PHSSL CARE LIMITED

CONTROLLED POLICY

C05 – PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES AND GIFTS POLICY

Policy Reference	C05
Version	1.0
Policy Owner	PHSSL Care Limited
Approved By	Lade Awosika, Director
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Status	Controlled Document
Applies To	All PHSSL Care Limited staff, workers and relevant contractors
Supersedes	New policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets out PHSSL Care Limited's expectations for professional boundaries and the safe management of gifts, money, personal relationships and other situations that could create dependency, exploitation, conflicts of interest or loss of professional trust.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all PHSSL Care Limited employees, workers, managers and relevant contractors in their relationships with people receiving care, relatives, representatives and others connected with the service.

3. Policy Statement

Staff must maintain warm, respectful and compassionate relationships while preserving clear professional boundaries. They must never use their position for personal, financial, sexual, emotional or other improper advantage.

4. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy will be applied with regard to the Care Act 2014 and safeguarding guidance; Mental Capacity Act 2005; Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014, particularly Regulations 10, 13, 17 and 19 where relevant; Human Rights Act 1998; Equality Act 2010; Fraud Act 2006 where relevant; UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018; and current CQC expectations.

5. Professional Relationships

Staff should be friendly, respectful and person-centred without allowing the relationship to become inappropriate or exploitative. The person's needs and agreed care plan must remain the focus of the professional relationship.

6. Power and Vulnerability

Staff must recognise that people receiving care may depend on them for personal care, access, communication, medication, money, daily activities or emotional support. This imbalance of power requires particularly careful boundaries.

7. Personal and Romantic Relationships

Staff must not initiate or pursue sexual, romantic or otherwise inappropriate intimate relationships with people currently receiving care. Any existing or emerging personal relationship creating a conflict or safeguarding concern must be disclosed immediately to management.

8. Relationships With Relatives or Representatives

Staff must also maintain appropriate boundaries with relatives, representatives and household members. Personal relationships that could affect professional judgement, confidentiality or service delivery must be declared to management.

9. Social Media and Online Contact

Staff must not use personal social-media accounts to form inappropriate relationships with people receiving care or share confidential information. Online contact must comply with PHSSL Care Limited's Social Media, Photography and Digital Communications Policy.

10. Personal Contact Details

Staff should use approved communication routes for care-related contact and should not routinely give personal telephone numbers, private email addresses or home addresses to people receiving care unless specifically authorised for a legitimate work reason.

11. Visiting Outside Work

Staff must not make private social visits to people receiving care outside their authorised work role unless an exceptional arrangement has been disclosed and formally approved. Former care relationships also require careful judgement because dependency or influence may continue.

12. Gifts and Hospitality

Staff must not solicit gifts, money, hospitality, discounts or benefits from people receiving care or their families. Small unsolicited tokens of modest value may only be accepted where consistent with PHSSL Care Limited arrangements and where acceptance cannot reasonably be seen as influencing care or creating obligation.

13. Declaring Gifts

Any offered or accepted gift or hospitality that falls within PHSSL Care Limited's reporting arrangements must be declared promptly and recorded. Where staff are uncertain, they should seek management guidance before accepting.

14. Cash Gifts and Significant Items

Staff should not accept cash gifts or significant personal items from people receiving care or their representatives. Any exceptional circumstance must be referred to management before acceptance.

15. Wills, Bequests and Inheritance

Staff must not seek or encourage inclusion in a person's will, inheritance or other financial benefit. If a staff member becomes aware that a person receiving care intends to leave them a bequest or significant benefit, they must inform management immediately and must not participate in arranging or witnessing it.

16. Loans and Borrowing

Staff must not borrow money or property from, or lend personal money to, people receiving care. They must not enter private financial arrangements, investments, sales or business dealings with them.

17. Handling Service-User Money

Where handling money, shopping, cards or financial transactions forms part of authorised support, staff must follow the care plan and PHSSL Care Limited financial procedures, obtain and retain appropriate receipts and maintain transparent records.

18. Bank Cards, PINs and Online Banking

Staff must not use a person's bank card, PIN, online banking or financial credentials unless there is a clearly authorised and lawful support arrangement with appropriate safeguards and records. Staff must never use financial access for personal benefit.

19. Personal Purchases and Selling

Staff must not sell personal goods or services to people receiving care, purchase their belongings for personal benefit, or promote private businesses or financial opportunities to them.

20. Witnessing Documents

Staff should not witness wills, loans, property transfers, powers of attorney or other significant personal or financial documents for people receiving care unless specifically authorised and appropriate following management or legal guidance.

21. Keys and Access to Homes

Keys, access codes and entry devices entrusted to staff must be used only for authorised work purposes, stored securely and never copied, shared or used for personal access.

22. Personal Property

Staff must respect the possessions and home of each person. They must not take, borrow, use or remove personal property without clear authority and legitimate care-related purpose.

23. Favouritism and Preferential Treatment

Staff must not provide preferential treatment in exchange for gifts, affection, money or other benefits. Care should be delivered according to assessed need, agreed plans, dignity and fairness.

24. Religion, Beliefs and Personal Opinions

Staff must not use their professional position to pressure people to adopt religious, political, financial or personal views. People's own lawful beliefs and choices must be respected.

25. Confidentiality

Information learned through work must not be used for personal advantage or shared inappropriately. Staff must not discuss people receiving care with friends, relatives or on social media.

26. Photography and Recording

Staff must not take personal photographs, videos or audio recordings of people receiving care or their homes. Any authorised recording must have a lawful purpose, appropriate consent or other authority and comply with PHSSL Care Limited policy.

27. Safeguarding Concerns

Boundary violations may constitute abuse, exploitation or grooming. Any suspected financial, sexual, emotional or other exploitation must be reported immediately through safeguarding procedures.

28. Conflicts of Interest

Staff must declare any personal, family, financial or business interest that could influence, or reasonably appear to influence, professional decisions or care arrangements.

29. Concerns About Colleagues

Staff who observe inappropriate boundaries, unexplained financial involvement, grooming, secretive contact, gifts or other concerning behaviour by a colleague must report it promptly. Whistleblowing procedures may be used where necessary.

30. Former People Receiving Care

The end of a care arrangement does not automatically remove professional-boundary concerns. Staff should seek management guidance before entering a personal, financial or intimate relationship with a former person receiving care where vulnerability, dependency or influence may remain.

31. Staff Responsibilities

Staff must understand and maintain professional boundaries; declare gifts and conflicts; keep transparent records when handling money; protect confidentiality; avoid inappropriate personal relationships; and report suspected exploitation or boundary breaches.

32. Management Responsibilities

Managers will provide guidance, maintain appropriate records of declared gifts or conflicts, respond to boundary concerns, take safeguarding action where necessary, support staff to resolve uncertainty and address misconduct through appropriate procedures.

33. Training and Supervision

Professional boundaries will be addressed through induction, training, supervision and competency discussions. Staff should use supervision to raise situations where emotional involvement, gifts, family relationships or other boundary issues are becoming difficult.

34. Monitoring and Audit

PHSSL Care Limited will monitor relevant safeguarding concerns, complaints, financial records, gift declarations, incidents and supervision themes to identify boundary risks and improvement needs.

35. Related PHSSL Policies

- A04 Records Management, Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy
- B01 Safeguarding Adults Policy
- B02 Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- B03 Whistleblowing / Speaking Up Policy
- B04 Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Human Rights Policy
- B05 Mental Capacity, Consent and Best-Interest Decision-Making Policy
- C01 Recruitment, Selection and Safer Employment Policy
- C03 Staff Conduct, Capability and Disciplinary Arrangements Policy
- C04 Lone Working and Staff Safety Policy
- F01 Information Sharing and Communication Policy
- F02 Social Media, Photography and Digital Communications Policy

36. Review and Document Control

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner following significant legal or regulatory change, a safeguarding concern, boundary breach, financial concern, complaint, inspection finding, audit finding or identified weakness. The current approved electronic version is the controlled master. Printed or locally saved copies are uncontrolled unless specifically issued and recorded as controlled copies.

Approved by	Lade Awosika
Position	Director
Approval method	Approved electronically
Approval date	September 2026
Next review date	September 2027