



Hackney Independent Forum for
Parents/Carers of Children with Disabilities
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Code of Conduct

1. What is a Code of Conduct?

1.1 The Steering Group has responsibility for all actions carried out by HIP staff, [contractors,] Steering Group Members [and parent representatives]. As a result, the conduct of Steering Group Members and staff, [and any other individual parent carers who are acting on behalf of HIP], should give our Members [constituents], partners and funders confidence.

1.2 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 and staff are required to uphold the spirit, as well as the wording, of this Code of Conduct.

1.3 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 and staff equally.

2. Findings of the Nolan Committee

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

- Selflessness:** take decisions in terms of HIP'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 disabilities, Special Educational Needs, cultures, social backgrounds and geographical areas.
- Accountability:** accept accountability for our decisions and actions to HIP Members [constituents], 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 HIP's reputation, values and mission.
- Leadership:** promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

3. Disclosure of Interest

3.1 This covers circumstances where an individual (or a close friend or relative) could in theory or practice receive a personal or business benefit (other than salary and expenses) as a consequence of HIP activity. There are two main examples where a benefit could occur:-

3.1.1 A Duality of Interest. Where the circumstances could potentially bring about some personal or business gain;

3.1.2 A Conflict of Interest. Where HIP interest and a personal/ business/other Voluntary Sector interest occurs over the same matter.

3.2 Both types of interest must be disclosed to the Chair as soon as an individual becomes aware of a real or potential conflict. The Chair will then decide in consultation with the [Executive/Steering Committee] what, if any, action it is necessary to take. All decisions must be recorded in writing.

3.3 The Secretary is responsible to ensure that annually members complete a declaration form. These forms will be held in a register that is open to public scrutiny.

3.4 Advice in relation to any potential conflict, or any other matter covered by this Code of Conduct can be sought from the Secretary.

4. Aims and Values

4.1 Our work and reputation relies on us upholding and promoting HIP's aims and values as set out in our Constitution.

4.2 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 HIP.

5. Political Activity

5.1 HIP'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 representations, HIP must clearly be seen as presenting a balanced case in support of HIP's key objectives

5.2 Members can engage in political activities, including standing for election to public office, however participation will be entirely on their own behalf and their political opinions will not represent HIP's position.

6. Equality and Diversity

6.1 HIP is committed to equality of opportunity in all aspects of its work. Our aim is that everyone should be treated fairly and be equally respected and represented. We aim to ensure that HIP is representative of its Membership [constituents].

7. Hospitality

7.1 We may not solicit hospitality. Occasional modest hospitality, for examples meals and light refreshments, is permitted.

7.2 Hospitality must always be recorded in the register held by the Administrator [Treasurer]. Anyone who has received hospitality must record this in the register as soon as practicable.

8. Personal Conduct

8.1 As a representative of HIP, the Steering Group Member Role has clear responsibilities and requirements in relation to personal conduct. Any person who represents HIP must

strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of our wider membership [constituency], and partners whom we work with.

8.2 We must never bring HIP into disrepute while acting in our representative capacity. As Steering Group members, our actions and behaviours are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. We should be aware that our actions in both our public and private life might have an adverse impact on our own role, and HIP.

8.3 In representing HIP we 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 of those we come into contact with courteously and with dignity and respect.
- 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 [constituency].
- Respect diversity and different cultures and values.
- Be honest and trustworthy;
- Keep the Chair [and Steering Committee] fully informed of all activity that we are involved in on behalf of HIP
- 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
- Are reliable and dependable, or provide clear information to the Co-chair if we are experiencing challenges that may prevent us from being so.
- Honour work commitments, agreements and arrangements and, when it is not possible to do so, explaining why to the Chair and other steering group members as appropriate
- Declare issues that might create conflicts of interest and making sure that they do not influence our judgement or practice
- Behave in a way, in work or outside work, which does not call into question our suitability to be a representative of other parent carers

8.3 Steering Group members must inform the Chair about any personal difficulties that might affect our ability to exercise our responsibilities appropriately. As members of the Steering Group we are expected to work in partnership with many different individuals and organisations, 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 or local Government Department)
- Other similar circumstances

8.4 In these situations, it will be standard practice to ask the Steering Group member 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 HIP and the individual involved.

8.5 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. Failure to follow the Code of Conduct

9.1 We should recognise that failure to follow this Code of Conduct may damage HIP and will be viewed as a disciplinary matter

9.2 In the event of an alleged breach of the Code, an investigation 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.

Formally adopted by HIP Steering Committee on 2017