

PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES POLICY AND PROCEDURE

RESPECT AND MAINTAINING PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES – POLICY

Respect is a fundamental aspect of the philosophy of **ubu**. All employees will act in a professional capacity, treating each person with respect at all times.

The role of an enabler includes befriending the customers we support but not becoming their friend. There needs to be a clear distinction between these two definitions, indeed a large part of the enablers role is to assist them to develop friendships with people who are not paid to spend time with them and who share similar interests and hobbies.

Liberties may not be taken in making assumptions or judgements on the names or labelling of any customers. Every customer has the right to choose how they wish to be addressed by each member of staff. Nicknames may not be attributed to an individual by staff members as this invades into the identity of each individual.

When in a customer's home staff should act like a visitor which indeed they are and should refrain from borrowing or accepting any possessions of any description owned by the customer they are supporting or using any items within the customer's home for personal benefit (e.g., TV, appliances etc)

The development of a sexual relationship between a member of staff and a customer we support is not only unacceptable, it is also unlawful.

At a less intimate level, the showing of favouritism towards a particular customer is not only open to misconstruction, it is divisive and dangerous. All members of staff are expected to guard against favouritism.

We recognize that it can sometimes be difficult to know where and when to draw the line between personal lives and work and when we are working with customers who have a learning disability important that we are always aware of our actions and the effect they may have on a person.

If staff are ever in doubt about the appropriate way to respond they should seek guidance from their line manager, and thorough records kept at all times.

Staff should receive as part of their induction information and training regarding the nature and limits of relationships between themselves and the customers they support and these practices should be integrated into the practices of the team.

Each new employee receives as part of their induction a copy of the GSCC code of conduct and a boundaries checklist which outlines their role and responsibilities. These documents should be read and clarification of understanding checked by the customer's line manager.

Each of the customers should receive support to enable them to understand what constitute appropriate boundaries for staff.

There are a number of questions include in the professional boundaries checklist which forms part of a new members induction and these will assist each person in ensuring that professional boundaries are maintained.

Dignity and Choice

Staff should be constantly reviewing how they can respect and extend the range of choices open to customers. Individuals should be free to choose in matters of relationships. Personal space, physical care and lifestyle. Limits and boundaries should be made clear but rules kept to a minimum.

Examples of situations where staff may be required to provide support include:

- i. Dressing: Individuals should be able to choose the clothes they would prefer to wear.
- ii. Hairstyles: Individuals should be able to choose where and when they have their hair cut and how they wear it.
- iii. Bathing: individuals should be given a choice regarding a shower or bath and the timing of this procedure. The bathroom should be comfortable with clean towels and facilities. There should be opportunity for bubble bath, soap, shampoo etc of personal choice. Always protect a customer's self respect and dignity should always be considered.
- iv. Shaving: support with this should be provided in line with agreed choices. If supporting a male tenant with a wet shave, support should be provided sensitively by a competent staff member to avoid unnecessary cuts to the face.
Female tenants should not be shaved, using a razor or creams under any circumstances by staff, unless permission is given by the customer themselves, or their family/advocate and the Support Leader.
- v. Shopping: Customers should have the opportunity to buy personal items of their own choice using local shopping facilities. Customers should accompany staff who are doing personal shopping.

Always provide choice and abide with the individual's choice except where your duty of care involves intervening because there is danger from a situation where he/she cannot cope. You should protect from any form of physical, verbal or psychological abuse from any other person. If you do not act to protect, you are failing in your duty. You should report to a support leader any suspicion of abuse.

Communicate completely with the customer. Explain at each stage, what you are doing and why. Even if the customer is unlikely to understand, give him/her the benefit of the doubt. They may begin to understand. Keep prompting their involvement.

Personal Appearance Staff should be aware that fashions and modern trends change and their own personal views and opinions may not be the preferences of the customers we serve. Examples of situations where extra sensitivity is required advice should always be taken include hair colour and style, beards and facial hair, shaving, hair removal, tattoos, jewellery and body piercings. In these situations staff must provide support that is in line with agreed care and support plans and if in doubt staff should always seek advice and support from their Support Leader/Customer Service Manager.

PROCEDURE

The support required by a customer should be recorded initially onto their needs assessment – “Getting to know me” document and important information with regards to maintaining professional boundaries should be included in the customer’s support and risk management plans. These documents should include a documented risk assessment that addresses the potential for personal benefit through abuse, including gifts, bequeaths and bequests.

<p>Gifts from the customers and/or their families</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees may not accept a personal gift of any sort from one of the customers or any of their friends or relatives without approval from their line manager. The staff member should explain to the customer offering them the gift that ubu has a strict policy and that they will have to seek written approval before they are able to accept the gift. They may not accept a gift of any sort from any organisation or person that provides services to ubu or any of the customers without written approval from their line manager.
<p>Behaviour, Values and Attitudes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All employees should receive and be familiar with the GSCC Code of Conduct which is provided in their induction pack prior to employment. This should help to clarify what is acceptable physical contact, e.g. is greeting a customer we support with a hug and kiss on the cheek acceptable? • Staff must not overstep professional boundaries by confusing befriending with friendship. • Support plans should include guidance on what is appropriate behaviour when assisting someone to buy goods or food/drinks in social settings, e.g. coffee shops or pubs.
<p>Money handling/ goods belonging to the customers we support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff should not be witnesses to wills or any other legal documentation nor be beneficiaries. • Staff should follow the financial procedures in place for each of the customers. As each customer has different needs this should be done on an individual basis for each customer. These procedures should form part of a new staff members induction.
<p>Staff expenses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff member's expenses when the customers want or need to be accompanied, for example on social activities, should be in line with ubu's policy on "payments for meals and activities when accompanying a customer we support".
<p>Decision making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff should not make decisions for or on behalf of clients, but should support and advise the customers to enable them to make decisions for themselves. • Staff should be given clear guidance on the extent and limit of their involvement in decision making for clients who lack the mental capacity to make a decision. • Nothing in such policies or guidance should be seen as contravening appropriate life-maintaining or life-preserving acts as defined by the Mental Capacity Act.
<p>Social Contact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional and social lives must be kept separate and social contact outside of the working environment should be discouraged. This includes refraining from socialising with the customers we support, e.g. meeting for a drink outside of work, invitations to weddings, birthday

	<p>parties etc. All employees must adhere to ubu's policy on alcohol.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is inevitable that contact may occur from time to time between staff and the customers we support outside of work e.g. bumping into someone in the supermarket. Staff should act as politely and respectfully as possible but then disengage themselves.• Personal telephone numbers should not be exchanged.
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