

Maintaining professional roles and safeguarding in an inclusive society – introducing the *Boundaries Clock*

'If people are less isolated and have support to participate in their community, this may provide some protection from abuse.' (CSCI 2008 p13)

Socially isolated and excluded people have a worse quality of life than others and are at greater risk of abuse, and so promoting inclusion is a policy imperative.

Unfortunately, some local interpretations of professional and regulatory frameworks hinder socially inclusive practice. We offer a way to assist local services safeguard their inclusion work and exclusion-proof their safeguarding work.

The problem

Safeguarding vulnerable people and promoting their social inclusion form twin obligations for health and social care services, but guidance for staff sometimes gets in the way, promoting a distorted view of safeguarding that shuts people out of the community beyond services. For example, in one local authority, off duty staff have been directed to leave a pub immediately if a service user entered the premises. A new approach is needed to overcome such rigid or ill-thought out interpretations of professional boundaries which can have the perverse effect of reducing opportunities for inclusion.

A two-pronged solution

Firstly, NDTi's original research¹ has demonstrated that the key element in managing personal and professional boundaries is the individual approach taken by staff. Secondly, the dearth of theoretical models has prompted NDTi to synthesise material from the academic literature into the *Boundaries Clock*². This provides a new conceptual framework to help staff to systematically work through the issues that occur at the interface of the safeguarding and inclusion agendas.

We offer a one-day workshop that will explore these issues and teach staff to use the *Boundaries Clock* in individual situations. Alternatively, you may want more support to review your organisation's policies, approach or culture in respect of this issue.

To find out more, contact peter.bates@ndti.org.uk or call 07710 439 677.

¹ Bates P, Lymbery M & Emerson E, (2013), Exploring boundary attitude, *The Journal of Adult Protection*, Vol. 15 Iss: 1 pp. 26 – 36.

² Bates P. 'Thinking about professional boundaries in an inclusive society' in Gilbert P (2010) *Social Work and Mental health: The Value of Everything* Lyme Regis: Russell House Publishing. Chapter 2, pp18-24.