



# SV PREMIER

CARE

caring for you at home

## STAFF HANDBOOK

SV PREMIER HEALTHCARE

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Reginald Vellem

2025

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# Staff Handbook (2025 Edition)

**Caring for you at home — and supporting you to care with excellence**

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## Welcome from our Leadership Team

Dear Team Member,

Welcome to SV Premier Healthcare Ltd. We are delighted to have you with us.

Our mission is simple: **To deliver compassionate, safe, high-quality home care that promotes dignity, independence and wellbeing.**

You are joining a team committed to excellence, respect and kindness — values we live out every day in the homes of those we support. This handbook will guide you through:

- What you can expect from SV Premier
- What we expect from you as a professional carer
- Our policies, standards and support structures
- Important guidance to help you feel confident, prepared and valued

We are here to support your growth, wellbeing and success. Please speak to your manager at any time if you have questions.

Where there is any difference between the Handbook and your Employment Contract, the terms of your Employment Contract will apply

**Together, we care. Together, we make a difference.**

Warm regards,

**The SV Premier Leadership Team**

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## Our Values

Value	What it means
<b>Compassion</b>	We treat everyone with kindness and dignity.
<b>Respect</b>	We value every individual and celebrate diversity.
<b>Accountability</b>	We do what's right, even when no one is watching.
<b>Excellence</b>	We commit to continuous learning and professionalism.
<b>Teamwork</b>	We work together to ensure safe, high-quality care.

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## About SV Premier Healthcare

SV Premier is a domiciliary care agency and private company limited by guarantee. Regulated by the RQIA and the Department of Employment & Learning, SV Premier Healthcare provides personalised home care across Northern Ireland. We are:

- Committed to person-centred care
- Registered and compliant with RQIA
- Working in partnership with HSC Trusts
- A values-driven employer invested in your growth

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## What You Can Expect From Us

You can expect:

- Fair treatment, respect and dignity
- A safe, protected and inclusive work environment
- Full training and induction
- Ongoing professional development and supervision
- Regular communication and support from your manager - Prompt payroll and fair compensation.

## What We Expect From You

We ask that every SV Premier team member:

- Provides safe, person-centered care
- Acts with professionalism and compassion
- Protects confidentiality and dignity
- Reports safeguarding concerns immediately
- Maintains professional boundaries
- Communicates respectfully and clearly
- Arrives on time and completes visits accurately

**Remember:** You are the heart of our service. Your actions shape our reputation and impact lives every day.

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## Important Contacts

Purpose	Contact
General queries / On-call	028 9454 8031 / 07864 761510
Registered Manager	Sharon Vellem
Email	sharon.vellem@svpremier.co.uk
Safeguarding	Report immediately to Manager / On-Call
Emergency Services	<b>999</b>
Belfast HSC Trust Safeguarding Gateway	028 9504 1744
BHSC Adult Protection Gateway Team	028 9504 9999
Out-of-Hours	

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## Recruitment and selection

SV Premier Healthcare is committed to ensuring equality, fairness and inclusion in all areas of employment. We recruit and employ staff in line with our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy and in full compliance with relevant legislation.

Our recruitment processes are designed to identify high-quality candidates and achieve the best match between the role requirements and an individual's skills, knowledge, experience and values, including the ability to work effectively as part of our team.

We ensure that no applicant or employee is disadvantaged by unfair or unreasonable conditions or requirements. Recruitment decisions are based solely on merit and job-related criteria.

If you believe you have been treated unfairly or discriminated against at any stage of the recruitment process, you have the right to raise this through our Grievance Policy and Procedure.

All successful applicants are employed subject to:

- Satisfactory references
- A satisfactory health questionnaire and medical report if required – these may be required at later stages in employment too if there are changes in health
- A satisfactory AccessNI Check – this may be required to be repeated throughout employment at the request of the statutory authorities
- Proof of eligibility to live and work in the UK

## Job Description & Person Specification Policy

SV Premier recognises that clear and accurate job descriptions and person specifications are essential for effective and fair recruitment. Well-defined roles ensure that all candidates understand the expectations and requirements of the position before interview, helping to promote transparency and equal opportunity.

A job description outlines the key duties, responsibilities and expectations of a post. It is written to describe the role itself — not the skills or working style of any current postholder.

Accurate job descriptions serve several important purposes:

- Supporting recruitment — informing clear and appropriate job advertisements
- Guiding selection — helping to assess suitability during the hiring process
- Forming part of the employment contract — ensuring staff understand their responsibilities
- Providing organisational protection — supporting fair and consistent decision-making
- Communicating expectations — reflecting the values, priorities and standards of SV Premier

Job descriptions and person specifications help ensure fairness, clarity and consistency for all applicants and employees.

## Creating and Reviewing Job Descriptions and Person Specifications

A job description must exist for every role within SV Premier Healthcare. New job descriptions will be created for any new roles introduced within the organisation. Existing job descriptions are reviewed when a post becomes vacant, following an appraisal, or when duties change, to ensure they remain accurate and up to date.

Job descriptions should be clear, concise and include the following sections:

- **Job title**
- **Hours of work**
- **Required vetting level** (e.g. AccessNI)
- **Reporting structure** (who the role reports to and, if relevant, who reports to the role)
- **Job purpose** — a brief summary of the overall aim of the role
- **Key duties and responsibilities** — written using active and outcome-focused language such as *plans, prepares, delivers, maintains, records, liaises, supports, collaborates, implements*. Duties should clearly state expectations, including any deadlines or supervision requirements.

A **person specification** outlines the skills, knowledge, qualifications and experience required for the role. Criteria should be clearly marked as:

- **Essential** — must be met to perform the role safely and competently
- **Desirable** — beneficial qualities used to support decision-making when candidates are otherwise equally suitable

Person specifications should include the following:

- **Education, training and qualifications** — clearly stating required levels (e.g. *RQF Level 2/3 in Health & Social Care*). Only qualifications relevant to the role should be included.
- **Skills and abilities** — e.g. communication skills, digital skills, practical abilities relevant to the role
- **Experience** — clearly defined (e.g. *minimum 6–12 months experience in a care environment*)

This structured approach ensures fairness, transparency and consistency in recruitment and supports safe, high-quality care provision.

## Overseas Worker & Right to Work Policy

SV Premier Healthcare is committed to fair, lawful and non-discriminatory recruitment practices. We welcome applications from individuals from all backgrounds, including those from overseas, provided they meet UK right-to-work requirements.

This policy outlines our approach to recruiting and employing overseas workers in line with current UK immigration law and our commitment to safe, ethical employment practice.

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## Commitment to Legal Compliance

All workers must have the legal right to work in the United Kingdom. We comply with the **Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006**, the **Right to Work Code of Practice**, and current UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) guidance.

We understand that employing someone who does not have the legal right to work in the UK is a serious offence and may result in significant penalties. We therefore carry out right-to-work checks on all employees before they commence employment.

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## Fair and Equal Treatment

To ensure fairness and avoid discrimination, we:

- Treat all applicants the same regardless of nationality or background
- Do not make assumptions about a person's right to work based on appearance, name, accent or background
- Carry out the same right-to-work verification process for all staff
- Follow our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy always

Recruitment decisions are based solely on merit and suitability for the role.

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## Right to Work Checks

To comply with UK immigration law, we:

- Verify documentation to confirm an individual's right to work in the UK
- Perform checks in accordance with current UKVI guidance
- Accept only approved forms of evidence (original physical documents or verified digital checks via the Home Office right-to-work service)
- Keep secure, dated copies of right-to-work documentation for our records
- Conduct repeat checks where required (e.g., for time-limited visas)

No individual will start work until satisfactory right-to-work checks have been completed.

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## Sponsored Workers

Where SV Premier Healthcare recruits overseas workers under a sponsorship licence, we will:

- Follow ethical recruitment practices
  - Ensure candidates meet UK visa and sponsorship requirements
  - Maintain accurate sponsorship and compliance records
  - Fulfil all UKVI reporting and monitoring obligations
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## Access to Latest Guidance

Right-to-work guidance is regularly updated. We refer to the latest information from:

### **UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI)**

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration)

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## Probationary Period

All new employees are required to complete a probationary period, normally lasting **3 months**. During this time, your performance, conduct and suitability for the role will be assessed and reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Throughout your probation, you will:

- Complete mandatory induction and training
- Receive appropriate guidance, support and supervision
- Have regular check-ins to discuss progress and any development needs

The probation period provides both you and the organisation with the opportunity to confirm that the role is the right fit.

If additional time, support or training is required, the probationary period may be extended for up to a further **3 months**. Extension may also occur if required training or shadowing has not been completed due to operational reasons.

At the end of your probation, you will be issued with written confirmation of successful completion.

Please note: until you receive written confirmation, you will be considered to be **still in probation**.

If, during the probationary period, it is determined that you have not met the required standards or you decide that the role is not suitable for you, either party may end the employment by giving written notice in accordance with the notice period set out in your Employment Contract.

Please note that the full SV Premier disciplinary policy and procedure do not apply during the probationary period. However, any concerns will be discussed with you, and you will be given appropriate feedback and support during this period.

## Hours of Work

Your contracted hours and working pattern are set out in your Employment Contract. You are expected to work the hours required to fulfil your role and to support the safe delivery of care.

As part of your duties, you may be required to work additional hours from time to time to meet service needs. This will always be in line with legal working time requirements, and overtime payments will be made in accordance with the terms set out in your Employment Contract..

SV Premier reserves the right to make reasonable adjustments to working hours, on a temporary or permanent basis, to meet the operational needs of the business. Where possible, reasonable notice will be given.

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## Zero-Hours Workers (where applicable)

If you are employed on a zero-hours contract, you will provide your weekly availability to the Care Manager. Once rotas have been issued, the rota forms your agreed working hours for that week.

To support continuity of care and rota planning:

- You must provide a **minimum of 48 hours' notice** if you need to cancel a scheduled shift (except in cases of sickness or emergency).
- If, on more than one occasion, shifts are cancelled without the required notice (not due to sickness or emergency), you may be moved to receiving **only short-notice or ad-hoc shifts** until reliability is re-established.

This approach ensures fairness and protects service users who rely on consistent care.

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## Flexible Working

Employees have a statutory right to request flexible working once they have completed **26 weeks of continuous service** (or earlier if legislation changes). SV Premier Healthcare supports fair consideration of such requests and recognises that flexible working can support work-life balance and wellbeing.

Requests for flexible working must be submitted in writing. We will meet with you to discuss your request, explore possible options and consider whether a workable arrangement can be achieved that meets both your needs and the needs of the service.

We will make every reasonable effort to accommodate requests. However, a flexible working request may not be approved where it would:

- Result in significant additional cost to the business
- Prevent us from meeting service user needs or contractual care commitments
- Require work to be redistributed in a way that is not reasonable or practicable
- Require recruitment that is not feasible
- Negatively impact quality or continuity of care
- Negatively affect performance or service delivery
- Create periods where there is insufficient work available
- Clash with planned organisational or staffing changes

Only **one flexible working request may be made in a 12-month period**, unless otherwise permitted under current legislation.

Where a request is approved, the agreed changes will form a **permanent amendment** to your Employment Contract. You will receive confirmation in writing in the form of a contract variation or new contract.

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## NISCC Registration (Carer Roles Only)

All staff employed in carer roles at SV Premier Healthcare are required to be registered as Social Care Workers with the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC).

As part of your induction, we will support you in completing your NISCC registration and show you how to access and manage your online NISCC portal.

Once registered, it is your responsibility to:

- Keep your NISCC registration active
- Maintain your professional conduct in line with the NISCC Code of Practice
- Pay your annual renewal fee in the month it is due
- Ensure your personal and employment details on the registry are kept up to date

If your registration lapses because you do not pay your annual renewal, NISCC will remove you from the register.

**You cannot work in a care role at SV Premier Healthcare without a valid and active NISCC registration.**

Failure to maintain registration may result in suspension from duties until registration is reinstated and could lead to disciplinary action if not resolved.

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## Professional Conduct & Behaviour

At SV Premier Healthcare, professionalism means demonstrating compassion, dignity, respect and integrity in every interaction. Our reputation — and the wellbeing of those we support — depends on your conduct.

### What professionalism looks like

- Arriving on time and completing full visit times
- Speaking kindly and respectfully to service users and families
- Maintaining confidentiality at all times
- Delivering care as agreed in the care plan
- Recording notes accurately and immediately after visits
- Reporting concerns promptly to your manager
- Supporting colleagues and working as a team

### Professional boundaries

- Do not accept gifts, money, or loans
- Do not share personal contact details or social media
- Do not take service users out in your own vehicle unless authorised

- Do not perform tasks not included in the care plan
- Do not enter into personal or romantic relationships with service users

If in doubt, ask your manager. Professional boundaries protect you and those you support.

## Conduct aligned with NISCC Code of Practice

There are six main Standards of Conduct. These are the rules for how a social care worker must behave towards service users, carers, and the people they work with.

1. Protect the rights and support the safety and well-being of service users and carers.
2. Earn and keep the trust of service users and carers.
3. Support service users to be independent and safe.
4. Respect service users' rights and keep them safe from hurting themselves or other people.
5. Behave well so that the public (people who live in the community) trust and respect social care services.
6. Make sure that they do a good job and keep learning new skills to do a good job.

## Zero-tolerance

We operate a zero-tolerance approach to:

- Abuse, bullying, discrimination or harassment
- Aggressive or threatening behaviour
- Breaches of confidentiality
- Fraud or dishonesty
- Unsafe practice or negligence

## Supporting you to succeed

Your manager is here to help you develop and thrive. Where performance or behaviour concerns arise, we offer:

- Coaching and support
- Extra training or supervision if needed
- Clear guidance and fair processes

We believe in growth, fairness and accountability.

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## Safeguarding & Whistleblowing

Safeguarding means protecting people from harm, abuse, neglect or exploitation. Every member of staff plays a vital role in keeping service users safe.

## Your safeguarding duties

- Treat every service user with dignity and respect
- Be alert to signs of abuse or neglect
- Report concerns **immediately** to the Registered Manager or On-Call Manager
- Record concerns clearly and factually
- Follow instructions from safeguarding authorities

**You must never ignore a safeguarding concern.** If someone is in immediate danger, call **999**.

## Types of abuse

- Physical, emotional or psychological
- Neglect or self-neglect
- Financial or material abuse
- Sexual abuse or inappropriate behaviour
- Discriminatory abuse
- Domestic abuse or coercion

## Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing protects service users, staff and our organisation. You must report:

- Unsafe practice or neglect
- Abuse or suspected abuse
- Fraud or dishonesty
- Serious breaches of policy
- Behaviour that puts people at risk

You can report to:

**Registered Manager:** Sharon Vellem

**On-Call Manager:** 07864 761510 / 028 9454 8031

**Belfast HSC Trust Gateway:** 028 9504 1744

**RQIA:** 028 9536 1111

**Police (emergency):** 999

**Police (non-emergency):** 101

We will always listen, support you and take your concern seriously. You will never be treated unfairly for raising a genuine concern.

A full safeguarding policy is provided separately and must be read alongside this handbook.

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## Confidentiality, Data Protection & Privacy

Confidentiality is fundamental to trust and dignity in care. As an SV Premier team member, you are trusted with personal information about service users, families and colleagues. You must protect this information at all times.

### Your responsibilities

You must:

- Keep all personal information confidential
- Only access information needed to do your job
- Store records securely and return them to the office when required
- Report any data concerns or breaches immediately to management
- Follow SV Premier's GDPR and data security policies

Information must **never** be shared with:

- Friends or family
- Other service users
- Social media or messaging groups
- Anyone not directly involved in care without permission

**If in doubt, do not share. Ask a manager.**

### When information **must** be shared

In some situations, you must share information:

- Safeguarding or safety concerns
- Risk of harm to the service user or others
- If instructed by emergency services or safeguarding authorities

### Mobile phone & communication policy

We expect responsible and professional use.

#### **Permitted:**

- Contacting office, emergencies & rota/work app
- Recording work notes in approved systems

#### **Not permitted:**

- Personal phone use during care tasks
- Taking photos/videos of service users or their home
- Using social media or messaging during visits
- Saving service user information on your phone

Phones should be kept silent and only used when appropriate.

## GDPR basics — simple guide

Personal data must be:

- Used lawfully and fairly
- Only used for its intended purpose
- Kept securely
- Only kept for as long as necessary

Breaches of confidentiality may result in disciplinary action.

---

## Infection Prevention, PPE & Hygiene

Keeping service users safe means preventing infections and maintaining excellent hygiene standards at all times. Infection control protects both you and those we care for.

### Core infection prevention practices

You must:

- Wash or sanitise hands before and after every visit
- Wear PPE as required for care tasks
- Follow safe handling of bodily fluids and waste
- Maintain clean uniform and personal hygiene
- Stay home and report immediately if you are unwell
- Follow SV Premier guidance during outbreak situations

### PPE expectations

Standard PPE includes:

- Gloves for personal care and clinical tasks
- Aprons when providing direct care or handling bodily fluids
- Masks when required by guidance or risk assessment

### Additional PPE during outbreaks

Extra protective measures may be required during:

- Public health alerts
- Infection outbreaks in the community or a client household

This may include masks, eye protection or enhanced hygiene protocols.

## Uniform & hygiene

- Uniform (tunic/cardigan/t-shirt/fleece) must be clean each day
- No long or artificial nails; hair tied back
- Minimal jewellery (wedding band/watch only)
- No smoking or vaping in or near a service user's home or while in uniform

## Cleaning equipment & environment

- Clean any reusable equipment after each visit
- Dispose of PPE safely and appropriately
- Report any infection concerns immediately

We follow Northern Ireland Public Health and RQIA guidance.

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## Uniform & Professional Presentation

Your appearance reflects SV Premier and helps build trust with those we support. Our uniform policy balances professionalism, comfort and safety.

### Uniform items provided / approved

- Tunic
- Cardigan
- T-shirts
- Fleece

These must be clean, well-maintained and worn during all care visits unless otherwise authorised.

The first uniform is provided at no cost. For additional uniforms, employees are advised to contact their manager or HR for arrangements. Payment is required for second uniforms, and details regarding this will be provided by HR.

### Presentation standards

- Uniform clean each shift (ideally daily)
- Hair tied back
- No long or artificial nails
- Minimal jewellery (wedding band & watch only)

- Closed-toe, non-slip shoes required
- Good personal hygiene essential

### What is not permitted

- Hoodies, caps or non-uniform tops
- Strong perfumes/scents
- Visible headphones/earbuds when providing care
- Clothing with inappropriate messaging

### Changing & travel

Where possible, travel in a coat or outer garment if using public transport or communal areas. Uniform should not be worn in bars, shops or social settings.

### Professional image

Smiling, eye contact and a calm, reassuring manner are as important as your uniform. You are the face of SV Premier — thank you for taking pride in your role.

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## Lone Working & Personal Safety

Your safety comes first. If at any time you feel unsafe or uncomfortable, you must prioritise your wellbeing.

### Lone-working expectations

- Always ensure your phone is charged before your shift
- Keep the on-call number with you: **028 9454 8031 / 07864 761510**
- Inform the office if you feel unsafe or have concerns
- Assess the environment on arrival — if you feel something isn't right, do **not** enter. Call the office.

### Personal safety inside homes

- Maintain safe personal space
- Position yourself near exits
- Do not enter where there is aggression, alcohol-related risk or uncontrolled pets
- Leave immediately if you feel unsafe

### Emergency / distress code phrase

If you cannot openly say you feel unsafe, use this phrase:

**“Can you check the rota for Mrs. McBride?”**

This alerts the office that you are in distress and need immediate support.

## Aggression & violence

If you encounter aggression or threats:

- Remove yourself immediately
- Call the office or emergency services if required
- Document the incident as soon as safe

## Manual handling and safety

- Never lift service users manually
- Use equipment and agreed techniques only
- Report faulty or missing equipment immediately

We are here to protect you — never stay in a situation where you feel at risk.

---

## Training, Induction & Ongoing Supervision

Delivering excellent care requires confidence, knowledge and support. Our training and induction programme is designed to prepare you for safe, compassionate practice.

### Induction programme

All new staff complete a structured induction before working independently. This includes:

- Welcome and introduction to SV Premier Healthcare
- Review of this handbook and key policies
- Mandatory training modules (online)
- Shadowing experienced carers in the community
- Competency checks before solo work

We follow a **blended learning approach** — a mix of e-learning and practical mentoring to help you feel confident and capable.

We work closely with our training partners to ensure you receive the most current and effective training throughout your employment. From time to time, additional specialist training sessions may be arranged, and you may also be required to attend NISCC-mandated courses.

Annual online training must be completed via the SV Premier training portal, and Manual Handling certification must be renewed every 18 months.

SV Premier reserves the right to request that you repeat any training should your care practice fall below the required standards.

Failure to meet the required training obligations may result in disciplinary action and/or suspension or termination of your registration until all training requirements are fulfilled.

### Mandatory training includes

- Safeguarding adults
- Infection prevention & PPE
- Moving & handling
- Medication awareness and support
- Dementia awareness
- Health & safety
- Food hygiene
- Communication & dignity in care
- GDPR & confidentiality

Additional training will be provided based on role and service user needs.

### Shadowing

You will shadow an experienced carer to learn:

- Routines and expectations
- Best practice care techniques
- Documentation and record-keeping
- Professional boundaries and communication

### Ongoing supervision & support

You will receive:

- Regular 1:1 supervision sessions
- Annual appraisal
- Spot checks and practice observations
- Access to advice and support at any time

Supervision is supportive — a chance to reflect, grow and ask questions.

### Continuous learning

We encourage you to:

- Refresh training when required
- Seek extra learning opportunities
- Work toward recognised care qualifications

We are committed to your professional growth and success.

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## Pay, Mileage & Expenses

SV Premier aims to ensure fair, transparent and timely payment for the important work you do.

### Pay

- Pay is made **monthly** (or as per your contract)
- Payslips are issued electronically
- Statutory deductions apply (tax, NI, pension if enrolled)
- Bank details must be kept up to date with the office

If you notice an issue with your pay, contact the office as soon as possible and we will resolve it promptly.

### Pay Reviews

Pay reviews may be carried out at the discretion of the Managing Director, typically aligned with your annual appraisal.

Any pay adjustments are based on business needs, performance, and market considerations. If a pay increase is awarded, you will receive written confirmation.

Please note: **there is no contractual entitlement to a pay increase**, and reviews do not guarantee an adjustment in pay.

### Pension

SV Premier Healthcare operates a workplace pension scheme in line with current UK legislation on automatic enrolment.

If you meet the eligibility criteria, you will be automatically enrolled into the pension scheme, and both you and the company will make contributions as required by law. You will be provided with full details of the scheme when you are enrolled, including your right to opt out if you choose to do so.

The company will make any required pension deductions from your pay in accordance with the **Pensions Act 2008** and associated regulations. No contracting-out certificate is in force for this employment.

The pension scheme and contribution levels may be amended from time to time to comply with statutory requirements or to reflect business or regulatory changes. You will be informed of any such changes in advance.

### Mileage

To support your travel during care delivery, mileage is paid:

**From first client to last client** at the agreed mileage rate

#### **Mileage rules:**

- Log mileage daily (office system or agreed form)
- Personal travel (home to first visit and last visit to home) is not claimable
- Mileage claims must be accurate and honest

Example: Home → Client A → Client B → Client C → Home **Paid:** A → B → C **Not paid:**  
Home → A and C → Home

#### Travel Time

Travel time between client visits is paid working time, as outlined in your Employment Contract.

#### Expenses

Only pre-approved business expenses will be reimbursed. Receipts must be provided.

#### Honesty in claims

Submitting false claims may lead to disciplinary action.

We are committed to fair compensation and supporting staff who support our service users.

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## Holidays & Absence

Reliable care depends on consistent staffing. We encourage a healthy work–life balance and support time off for rest, family and wellbeing.

### Annual leave

- Annual leave entitlement is provided in your contract
- Leave must be **requested in advance** and approved before booking
- We approve leave fairly based on staffing and service user needs
- Leave during peak periods such as Christmas and New Year may be restricted and is not guaranteed.

Please submit requests as early as possible to help with rota planning.

### Sickness & absence

If you are unwell and cannot attend work, you must notify us **as early as possible**, ideally:

**The night before, and no later than early morning on the day of shift**

We operate a care service — early notice helps us protect vulnerable service users.

## Reporting sickness

- Call the office or on-call number — do **not** message unless instructed
- Explain your symptoms and likely duration
- Keep us updated daily unless otherwise agreed

## Certificates

- Up to 7 days: self-certification
- 8+ days: GP fit note required

## Returning to work

A brief return-to-work discussion will take place to support you and ensure fitness to work.

## Emergencies

We understand emergencies happen. Please call as soon as possible so we can support you and manage care safely.

Unreported absence may result in disciplinary action.

## Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

If you are too unwell to work, you may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP).

### *SSP Rate & Payment*

You can receive £109.40 per week Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) if eligible.

SSP is paid by SV Premier Healthcare for up to 28 weeks.

- SSP is paid for the actual week you are sick
- Normal wages are paid one week in arrears
- This may result in different weekly payment patterns during sickness periods

### *Waiting Days*

The first 3 qualifying days of sickness are “waiting days” and are unpaid.

SSP is paid from day 4 of illness onward (if eligible).

### *Eligibility for SSP*

To qualify for SSP, you must:

- Have started work for SV Premier Healthcare
- Earn at least £123 per week (average) (current LEL)
- Be ill for at least 4 consecutive days (including non-working days)

- Submit sick certification in line with policy

*You will not qualify for SSP if you:*

- Have already received 28 weeks of SSP
- Are receiving Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)
- Are self-isolating after overseas travel without medical/public health requirement

### *Certification*

You must provide:

- Self-certification for up to 7 days
- GP fit note for 8 days or more

Fit notes must be submitted as soon as they are issued to avoid delays in payment.

### *COVID-Linked Absence (where applicable)*

If self-isolating due to NHS advice, you may provide:

- NHS online isolation note (if required)
- Notification from NHS/public health authorities
- Surgery admission advice from hospital

You cannot claim SSP if self-isolating after travel without public health requirement.

### **Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)**

Eligible employees may receive Statutory Maternity Pay for up to 39 weeks:

- First 6 weeks: 90% of average weekly earnings
- Next 33 weeks: £172.48 per week (current rate) or 90% of earnings (whichever is lower)
- (Tax and NI will be deducted)

### *SMP Eligibility*

To qualify, you must:

- Be employed by SV Premier in the 15th week before your baby is due
- Have worked continuously for at least 26 weeks
- Earn at least £123 per week (before tax)
- Provide correct maternity notice and MATB1 certificate

### *Proof*

You must supply your MATB1 certificate (normally issued at 20 weeks pregnant) within 21 days of SMP start date.

### *If You Do Not Qualify*

We will provide form SMP1 to support your Maternity Allowance claim.

### *Returning to Work*

Please give 8 weeks' notice if you plan to return after maternity leave or if you do not intend to return.

## Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP)

You may be eligible for Statutory Paternity Pay for up to 2 weeks.

- Paid at £172.48 per week (current rate) or 90% of average weekly earnings (whichever is lower)

### *Eligibility*

You must:

- Be the father, partner, adopter, or intended parent via surrogacy
- Earn at least £123 per week
- Have been employed continuously for 26 weeks before the qualifying week
- Provide required notice and proof

SPP is paid in the same way as wages and is subject to tax and NI.

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## Performance Support & Wellbeing

At SV Premier, we believe people do their best when they feel supported, valued and empowered. Our approach to performance is proactive and encouraging.

### Our commitment to you

We will:

- Provide clear expectations and guidance
- Offer coaching, feedback and training
- Hold regular supervisions and check-ins
- Listen and support your wellbeing
- Help you develop confidence and skills

### When challenges arise

We understand that sometimes staff need guidance or support. If performance concerns arise, we will:

- Discuss them openly and fairly
- Identify what support you may need
- Agree an action plan or training if needed
- Review improvement regularly

**Our goal is development, not blame.**

## When formal steps may be needed

If issues persist despite support, or if there is serious misconduct, we may move to our formal disciplinary process. This is always handled fairly, respectfully and in line with policy.

## Your wellbeing matters

Your emotional, physical and mental health are important. We encourage you to:

- Speak to your manager if you feel overwhelmed
- Reach out early if struggling
- Seek support with work-related stress or personal challenges

We are here to help. Caring for others begins with caring for you.

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## Disciplinary & Grievance

We aim to resolve issues early through support, coaching and open communication. However, we also have formal processes to ensure fairness, safety and accountability.

## Our disciplinary approach

We follow a clear, fair and transparent process. Disciplinary action may be taken when there is:

- Breach of policy or procedure
- Repeated performance issues despite support
- Misconduct or unsafe practice
- Behaviour that risks harm to service users, staff or the organisation

## Stages of disciplinary procedure

- 1) **Informal discussion & support plan** (where appropriate)
- 2) **Formal investigation**
- 3) **Disciplinary meeting**
- 4) **Outcome** (e.g., written warning, final warning, dismissal)

## Examples of misconduct

- Breach of confidentiality
- Repeated lateness or missed calls
- Failure to follow care plans or safety procedures
- Dishonesty or falsifying records
- Inappropriate behaviour toward service users, colleagues or the public

## Examples of gross misconduct

May result in summary dismissal:

- Abuse, neglect or intentional harm
- Fraud or theft
- Serious breach of safeguarding
- Involvement in serious criminal activity
- Deliberate breaches of data security

## In the case of a serious complaint/concern/allegation from:

- The Trust/RQIA
- District Nursing/PSNI
- A senior care worker
- A member of staff
- A service user
- A service user's family
- A whistle-blower

The employee will not be assigned duties until an investigation has been completed. If suspension from duty is deemed necessary, the employee should be informed of the reason for the suspension and advised that it is a temporary measure pending the outcome of the investigation.

An SV Premier manager will investigate by collecting written complaints, witness reports, and interviewing the carer. After reviewing these, the Registered Manager may request a formal hearing with the staff member and decide on further action.

SV Premier is required to notify the NISCC (Northern Ireland Social Council) that a worker has been suspended following a complaint/allegation/concern.

In cases of gross misconduct, the carer should be removed from membership of SV Premier without notice or pay in lieu of notice. In exceptional circumstances, or if there are genuine mitigating circumstances, alternative disciplinary action may be taken.

## Your rights

You have the right to:

- Be informed of concerns clearly
  - Be listened to and treated fairly
  - Be accompanied at formal meetings
  - Appeal decisions through the formal process
- 

## Grievance procedure

If you have a concern or complaint about your work environment or treatment, we want to hear from you.

### How to raise a grievance

- 1) Speak to your manager where possible
- 2) If unresolved, submit a written grievance
- 3) Formal meeting arranged to discuss
- 4) Outcome confirmed in writing
- 5) Right to appeal if dissatisfied

We commit to handling all concerns professionally, fairly and without bias.

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## Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Everyone deserves dignity, respect and belonging. At SV Premier, we value diversity in all forms and celebrate the unique strengths each team member brings.

### Our commitment

We are committed to:

- Treating everyone with fairness and dignity
- Creating an inclusive and supportive workplace
- Providing equal opportunities for training and progression
- Challenging discrimination, harassment or bullying
- Respecting cultural, religious and personal differences

### You must

- Treat colleagues and service users with kindness and respect
- Listen to and value different perspectives
- Use inclusive and respectful language

- Report discrimination or harassment immediately

## We do not tolerate

- Bullying, harassment or intimidation
- Discrimination based on any protected characteristic
- Racist, sexist, homophobic, ableist or offensive language or behaviour

## Our service users

We support people from all backgrounds, and your role includes:

- Respecting personal beliefs, preferences and culture
- Supporting equality, dignity and independence
- Providing care without bias or judgement

**Inclusion is not only a policy — it is how we treat each other, every day.**

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## Record Keeping & Documentation

Accurate and timely record keeping is essential for safe, high-quality care. Care notes protect service users, support safe handovers, and provide evidence of the care you have delivered.

### What must be recorded

- Tasks completed as per the care plan
- Service user wellbeing and observations
- Medication support (where applicable)
- Any concerns, refusals, or incidents
- Communication with service users or family
- Escalations to office or professionals

### Recording expectations

- Records should be completed **during or immediately after the visit, or within 1 hour at the latest**
  - Notes must be factual, clear, and confidential
  - No personal opinions or assumptions — stick to facts
- If it's not recorded, it did not happen.**

### Professional standards

- Use approved recording systems only
- Never alter or backdate notes

- Report system issues immediately

Failure to maintain accurate records may lead to investigation and support, and if not corrected, disciplinary action.

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## Electronic Systems & Device Use

SV Premier uses **Nourish Empower** for electronic care records, rotas and communication. Using this system correctly keeps service users safe and ensures accurate documentation.

### Using Nourish Empower

You must:

- Log in using your own secure credentials
- Record notes during or immediately after visits
- Complete tasks and observations as prompted
- Report any technical issues immediately
- Log out and protect your device when not in use

Never share your login details with anyone.

### Mobile phone and device rules

- Personal phones may be used for Nourish and essential work communication only
- Keep your phone on silent during visits
- Do not save service user information to your device
- Do not use personal messaging apps (e.g., WhatsApp) for service user communication
- Never take photos or recordings in a service user's home

### Professional communication

- Communicate respectfully and professionally in all app messages
- Keep language clear and factual
- Do not use emojis or informal shorthand in care notes

### Data security

- Use strong passwords and keep them secure
- Ensure screens are not visible to others when recording notes
- Report lost or damaged devices immediately

Technology supports safe and efficient care — thank you for using it responsibly.

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## Social Media & Representation

Social media is a public space. As a care professional, your online behaviour reflects on you and SV Premier Healthcare.

### Guiding principles

- Protect service users' privacy at all times
- Maintain professionalism on public and private accounts
- Be kind, respectful and positive online

### What you **can** do

- Share **approved SV Premier posts only**
- Promote positive awareness of care work
- Celebrate achievements and training (no client details)

### What you **must not** do

- Post photos or videos in uniform without permission
- Discuss service users, families, visits or workplaces
- Share rota information or internal messages
- Take or share images inside a client's home
- Post negative or harmful comments about the organisation, colleagues or service users
- Engage in arguments or unprofessional discussions online

### Protecting our reputation

If you are unsure whether something is appropriate to post, do not post it.

### Reporting concerns

If you see harmful or inappropriate content relating to SV Premier or a vulnerable person, report it to the Registered Manager immediately.

We support pride in your role — safely, positively and professionally.

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## Complaints & Feedback

We aim to provide compassionate and high-quality care at all times. We welcome feedback and view complaints as an opportunity to improve and learn.

### When a service user or family raises a concern

- Listen respectfully and acknowledge their feelings

- Do not dismiss or argue
- Thank them for bringing it to your attention
- Reassure them the concern will be passed on to the office
- Report it immediately to the Registered Manager or on-call

Do not promise outcomes — your role is to listen and escalate.

## Recording and reporting

- Document the concern factually in the care system
- Notify the office without delay
- Follow any further instructions from management

## Our commitment

- Concerns are taken seriously
- We investigate fairly and promptly
- We provide feedback and learning where appropriate
- There is **no retaliation** toward staff or service users who raise concerns

## Compliments

We celebrate positive feedback. Please share compliments with the office so we can recognise excellent work and learning.

We are committed to continuous improvement and open communication.

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## Leaving Employment & Notice

We aim to build long-term relationships and support your growth with SV Premier. We understand that circumstances can change, and if you decide to move on, we ask for professionalism and notice so that care arrangements remain safe.

### Notice periods

Your contract states your required notice period. As a guide:

- During probation: **1 week's notice**
- After probation: **4 weeks' notice** (unless contract states otherwise)

Notice must be provided **in writing**.

### Working your notice

We expect:

- Continued professionalism and punctuality

- Completion of planned shifts where reasonable
- Participation in handovers to ensure safe continuity of care

## Returning property

You must return:

- Uniform and ID badge
- Any equipment or devices issued
- Any paper records or notes

Final pay may be withheld until items are returned.

## Exit conversations

We may hold an exit discussion to:

- Gather feedback
- Review experience and suggestions
- Ensure employment has ended smoothly and professionally

We wish all staff success in their future careers and thank you for your contribution to SV Premier.

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## Acknowledgement & Signature Page

I confirm that I have received, read and understood the SV Premier Healthcare Staff Handbook. I agree to follow the policies, standards and expectations outlined.

**Employee Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Manager Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

(For induction confirmation)

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Induction Checklist

This checklist will be completed during your induction to ensure you feel prepared, confident and supported.

Item	Completed	Manager Initials
Welcome & introduction	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
ID verified & right to work checked	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Contract issued & signed	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Staff Handbook received	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Policies reviewed (Safeguarding, GDPR, H&S, Lone Working)	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Mandatory training modules assigned	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
E-learning system set up (Evolve)	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
E-learning completed	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Shadowing shifts scheduled	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
System access set up (Nourish Empower)	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Shadowing completed	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Competency checks completed	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
PPE & uniform issued	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Rota & on-call procedures explained	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Mobile/work device guidance explained	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Emergency & safeguarding contacts reviewed	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Mileage & timesheet process explained	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Questions invited & answered	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

**Staff Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Manager Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Staff Quick Reference Guide

A quick guide to key expectations and contacts.

### Key Contacts

- **Office:** 028 9454 8031
- **On-call:** 07793503305
- **Registered Manager:** Sharon Vellem
- **Emergency:** 999
- **Police (non-emergency):** 101
- **Belfast HSC Trust Gateway:** 028 9504 1744

## Safeguarding

- Report concerns immediately
- If in danger: **999**
- If unsure: **call the office / on-call**
- **Distress code phrase:** “Can you check the rota for Mrs. McBride?”

## Documentation

- Record notes **during/after visit** or **within 1 hour**
- Facts only — no opinions
- If it’s not recorded, it didn’t happen

## Conduct

- Be kind, calm, respectful
- Maintain professional boundaries
- Protect confidentiality at all times

## Mobile device use

- Only for Nourish Empower & essential calls
- No photos, messages or social media in visits
- Phone on silent

## Uniform & Appearance

- Clean uniform daily
- Hair tied back
- No long nails or excessive jewellery
- Closed-toe shoes

## Lone Working

- Trust your instincts — **leave if unsafe**
- Call office/on-call if concerned
- Use emergency code phrase if needed

## Wellbeing

- Speak up early if struggling
- Support is always available