

# Volunteer Code of Behaviour



The Volunteer Code of Behaviour has been developed to support you with your volunteering within IOSH.

Volunteers are defined by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) as “individuals who spend time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives. Central to this definition is the fact that volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual”.

IOSH volunteers are a vital part of the Institution, giving their time freely to support the development of the Institution and the safety and health profession.

The Volunteer Code of Behaviour sets out the responsibilities that volunteers have while they are undertaking duties on behalf of IOSH, and what will happen when words or deeds fall short of what would be classed as acceptable under a set of principles.

## Section 1

The Volunteer Code of Behaviour is based on the seven principles of public life which should serve to underpin your voluntary role with IOSH

- 1.1 **Selflessness** – You should act in a manner that promotes IOSH and the OSH agenda. You should not use your position as a volunteer to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, your family or your friends.
- 1.2 **Integrity** – You should not place yourself under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence you in the performance of your official duties.
- 1.3 **Objectivity** – In carrying out IOSH business, including reviewing recommendations for contract award, recommending individuals for rewards, or reviewing an individual’s application for chartered or other status, you should make choices and recommendations based on merit.
- 1.4 **Accountability** – You are accountable for your actions to the membership and should act for the greater good of the Institution. In certain circumstances you will be required to exercise collective responsibility for decisions that may be contrary to your personal position or opinion.
- 1.5 **Openness vs Confidentiality** – You should be as open as possible about all the recommendations you make and the actions you take but you should respect at all

times the need for confidentiality, particularly in relation to information with a financial or commercial aspect. If you are in receipt of confidential information, do not disclose it. If you are unsure whether the information you have is confidential, please ask your IOSH contact before taking any further action.

- 1.6 **Honesty** – You have a duty to declare any interests relating to your volunteering role and to take steps to resolve or declare any conflicts arising in a way that protects yourself and the Institution from reputational or other risk. You should refer to the Conflict of Interest business rule document for further information.
- 1.7 **Leadership** – You should promote and support these principles by leadership and example, and always consider how you are representing IOSH in your volunteer role.

## Section 2

What is the Volunteer Code of Behaviour?

- 2.1 The Volunteer Code of Behaviour sets out the standards of behaviour that IOSH expects from you when you are volunteering. It also sets out some of the ways in which IOSH will help you to meet those standards.
- 2.2 The Volunteer Code of Behaviour is the foundation of the Volunteer Agreement, which you must sign to become a volunteer with IOSH.
- 2.3 A serious single breach or series of cumulative breaches of this code is likely to be assessed as a breach of the Volunteer Agreement and could result in your opportunity to volunteer being withdrawn, or conditions being placed upon your volunteering.
- 2.4 If you are an IOSH member you are also bound by the wider Member Code of Conduct, which will continue to apply to you. A serious or cumulative breach of the Volunteer Code of Behaviour, or refusal to abide by sanctions imposed under it may be considered a breach of the Member Code of Conduct and could result in the matter transferring to our formal member disciplinary route.
- 2.5 The introduction of the Volunteer Code of Behaviour means that we can support you with your volunteering and deal with any issues even if you are an independent volunteer and without risking your standing as an OSH professional if you are a member, as may be the case were we to process issues through the Member Code of Conduct route.

# Volunteer Code of Behaviour

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- 2.6 Compliance with the Volunteer Code of Behaviour should be regarded as a minimum standard. If you are unsure whether a decision you are about to make will breach the Volunteer Code of Behaviour, ask your agreed IOSH contact. By working within the guidelines of the Volunteer Code of Behaviour you will not only protect, but also positively contribute to the reputation and success of IOSH.
- 2.7 If you would like to ask us any questions about the content of the Volunteer Code of Behaviour, please contact the Governance Team at The Grange.

## Section 3

### Understanding your volunteering role

- 3.1 The Volunteer Code of Behaviour should be read in conjunction with your role description. You must make all reasonable efforts to fulfil the duties set out therein and you should seek advice and guidance from your agreed IOSH contact if you feel you are not able to perform some or all your duties for any reason.
- 3.2 Your role is important, and you should be afforded the time to do it to the best of your ability.
- 3.3 Additional volunteering activities, outside of what may be considered 'within scope' of your formal role, must not be taken on without the agreement of your IOSH contact.
- 3.4 You should at all times be mindful that staff are responsible for day-to-day managerial and operational decisions within the Institution.
- 3.5 It must be remembered that staff are there to support you but are also accountable to their Head of Service and Director and that while staff will always seek to assist a volunteer, they must not, in so doing, go beyond the bounds of whatever authority they have been given by those they are accountable to.
- 3.6 You are expected to act in the interest of your own health and safety, and that of others. IOSH will provide health and safety information, supervision, instruction and equipment as appropriate to the role or tasks being undertaken.
- 3.7 Finally, your volunteering must be undertaken within the laws of the place where you are undertaking the activity.

## Section 4

### Respect and relationships

- 4.1 At the heart of the Volunteer Code of Behaviour is the importance of mutual respect. All relationships should be conducted in a positive and constructive way. Therefore, it is important that any dealings you undertake as a volunteer observe appropriate standards of courtesy and that no one should seek to take unfair advantage of their position or seek to exert undue influence on another party.

- 4.2 All of your interactions with other volunteers should be conducted with proper respect and courtesy, irrespective of whether they share your views or not. Effective teams rely on people holding differing opinions and being able to express themselves in an appropriate way in a safe and supportive environment, to reach an agreed way forward. This code expects that you maintain the IOSH values and apply the seven principles outlined above when volunteering with others. This means that you should be open and honest with others while respectful of their knowledge and motives. At all times you should be mindful of the Institution's policy on equality, diversity and inclusion. You can raise instances where you feel you have been treated discourteously with your Committee Chair (if appropriate) or your IOSH contact.
- 4.3 You should only raise matters relating to the conduct or capability of a member of staff through IOSH's agreed procedures for such matters. If you feel that you have not been treated with proper respect or courtesy or have any concern about the conduct or capability of a member of staff, which you have not been able to resolve through direct discussion with them, you should raise the matter with the respective Line Manager.
- 4.4 Where any member of staff feels that you have not treated them with respect or where they have any other concerns about conduct they will raise it with you, the Chair of the Committee (if appropriate), or with their Manager for investigation. The matter may then pass to the Head of Governance who will investigate the matter for referral to the appropriate committee.
- 4.5 Inappropriate relationships can be inferred from language and style. To protect you, other volunteers and members of IOSH staff, you should be mindful of not just how interactions are intended, but also how interactions may be perceived by others (either participants or observers).
- 4.6 You should not make criticisms of IOSH, volunteers or staff in a public or semi-public environment, for example, online. This point will be interpreted in line with point 3.1 of the Code of Conduct Guidance and in particular these words as set out therein: "You must have regard to the reputation and good standing of IOSH and other members. You should avoid conduct that brings you and/or other members and/or IOSH into disrepute; and/or is prejudicial to the interests of IOSH. Such conduct may include injuring the reputation of a member and inappropriate behaviour."

# Volunteer Code of Behaviour

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## Section 5

### Role-specific behaviours

- 5.1 All volunteers are subject to the Volunteer Code of Behaviour.
- 5.2 Some volunteer roles come with additional expectations (for example Board of Trustees or Council members), but these additional expectations must still be discharged in line with the seven principles as set out and the other expectations set out under the Volunteer Agreement. For information about additional requirements of your role, please refer to your role description.

## Section 6

### Breaches of the Volunteer Code of Behaviour

- 6.1 Any report of a potential breach of this Code will be investigated in the first instance following the escalation routes as set out in Section 4. Should the situation be unresolved then it will be reviewed by the Head of Governance, who in line with the relevant procedure will take appropriate action to resolve the matter or refer to the relevant committee for a decision.
- 6.2 Once resolved, sanctions may be imposed. Disciplinary procedures set out the possible sanctions for breaches which ultimately may mean that IOSH withdraws the opportunity to volunteer.
- 6.3 If the breach(es) is/are serious or persistent there is a recourse to the formal disciplinary procedures (Member Code of Conduct) for further action if necessary.