



Sefton Parent Carer Forum (SPCF) Code Of Conduct

Approved by: SPCF Steering Group Committee

Approved on: May 2024

Next Review on: May 2025

Introduction

We, the SPCF Steering Group, are responsible for all actions carried out by members, staff and volunteers when acting on behalf of SPCF. We have drawn up this Code of Conduct in order that our members, partners, and funders have confidence in our work.

We ensure that our actions and behaviours are transparent and professional, without any suggestion of improper influence. We uphold the spirit as well as the wording of this Code of Conduct. We use the [Nolan Committee Principles of Public Life](#) and strive to go beyond these.

The term 'we' and 'us' have been used throughout to show that the Code of Conduct applies to SPCF trustees, steering group members, staff, volunteers and parent and carers equally.

Communication

We understand that how we communicate with each other, with our wider membership and with all our strategic partners, is key to the successful engagement, influencing, involvement and leadership of SPCF.

We:

- Use assertive communication skills. We ensure that what we say to each other and to our members is clear, accurate, appropriate, and always in the interests of the safe, smooth running of the Forum.
- Use ground rules for our meetings. We expect everyone present to agree and adhere to these ground rules.
- Are reliable and dependable. We provide clear information to the membership, and explain when this has not been possible.
- Respect confidentiality. We do not share any confidential information outside of the Steering Group in line with the SPCF Confidentiality Policy, unless we believe that a

child or vulnerable adult is being harmed or is at risk of harm in which case we follow our SPCF Safeguarding and Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy.

- Are honest with each other when our private lives may affect our ability to carry out our forum responsibilities appropriately.
- Acknowledge our professional and personal boundaries so that we can be useful to the members we represent.
- Share leadership tasks so that no individual at any time feels over-burdened by their role or responsibility and allocate roles and tasks amongst ourselves to utilise individuals' skills and strengths.
- Take up learning and development opportunities & actively seek support when we face challenging situations.
- Adhere to our SPCF Social Media Policy to ensure communication is appropriate.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

SPCF is committed to respecting and representing our members fairly and we aim to represent all parent and carers in Sefton equally. We respect those with cultures and values different from our own. Whilst personal experience may inform this, we do not rely entirely on own experiences, views, and judgements. We represent our members by listening to a diverse range of opinions and experiences.

This reflects SPCF's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy.

Political Activities

SPCF's work may take it into the political arena, and we ensure that we demonstrate our non-political nature, and are impartial about party politics. When making any representation, the Steering Group is clearly seen to present a balanced case in support of SPCF's purpose and aims.

Steering Group members can engage in political activities, including standing for election to public office, if it is legal. However, participation is entirely personal, and their political opinions do not represent the PCF's position. This must be declared as a conflict of interest and considered by the remaining steering group members.

Campaigning

We recognise that SPCF and campaign groups may be trying to influence the same changes, it may therefore be mutually beneficial to find ways of working together to improve services for the families we all represent.

However, we acknowledge that campaigning is inconsistent with the ethos of SPCF and parent carer forums in general.

SPCF have an equal relationship with our local partners where we can use our knowledge as users of SEND services to work with all service providers to find ways to improve these services with available resources.

Having a seat at the table does not stop us from supporting the issues and themes arising out of local campaign activity, particularly where it aligns with our objectives, it simply prevents us (as a forum) from actively campaigning ourselves.

SPCF will not initiate, incite, advertise or run campaigns.

Membership of a campaign group, or other organisation is an entirely personal matter if it is understood that this does not represent SPCF position, and the member discloses the information in the SPCF Declaration of Interests Form.

Conflicts of Interest

SPCF Steering Group discusses potential conflicts of interest and refers to its Conflict of Interest Policy e.g., when a SPCF member is considering standing for election as an officer or a local representative role, including grant panels and/or tenders.

Where the Steering Group agrees there is a conflict of interest, they recommend action, and this decision is final in accordance with SPCF Conflict of Interest Policy.

Disclosure of Interest

Any member (or their close relative) receiving a personal or business benefit (other than Honorarium/Salary and expenses) as a consequence of SPCF activity discloses this conflict. Where our personal conduct may be viewed as conflicting with the work of SPCF, we disclose details to the Co-Chairs and record this in the minutes of meetings.

Failure to Follow Code of Conduct

In the event of an alleged breach of this Code of Conduct, any investigation or action will be undertaken in accordance with SPCF's Comments and Complaints Policy. Based on the outcome of the investigation, a range of actions may be taken 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.