



## *Vocational and Personal Development for Young People*

---

### **Volunteer Code of Conduct**

Providing volunteer opportunities to young people which facilitates outreach, promotes community development, and provides youth input into service delivery. This ultimately assists Esteem in achieving its mission and values.

#### **Trustees & Employees of Esteem**

Trustees of Esteem are not to serve as both Trustees and hold paid positions. A newly appointed Trustee must leave that volunteer assignment within one month of moving into a Trustee position. That volunteer may still represent and is encouraged to represent that working group at the Esteem meetings.

#### **Rights & Responsibilities**

Volunteers and employees have the right to

- be given meaningful assignments
- be treated as equals
- receive effective and ongoing supervision
- full involvement as members of the organisation
- on-going support and recognition for their contribution to Esteem.

In return, volunteers and employees agree to

- actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities
- be accountable to Esteem
- remain faithful to the philosophies, policies and procedures of the charity.

#### **Confidentiality**

Volunteers and employees are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer. Failure to maintain confidentiality shall result in termination of the volunteer's relationship with Esteem.

## **Non Discrimination/Equity**

Esteem Volunteers will neither practice nor tolerate discrimination or harassment against any staff member, volunteer or service-user on the ground of race, creed, colour, place of origin, ethnic origin, ancestry, citizenship, political or religious affiliation, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family relationship, economic status, identity, disability or record of offences.

## **Conflict of Interest**

No member of Esteem shall derive any personal profit or gain, directly or indirectly, by reason of his or her participation. Each individual shall disclose to the Esteem Management Committee any personal interest which he or she may have in any matter and shall refrain from participation in any decision on such matter.

Any member of Esteem shall refrain from obtaining any list of Esteem clients for personal or private solicitation purposes at any time during the term of their affiliation.

## **Communication**

Occasionally, volunteers will need to contact other volunteers with regard to their activities with Esteem. We expect all such communications among volunteers to follow general etiquette guidelines. Other than phone numbers or email addresses, Esteem will not share personal information about a volunteer without the express consent of all parties involved.

## **Information Sharing**

Staff, volunteers and members are encouraged to share relevant information with one another on a regular basis. The following are vehicles of communication available to Esteem

- meeting minutes
- <http://www.esteem.org.uk>
- group email regarding Esteem business.

## **Copyright/Ownership**

Material produced by volunteers for Esteem, including graphics materials, web page designs, narratives, research, compilations, etc., becomes the property of the organization upon submission. Volunteers will receive credit on the Esteem website for these and other contributions.

## **Gifts**

Esteem volunteers may not accept gifts (see *Conflict of Interest*). However, it is recognised and understood that gifts offered by clients are an expression of their gratitude for care and kindness received. Therefore a response to them is required.

## Volunteer and Employee Complaints

All complaints from volunteers about Esteem receive a respectful and timely response. A volunteer with a complaint should attempt to settle the issue quickly by discussion with the volunteer/staff member with whom they have direct contact. If it is preferred not to discuss the issue with this person or if not satisfied with the response, you may lodge a formal complaint as outlined below.

1. Submit details of complaint (in writing, by phone, or in person) to the Chairperson of the Management Committee.
2. Upon receiving the formal complaint, the Chairperson will
  - i. acknowledge receipt (by writing, by phone or in person) of complaint and inform volunteer of the expected timelines for response
  - ii. investigate the complaint and provide an update to the volunteer if the investigation will take longer than two weeks
  - iii. provide a response (by writing, by phone or in person) to complainant within four weeks of receiving the complaint.
3. If not satisfied with the response, take the complaint to the Managing Director of Esteem.

In striving to obtain the ideals of high professional ethical standards, Esteem members obligate themselves to the following principles.

- Members will carry out all activities in a manner, maintaining the good reputation of the organisation and its ability to serve the public interest.
- Members will ensure that the level of professional services they provide is competent and in keeping with the level of standards set out by the organisation.
- When dealing with clients, members will hold themselves free of any interest, influence or relationship regarding any professional activity that could impair professional judgment or objectivity.
- Members have the duty to keep confidential the affairs of clients, colleagues and/or organisations and shall not disclose confidential information obtained in the course of professional activities; nor shall members exploit to their own advantage, information obtained in the course of duties.
- Members shall treat all other members with respect and consideration due between colleagues.
- Members are not expected to incur personal costs in the capacity of their volunteer work. In the case of out of the ordinary expenses, all major expenditures must be approved in advance by the Management Committee.

## Trial Period

For the first three months of working or volunteering for Esteem, all members must undergo a trial period. This is to assess the suitability of their role at the Charity and their progress in this. During this period, Esteem has the right to end a contract without notice should they find reason to do so.

At the end of the three month trial period, all members will be subject to a review of their role. This is to reassess their working hours, tasks within their role or any other subjects in relation to their work at Esteem which would warrant discussion.

## **Disciplinary Policy**

In the unlikely event of a member of Esteem not meeting the high standards of behaviour expected, disciplinary action may follow. Misconduct is not limited to physical appearances at events or campaigns. Breaches of conduct also include communication through digital means (i.e. e-mail, Facebook) and at any point a member is acting for or representing the charity. Esteem follows a three-strike system, except in the cases of gross misconduct.

### **1. Verbal (informal) warning**

If a member is found to have breached the terms of the Code of Conduct, they will be subject to a verbal warning from a senior member of the organization. In this warning, they will be told as to why disciplinary action has been taken and if required, a resolution to the problem.

### **2. Written (formal) warning**

If a member continues to breach the Code of Conduct, fails to take action to resolve an issue or any other behaviour that is recognised as misconduct after receiving a verbal warning, a written warning will follow. This will be sent from a senior member of staff inviting them to a hearing to discuss the issues of misconduct.

The outcome of the hearing will be confirmed in writing and provide details of the complaint, any action taken, state the standard or improvement required, and advise the employee of their right to appeal. It will also warn that more serious disciplinary action may be taken if there is no satisfactory improvement.

### **3. Dismissal**

If a member's conduct or performance is still unsatisfactory, or they have committed an act of gross misconduct, a disciplinary hearing will be held which may result in dismissal.

The Charity will pay salary in lieu of notice (where applicable) if an employee is dismissed, except in the case of gross misconduct. The employee will receive written reasons for their dismissal, including the date upon which their employment will terminate and of their right to appeal. There may be circumstances where an alternative penalty other than dismissal may be justified, such as a period of unpaid suspension, demotion, loss of seniority or loss of pay and an extension to a warning.

## **Gross Misconduct**

Gross misconduct is an act sufficiently serious to warrant summary dismissal (i.e. dismissal without notice or pay in lieu of notice). It generally includes conduct resulting in a serious breach of contract, or which brings the member or the Charity into disrepute, or action that is

inconsistent with the relationship of trust and confidence required between members. The following are examples of offences which are normally regarded as gross misconduct. This list is not exhaustive.

- Theft, fraud or dishonesty
- Deliberately falsifying records and information
- Threatening behaviour, verbal abuse, acts of violence, fighting and assault
- Acts of discrimination, harassment or bullying on the grounds of sex, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, disability, age, or any other nature
- A criminal offence committed at work, or an offence committed outside work, which makes your position with the Charity untenable
- Serious misuse of the Charity's computer systems including illegal copying of software
- Being under the excessive influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, or being in possession of illegal drugs, whilst at work
- Serious acts of insubordination or refusal to carry out a reasonable instruction
- Unauthorised use or disclosure of confidential information
- Serious breaches of the Charity's rules, policies and procedures including health and safety and use of email and internet
- Serious carelessness, incompetence or negligence which causes, or may cause unacceptable damage, loss or injury.

### **Limitations of Disciplinary Actions**

If a course of disciplinary action cannot be reasonably conducted in person for any reason, alternative methods of contact may be implemented.

This may be done via phone or a live webcam service (e.g. Skype). If none of the above practices are feasible, an e-mail will be sent to the member and they will be given seven days to give their acknowledgment of the disciplinary action. A follow up meeting may be required to provide evidence of improved standards of behaviour, a planned course of action or otherwise.