

Spiral Sussex

Holidays

Policy

January 2019

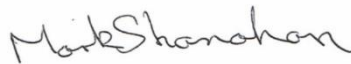
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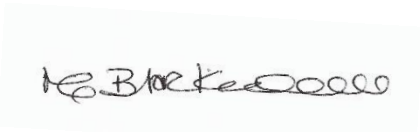
This policy and procedure has been approved by the Executive Committee of Spiral Sussex which are responsible for its review.

The original signed copy of this policy and procedure is kept at Spiral Sussex's office.

Signed:  _____ Date: 8th January 2019

Name: Mr Mark Shanahan

Chair of Trustees

Signed:  _____ Date: 8th January 2019

Name: Mr Marc Blackwell

Trustee

Record of adoption and review of this policy and procedure:-

- Adopted:
- To be reviewed: (+1 years from the adopted date)

Spiral Holidays

Policy

Spiral Respite-breaks are for the benefit of Spiral members who take part in Spiral activities during the course of the year. Spiral members have greatly varying support needs, and desires. In order to meet these varying wishes Spiral offers an equally diverse range of Respite-breaks/holidays to suite.

The same principle as with our regular activities applies, that not all holidays are appropriate or viable for all of our service users.

Some are geared to suite our more energetic and physically active participants and others are designed to provide a more leisurely slower pace of holiday.

Every aspect of the holidays is developed around:

- User's needs,
- User's safety
- User's enjoyment
- User's health and well being

Key elements

- Group size
- Staff ratios
- Destination
- Finances
- Insurances
- Travel
- Accommodation
- Accessibility
- Personal Care Support Plans

The respite-breaks must also take into account the risks for the staff and lay out contingency plans for emergencies.

Each respite-break must be clear as to the ability to meet the needs of each individual participant.

- Walking difficulties
- Communication ability
- Behavioural issues
- Staff to participant ratio
- Health issues
- Toileting
- Medication
- Dietary needs

Consequently, there is an assessment phase at the beginning of booking a holiday, for each, and every-one, of our would be holiday-makers. This can only be done once the holiday suitability and risk assessments have been concluded.

Holiday Elements

- Holiday Destination
- Length of holiday
- Travelling distance to holiday destination
- Modes of transport to and from destination
- Hotel/holiday site facilities
- Accommodation format
- Language and communication
- Medical Facilities
- Insurances
- Forms of ID
- Passport Validation (If required)
- Remote staff working
- Emergency contingency plans

Staffing Levels

Each holiday is assessed according to

- the type of holiday
- length of holiday
- number of clients
- support needs of each client

The Staff need to have the appropriate training to provide the care needs of the clients. The number of staff should allow for

- Staff to take time-out
- Staff illness

Without impacting on the safety and welfare of the clients or other staff.

External Carers

In some cases care homes will provide their own specialist support staff for their clients. In this instance the Care home manager must sign a document confirming that they have conducted DBS checks and appropriate training. They must also jointly agree an acceptable accommodation plan for their clients and staff.

Overseas Holiday Travel Documents

The Client (and any accompanying staff) must provide proof, at the time of booking, that they have a valid passport and where needed a permit for the countries being visited. They must also provide their travel insurance documents before departure.

Communications

Spiral staff use open channel walkie-talkies with a range of up to 10km when working. These allow for all staff to be alerted at once and for all staff to hear any radio communication from each other. This provides a safer environment for all concerned. On holidays Spiral will either switch to a channel used by the hotel if applicable or furnish the hotel and security with a radio unit. Spiral staff will also carry Spiral mobile phones with all necessary phone numbers programmed in.

Hotel accommodation / holiday site

Unless requested otherwise, participants are paired together in twin rooms. This is arranged with the mutual consent of the holiday-makers. Single rooms, or apartments with adjoining doors, are supplied upon specific request when possible. Not all hotels can offer this facility. In some circumstances, where a client has a one to one support-need, they will share accommodation with either, their own member of staff, or a Spiral member of staff. In either case this has to be approved by all parties concerned.

The aspects for each hotel or holiday site which need to be assessed are:

- **General hotel overview.**
Size of the hotel - physically and in number of guests
Target market sector – Does it aim to attract 18 to 30 groups, hen or stag parties, families, older people.
- **Board type: half-board, full-board, fully inclusive**
Generally we select half-board as this gives us the opportunity to eat out during the daytime and to plan day trips.
- **Hotel reviews,**
eg on Trip adviser, blogs, facebook.
When planning a holiday Spiral checks if we have used the hotel before and if so any feedback. We also take into account reviews posted in various media about the hotel.
- **hotel location:-**
Proximity to shops, beach, restaurants and other key facilities.
Distance from night clubs (Possible Noise issues at night).
Sited on a flat area of the town.
Near to medical facilities.
Distance to airport (if applicable).
Distance to local transport services.
Parking options and pick up/drop off point for minibuses.
- **Number of steps into the hotel**

The number and of steps, width of steps and availability of hand rails are relevant for our clients with walking difficulties in the absence of a slope or ramp.

- **Access to hotel for Wheelchair users and people with walking difficulties**

There are still some hotels that are not accessible for people confined to wheelchairs.

- **Suitability of lifts**

Not all lifts are wide enough for all wheelchairs.

- **Accessibility to all areas internal to the hotel**

Often older hotels have steps going down/up along passageways. Sometimes these may still be viable for a wheelchair user.

- **Bed room furniture**

Check that twin rooms means 2 single beds (Not double as in some cases). Many hotels mix up their description of rooms and state twin room when they mean double.

- **Size of bed rooms**

Some hotel rooms are very cramped and do not provide sufficient space for adults with any form of physical movement disability, especially if luggage can not be stowed safely.

- **Bathroom facilities.**

Wet room , walk-in-shower, bath with shower.

Some floors can be very slippery. Hand rails are not always installed sensibly. Hot and cold water taps may not be signed properly. Hot water temperatures may not be regulated to a safe heat.

- **Risk of falling from balconies**

Spiral avoids the use of rooms with balconies when possible, However many hotels abroad have balconies so they need to be made secure.

- **Rooms available close together**

We always aim to have rooms located close together or in clusters with carers near to participants. Rooms with staff will also have a “Spiral Staff” sign on the door.

- **Rooms available on lower floors**

Spiral will always endeavour to have rooms allocated on the lowest floor possible.

- **Wheelchair accessible room**
For holidays suitable for wheelchair users we will always try to find hotels with wheelchair accessible rooms.
- **Presence of life-guards by pools**
Hotels generally only supply life-guards around pools for part of the day. Spiral participants can only use the pool when there is a life-guard present.
- **Disabled access to pools**
Some hotels will have pools with a slope access or a hoist. If a hoist is available only the hotel staff are allowed to operate it.
- **Grouping of party in restaurant**
It is much easier to support people at meal times if the group are sat together. This also facilitates the administration of medication.
- **Suitability of meal times**
It is common for hotels to have several sittings for breakfast and dinner. Due to the support needs of our participants it takes longer to get people ready for breakfast than the average holiday-maker. Our participants are also likely to take longer to eat. Thus it is preferable to take the latest slot possible for breakfast.
- **Clear food labelling**
Not all hotels adhere sufficiently to the food labelling regulations. If there are any people with food allergies it is important for Spiral staff to inform the hotel and kitchen staff of any concerns. This is best done prior to the booking and again upon arrival.
- **Food Hygiene standards**
Staff need to be alert to food not being cooked thoroughly, under-cooked, meat left-out, food left uncovered (open to contamination by flies, etc). Many hotels are self-service so clients will need to be assisted with food and with advice on whether food appears safe.
- **Bedding supplied.**
Not all holiday sites include bedding as default.
- **Toilets**
Hotel toilets must be checked for accessibility and safety. Clients should always be accompanied to the toilet by staff.

- **Entertainment**

Many of the hotels Spiral uses offers family entertainment. For the group it is easier and safer to arrange to have participants seated in the same area or in clusters with staff distributed appropriately.

- **On-site medical facilities**

All hotels have their own first aid and many now have additional equipment ie defibrillators. Some hotels also have small medical units. Spiral staff will ensure they have the relevant information and contact points.

- **On-site security**

On Check-in the Spiral group leader will ensure that hotel management and security have Spiral staff contacts and room numbers. In addition, where possible Spiral will provide the hotel with a walkie-talkie or frequency information for their own equipment. We will also provide a photo id sheet for senior staff.

- **Local Information**

Staff will be provided with maps and local emergency services information before they travel, but should still make themselves familiar with the terrain around the hotel. On-line information is not always accurate, up to date, or clear. It is important to check emergency contact numbers, especially abroad.

Holiday Transport (UK Breaks)

For UK mainland holidays Spiral uses either one or two minibuses and a trailer depending upon the group size.

According to the needs of the participants Spiral may take a wheelchair accessible bus or car, but otherwise we will use a minibus without a tail-lift.

Using a minibus with a tail-lift prevents the use of the trailer for luggage, hence it would normally necessitate taking a second vehicle.

The Minibus and driver will stay with the party for the duration of the holiday and will be used for the day trips. A back-up vehicle will be available for the duration of the holiday.

Overseas Holidays Transport

UK Airport Transfers

When travelling abroad we will use Spiral minibuses to travel to and from the UK airport. The holidays are usually planned to fly to and from Gatwick.

We strive to find flight times that are manageable for our participants and their Carers. Hence normally afternoon flight out, and afternoon or evening flight back.

To use the minibuses for pick up at Gatwick, Spiral has to book the buses in to Airport security.

Flights

When booking the flights, Spiral makes group bookings with the selected airline. We also book the group as a disabled group requiring assistance through the airports. This provides Spiral with:

- The ability to change passenger names up to 48 hours before the flight.
- Seating grouped together
- Escorting through the airport
- Additional Wheelchair support for people with walking difficulties.
- Disabled access to the planes.
- Priority Boarding
- Additional bag for medical equipment

Spiral will also notify the airline if we have any users with allergies such as nut, that may impact on the food being served or consumed on the flights.

Spiral will plan transfers to arrive at airports at least three hours before the flight time. This facilitates a less stressful, unhurried passage through the airport.

Destination Airport Transfers

Spiral will book appropriate transfers to and from the airport to the hotel. This is usually by a coach operator local to the region. Access to coaches abroad is often poor and not disabled friendly. Spiral will have assessed the individuals before the holiday as to their ability to use them. In all cases Spiral staff will have to provide extra support for people embarking and disembarking from buses. If any of the participants is assessed as not being able to use the coach, then a separate, adapted vehicle, will be hired for these journeys. This would necessitate a member of staff also travelling in the adapted vehicle.

Participant Check-in

On the day of travel the participant will be transferred from their own carer to the Spiral group leader at the Spiral Media centre unless otherwise agreed. There are several key items which need to be checked in. These are:

- Personal Support Plan (or update).
- Medication administration Record sheet
- Medication
- Spending money
- Holiday Insurance Document
- ID Documents
- Suitcase and hand luggage

The group leader and Medical Officer will check in the medication and verify they match with the MARS sheet and that there is sufficient medication for the duration of the holiday. The medical officer will also check dosages and that all medications are within date. They will also record the administration times on the Spiral Medication Master sheet.

If any medication needs to be taken during the course of the journey then it will need to be decanted into a labelled container and kept by the medical

officer. The medication is placed in a Name-labelled zipped bag along with a copy of the Personal Care Support plan.

For Overseas holidays

The named Zipped bags are stored back in the clients suitcases for the duration of the travel and recouped at the destination hotel by the Medical officer.

For UK holidays

The zipped bags are stored together in a medical bag and kept with the medical officer for the duration of the holiday.

Client Holiday Spending money

Clients spending money is logged-in and transferred into “daily labelled” envelopes, which will be issued and signed-for during the course of the holiday. Each clients spending money envelopes are kept in the Zipped bag with the clients medication and documents.

ID Documents

If this is an overseas holiday then passports/visas will all be given to the group leader for safe-keeping and kept with the holiday travel documents such as boarding passes. Each person will be issued with a holiday card containing:

- Clients Name
- Staff Names and contact numbers
- Hotel Address and contact number
- A message requesting assistance in English and for overseas holidays in the native tongue of the country being visited.

Holiday Insurance

These documents will be checked and kept in the zipped bags.

Luggage

Each person’s suitcase will be labelled by Spiral and tagged with a coloured tape (this allows for easier identification on airport carousels etc).

For Overseas Holidays

Hand luggage will be labelled and with the participation of the carer and holiday-maker checked for any items not allowed to be taken through airport security.

Transport (General)

As per the Transport and outings policies Spiral will plan the journeys taking into account the necessary fuel, comfort, medication times and lunch stops. An assessment will have to be undertaken at each comfort stop by the group leader and the driver with regards to using the facilities safely.

The driver is responsible for the safety of everybody on the minibus and will make decisions on where to stop safely and if to stop more times than originally planned.

The driver must ensure that he has undertake all vehicle checks and that he has his documentation and equipment. These include:

- Maps
- Insurance
- Breakdown Information
- Breakdown warning signs
- Fuel card
- First aid bag

Register Checks

Register and head count checks must take place frequently throughout the journey, especially at any change of location, both at the start and arrival. This is even from one end of a corridor to the next.

Airport Check-in

The group leader must present themselves to the Special Assistance desk at the front of the airport, by the “Drop off” point. From there the group will

be provided with assistance through the airport. A designated person should be responsible for keeping hold of all the passport and boarding passes to facilitate both keeping them safe and to aid a smooth flow through the various check-ins and security checks.

If wheelchair users are separated at any time from the rest of the group by ground-staff then Spiral staff must also escort the wheelchair users. At no point can anybody be left without a member of staff present.

Experience has led us to the conclusion that participants are better served buying food and drinks at the airport, after the security checks, rather than trying to buy them on the plane.

In-flight

Depending upon where the most accessible points of entry are situated on the plane our group will be located either at the front or rear of the plane and near to the toilets. Staff should position themselves next to people with the greatest needs at the time and use end of row seats so that they are next to the central passageway. Clients must be escorted to and from toilets at all times.

Flight Arrivals

There are four specific stages:

Disembarkation:

Because of the special assistance our group will normally be the last off the plane, which makes it safer and easier to manipulate. Ensure that all overhead lockers have been checked for passenger belongings.

At most airports the group will need to travel from the plane to the terminal buildings. These are accessible vehicles but can be very crowded, so register checks are needed at both ends of this journey.

Border Control

If necessary allow other travellers to go ahead. Ensure that at least one member of staff passes through the border control ahead of the rest. This facilitates keeping people together safely on the other side, and if they are not aware to inform the Control staff that the passengers have learning

difficulties. Each participant must be assisted through this point and one member of staff remaining behind until all of the group has passed through. Each person will have to have their own passport in their own hands.

Luggage Carousel

The Spiral luggage has extra coloured labels to help with identification. Luggage should be placed with their owners and name labels checked before moving on.

Coach transfer

A representative of the coach company will usually meet you at the exit from the arrivals area. If not, then locate their kiosk, which will be based on the concourse.

Hotel Arrival

Do not allow your driver to leave until you have verified that you are at the correct hotel. There are many hotels with similar names.

The group must be kept together in the foyer until being taken to their rooms. Most people will want to use a toilet upon arrival.

The group leader must go through the hotel and Spiral Check-in procedures then go and check the suitability of all of the rooms.

Spiral will also ensure that we have the use of safes in Staff rooms for valuable, documents and medications.

The allocation of participants and staff to rooms can only then take place in its finality.

A fresh set of risk assessments will have to be undertaken for the hotel and a gathering of terrain, and facilities information. These will be worked on with the involvement of the staff team.

Day trips and excursions

These will be planned following the Spiral Outings and Day trips policy and the Transport policy.

Emergency Contingencies

Where there are people things will go wrong. Spiral endeavours to minimise this by forward planning and to provide a range of solutions, based on experience and observation, for those problems that might arise.

The medication supplied does not match the supporting care plan or Mars sheet.

Discuss with carer / parent /social worker/clients GP. If the client has either brought the wrong medication, or left some at home this will need correcting and maybe collecting.

Forgotten Passport

If travelling abroad then this will need to be collected

Forgotten Spending money

Spiral can agree to loan money to the participant until our return

Minibus breakdown/Accident

Spiral breakdown policy provides for the forward travel of a group to their destination. Spiral also keeps a bus and driver to hand as a back up during holiday travel periods.

Flight delays

Spiral will pay for and provide nourishment for travellers until flights resume departure. Spiral Office staff will notify Transfer companies of delays.

Loss of luggage (and medication)

In the event of a person's luggage being lost Spiral will purchase a new case and help the person to buy clothes etc as needed for the holiday. We will also attempt to initiate recovery of the lost luggage and have it delivered to the hotel. If the luggage contained the clients medication we will liaise with the clients GP and a GP/pharmacy, near to the hotel, to have the medication replaced.

Personal Accident or need for medical treatment

Dependent upon the injury assessment a member of staff will either contact a local GP, Pharmacy or call a paramedic as necessary. A senior Spiral manager in Brighton, and clients carer, will need to be notified at the earliest convenient point.

If abroad

Although the EHIC/E111 card is supposed to allow for the non-payment of medical treatment the reality can be very different. Also the production of Medical insurance documents may not suffice. So, Spiral or the participants carer, may have to pay for the treatment and then reclaim the costs later.

Need to travel Home

If a client needs to return home early due to illness /accident then Spiral will supply the staff and transport and will facilitate the actions needed.

Client requiring hospitalisation

Initially the client will be escorted by a Spiral Member of staff. If a client has to stay in hospital for more than a day, Spiral will work with the client's carer, to mutually, make the best arrangements for extra support, to attend the hospital, and to communicate with the Medical staff in whatever capacity is required.

Missing Person

Please refer to the missing person's policy.