



# Dorset Parent Carer Council

## Code of Conduct

### WHAT IS A CODE OF CONDUCT?

The Dorset Parent Carer Council (DPCC) Steering Group has responsibility for all actions carried out by staff, Parent Carer representatives and Steering Group members. As a result, the conduct of Steering Group members, staff, Parent Carer representatives and any other individual parent carers who are acting on behalf of DPCC should give our members, partners and funders confidence.

All individuals covered by the Code of Conduct need to show integrity, ensure 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.

This Code of Conduct includes the seven Principles of Public Life and strives to go beyond these (see appendix 1). The term “we” and “us” have been used throughout to show that the Code of Conduct applies to Steering Group members, staff and parent carer representatives equally.

### AIMS AND VALUES

Our work and reputation relies on us upholding and promoting DPCC’s aims and values. 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 DPCC.

### EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

DPCC is committed to respecting and representing our members fairly and we aim to represent all parent carers in Dorset 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 DPCC *Equality and Diversity Policy*.

## **DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

This covers circumstances where an individual (or their close relative) could in theory receive a personal or business benefit (other than Reimbursement of Time, Salary and Expenses) as a consequence of forum activity. There are two main examples where a benefit could occur:

1. A Duality of Interest is a situation where the circumstances could potentially bring about some personal or business gain.
2. A Conflict of Interest is a situation where the forum's interest and a personal/business/other voluntary sector interest occurs over the same matter.

Both types of interest must be disclosed. The Participation Co-ordinator will ensure that members complete a declaration form annually. These forms will be held in a register that is open to public scrutiny.

## **POLITICAL ACTIVITIES**

DPCC'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 representation, the Steering Group is clearly seen to present a balanced case in support of DPCC's purpose and aims. Steering Group members are allowed to engage in political activities, including standing for election to public office, as long as it is legal for them to do so. However, participation will be entirely personal, and their political opinions do not represent DPCC's position.

## **PERSONAL CONDUCT.**

As a representative of parent carers in Dorset, the Steering Group member and Parent Representative role has clear responsibilities and requirements in relation to personal conduct. Any member who represents DPCC is expected to strive to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of our wider membership and partners with whom we work.

You must not bring DPCC into disrepute while acting in your representative capacity. As a Steering Group Member or Parent Representative, your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions in both your public and private life might have an adverse impact on your own role and the forum.

As representatives of DPCC 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.
- Respect diversity and different cultures and values.
- Are honest and trustworthy.

- 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 or Parent Representative Group.
- Are reliable and dependable, and provide clear information to the Participation Co-Ordinator 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, explain why to the Participation Co-Ordinator.
- 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.
- Declare issues that might create conflicts of interest, making sure that they do not influence your judgement or practice.
- Behave in a way, both within the forum and outside of it, which would not call into question your suitability to be a representative of other parent carers.

As a Steering Group Member or Parent Representative you must inform the Participation co-Ordinator about any personal difficulties that might affect your ability to exercise your responsibilities appropriately. As a representative of DPCC you 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 Participation Co Ordinator immediately.

The following are examples of such 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.

## **GENERAL**

Advice on any matter in this Code of Conduct should be sought from the Participation Coordinator.

We should carry out our responsibilities in accordance with DPCC policies and procedures.

## **FAILURE TO FOLLOW CODE OF CONDUCT**

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

In the event of an alleged breach of the Code, any investigation or action will be undertaken by the Participation Co Ordinator and/or Chair. 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.

If the Chair breaches the code another Parent Carer Forum will be requested to investigate the allegations.

Approved by: DPCC Steering Group

Approved on: 29th May 2020

Review date: May 2021

## **Appendix 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 DPCC'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 disability, Special Educational Needs, cultures, social backgrounds and geographical areas.
- **Accountability:** accept accountability for our decisions and actions to DPCC members, 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 DPCC's reputation, values and mission.
- **Leadership:** we promote and support the above principles with effective leadership and by personal example.