

Abbeyfield Oxford Board, May 18 2016

TITLE	<b>ABBEYFIELD OXFORD SOCIETY PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES LG027P</b>
<b>1 Background</b>	<p><b>The Importance of Boundaries</b></p> <p>Boundaries are about establishing what is considered to be appropriate staff behaviour. They allow a resident 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. 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>
<b>2 Objectives</b>	<p>The aim of this policy is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide guidance on establishing and maintaining professional boundaries in all areas of working relationships. This includes gifts and wills.</li> </ul>
<b>3 Scope</b>	<p>This policy applies to all Abbeyfield Oxford employees and volunteers and agency staff. It provides guidance on establishing and maintaining professional boundaries in all areas of working relationships.</p>
<b>4 Policy</b> <b>4.1</b>	<p><b>Relationships Between Individuals and Residents</b></p> <p>Individuals, both employed and volunteers, working within Abbeyfield Oxford have a responsibility to provide safe, effective and caring services to residents. Whilst it is recognised that it is important to establish a rapport with residents and provide friendly and accessible services, each individual is responsible for establishing and maintaining appropriate boundaries between themselves and residents.</p>

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	<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 resident 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>Residents may be unaware of the need for professional boundaries and may at times even initiate behaviors or make requests that could cross boundaries. Abbeyfield Oxford 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>
<b>4.2</b>	<p><b>Conflicts of Interest</b></p> <p>All involved in Abbeyfield Oxford 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 or the chairman 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 or volunteers 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 and other colleagues and should bring this to the attention of the line manager or chair.</p>
<b>4.3</b>	<p><b>Unacceptable Practices</b></p> <p>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>
<b>4.3.1</b>	<p><b>Sexual Contact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sexual acts</li><li>• Requests for/suggestion of sexual acts</li><li>• Physical contact which could be construed as sexually suggestive</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual innuendo and/or insinuation.</li> </ul> <p>Some examples of more subtle inappropriate behaviour may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inappropriate dress</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• Asking the resident inappropriate questions regarding their sexual habits</li> </ul>
<p><b>4.4</b></p>	<p><b>Acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality</b>  Staff members and volunteers must not borrow or accept individual gifts of any description or value from any third party including residents, service users or their relatives, friends and representatives other than small non-monetary gifts of no substantial value.</p> <p><b>Gifts of Money</b>  If a third party, such as a resident, service user (or their relative, friend or representative) offers an individual staff member or volunteer a gift of <u>money</u> they should be thanked. However, the offer must be firmly and politely declined. The staff member or volunteer must inform their Manager of the offer and their refusal as soon as is reasonably practical.</p> <p><b>Small Gifts</b>  An individual can accept a small non-monetary gift of little or no significant monetary value, defined as having a value of £10 or less.</p> <p>Non-monetary gifts to the House or Home team may also be accepted where the gift is of no substantial value; this is defined as £20 or less, such as biscuits or chocolates. This is acceptable where a third party wishes to offer a small token of appreciation for the team as a whole. In these situations, the gift may be accepted by an individual staff member <u>on behalf of the team</u>. Upon receipt, the gift should be recorded and passed to the Manager to be shared amongst all staff members and volunteers.</p> <p>In situations in which it is apparent that a member of staff or volunteer has not complied with this policy, it will be treated as a disciplinary matter and dealt with in accordance with Abbeyfield’s Disciplinary Policy &amp; Procedure.</p> <p><b>Donation to the House/Home/Service</b>  Where a third party wishes to donate a more substantive gift or donate money to the house or home this <b>MUST</b> be referred to the Chair, who will take a decision as to whether the gift can be accepted, and ensure the third party is</p>

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	advised of the basis on which the gift/donation can be accepted or politely declined (for example, if it conflicts with the Conflict of Interest section ).
<b>4.5</b>	<p><b>Involvement in Resident's Wills</b></p> <p>Staff and volunteers are not permitted to become involved in any way in the drawing up of a resident's will.</p>
<b>4.6</b>	<p><b>Misuse of Resident's Facilities and Property</b></p> <p>Staff and volunteers must not use resident's property for their own use. For example, using a resident's TV for their own use or eating resident's food.</p>
<b>4.7</b>	<p><b>Inappropriate Personal Disclosure</b></p> <p>Staff and trustees must not divulge any inappropriate personal information about themselves or colleagues, 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 Oxford.</p>
<b>4.8</b>	<p><b>Abuse of Power/Creating a Dependence</b></p> <p>Staff and volunteers have a responsibility to discourage over reliance of the resident on one individual, and to encourage and enable the resident towards independence. Some examples of what may be a breakdown of professional boundaries are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inviting residents home</li> <li>• Socialising outside the working relationship</li> <li>• Encouraging the residents to rely on one employee</li> <li>• Using the resident for the employee or volunteer's emotional need.</li> </ul>
<b>4.9</b>	<p><b>Existing Personal Relationships with Residents and Between Employees and/or Volunteers</b></p> <p>Should a personal relationship already be in existence with either a resident 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 HR or Operations trustee at the time of accepting the appointment. The trustee will then inform their Line Manager or mentor. 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.</p>

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	<p>A decision will be made as to whether the existing relationship presents a conflict of interest on the basis of the individual circumstances, and action taken if appropriate</p>
<p><b>4.10</b></p>	<p><b>Relationships Between Employees and/or Volunteers</b></p> <p>Abbeyfield Oxford does not wish to restrict an individual’s right to form a relationship with another in any inappropriate or unnecessary way. It will be recognised however that intimacies between members of staff and/or volunteers may have an adverse effect both on the individual’s ability to act in a professional way and on the working environment.</p> <p>This is particularly where one person has line managerial responsibility for 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 or volunteering which could be a conflict of interest or constitute a breakdown of professional boundaries must be disclosed to the individual’s line manager or the chair in the first instance. Failure to do so may be regarded as misconduct and dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.</p>
<p><b>5 Procedure/ Guidance</b></p>	
<p><b>5.1</b></p>	<p><b>Assessing Potential Boundary Issues</b></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"> <li>• Is this in the resident’s best interest</li> <li>• Whose needs are being served</li> <li>• Will this have an impact on the service I am delivering</li> <li>• Should I make a note of my concerns or consult with a colleague</li> <li>• How would the resident’s family view this action</li> <li>• How would I feel telling a colleague about this</li> <li>• Am I treating this resident differently</li> <li>• Does this resident mean something “special” to me</li> <li>• Am I taking advantage of the resident</li> <li>• Does this action benefit me rather than the resident</li> <li>• Am I confident in documenting this decision/behaviour in the</li> </ul>

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	<p>resident's personal file</p> <p>If there is any doubt individuals should discuss the matter with their line manager or the HR or Operations trustee.</p>
<b>6.Frequently Asked Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <b>A resident has given me a gift. What should I do?</b></li></ul> <p>You should inform your line manager as soon as possible. Your manager will then take the appropriate steps to return the gift or other action which may be appropriate.</p>
<b>7. Review</b>	<p>Policy last reviewed: May 2016</p> <p>Review date: 2019</p>