



THE ABBEYFIELD FERRING SOCIETY LTD POLICY & PROCEDURE/GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Policy Ref:	AF047	Effective date:	August 2017
Owner:	Abbeyfield Ferring Society	Review date:	August 2020

Title:	PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES
1. Background	<p>The Importance of Boundaries</p> <p>Boundaries are about establishing what is considered to be appropriate staff behaviour. They allow a resident, client or customer and an employee to engage in a supportive relationship and are based on trust, respect and the appropriate use of power.</p> <p>Boundaries protect and inform both staff and residents by clarifying what types of staff behaviour is appropriate.</p> <p>They also protect staff from the risk of false allegations of unprofessional conduct. Clear boundaries help to develop trusting relationships with residents who know what to expect from staff and help develop professionalism by encouraging high standards of work and consistency.</p>
2. Objectives	<p>The aim of this policy is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide guidance on establishing and maintaining professional boundaries in all areas of working relationships.
3. Scope	<p>This policy applies to all Abbeyfield Ferring Society employees, trustees, volunteers and agency staff. It provides guidance on establishing and maintaining professional boundaries in all areas of working relationships.</p>
4. Policy	<p>Relationships Between Individuals and Residents</p> <p>Individuals, both employed and volunteers, working within Abbeyfield Ferring Society have a responsibility to provide safe, effective and caring services to residents, clients and customers.</p> <p>Whilst it is recognised that it is important to establish a rapport with our customer base and provide friendly and accessible services, each individual is responsible for establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries between themselves and residents.</p> <p><i>The priority in establishing appropriate boundaries should be the resident's needs. The motive behind all staff behaviour should be to assist the customer rather than to benefit themselves. These should be at the centre of all our work and anything which is not in line with this should be questioned.</i></p> <p>Our customer base may be unaware of the need for professional boundaries and may at times even initiate behaviors or make requests that could cross boundaries. Abbeyfield Ferring Society staff and volunteers have a duty to act in the best interests of the resident and are ultimately responsible for managing boundary issues and being accountable should conflict occur.</p>
4.1.	Conflicts of Interest



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	<p>All involved in Abbeyfield Ferring Society should think carefully about potential conflicts of interest, for example if the relative of a resident is to be employed in the same house.</p> <p>Where there is a potential conflict of interest, it is the individual's responsibility to declare this to their line manager in the first instance. Such situations should be assessed or judged on a case-by-case basis and the decision recorded.</p> <p>Where employees feel a colleague is at risk of potential breakdown of professional boundaries or where there is a conflict of interest then they too have a duty to protect both resident, client and customer and other staff and should bring this to the attention of the line manager.</p>
4.2.	<p>Unacceptable Practices Unacceptable practices are those which put the professional/personal relationship in danger of crossing professional boundaries. The following list not exhaustive and if staff are in any doubt they should consult their line manager. Unacceptable practices which cross professional boundaries will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.</p> <p>Sexual Contact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual acts • Requests for/suggestion of sexual acts • Physical contact which could be construed as sexually suggestive • Sexual innuendo and/or insinuation. <p>Some examples of more subtle inappropriate behaviour may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate dress • Inappropriate use of body or verbal language i.e. language which is used to satisfy the need of the employee concerned and are not likely to have any benefits for the Resident/customer. • Asking the resident/customer inappropriate questions regarding their sexual habits • Asking the resident/customer inappropriate questions regarding their hygiene or sanitary issues. <p>Acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality Employees must not accept any personal gift(s), or hospitality from residents/customers but should inform their line manager who will take the appropriate steps to return the gift or other action which may be appropriate.</p> <p>Further information can be found in the Gifts and Wills Policy.</p>



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Involvement in Resident’s Wills

Staff and volunteers are not permitted to become involved in the drawing up of a resident’s will. Further information can be found in the Gifts and Wills Policy.

Misuse of Resident’s Facilities and Property

Staff must not use resident’s/customer’s property for their own use. For example, using a resident’s TV for their own use or eating resident’s food

Inappropriate Personal Disclosure

Staff must not divulge any inappropriate personal information about themselves or other staff members or divulge any personal information about residents to anyone who does not have a legitimate right to access it. This includes discussing residents with individuals outside of Abbeyfield Ferring Society.

It would also be inappropriate for a staff member to give a resident/customer their personal mobile phone/home number

Abuse of Power/Creating a Dependence

Staff have a responsibility to discourage over reliance of the resident on one employee and to encourage and enable the resident towards independence. Some examples of what may be a breakdown of professional boundaries are:

- Inviting residents home
- Socialising outside the working relationship
- Encouraging the residents to rely on one employee

Using the resident for the employee’s emotional need.

Existing Personal Relationships with Residents and Between Employees and/or Volunteers

Should a personal relationship already be in existence with either a resident/customer or a current employee or volunteer when a new member of staff or volunteer is appointed, it is the responsibility of that individual to advise the manager at the time of accepting the appointment. The individual will not be required to give details other than the individual’s name and the nature of the association, for example family member, partner.

A decision will be made as to whether the existing relationship may pose a conflict of interest. A decision will be made on the basis of the individual circumstances and action taken as appropriate

Relationships Between Employees and/or Volunteers

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	<p>Abbeyfield Ferring Society does not wish to restrict in any inappropriate or unnecessary way, one individual's right to form a relationship with another. It will be recognised however that intimacies between members of staff may have an adverse effect not only on the individual's ability to act in a professional way but also on the working environment.</p> <p>This is particularly where one person has line managerial responsibility towards the other or where a line manager may be perceived as having used influence to obtain a benefit (such as employment or promotion) for a partner or close relative.</p> <p>Any relationship which develops during employment which could be a conflict of interest or constitute a breakdown of professional boundaries must be disclosed to the individual's line manager in the first instance. Failure to do so may be regarded as misconduct and dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.</p>
4. Finance	TBC
5. Supporting Appendices	
6. Linked policies	<p>Safeguarding Vulnerable People</p> <p>Disciplinary</p> <p>Conflict of Interest</p> <p>Gifts and Wills</p> <p>Induction</p>
7. Legislation / Regulation	
8. Review	Every 3 years, subject to any regulatory or legislative updates.
9. Procedure / Guidance	<p>Assessing Potential Boundary Issues</p> <p>In each individual case, boundary issues may pose dilemmas for staff/volunteers and there may be no clear or obvious answers. In determining how to proceed, consideration of the following questions may be helpful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this in the resident's/customers best interest • Whose needs are being served • Will this have an impact on the service I am delivering • Should I make a note of my concerns or consult with a colleague • How would the resident's family view this action • How would I feel telling a colleague about this • Am I treating this resident differently • Does this resident mean something "special" to me



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Am I taking advantage of the resident• Does this action benefit me rather than the resident• Am I confident in documenting this decision/behaviour in the resident's personal file <p>If there is any doubt individuals should discuss the matter with their line manager or COO.</p>
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