



Children North East

General

Code of Conduct

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1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1. This Code of Conduct sets out the expectations Children North East has of all those who work for Children North East in a voluntary or paid capacity: trustees, employees, trainees, sessional workers, students and volunteers. The Code of Conduct is based on the values and expected behaviours of the whole organisation and everyone in it. Our values are:

Equality

- We treat people with dignity and kindness.
- We embrace individuality.

Empowerment

- We initiate, encourage and motivate.
- We give people a hand-up, not just a hand-out.

Building Relationships

- We work together to make a difference.
- We are reliable, open and transparent.
- We listen.

1.2. Children North East is a professional organisation and therefore everyone who represents it is expected to behave accordingly. Employees are expected to promote professionalism and trust by upholding the reputation of Children North East at all times. Employees must adhere to Children North East's values, regardless of whether these differ from an individual's personal, religious, social, political or moral views.

1.3. As an organisation we are dependent on individuals and organisations for our continuing financial viability. We, therefore, expect that all resources are used legally, economically and effectively.

1.4. This Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with the Children North East Values, Equal Opportunities Policy, Data Protection Policy and the Staff Handbook; also written statements of terms and conditions of employment, Children North East's policies and procedures, and other documents as appropriate.

1.5. Please note, the Code of Conduct is not part of the formal terms and conditions of employment and we may review and amend the policy from time to time.

2. RELATIONSHIPS WITH SERVICE USERS

- 2.1. Children North East does not permit members of staff, sessional workers, students or volunteers to have friendships with service users or to be 'friends' on social networking websites or other forms of online media, or to give personal contact details (e.g. personal phone number or email address) to service users. Members of staff, sessional workers, students, and volunteers are strongly advised to manage social networking privacy settings to limit their online exposure.
- 2.2. Contact with services users outside the working environment should be brought to the attention of your service manager to discuss how to manage the situation.
- 2.3. Any form of sexual contact between members of staff, sessional workers, students, volunteers and service users is prohibited, would be considered gross misconduct and will result in disciplinary action.
- 2.4. Members of staff, sessional workers, students and volunteers must not borrow money from service users, ask them to carry out paid or unpaid private work or services or gamble with them. It is not permitted to make personal loans to service users, buy items from them or sell items to them.
- 2.5. Members of staff, sessional workers, students and volunteers must not solicit gifts from service users. If gifts are offered they may be accepted for the benefit of Children North East. In such circumstances the line manager must be informed who will log the gift. Service users should be informed of what will happen to gifts.

3. RELATIONSHIPS WITH COLLEAGUES

- 3.1. Children North East encourages the development of positive working relationships between employees and recognises that in the process friendships can develop at work.
- 3.2. Whilst Children North East respects the individual's right to a private life, there may be occasions when personal relationships between staff, sessional workers, students and volunteers, may lead to actual or perceived conflicts of interest, for example family and/or romantic relationships. In this situation, the relationship must be brought to the attention of the relevant line managers in order to mitigate potential conflicts of interest. The line manager will assess the impact of the relationship on the team to ensure protection for all parties involved and Children North East reserves the right to separate employees during work to ensure quality of service delivery.
- 3.3. Where members of staff, sessional workers, students or volunteers wish to involve family members in any aspect of their work it must first be discussed with the line manager.

- 3.4. Members of staff, sessional workers, students and volunteers should remember that entering into transactions/financial arrangements/loan of property with colleagues will have an impact on working relationships and should be avoided. Members of staff, sessional workers, students and volunteers must not be put under pressure to enter into such arrangements by more senior members of staff.
- 3.5. Members of staff, sessional workers, volunteers and students must treat each other with respect. Any concern about a colleague's work or behaviour should be brought to the attention of a manager.

4. PHYSICAL INTERVENTION AND VIOLENCE

- 4.1. Any kind of physical punishment or violence against a service user or a colleague is prohibited, would be considered gross misconduct and will result in disciplinary action.
- 4.2. Where physical intervention is essential to keep children from harm, or for employees and volunteers to protect themselves, reasonable restraint may be necessary. These occasions will be rare and are only permitted when there is immediate danger of harm or threat of serious damage to property. Any physical intervention or restraint must be reported to the line manager immediately after the event and be recorded.

5. ALCOHOL, SUBSTANCE MISUSE AND SMOKING

- 5.1. Smoking or vaping is not permitted on Children North East premises.
- 5.2. Consumption of alcohol is not permitted during normal working hours.
- 5.3. Members of staff, sessional workers, volunteers and students must not be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or other substances during working hours. Incapacity for work through the misuse of drink, drugs or other substances is a disciplinary matter. Where staff are prescribed medication that may affect their mood they should bring this to the attention of their line manager immediately.
- 5.4. Children North East will support members of staff, sessional workers, students and volunteers who are seeking support/treatment for alcohol or substance misuse but our prime consideration will be the welfare of the people who use our services. Where appropriate a referral may be made to an Occupational Health Service. Members of staff may seek confidential advice from the HR team or Westfield Health.
- 5.5. The provision of alcohol at Children North East events should be discussed with, and approved by, the line manager.

6. PUNCTUALITY AND RELIABILITY

- 6.1. Members of staff, sessional workers, students and volunteers are expected to arrive for work and appointments with service users on time and reliably.
- 6.2. Unavoidable delay in travelling to work should be reported to your line manager as soon as possible.
- 6.3. Repeated lateness or unreliability will be dealt with as a disciplinary matter.

7. EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

- 7.1. The work of Children North East depends on support from the public and a wide range of funders, commissioners, donors and supporters. The reputation of the organisation is vital to these relationships. Everyone connected with the charity must behave in accordance with the values of the charity at all times.
- 7.2. Everyone connected with Children North East is expected to support the mission and aims of the charity. It is not acceptable for trustees, members of staff, sessional workers, students and volunteers to publish comments online which undermine the credibility of the organisation.
- 7.3. Members of staff, sessional workers, students, volunteers or trustees may not use their connection with Children North East to promote or support any other organisation, cause or activity unless it is consistent with the work and policies of Children North East. Anyone considering any such activity must discuss it with their line manager in advance.
- 7.4. In order to advance the cause of Children North East, the charity works extensively with a wide range of organisations and individuals. These relationships will always be conducted in a spirit of openness and partnership to benefit children, young people and families.
- 7.5. Members of staff, sessional workers, students and volunteers must not become involved in any activities outside work which put children or young people at risk.
- 7.6. If a member of staff or sessional worker, commits an offence they must inform their line manager. The nature of the offence, the implications for the organisation and the attitude of the person concerned will determine the response.
- 7.7. If a volunteer or student commits an offence they must inform their line manager who will then inform a member of the Senior Management Team. The nature of the offence, the implications for the organisation and the attitude of the person concerned will determine the response.

- 7.8. Members of staff should not accept or solicit or give (directly or indirectly) any improper gift or hospitality and should be mindful that the personal receipt of gifts, hospitality or favours may give rise to potential, or appearance, of impropriety. All personal gifts should be reported to finance and any gifts greater in value than £25 should be passed on as a donation to the Children North East, if appropriate, or politely declined. Advice can be sought from HR or Finance if needed.

8. FINANCIAL

- 8.1. As a recipient of large amounts of public funds and private donations, Children North East has a duty to use its financial resources prudently and within charity regulations.
- 8.2. All financial transactions must be properly authorised and recorded. Unnecessary expenditure must be avoided.
- 8.3. All income in cash should be recorded at the project at which it is received and passed promptly to Head Office.
- 8.4. Advances on salary or expenses are not permitted. In no circumstances may staff borrow money from petty cash or cash received by the organisation.
- 8.5. Any fees, expenses, payments and gifts received for speaking engagements or providing training in connection with Children North East work are the property of Children North East and should be discussed with your Line Manager.
- 8.6. There may be circumstances in which it may be relevant for Children North East to contract work from relatives or friends of members of staff, sessional workers, students and volunteers. In such cases no preferential treatment should be expected. The decision whether to use such a person should be made by the relevant manager based on the type of work required and quotes obtained from other people.
- 8.7. Anyone who has a financial or business interest in any organisation or individual with whom Children North East is carrying out a transaction should declare that interest.

9. BREACH OF CODE OF CONDUCT

- 9.1. Children North East take any breach of the Code of Conduct very seriously and a breach is likely to be regarded as an act of misconduct to be addressed under the appropriate policy, which may include one or more of the following:
- Whistleblowing Policy & Procedure
 - Disciplinary Policy
 - Grievance Policy
 - Appeal Policy

9.2. If you have any questions about this document then please either raise this with your line manager, the HR department or the CEO.