



# Staff and Volunteers Code of Conduct Policy

2020

This is a Make a Difference Trust Code of Conduct and all staff, volunteers and stakeholders are expected to abide by our code of conduct.

Underpinning this is the values statement that is crucial to all our work.

## 1. Values

At the Make a Different Trust we engage and empower staff, volunteers, clients and guests. We are impartial, celebrate and value diversity. We work with integrity, and respect differences and opinions. Our work is holistic, inclusive, and delivered with a team approach. We will not tolerate any form of abuse.

## 2. General Conduct

This Code of Conduct exists to:

- a) Protect our audience and stakeholders, staff, visitors, students on placement and volunteers.
- b) Respect the boundaries and rights of our audience and stakeholders, staff, visitors and volunteers.
- c) Ensure responsible behaviour when representing The Make a Difference Trust

The following are not acceptable:

- Violent, aggressive or abusive behaviour
  - Giving an individual's contact details to another individual without their permission.
  - Using recreational drugs on the premises or bringing them onto the premises.
  - Supplying illegal drugs or illegal drug equipment on the premises or while employed by us.
  - Consuming alcohol on the premises, unless served as part of an event hosted by The Make a Difference Trust
-

- Exploiting or abusing your position as a member of staff or volunteer (see Safeguarding policies)
- Accepting gifts other than small tokens of appreciation, not greater than £5 (see professional boundaries)
- Witnessing the will of a service user, or being a beneficiary in any way
- Participating in plans for suicide
- Giving your personal phone number to a service user

### **3. Professional and Personal Boundaries**

Due to the peer ethos of The Make a Difference Trust and the fact that a large number of staff and volunteers are living with and affected by HIV, professional and personal boundaries will inevitably need careful management. An element of peer support is developing a network of close and supportive friends living with and affected by HIV, so when someone starts work or volunteering with The Make a Difference Trust it is likely that they may have personal relationships with other staff, volunteers or our audience and stakeholders.

For the purpose of this policy, personal relationships are defined as; a close friendship, family relationship, sexual relationship or business relationship.

### **4. Relationships**

#### **a) Relationships between staff or volunteers and our audience and stakeholders**

The definition of a service user in this policy, when defining professional and personal boundaries is someone who is using our services and or events.

Staff, visitors and volunteers have a professional, legal and ethical responsibility to our audience and stakeholders at all times. At THE MAKE A DIFFERENCE TRUST our professional boundaries policy sets out clear personal and professional boundaries, which help staff and volunteers avoid dependency or potential for abuse in their work relationships with stakeholders.

It is not acceptable in any circumstances for a staff member or volunteer to start a personal relationship with a volunteer or service user. If there is a pre-existing relationship this must be made known to the line manager when the service user, volunteer or staff member starts with us. Breach of our professional boundaries policy and code of conduct will result in disciplinary and grievance procedures being applied, and may result in disciplinary actions up to and including dismissal.

#### **b) Relationships between staff and volunteers**

We acknowledge that part of the motivation for volunteering with us may be to develop a circle of friends. We expect staff, volunteers and our audience and stakeholders to develop good working relationships. If staff and/or volunteers develop or have pre-existing relationships with each other, other volunteers or members of staff, this must be made known to your line manager at the earliest opportunity. Management discussion will establish and agree appropriate roles and ensure boundaries are put in place. Arrangements will be discussed with each person individually, to put in place what is needed to ensure they maintain confidentiality, autonomy, personal and professional boundaries in their respective roles at all times. It is critical that pre-existing relationships are declared so that conflict of interest can be avoided, professional boundaries maintained, and all are protected in the case of managing safe guarding, allegations of abuse and potential creation of dependency. The Make a Difference Trust do have a hierarchical structure and some of our volunteers are using volunteering or employment to improve confidence and mental health and may be in a vulnerable situation for example having uncertain immigration status or having recently come out of prison. Professional

---

relationships will be established so they do not lead to abuse or exploit positions of power and trust. **A staff member or volunteer who has acknowledged a pre-existing personal relationship with a service user will not be allowed to provide that individual with 1-2-1 support.**

If a complaint is made by other staff, volunteers or stakeholders that a relationship is adversely affecting the individual or organisations within the Make A Difference Trust, it will be dealt with through the relevant procedures. **The development of personal relationships between staff, trustees, volunteers and stakeholders is not permitted in any circumstances.**

## **5. Confidentiality**

This is dealt with in detail in the Confidentiality Policy Statement, which is signed, by volunteers and staff at induction.

In practice this respects that:

Staff, volunteers and our audience and stakeholders have the right to expect personal information, including health details, will not be shared unless there are issues which may lead to harm or safe guarding concerns.

## **6. Media**

All public statements concerning The Make a Difference Trust are made by the CEO, Chair of Trustees, and managers unless there is a pre-arranged agreement. Staff and volunteers may not discuss or respond to the media concerning any aspects of The Make a Difference Trust.

## **7. Equal Opportunities and Diversity**

We are an equal opportunities employer and is committed to the promotion of Equality and Human rights for all our audience and stakeholders, staff and volunteers. (See the Make A Difference Trust Policy and action plan.)

## **8. References and official documents**

Staff at The Make a Difference Trust will only sign legal or official documents or give references where we meet the criteria, for example knowing the person for the correct number of years.

## **9. Compliments, criticism and complaints**

The Make a Difference Trust try to promote a non-judgmental environment and welcome feedback on our services. If criticism or complaints are being made about a third party, individuals should avoid entering into discussion but suggest the matter is raised with the individual or a manager to enable the matter to be dealt with appropriately. We have a complaints procedure and welcome feedback at other times. Do please tell us how we are doing so we can learn from the experiences and continually improve our services.

## **10. Breaches of Code of Conduct**

You are required to report breaches of this code to a line manager for staff and to a member of staff for volunteers, our audience and stakeholders and visitors. Disciplinary and Grievance procedures will apply where appropriate.

---