APRIL COMPLETE CARE SOLUTIONS LTD
(The "Company")

Professional Boundaries Policy

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Issued – 21.11.16

1. Purpose

1.1. This procedure provides guidance for all staff when working with individuals, employees and others to ensure that the boundaries between personal and professional behaviour are clearly understood and managed

1.2. The procedure provides guidance for staff regarding the standards expected in their relationships with individuals, staff and others

2. Applicability

2.1. The procedure applies to all staff working in Community Services whether they work directly with individuals or have contact with individuals from time to time

2.2. The procedure covers the following relationships between:

- Staff and individuals
- Staff and staff
- Staff and external individuals / organisations (to include carers and family members)

2.3. The procedure applies when staff are 'on duty' and in certain circumstances when 'off duty' as described below

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. The Registered Manager has overall responsibility for reviewing the procedure within the published timescale

3.2. All staff who have management responsibilities are responsible for ensuring that the staff they are responsible for understand the procedure and that standards expected of staff are complied with

3.3. They are also responsible for dealing with any breaches of the procedures under the relevant HR procedures (e.g. disciplinary)

3.4. All staff are responsible for familiarising themselves with, and ensuring that they comply with the procedure.

4. Principles for maintaining professional boundaries

4.1. The relationship between a worker and an individual using the service may appear to have much in common with friendship or other relationships. However it is a professional relationship with a defined purpose to promote the wellbeing of the person using the service.

4.2. The social care professional is responsible for establishing and maintaining a meaningful and effective professional relationship with the individual/family members, based upon an understanding of their individual needs and preferences in relating to others.

4.3. The needs and well-being of the individual should be paramount. This includes providing opportunities for individuals to make active contributions to their lives, their relationships and their care and support.

4.4. Professional boundaries apply to all forms of communication between social care professionals and individuals. This includes any use of social media.

4.5. The social care professional is responsible for seeking support and taking sensitive action where an individual misreads or becomes confused about their relationship.

4.6. Where it is not appropriate for a social care professional to provide, or continue to provide, care and support due to blurring or crossing of professional boundaries, alternative care and support must be provided.

4.7. The social care professional should be supported to reflect on and understand the impact of caring on their own emotional well-being. They are also responsible for accessing additional support or specialist advice when relationship-based practice and managing of professional boundaries becomes difficult for them.

4.8. Social care professionals should apply professional boundaries with fairness, clarity, consistency and transparency.

5. Standards

5.1. Staff members must not have sexual relationships with individuals

5.2. Staff must not attend clients homes, if they are not scheduled to do so

5.3. Staff must not smoke or consume alcohol, or take other illegal substances when 'on duty' or present for work in an unfit state.

5.4. Staff must not accept money as a gift or borrow money from individuals. Our policy on Acceptance of Gifts must be followed at all times

5.5. Staff (or any member of their family) must not witness wills for individuals or knowingly be named as an Executor or Beneficiary of a will

5.6. Staff must not sell things to, or buy things from, individuals

5.7. Staff must not use credit/debit cards or Benefit cards belonging to individuals; or have access to / use their 'PIN' numbers

5.8. Staff must not accept responsibility for looking after any personal items on behalf of an individual, except on a temporary basis e.g. when looking after a purse when on an outing

5.9. Staff must not accept free services from individuals or their families, where such services would normally be paid for

5.10. Staff should not take their children or other family members to an individual's home

5.11. Individuals must not be taken with a staff member to their home or be allowed to enter a staff member's home

5.12. Staff must not give out their mobile phone number to individuals without prior permission

5.13. Staff must work within the written care plan of the individual and should not divulge the content of the plan to other family members / friends / partners etc. of the individual without the consent of the individual. Where an individual lacks capacity to provide such consent the procedures under the Mental Capacity Act Guidance should be followed

5.14. Staff must not swear, use abusive or discriminatory language, gestures or make jokes that cause offence to others when on duty

6. Maintaining Confidentiality

6.1. Staff must not disclose information about individuals to other individuals / families / carers (whether past or present users of services)

6.2. Staff must not disclose information about individuals (e.g. care needs, personal information) to other people outside the service unless there is a requirement to do so – see 6.4 below

6.3. Where a member of staff is unsure whether they should disclose such information they should seek advice from their manager

6.4. As a general rule staff should not make themselves accessible to individuals when off duty and must not give out their own or other staff members' home phone number, personal mobile phone number or address.

6.5. All messages and requests for help, assistance or advice etc must go via the office.

6.6. If the matter is urgent, a member of staff in the office may ring the staff member at home to relay the message and a decision regarding the way to respond will be agreed

6.7. If a staff member is concerned that confidential information is being breached they should report this to their manager as soon as possible

7. Maintaining Personal Professional Boundaries

7.1. Staff should not generally work in their professional capacity for a relative or close friend e.g. where these people become an individual. Where a potential individual has been referred to a service where a relative / friend is working the matter should be discussed with the Manager

7.2. Consideration should be given to the following when deciding what action to take

7.3. Is the staff member a close / distant relative?

7.4. Is the staff member providing personal care or are they a manager?

7.5. Does the staff member clearly understand the boundaries between personal and professional issues / behaviour?

7.6. Could the staff member be re-deployed elsewhere to enable the individual to receive the service (especially where there are no other options for the individual)?

7.7. Staff should excuse themselves from meetings when someone they know personally is to be discussed (e.g. team meetings)

7.8. Information regarding a complaint, child protection or risk to a vulnerable adult should be shared with a Manager; even when it has been gained in a personal capacity. The Complaints and Safeguarding Adults procedures must be followed.

7.9. Where such information also concerns an employee the Registered Manager should be informed so that appropriate action can be agreed

8. Staff must also be aware of the boundaries between personal and professional behaviour when they are 'off duty' (i.e. not in their normal work setting). Examples are as follows:-

8.1. Staff must not discuss individuals with relatives / carers when in a social setting

8.2. Staff must not discuss individuals between each other when in a social setting

8.3. Staff should not discuss matters relating to their service in external settings (meetings /training etc.) or with friends / relatives that breaches confidentiality or data protection

8.4. Where staff need to discuss cases or scenarios as part of participative training then these should be 'anonymised' as far as possible; such that people / places etc cannot be easily identified

8.5. Any information obtained in meetings / training etc. re: individuals / services must not be discussed outside of these events

8.6. Staff should not meet individuals socially outside of workplace events unless this has been discussed and agreed with their manager (e.g. going on holiday with an individual as a volunteer carer)

8.7. Where a member of staff belongs to a club, society, voluntary organization etc., and their involvement can sometimes provide benefits to a service. This could include the provision of services, activities, collaborative working etc. with that organisation.

8.8. It is recommended that any such activity is agreed in advance with the manager and any potential conflicts of interest or potential for blurring of personal / professional boundaries are identified and appropriate action agreed and recorded

8.9. This is particularly important where transactions in relation to Company property (e.g. lending of equipment) or finance are involved. In such cases it is advised that another member of staff manages these aspects

8.10. On occasions staff teams may go out socially in groups e.g. Christmas Parties where they are on view to other members of the public. Staff need to be aware that they are employees of the Company and should not bring the service or the Company into disrepute at such times by inappropriate behaviour as this could lead to complaints from the public

8.11. Staff who are 'lone workers' should also take care to ensure that they do not place themselves in a position whereby they could inadvertently breach these procedures

9. Physical contact with individuals should be such that the intent is clear and that professionalism is not compromised. Examples are as follows:

9.1. A certain amount of physical contact is required to facilitate moving and handling / personal care and the requirements for each individual should be described in risk assessments and care plans

9.2. Individuals' individual needs and preferences should be taken into account

9.3. Some individuals may enjoy physical contact but it may be inappropriate for this to be given – the care plan should make clear the boundaries for individuals

9.4. Some individuals may initiate physical contact with staff that is not appropriate. Measures for managing such instances should be recorded in the care plan and staff understand the mechanisms for reporting incidents to management. In such cases clear boundary setting should also be discussed and agreed with the individual

9.5. Where an individual clearly indicates that forms of physical contact are unwelcomed (this may be indicated by body language) this must be clearly recorded in the care plan and staff informed so that this is not repeated

9.6. However – it may be that unwelcomed forms of physical contact cannot be avoided e.g. when assisting with personal care / using a hoist etc. In such cases the care worker should explain what contact will be made <u>before</u> carrying out the activity and they should also reassure the individual that this will be kept to a minimum

10. Guidance for staff who are related or in a relationship

10.1. In general terms staff who are related (e.g. by marriage, brother / sister etc), should not work together in the same service area. This may be allowed as long as certain conditions are met as follows:

10.2. Staff employed in the same job role should not work on the same shifts as each other

10.3. Where staff work in the same service area and one is more senior than the other, the senior person must not be the other's supervisor

10.4. Neither employee should exert influence over the other in relation to work issues

10.5. Either employee should report to their Manager where they feel that their ability to maintain personal / professional boundaries is being compromised by other work colleagues

10.6. There may be exceptional circumstances whereby related staff do work alongside each other e.g. where one staff member is covering for other staff sickness and the alternative would mean using agency staff

10.7. The Manager will monitor these relationships and should discuss any concerns with either employee in supervision and seek appropriate action to ensure that personal / professional boundaries are managed and maintained

11. Unacceptable Practices

11.1. Concealing information about individuals from colleagues, for example, not reporting incidents and concerns, safeguarding issues, not completing records, colluding with criminal acts;;

11.2. Causing physical harm or injury to individuals

11.3. Making aggressive or insulting comments, gestures or suggestions;

11.4. Seeking information on personal history where it is neither necessary nor relevant;

11.5. Watching an individual undress where it is unnecessary; • Sharing your own private or intimate information where it is unnecessary

11.6. Acceptance of gifts and hospitality in return for better treatment;

11.7. Spreading rumours or hearsay about an individual or others close to them;

11.8. Misusing an individual's money or property;

11.9. Encouraging individuals to become dependent or reliant for the worker's own gain;

11.10. Giving special privileges to 'favourite' individuals, for example spending excessive time with someone, becoming over-involved, or using influence to benefit one individual more than others;

11.11. Providing forms of care that will not achieve the planned outcome;

11.12. Providing specialist advice or counselling where the worker is not qualified to do this;

11.13. Failing to provide agreed care and support for or rejecting an individual, for example, due to negative feelings about an individual;

11.14. Trying to impose own religious, moral or political beliefs on an individual;

11.15. Failing to promote dignity and respect

11.16. Any practices specifically prohibited in relevant legislation, statutory regulations, standards and guidance. The consent of the individual is never a defence for any of these practices.

11.17. Recognising and using sensitively and responsibly the power that comes from your work with individuals and carers;

11.18. Adhering to policies and procedures about accepting gifts and money from individuals, their families and carers.

11.19. You must not…form inappropriate personal relationships with individuals, their families or carers.

11.20. If you are responsible for managing or leading staff, you must embed the Code in their work