taking this decision. Following any discussion, where you can provide additional contextual information, a final decision regarding your continued access to the Platform will be made and communicated to you.

6. Practise within your knowledge, skills, and experience

We trust that Care Recipients are in good hands with you.

You should only apply to placements which are most suited to your skills, knowledge, experience, and training. Honesty about your strengths and limitations as an Independent Care Professional will help facilitate success and safety for both yourself and the Care Recipient. This requires reading placement specifications in full and being comfortable with duties outlined in the Care Recipient's Care Appraisal. It is up to you to seek clarification from the Care Recipient/Customer/family to ensure you fully understand placement requirements.

7. Protect and respect the right to confidentiality

You must maintain confidentiality and not at any time disclose information of a confidential or sensitive nature without clear authorisation. Confidential and sensitive information includes any personal identifying information, address, medical conditions, and photographs.

By not protecting and respecting the Care Recipient's right to confidentiality, you may be breaking GDPR and UK data protection laws.

Once you have left the placement, you should not contact the Care Recipient, Customer, family or Independent Care Professionals, unless specifically asked to do so by them. Delete all of their contact details from all of the devices you may have used while on placement.

You can find Elder's privacy notice [here.](#)

In summary:

It's important that you treat Care Recipients, their family members, Customers, and other carers with respect and professionalism, being honest, organised, committed and flexible. We expect Care Recipients, Customers and families to show you the same courtesy. Everyone at Elder is committed to extending these values to you at all times, too.

While off placement, we encourage you to keep your profile accurate and to follow the guidelines outlined in these Standards.

Please continue to refer back to the Independent Care Professional terms and conditions and these expected Standards of behaviour - these documents exist to help you have a positive experience with the platform and on each placement.

You can find out Community Standards [here](#).



Get in touch

We're here for you seven days a week, 365 days of the year. If you need our help, or you're unsure about anything, here's how to get in touch:

☎ 0333 220 4550

✉ support@elder.org

💻 www.elder.org