

Code of Conduct for Members

County Durham Local Involvement Network

1. Why the LINK has a code of conduct

- To create a positive environment for LINK members to work in.
- To ensure all members can contribute and are treated with respect and courtesy.
- To provide guidance to LINK members and others about what is expected of their behaviour and actions.
- To ensure all issues acted upon by the LINK are treated with the same level of openness and equality.
- To operationalise core LINK values and the Nolan Committee's 7 Principles of Public Life

2. Scope

The code of conduct applies to all LINK members, employees of the Host organisation and contractors, irrespective of level of membership or status. It applies to all methods of communication including verbal, electronic, written and body language.

3. Key principles of the Code of Conduct

In joining the LINK I am agreeing to uphold the following principles and behaviours:

Respect

Respect the reputation of the LINK and treat fellow members and any other person my business with the LINK brings me into contact with respect, courtesy and in a collegiate manner.

Openness and accountability

Be fair and open in all my dealings as a LINK member and be accountable for my decisions and actions in that capacity to the membership and those who may have nominated me to represent them.

Honesty

Act honestly and withdraw from involvement in any business of the LINK and supply a reason for doing so to the LINK Host. I will also declare where I have a conflict of interest or where I could benefit financially or preferentially, prior to any business of the LINK taking place.

Best interests and objectivity

Act only in the best interests of the LINK and its membership, promoting public confidence in the LINK and taking decisions on merit and in the public interest. I will not pursue a single agenda at the expense of other LINK priorities or those I may have been nominated to represent. I will accurately represent the differing views of LINK members and the wider community when speaking on the LINK's behalf.

Integrity

Ensure I do not place myself under any obligation, financial or otherwise to a person or organisation that may influence my decisions or actions as a LINK member or the information I share with the LINK membership.

Leadership

Take responsibility for promoting and exemplifying these principles and leading by example in order to maintain and strengthen the public's trust and confidence in the integrity of the LINK in conducting public business

4. Equality and diversity

The LINK places great emphasis on understanding, acceptance and appreciation of individual differences. Members will treat everyone they are in contact with in the course of their LINK membership with dignity and respect, recognising the value of each individual and their experience. The LINK expects members to demonstrate attitudes and behaviours which support this position and will not tolerate discrimination by LINK members arising from (but not limited to) employment status, ill health, social exclusion, ethnic origin, gender, disability, age, sexuality and religion.

5. Representing the LINK

Any role representing the LINK, including contact with the media, will be authorised first by the LINK Management Group and includes an obligation to represent the best interests of the LINK and the wider community and to provide feedback on request. When speaking on behalf of the LINK, comments will reflect LINK priorities and policies even when these do not reflect personal views.

6. Confidentiality

Members will respect all confidences they are party to as a LINK member and will not divulge third party confidences without their agreement or that of the Management Group and in line with governing policies and the law.

7. Law, LINK values and policies

Members will not break the law, go against charity regulations or act in disregard of LINK policies, procedures and code of conduct in their relationships with anyone they come into contact with as a LINK member or on LINK business. A full list of LINK policies are available from the LINK website, www.linkcountydurham.co.uk or on request from the LINK Host.

8. Participation in LINK activity

Members will strive to attend all meetings they have committed themselves to, giving apologies ahead of time if unable to attend. They will come prepared and be willing to participate, debate and vote on agenda items as appropriate and will respect the opinions of others while making my voice heard. They will respect the authority of the Chair and his/her role and accept a majority vote on an issue as decisive and final. They will maintain confidentiality about what goes on in meetings unless authorised by the Chair. They will exercise their rights as a LINK member in full by voting and contributing to its aims to the best of their ability.

9. Sanctions

Where members breach this code of conduct, the following sanctions are available to the Standards Committee:

- Formal caution
- Suspension of membership from all or some LINK activities
- Removal from membership

Members agree to abide by the decisions made by the Standards Committee on breaches of this code of conduct.