#

# Policy on PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

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**Policy Statement**

This charity believes that staff need to observe professional boundaries in their relationships with members and their relatives, friends, visitors and representatives, and that behaviour outside those boundaries should be regarded as 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 members and others, and to discuss with managers any ambiguities which arise. The starting point is that the needs of members should be at the centre of our care practice; any relationship that might jeopardise that objective should be questioned.

**The Policy**

The aim of this policy is to lay down the principles and values underlying our approach to professional boundaries in relationships with members and their relatives, friends, visitors and representatives.

**The Parties Involved:**

**Staff**

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

**Members**

The term ‘member’ is used in this policy to include: current members, past members and anyone whose contact with the charity is concerned with either their being currently, or having previously been, a user or potential user of services.

**People Associated with Members**

This policy includes relationships with people directly associated with members in a personal capacity, i.e. 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 members, the key consideration should always be the needs of the member, as opposed to the personal or mutual satisfactions that characterise personal relationships. Staff must therefore on occasions refrain from allowing a relationship to develop to the extent that they would find personally satisfying or to include a dimension that they would find personally satisfying in order to ensure that the needs of the member remain paramount. Any member of staff who feels that a relationship is developing that might be judged as inappropriate should discuss the situation with their manager. The action to be taken may 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; or, in extreme circumstances, controlling an individual’s contacts with the charity.

This includes relationships between staff members regardless of their job title. Inappropriate behaviour from any member of staff should be discussed in an open and honest manner with the Service Lead.

If the inappropriate behaviour involves the Service Lead, then it should be discussed with a senior member of staff.

It is important to recognise that any purported abuse of power leads ultimately to inappropriate behaviours becoming acceptable and therefore it is the responsibility of all staff where they have concerns to flag up such concerns as early as possible.

**Professional Codes of Practice**

All staff should be familiar with and comply with the code of conduct skills for care, copies of which are supplied to all staff. Other professional staff should, in addition, comply with the standards of conduct and practice set by their own regulatory bodies. Breaches of any of these codes by staff will be reported, and the charity will cooperate with any action taken by a regulatory body.

**Action Outside the Work Situation**

Although we do not, in general, seek to regulate the private behaviour of staff, we recognise that occasionally an individual’s behaviour outside of work may call into question their suitability to work in social care services. It is the responsibility of all staff therefore to behave, both at work or otherwise, in ways that uphold their own credibility and the charity’s reputation.

**Related Policies**

Code of Conduct for Workers

Monitoring and Accountability

Recruitment and Selection

Social Media and Networking

**Training Statement**

All staff will be encouraged to read this policy and related policies as part of their induction process and will be provided with training on professional boundaries.