



Code of Conduct for Staff & Volunteers

The purpose and scope of this behaviour code

This behaviour code outlines the conduct that Interest Link Borders expects from all our staff & volunteers (including trustees, sessional workers, placement students, tutors and anyone else undertaking duties for Interest Link Borders, whether paid or unpaid).

This code of behaviour is there to make sure everyone who takes part in Interest Link Borders's activities knows what is expected of them and feels safe, respected and valued.

Interest Link Borders is responsible for making sure everyone taking part in our activities has seen, understood and agreed to follow the code of behaviour, and that they understand the consequences of inappropriate behaviour.

The role of staff and volunteers

In your role at Interest Link Borders you are acting in a position of trust and authority and have a duty of care towards the members we work with. You are likely to be seen as a role model by members and are expected to act appropriately.

We expect people who take part in our services to display appropriate behaviour at all times. This includes behaviour that takes place outside our organisation and behaviour that takes place online.

Responsibility of staff and volunteers

You are responsible for:

- prioritising the welfare of members
- providing a safe environment for members
 - ensuring equipment is used safely and for its intended purpose
 - having good awareness of issues to do with safeguarding and adult & child protection and taking action when appropriate.
- following our principles, policies and procedures
 - including our policies and procedures for safeguarding and adult & child protection, whistleblowing and online safety
- staying within the law at all times
- modelling good behaviour for members to follow
- challenging all inappropriate behaviour and reporting any breaches of the behaviour code to the local Branch Co-ordinator.
- reporting all concerns about abusive behaviour, following our safeguarding and adult & child protection procedures

Respecting members

You should:

- listen to and respect members at all times
- value and take members' contributions seriously, actively involving them in planning activities wherever possible
- respect a member's right to personal privacy as far as possible
 - if you need to break confidentiality in order to follow adult & child protection procedures, it is important to explain this to the member at the earliest opportunity.

Diversity and inclusion

You should:

- treat members fairly and without prejudice or discrimination
- understand that members are individuals with individual needs
- respect differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and religious belief systems, and appreciate that all participants bring something valuable and different to the group/organisation
- challenge discrimination and prejudice
- encourage members to speak out about attitudes or behaviour that makes them uncomfortable.

Appropriate & Inappropriate Relationships & Behaviour. See also Boundaries Policy.

Appropriate relationships

You should:

- promote relationships that are based on openness, honesty, trust and respect
- avoid showing favouritism
- be patient with others
- exercise caution when you are discussing sensitive issues with members.
- ensure your contact with members is appropriate and relevant to the nature of the activity you are involved in
- ensure that wherever possible in befriending groups there is more than one staff member or volunteer present during activities with members
- follow our Group Health & Safety Guidelines

Inappropriate behaviour

When working with members, you must not:

- allow concerns or allegations to go unreported
- take unnecessary risks
- smoke, consume alcohol (there are some very limited and exceptional circumstances where alcohol may be consumed: see Boundaries Policy) or use illegal substances
- develop inappropriate relationships with members
- make inappropriate promises to members
- engage in behaviour that is in any way abusive, including having any form of sexual contact with a member

- act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive
- patronise or belittle members
- make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of members.

The use of digital/social media

This is covered in detail in our Online Safety & Social Media Policy. Our Boundaries Policy and Group Guidelines are also relevant.

In brief:

- During Interest Link activities members and volunteers should only use their mobile phones during sessions to confirm transport arrangements or in connection with the activities.
- Contact between members and volunteers outside Interest Link activities should be kept to a minimum. Sharing of phone numbers and email addresses should usually be avoided, as should contact on social networking sites.
- Online activities organised by Interest Link, such as Zoom, WhatsApp and Facebook groups must always be supervised and moderated by Interest Link staff. The accounts of members with learning disabilities who participate in these activities are the responsibility of parents & carers, and online activity should be supervised by parents & carers.

Upholding this code of behaviour

- You should always follow this code of behaviour and never rely on your reputation or that of our organisation to protect you.
- If you have behaved inappropriately, you will be subject to our disciplinary procedures. Depending on the seriousness of the situation, you might be asked to leave Interest Link. We might also make a report to statutory agencies such as the police and/or the local authority child protection services.
- If you become aware of any breaches of this code, you must report them to your Branch Co-ordinator or the Project Co-ordinator. If necessary, you should follow our whistleblowing procedure and safeguarding and adult & child protection procedures.