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Professional Resources for Care, Catering & Hospitality

FREE PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE

Professional Conduct and Accountability

A Practical Guide for Care Staff

Knowledge Hub Resource 048

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Introduction

Professional conduct and accountability are at the heart of safe, effective and compassionate health and social care. Every care worker is expected to act with honesty, integrity and professionalism while delivering high-quality, person-centred care that respects the rights, dignity and wellbeing of every individual.

Being accountable means taking responsibility for your actions, recognising the limits of your role and always working in accordance with your organisation's policies, professional standards and current legislation. Professional conduct is demonstrated through everyday behaviours such as treating people with respect, maintaining confidentiality, communicating effectively and following agreed care plans.

By maintaining high standards of professional practice, care staff help build trust, promote confidence in care services and contribute to positive outcomes for the individuals they support.

Why This Resource Matters

Understanding professional conduct and accountability helps care staff to:

- Deliver safe, compassionate and person-centred care.
 - Understand their professional responsibilities and limits of practice.
 - Build trust with individuals, families and colleagues.
 - Maintain high standards of honesty, integrity and professionalism.
 - Promote dignity, respect and equality in everyday practice.
 - Recognise the importance of following policies, procedures and professional guidance.
 - Meet legal, regulatory and organisational responsibilities.
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Key Message

Professional conduct is demonstrated through everyday actions, attitudes and behaviours. By acting responsibly, working within your role, maintaining professional standards and taking accountability for your decisions, you help protect the people you support while promoting safe, high-quality care.

Understanding Professional Conduct and Accountability

Professional conduct refers to the standards of behaviour, ethics and attitudes expected of everyone working in health and social care. It means acting professionally at all times, treating individuals with dignity and respect, following agreed procedures and maintaining the confidence of those receiving care.

Accountability means taking responsibility for your own actions, decisions and the care you provide. Care staff should always work within the limits of their knowledge, skills and competence, seeking advice or support whenever necessary.

Being accountable also means recognising when something has gone wrong, reporting concerns honestly and learning from experiences to improve future practice.

Professional Standards in Everyday Practice

Care staff demonstrate professional conduct by:

- Treating every individual with dignity, kindness and respect.
- Working within the boundaries of their role and level of competence.
- Following care plans, organisational policies and agreed procedures.
- Maintaining confidentiality and protecting personal information.
- Communicating openly, honestly and respectfully.
- Being punctual, reliable and prepared for work.
- Completing records accurately and without unnecessary delay.
- Participating in training and continuous professional development.
- Raising concerns whenever safety or quality of care may be affected.

Consistently following these standards helps create a safe, positive and professional care environment.

Remember

Professional conduct is demonstrated through the choices you make every day. By acting with honesty, integrity, accountability and compassion, you help protect the people you support, strengthen public confidence in care services and contribute to a positive culture of professionalism and continuous improvement.

Professional Responsibilities

Every care worker has a professional responsibility to provide safe, compassionate and person-centred care while maintaining the highest standards of conduct and accountability. Professionalism is demonstrated not only by what you do, but also by how you behave, communicate and respond to challenges in the workplace.

As a care professional, you should always:

- Work within the limits of your role, training and competence.
- Follow your organisation's policies, procedures and professional standards.
- Treat every individual with dignity, respect and compassion.
- Be honest, reliable and accountable for your actions and decisions.
- Maintain confidentiality and protect personal information.
- Complete records accurately, clearly and promptly.
- Participate in training, supervision and continuous professional development.
- Raise concerns whenever you believe safety, quality of care or professional standards may be compromised.

By demonstrating professionalism every day, care staff help build trust, promote confidence and support high-quality care.

When to Raise Concerns

You should speak to your manager or follow your organisation's reporting procedures if:

- You are asked to carry out duties beyond your training or competence.
- You witness unsafe, unethical or unprofessional behaviour.
- You identify poor practice that may place individuals at risk.
- You make a mistake or become aware of an error affecting care.
- You are unsure how to respond to a situation or need additional support.
- You believe organisational policies or professional standards are not being followed.

Being open, honest and willing to seek advice demonstrates professionalism and helps protect both the individuals you support and your colleagues.

Good Practice Reminder

Professional conduct and accountability are demonstrated through your everyday actions. By acting with integrity, taking responsibility for your work, respecting others and continually striving to improve your knowledge and skills, you help maintain public confidence and deliver safe, effective and person-centred care.

Summary

Professional conduct and accountability are essential for delivering safe, effective and person-centred care. Every care worker has a responsibility to act with honesty, integrity and professionalism while working within the limits of their role and following organisational policies, procedures and professional standards.

By taking responsibility for your actions, maintaining high standards of behaviour and continually developing your knowledge and skills, you help protect the individuals you support, strengthen public confidence in care services and contribute to a positive culture of safety, respect and continuous improvement.

Professional Conduct and Accountability Checklist

- ✓ Work within the limits of your role, training and competence.
 - ✓ Treat every individual with dignity, respect and compassion.
 - ✓ Be honest, accountable and professional at all times.
 - ✓ Follow organisational policies, procedures and professional standards.
 - ✓ Maintain confidentiality and protect personal information.
 - ✓ Complete records accurately, clearly and promptly.
 - ✓ Participate in training and continuous professional development.
 - ✓ Raise concerns promptly if you identify unsafe or unprofessional practice.
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Further Information

For further guidance on professional conduct and accountability in health and social care, visit:

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

<https://www.cqc.org.uk>

Skills for Care

<https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk>

Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)

<https://www.hcpc-uk.org>

GOV.UK – Health and Social Care

<https://www.gov.uk/health-and-social-care>

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- Resource 038 – Duty of Care – A Practical Guide for Care Staff
- Resource 039 – Professional Boundaries – A Practical Guide for Care Staff
- Resource 044 – Confidentiality and Information Sharing – A Practical Guide for Care Staff
- Resource 047 – Risk Assessment in Care Settings – A Practical Guide for Care Staff

Related FlexiLearnHub Courses

- Duty of Care Awareness
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 - Safeguarding Adults Awareness
 - Mental Capacity Act (MCA) & Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) Awareness
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