

Coventry Local Involvement Network (LINK) Code of Conduct

1 Scope

The Code of Conduct applies to all LINK volunteers, employees of the Host organisation and contractors, irrespective of level of membership or status. It applies to all methods of communication including verbal, electronic, written and body language.

2 Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all those involved in the Coventry LINK to uphold this Code of Conduct. Adherence to this Code is a condition of involvement in Coventry LINK and breaches of this Code may lead to sanctions.

3 Key principles of the Code of Conduct

In joining the LINK I am agreeing to uphold the following principles and behaviours:

- **Respect:** Respect the reputation of the LINK and treat fellow volunteers and any other people that my LINK role brings me into contact with respect and courtesy.
- **Openness and accountability:** Be fair and open in all my dealings and be accountable for my decisions and actions.
- **Honesty:** Act honestly and withdraw from involvement in any business of the LINK where I have a conflict of interest or where I could benefit financially or preferentially.
- **Best interests and objectivity:** Act only in the best interests of the LINK, promoting public confidence and taking decisions on merit and in the public interest.
- **Integrity:** Not place myself under any obligation, financial or otherwise to a person or organisation that may influence my decisions or actions.
- **Leadership:** Take responsibility for promoting and exemplifying these principles and leading by example in order to maintain and strengthen the public's trust and confidence in the integrity of the LINK in conducting public business.

4. Equality and diversity

The LINK places great emphasis on understanding, acceptance and appreciation of individual differences. LINK volunteers will treat everyone they are in contact with in the course of their LINK activities with dignity and respect, recognising the value of each individual and their experience. The LINK expects volunteers to demonstrate attitudes and behaviours which support this position and will not tolerate discrimination

by LINK volunteers arising from (but not limited to) employment status, ill health, social exclusion, ethnic origin, gender, disability, age, sexuality and religion.

The LINK will seek out and listen to the views of patients, carers and the public, especially those individuals and groups whose voices are not usually heard.

5. Confidentiality

LINK volunteers will respect all confidences they are party to as a LINK member and will never disclose confidential and sensitive information unless there is a legal duty to do so for example in the interests of patient/service user safety.

6. Legislation and policies

LINK volunteers will comply with relevant legislation including equal opportunities, discrimination, human rights, LINK regulation, data protection and freedom of information and will not disregard LINK policies, procedures and code of conduct.

7. Representing the LINK

Any role representing the LINK, including contact with the media, will be authorised first by the LINK Steering Group and includes an obligation to represent the best interests of the LINK and the wider community and to provide feedback on request. When speaking on behalf of the LINK, comments will reflect LINK priorities and policies even when these differ from personal views.

8. Participation in LINK activity: personal conduct

I will:

- attend induction training and other training opportunities to develop my understanding of LINK work
- make sure that I have read and understood the LINK policies and procedures and follow the guidance that I am given by the Host
- let the Host know of any changes to my employment or personal circumstances which could affect my involvement in LINK
- declare any conflict of interest, or anything that might be seen by other people as a conflict of interest, as soon as it arises and keep the Register of Interests up to date
- commit to playing an active role in the LINK, contributing to meetings and being involved with working groups and other projects
- prepare for meetings and events and send apologies when I cannot attend or will be late and ensure that I let the Host know when I am unavailable for LINK work or meetings

- be prepared and willing to participate, debate and vote on agenda items as appropriate
- listen to and respect the views and experiences of others and support fellow volunteers to contribute to the LINK's work
- raise issues for consideration by the LINK which are based on evidence from patients or the public demonstrating a matter of wider concern rather than an individual issue
- make sure that people are aware of who can deal with complaints about personal or individual treatment, such as PALS or ICAS
- act and conduct myself in a reasonable and responsible way to any staff or volunteers or members of the public I work with or meet in my LINK role
- value Diversity and treat all people with respect and act in a way which does not discriminate against or exclude anyone
- not accept gifts or hospitality which could be seen as trying to influence the decisions, independence or activities of the LINK
- ensure that I do not act in a way which puts others at risk

9. Collective responsibility

Coventry LINK operates as a collective and it is important that the following collective values are upheld by everyone involved.

I agree to:

- accurately represent any differing views of LINK members and the wider community when speaking on the LINK's behalf.
- not work against the majority view of the LINK once a decision has been democratically taken, but I may request that my viewpoint, if it differs, is recorded in the minutes.
- only carry out work and go on visits in line with the LINK work plan agreed by the LINK, and have a remit from the LINK before speaking or writing on behalf of the LINK or attending meetings on behalf of the LINK
- not pursue a single issue or personal agenda at the expense of other LINK priorities.
- ensure that when I am representing the LINK at a meeting or event or in any other way, that I am speaking on behalf of the LINK and not myself
- report back when I attend anything on the LINK's behalf

10. Sanctions

Where individuals breach this code of conduct, the following sanctions are available to the LINK Steering Group:

- Censure: the LINK reprimanding the individual.
- Suspension from all or some LINK activities for a given period of time
- Removal from membership

Members agree to abide by the decisions made by the Steering Group on breaches of this Code of Conduct.

11. Support from the LINK Host Organisation

I understand that the LINK Host organisation will seek to provide me with: help to carry out my role on the LINK:

- advice and support in dealing with any difficulties I am having and guidance with situations that are new to me
- appropriate reimbursement for the out of pocket expenses I need to take a full part in the LINK's work
- an induction to the LINK and training in the skills I need for my LINK role
- correct and up to date information, sent to me in a way (such as email or post) and format that I have agreed
- an appropriate level of insurance when taking part in LINK activities
- appropriate ID to be shown when reasonably required

Declaration

Signed:

	Date:
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Please print name:

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Signing up to the Code of Conduct does not tie you in to an employment relationship

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 or 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.