

Leeds Mind
Policies and Procedures

Category:	Managing Risk
Title:	Working Together: Boundaries policy
Responsibility of:	Operations
Developed in consultation with:	SLT/OMT Employees
Staff with operational responsibility for development, implementation, and review:	Operations Director
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Working Together: Boundaries Policy

We want our clients' experience of working with Leeds Mind to be positive for everyone; clients, employees, volunteers, and the wider community. Our values are at the heart of everything we do and we will support everyone to follow these values during their times working, volunteering or being a user of our services.

We aim to create an inclusive environment that fosters belonging, as well as diversity of experience and thought.

We want to make sure that our whole community – colleagues, partners, supporters, volunteers, service users and others – feel a sense of belonging. This will give people the confidence to be their authentic selves and to share their unique perspectives and experiences.

Ultimately, this policy will help people get the most out of their time with Leeds Mind and improve the outcomes of our work together.

Please note that client, service user and people/person are used interchangeably throughout this document. This policy covers all people working with Leeds Mind, including volunteers, employees, and partners.

Why are boundaries important?

It is important that anyone working with or for Leeds Mind works in line with our values. Leeds Mind has a responsibility to ensure this happens. This policy will set out clear guidelines that support that. Not all circumstances can be covered, but it should support all people working with or for Leeds Mind to understand the role they play and set clear boundaries as to what is ok, and what isn't. For example, it will help to avoid abuse of power between employees and clients, or any form of discrimination being tolerated from anyone. As all people working with or for Leeds Mind might also have their own trauma and/or Mental Health difficulties – having clear boundaries between us all to get the most of our working relationships is extremely important.

Employees and volunteers must follow the behaviour framework which underpins our values. They can be supported in doing so via induction, training, supervision and through experience. On the rare occasion where there is a breach of these boundaries this could lead to disciplinary procedures being followed for employees or, for example, a client being asked to leave our support, or a volunteer being asked to leave their role. These happen very rarely and would be dealt with on a case-by-case basis using existing policies such as our performance management policies or for clients, our complaints procedures.

Boundaries and Expectations

Below we will detail some of the most common boundaries that might come up in our working relationships. The list is not exhaustive. We will detail what is ok, what is never ok and what can sometimes be ok depending on the relationship itself.

What is never ok

- Any behaviours that are abusive i.e., a violation of an individuals' human and civil rights (Department of Health, 2020). It is non-accidental action or omission to act, which could result in real or potential harm. Abuse can be physical, sexual, financial, or emotional as a single act or repeated acts.
- Using your power inappropriately. Inappropriate use of power is where someone in a position of power or authority (whether 'formal' or perceived) pursues their position to the detriment of the health, safety, welfare, or general wellbeing of an individual. This includes abusive and aggressive language or action.
- Any form of non-professional relationship between employees, volunteers and clients such as a romantic relationship including within 6 months of a client leaving any Leeds Mind service - unless this relationship existed prior to the employees employment in which case this should be disclosed when employed and with their line manager. This is the case for employees and volunteers.
- Attending social occasions with service-users as part of your support of them. Social meetings in a restaurant, café, or pub. This does not include activities where this is an agreed part of a service (such as Befriending) and forms part of planned support; or is a planned social activity for a group of service users and employees. Where employees or service users independently join external social groups (such as sports teams), this should be discussed in supervision.
- Acting as godparent or guardian to a service user's child; or any other relationship with a service user which involves a long-term responsibility, outside the work role. As above, where such a relationship already exists when an individual becomes an employee, this must be discussed with the manager.
- Disclosing confidential or personal information to service users or employees regarding employees or other service users. This includes not ensuring privacy when discussing confidential/personal information or discussing personal information that could identify another individual in an open forum.

- Taking on a Power of Attorney role. This is distinct from advocacy or 'living wills', and being named in documents pertaining to how someone wishes to be treated, such as 'Crisis Cards'.
- Cashing cheques for service users, opening accounts for service users under your own name or using your own account for processing service user's money.
- Meeting with a client at a worker's home or giving a service user your home contact details. This includes precise details of where you live or your home/personal mobile telephone number.
- Providing service users with financial advice. This would include recommending insurance policies or money investment. This does not include general budgetary advice given to clients as part of the support role or directing service-users to other non-profit agencies providing advice.
- Personally, undertaking home improvement work for service users, except where this is an agreed role (such as Housing employees supporting the service user with minor home improvements). This includes making recommendations of friends/acquaintances to perform such work where there is financial or other payment for the work completed.
- Expressing disrespectful or negative views about a service user.
- Opening a bank account to receive monies through work contexts.
- Having social media relationships such as being friends on Facebook or following a client or employees on Instagram. Employees can limit what of their social media can be seen and it is good practice to also use a different name to ensure your own protection. This relates to client/staff or client/volunteer online friendships only. Staff are allowed to have social media relationships in line with normal social media policies.

What is ok only when discussed and agreed with the Team manager

The team manager, in discussion with the individual will judge whether an action would be a breach of policy or not. Major issues should be discussed in supervision and recorded in supervision notes. Anything that you are not sure about or feel uncomfortable about should be discussed with a third party if the manager is not available.

We recognise that values are subjective - what may be small/inexpensive to one person is large/expensive to another. Similarly, when placing a value on something it should be related to monetary value as opposed to the value placed on an item through time spent

making it. Many considerations may be applied, so common sense and instinct should always prevail.

The following should only be done if agreed with your Team manager and if you and the service user as comfortable to do so. If in doubt, don't do these things.

- Attending ceremonies and other formal occasions (such as weddings and funerals) of service users.
- Giving gifts at major festivals/events that are purchased or donated and arranged centrally through the team manager or nominated person or giving a service user a personal or inexpensive gift.
- Receiving small gifts up to £5 in value (such as chocolates, flowers, or cards, but not money) for you or another individual. This includes gifts as a 'thank you', for birthdays or other festivals / events. It also includes 'shared' items (such as if an individual offers round sweets, they have bought for themselves). If you feel uncomfortable about receiving small gifts (possibly due to the subjective nature of expense / size or the frequency of gifts of any size), then this should be discussed in supervision. It is also possible to politely refuse gifts.
- Giving a reference, for example for employment or education for a service user. The wording of the reference should be checked with the People Team or an agreed person with knowledge of legal / HR issues concerning references.
- Purchasing or borrowing items from or selling items to service users. This includes the purchase of homemade goods for charity. This does not include reimbursing a service user for a 'shared item' (such as paying a service-user back if they have offered to go to the shop to buy a sandwich), which can be done at the individual's discretion, provided it is done in an open and transparent way that both parties feel comfortable with.
- Lending money to a service user. It is very rare that money should be lent or given to clients from staff and volunteers. This includes money from an authorized source, such as a 'hardship fund' or petty cash, providing that it is properly authorised and recorded. This also includes amounts of money over £2 from an unauthorised source (such as your own personal cash) or where it is not on a one-off basis. Again, there is no expectation that staff or volunteers will lend or give money to clients.
- Visiting a Leeds Mind service-user in hospital.

- Negotiating any financial transaction between a worker and a client from which the worker may be a beneficiary.
- Giving a lift to a client

Things that are ok only if the employees feels comfortable to do them

As stated above, anything that you are not sure about or feel uncomfortable about should be discussed with a third party.

- Giving small items to service-users, such as amounts of your personal cash [under £2] or disposable items (such as cigarettes) on a “one off” basis to a service user that you know are unlikely to be returned. As above, there is no expectation that staff or volunteers will lend or give money to clients.
- Accepting food as this can be an important part of certain cultural communities to build trust and connection such as accepting homemade food when visiting or attending events – assuming these are in line with your own dietary requirements.
- Disclosing personal interests such as hobbies. This also includes disclosing personal matters such as religion, politics, beliefs, or sexuality, providing this is done in a manner which is respectful to the views of others.
- Physical contact with a service user that would not be perceived to be threatening either by the service user or yourself. These actions must, however, take into consideration the views/beliefs of different groups, as outlined in the Equality and Diversity policy. If anything arises in this way that you feel uncomfortable with, it should be reported to the team manager and recorded. Physical contact can also be triggering for certain people, and therefore this should be taken into consideration. If in doubt, it is better not to have any physical contact with clients.

Inappropriate behaviour

Employees and volunteers working at Leeds Mind are expected to adhere to the values of Leeds Mind and the behaviour framework that underpins those values. We believe that our employees should be able to carry out their duties without fear of intimidation or harassment and will take any complaints seriously. Whilst clients are not working for Leeds Mind, there are still some minimum expectations of working with us to protect employees and volunteers from discrimination and harm.

We ask that if employees are unsure about a client behaviour, they speak to their line manager. The manager may decide to contact the client directly and in some

circumstances Leeds Mind reserves the right to remove support from a client. This would only be done in exceptional circumstances. All client concerns would be logged by our internal reporting system, usually as an Incident Form.

What are the general expectations of clients to ensure they get the most of working with Leeds Mind?

Things that are not acceptable:

- Show anti-social behaviour towards others. Section 105(4) of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 defines this as “behaviour causing harassment, alarm or distress to any member of the public.” This includes any form of discrimination or hate crimes.
- Any nuisance behaviour – which is behaviour that causes annoyance, such as ringing staff or volunteers when not asked to or in line with service expectations
- Any form of harassment – which can be verbal, physical, or written attacks which are deliberately and repeatedly directed at one or more persons not of the same social unit and is offensive or in any way distressing. It may be intentional bullying, which is obvious or violent, but it can be unintentional, subtle, and insidious.
- Any form of hate crime, discrimination, homophobia or racism – which is a criminal offence committed against a person or their or property that is motivated by the perpetrator’s hate or prejudice because of the victim’s:
 - Race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, or national origin.
 - Religion or faith.
 - Gender or gender identity (including transphobia).
 - Sexual orientation.
 - Disability or mental health.
- Leeds Mind staff and volunteers will always endeavour to appropriate challenge discriminatory behaviour.

Further Examples of Inappropriate Behaviour

Below is a list of examples of inappropriate behaviour. This list is not exhaustive, hence why employees much always speak to their manage before taking any action.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Any act of physical violence
- Any threat made towards employees including to harm, kill or extortion.
- Racist, homophobic, sexist of any other bigotry toward protected characteristic groups – directed towards employees.
 - If a client is speaking about other people and is using bigoted language, employees are advised to remind clients that we support and welcome all people to our service and ask them to refrain from using that language. For

example, you could say "What you've said is not in line with Leeds Mind's values and it's not okay to use that language whilst we're working together"

- Excessive use of swearing which is outside the normal style of communication and suggests a threat or escalation of behaviour.
- Any sexualised language towards any employee such as making derogatory comments about women, even if this is directed to male employees.
- Any form of sexualized behaviour towards employees such as suggesting sexual attraction towards employees
- Demanding employees follow orders.

Reporting

Employees should report any incidents to their Line Manager or if they are not available, another manager. An incident report form should be completed in most circumstances. These will be monitored and discussed with the Team manager and action agreed. The action will depend on the nature of the incident.

If there is actual or threatened violence, the police should be informed, and advice sought. If there is no threat of violence and it is felt appropriate the client should be interviewed by the Line Manager or another manager; in extreme circumstances, support can be suspended or withdrawn if we feel we can no longer work with them constructively. Different service may have their own procedures for doing this.

The client would be informed in writing if their behaviour is not acceptable and what is expected if we are to continue to work with them. This letter would come from the Team manager and should only be done as a last resort. If they do not comply with our requests, we would close their case. Again, this decision would be made by the Team manager who would be supported and advised by their operations Manager.

It may be appropriate to change allocated employees. This should be done with care so as not to 'reward' the service-user who has behaved unacceptably. The employee who made the report should be fully involved in the decision and again, this will be decided by the Team manager with support from the Operations Manager if needed.

Complaints

Should a client be unhappy at any point that they are not being treated fairly or have any other concerns, as with all clients, they can make a complaint, and this will follow the normal complaints process. Complaints can be made via the Leeds Mind website <https://www.leedsmind.org.uk/contact>. Employees and volunteers should make their line manager aware of any behaviour issues as soon as they are experienced or informed about.