

Kennet Care: Code of Conduct

This document covers the following headings

- Professional conduct
- Relationships with the children and children and young people
- Working practices
- Support

Ethics of Kennet Care:

1. Inclusive ethos

- Kennet Care support people of all backgrounds and identities. This includes, but is not limited to members of any sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, race, ethnicity, culture, economic class, educational level, sex, age, size, family status, political belief, religion, and mental and physical ability.
- Be considerate and respectful
- We all depend on each other to work together to achieve the best outcomes for the children and young people that we look after. There will be times where disagreements occur and these should be worked through in a respectful manner. Kennet Care seeks to create an environment where people do not feel uncomfortable or dismissed for their views or opinions.

Professional Conduct:

2. Attendance and punctuality.

Staff are expected to be regular and punctual in attendance. This means being in the homes ready to work, at their starting time each day. Absenteeism and lateness burden other colleagues and the company. Consistent issues with punctuality may lead to disciplinary measures

3. Absence

Staff who are unable to work due to illness or an accident should follow the company procedure for reporting absences. If any staff member does not report for work and the company is not notified of an employee's status for 3 days, this will be considered job abandonment and we will terminate your employment.

Staff may be subject to extra scrutiny for absences that fall around festive periods, or if sickness coincides on days that have been rejected for annual leave.

4. General harassment and sexual harassment.

Harassment and exclusionary behaviour is not acceptable. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Aggressive or abusive behaviour, including rude language, personal insults or threats to harm another person.
- Unwanted and/or inappropriate physical contact.
- Unwanted, inappropriate, excessive or flirtatious contact or messages either directly or indirectly.
- Inappropriate remarks, references, comments, messages or jokes (either face to face, electronically or via social media). For example, remarks relating to an individual's personal characteristics (protected or otherwise), and/or professional reputation, which are derogatory or detrimental in nature.
- Intimate/inappropriate gestures (e.g. unsolicited gifts)
- Advocating for, or encouraging, any of the above behaviour.

5. Reporting inappropriate behaviour

Kennet Care will take any allegations of inappropriate behaviour very seriously and will ensure that all issues are investigated thoroughly. Individuals who suspect, have witnessed, or have experienced inappropriate behaviour by a member of staff can report this, by any means, to any of the following people. (In no particular order)

- Your supervisor
- Responsible Individual
- Director

6. Socialising with colleagues outside of work

There is no culture of socialising outside of work as there may be in other sectors. Should staff develop friendships within the home you are expected to manage your relationships so they do not impact on your conduct on shift.

7. Consensual relationships with staff

Kennet Care recognises that there may be occasions where genuine, consensual relationships occur between staff members. Where a romantic/intimate relationship exists or develops and where there is a power relationship (or potential for such a relationship) between members of staff, both should declare the relationship to supervisor or Responsible Individual. Failure to declare a relationship of this nature could lead to disciplinary action. As a company we retain the right to introduce management plans or support plans if we feel that the relationship would cause conflict in the team or the organisation.

8. Dress code

Staff should be well dressed at all times. For those days when working with the children and young people casual dress. Staff should be mindful not to wear any revealing clothing or clothing that may offend others. As a general rule you should avoid wearing any strapless clothing, or any other forms of 'unsecured' clothing. Jewellery should be kept to a minimum- large hoop or dangling earrings are not permitted.

High heels must not be worn in the homes due to health and safety and damage to flooring. Flips flops should also be avoided. Wearing trainers are acceptable.

For any external meetings with external agencies a more professional appearance may be required.

9. Substance abuse.

Being under the influence of illegal drugs, alcohol, or substances of abuse on company property is strictly prohibited. Should you knowingly come to work for a shift or during on call procedures, and be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, this will be treated as gross misconduct.

If you feel that your prescription drugs may impair you carrying out your role, you must disclose this immediately to a senior member of staff/home manager.

10. Pregnancy

You are legally obliged to inform the company of your pregnancy 15 weeks before the expected week of childbirth (EWC).

You are additionally advised to inform your home manager or the Responsible Individual, in confidence, as soon as you are confirmed to be pregnant. This will ensure that the company has the necessary time to plan your attendance on shift, lone working practices, and continued work with children and young people. The company may (in consultation with you) vary your working patterns.

Further details can be found in the employee handbook.

Relationships with the children and young people:

11. Conduct in public

You are responsible for the young people when they are out in public with you. All trips out of the home must be arranged and your colleagues must know where you are going. Staff must not take young people to run personal errands.

Staff are responsible for ensuring that that they have considered risk assessments when accompanying young people on activities or trips. This should include a working plan of how to seek support or help if needed.

12. Travelling with the young people

You must not travel with the young people unless there is a valid risk assessment in place. All homes have house cars and staff are able to use their own cars to drive the young people if they have business insurance. Staff must ensure that they observe legal speed limits and drive with care. You must not drive friends of residents in company cars without prior permission from your home manager.

13. Gifts to and from children and young people

Your working relationships may bring you into contact with outside organisations where it is normal business practice or social convention to offer hospitality, and sometimes gifts. Offers of this kind to you can place you in a difficult position. Therefore no employee or any member of your immediate family should accept gifts from any of the young people, their relatives or any other person doing business with Kennet Care. In every circumstance where a gift is offered, you must decline and inform your supervisor.

You should actively discourage the children and young people from giving you gifts and seek advice from your supervisor if this occurs.

It is very important that you do not give individual gifts to the children and young people. Every gift received by the children and young people must be given by Kennet Care on behalf of all of the staff. This is to ensure that children and young people see the staff as one entity.

14. Personal disclosure

You must take steps not to disclose personal matters to the children and young people. As a general rule you must not disclose anything that would lead to the young person feeling unsafe with you or being in a position where they have information that could be used to embarrass or harass you. In the event that you discover the young person has uncovered personal information about you please discuss this information with your supervisor. You must not disclose your home address either directly or indirectly (e.g I live next door to a befeater pub)

You should also not disclose any previous trauma (childhood or as an adult) unless this has been discussed in advance with your supervisor.

You must also be mindful not to engage in any detailed conversations about your own family, your own children or any other conversations that may make the young person feel uncomfortable or where they make parallels with their own lives and feel

disheartened. If you are unsure of what this entails please discuss this issue with your supervisor.

You should maintain professional boundaries with other staff and are discouraged from gossiping or divulging very personal or sensitive information. Supervision can be used as a forum where you can discuss with your supervisor whether to share sensitive information with your colleagues.

15. Conversations with the children and young people:

Kennet Care prides itself on its homely environment and sometimes one can forget that you are in a professional environment. You should be mindful that all discussions you have with children and young people and your colleagues remain appropriate. The children and young people can be very impressionable and sometimes even role model themselves on the beliefs of the adults who look after them.

- Conversations must be legal. No references to any beliefs that may be considered right-wing, racist or discriminatory in any way. (see point 1)
- Religious beliefs can be shared with the children and young people to inform and educate but not to be imposing or to suggest that other religious beliefs are wrong or right. You are especially reminded that you should not share your personal religious or cultural opinions if they are in opposition of Kennet Care's inclusive ethos.
- Anti-vaccination beliefs must not be discussed with the children and young people. The policy of the home is that all children and young people must have their delegated vaccinations as directed by health professionals. The children and young people can refuse to be vaccinated but this should not be influenced by any Kennet Care employee.
- Conspiracy theories and fake news - Please take additional care not to share information that could be untrue and could cause unnecessary anxiety or upset.

Working practices:

16. Mobile phone use

Personal mobile usage during work hours is discouraged, except in extreme cases such as an emergency. Please check with your home manager what the accepted use is for the home you work in.

All children and young people have access to house mobile phones and should not use any mobile phones that belong to staff.

DO NOT GIVE YOUR PERSONAL PHONE NUMBER TO ANY CHILDREN LIVING AT KENNET CARE, UNDER ANY CURCUMSTANCES.

If calling the children and young people you must use the house mobiles or restrict your phone number.

You must not use your personal mobile to take photographs of the young people. There are house cameras and house mobile phones that can be used for this.

No young person should have the personal contact phone number of any staff, (with the exception of the Director and Responsible Individual). If a young person discovers your personal mobile number you must disclose this to your supervisor for further guidance.

You must not set up WhatsApp groups (or equivalent phone/social media groups) on personal mobile phones to use to communicate about your work, or the young people.

17. Internet use at work.

Staff may use the internet when appropriate to access information needed to conduct company business. Use of the internet must not disrupt or interfere with the company computer network. Occasional personal use of computers is permitted but this does not include use of restricted sites such as pornographic sites, gambling sites or chat rooms. You must not access your online banking accounts or leave any sensitive information on the work computers.

18. Use of Social media

The use of social networking sites for personal purposes during working time or on Company terminals or laptops is not permitted and is a breach of Company rules.

You must not refer to, or mention Kennet Care in any of your social media networks /posts. This includes adding any photos online. Employees using social networking sites away from work must ensure that, if adding personal news items, they do not include reference to Kennet Care by name or by photograph, or to any employee, resident, or any other person or organisation connected with the Company. Failure to comply with this policy will be treated as a serious breach of the rules and will result in disciplinary action being taken, up to and including summary dismissal.

Any use of social networking sites that brings the Company into disrepute, or breaches the equal opportunities and discrimination policy or harassment policy, will be regarded as gross misconduct and will result in summary dismissal.

You must not add any children and young people (current) or historic to your social media networks. Any attempts by children and young people to add you must be reported to your supervisor. Please be mindful of your settings and information that is available for public viewing. You must also take concerted efforts to ensure that the children and young people do not have access to your personal life via the internet. You are advised to set privacy settings to your social media accounts and where possible to actively block the young people from your accounts.

We would continue to discourage adding children young people to your social media platforms even when they are over 18 years of age and have left the organisation. Should you wish to remain in contact with the children and young people you must disclose this to your supervisor and this will continue to be monitored whilst you are still employed by Kennet Care.

19. Breaks at work

Most shifts will be 8 hours long and this includes paid breaks throughout the shift. You are not able to leave the premises for a break off site. You are able to help yourself to any food and drink provided on site. Any requests to leave site for a break must be cleared by your manager.

20. Smoking

There is no automatic right to a smoking break whilst on shift and smoking breaks should not exceed more than 20 collective minutes per shift. You are not permitted to smoke with your colleagues nor in visible sight of the children and young people.

You are reminded that there is strictly no smoking in the homes or on the sites. Failure to observe will result in dismissal and may lead to criminal prosecution.

You are responsible for ensuring that any cigarettes or smoking aids are kept securely and that children and young people do not have access to them. In addition, you must ensure that when you return from smoking you wash your hands and freshen your breath before resuming contact with the children.

21. On call

All residential staff are subject to weekend on call working. On call shifts are allocated as indicated on the rota. Should you not be able to meet the on call obligation you must inform your supervisor within one day of the rota being released.

Obligations whilst on call:

- To provide cover in the event of staff sickness/absence. This includes any whole shifts or part of shifts.
- To be able to stay on shift if covering or present on shift within one hour of being called.
- To be physically able to work i.e. Not under the influence of intoxicants
- Failure to meet on call obligations will be treated as a disciplinary issue.

22. Sleeping in shifts

There are occasional sleeping in shifts for staff. Staff are not able to leave the homes during their sleep-in shift unless in an emergency - which must be declared to the on call manager.

Staff who sleep over must be clearly identified on the rota. Staff who are not on shift are not able to be in the home overnight, or to sleep over unless express permission is given by the home manger. This is reserved for emergencies only

Waking night staff must stay awake through the duration of their shift. Waking nights teams are expected to take personal responsibility to ensure that they are well rested for their shift. Any instances of staff falling asleep on shift will be treated as a lapse in supervision/safeguarding and will be treated in a disciplinary issue.

23. Training

A requirement of your role is ongoing training. This may be on call training or face to face. In the event of training that is booked by an external trainer, you may incur repayment costs if you do not attend when scheduled on the rota. This will usually be the cost of your place. Non-attendance at Group supervision (where scheduled on the rota) will incur a charge of £25.

Support

24. Where to access support

For any grievances you should speak with your supervisor in the first instance. If the grievances is about your supervisor please contact your home manager or the Responsible Individual.

Should you feel that your issues are not being listened to or resolved you are able to Director. You are also able to contact the Director with any sensitive issues that you may not want to discuss with your direct line manager.

Pay and contract issues	Raj Kelair Director
Training needs/ QCF awards	Dennis Visser Responsible Individual
Support with young people	Supervisors/Home Managers
Anything else (in confidence)	Amanda Slatter Compliance manager

In addition Kennet Care works in partnership with BUPA private healthcare. This will give you access to the Bupa Employee Assistance programme.

Bupa Employee Assistance.

Here for you day and night.

We all have times in our life when we need a little extra support which is why we're working with Bupa to bring you a free, 24-hour confidential helpline service.

Why call Bupa?

Emotional support

If you're experiencing something that's making you feel stressed, worried or upset, you can speak to a trained counsellor. Here are just some of the problems they can help with:

- relationship worries
- difficulties at work
- bereavement
- anxiety and depression
- addiction and substance abuse
- child and dependant advice and care search

Practical support

The helpline can also support you with the practical side of life. You can speak to a team of experts who'll give you the facts you need to make informed decisions on things like:

- money management†
- landlord disputes
- divorce
- consumer rights

Who can call?

The helpline is available to all our employees – and it's free. It's also open to your partner or spouse and any children who live at home with you and are over the age of 16.

What to expect when you call Bupa

You'll speak to a qualified counsellor who'll listen to whatever's on your mind. They'll then tell you about the options available to you. By talking things through, you'll be supported to make informed decisions to better handle your situation.

Everything you say is kept confidential; Bupa won't tell us or anyone else that you've called. The only reason they may need to pass on information is if you or someone else is at risk of harm – but they'll always tell you about this first.

Even more support online

You've also got unlimited access to a range of self-help tools, like factsheets, mindfulness blogs and a nutrition quiz. Take a look around at:

<https://www.bupa.co.uk/eaponline/emotional-wellbeing>

One call can make a big difference

0800 269 616 1800 650 138 (ROI) +44 131 588 0321 (International)