

PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES POLICY

Policy Statement: McSence Group recognises that in particular our social care employees have a wide variety of experience in both their personal and professional lives and this experience can enrich the service(s) offered. However, it can sometimes be difficult to know where to draw the line between personal life and professional responsibility. A professional relationship between a McSence Group colleague and a client is very different from that of friends or family members.

It can lead to misunderstanding and confusion if the employee and client are not clear as to their respective roles. If boundaries are not adhered to it leaves employees open to allegations of unprofessional conduct and abuse. The object of this policy is to protect employees and help them feel more secure by making it clear what they can and cannot do. The following is intended to offer some guidance on this subject, and ensure expectations are clear.

All Employees: This policy applies to all persons working for or on our behalf of the McSence Group of Companies which includes the subsidiary companies - *McSence Communication Ltd, McSence Ltd, McSence Services Ltd & McSence Workspace Ltd* in any capacity including but not limited to:

- ✚ All employees at all levels, prospective employees, agency workers, seconded workers, temporary workers, contractors/sub-contractors, clients, agents, external consultants, volunteers, members of the public, group's supply chain, third-party representatives and/or business partners who will be referred to in our Group policies as "all employees".

The Workplace: This policy applies to all persons working for or on our behalf of the McSence Group of Companies in any capacity at the workplace(s) as defined below which includes but not limited to:

- ✚ McSence Premises, Offices, Units, Business Park, Client's Premises, External Meeting Places, Customers' Homes, Gardens, Sheltered Housing, Whilst On-Call, On-Duty, Emergency Cover, Working from Home including On-Line Meetings, Whilst Driving in Company Time, Working Public Areas (café's, trains, coffee shops, buses etc) and will be referred to throughout this policy as "the workplace".

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is intended for employees and volunteers at all levels and in all settings as outlined above. However, no policy on professional boundaries can cover every eventuality and there will always be an element of debate as to what behaviour is acceptable or unacceptable. Where there is doubt as to the appropriateness of behaviour an employee member/volunteer should always consult with their line manager.

Rules: There are, however, some boundaries which should not be crossed in any circumstances which are as follows but not limited to where employees:

- ✚ Must not have sexual relationships with clients, or personal/emotional relationships which are different to normal professional relationships between employee and clients
- ✚ Must not accept money as a gift
- ✚ Must not borrow money from clients
- ✚ Should not lend money to a client
- ✚ Or any member of their extended family must not witness wills for clients
- ✚ Or any member of their extended family must not be named an Executor or Beneficiary of a will
- ✚ Must not sell things to clients
- ✚ Must not buy things from clients
- ✚ Must not accept responsibility for looking after any valuable goods on behalf of a client - the client is responsible for the safekeeping of their own property although employees may support clients to take care of their money and purchases when out on trips
- ✚ Must not accept free services from clients or their families where such services would normally be charged for
- ✚ Should not take their children, minors, other family members or friends to a client's home
- ✚ Must not take a client's to their own home or family member's home
- ✚ Should not be accessible to clients when off duty and must not give out their own or other employee home phone numbers, e-mail, EH6 7HY or domestic address

- ✚ Must not use abusive or discriminatory language
- ✚ Must not make such jokes while on duty or in front of clients
- ✚ Should avoid calling a client “dear” or “love” etc unless for example a young child or older person finds these words reassuring and the situation warrants the use of these terms
- ✚ Should refrain from disclosing their own problems instead of listening to clients’ needs
- ✚ Should avoid disclosing their political or other personal views which may offend
- ✚ Should never use power inappropriately - the way an employee member/volunteer relates to a client can emphasise the employee /volunteers power verbally or in actions Power can be used for personal advantage and clients denied power might give more than they wish or behave differently to gain favour the power relationship needs to be acknowledged
- ✚ Should maintain and respect the same boundaries as above with the client’s family and friends as with the client
- ✚ Must not enter into negative discussions about colleagues or share colleagues personal information
- ✚ Should not discuss any commercially sensitive information with the client

Additional Guidelines: The following “rule of thumb” guidelines are to be adhered to:

- ✚ Employee should not meet clients socially when off duty nor continue a friendship past the end of the strictly professional relationship
- ✚ Social occasions would not include events such as fetes, fundraisers and socials arranged by McSence Ltd
- ✚ Employee should be cautious regarding physical contact with clients unless it is understood and agreed that a pat on the shoulder or squeeze on the arm is an acceptable level of physical contact, but further than this professionalism may be compromised Likewise, a kiss on the cheek may be viewed as compromising and should be avoided – unless instigated by the client, in their interests or as a part of that client’s culture
- ✚ Employee should not do work privately for clients nor allow clients to do work for them
- ✚ Gifts must not be accepted from clients – in exceptional circumstances i.e., if it can be shown that a refusal would be detrimental to the client
- ✚ Receiving a small gift for yourself which needs to be recorded in writing to your immediate line manager (email is deemed in “writing”).
- ✚ Employee should not accept the purchase for them, by a client, of tea/coffee/refreshments or meals/snacks of any description unless to do otherwise would offend This should be reported back through line management Most clients will understand and accept a polite refusal
- ✚ Employee should maintain and respect the same boundaries as above with the client’s family and friends as with the client

Disclosing Personal Information: In disclosing personal information, an employee must be personally responsible for exercising professional judgement about the validity, wisdom, and necessity of such a disclosure with due account to outcome including but not limited to disclosing marital status, sexual orientation, political views, religious views etc.

Questions That Employee Should Ask Themselves: Client’s needs and the relationship between them and individual employees can vary considerably and sometimes it is not always helpful to lay down strict rules. Employees should ask themselves certain questions and use open discussion with colleagues and their managers to help with replies. Some questions might be:

- ✚ Whose needs is this meeting? Mine or the clients?
- ✚ Am I prepared to do this openly or not? If not, why not?
- ✚ Will this action leave me, the McSence Group and/or the service(s) provided open to reasonable criticism?
- ✚ If it will, is there anything I can do to safeguard against this?
- ✚ What role does the client see me in?
- ✚ Is the client able to see me in more than one role and will this cause confusion?
- ✚ Will this action lead other client(s) to see this client as my favourite?
- ✚ Will I be perceived as giving preferential care to this client?
- ✚ If a client objected to this, would or could they make these feelings known?
- ✚ Will this action undermine the work of another professional employee?
- ✚ Am I prepared to record this, or have it recorded?
- ✚ Would I support another employee member having the same relationship with the client(s)?

Company Intranet – Staff Zone: All the McSence Groups policies, procedures, handbooks are available on-line to all employees on the McSence Group’s Staff Zone Intranet via our website [Login | McSence](#)

Compliance: Failure to comply with the provisions of this Policy may result in Disciplinary proceedings.



McSence Group Signatory:

David Maxwell | Chief Executive

McSence Group - McSence Communication Ltd, McSence Ltd, McSence Services Ltd & McSence Workspace Ltd

T: 0131 454 1500 | E: mail@mcsence.co.uk | W: www.mcsence.co.uk | FB: www.facebook.com/McSenceGroup

***Policy Amendments & Revisions:** This policy will be reviewed annually and, if necessary, revised in the light of legislative or organisational changes. Improvements will be made by learning from experience and the use of an established annual review. Should any amendments, revisions, or updates be made to this policy it is the responsibility of the Company Senior Management Team (SMT) to see that all relevant employees receive notice and training if necessary.*

POLICY