

Policy document - Code of Ethics and Ethical Guidelines for Staff working within the Brothers of Charity Services - Galway Region

The aim of all staff working within the Brothers of Charity Services in Galway is to support service users in the fulfilment of their needs and rights and in the development of their abilities and potential. Staff should do their utmost to ensure that basic rights of service users are upheld and should actively promote the exercising of these rights in the daily lives of the service users with whom they work. Our services respect each individual's right to identity, autonomy, affiliation, attainment, safeguards, rights, health and wellness.

At all times, service users should be treated with respect and dignity and staff should foster personal choice and autonomy. Staff should communicate with or about service users in a manner that is respectful of each individual. Staff should be aware of our *Good Practice Guidelines* and this should be evident in their dealings with service users.

Staff members should make every effort to listen to and heed the views expressed by service users and their relatives or advocate. Service users, or their advocates are required to be regularly consulted on all issues relating to the provision of service by the Brothers of Charity Services, including the programmes available to them and any treatment or intervention procedures which are in operation pertaining to them. Every effort should be made to assist and, where appropriate, to develop training programmes which will enable service users to advocate on their own behalf.

Personal information relating to service users should be treated as privileged and confidential. The confidentiality of records must be safe-guarded. Personal details relating to service users may not be discussed without a definite and valid reason. It is the responsibility of each staff member to be familiar with and to follow the principles and guidelines outlined in the Brothers of Charity Services Policy Document on *Confidentiality*.

Our service actively encourages staff to monitor the effectiveness of all training programmes with a view to enhancing the quality and effectiveness of our programmes. Indeed, staff are encouraged to formally monitor programme work and, from time to time, to report the outcomes of such monitoring to colleagues and, more widely, in the relevant learning disability literature. In order to ensure the appropriate safeguarding of the rights of our service users and their families, staff are required to prepare a formal proposal in respect of any research study which is proposed and to submit this to the Brothers of Charity Galway Services Research Committee. The Research Committee will encourage research within the Brothers of Charity Galway Services while excluding any research where a negative outcome for any participant could possibly be anticipated.

Any form of verbal, physical or sexual abuse towards a service user is regarded as serious misconduct. Staff members have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with the Brothers of Charity Services Policy on abuse and have a duty to report instances of abuse of which they become aware. Each member of staff has a continuing responsibility to their colleagues. He or she is obliged to transmit or request acquired professional knowledge, skills and attitudes by the *manner* in which they perform their duties and by example. Staff must not delegate to their colleagues tasks and responsibilities deemed to be beyond their skill and experience.

Signed: _____
Patrick McGinley, Director of Services

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All staff must also realise that their colleagues have many skills which they may learn from, and all must be treated with respect and dignity. Under no circumstances should bullying occur or be tolerated.

Staff from different disciplines should work in close co-operation with each other and a team approach should be followed, and respect and consideration given to each person's views.

Staff should at all times take reasonable precautions to ensure that from the point of view of his or her health that he or she is competent to carry out the duties required. Abuse of alcohol and/or other drugs will adversely affect that competence. Staff have an obligation to familiarise themselves with the Brothers of Charity Galway Services, *Policy on Alcohol and Drug Use*.

Any circumstances that could place service users in jeopardy or which mitigate against safe standards of practice should be made known to the appropriate person or authorities (in the first case to one's immediate superior). If for any reason this is not felt to be the preferred route for complaint or voicing of concerns, the individual should pursue alternative avenues.

In responding to challenging behaviour, staff are obliged to familiarise themselves with and adhere to the Brothers of Charity Services policy document in relation to *Challenging Behaviour*.

Staff should not accept any gift or favours from service users or their families which could reasonably be interpreted as seeking to exert influence or to obtain preferential treatment.

Staff members should strive to develop meaningful relationships on behalf of service users within the guidelines outlined in the Brothers of Charity Services Policy on *Personal Development, Relationships and Sexuality*. Staff will at all times be mindful of the needs of service users for appropriate support in developing relationships with other members of their communities. As service and support providers, we provide support for people to learn about their communities, to interact with others, and become part of the community. We show (and model for others) respect and personal regard by listening and learning from each person about the level and type of community interaction, and personal interaction he or she desires, and by providing support to bring that about.

Staff members in managerial and leadership roles have the responsibility of ensuring that staff who report to them are made aware of the various Brothers of Charity Services Policy Documents and should ensure that there is an adequate induction process whereby new staff can familiarise themselves with their place of work.

If staff members find themselves in a position where they are in doubt or feel they face ethical dilemmas they should discuss this openly with their team leader.

Ethical considerations must be mindful of legal requirements and staff members should be mindful of the following articles from the Convention on Human Rights.

- Article 2: *The right to life.*
- Article 3: *The right to freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.*
- Article 4: *The right to freedom from slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour.*
- Article 5: *The right to liberty and security of person.*
- Article 6: *The right to a fair and public trial within a reasonable time.*
- Article 7: *The right to freedom from retrospective criminal law and no punishment without law.*
- Article 8: *The right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence.*
- Article 9: *The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.*
- Article 10: *The right to freedom of expression.*
- Article 11: *The right to freedom of assembly and association.*
- Article 12: *The right to marry and found a family.*
- Article 14: *The prohibition of discrimination in the enjoyment of convention rights.*