



# Professional Boundaries Guidance for Independent Living

## 1.0 Statement

- 1.1 Southern Housing has an open and transparent culture in which everyone is clear about their roles and responsibilities, and the boundaries in which they carry out their work. All employees are required to observe professional boundaries and to maintain positive professional relationships with:
  - Colleagues and other professionals
  - Residents who use our services and their families, friends, carers, or advocates.
- 1.2 The families, carers, or advocates of residents depend upon us to support and protect them from exploitation and abuse.
- 1.3 Families, carers, or advocates are themselves vulnerable to ongoing concerns for the residents present and future security and well-being, and have the right to expect a professional service.
- 1.4 Inconsistent and inappropriate staff behaviour, risks undermining a residents motivation and understanding, and may contribute to their vulnerability. It can also place staff at risk and compromise staff and the service.

## 2.0 Role of staff

- 2.1 The role of staff is professional, very specific, and quite distinct from that of, for example a friend, family member, or advocate.
- 2.2 We expect staff to observe professional boundaries in their relationships with the residents they support and their relatives, friends, visitors, and representatives. Behaviour outside those boundaries should be regarded as potentially abusive and a reason for disciplinary action.
- 2.3 Each member of staff has a job description that describes the expectations we have of them in respect of their role and responsibilities. They receive support and one to ones associated with their role, and have managers who they can seek advice and guidance on the boundaries of their role.
- 2.4 Staff therefore operate at all times within the context of our aims, policies, and operational guidelines for services and individuals, seeking advice and guidance from managers when uncertain or faced by conflicting priorities or opinions.
- 2.5 Professional relationships must be distinguished from personal relationships. Managers work with staff to raise and maintain awareness of professional roles, responsibilities, boundaries, and their purpose.

2.6 Staff should seek advice and guidance from their managers if unclear on the appropriate way to respond to any circumstances relating to relationships with residents

2.7 **Best practice is Staff must not:**

- Give, receive, exchange gifts of money or goods to or from residents, their families, or carers
- Sell, buy, exchange, lend, borrow goods or services to or from residents, their families, or carers
- Engage in any form of uninvited, unplanned and unnecessary physical contact with residents – being specifically careful to avoid introducing any ‘social touching’ because it is a natural part of their own family, social, or cultural life
- Initiate, encourage, or maintain contact with family, carers, or advocates beyond that required by their role
- Invite to, accept invitations to, or engage in social activities or social media involving residents, their families, carers, or advocates unless required to do so as part of their role and only with the express permission of their line manager
- Wear inappropriate clothing to include items with large logos across the front, items that could be deemed as offensive. Professional smart, casual wear at all times as you are constantly representing Southern Housing
- Invite residents, their families, carers, or advocates to personal functions
- Visit personal family, carers, or advocates of residents unless required to do so as part of their role and only with the express permission of their line manager
- Give lifts to residents under any circumstances
- Share their own or other team members personal information with residents, families, or carers
- Share their own personal views of a political, religious nature with residents, relatives, friends and other agencies.
- Carry out private work for residents whilst employed by Southern Housing
- Handle residents money on their behalf
- Use inappropriate communication, like use names of endearment, slang, inappropriate language like swearing, and never share sensitive personal or sensitive information with other residents.
- Make, witness, or benefit from Enduring Powers of Attorney, Lasting Powers of Attorney, wills, and legacies of residents, their families, carers, or advocates
- Accept the offer of purchasing food or drink by a resident they’re delivering support to. In exceptional circumstances there maybe a request from a legal representative to partake in the activity. This would be agreed and arranged by a manager with the representative and documented and would be appropriately risk assessed.
- Visit residents even if you have left your role, as the relationship was professional
- Use Southern’s facilities, or resources for personal use

2.8 Any member of staff who feels concern regarding a relationship with a resident, carer, family member, or agency should discuss the situation with their manager. The action to be taken might 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
- Having a chaperone present whenever there is one to one contact
- Moving either the individual or the staff member to another work setting.

### 3.0 What have we done to make sure this Policy is fair?

- 3.1 We've carried out an Equality Impact Assessment to ensure that our policies, practices, events, activities and decision-making processes are fair and do not present barriers to participation or disadvantage to any protected groups including age, disability, race and sexual orientation under the [Equality Act 2010](#).

### 4.0 Review

- 4.1 We will review this to address legislative, regulatory, best practice or operational issues.

#### Controls.

<b>Effective from</b>	December 2024
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<b>Policy owner</b>	Naomi Keyte – Director of Care and Independent Living
<b>Policy author</b>	Chrissy Ellis
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Version no	Date	Summary of change	Author and approver
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