

POL70 – Professional Boundaries Policy and Procedure

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd
Unit 5, Millennium Way, Dunston, Chesterfield, Derbyshire Ltd
S41 8ND



1. Purpose

1.1 To ensure that all staff at Serendipity Healthcare Ltd are approachable, whilst making sure that the working relationships with Service Users, their families or friends are not misread or confused with friendship or other personal relationships.

1.2 To support Serendipity Healthcare Ltd in meeting the following Key Lines of Enquiry:

Key Question	Key Lines of Enquiry
CARING	C1: How does the service ensure that people are treated with kindness, respect and compassion, and that they are given emotional support when needed?
SAFE	S1: How do systems, processes and practices keep people safe and safeguarded from abuse?
SAFE	S6: Are lessons learned and improvements made when things go wrong?
WELL-LED	W2: Does the governance framework ensure that responsibilities are clear and that quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements are understood and managed?

1.3 To meet the legal requirements of the regulated activities that Serendipity Healthcare Ltd is registered to provide:

- The Public Interest Disclosure Act 2013
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003
- The Care Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) (Amendment) Regulations 2012

2. Scope

2.1 The following roles may be affected by this policy:

- All staff

2.2 The following Service Users may be affected by this policy:

- Service users

2.3 The following stakeholders may be affected by this policy:

- Family
- Representatives
- Commissioners
- Local Authority

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3. Objectives

- 3.1** To ensure that all interactions between staff, including Care Workers, and the Service User are regarded as professional relationships.
- 3.2** For a culture of safety and quality to exist in Serendipity Healthcare Ltd with all staff complying with this policy and its associated procedures. Whilst also protecting Service Users from potential abuse or harm.

4. Policy

- 4.1** Serendipity Healthcare Ltd recognises that it is important for its staff to establish a rapport with Service Users and provide friendly, caring, and accessible services.
- 4.2** The rights and needs of Service Users and their families and friends will be respected at all times. However, it is acknowledged within Serendipity Healthcare Ltd that the relationship between the Service User and Care Worker is not one of equal balance. Serendipity Healthcare Ltd understands that the relationship with Service Users must focus solely upon meeting the needs of the Individual. It is not established to build personal or social contacts for staff. Moving the focus of Care away from meeting the needs of individuals or those who care for them, towards meeting the member of staff's own needs is an unacceptable abuse of power.
- 4.3** This power must not be abused at any time. It is essential, therefore, that all interactions between Service Users, their families, and staff at Serendipity Healthcare Ltd must be in the context of a professional relationship. Staff will, therefore, have a clear framework within which to provide Care. Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will make it clear that the responsibility to maintain professional boundaries rests with individual members of staff.
- 4.4** We recognise that a member of staff may develop an attachment towards a particular Service User or Service Users and while this may be natural, staff of Serendipity Healthcare Ltd or those engaged in work on our behalf, must ensure that this does not lead to a breach of professional boundaries. We take the breach of personal and professional boundaries very seriously and failure to follow this policy may result in disciplinary action. Breaches of professional boundaries may require investigation under the safeguarding procedures at Serendipity Healthcare Ltd and we will ensure that we dovetail with any local policies and procedures alerting the Care Quality Commission and Derbyshire County Council, Sheffield City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council Safeguarding Team without delay.

5. Procedure

5.1 Pre-Existing Relationships

It is quite possible that at some point someone known to a staff member or a relative may need Care from Serendipity Healthcare Ltd. It is the member of staff's responsibility to inform The Registered Manager of the relationship, so that they are not directly involved in the Care. Otherwise, they may be perceived to be in a position leading to a conflict of loyalties.

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Managers will agree a course of action which may include putting systems in place where staff would have no involvement with the Service User's Care.

5.2 Outside Work

Off duty staff will, wherever practicable, avoid situations where their responsibilities to Serendipity Healthcare Ltd and Service Users conflict with their private interests. Staff must not knowingly arrange to meet a Service User or those who care for them off-duty or to take them home. Where an employee does meet a Service User outside of work in a social situation, the general advice given above must be followed.

- Where staff find themselves in a situation where they see Service Users outside work on a frequent basis, they must declare this to The Registered Manager. The Registered Manager has a responsibility to discuss potential conflicts of interest and any other implications for Serendipity Healthcare Ltd
- Staff must be careful not to influence a Service User with their own beliefs and personal values. Staff must also be aware of their potential to influence vulnerable and/or impressionable individuals. Failure to follow this may result in disciplinary action

5.3 Inappropriate Disclosure

'Gossip' or hearsay must not feature as an aspect of the culture of Serendipity Healthcare Ltd and will be discouraged among both staff and Service Users.

- Staff must never share personal details about other staff with Service Users
- Staff must never discuss other staff members with Service Users except on issues relating directly to the Service User's Care
- Staff must never discuss Service Users with other Individuals and other third parties without the Service User's consent
- Staff must not interact with the Service Users, their families, and friends on social networking sites such as Facebook, Snapchat, etc. and must not accept requests to join their network or 'friend' them
- Staff must not discuss or post about their work, their Service Users, other staff, or any other aspect of their work with Serendipity Healthcare Ltd on social network sites such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, blog sites or other media such as radio, TV, or newspapers/magazines without prior approval from The Registered Manager
- To promote the dignity and respect of the Service User and avoid a breach of confidentiality, Care Worker must NOT use their mobile phones (e.g., answer calls or check texts) when delivering direct personal care or support to the Service User. However, Care Workers can use their mobile phones for business use at a time more convenient away from the Service User. This policy does not prohibit the use of smartphones and devices for professional care or clinical use when prior agreement is given by Serendipity Healthcare Ltd
- Failure to follow this procedure may result in disciplinary action. It is recognised that increasingly, technology is used. However, this is directed by Serendipity Healthcare Ltd and clear boundaries will be put in place
- It is the responsibility of Serendipity Healthcare Ltd to support staff working in the homes of Service Users and ensure they are aware of the times they are delivering Care and not call them during this time

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- Where any of the above does occur, the incident must be brought to the attention of The Registered Manager as soon as possible

5.4 Influencing, Imposing Personal Views and Opinions

- Staff must be careful not to influence the Service User with their own beliefs and personal values
- Staff must also be aware of their potential to influence vulnerable and/or impressionable individuals
- Although morality, religion and politics are common areas of conversation and Service Users may wish to discuss their views with the member of staff, staff must never promote or impose their own views
- In assessing a Service User and creating a Care Plan, Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will take account of spiritual, religious, social, and cultural factors, as well as their medical history. It may, therefore, be appropriate to ask a Service User about their personal beliefs. However, staff must not put pressure on a Service User to discuss or justify their beliefs or the absence of them
- Care Workers will keep the discussion relevant to the Service User's Care during their visit. If the Care Worker discloses any personal information to a Service User, including talking to a Service User about personal beliefs, the Care Worker must be very careful not to breach the professional boundary that exists between them. These boundaries are essential to maintaining a relationship of trust between a Care Worker and a Service User

5.5 Finances

- Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will ensure that all staff have read and understood the policies on gifts and finances
- Staff will not borrow, lend, or buy items or goods from Service Users. This includes catalogues, etc.
- Staff will not buy shopping/goods for Service Users from their own money as this may lead to safeguarding issues
- Where a Care Worker has concerns about a Service User's finances, they must escalate these concerns to The Registered Manager immediately
- Staff will not enter a Service User's home without them being present as this may lead to safeguarding incidents
- Staff are not permitted to undertake Care on a private basis for a Service User with whom Serendipity Healthcare Ltd has an agreement

5.6

- Staff must ensure that confidentiality is maintained and will not take their family, friends, or children to the Service User's home, this includes where staff rely on family members or friends for transport to and from Service User's homes. Where staff are driven, arrangements must be made to ensure that the address of the Service User's home is kept confidential
- Staff must not take pets into the Service User's home

6. Definitions

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6.1 Professional Boundaries

- Professional boundaries set limits for safe, acceptable, and effective behaviour by members of staff

6.2 Hearsay

- A conversation that includes unverified information, gossip, rumours

Reviewed 31.01.2022

HR Manager - Lisa Ward