

## Code of Conduct

### Summary

North Somerset Parent Carers Working Together (NSPCWT) Directors have responsibility for all actions carried out by its parent carer representatives and members.

All individuals covered by the Code of Conduct need to show integrity, ensure their actions are transparent and avoid any suggestion of improper influence. There must be no abuse of authority in our actions. NSPCWT and all its representatives will uphold the spirit, as well as the wording of this Code of Conduct.

### Principles

The Nolan Committee (1995) identified seven principles that should apply to anyone working as a public office holder. NSPCWT have used those principles (as follows) to guide this Code of Conduct, those being:

- **Selflessness:** to take decisions in terms of NSPCWT's values and mission and not to gain financial or material benefit 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 and age of child/young person.
- **Accountability:** accept accountability for our decisions and actions to NSPCWT members, the provider of public funds and other stakeholders, and submit ourselves to appropriate scrutiny.
- **Openness:** be open about all decisions and actions that we take and 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 NSPCWT's reputation, values and mission.
- **Leadership:** promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

### Disclosure of Interest

NSPCWT Directors and representatives must disclose any duality and/or conflict of interest, such as:

- Circumstances which could potentially bring about personal or business gain (over and above expenses)
- Where a personal, business or voluntary sector interest matter occurs over the same matter as a NSPCWT Interest.

Either conflict must be declared to the CEO and all NSPCWT representatives will be required to complete a declaration form annually (Appendix One).

### Political Activities

All representatives of NSPCWT must ensure that we demonstrate our non-political nature and are impartial about party politics when representing NSPCWT.

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 NSPCWT's position.

### **Equality and Diversity**

NSPCWT 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 at all times.

### **Hospitality**

NSPCWT representatives may not solicit hospitality. Occasional modest hospitality is allowed.

### **Personal Conduct**

NSPCWT representatives must ensure that they:

- Conduct themselves appropriately for the duty or function that they are carrying out or attending, which includes treating all of those they come into contact with courteously and with dignity and respect. This includes not talking over other people, listening to their views respectfully and appreciating that all views are valid.
- Respect diversity and different cultures and values.
- Are honest and trustworthy.
- Communicate in an appropriate, open, accurate and straightforward way.
- Respect confidential information.
- Are reliable and dependable, or provide clear information to the CEO 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 CEO 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 which would not call into question their suitability to be a representative of other parent carers.

NSPCWT members must inform the CEO about any personal circumstances that might affect your ability to exercise your responsibilities appropriately, such as:

- Any allegation that an individual may have committed, or is being investigated in relation to having committed a criminal offence.
- 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).

In these situations, it will be standard practice to ask the member or Representative to temporarily stand down until the issues are resolved. This is a neutral and non-judgemental position, designed to protect the individual and NSPCWT, and to ensure the individual involved is able to focus all of their attention on the issue at hand.

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.

Should any Member or Representative start, or have an ongoing formal complaint with North Somerset Council or any Health body, they need to inform the CEO. In such circumstance, the CEO may select an alternative Representative for any relevant meetings.

### **Failure to Follow the Code of Conduct**

Failure to follow this Code of Conduct may damage NSPCWT 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 CEO. 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.

### **Review**

This Policy will be reviewed bi-annually.

## **General**

- I will act within the governing documents of NSPCWT and the law, and abide by the policies and procedures of the organisation. This includes having a knowledge of relevant policies and procedures.
- I will support the Aims and Objectives of NSPCWT, championing it, using any skills or knowledge I have to further that mission and seeking expert advice where appropriate.
- I will respect organisation/board/workstream/project/tender and individual confidentiality, while never using confidentiality as an excuse not to disclose matters that should be transparent and open.
- I will use resources responsibly, and when claiming expenses will do so in line with NSPCWT Remuneration Policy.
- I will seek to be accountable for my actions, and will submit myself to whatever scrutiny is appropriate.
- I accept my responsibility to ensure that NSPCWT is well run and will raise issues and questions in an appropriate and sensitive way to ensure that this is the case.

## **Managing Interests**

- I will not gain materially or financially from my involvement with NSPCWT unless specifically authorised to do so.
- I will act in the best interests of NSPCWT as a whole and consider what is best for NSPCWT and its present and future beneficiaries and avoiding bringing it into disrepute.
- Unless authorised, I will not put myself in a position where my personal interests conflict with my duty to act in the interests of the organisation. Where there is a conflict of interest I will ensure that this is managed in line with NSPCWT's policy.

## **Meetings**

- I will attend all appropriate meetings and other appointments for NSPCWT or give apologies. If I cannot regularly attend meetings I will consider whether there are other ways I can engage with NSPCWT.
- I will ensure that I wear a minimum of business casual clothing when attending meetings where I am representing NSPCWT.
- I will prepare fully for all meetings and work for the organisation. This will include reading papers, querying anything I do not understand, thinking through issues before meetings and completing any tasks assigned to me in the agreed time. I will also ensure I provide feedback from meetings I have attended in a timely manner in accordance with agreed policies.
- I will actively engage in discussion, debate and voting in meetings; contributing in a considered and constructive way, listening carefully, challenging sensitively and avoiding conflict. I will seek views of the wider group of parents through NSPCWT.
- I will participate in collective decision making, accept a majority decision and will not act individually unless specifically authorised to do so.

### **Governance**

- I will actively contribute towards improving the governance of the organisation, participating in induction and training and sharing ideas for improvement.
- I will inform the CEO of any formal complaints that I have ongoing with the Local Authority or Health.

### **Relations with Others**

- I will endeavour to work considerately and respectfully with all those I come into contact with at NSPCWT. I will respect diversity, different roles and boundaries, and avoid giving offence.
- Any public comments I make about NSPCWT will be considered and in line with organisational policy, whether I make them as an individual or parent representative.

### **Leaving the Organisation**

- I understand that substantial breach of any part of this Code may result in procedures being put in motion that may result in my being asked to resign from NSPCWT.
- Should this happen I will be given the opportunity to be heard. In the event that I am asked to resign I will accept the decision of the Directors in this matter and resign at the earliest opportunity.
- If I wish to cease being a parent representative at any time, I will inform the CEO in writing, stating my reasons for leaving.

Signed:

Name:

Date: