



# LANCASHIRE WOMEN'S CENTRES

## Staff Code of Conduct

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# Appendix A

### Appendix A – Code of Conduct and Safer Working Practice

The guidance contained in this Code of Conduct is to help keep Lancashire Women's Centres staff and volunteers, and the clients they support safe whilst doing their job. It identifies that staff are in a position of increased potential vulnerability because many clients are also children and vulnerable adults.

Its aim is to minimize the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations.

Lancashire Women's Centres has a duty to safeguard and promote the well-being of children and vulnerable adults. It also needs to ensure that you are competent, confident and safe to do so.

The Code of Conduct below identifies what behaviours are expected of them. Any practice that deviates from this guidance and this code may bring into question their suitability to work with children and adults at risk. All Lancashire Women's Centres staff and volunteers are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority; manage risk; use resources; and safeguard children and adults at risk.

#### Propriety and Behaviour

This means that you should:

- *Be aware that behaviour in your personal life may impact upon your work with children and young people*
- *Respect all staff, volunteers and clients and treat each other in a respectful and cooperative manner*
- *Treat each other as equals and value any diversity*
- *Maintain safe, hygienic and healthy conditions in the workplace*
- *Understand that the behaviour and actions of your partner (or other family members) may raise questions about your suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults*
- *Disclose any criminal charges or involvement in any safeguarding investigations that occur after commencement of employment*
- *Work within the Lancashire Women's Centres' Confidentiality Policy at all times*

This means that you should not:

- *Behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question your suitability to work with children or vulnerable adults or act as a role model e.g. use alcohol or drugs at work unless previously agreed by management*
- *Make, or encourage others to make, unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate, or which might be interpreted as such*



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### Confidentiality

This means that adults:

- *are clear about when information can be shared and in what circumstances it is appropriate to do so*
- *are expected to treat information they receive about children and vulnerable adults in a discreet and confidential manner*
- *should seek advice from a senior member of staff if they are in any doubt about sharing information they hold or which has been requested of them*
- *need to know to whom any concerns or allegations should be reported*

### Dress and Appearance

This means that you should wear clothing which:

- *is appropriate to your role*
- *is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative*
- *does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding*
- *is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans*
- *is not considered to be discriminatory and is culturally sensitive*

### Use of Personal Living Space

This means that you should:

- *be vigilant in maintaining your privacy and mindful of the need to avoid placing yourself in vulnerable situations*
- *challenge any request for your accommodation to be used as an additional resource for the organisation*
- *refrain from asking children and vulnerable adults to undertake personal jobs or errands*

This means that you should not:

- *Invite a client into your home unless the reason for this has been firmly established and agreed with parents/ carers and senior managers or the home has been designated by the Lancashire Women's Centres or regulatory body as a work place.*

### Gifts Rewards and Favouritism

This means that you should:

- *be aware of your organisation's policy on the giving and receiving of gifts*
- *ensure that gifts received or given in situations which may be misconstrued are declared*
- *generally, only give gifts to an individual young person as part of an agreed reward system*
- *where giving gifts other than as above, ensure that these are of insignificant value*

### Infatuations

This means that you should:

- *report and record any incidents or indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a*



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*client, child or vulnerable adult may have developed an infatuation with you in the workplace*

- *always acknowledge and maintain professional boundaries*
- *not give your personal contact details to clients or their children, including their mobile telephone number and details of any blogs or personal websites*

### Communicating with Clients

This means that you should:

- *not give your personal contact details to clients, children or vulnerable adults, including their mobile telephone number and details of any blogs or personal websites*
- *only use equipment e.g. mobile phones, provided by the organisation to communicate with clients, making sure that where necessary parental permission has been obtained for this form of communication to be used*
- *only make contact with clients for professional reasons and in accordance with any Lancashire Women's Centres' policy*
- *Recognise that text messaging is rarely an appropriate response to a client in a crisis situation or at risk of harm. It should only be used as a last resort when other forms of communication are not possible*
- *not use internet or web-based communication channels to send personal messages to a client/child/vulnerable adult*
- *Ensure that if a social networking site is used, details are not shared with clients or their children and privacy settings are set at maximum.*

### Social Contact

This means that you should:

- *have no secret social contact with clients, children or vulnerable adults or their parents/carers*
- *consider the appropriateness of the social contact according to their role and nature of your work*
- *always obtain approval for any planned social contact with clients, children or parents with your manager or colleagues,*
- *advise your line manager of any social contact you have with a client, child or a parent with who whom they work, which may give rise to concern*
- *report and record any situation, which may place a child / vulnerable adults at risk or which may compromise the organisation or their own professional standing*
- *Be aware that the sending of personal communications such as birthday or faith cards should always be recorded and/or discussed with line manager.*
- *Understand that some communications may be called into question and need to be justified.*

### Sexual Contact

This means that you should:

- *ensure that your relationships with clients, children and vulnerable adults clearly take place within the boundaries of a respectful professional relationship*
- *Take care that your language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when members of staff are dealing with adolescent boys and girls.*



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This means that you should not:

- *have sexual relationships with clients who are children or vulnerable adults*
- *have any form of communication with a client, child or vulnerable adult which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative i.e. verbal comments, letters, notes, electronic mail, phone calls, texts, physical contact*
- *make sexual remarks to, or about, a client, child or vulnerable adult*
- *Discuss your own sexual relationships with or in the presence of clients.*

### Physical Contact

This means that you should:

- *be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the client, child, vulnerable adult, or an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described*
- *never touch a client, child or vulnerable adult in a way which may be considered indecent*
- *always be prepared to report and explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny*
- *not indulge in 'horseplay'*
- *always encourage clients, where possible, to undertake self-care tasks independently*
- *work within Health and Safety regulations*
- *be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and always be sensitive to issues of gender*
- *Understand that physical contact in some circumstances can be easily misinterpreted.*

### Clients in Distress

This means the you should:

- *consider the way in which you offer comfort and reassurance to a distressed client and do it in an age-appropriate way*
- *be circumspect in offering reassurance in one to one situations, but always record such actions in these circumstances*
- *follow professional guidance or code of practice where available*
- *never touch a client/child/vulnerable adult in a way which may be considered indecent*
- *record and report situations which may give rise to concern from either party*
- *not assume that all children or adult clients seek physical comfort if they are distressed*

### One to One Situations

This means that you should:

- *Ensure that when lone working is an integral part of their role, full and appropriate risk assessments have been conducted and agreed.*
- *avoid meetings with a client child or vulnerable adult in remote, secluded areas,*
- *always inform other colleagues and/or parents/carers about the contact(s) beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by*
- *Avoid use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs wherever possible. Such signs may create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy*
- *always report any situation where a client child/adult becomes distressed or angry to a senior colleague*
- *Carefully consider the needs and circumstances of the client child/vulnerable adult when*



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*in one to one situations.*

### Home Visits

This means that you should:

- *agree the purpose for any home visit with senior management, unless this is an acknowledged and integral part of their role*
- *adhere to agreed risk management strategies*
- *always make detailed records including times of arrival and departure and work undertaken*
- *ensure any behaviour or situation which gives rise to concern is discussed with your manager and, where appropriate action is taken*

This means that your employer should:

- *ensure that you have home visit and lone-working policies of which you are made aware. These should include arrangements for risk assessment and management*
- *ensure that all visits are justified and recorded*
- *ensure that you are not exposed to unacceptable risk*
- *ensure that you have access to a mobile telephone and an emergency contact person*

### Transporting Children and Vulnerable Adults

This means that you should:

- *ensure you are fit to drive and free from any drugs, alcohol or medicine which is likely to impair judgement and/ or ability to drive*
- *be aware that the safety and welfare of any child is your responsibility until they are safely passed over to a parent/carer*
- *record details of the journey in accordance with agreed procedures*
- *ensure that your behaviour is appropriate at all times*
- *ensure that there are proper arrangements in place to ensure vehicle, passenger and driver safety. This includes having proper and appropriate insurance for the type of vehicle being driven*
- *ensure that any impromptu or emergency arrangements of lifts are recorded and can be justified if questioned*

### Photography and Videos

This means that you should:

- *be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the images when the activity is concluded*
- *be able to justify images of children in your possession*
- *avoid making images in one to one situations or which show a single child with no surrounding context*
- *Ensure the child/young person understands why the images are being taken and has agreed to the activity and that they are appropriately dressed.*
- *only use equipment provided or authorised by the organisation*
- *report any concerns about any inappropriate or intrusive photographs found*
- *always ensure you have parental permission to take and/or display photographs of children*



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This means that you should not:

- *display or distribute images of children unless you have consent to do so from parents/carers*
- *use images which may cause distress*
- *use mobile telephones to take images of children*
- *Take images 'in secret', or taking images in situations that may be construed as being secretive.*

### Access to Inappropriate Images and Internet Usage

This means that you should:

- *follow the organisation's guidance on the use of IT equipment*
- *ensure that children are not exposed to unsuitable material on the internet*
- *ensure that any films or material shown to children and young people are age appropriate*

This means that you should not:

- *use equipment belonging to the Lancashire Women's Centres to access adult or child pornography; neither should personal equipment containing these images or links to them be brought into the workplace.*