

PartnershipProjects

Code of Professional Conduct for Employees and Individuals Delivering Services on behalf of PartnershipProjects

PartnershipProjects

Contents

Introduction	3
Purpose of this Guidance	3
Expectations of conduct, behaviour and practice	4
Who does this apply to?	4
Staff protection and consequences of failing to comply with this code	4
Underpinning Principles	5
Code of Professional Conduct	6
1. Responsibilities	6
2. Making professional judgements	7
3. Power and positions of trust and authority	7
4. Confidentiality	8
5. Standards of behaviour	9
6. Dress and appearance	10
7. Gifts	10
8. Infatuations and 'crushes'	11
9. Social contact outside of the workplace	12
10. Communication with service users (including the use of technology) ...	13
11. Physical contact	14
12. The use of control and physical intervention	15
13. Sexual conduct	16
14. One-to-one situations	16
15. Transporting service users	17
16. Activities in the Community	18
17. Photography, videos and other images / media	19
18. Exposure to inappropriate images	20
19. Using Resources During Service Delivery	21
20. Whistleblowing	21
21. Sharing concerns and recording incidents	22

PartnershipProjects

Introduction

All PartnershipProjects staff who come into contact with our service users have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare.

The Children Act 1989 and 2004 and the statutory guidance, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018' places a duty on organisations to safeguard and promote the well-being of children and young people. This includes the need to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of children and young people are competent, confident, and safe to do so. Similarly, the Care Act 2014 places a duty on organisations to reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults who need care and support, and safeguard adults in a way that recognises their choice and control.

It is important that all our staff working with our service users understand that the nature of their work and the responsibilities related to it, place them in a position of trust. This Code of Professional Conduct provides clear advice on appropriate and safe behaviours for all staff working with our service users in paid or unpaid capacities, in any setting and in all contexts. The guidance aims to:

- Keep service users safe by clarifying which behaviours constitute safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided
- Assist staff working with our service users to work safely and responsibly and to monitor their own standards and practice
- Support Managers in setting clear expectations of behaviour and/or practice relevant to the services being provided
- Support Managers in giving a clear message that unlawful or unsafe behaviour is unacceptable and that, where appropriate, disciplinary will be taken
- Support safer recruitment practice
- Reduce the incidence of positions of trust being abused or misused.
- Fulfil requirements as a code of conduct and act as part of staff induction.

Purpose of this Guidance

The purpose of this Code of Professional Conduct is to clarify the vision, values, rules and ethical principles of PartnershipProjects. It provides clear standards and expectations to ensure that everyone understands they are accountable for fulfilling the responsibilities of their roles in a professional manner and in a way that keeps children, parents/carers, and all staff safe.

We want our staff to be fully congruent with our values and furthermore we want our staff to turn these values into appropriate behaviours that positively impact how we treat each other, how we interact with others and how we exemplify 'excellence' in the services we deliver.

PartnershipProjects

Expectations of conduct, behaviour and practice

The following measures clarify the expectations to everyone working on behalf of PartnershipProjects to maintain a positive personal reputation and the reputation of the service whether inside or outside working hours.

Naturally, this Code of Professional Conduct cannot cover every eventuality and cannot be an exhaustive list of behaviours that are acceptable and unacceptable. The professional judgement of staff must be utilised to ensure that our behaviour is at all times professional and appropriate.

Who does this apply to?

This Code of Professional Conduct applies to all staff and anyone delivering services on behalf of PartnershipProjects, i.e. all permanent and temporary employees; all agency workers on assignment; independent contractors and consultants contracted to provide services for PartnershipProjects, all Directors and any associates.

This Code of Professional Conduct does not negate or replace any expectations that individual's professional bodies place on them.

Staff protection and consequences of failing to comply with this code

Employees who raise genuine concerns about breaches of this policy will be protected from victimisation in line with our Whistleblowing Policy.

All staff need to recognise that failure to meet these standards of behaviour and conduct may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal or termination of contract. Where breaches occur, consideration will also be made as to whether PartnershipProject is required to refer individuals to statutory agencies or professional bodies in line with its legal and ethical responsibilities.

Employees subject to Disclosure and Barring checks in their capacity as an employee who are subsequently convicted of an offence which may impact on their work with the Company are required to report that conviction to their management and/or Human Resources. Failure to do so may become a disciplinary matter, the seriousness of the matter being dictated by the nature of the offence and the role of the employee.

PartnershipProjects

The Safeguarding responsibilities mentioned within this Code of Professional Conduct must be read in conjunction with the PartnershipProjects Safeguarding Policy.

All PartnershipProjects' Policies and Procedures are available on our website or upon request from any director. It is your responsibility to read and understand the policies and ask for assistance if you are not clear about anything.

PartnershipProjects reserves the right to amend all its policies in-line with business needs.

Underpinning Principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- Staff should understand their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of all those in receipt of a service
- Staff are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
- Staff should work, and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way
- Staff should acknowledge that deliberately invented/malicious allegations are extremely rare and that all concerns should be reported and recorded
- Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their named link person if they have acted in a way which may give rise to concern
- Staff should apply the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and sexual orientation
- Staff should not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or any substance, including prescribed medication, which may affect their ability to undertake their role
- Staff should be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in disciplinary action being taken against them, criminal action and/or other proceedings including barring by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) from working in regulated activity, or for acts of serious misconduct prohibition from their professional regulatory body.
- Staff and managers should continually monitor and review practice to ensure this code of conduct is followed
- Staff should be aware of and understand PartnershipProjects' Safeguarding Policy, Managing Allegations against Staff Policy and Whistleblowing Policy.

PartnershipProjects

Code of Professional Conduct

1. Responsibilities

Staff are accountable for the way in which they: exercise authority; manage risk; use resources; and safeguard service users.

All staff have a responsibility to keep service users safe and to protect them from abuse (sexual, physical and emotional), neglect and contextual safeguarding concerns. Service users have a right to be safe and to be treated with respect and dignity. It follows that trusted staff are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure their safety and well-being. Failure to do so may be regarded as professional misconduct.

The safeguarding culture of PartnershipProjects is, in part, exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between our staff and service users and behaviour by the staff member that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement.

When staff members accept a role working for PartnershipProject they should understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust involved in that role.

PartnershipProjects has a duty towards employees and others under Health and Safety legislation which requires them to take steps to provide a safe working environment for staff.

Legislation also imposes a duty on employees to take care of themselves and anyone else who may be affected by their actions or failings. An employer's Health and Safety duties and the staff member's responsibilities towards service users should not conflict. Safe practice can be demonstrated through the use and implementation of these guidelines.

This means that staff are expected to:

- *understand the responsibilities which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached*
- *always act, and be seen to act, in the best interests of service users*
- *avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions*
- *take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour*

This means that PartnershipProjects will:

- *promote a culture of openness and support*
- *ensure that systems are in place for concerns to be raised*
- *ensure that staff members are not placed in situations which render them particularly vulnerable*
- *ensure that all staff members are aware of expectations, policies and procedures*

This means that the Directors for PartnershipProjects will:

- *ensure that there is an up to date Safeguarding Policy distributed, adopted, implemented and monitored.*

PartnershipProjects

2. Making professional judgements

This guidance cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. It does highlight however, behaviour which is illegal, inappropriate, or inadvisable. There will be rare occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interest of a service user which could contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists. Individuals are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the service users they are working with and, in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably. These judgements should always be recorded and shared with a manager.

Staff members should always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate, safe and applied equitably.

This means that where no specific guidance exists staff should:

- discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed action, with their line manager or, where appropriate, PartnershipProjects' designated safeguarding lead. This will help to ensure that the safest practices are employed and reduce the risk of actions being misinterpreted
- always discuss any misunderstanding, accidents or threats with their Manager or designated safeguarding lead
- always record discussions and actions taken with their justifications
- record any areas of disagreement and, if necessary, refer to another agency / the LA / other Statutory Agency or Regulatory Body

3. Power and positions of trust and authority

As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, all those working with our service users are in a position of trust.

The relationship between a person working with a service user is one in which the staff member has a position of power or influence. It is vital for staff to understand this power; that the relationship cannot be one between equals and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence.

The potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable service users means that staff members have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

Staff should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries, avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted by others and report and record any such incident.

This means that staff should not:

- use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage and/or a service user's or family's detriment
- use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine service users
- use their status and standing to form or promote relationships with service users which are of a sexual nature, or which may become so.

4. Confidentiality

The storing and processing of personal information is governed by the General Data Protection Regulations 2017 (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018. Staff should provide clear advice to service users about their responsibilities under this legislation so that, when considering sharing confidential information, those principles should apply.

Staff may have access to special category personal data about service users and their families which must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when legally permissible to do so and in the interest of the service user. Records should only be shared with those who have a legitimate professional need to see them.

Staff should never use confidential or personal information about a service user or her/his family for their own, or others advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other organisations). Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass a service user. Confidential information should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need-to-know basis. In circumstances where the service user's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.

There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a service user, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a responsibility to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated safeguarding responsibilities or to statutory services.

If a child – or their parent/carer – makes a disclosure regarding abuse or neglect, the member of staff should follow PartnershipProjects' Safeguarding Policy. The staff member should not promise confidentiality to a child or parent/carer but should give reassurance that the information will be treated sensitively.

If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential, he or she should seek guidance from the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to Directors.

This means that staff:

- need to know the name of their Designated Safeguarding Lead and be familiar with the role of statutory safeguarding agencies
- are expected to treat information they receive about service users in a discreet and confidential manner
- should seek advice from their Designated Safeguarding Lead if they are in any doubt about sharing information they hold or which has been requested of them
- need to be clear about when information can/must be shared and in what circumstances
- are aware of the Managing Allegations against Staff Policy and to whom any concerns or allegations should be reported (LADO)
- need to ensure that where personal information is recorded electronically that systems and devices are kept secure

Partnership Projects

5. Standards of behaviour

All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard service users. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain confidence and respect of the general public and those with whom they work.

There may be times where an individual's actions in their personal life come under scrutiny from the community, the media or public authorities, including with regard to their own families, or children or adults in the community. Staff should be aware that their behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, could compromise their position within the work setting in relation to safeguarding of services users, loss of trust and confidence, or bringing the employer into disrepute. Such behaviour may also result in referral to any professional body that they may belong to, or action by another relevant regulatory body.

This means that staff should not:

- *behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults or to act as an appropriate role model*
- *make, or encourage others to make sexual remarks to, or about, a service user*
- *use inappropriate language to or in the presence of service users*
- *discuss their personal or sexual relationships with or in the presence of service users*
- *make (or encourage others to make) unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean, discriminate or humiliate, or might be interpreted as such*

This means that staff should:

- *inform their manager or other specified person of any cautions, convictions, or relevant orders accrued during their employment, and / or if they are charged with a criminal offence*
- *be aware that behaviour by themselves, those with whom they have a relationship or association, or others in their personal lives, may impact on their work with service users*

This means that Managers should:

- *have a clear expectation that staff will discuss with managers any relationship / association that may have implications for the safeguarding of service users*
- *create a culture where staff feel able to raise these issues*
- *safeguard their employees' welfare and contribute to their duty of care towards their staff*
- *identify whether arrangements are needed to support these staff*
- *consider whether there are measures that need to be put in place to safeguard service users.*

Partnership Projects

6. Dress and appearance

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression and some individuals will wish to exercise their own cultural customs. However, staff should select a manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role and which may be necessarily different to that adopted in their personal life. Staff should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be viewed as offensive or inappropriate will render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegation.

This means that staff should wear clothing which:

- *promotes a positive and professional image*
- *is appropriate to their role*
- *is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative*
- *does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding*
- *is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans*
- *is not considered to be discriminatory*
- *is compliant with professional standards*

7. Gifts

Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.

There are occasions when service users wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff e.g. at Christmas or as a thank-you and this is usually acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

Similarly, it is inadvisable to give such personal gifts to service users or their families. This could be interpreted as a gesture either to bribe or groom. It might also be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return.

This means that staff should:

- *ensure that gifts received or given in situations which may be misconstrued are declared and recorded*
- *only give gifts to a service user as part of a previously agreed practice*
- *where giving gifts other than as above, ensure that these are of insignificant value and given to all service users equally*
- *ensure that they do not behave in a manner which is either favourable or unfavourable to individual service users*

Partnership Projects

8. Infatuations and 'crushes'

All staff need to recognise that it is not uncommon for service users to be strongly attracted to a member of staff and/or develop a 'crush' or infatuation. They should make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour cannot be brought into question, does not appear to encourage this and be aware that such infatuations may carry a risk of their words or actions being misinterpreted.

Any member of staff who receives a report, overhears something, or otherwise notices any sign, however small or seemingly insignificant, that a young person has become or may be becoming infatuated with either themselves or a colleague, should immediately report this to their named link person. In this way, appropriate early intervention can be taken which can prevent escalation and avoid hurt, embarrassment or distress for those concerned.

The named link person should give careful thought to those circumstances where the staff member, service user and their parents/carers should be spoken to and should ensure a plan to manage the situation is put in place. This plan should respond sensitively to the child and staff member and maintain the dignity of all. This plan should involve all parties, be robust and regularly monitored and reviewed.

This means that staff should:

- report any indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a service user may be infatuated with a member of staff
- always maintain professional boundaries

This means that managers should:

- put action plans in place where concerns are brought to their attention

PartnershipProjects

9. Social contact outside of the workplace

It is acknowledged that staff may have social contact with service users, independent of the professional relationship. Staff should, however, also be aware that professionals who abuse their position of trust may seek to establish relationships and contact outside of the workplace.

It is also important to recognise that social contact may provide opportunities for other types of grooming such as for the purpose of sexual exploitation or radicalisation.

Staff should recognise that some types of social contact with service users or their families could be perceived as harmful or exerting inappropriate influence, and may bring PartnershipProjects into disrepute (e.g. attending a political protest, circulating propaganda).

If a service user seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise her/his professional judgement. This also applies to social contacts made through outside interests or the staff member's own family.

Some staff may, as part of their professional role, be required to support parents/carers. If that person comes to depend upon the staff member or seeks support outside of their professional role this should be discussed with their manager and where necessary referrals made to the appropriate support agency.

This means that staff should:

- *always seek approval for any planned social contact with service users with their manager*
- *advise their manager of any regular or unexpected social contact they have with a service user which could give rise to concern*
- *refrain from sending personal communication to service users unless agreed with senior managers*

Partnership Projects

10. Communication with service users (including the use of technology)

Staff should ensure that they establish safe and responsible online behaviours, working to local and national guidelines and acceptable use policies which detail how new and emerging technologies may be used.

Communication with service users both in the 'real' world and through web based and telecommunication interactions should take place within explicit professional boundaries. This includes the use of computers, tablets, phones, texts, e-mails, instant messages, social media such as Facebook and Twitter, chat-rooms, forums, blogs, websites, gaming sites, digital cameras, videos, web-cams and other hand-held devices. (Given the ever-changing world of technology it should be noted that this list gives examples only and is not exhaustive.)

Staff should not request or respond to any personal information from service users other than which may be necessary in their professional role. They should ensure that their communications are open and transparent and avoid any communication which could be interpreted as 'grooming behaviour'

Staff should not give their personal contact details to service users for example, e-mail address, home or mobile telephone numbers, details of web-based identities. If service users locate these by any other means and attempt to contact or correspond with the staff member, the staff member should not respond and must report the matter to their manager. The service user should be firmly and politely informed that this is not acceptable.

Staff should, in any communication with service users, also follow the guidance on 'Standards of Behaviour'.

This means that staff should:

- *not seek to communicate/make contact or respond to contact with service users outside of the purposes of their work*
- *not give out their personal details*
- *ensure that their use of technologies could not bring their employer into disrepute*
- *not discuss or share data relating to service users in staff social media groups*

11. Physical contact

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with service users, however, it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role and in relation to the service user's individual needs and any agreed care plan.

Not all service users feel comfortable about certain types of physical contact; this should be recognised and, wherever possible, staff should seek the service user's permission before initiating contact and be sensitive to any signs that they may be uncomfortable or embarrassed. Staff should acknowledge that some service users are more comfortable with touch than others. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the service user's reaction or feelings and, so far as is possible, use a level of contact and/or form of communication which is acceptable to the service user.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one service user, in one set of circumstances, may be inappropriate in another, or with a different service user.

Any physical contact should be in response to the service user's needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Staff should therefore, use their professional judgement at all times.

Physical contact should never be secretive, or for gratification, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action by them or a colleague could be misinterpreted, or if an action is observed which is possibly abusive, the incident and circumstances should be immediately reported to the manager and recorded. Where appropriate, the manager should consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in line with PartnershipProjects' Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy.

Extra caution may be required where it is known that a service user has suffered previous abuse or neglect. Staff need to be aware that the service user may associate physical contact with such experiences. They also should

This means that staff should:

- be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the service user, an observer or any person to whom this action is described
- never touch a service user in a way which may be considered indecent
- always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny
- never indulge in horseplay or fun fights
- always allow/encourage service users, where able, to undertake self-care tasks independently
- ensure the way they offer comfort to a distressed service user is age appropriate
- always tell a colleague when and how they offered comfort to a distressed service user
- establish the preferences of service users
- consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a service user might misinterpret or be uncomfortable with physical contact
- always explain to the service user the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take
- report and record situations which may give rise to concern
- be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and be sensitive to issues of gender

This means that PartnershipProjects should:

- ensure they have a system in place for recording incidents and the means by which information about incidents and outcomes can be easily accessed by managers
- provide staff, on a 'need to know' basis, with relevant information about vulnerable service users they are working with

PartnershipProjects

recognise that these service users may seek out inappropriate physical contact. In such circumstances staff should deter the service user sensitively and help them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.

12. The use of control and physical intervention

At PartnershipProjects, staff are encouraged to avoid any form of physical intervention with service users and adopt de-escalation strategies where required to do so.

Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment. The use of unwarranted or disproportionate physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence. Where the staff member judges that an individual's behaviour presents a serious risk to themselves or others, they must always put in place a robust risk assessment.

Parental consent does not permit staff to use unlawful physical intervention or deprive a service user of their liberty.

In the rarest of circumstances if it is perceived that physical intervention is required to:

- 1) avert an immediate danger of personal injury to, or
 - 2) avert an immediate danger of death of, any person,
- then physical intervention may be the only cause of action and would not be considered to be breaching the staff code of conduct.

This means that staff should:

- *always seek to defuse situations and avoid the use of physical intervention wherever possible*
- *where physical intervention is deemed necessary, only use minimum force and for the shortest time needed*

This means that staff should not:

- *use physical intervention as a form of punishment*

PartnershipProjects

13. Sexual conduct

PartnershipProjects views any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a service user as unacceptable.

It is an offence for a member of staff in a position of trust to engage in sexual activity with a service user under 18 years of age and sexual activity with a child is likely to be a matter for criminal and/or disciplinary procedures.

Sexual activity involves physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts, however it also includes non-contact activities, such as causing service users to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of pornographic material.

All staff should undertake appropriate training so they are fully aware of those behaviours that may constitute 'grooming' or service users (adults and children) and of their responsibility to always report to a senior manager any concerns about the behaviour of a colleague which could indicate that a service user is being groomed.

This means that staff should:

- not have any form of sexual contact with a service user
- avoid any form of touch or comment which is, or may be considered to be, indecent
- avoid any form of communication with a service user which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive, provocative or give rise to speculation e.g. verbal comments, letters, notes, by email or on social media, phone calls, texts, physical contact
- not make sexual remarks to or about a service user
- not discuss sexual matters with or in the presence of service users other than within agreed curriculum content or as part of their recognised job role

14. One-to-one situations

Staff working in one-to-one situations with service users can be more vulnerable to allegations or complaints.

To safeguard both service users and staff, a risk assessment in relation to the specific nature and implications of one-to-one work should always be undertaken. Each assessment should consider the individual needs of each service user and should be reviewed regularly.

This means that staff should:

- ensure that any completed risk assessments are kept up to date and reviewed.
- Discuss with their manager any new information that may require a change to the risk assessment.
- always report any situation where a service user becomes distressed or angry and there is a perceived increase in risk posed
- consider the needs and circumstances of the service user involved

15. Transporting service users

In certain situations, staff may be required to offer transport to service users as part of work activity (for example driving to a meeting). As for any other activity undertaken at work, the employer has a duty to carry out a risk assessment covering the health and safety of their staff and to manage any known risks.

Consideration must be given to the potential distraction of the driver and the supervision of the passengers. A judgement should be made about the likely behaviour and individual needs of the service users. If any of them may require close supervision, then another adult should travel in the vehicle so that the driver is not distracted or compromised.

Staff should not offer lifts to service users unless the need for this has been agreed by a manager.

Wherever possible and practicable it is advisable that transport is undertaken other than in private vehicles.

It is a legal requirement that all passengers wear seatbelts and the driver should ensure that they do so. They should also be aware of and adhere to current legislation regarding the use of car seats / booster seats for younger children where appropriate.

Staff should ensure that their behaviour is safe and that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. They should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately insured and that the maximum carrying capacity is not exceeded.

Staff should never offer to transport service users outside of their normal working duties, other than in an emergency or where not doing so would mean service users may be at risk. In these circumstances the matter should be recorded and reported to their manager.

This means that staff should:

- *plan and agree arrangements with all parties in advance*
- *respond sensitively and flexibly where any concerns arise*
- *take into account any specific or additional needs of the service user*
- *have an appropriate licence/permit for the vehicle*
- *ensure they are fit to drive and free from any drugs, alcohol or medicine which is likely to impair judgement and/ or ability to drive*
- *ensure that if they need to be alone with a service user this is for the minimum time*
- *report the nature of the journey, the route and expected time of arrival in accordance with agreed procedures*
- *ensure that their behaviour and all arrangements ensure vehicle, passenger and driver safety. This includes having proper and appropriate insurance for the type of vehicle being driven*
- *ensure that any impromptu or emergency arrangements of lifts are recorded and can be justified*

This means PartnershipProjects will seek evidence that:

- *the vehicle is safe. This means that it holds a valid MOT certificate, where relevant, that the driver certifies it has been serviced in line with the manufacturer's schedule, and that the driver carries out any pre-use checks specified by the manufacturer*
- *the driver is suitable. This means that they hold a valid licence for the type of vehicle and meet any employer requirements*
- *there is a valid insurance policy covering the driver and the vehicle for the intended use. This may require that the driver has 'business use' cover.*
- *Retain evidence of the above with the risk assessment*

Partnership Projects

16. Activities in the Community

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999) impose a duty on employers to produce suitable and sufficient risk assessments. This would include assessment of any risks to employees, service users or others, and the measures that should be taken to minimise these risks.

For frequent activities in the community, a review of an existing assessment may be all that is needed. For new activities or trips, a specific assessment of the risks should be carried out.

Staff are minded that they remain in a position of trust regardless of the setting which they are in and need to ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship.

This means that staff should:

- *undertake risk assessments*
- *liaise with their manager for approval*
- *have the appropriate consents in place (e.g. medical)*
- *ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times*

PartnershipProjects

17. Photography, videos and other images / media

Under no circumstances should staff be expected or allowed to use their personal equipment to take images of service users.

Making and using images of service users by staff (e.g for PartnershipProjects' promotional material) will require the consent of their manager, consent of the individuals concerned and parents/carers where applicable. Images should not be displayed online, in publications or in public places without such prior consent.

For the protection of service users, it is recommended that when using images for publicity purposes that the following guidance should be followed:

- if the image is used, avoid naming the service user, (or, as a minimum, use first names rather than surnames)
- if the service user is named, avoid using their image
- be clear about whether the image will be retained for further use, where and for how long
- images should be securely stored and used only by those authorised to do so.

This means that staff should:

- only publish images of service users where they have consent from their manager and explicit written consent from service users and parents/carers where applicable.
- only retain images when there is a clear and agreed purpose for doing so
- store images in an appropriate secure place
- be able to justify images of service users in their possession
- avoid making images in one-to-one situations

This means that staff should not:

- take images of service users for their personal use
- display or distribute images of service users unless they are sure that they have managerial and service user consent to do so.
- take images of service users using personal equipment
- take images of service users in a state of undress or semi-undress.
- take images of a service user's injury, bruising or similar (e.g. following a disclosure of abuse) even if requested by statutory agencies.
- make audio recordings of a disclosure
- take images of service users which could be considered as indecent or sexual

PartnershipProjects

18. Exposure to inappropriate images

Staff should take extreme care to ensure that service users are not exposed, through any medium, to inappropriate or indecent images.

There are no circumstances that will justify staff: making, downloading, possessing or distributing indecent images or pseudo-images of children (child abuse images). Accessing these images, whether using the settings or personal equipment, on or off the premises, or making, storing or disseminating such material is illegal.

If indecent images of children or any service user are discovered on PartnershipProjects' equipment, an immediate referral will be made to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the police contacted if relevant. The images/equipment should be secured and there should be no attempt to view or delete the images as this could jeopardise necessary criminal action. If the images are of service users, a referral should also be made to children or adults social care in line with local arrangements.

Under no circumstances should any staff member use PartnershipProjects' equipment to access pornography. Personal equipment containing pornography or links to it should never be brought into or used in the workplace. This will raise serious concerns about the suitability of the staff member to continue working with our service users.

Staff should keep their passwords confidential and not allow unauthorised access to equipment. In the event of any indecent images of children or unsuitable material being discovered on a device the equipment should not be tampered with in any way. It should be secured and isolated from the network and the Director for Safeguarding contacted without delay. Individuals should not attempt to investigate the matter or evaluate the material themselves as this may lead to a contamination of evidence and a possibility that they will be at risk of prosecution themselves. See Management of Allegations Policy for further details.

This means that staff should:

- *abide by PartnershipProjects' Safeguarding and Management of Allegations against Staff Policy.*
- *ensure that service users cannot be exposed to indecent or inappropriate images*
- *ensure that any films or material shown to service users are appropriate.*
- *If staff are unsure about the appropriateness of material that they wish to share, seek prior approval from their manager.*

PartnershipProjects

19. Using resources during service delivery

Care should be taken to ensure that any materials used as a resource when delivering services cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the desired outcomes identified by the work being undertaken. This can be supported by developing ground rules with service users to ensure sensitive topics can be discussed in a safe manner.

When working with services users, the nature of the work may lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexual, political or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to service user's questions requires careful judgement and staff should take guidance in these circumstances from their manager.

This means that staff should:

- *have clear plans outlining the work that they are undertaking with service users.*
- *take care when encouraging service users to use self-expression, not to overstep personal and professional boundaries*
- *be able to justify all resource materials and relate these to clearly identifiable outcomes.*

This means that staff should not:

- *enter into, or encourage inappropriate discussions which may offend or harm others*
- *undermine fundamental British values*
- *express any prejudicial views*
- *attempt to influence or impose their personal values, attitudes or beliefs on service users*

20. Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. PartnershipProjects has a Whistleblowing Policy that meets the terms of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Staff should recognise their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of management and/or relevant external agencies and that to not do so may result in charges of serious neglect on their part where the welfare of service users may be at risk.

This means that staff should:

- *ensure they are well-versed with PartnershipProject's Whistleblowing Policy and Managing Allegations against Staff Policy.*
- *escalate their concerns if they believe service users are not being protected*
- *report any behaviour by colleagues that raises concern*
- *report allegations against staff and volunteers to their manager, or registered provider, or where they have concerns about the manager's response report these directly to the relevant statutory agency.*

PartnershipProjects

21. Sharing concerns and recording incidents

All staff should be aware of PartnershipProjects' Safeguarding Policy, including the procedures for dealing with allegations against staff and volunteers.

In the event of an allegation being made, by any person, or incident being witnessed, the relevant information should be immediately recorded and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Director for Safeguarding as appropriate.

Members of staff should feel able to discuss with their line manager any difficulties or problems that may affect their relationship with or behaviour towards service users, so that appropriate support can be provided and/or action can be taken.

In order to safeguard and protect service users and colleagues, where staff have any concerns about someone who works with our service users, they should immediately report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Director for Safeguarding as appropriate.

This means that staff should:

- *be familiar with PartnershipProjects' arrangements for reporting and recording concerns and allegations*
- *know how to contact the LADO directly if required*
- *take responsibility for recording any incident and passing on that information where they have concerns about any matter pertaining to the welfare of an individual.*

Please sign the declaration below and pass to your Manager.

DECLARATION

I have read the above Code of Professional Conduct. I understand the content and agree to follow this Code of Professional Conduct whilst working for PartnershipProjects.

Name:..... Signed:.....
Date:.....