



# North Tyneside LINK

## Code of conduct for all LINK Members

### October 2011

## 1. Introduction

All members of North Tyneside LINK are expected to follow the following code of conduct. All LINK staff abide by the host organisation's code of conduct.

## 2. Confidentiality

- 2.1 All LINK members will respect confidentiality at all times. This relates to individuals personal information and information that may identify an individual.
- 2.2 It is LINK members responsibility to protect the interests of our members, the public and LINK, by not divulging confidential information to anyone outside the membership without reasonable cause.
- 2.3 "Confidential information" is information in any format (e.g. written, digital, verbal, etc) and may include:
  - Personal details relating to those working in and with the LINK, including volunteers, patients and service users
  - Internal documents, such as reports, memoranda and financial information
  - Discussions between members of the Board, the LINK Team and others
  - Sensitive information relating to our members, service users and the groups they represent
  - Confidential information relating to public bodies.
- 2.4 Before disclosing any information you should satisfy yourself that the person requesting the information is entitled to it and it will be used for legitimate purposes. If you have any doubts you should refer the matter to the LINK manager. Similarly, you should not request information from another if you are not entitled to it.
- 2.5 Take care not to openly discuss confidential matters (e.g. in corridors), and ensure that confidential material is not accidentally disclosed (e.g. by leaving files open and unattended on a desk or displayed on a computer screen). Sensitive information should be kept secure.
- 2.6 When representing LINK in any meeting or activity, including public forums, care should be taken when disclosing information. If in doubt refer to the LINK Manager.

- 2.7 Where someone requests personal information concerning Board Members, staff or volunteers you should first obtain their permission before disclosing any details.
- 2.8 Sending information by e-mail is not considered to be secure and should not be used for confidential material.

## **2.9 Code of practice in relation to users**

- 2.10 LINK members, Board members and the LINK team will not disclose personal details or information that could identify an individual to any party unless given express permission to do so by the individual concerned.
- 2.11 This also applies to any reports published by the LINK which could identify **individuals**.
- 2.12 Members of working-groups are not permitted to disclose information on projects or investigations to people outside that working-group and the LINK Board.

## **2.13 Confidentiality and authorised representatives**

- 2.14 Authorised representatives will respect the confidentiality of service users, their families and carers as well as service staff that they speak to.
- 2.15 Authorised representatives will not share information that could identify the individuals who have raised a concern about the service being visited.

## **2.16 Confidentiality and the media**

- 2.17 Sensitive and confidential information should not be disclosed to the media.
- 2.18 Requests from the media for information on contentious issues should be referred to the LINK Manager and, where possible, a prepared written statement should be issued.
- 2.19 When arranging publicity about the LINK, or any of our projects, personal details should not be disclosed about anyone without first obtaining their permission, in writing where appropriate.

## **2.20 Photographs**

- 2.21 If you wish to take photographs at an event or meeting you should seek the permission of those present.
- 2.22 Photographs of the LINK Team, Members or Board Members should not be displayed on web sites without their permission

## 2.21 **Enter and view**

2.22 As a member of the LINK Board, Working-Group or as a LINK Authorised Representative you may come across information relating to individual's personal experiences. This information is also confidential and should not be discussed outside the Board or Working-Group without the expressed consent of the individual concerned.

2.23 Evidence and information gathered by Authorised Representatives on Enter and View visits should not be shared or discussed outside of the LINK Working-Group or Board, unless the Board decides that it should be shared more widely.

## 2.24 **General**

2.25 The only circumstances in which a breach of confidentiality may be justified are:

- When there is a perceived danger to the user or others.
- When not to do so would be breaking the law.

2.26 If in doubt discuss it with the Link Manager. If the LINK Manager is not available concerns can be forwarded to the Executive Officer of VODA or the LINK Chair.

2.27 Confidentiality can apply to a wide range of circumstances and is not confined to the matters discussed in this document.

## 3. **Respect**

3.1 The Board represents the community of North Tyneside and members of the Board have been selected for their knowledge, skills and experience. Decisions made by the Board, and the reasons that the decisions have been made will be published. All LINK members are expected to respect the decisions of the Board.

3.2 Members should be aware of the LINK's Equality and Diversity statement. The LINK represents all members of society and members are expected to treat one another with respect and dignity at all times.

## 4. **Information**

4.1 The LINK can only be as good as its members. We rely on the members to keep us informed about health and adult social care issues affecting the local community.

4.2 In return, the LINK will publish findings regarding any project it under takes to keep its members and the wider population informed.

## **5. Representation**

5.1 LINK recognises that members may be involved with other groups, as well as being a LINK member. Members should be aware that they will only represent the LINK when authorised to do so by the LINK Board. Authorised LINK representatives will be issued with a letter from the LINK Chair stating the terms of their representation.

**6. The LINK Board reserves the right to revoke membership of any individual or organisation that fails to comply with this code of conduct.**

## **7. Review**

7.1 This policy will be reviewed by October 2012.

**LINK Manager  
October 2011**