

# Code of Conduct

## Policy brief and purpose

This Code of Conduct sets out what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for employees and volunteers while undertaking work on behalf of Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire.

Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire promote freedom of expression and open communication. However we expect all employees and volunteers to follow our code of conduct. They should avoid offending, participating in serious disputes and disrupting the workplace. HWCB also expect employees and volunteers to foster a well-organised, respectful and collaborative environment.

## Scope

This policy applies to all our employees and volunteers regardless of employment agreement, volunteering role or title.

## Policy elements

All employees are bound by their contract to follow HWCB Code of Conduct while performing their duties and all volunteers are bound by HWCB's Volunteer Policy while representing the interests of HWCB.

## Compliance with law

All employees and volunteers must protect the organisations legality. They should comply with all environmental, safety and fair dealing laws. We expect employees and volunteers to be ethical and responsible when dealing with partnerships and the public image of the organisation.

## Respect in the workplace

All employees should respect their colleagues. We won't allow any kind of discriminatory behaviour, harassment or victimization. Employees should conform with our equal opportunity policy in all aspects of their work, from recruitment and performance evaluation to interpersonal relations.

## Protection of Company Property

All employees and volunteers should treat our company's property, whether material or intangible, with respect and care.

## Employees & Volunteers:

- Shouldn't misuse company equipment or use it frivolously.
- Should respect all kinds of incorporeal property. This includes trademarks, copyright and other property (information, reports etc.) Employees should use them only to complete their job duties.
- Should protect company facilities and other material property from damage and vandalism, whenever possible.

## Professionalism

All employees and volunteers must show integrity and professionalism in the workplace. Everyone acting on behalf of HWCB is reminded of 'The Seven Principles of Public Life'. See appendix (A).

### **Personal appearance**

All employees must dress appropriately and follow personal appearance guidelines.

### **Corruption**

We discourage employees and volunteers from accepting gifts from the public, service users or partners. We prohibit bribes for the benefit of any external or internal party.

### **Job duties and authority**

All employees should fulfil their job duties with integrity and respect toward stakeholders and the community. Board Members and line managers must not abuse their authority. We expect them to delegate duties to their team members taking into account their competences and workload. Likewise, we expect managers or project leads to follow instructions and complete their duties with skill and in a timely manner.

### **Absenteeism and tardiness**

Employees should follow their schedules. We can make exceptions for occasions that prevent employees from following standard working hours or days. But, generally, we expect employees to be punctual when coming to and leaving from work.

### **Conflict of interest**

We expect employees and volunteers to avoid any personal, financial or other interests that might hinder their capability or willingness to perform their role or job duties.

### **Collaboration**

Employees and volunteers should be friendly and collaborative. They should try not to disrupt the workplace or present obstacles to their colleagues' work.

### **Communication**

All employees and volunteers must be open for communication with their colleagues, project leaders, Directors or Trustees.

### **Confidentiality**

Employees and volunteers of HWCB may occasionally receive information which is not in the public domain often relating to individuals, organisations or financial matters. It is the responsibility of each individual to ensure that this information remains confidential unless prior authorisation has been given by the CEO for this to be discussed elsewhere. Individuals must never use confidential information for their personal advantage or the advantage or disadvantage of anyone known to them or to disadvantage or discredit HWCB.

### **Breaches of the Code of Conduct during Meetings**

Any staff member or volunteer who does not comply with the Code of Conduct will be notified that they are in breach of the code. If they continue to not meet these aims they will be asked to leave the meeting by the Chair. Any person excluded from an individual meeting because of their behaviour will only be allowed to return to future meetings if they agree to abide by the code of conduct.

### **Benefits**

We expect employees to not abuse their employment benefits. This can refer to time off, insurance, facilities, pensions or other benefits our company may offer.

### **Policies**

All employees and volunteers should read and follow the organisations policies. If they have any questions, they should ask their line manager/CEO.

### **Disciplinary actions**

HWCB may have to take disciplinary action against employees or volunteers who repeatedly or intentionally fail to follow our code of conduct. Disciplinary actions will vary depending on the violation.

Possible consequences include:

- Demotion
- Reprimand
- Suspension or termination for more serious offences.

We may take legal action in cases of corruption, theft, embezzlement or other unlawful behaviour.

### **DECLARATION**

I acknowledge and agree to maintain my responsibilities with regards to the Code of Conduct.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Role: Employee / Volunteer  
(Delete as applicable)

## The Seven Principles of Public Life:

- Selflessness** Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.
- Integrity** Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.
- Objectivity** In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
- Accountability** Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
- Openness** Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
- Honesty** Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- Leadership** Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.