

Proposed Code of Conduct for the Plymouth LINK



Introduction

This Code of Conduct provides the standards of behaviour for everyone involved in the Plymouth LINK. It is important that members of the LINK are accountable for their conduct at all times. This Code of Conduct sets out what you can expect from the Plymouth LINK and what the Plymouth LINK expects from you as a member.

1. General Principles of Conduct

Members of the Plymouth LINK are expected to:

- ◆ act in the best interest of the Plymouth LINK
- ◆ promote equality and diversity and treat everyone with respect, not discriminating against anyone
- ◆ not disclose confidential and sensitive information unless there is a legal duty to do so
- ◆ declare any conflict of interest, or anything that might be seen by other people as a conflict of interest, as soon as it arises
- ◆ not accept gifts or hospitality which could be seen as trying to influence the decisions or independence of the LINK.

Active members of the Plymouth LINK are expected to:

- ◆ be committed to playing an active role, contributing to the work of the Plymouth LINK and being prepared for meetings and events as needed
- ◆ listen to and respect the views and experiences of other members, and support fellow members to contribute to the LINK
- ◆ represent the views of the Plymouth LINK (which may not always be the same as their own) and act in the best interests of the LINK
- ◆ report to the Plymouth LINK and keep the LINK up to date with activities
- ◆ work to the Nolan Principles of Public Life (attached)

2. Poor Conduct

If a member of the Plymouth LINK does not follow the code of conduct while carrying out LINK activities, membership may be withdrawn. The following are examples of behaviour that could lead to this:

- physical violence or intimidating behaviour towards someone else;
- theft of or malicious damage to property;
- carelessness or negligence which endangers others' health and safety;
- making comments or acting in a way that is considered to be discriminatory, as set out in the MacPherson Report 1999;
- being convicted of a criminal offence during membership that might compromise the credibility of the LINK
- sharing confidential information
- fraud (e.g. submitting false expenses claims);
- preventing other members from participating;
- acting in a way that could damage the reputation of the LINK;
- not adhering to the standards of behaviour as stated in the Code of Conduct.

3. Procedure

The Plymouth LINK may become aware that a member is not following the code of conduct via:

- * a written complaint;
- * a verbal complaint;
- * the Host observing the conduct of a member;

When this happens, the Stewardship Group will consider the complaint and a response and may decide to:

- * look into the complaint further by talking to others involved;
- * suspend membership while this happens (in serious cases);

- * ask the member to meet with a representative of the Stewardship Group and Host to reach a solution and put a plan in place to support the member;

The Stewardship Group will then decide on what should happen as a result of the problem and it may agree to:

- > take no action;
- > keep a record of the conduct, action and review on the member's file for a period of time;
- > withdraw membership of the LINK in writing with reason and an end date.

The Host will work closely with the Stewardship Group to work through this procedure and keep records of everything to do with the complaint and response. The Host will make sure that the member is kept informed throughout the process and that it is accessible to them. Letters will be sent by recorded delivery.

4. Appeal

A member has the right to appeal against the decisions of the Stewardship Group and the Host will make sure that they understand their rights and how to make an appeal.

- * An appeal must be made in writing in two weeks of receiving the Stewardship Group's decision.
- * The Stewardship Group will respond to the appeal in 4 weeks of receiving it.
- * If the member is not happy with this decision, the Host will find an independent person to help resolve the problem.

Appendix 1 - The Seven (Nolan) Principles of Public Life

Selflessness

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material 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 for organisations that might 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.