

# Workbook 1(1.6)

## Professional boundaries

Extracts from 'Professional boundaries: A resource for managers pg 1&2

### Introduction:

Individuals who use services are all different, so too are the individuals who make up the workforce.

Developing good quality working relationships takes time and work, and a culture that supports the workforce to develop these relationships is crucial.

Relationship centred working may cause uncertainty for some about how to carry out their roles and responsibilities.

Professional boundaries help us to make sense of this and can be described as the 'boundary between what is acceptable and unacceptable for a professional both at work and outside work'.

Establishing a clear foundation about the nature and limitations of the working relationship from the outset will help both workers and people using services to explore their expectations and understand how they can best work together.

A shared agreement will also help to protect individuals, the workforce and organisations, from misunderstandings about working relationships.



# Principles for maintaining professional boundaries

- The social care professional is responsible for establishing and maintaining a meaningful and effective professional relationship with the individual, based upon an understanding of their individual needs and preferences in relating to others.
- 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.
- Professional boundaries apply to all forms of communication between social care professionals and individuals. This includes any use of social media.
- The social care professional is responsible for seeking support and taking sensitive action where an individual misreads or becomes confused about their relationship.
- 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.
- 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.
- Social care professionals should apply professional boundaries with fairness, clarity, consistency and transparency.