

PEOPLE FIRST HOUSING ASSOCIATION

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People First HA is registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965, Registration Number 27746R. It has Charitable Status.

People First aims to promote equality of access to all.



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Maintaining Professional Boundaries

At People First, we recognise the importance of maintaining professional boundaries with our clients, colleagues and partner agencies. Since our work involves regular contact with vulnerable people, we understand how important it is to set clear guidelines.

This leaflet gives examples of what People First's staff can and cannot do and describes what you should do if you feel boundaries are being crossed by a staff member or somebody else.

Why do we need boundaries?

Boundaries help us understand the relationship between two people or organisations. We need them to ensure:

- Our services are delivered professionally;
- Our workers' integrity is not compromised;
- We are fair to everyone, with no favouritism;
- We deliver the services we have been paid to deliver by our funding agencies; and
- Nobody gets unnecessarily upset.

We have put in place a set of rules which staff must follow to reduce the risk of abuse. They are set out below:

Staff are not allowed to:

- Give you lifts
- Handle or hold your money/benefit books/bank books
- Do your shopping
- Lend/borrow money from you
- Give/receive gifts
- Accept food and drinks bought by you
- Hold keys
- Buy/sell goods
- Socialise, drink alcohol or take drugs
- Have physical contact or sexual relationships
- Carry out personal favours
- Disclose personal information about themselves
- Visit outside of working hours, unless clients are not available during these times because they work
- Handle or administer medication, including over the counter medicine such as aspirin or paracetamol
- Witness or take part in criminal activity
- Show favouritism to individuals
- Influence clients with their own beliefs and personal values.

Depending on your circumstances, staff may be able to:

- Help with debt control and provide advice on benefits
- Enable you to safely manage any medication you take
- Assist you to access social activities in your area
- Provide emergency telephone numbers
- Provide emotional support
- Help if you have an emergency such as helping you to contact your landlord if you lock yourself out

Staff should also work to our acceptable behaviour guidelines:

- Staff should challenge language which is racist, sexist, and homophobic on all occasions and explain the reasons for this.
- Staff can request that a client refrains from using profane or 'bad' language.
- Staff should where possible make prior appointments to visit clients and keep to these appointments.
- Staff should always be dressed appropriately including client visits and training events.

What to do if you suspect staff are breaking the rules

If you are worried about the way a member of staff at People First Housing is behaving, you should speak to their line manager and/or make a complaint using the Associations' complaints procedure. Contact a manager at the office to find out more. (managers details are on the back of this form).

What will People First do next?

Trained staff will carry out a careful and sensitive enquiry if boundaries have been crossed. What happens then will depend on your wishes and the seriousness of the situation.

Information and advice will be offered so that you can make an informed choice about any practical help you may need or action you may wish to take. If you are unable to make an informed choice, care will be taken to support and protect you.