

CODE OF PRACTICE & QUALITY ASSURANCE

This document sets out some of the standards of service you can expect from us. The aim is to provide you with a clear explanation of all that is being undertaken on your behalf so that the project/assignment fulfils the agreed brief and is delivered to the highest standards of service.

The Accomplice Lead, Nicky Spencer, operates according to the NHS Code of Conduct (2002) and, as an active member of the Institute of Healthcare Management, adopts the Institute's Code of Practice in all aspects of her work. The essence of both Codes is also incorporated in the contracts of her staff and Associates.

1. Commissioning and Assignment

1.1 Preliminary Discussion

You are invited to discuss your requirements and explore how these might be addressed by us. Normally this would be by telephone and you will be asked to:-

- Outline the background to the project/assignment, give an overview of those interested in its delivery (stakeholders) and provide copies of background information
- Confirm the drivers behind the project/assignment and its aim, together with the benefits you hope to obtain and the factors that you consider may affect its delivery
- Agree quality measures and evaluation criteria you would like put in place (including specific activities and time-scales)
- Identify the support you require and any other resources issues (e.g. resources you would want to make available, funding constraints and skills you would like transferred to your own staff)
- Provide contact details of the person who will lead the assignment from your organisation's perspective; this would normally be an executive

For larger pieces of work (in excess of £5,000 fee), this first discussion would not be chargeable.

1.2 Draft Proposal and Final Agreement

Following the Preliminary Discussion, you will be provided with a written proposal, including an estimate of the work entailed and the likely fee. You are asked to check that your requirements have been fully understood and outlined in the proposal. Once your amendments have been received, the final agreement will be provided for you and the project/assignment will commence.

2. Progressing the Project/Assignment

2.1 Keeping you Informed

During the project/assignment Accomplice will aim to:-

- Keep you (or your delegated lead) informed of progress
- Give advance warning of any delay, the reason for it, and agree any remedial actions required
- Discuss with you any changes in the likely duration and cost of the project/assignment

2.2 Customer Liaison

During the project/assignment, the Accomplice team will:-

- Act with honesty, integrity and courtesy
- Show care and respect for the public, service users, patients, carers and staff of all agencies
- Work as team members with colleagues across and within all relevant organisation and groups
- Enable staff to work together in the best interests of patients, carers and services users
- Support the development of leadership and other skills within your organisation

2.3 Standards

The Lead from Accomplice will accept responsibility for the quality of their work and the performance of any other parties from Accomplice who may be engaged. All strive to improve standards of service and give due consideration to suggestions for improvements in performance, use of resources and service delivery.

You are asked to advise the Lead immediately of any specific corporate styles and standards that you would wish to be adopted and observed – and ensure that these are included in the final agreement.

Standards for the production of reports, training materials and other documentation should also be set out in the agreement. As a minimum you can expect:-

- A response to electronic communication within 36 hours; written within 3 working days
- Prompt timekeeping for appointments; you will be notified and given the reason for any delays
- Draft agenda and papers to be available at least five working days in advance of the meeting
- Draft action notes of meetings to be available within five working days of the meeting
- Draft summary reports of events to be available within ten working days of the meeting

Should concerns arise during the project/assignment, you are requested to voice these to the Accomplice Lead as soon as possible. If you subsequently wish to place your concern in writing, an acknowledgement will be sent within five working days of its receipt with the Accomplice Lead, who will endeavour to resolve all concerns within 28 days.

Queries and complaints will be addressed in an open, honest and informed way, explaining what will be done to deal with poor performance and, when appropriate, an apology will be given.

2.4 Confidentiality, Equal Opportunities, Virus Protection & Other Policies

Should you wish us to work within your Confidentiality, Equal Opportunities, Virus Protection, Corporate Image or other Policies, these must be made available to the Accomplice Lead prior to confirming the agreement. As a matter of course, Accomplice will:-

- Respect the confidentiality of patient, carer, service users and any materials that are clearly marked 'confidential'. You are asked to reciprocate this practice
- Be sensitive to the needs of disadvantaged groups and individuals; wherever possible, the Accomplice approach and materials will reflect the diverse nature of society
- Make every effort to ensure computers are virus-free; virus definitions will be updated weekly. You are asked to ensure that all materials you relay are virus-free prior to transmission

2.5 Keeping Up-to-Date

Every attempt is made to ensure that the latest management learning underpins the delivery of your assignment. Members of Accomplice all take responsibility for their own learning and development. Nicky Spencer herself is an active member of the Institute of Healthcare Management, fulfilling its requirements for Continual Professional Development.

2.6 Use of Resources

All resources made available to Accomplice will be used in an effective, efficient and timely manner with due regard to the best interests of the public and patients. This includes:-

- Observing health and safety procedures on site: you are asked to make your health and safety requirements known to us
- Remaining fully conversant with (and utilising) new technologies
- Recording time and resources on your project/assignment so that a reasonable explanation of performance may be provided where required

3. Concluding an Assignment

Electronic and paper copies of key documents will be retained for *eight weeks* after the conclusion of the project/assignment. There would normally be a charge for longer-term storage.

Where the duration of the project/assignment is more than ten working days, a hand-over meeting between your Organisational Lead and the Accomplice Lead will automatically be built in. At this meeting, views will be sought as to the success of the project/assignment and the fulfilment of the criteria set out in the agreement.

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