



EASTERN REGION OF PARENT CARER FORUMS

CODE OF CONDUCT

1. WHAT IS A CODE OF CONDUCT?

The Eastern Region of Parent Carer Forums (hereafter 'ERPCF' or 'the Region') Steering Group has responsibility for all actions carried out by Steering Group Members, staff, Reps and ERPCF members. As a result, the conduct of Steering Group Members, staff, and any other individual parent carers who are acting on behalf of the Region, should give our Member Forums, partners and funders confidence. All individuals covered by the Code of Conduct need to show integrity; ensure actions are transparent and avoid any suggestion of improper influence. There must be no abuse of authority in our actions. All Steering Group Members, staff and individuals are required to uphold the spirit, as well as the wording, of this Code of Conduct.

This 'Code of Conduct' includes the findings of the Nolan Committee on "Standards in Public Life", and goes beyond these. The term 'we' and 'us' have been used throughout to show that the Code of Conduct applies to Steering Group Members, staff, Regional Reps and individual ERPCF Members equally.

2. FINDINGS OF THE NOLAN COMMITTEE

The seven principles of public life identified by the Nolan Committee guide the content of our Code of Conduct.

1. **Selflessness:** take decisions in terms of ERPCF's values and mission and not to gain financial or material benefits for ourselves, our family or friends other than in the case of universal benefit.
2. **Integrity:** not place ourselves under obligations to individuals or organisations that might influence us in the performance of our duties.
3. **Objectivity:** to ensure that we represent, at all times, a range of disability, Special Educational Needs, cultures, social backgrounds and geographical areas.
4. **Accountability:** accept accountability for our decisions and actions to other ERPCF Members, the providers of public funds and other stakeholders, and submit ourselves to appropriate scrutiny.



5. **Openness:** be open about all decisions and actions that we take. Where required give reasons for our decisions.
6. **Honesty:** declare private interests relating to our duties and take steps to resolve conflicts arising in a way that protects ERPCF's reputation, values and mission.
7. **Leadership:** promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

This covers circumstances where an individual (or their close relative) could in theory receive a personal or business benefit (other than Honorarium/Salary and expenses) as a consequence of ERPCF activity. There are two main examples where a benefit could occur:

1. A Duality of Interest. Where the circumstances could potentially bring about some personal or business gain;
2. A Conflict of Interest. Where an ERPCF interest and a personal/business/other Voluntary Sector interest occurs over the same matter.

Both types of interest must be disclosed.

4. AIMS AND VALUES

Our work and reputation rely on us upholding and promoting ERPCF's aims and values.

We should all work to the same aims and uphold the same values. We are required to incorporate these in our conduct in relation to ERPCF.

5. POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

ERPCF's work may take it into the political arena but we must ensure that we demonstrate our non-political nature, and are impartial about party politics. When making any political representation, ERPCF must clearly be seen as presenting a balanced case in support of ERPCF's key objectives



Members can engage in political activities, including standing for election to public office, as long as it is legal to do so. However, this activity will be entirely on their own behalf and their political opinions will not represent the ERPCF's position.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

ERPCF 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. The aim is to ensure that ERPCF reflects its Member Forums.

7. HOSPITALITY

ERPCF Steering Group, staff, Reps or members may not solicit hospitality. Occasional modest hospitality is allowed.

Hospitality must always be recorded in the register held by the Secretary to the Eastern Region. Anyone who has received hospitality must record this in the register as soon as practicable.

8. PERSONAL CONDUCT

As a representative of parent carers across the Eastern region, the Steering Group, staff, Regional Rep or Member Role has clear responsibilities and requirements in relation to personal conduct. Any Parent Carer who represents the Eastern Region must strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of our wider membership, and partners with whom we work.

You must not bring the ERPCF into disrepute while acting in your representative capacity. As a steering group or staff member or Regional Rep, your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions in both your public and private life might have an adverse impact on your own role, and the ERPCF.

Those who represent the ERPCF must ensure that in our conduct and activity we:

- Conduct ourselves appropriately for the duty or function that we are carrying out or attending, which includes treating all with whom we come into contact with courteously, dignity and respect;
- Respect diversity and different cultures and values;



- Are honest and trustworthy;
- Communicate in an appropriate, open, accurate and straightforward way;
- Respect confidential information and do not share any information that is confidential outside of the Steering Group or any ERPCF Meeting;
- Are reliable and dependable, or provide clear information to the Chair 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, to explain to the Chair and other steering group members 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 make sure that they do not influence your judgement or practice;
- Do not behave in a way, in work or outside work, which would call into question your suitability to be a representative of other parent carers.

Steering Group members and Reps must inform the Chair about any personal difficulties that might affect your ability to exercise your responsibilities appropriately. As Regional Reps are expected to work in partnership at the highest level with various National and Regional Departments, any personal circumstance which may pose a conflict for individuals, and therefore for the organisation, must be declared to the Chair immediately.

The following are examples of types of circumstances

- Any allegation that an individual may have committed, or is being investigated in relation to having committed, a crime
- 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 Government Department or Local Authority)



- Other similar circumstances

In these situations, it will be standard practice for the Chair to ask the Regional Rep to temporarily stand down until the issues are resolved. This is a neutral and non judgemental position, designed to protect the organisation and the individual, and to ensure the individual involved is able to focus all of their attention on the issue at hand. It is felt necessary however to insist on this protocol to safeguard both the ERPCF and the individual involved.

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.

9. GENERAL

Where our personal conduct may be viewed as conflicting with the work of ERPCF, we are required to disclose details to the Chair. Advice on any matter in this Code of Conduct should be sought from the Chair.

We should carry out our responsibilities in accordance with ERPCF's policies and procedures.

All of us represent the ERPCF.

10. FAILURE TO FOLLOW CODE OF CONDUCT

We should recognise that failure to follow this Code of Conduct may damage the ERPCF 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 Chair. 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.

This policy was approved by the ERPCF

Frequency of Policy review:

Bi-annually

Review of this Policy due:

May 2022