

Professional Boundaries (England) Policy

Policy Statement

This policy sets out the principles and values underlying our approach to professional boundaries in relationships with people using the service and their relatives, friends, visitors and representatives. The service aims to have an open and transparent culture in which everyone is clear about their roles and responsibilities, and the boundaries in which they carry out their work.

This policy is in line with the principles of a safe, effective, caring, responsive and well led service as required by the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 in which staff know their roles and responsibilities to their people using the service and their limits and can work to the respective codes of practice and conduct. They will also be aware of the possible consequences of breaching their professional boundaries.

MKEC considers that staff need to observe professional boundaries in their relationships with people using the service and their relatives, friends, visitors and representatives, and that behaviour outside those boundaries should be regarded as potentially abusive and a reason for disciplinary action.

We recognise that it is often difficult to draw precise lines defining appropriate behaviour, so we encourage staff to be transparent in their dealings with people using the service and others and to discuss with managers any difficulties which arise. The starting point is that the needs of people using the service should be at the centre of our care practice; any relationship which might threaten that objective should be questioned.

We teach staff to recognise that they are in a position of trust and power in relation to the people using the service who are often vulnerable to abuse and exploitation and who do not always have the mental capacity to decide if a relationship is in their best interests. We do not expect staff to betray the vulnerable person's trust in them or to misuse their power to coerce or control the person receiving their care or to abuse or harm them in any way.

Care staff must recognise that they are in positions of trust and must not abuse their position by:

- harming the people using the service
- committing a criminal offence against or related to the people for whom they are caring and which might incriminate them in some way in those offences

- behaving so that they pose a risk of causing harm to the people for whom they are caring.

The Parties Involved

Staff

This policy applies to all staff, including temporary staff and volunteers, not only those who have regular contact with the person in a care-giving capacity.

People using the service

They are the people to whom the care service has agreed to provide care and support, and to whom the service has a duty of care for their safety and wellbeing.

People associated with people using the service

This policy includes relationships with people directly associated with people using the service in a personal capacity — their relatives, friends, visitors and representatives.

Professional Boundaries

Professional relationships must be distinguished from personal relationships. Although we believe that staff can quite properly gain satisfaction from developing and sustaining relationships with people using the service, the key consideration should always be the needs of the person rather than the personal or mutual satisfactions which characterise personal relationships. Staff must therefore on occasions hold back from allowing a relationship to develop a dimension or to a degree which they personally would find satisfying, in the interests of ensuring that the needs of the individual remain paramount.

Any member of staff who feels that a relationship that might be judged inappropriate is developing should discuss the situation with their manager. The action to be taken might include:

- varying the staff member's duties in order to limit contact with that person
- discussing the situation frankly with the person in order to re-establish appropriate boundaries
- having a chaperone present whenever there is likely to be physical contact (see [Chaperone Policy](#))
- moving the staff member to another work setting.

Where the overstepping of professional boundaries has resulted in harm to the person, the staff member will be subject to a disciplinary investigation (following local safeguarding procedures). This could result in the person being dismissed and referred for inclusion on the relevant barring list that would prevent future employment in a care role.

Professional Codes of Practice

Care, nursing and other professional staff must comply with the standards of conduct and practice for their respective occupations or professions. The service will co-operate with any action taken by a professional regulatory body investigating the conduct of one of its members.

Conduct Outside the Work Situation

Although we do not in general seek to regulate the private behaviour of staff, we recognise that, on some occasions, a staff member's behaviour away from work may call into question their suitability to work in social care services, particularly if they have committed a criminal offence. It is the responsibility of all staff therefore to behave, both at work and outside, in ways which uphold their own credibility and the care provider's reputation.

Training

All staff receive training to understand and apply this policy and related policies.

Review

Signed: _IUKELEGHE

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