

Professional boundaries

Training presentation for volunteers
January 2024

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Volunteer responsibilities

- Work in accordance with RNID policy as well as any local guidance specific to the locality or service where you volunteer.
- Work in a way which communicates that professional boundaries are important.
- Report any concerns that you or another member of staff/ volunteer is experiencing challenges in maintaining or has crossed professional boundaries
- Complete organised training on professional boundaries where you are asked to do so.

Professional boundaries form the basis of what is acceptable and unacceptable for a professional both at work and outside work.

Professional boundaries are important in protecting staff, volunteers and people accessing RNID's services from physical, financial and emotional harm.

RNID expects all volunteers to work in an appropriate and consistent manner, to keep professional boundaries to maintain a safe environment.



**Why are
professional
boundaries
important?**

You will be given a clear description of your role, the types of support that you are expected to provide, and the boundaries around this.

There must be a clear agreed understanding of the level of commitment you are able to make to the role.

Your volunteer co-ordinators will provide ongoing supervision to ensure that you understand your role and are working in line with our professional boundaries policy.

Professional boundaries will be a regular agenda item in sessions with your volunteer co-ordinator. Please raise any queries, challenges or concerns you have with your volunteer co-ordinator.



**How RNID will
support you**

How to keep professional boundaries

Declare existing relationships

If you are asked to provide support to someone you know personally, let your volunteer coordinator know immediately.

Your volunteer co-ordinator will consider whether it is appropriate for the professional relationship to commence and seek further advice internally, if needed.

Provide support within the scope of the service

You may be asked by the person you are supporting for help with something outside the agreed scope of the service e.g., advice on relationships, collecting shopping.

You must politely decline and explain you can only support with the agreed service, and remind them on what that is (e.g., information regarding hearing loss).

Please report any requests to your volunteer co-ordinator.



How to keep professional boundaries

Only provide information that is part of RNID agreed factual information.

We understand you have your own personal opinions, but you must only give information that is factual and is part of RNID agreed information.

- Don't tell people what actions you think they should take, or what you would do in the same situation.
- Do not express your personal opinions or beliefs, for example about whether NHS hearing aids or private hearing aids are better, or about other organisations, services, or professionals.
- Do not engage in any conversations that could be perceived as 'gossip'.



How to keep professional boundaries

Communication boundaries

Contact with people we support must be via the channels agreed with your volunteer coordinator, e.g., phone, email, live chat or video call. Never via personal social media accounts.

- Only contact people if the volunteer co-ordinator has agreed it.
- When calling from a phone, hide your phone number.
- Do not share your contact details with people we support.
- If a person we support contacts you via their personal social media account, decline the request and explain to the person why this is not appropriate.
- Do not commit to any additional contact beyond what can be reasonably expected of the service.



How to keep professional boundaries

Face to face support

Any face-to-face support should take place in an agreed public meeting place (such as a community centre) or at the person's home where a home visit has been agreed by the volunteer co-ordinator.

Where services do home visits, all visits must be pre-arranged with the person we support and logged with the volunteer co-ordinator. It is never appropriate for volunteers to 'drop in' on someone.

If you meet a person by chance outside of RNID activity, be mindful of your professional role. Be polite and quickly end the interaction. Tell your volunteer co-ordinator.



How to keep professional boundaries

Appearance and identification

Always present yourself professionally and wear your RNID lanyard and ID card. Depending on your role, you may be offered branded clothing.

Clothes should always be clean, in good repair, well presented and should not have slogans or pictures that could cause offence.

Your clothes should be comfortable but protect you from injury.



How to keep professional boundaries

Relationships

Take care about the information you share about yourself with people we support. Only share what is needed to support the person, and only what you are comfortable sharing.

- Do not share personal details about others, e.g., family members, friends or colleagues.
- Never introduce family or friends into your work.
- Do not purposely develop friendships with people you support. The distinction between a professional relationship and a friendship is:
 - A professional relationship - a relationship to meet the needs of the person being supported.
 - A friendship - a relationship that focuses on the needs of both people.
- Always work in an open and transparent way to ensure that working relationships are not confused with personal relationships.

If you feel a professional relationship is evolving into a friendship, tell your volunteer co-ordinator, who will decide whether it is appropriate to end the professional relationship.

How to keep professional boundaries

DO NOT

- Accept cash gifts from people we support. Only accept gifts in line with the Gifts Policy.
- Engage in a sexual relationship with anyone we support.
- Consume alcohol or drugs whilst at work and/ or with people we support.
- Agree to act as a Trustee, Executor or be a beneficiary to a will for anyone we support.
- Ask to or borrow money or possessions from people we support, or let people borrow from you.
- Share or use memberships, discount cards, vouchers or reward points of people we support.
- Use accounts of people we support, for example an Amazon Prime account to purchase items even if you pay for the items yourself.
- Purchase items or services on behalf of people using our services or do joint purchases.
- Accept deliveries for a person we support.
- Get involved in gambling (including the National Lottery) with people we support.

Raise any queries, discuss any challenges you are facing or concerns you have in a supportive way in your regular 1-1 sessions with your volunteer coordinator.

If you have concerns about your own professional boundaries, or those of another staff or volunteer, please raise them, no matter how small they may seem. This may prevent issues from escalating.

If the concerns relate to your volunteer co-ordinator, raise the concern with the Service Manager or the People Team.

In some cases, you may wish to use our Complaints or Whistleblowing policy to raise concerns.



Raising concerns



**Any questions:
Contact your
volunteer co-ordinator**

THANK YOU!

RNID is the trading name of The Royal National Institute for Deaf People.
A registered charity in England and Wales (207720) and Scotland (SC038926).

RN
I:D | Supporting people
who are deaf, have
hearing loss or tinnitus