

Parent Carers Together Code of Conduct Policy

Introduction

We, the Parent Carers Together (PCT) Steering Group, are responsible for all actions carried out by PCT members and staff when acting on behalf of PCT. We have drawn up this Code of Conduct in order that our members, partners, and funders have confidence in our work.

We ensure that our actions and behaviours are transparent and professional, without any suggestion of improper influence. We uphold the spirit as well as the wording of this Code of Conduct. We use the *Nolan Committee Principles of Public Life* and strive to go beyond these (see Appendix 1).

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

Communication

We understand that how we communicate with each other, with our wider membership and with all our strategic partners, is the key to successful leadership. We:

- Use *assertive communication skills*. We ensure that what we say to each other and to our members is clear, accurate, appropriate, and always in the interests of the safe, smooth running of the Forum
- Use *ground rules* for our meetings. We expect everyone present to agree and abide by these ground rules
- Are *reliable and dependable*. We provide clear information to the membership, and explain when this has not been possible
- Respect *confidentiality*. We do not share any confidential information outside of the Steering Group in line with the *PCT Confidentiality Policy*, unless we believe that a child or vulnerable adult is being harmed or is at risk of harm in which case we follow



- our *PCT Safeguarding Policy and Procedures*.
- Are *honest* with each other when our private lives may affect our ability to carry out our forum responsibilities appropriately.
- *Acknowledge* our professional and personal boundaries so that we can be useful to the members we represent.
- *Share* leadership tasks so that no individual at any time feels overburdened by their role or responsibility and allocate roles and tasks amongst ourselves to utilise individuals' *skills* and *strengths*.
- Take up *learning* and development opportunities & actively seek *support* when we face challenging situations.
- Adhere to our *PCT Social Media Policy* to ensure communication is appropriate.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

PCT is committed to respecting and representing our members fairly and we aim to represent all parent and carers in Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole equally. We respect those with cultures and values different from our own. Whilst personal experience may inform this, we do not rely entirely on own experiences, views, and judgements. We represent our members by listening to a diverse range of opinions and experiences. This reflects *PCT's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy*.

Political Activities

PCT's work may take it into the political arena, and we ensure that we demonstrate our non-political nature, and are impartial about *party politics*. When making any representation, the Steering Group is clearly seen to present a balanced case in support of PCT's purpose and aims. Steering Group members are allowed to engage in political activities, including standing for election to public office, if it is legal for them to do so. However, participation is entirely personal, and

their political opinions do not represent PCT's position.

Campaigning

We recognise that Parent Carers Together and campaign groups may be trying to influence the same changes, it may therefore be mutually beneficial to find ways of working together to improve services for the families we all represent.

However, we acknowledge that campaigning is inconsistent with the ethos of Parent Carers Together and parent carer forums in general.

Parent Carers Together has a seat at the decision-making table. We have an equal relationship with our local partners where we can use our knowledge as users of SEND services to work with all service providers to find ways to improve these services with available resources.

Having a seat at the table does not stop us from supporting campaign activity where it aligns with our objectives, it simply prevents us (as a forum) from actively campaigning ourselves.

Parent Carers Together will not initiate, incite, or run campaigns.

Membership of a campaign group, or other organisation is an entirely personal matter if it is understood that this does not represent Parent Carers Together's position, and the member discloses the information in the *Declaration of Interests* Form.

Conflicts of Interest

The Steering Group discusses potential conflicts of interest issues e.g., when a PCT member is considering standing for election as an officer or a local representative role, including grant panels and/or tenders. Where The Steering Group agrees there is a conflict of interest, they recommend action, and this decision is final in accordance with the *PCT Conflict of Interest* Policy.



Disclosure of Interest

Any member (or their close relative) receiving a personal or business benefit (other than Honorarium/Salary and expenses) as a consequence of PCT activity discloses this conflict. Where our personal conduct may be viewed as conflicting with the work of PCT, we disclose details to the Chair and record this in the minutes of meetings.

Failure to Follow Code of Conduct

In the event of an alleged breach of this Code of Conduct, any investigation or action will be undertaken in accordance with *PCT's Compliments and Complaints Policy*.

Based on the outcome of the investigation, a range of actions may be taken 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.

Policy Adopted on	1 st April 2019
Reviewed on	25 th July 2022 30 th March 2023
Next Review Date	March 2024

(see appendix 1 on page 5)



APPENDIX 1

Nolan Committee Principles of Public Life

- *Selflessness*: take decisions in terms of PCT's values and mission and not to gain financial or material benefits for ourselves, our family, and friends other than in the case of universal benefit.
- *Integrity*: not place ourselves under obligations to individuals or organisations that might influence us in the performance of our duties.
- *Objectivity*: to ensure that we represent, at all times a range of disability, Special Educational Needs, cultures, social backgrounds and geographical areas.
- *Accountability*: accept accountability for our decisions and actions to PCT Members, the providers of public funds and other stakeholders, and submit ourselves to appropriate scrutiny.
- *Openness*: be open about all decisions and actions that we take. Where required give reasons for our decisions.
- *Honesty*: declare private interests relating to our duties and take steps to resolve conflicts arising in a way that protects PCT's reputation, values, and mission.
- *Leadership*: we promote and support the above principles with effective leadership and by personal example.