



INTRODUCTION

Homemaker takes its responsibilities for ensuring the health and safety of its staff very seriously.

On 1st July 2007, under the Health Act 2006, it became illegal in England for anyone to smoke tobacco in virtually any enclosed public place or workplace.

This policy has been drawn up to clarify all the issues, and to suggest ways in which the risks of passive smoking to staff when they visit clients in their own homes may be reduced, an area which falls outside the scope of the new legislation.

PRINCIPLES

This policy is intended to:

- Make sure all staff comply with the law
- Protect everyone against the effects of secondhand smoke
- Promote health in the workforce
- Support those people who would like to quit smoking.
- Respect the rights of clients

WITHIN THE OFFICE ENVIRONMENT

No staff, Board member or visitor will be allowed to smoke or use an electronic cigarette ('vape') within the office environment.

VISITING CLIENTS IN THEIR HOME

Homemaker wishes to balance the rights of clients to partake in a perfectly legal activity in their own homes, with the rights of employees not to be subject to second-hand smoke. Homemaker also recognises the importance of not imposing any rules which will adversely affect the opportunity for a positive trusting relationship between the caseworker and the client, which is often finely balanced and may be easily jeopardised.

The following guidelines are written to empower staff to take measures to look after their own health.

We recognise that staff who have a pre-existing condition that is made worse by exposure to tobacco smoke (such as asthma, COPD, cardiovascular disease, or pregnancy) are at a higher risk, and that particular care should be taken to prevent their exposure.

- Prior to their first home appointment, all clients are sent a copy of Homemaker's "Home Visits and Smoking" leaflet prior to their first appointment: which asks them to provide a smoke-free environment for the appointment.

- Staff should ensure that they do not make consecutive visits to houses where they are likely to be exposed to tobacco smoke.
- Where the client, or anyone else in the household, is a smoker, the caseworker may wish to ask them to refrain from smoking/vaping whilst the home visit is taking place.
- **In every case** the Caseworker should not remain in a property where people are smoking
- Where this is not possible, for example, due to the anxiety of the client, the caseworker should leave the house and discuss the next steps with their line manager, or suggest that the client might take a “cigarette break” in another room, or outside.

All discussions should take place having due regard to the rights of the client within their own home.

Caseworkers must not compromise their health by working with a smoker who will not take steps to reduce the effects of passive smoking. The organisation will support any member of staff in withdrawing a service in these circumstances, in every instance this should be discussed with their line manager.

Where a member of staff or a client suggests they wish to give up smoking altogether, they should be supported in this, and signposted to resources to help them to quit.

Policy approved: November 2017

Date for review: November 2019