

Staffordshire LINK: Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct indicates the standards of behaviour expected of the following members of the Staffordshire LINK.

- Staffordshire LINK County Board
- Staffordshire LINK District Committee's
- Co-opted members of any panel authorised by the County Board
- All Authorised Individuals act on behalf of Staffordshire LINK

It sets out, in general terms, the standards and duties which it is reasonable to expect you to observe.

Principles:

The LINK is required to reflect the broad range of views and backgrounds of the people of Staffordshire and as such all members need to abide by the principles of:

- Valuing any contribution an individual can make to the LINK
- Respecting other peoples opinions and beliefs
- Treating other people with dignity

General Codes of Conduct

All members agree:

- To abide by the Constitution of the LINK
- To **not** act in way that explicitly or implicitly discriminates against anyone on the grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age or disability.
- To **not** act in any way that is bullying, harassing & intimidating
- To **not** act in any way that would bring the LINK into disrepute
- To ensure their actions do not put other members at risk
- To **never** disclose confidential information
- To **never** claim to represent the views of the LINK without authorisation to do so
- To declare any relevant conflict of interest (in line with the Conflict of Interest Policy of the LINK)
- To abide by any amendment to this Code of Conduct

Organisational Members

Additionally Members who are representing an organisation or group agree:

- **not** to present their personal views as those of their Organisation/group,
- to collect opinions from within their group/organisation to be fed into appropriate LINK activities and discussions

County Board, District Committee's, Co-opted Panels, Authorised Individuals

The Code of Conduct requires all members identified as affected by the remit of this Code of Conduct:

- Not to accept gifts from Commissioners or Providers of Health & Social Care Services
- To provide a reasonable and timely reason for not being able to attend meetings
- To act in the best interest of the LINK when making decisions
- To abide by the Tasks and Terms of Reference set by the County Board
- To agree to a Criminal Records Bureau Check if acting as an Authorised Individual
- To abide by the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles) – see Appendix A
- Authorised Representatives agree to abide by the conduct requirements stated by the Staffordshire LINK Authorised Representative Policy.

Consequences of Breach of Code of Conduct

Investigations and Hearings regarding Breach of Code of Conduct will be conducted by a Disciplinary Panel convened by the County Board. Please refer to the Staffordshire LINK document "Procedure for Hearings" for further information.

Where a Member has been found to be in breach of their duty under the code of Conduct the LINK has the following sanctions it can enforce:

- censure – the LINK may reprimand the member but otherwise take no action;
- suspension of specific membership rights for a maximum period of one year, for example:
 - suspension from attending specific meetings
 - suspension from attending all meetings
 - suspension from representing the LINK
- suspension of all the member's entitlements for a period not exceeding one year.
- Disqualification - removing the member from membership of the LINK body for a period of no more than **five years**.

The LINK Disciplinary Panel will inform the member of the Sanction in writing within **ten working days** of the hearing.

Any Sanction imposed may be appealed against on the following grounds:

- New information being available that couldn't reasonably have been provided to the Disciplinary Panel at the time of the hearing;
- The process for the hearing has not been properly followed;
- The sanction is disproportionate to the breach of the Code of Conduct.

An appeal has to be made in writing within **20 days** of notification of the Sanction.

- The Appeal will be heard by at least three members of the County Board who were not previously part of the Disciplinary Panel that made the original decision.
- The Appeals Panel would normally include the Chair or Vice Chair of the County Board.
- The LINK Host Director or their nominee will act as an Advisor to the Appeals Panel.
- The decision of the Appeals Panel is final.

Glossary

Authorised Individual (from the Staffordshire LINK document “Entering and Viewing Premises”)

- Is nominated and recognised by Staffordshire LINK County Board
- Has undertaken a Criminal Record Bureau check and has satisfied the Staffordshire LINK County Board that they are able to be nominated as an *authorised individual*.
- Carries identification provided by Staffordshire LINK County Board recognising their role as an *authorised individual* acting on behalf of Staffordshire LINK County Board.
- Abides by the policies, procedures and good practice of the Staffordshire LINK.

The Act refers to the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 Part 14, Sections 221-234.

Appendix A: The Nolan Principles

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **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.
4. **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.
5. **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.
6. **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.
7. **Leadership** Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.