

Gloucestershire Local Involvement Network (LINK) Membership Code of Conduct

MISSION

The Gloucestershire LINK will help influence, improve or change the way local Health & Social Care services are planned and delivered

The Gloucestershire LINK is a network of local people, groups and community organisations who want to help shape health and social care services commissioned and provided in Gloucestershire. It is a mechanism for gathering the views of people throughout Gloucestershire communities so that these views can be made known to health and social care commissioners and providers. The Gloucestershire LINK aims to be inclusive and will not discriminate on the grounds of the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. The Gloucestershire LINK has statutory duties and powers and will act in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

All members must abide by the Governance Framework and Code of Conduct which is based on “The Nolan Principles of Public Life”.

Personal conduct

- LINK members will act and conduct themselves in an open and responsible way to serve patients, service users and carers
- Link members will ensure confidential and sensitive information is kept safely under the principles of Data Protection Act and not disclosed unless there is a legal duty to do so in the interest of patients, service users and carers safety
- LINK members will declare any conflict of interest as soon as it arises
- LINK members will comply with relevant legislation; for example, relating to: Equal Opportunities, Human Rights, Valuing Diversity, Data Protection and Freedom of Information guidance

Code of Conduct for meetings

- LINK members will respect the Chair's management of the meeting and not seek to dominate proceedings
- LINK members participating in meetings will treat others with respect and dignity. There will be no tolerance for abuse, the use of derogatory remarks, inappropriate language, personal insults, threats or any forms of discrimination
- LINK members must deal with each other in an open, honest and respectful manner, respecting the views of others and allowing others the opportunity to speak without interruption
- LINK members are expected to be constructive and operate in the best interests of the Gloucestershire LINK
- LINK members are expected to attend meetings, having completed the necessary advance preparation
- LINK members should arrive on time and stay for the duration of the meeting
- LINK members should keep contributions relevant to the agenda in terms of content and length
- LINK members attending meetings as an authorised LINK representative must provide feedback to the host in an agreed format

Code of Conduct for attendance at Public meetings

- LINK members must have the agreement of the Gloucestershire LINK Stewardship Board before attending meetings as a representative of Gloucestershire LINK
- LINK members attending as a representative of the Gloucestershire LINK must represent the broader views of Gloucestershire LINK and not a personal view
- LINK Members have responsibility for their personal safety and for the safety of other participants in accordance with relevant legislation e.g. Health & Safety etc

Confidentiality

- LINK members may learn of and acquire information that has not yet been made public and is still confidential. It will be regarded as a betrayal of trust to breach such confidences
- LINK members must never disclose or use confidential information arising from the work of the LINK for personal advantage to them or anyone known to them (disclosure of confidential information may be cause for prosecution under the Data Protection Act)

Identification

- LINK members must prominently display identification badges when on Gloucestershire LINK business.
- Badges remain the property of the Gloucestershire LINK., and must be returned when membership of the Gloucestershire LINK is terminated.

Gifts and Hospitality

- LINK members need to treat with caution any offer of gift, favour or hospitality that is made to them in the context of their LINK membership. The person or organisation making the offer may be doing so to obtain information or to influence a decision.
- LINK members are personally responsible for all decisions connected with the acceptance or gifts or hospitality

Disclosure of Interests

- LINK members should declare any conflicts of interest
- The criteria of an interest is not whether you think you have a conflict of interest to declare but whether another LINK member, the host or a member of the public would think you have an interest to declare. (An example of a declarable conflict of interest would be one which was of financial benefit, such as a member deciding about care services which they, or a group to which they belong, provide. It would also be knowledge of, or an interest in, another person, such as friends of family)
- If in doubt about the need to disclose an interest, disclose it anyway and take the advice of the Gloucestershire LINK Stewardship Board
- The opportunity to make a declaration of interest will be given at the start of Gloucestershire LINK meetings. However, members can at any point during a meeting declare any potential conflict of interest when it becomes apparent there may be one. Having declared a conflict of interest the member may be asked to withdraw from the meeting during the discussion

The Nolan Principles – The Seven 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 organizations 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