
Professional and Personal Boundaries Policy

1. Policy Statement

This policy is intended to set out the values, principles and good practice guidelines on professional boundaries with Service Users and is written for all staff in relation to their work with Service Users who are currently receiving support or who have received support in the past from Moonstone Care uk Ltd.

All staff of Moonstone Care uk Ltd. is required to observe professional boundaries and to maintain positive professional relationships with other colleagues and other professionals as well as Service Users and their families.

Whilst Moonstone Care uk Ltd. recognise that support workers must establish a rapport that optimises the potential for Service Users and provide friendly and accessible support, they are, responsible for establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries between themselves and Service Users. The needs and rights of Service Users should be respected at all times. However, disabilities of individual Service Users, particularly where mental capacity is an issue, means the relationship between Service User and Care Worker is not one of equal balance.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the division between professional and personal relationships between Service Users and staff therefore enabling consistent approach to Service Users at all times.

Staff must ensure that working relationships are not misread or confused with friendship or other personal relationships. This is essential in order to protect service users at a time when they may be vulnerable. It is also to protect staff from any risk of potential false allegations.

3. Responsibility and Authority

The Registered Manager has overall responsibility for ensuring that these guidelines are followed.

Field Supervisors/ Line Managers have the specific role of monitoring day to day team and individual practice and have a responsibility to challenge and address staff when standards are not being maintained. It is the responsibility of Field Care Supervisors or Line Managers to ensure that staff have a full understanding of this policy and the policy requirements are adhered to by staff at all times.

All staff must recognise and understand that they are in a position of power. This power must not be abused at any time. It is therefore essential that all interactions between Service Users and staff are seen in terms of a professional relationship.

THIS POLICY WAS REVIEWED AND UPDATED ON: [01/01/2017](#)

[Next Update 01/01/2018](#)

Because there is a potential for positions of power to be abused and professional boundaries to be broken, Moonstone Care uk Ltd. advises that the responsibility to apply and maintain appropriate professional boundaries rests with individual staff members. Failure to meet this responsibility may lead to formal disciplinary action being taken against them.

4. Requirements: What staff must do:

If a member of staff thinks that there is a risk of a potential breakdown of his/her professional boundaries with a Service User, he/she must bring this to the attention of a supervisor or Moonstone Care uk Ltd. management immediately.

If staff consider that a colleague is at risk of potential breakdown of professional boundaries with a Service User (s), they too have a responsibility to report their concerns immediately to the Management of Moonstone Care uk Ltd..

Staff must inform the Management if they have a personal knowledge of a Service User who receives service from us (as soon as they become aware this is the case) or if they are aware that he/she is related to a Service User.

- Home Care workers must be aware of areas in which they are not qualified to give advice or where it is not appropriate for them to offer advice and should inform the Service User of this and make every effort to assist them in accessing appropriate qualified services.
- Staff must not influence a Service User with their own beliefs or personal values.
- Staff must not divulge any personal information about themselves or other members of staff.
- Staff must never discuss other staff with Service Users except on issues relating to care and support work.
- Staff must not conceal information about a Service User from colleagues. This may include :
 - The intention of a Service User to self-harm or harm others.
 - Not completing full records of Service Users interactions
 - Not reporting violent or critical incidents.
 - Not reporting safeguarding or protection issues.
- Staff must not divulge Personal Information such as letting a Service User know where they or other staff members live
- Staff must not accept any money or gifts from Service Users or enter into any financial transactions including buying, selling, exchanging or bartering goods or services.
- Staff must not lend their personal money or possessions to Service Users.
- Staff must not borrow money or possessions from a Service User.
- Staff should not handle money on behalf of a service user except in clearly defined and documented work instructions.
- Staff must not use Service User's property for their own use (this includes eating Service User's food).

Staff should not arrange and engage in contact with Service Users outside work. Where a Support Worker or staff member encounters a Service User in the community out of working hours,

THIS POLICY WAS REVIEWED AND UPDATED ON: [01/01/2017](#)

[Next Update 01/01/2018](#)

he/she should be pleasant and civil if approached by the Service User but should discourage prolonged social contact.

- Staff should not approach a Service User in any social setting if the contact is not instigated by the Service User.
- Staff must never discuss Service Users with other Service Users.

5. Principles of working with Service User: What staff should do.

This section provides professional context for working with Service Users, describing basic values and principles that govern professional practice.

- Boundaries define limits of behaviour, which allow a professional Home Care worker and Service User to engage safely in a supportive relationship. These boundaries must be based upon trust and respect.
- The relationship between a Home Care worker and Service User is a therapeutic, caring relationship which must focus solely on meeting the needs of the Service User. It is not to build personal or social contacts for staff and therefore moving the focus away from Service Users' care needs towards meeting individual Home Care workers' own needs is an abuse of power and unacceptable.
- Staff should be seen as approachable, open to fair challenge and criticism. They should not be seen as intimidating or inaccessible to the Service User. Service Users must not be discouraged from making complaints.
- On occasions a member of staff may develop an attachment towards a particular Service User. While this may be natural the staff member should ensure that this does not lead to a breach of professional boundaries. Staff has a responsibility to discuss this kind of difficulty with their Line Manager as part of supervision process.
- Staff have a responsibility to discourage overreliance by a Service User on one particular Worker and to encourage and enable Service Users towards independence.
- Some examples of creating dependence or abuse of power are:
 - Inviting Service User to the Home Care worker's own home
 - Socialising with the Service User outside the professional role such as out of work time
 - Using the Service User to meet the employees' emotional needs.
 - Encouraging the Service User to rely on one support worker.
- Befriending is an appropriate relationship for staff and part of building the necessary trust to work with Service Users. Staff must be aware and never overstep professional boundaries and not confuse Befriending with Friendship. Befriending a Service User is a professional relationship, in order to meet a Service Users needs whilst becoming a Service User's friend is a relationship which focuses on the needs of both Service User and Home Care worker.
- Staff must be aware of the difference between being a counsellor and using counselling skills (such as active listening with a non-judgemental approach) that are appropriate for the delivery of care and support.

- Where it is appropriate that a Service User requires counselling, Staff should provide appropriate support and advice on accessing the appropriate services.
- Advice should in general only be offered to a Service User when it is requested, unless there are any good reasons to be more directive. Where a Support Worker provides more directive advice, for example in a situation where there is a potential for physical harm or danger, the Home Care worker should aim to do this in a non- judgemental manner and carefully record what has been said.
- When advice is offered to a Service User the Home Care worker should ensure that they provide sufficient information for the Service User to make an informed choice.
- Caret Workers should approach touching a Service User with caution. Some Service Users may misinterpret physical contact as affection outside the professional relationship. Where touching does occur it must take place when following specific work instructions and professional boundaries within the service that is provided and with the specific agreement of the Service User.
- All staff should be aware that physical contact risks being misunderstood and it may result in staff being vulnerable to allegations of inappropriate behaviour.

Other more subtle inappropriate behaviour may include:

- Inappropriate dress
- Inappropriate use of body or verbal language
- Asking the Service User inappropriate questions regarding their sexual habits
- Asking a Service User inappropriate questions regarding their hygiene or sanitary issues.

6. How to manage Boundary issues

- Home Care Workers may be put in a position where their relationship with a Service User is compromised, or where they may be drawn into a conversation or situation where boundaries are crossed or stretched. In some situations the fine line between good and bad practice may not always be clear.
- Support workers should always seek guidance from their Supervisor/Line Manager if they are not sure about the relationship which is developing with a particular Service User or if they need advice on how to deal with a situation.
- Any action taken must be discussed with Management as soon as possible.
- Other Home care workers in the team who are also likely to work with the Service User must be made aware of where the boundaries have been crossed or stretched and what action is taken so that a consistent approach can be maintained with the Service User
- Written records of a boundary issue must be kept by completing an incident form and also recording the situation in the Service Users Daily Records.
- Boundary issues may be discussed in staff meetings or during supervisions on a regular basis.

- The management of MOONSTONE CARE UK will take a serious view of any member of staff who fails to follow this policy and the principles and standards contained within it. Persistent breaches (or one serious breach) may necessitate use of disciplinary procedures.