

Context to this document

This document is intended to be read in conjunction with the Trustee Role Descriptions, Articles of Association and Scheme of Delegations. It is intended to provide trustees with an understanding of their role, responsibilities and the standards of behaviour expected of them. It supports the governance principles of transparency, openness and accountability. All trustees will be asked to sign and return a copy of this document.

The Fostering Network Trustee Code of Conduct

As a trustee of The Fostering Network, I promise to abide by the fundamental values that underpin all activities of this organisation. These are as follows:

- Genuine
- Connected
- Expert
- Caring
- Adaptable
- Brave

In addition, I will abide by the Standards of Behaviour in Public Life – the Nolan Principles

- Selflessness – Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other 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 seek to 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 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.

Additionally, I agree to the following points:

Law, mission, policies

- I will act within The Fostering Network's Articles of Association and abide by the policies and procedures of the organisation.
- I will not break the law or go against charity regulations in any aspect of my role of trustee.
- I will support the objects and mission of the organisation championing it, using any skills or knowledge I have to further that mission and seeking expert advice where appropriate.
- I will develop and maintain an up-to-date knowledge of The Fostering Network and its context. This will include an understanding of how the organisation operates, the social, political and economic environment in which it operates and the nature and extent of its work.

Conflicts of interest

- I will always strive to act in the best interests of the organisation as a whole and not as a representative of any group, considering what is best for The Fostering Network and its present and future members.
- I will declare any conflict of interest with my role as a Trustee, or any circumstance that might be viewed by others as a conflict of interest, as soon as it arises. This will include submitting an annual declaration of interests.
- I will submit to the judgment of the board and do as it requires regarding potential conflicts of interest.
- I understand that I am unable to take up employment with the organisation throughout the duration of my term as Trustee.

Person to person

- I will not break the law, go against charity regulations or act in disregard of organisational policies in my relationships with fellow trustees, staff, volunteers, members, contractors or anyone I come into contact within my role as trustee.
- I will work considerately, respectfully and professionally with all those I come into contact within the organisation and the wider fostering community. I will respect diversity, different roles and boundaries, and avoid giving offence.

Protecting the organisation's reputation

- I will not scrutinise or make public comments about the organisation during my term in office unless authorised to do so (including on social media or any other public forum).
- Any public comments I make about The Fostering Network will be considered and in line with organisational policy, whether I make them as an individual or as a trustee.
- When I am speaking as a trustee of this organisation, my comments will reflect current organisational policy even when these do not agree with my personal views.
- When speaking as a private citizen I will strive to uphold the reputation of the organisation and those who work in it.
- I will respect organisational, board and individual confidentiality. I will not discuss or share closed business raised in Trustee Board with anyone who is not authorised to have such information.

Personal gain

- I will not personally gain materially or financially from my role as trustee, unless specifically authorised to do so, nor will I permit others to do so as a result of my actions or negligence.
- I will use organisational resources responsibly. I will document expenses and seek reimbursement according to procedure.
- I will not accept gifts or hospitality without the prior consent of the chair.

In Board & Committee Meetings

- I will strive to embody the principles of leadership in all my actions and live up to the trust placed in me by The Fostering Network
- I accept my responsibility to ensure that The Fostering Network is well run and will raise issues and questions in an appropriate and sensitive way to ensure that this is the case.
- I will abide by board governance procedures and practices.
- I will strive to attend all board meetings, giving apologies ahead of time to the chair if unable to attend.
- I will prepare fully for all meetings and work for the organisation. This will include reading papers, querying anything I do not understand, thinking through issues before meetings and completing any tasks assigned to me in the agreed time.
- I will actively engage in discussion, debate and voting in meetings; contributing in a considered and constructive way, listening carefully, challenging sensitively and where there is conflict, working to find effective outcomes in the best interests of the charity

- I will participate in collective decision making, accept a majority decision of the board and will not act individually unless specifically authorised to do so.
- I will honour the authority of the chair and respect their role as meeting leader.

Enhancing governance

- I will participate in induction, training and development activities for trustees.
- I will actively contribute towards improving board governance practice.
- I will support the chair in their efforts to improve their leadership skills.
- I will support the Chief Executive in their executive role and, with my fellow board members, seek development opportunities for them.

Leaving the board

I understand that substantial breach of any part of this code may result in my removal from the trustee board in accordance with the organisation's governing document.

- Should procedures be put in motion that may result in my being asked to resign from the board, I will be given the opportunity to be heard. In the event that I am asked to resign from the board, I will accept the majority decision of the board or the members vote of no confidence and resign at the earliest opportunity.
- Should I resign from the board I will inform the chair in advance in writing, stating my reasons for resigning. Additionally, I will participate in an exit interview.

DECLARATION: I agree to adhere to The Fostering Network's Trustee Code of Conduct

Signed:

Name:

Date: