



Code of Conduct for Members and others using our services and spaces

Introduction

Community Works exists to support the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector in Adur, Worthing, Brighton and Hove. It does this in part by facilitating the sharing of ideas and mutual support between VCSE organisations.

We are committed to providing services and spaces which are welcoming, informative, safe and inclusive to our Members, our guests, our staff and our volunteers. We want everyone to feel comfortable accessing and participating in our spaces. This Code of Conduct covers all our spaces and refers to both physical space (e.g. meeting rooms, offices, events) and digital space (e.g. e-lists, social media channels and online meetings).

We expect everyone accessing our services and spaces to abide by this Code of Conduct. Failure to abide by this Code of Conduct may result in services being restricted or withdrawn and admission to future events being refused.

Organisational Values

We expect all members and other users of Community Works spaces and services to respect our values:

- We challenge oppression and prejudice and promote equity, inclusion and diversity
- We are friendly and make everyone feel welcomed and supported
- We are creative in finding new ways of making voluntary and community action most effective and are not afraid of doing things differently
- We are an independent voice for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector
- We are dynamic and work with purpose to get things done to the highest possible standards and achieve lasting impact.

Conduct in our spaces

Community Works spaces include our physical and online events and the e-lists we host. Our spaces are intended to support VCSE organisations in undertaking their work. We encourage those using our spaces to share their expertise and knowledge with one another towards this aim. We expect that those using our spaces will:

- Not use language which is discriminatory or offensive to others
- Conduct themselves in a way that does not cause harm or distress to others
- Treat others with dignity and respect and value other people's contributions and lived experiences.

- Use people's stated pronouns (sharing your own pronouns is optional)
- Not pursue individual agendas, particularly when these are at others' expense
- Not distribute campaign emails, leaflets, petitions or other such materials, unless they have prior agreement from us
- Allow people to disagree; challenge the issues not individuals and offer constructive criticism
- Stick to one speaker at a time and not interrupt each other (we recognise that this may not be done intentionally)
- Not repeat what has already been said or make long statements or speeches (we recognise that this may not be done intentionally. If people feel they need more time to get their point across, they are invited to speak to a member of staff to discuss other ways of achieving this.)
- Encourage the participation of others
- Respect confidentiality: in general, attendees may leave the meeting and repeat what was said, but not who said it
- Use words in full and not use acronyms or jargon
- Use content warnings if sharing information that is likely to be upsetting
- Put mobile phones and other electronic devices on silent in physical and online spaces (but participation via social media is encouraged)
- Endeavour to be in a private space and/or use headphones during online meetings to ensure privacy/confidentiality and reduce background noise.

We encourage people to take responsibility for communicating their own needs, including their access needs and any reasonable requests to make a space more equitable and inclusive. Community Works usually invites this information ahead of events, but needs and requests can be raised at any time by speaking to or emailing a staff member, or emailing info@communityworks.org.uk

The following are examples of behaviours that would represent a breach of this Code of Conduct:

- Aggression and/or threat of violence - all acts of physical intimidation, aggression or force, including threats.
- Sexual misconduct – any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature. Can include, but is not limited to, sexual comments or jokes, sexual gestures, unwelcome sexual advances, any non-consensual touching/groping, sharing of inappropriate images/sexual content.
- Discriminatory and/or exclusionary language and/or behaviour – any unjust or prejudicial treatment of an individual or group of individuals based on a protected characteristic or perceived characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010. Includes ageism, ableism, sexism, transphobia, racism, religious prejudice (e.g. Islamophobia, anti-Semitism), homophobia and discrimination based on marital status.
- Distribution of misinformation and/or information which is brought together with an intention to undermine and/or stir up hatred

- Bullying and/or abuse – any behaviour (physical, verbal or cyber) that intends to cause physical or psychological harm.
- Coercion – any behaviour that forces someone to do something they are not willing to do through threat, intimidation or manipulating a social power imbalance.

We recognise that people have different identities, lived experiences and deeply held personal beliefs that may be contested by others. We require those accessing our spaces not to use Community Works as a platform for expressing their personal beliefs. Where members feel it is appropriate to express personal beliefs, they should do so with respect and compassion for those that may disagree with them and not express personal beliefs in a way that could undermine, harass, exclude or intimidate others.

Reporting incidents

Incidents that appear to breach this Code of Conduct should be reported to a Community Works staff member either verbally or in writing. The Community Works team, led by the CEO, will decide on appropriate action.

General Meetings

In addition, when attending our general meetings, Members and guests will:

- Abide by the guidelines or ground rules set out at the start of the meeting
- Respect the authority of the Chair in their role as meeting leader
- Engage in discussion and voting according to procedures, maintaining a respectful attitude towards the views of others
- Accept a majority vote as decisive and final

Equity, diversity and inclusion

We are committed to the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion in the way we provide services, and we expect Members and others who participate in our spaces to share our approach.

Many organisations are set up to serve the needs of specific groups of people or communities of identity and interest. However, Members must not unlawfully discriminate against anyone on the grounds of any protected characteristic: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

Protecting the organisation's reputation

Community Works has a duty to protect its good name and that of the VCSE sector in general.

- Members, Reps and others using our spaces are asked to take an active interest in the public image of Community Works and uphold the reputation of the organisation and those who work and volunteer in it.

- If any Member, or another individual or organisation, is dissatisfied with our service provided they should use the Community Works complaints procedure to resolve this.
- Members bringing the organisation into disrepute may have their membership benefits restricted or withdrawn.
- Members may cite their membership of Community Works in communications with funders and other organisations. They should not however imply that this brings with it a recommendation of any sort.
- Members do not acquire any intellectual or property rights as a result of their membership of the organisation. Should a Member wish to use or reproduce the name and/or logo of Community Works, permission should be sought from the Chief Executive.
- Members or others using our spaces must not speak to the press on behalf of Community Works, without permission from the Chief Executive.

Conflict of interest

Individuals attending our events may have multiple roles within the community and sometimes a conflict of interest may arise with an event that Community Works facilitates. If a Member has a conflict of interest in relation to a matter being discussed, we ask that they declare it and act in the best interests of the VCSE sector as a whole.

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