

# NNPCF CODE OF CONDUCT

## PURPOSE

The NNPCF Steering Group has responsibility for all actions carried out by any and all representatives, including paid staff and volunteers. As a result, the conduct of Steering Group Members, National Representatives, staff, or any other individual acting on behalf of the NNPCF, should give our Member Forums, partners and funders confidence.

All individuals covered by the Code of Conduct need to show integrity; ensure actions are transparent and avoid any suggestion of improper influence. There must be no abuse of authority in our actions. All Steering Group Members, parent carer representatives, and staff are required to uphold the spirit, as well as the wording, of this Code of Conduct.

The term 'we' and 'us' have been used throughout to show that the Code of Conduct applies to Steering Group Members, National Representatives, and staff equally.

## AIMS AND VALUES

Our work and reputation rely upon us upholding and promoting the NNPCF's aims and values.

We should all work to the same aims and uphold the same values. We are required to incorporate these in our conduct in relation to the NNPCF.

You must not bring the NNPCF into disrepute while acting in your representative capacity. As a steering group member, your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions in both your public and private life might have an adverse impact on your own role, and the NNPCF.

Those who represent the NNPCF must ensure that in their conduct and activity they:

Conduct ourselves appropriately for the duty or function that we are carrying out or attending, which includes treating all of those we come into contact with courteously and with dignity and respect.

Respect diversity and different cultures and values.

Are honest and trustworthy.

Communicate in an appropriate, open, accurate and straightforward way.

Respect confidential information and do not share any information that is confidential outside of the Steering Group.

Are reliable and dependable or provide clear information to the Co-chair if they are experiencing challenges that may prevent them from being so.

Honour work commitments, agreements and arrangements and, when it is not possible to do so, explaining why to the Co-chairs and or other steering group members as appropriate.

Ensure that the views of parent carers are fully and accurately represented. Whilst personal experience may inform this, we must not rely entirely on own experiences, views and judgements, but be fully representative of the wider membership.

Declare issues that might create conflicts of interest and making sure that they do not influence your judgement or practice

Behave in a way, in work or outside of work, which would call into question your suitability to be a representative of other parent carers:

Steering Group members must inform the Co-chairs about any personal difficulties that might affect your ability to exercise your responsibilities appropriately. As members of the Steering Group are expected to work in partnership at the highest level with various National Departments, any personal circumstance which may pose a conflict for individuals, and therefore for the organisation must be declared to the Co-chairs immediately

The following are examples of types of circumstances:

- Any allegation that an individual may have committed, or is being investigated in relation to having committed a crime
- Any child protection or safeguarding concern relating to children and / or vulnerable adults.
- Any significant challenge between individuals and Government agencies (e.g. where individuals may end up in a litigious relationship with a central or local Government Department)

- Other similar circumstances

In these situations, it will be standard practice to ask the Steering Group member to temporarily stand down until the issues are resolved. This is a neutral and non-judgemental position, designed to protect the organisation and the individual, and to ensure the individual involved is able to focus all of their attention on the issue at hand. It is felt necessary however to insist on this protocol to safeguard both the NNPCF and the individual involved.

Consideration will be given as to how the roles and responsibilities of that individual will be covered in their absence, and whether a temporary replacement should be sought.

## POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

The NNPCF's work may take it into the political arena but we **must** ensure that we demonstrate our non-political nature and are impartial about party politics. When making any political representation, NNPCF must clearly be seen as presenting a balanced case in support of NNPCF's key objectives

Members can engage in political activities, including standing for election to public office, as long as it is legal to do so, however participation will be entirely on their own behalf and their political opinions will **not** represent the NNPCF's position.

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

NNPCF is committed to achieving equality of opportunity in every area. Our aim is that everyone should be treated fairly and be equally respected and represented. The aim is to ensure that NNPCF reflects its Member Forums.

## HOSPITALITY

We may not solicit hospitality; occasional modest hospitality is allowed.

Hospitality must always be recorded in the register held by the Management Team. Anyone who has received hospitality must record this in the register as soon as practicable.

## GENERAL

Where our personal conduct may be viewed as conflicting with the work of NNPCF, we are required to disclose details to the Co-chairs, and enter details in the 'Disclosure of Interest Register'. Advice on any matter in this Code of Conduct should be sought from the Management Team.

In any case of uncertainty, we should always make an entry in the 'Disclosure of Interest Register' and / or seek advice and make a record of this.

We should carry out our responsibilities in accordance with NNPCF's policies and procedures.

All of us represent NNPCF.

## FAILURE TO FOLLOW CODE OF CONDUCT

We should recognise that failure to follow this Code of Conduct may damage the NNPCF and will be viewed as a disciplinary matter

In the event of an alleged breach of the Code, any investigation or action will be initiated by the Co-Chairs. Based on the outcome of the investigation, a range of actions may be taken ranging from seeking appropriate training and support for the individual member, to asking them to permanently step down, depending on the severity and impact of any alleged breach.

All NNPCF representatives, staff and volunteers have an obligation to work in the best interests of the organisation.

Conflicts of interest may arise where an individual's personal, family or organisational interests and loyalties conflict with those of NNPCF and such conflicts may create problems.

### **They can:**

- **Inhibit free and informed discussion**
- **Result in decisions or actions that are not in the best interests of NNPCF**
- **Risk the impression that NNPCF has acted improperly**

**The aim of this policy is to protect both the NNPCF, individuals and their organisations from any appearance of impropriety.**

## DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

All NNPCF representatives, staff and volunteers are asked to declare their interests and any gifts or hospitality received in connection with their role, using the template form provided.

This should include involvement with other organisations (voluntary, public or private sector) whether as a representative, staff member, volunteer or other close associate.

To be effective this form needs to be updated annually and also when any changes occur. If you are unsure what to declare, or whether and when your declaration needs to be updated, please err on the side of caution. If you want to discuss this issue, please contact one of the Forum's Co-chair\* for confidential guidance.

Interests will be recorded in the organisations register of interests which will be maintained by the Co-chairs.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU FACE A CONFLICT OR DUALITY OF INTEREST

If you become aware that your involvement in a discussion or decision affecting NNPCF presents you with a conflict you should declare your interest at the earliest opportunity.

If the discussion or decision-making involves potential benefit to you, a member of your family or to an organisation you are closely associated with, you should offer to withdraw from any subsequent discussion.

You may participate in discussions from which you may indirectly benefit, for example, where the benefits are universal.

## DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OR DUALITY OF INTEREST FORM

As a representative of the National Network of Parent Carer Forums, please set out below your interests in accordance with NNPCF's Conflicts of Interest Policy, to the best of your knowledge, the information is complete and correct, this needs to be updated as necessary the information that is provided, and to review the accuracy of the information on an annual basis. By signing the form, you give your consent for it to be used for the purposes described above and for no other purpose.

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