

Code of conduct and rules for people attending Trust meetings and events.

Endorsed by the Trust Board

Introduction

Our code of conduct and meeting rules set out what is expected of everyone attending any event hosted by Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust ('the Trust'), whether on Trust premises or at community venues.

Coming to an event shows agreement to follow these rules and standards of behaviour so that everyone is able to be present without harassment, interruption, fear or intimidation.

Where any person attending has a complaint, then that person is entitled to use the Trust's formal complaints process through the PALS team. Any person asked to leave a meeting can ask for an investigation of the circumstances around his or her exclusion.

1. Valuing Diversity

All delegates attending Trust events, must undertake to:

- 1.1 treat all people with respect and act in a way which does not discriminate against or exclude anyone;
- 1.2 act in a fair and responsible way to any staff, fellow delegates or volunteers they encounter;
- 1.3 communicate in advance to the chairman, facilitator or nominated Trust officer any information necessary to help them at the meeting or event and
- 1.4 follow the Seven Principles of People in Public Life ('the Nolan Principles') attached at **Appendix A**.

2. Collective responsibility

The Trust assumes that all people coming to Trust events agree by their presence that they will:

- 2.1 Observe the authority of the chair or facilitator at all times if one is present, raising points and matters for discussion only through the chair at formal meetings;
- 2.2 Listen quietly to and respect the views and experiences of other people contributing;
- 2.3 Agree to and follow the standard of behaviour expected at each event, according to what is happening at that event. For example, arriving in good time; not interrupting; wearing appropriate clothing; not shouting; switching off mobile phones.
- 2.4 Agree that any decision reached by a majority of the group, once made, must be accepted, although a formal request to the chair can be made to record a differing opinion;
- 2.5 Add to the discussion only if and when asked to do so and then only in a way that is relevant to the matter under discussion;
- 2.6 Allow others to have equal opportunity and time to share their opinions when contributions are asked for;

- 2.7 Challenge ideas not individuals or their opinions;
- 2.8 Not use inflammatory language or behaviour of any kind;
- 2.9 Not have used alcohol and illicit substances before or during the session or in the venue where the meeting or event is held;
- 3.0 Report any health and safety issues which could affect the safe running of the event to the event chairman, facilitator or the Trust's nominated officer.

3. Procedure for breaches

If the code of conduct is breached during a meeting or event, the chairman, facilitator or nominated officer of the Trust may take one or more of the following steps with the objective of restoring order.

- 3.1 Any person making offensive, insulting, threatening, provocative, slanderous or obscene remarks, or who becomes boisterous, or who threatens or harasses any person or property while at a Trust event, will cause the event to be suspended for the shortest period needed to allow order to be restored.
- 3.2 Any person or people causing an event to be interrupted by reason of behaviours identified in s.3.1 above, who does so more than once, can be asked to leave the event by Trust staff or the nominated officer(s) of the Trust at the event. This can be for a specific length of time to allow the person or people to cool off or for the rest of the meeting or event, depending on the judgement of Trust staff present.
- 3.3 Where the chairman, facilitator or nominated officer at the event judges that:
 - the event has become unmanageable, unnecessarily interrupted, harassed or hindered more than once by the same person or people,
 - there has been behaviour which threatens the safety of him or herself or others present,

the chairman or facilitator may opt to suspend the meeting or event until order is restored or to end the meeting or event if he or she feels that it is appropriate.

- 3.4 Any person or persons causing through their behaviour, any other individual or individuals present at a Trust event to fear for their personal safety may be subject to immediate removal from the event and/or the event premises.
- 3.5 It shall be at the discretion of the chairman or facilitator of the event, or any nominated officer of the Trust present, to decide whether any person or people excluded can be re-admitted to the event, taking into account s.3.4 above.
- 3.6 Where a person or people have been excluded more than once from an event or events, it shall be the decision of the Trust whether to allow that person or people to return, taking into consideration the views of the majority of others involved or taking part. These decisions can be reviewed and agreed with the others involved or taking part at the next meeting or event, with the support of Trust staff.
- 3.7 It shall be at the discretion of the chairman, and/or facilitator and nominated officer of the event, in judging whether the behaviours leading to exclusion require further intervention.

Consequence of repeated breaches

Repeated failure to follow this code of conduct and meeting rules may lead to suspension and/or permanent exclusion from Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust events and/or involvement.

Definitions

'Events' includes all activities run or hosted by the Trust, including engagement and member activities, formal and informal meetings and gatherings organised by the Trust.

'Unnecessary or undue hindrance' includes any un-asked for interruption, or excessive delays caused by or to a person or people present; any delays caused by any noise or behaviours calculated to impair the delivery of the event.

'Interruption' is the suspension or repeated suspension of the event caused by a person or people attending or members of the public not involved in the delivery of the event.

'Fear', 'intimidation', 'harassment', 'threatening' includes behaviours likely or intended to cause other delegates, Trust staff or visitors, to be afraid to speak or afraid for their personal safety; the safety of the immediate surroundings or possessions or property, whether these are their own, or belonging to the Trust, or to the venue where the event is taking place.

'Chairman' means the person appointed by the Secretary of State for Health to lead the Board and the Council of Governors who ensures that it successfully discharges its overall responsibility for the Trust as a whole. Depending on circumstances, the chairman at any Trust event might be the appointed Chairman of the Trust, the Vice-chairman of the Trust or might be another person nominated by the Trust to carry out that function in his or her absence.

'Vice-chairman' means the individual appointed by the Board or Trust-wide engagement group to take on the Chairman's role or duties if the Chairman is absent for any reason.

'Delegate' includes anyone attending Trust events, whether members of staff, members of the Trust or members of the public, including current or past service users and carers.

'Nominated officer' means any person, either paid or unpaid who is charged by the Trust with the responsibility for discharging specific steps or tasks within this code at any Trust event.

'Staff' means any regular employee of the Trust.

'Facilitator' is any person directing a session or a group within a session at any Trust event.

'Volunteers' are any individuals who attend Trust events with the intention to assist in the delivery of that event or who represent third party and/or voluntary sector organisations and who do not receive remuneration for carrying out that function, although they may receive reimbursement for expenses.

Appendix A

The Seven (Nolan) Principles of Public Life

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.