

YMCA TRINITY GROUP



Here for young people  
Here for communities  
Here for you

# CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

January 2023



## OUR VISION

More work with more Young People, in more places.

“More work”: more work hours, that are more impactful, with a greater variety of service types.

“More Young People”: places young people at the focus of our work, not that we work with them exclusively, but rather the work we do benefits them directly or indirectly.

## OUR MISSION

*‘Inspiring communities, transforming young lives’*

Our values are:

**We believe in potential** – yours

**We inspire** – you to have a vision for your life

**We respect** – everyone’s personal journey

**We empathise** – with your individual life choices and support you to take action

**We act with integrity** – we are honest and have strong moral principles

## SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

YMCA Trinity Group is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk and expects all staff to share this commitment.



## INTRODUCTION

This Code of Professional Conduct is a set of guidelines, which will help staff and volunteers work professionally and maintain the Values and Mission of YMCA Trinity Group. It will also protect staff and volunteers from misunderstandings or unfair criticism.

Inevitably, not all the issues covered in this document will apply to all staff and volunteers. Some may only apply to senior managers, others to staff and volunteers who work directly with clients, but it's important that everyone has all the information. If you have any questions about this Code of Professional Conduct, ask your line manager.

It's important to note that this document mirrors a Code of Conduct for Board and Committee (non-staff) members. Where possible the language used is as clear as it can be. However, at times, words are used that are open to interpretation – an example of this is “appropriate”, what one staff member or volunteer considers appropriate another one may not.

Where these types of words are used, it is hoped that staff and volunteers understand that this Code of Professional Conduct strives to project a positive image and promote professionalism throughout.

Pages 4-8 describe the behaviours that are expected from staff and volunteers and pages 9-17, describe the General Standards that we expect from all staff and volunteers.

Again if you're in doubt, talk to your line manager.



**37 staff**  
have more than 15 years' service.  
Of these, 9 have more than 25!

**We believe in potential – yours**

Expected	Desirable	Aspirational
You encourage others to reach their full potential	You take ownership of your own personal development	You encourage others to develop
You participate in professional development and training	You actively promote a culture of learning, by seeking opportunities for yourself and others, asking for help when needed and supporting others to overcome barriers in development.	You actively develop people
You encourage others to use their skills for the common good	You recognise skills in individuals	You encourage participation by staff and volunteers
You participate in consultations and strategies	You take part in working groups	You value and recognise successes
You listen to ideas and suggestions	You take time to reflect on and identify community needs and promote them in team meetings and 1-2-1s	You encourage ideas and suggestions and then act on them
You let clients know they have potential		You appreciate everyone learns in a different way
You engage fully in regular evaluation and 1-2-1 sessions		You build confidence in staff and volunteers to constructively feedback to Managers and Trustees as to how we could do things better



Here for young people  
Here for communities  
Here for you

**We inspire** – *you to have a vision for your life*

Expected	Desirable	Aspirational
You participate in professional development and training	You take time to reflect on and identify community needs and promote them in team meetings and 1-2-1s	You make sure you communicate appropriately, ensuring staff and volunteers are kept informed and their feedback is sought
You lead by example and act as an ambassador for YMCA	You are open and receptive to new methods and ideas	You ensure personal professional development is maintained
		You encourage others to develop
		You encourage participation by staff and volunteers



Here for young people  
Here for communities  
Here for you

**We respect** – *everyone's personal journey*

Expected	Desirable	Aspirational
You treat others as you would wish to be treated	You actively seek the input of others	You monitor behaviours to ensure people are showing respect
You encourage mutual respect of others views, opinions and beliefs	You listen to others	You ensure staff and volunteers are listening to each other's views, beliefs and opinions
You actively practice equality and embrace diversity and inclusion	You respect others suggestions and ideas	You promote and encourage an environment of respect amongst your team
You acknowledge and understand each other's jobs and roles within YMCA		You address instances where people don't conform to the behaviours framework, not ignore them
You have an open, non-judgemental approach to everyone		
You listen to what people say to you and acknowledge their point of view		



Here for young people  
Here for communities  
Here for you

**We empathise** – *with your individual life choices and support you to take action*

Expected	Desirable	Aspirational
You are fair, supporting and accepting of others	You make time to understand and share each other's challenges	You encourage ideas and suggestions and then act on them
You recognise who our clients are	You actively promote a culture of learning, by seeking opportunities for yourself and others, asking for help when needed and supporting others overcome barriers in development	You appreciate everyone learns in a different way
You actively practice equality and embrace diversity and inclusion	You acknowledge the limitations of others and seek to show greater understanding	
You strive to understand an individual's needs		
You show acceptance of others		
You listen to what people say to you and acknowledge their point of view		

**We act with integrity** – *we are honest and have strong moral principles*

Expected	Desirable	Aspirational
You are open and honest in all aspects of your work with clients, colleagues and stakeholders	You are open and receptive to new methods and ideas	You maintain professional integrity even in times of challenge, pressure and stress
You are trustworthy in carrying out the duties expected of you by YMCA	You work as part of a collective	You promote the work, staff and volunteers of YMCA
You maintain appropriate personal boundaries in your work	You promote trust	You act as a role model in your behaviours
You keep the confidentiality of clients and stakeholders in work and outside		You recognise and pro-actively support a good work-life balance
You encourage pro-active, positive communication		You participate in the wider YMCA Federation activities to support other team to enable you to grow and develop
You raise questions and concerns when see the potential of others being obstructed		You challenge and address concerns around negative behaviour
You know and understand all areas of YMCA's work to enable you to support other teams to enable you to grow and develop		You value and recognise successes
You, when appropriate, have open and transparent communication with other agencies		You challenge and address concerns around negative behaviours
You follow YMCA policies, guidelines and rules		



## GENERAL STANDARDS

### *General Conduct*

YMCA Trinity Group expect high standards of personal conduct from all employees and volunteers. Staff and volunteers must always follow YMCA Trinity Group's policies and procedures, especially where the health & safety and safeguarding of staff, volunteers and clients is concerned. As a minimum, staff and volunteers should come ready for work, not under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs (please refer to the Staff Alcohol & Drug policy) and dressed appropriately (if in doubt about what's appropriate, talk to your line manager), this includes on-call duties.

### *Financial Conduct*

As a charity, YMCA Trinity Group is governed by various legislation, it must therefore ensure that its money and other resources it is given are used in a responsible and lawful way. Staff and volunteers are key in ensuring that money and other resources are protected from abuse, theft or waste. You should strive for value for money for the clients and the funding bodies who support YMCA Trinity Group.

You should be aware of YMCA Trinity Group's financial regulations, standing orders and internal controls, and observe them. A copy of the Finance Manual is available on Cascade.

You must be aware that it is a serious criminal and disciplinary offence to receive a gift, loan, fee, reward or other advantage in return for doing anything, or showing favour, to any person or organisation in the course of your work. It is also a disciplinary matter to use your position to the detriment or disadvantage of an individual or organisation.

When working with money or resources, always reflect on how others may interpret your behaviour. Always make sure that you can justify how you've acted and, if you make a mistake, you must report it to your line manager as soon as you can.

### *Confidential Reporting*

Each staff member and volunteer should take responsibility to report any deficiencies in service delivery, breach of this Code or other procedures to your line manager. If this is inappropriate, then you should talk to another senior manager or a member of the Executive team. YMCA Trinity Group's whistle-blowing policy will ensure that you can do this without any fear of recrimination or punishment.

You can find the Whistleblowing policy on Cascade

You should recognise that failure to follow this Code of Professional Conduct may damage YMCA Trinity Group and its work and therefore will be viewed as a disciplinary matter. Where this is the case, it will be dealt with under normal disciplinary procedures. A serious breach of this code of conduct may lead to a dismissal.

The Disciplinary Policy and Procedure can be found on Cascade.

## RELATIONSHIPS

### *Board Members*

The Board of Trustees govern all the work that takes place at YMCA Trinity Group. If your work brings you into contact with Board Members, mutual respect between you and them is essential to the good running of YMCA Trinity Group. Inappropriate familiarity between you and the individual Board Member could be prejudicial to this relationship and should be avoided, especially in the work context. If you have a close relationship with a Board Member, this should be shared with your line manager. This includes family connections or relationships.

You should not use informal channels to influence Board Members on matters of Board business.

### *Staff and volunteers*

From time to time we all disagree. If you have a problem or an issue with a colleague make sure you don't allow this to affect the service to clients. Never argue in public. If a problem persists, see your line manager to try and resolve the issue informally or, if you feel it's necessary, use the grievance procedure.

The Grievance procedure can be found on Cascade.

### *Clients (including Residents)*

If you are involved in the delivery of services, you should always remember your responsibilities to the clients and community you serve, and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals.

See details in the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy on Cascade.

A professional relationship between members of staff, volunteers and clients is very different from that of friends or family members. It can lead to misunderstanding and confusion if the member of staff or volunteer and client are not clear as to their respective roles.

If boundaries are not adhered to it leaves staff and volunteers open to allegations of unprofessional conduct and abuse. The object of this policy is to protect staff and volunteers and help them to feel more secure by making it clear what they can and cannot do.

No policy on professional boundaries can cover every eventuality; and there will always be an element of debate as to what behaviour is acceptable or unacceptable; this Code of Professional Conduct is intended to lay down guidelines for people to follow. Where there is doubt as to the appropriateness of behaviour at work, staff should always consult with their line manager.

Behaviours are listed under three headings:

1. Prohibited on all occasions
2. At line manager's discretion and recorded
3. At worker's own discretion



### *Prohibited on all occasions*

- ▶ Sexual relationships with clients.
- ▶ Initiating or continuing gratuitous talk about sex.
- ▶ Physical contact with sexual intent.
- ▶ Inappropriate physical contact.
- ▶ Unnecessary or unwanted physical contact
- ▶ Sharing smoking paraphernalia with residents or smoking together
- ▶ Meeting a client socially in a restaurant or pub (Exception: Unless part of a written and agreed action plan or planned social skills programme.)
- ▶ Social meeting in a client's room/home. (Exception: Unless part of written and agreed care plan or planned social skills programme.)
- ▶ Social meeting with a client in your own home.
- ▶ Being friends with clients or clients' families on Social Media sites
- ▶ Expressing inappropriate terms of endearment to a client.
- ▶ Disclosing your own current emotional personal problems to the detriment of listening to clients' needs.
- ▶ Imposing your political views on clients.
- ▶ Pressuring a client to make a will or trust under which you are named as executor, trustee or beneficiary.
- ▶ Casual handling of a client's money or valuables – e.g. failing to give a receipt for every financial transaction.
- ▶ Receiving money for yourself from clients.
- ▶ Receiving loans for yourself from clients.
- ▶ Giving or loaning clients your personal money.
- ▶ Lending or giving YMCA Trinity Group money to a client outside financial regulations.
- ▶ Taking any action on the client's behalf if that action breaks any law. This includes giving references that you know to be false.
- ▶ Advising clients to take a course of action that is legally or morally wrong.

- ▶ Disclosure of your own or other staff member's addresses or contact numbers (excludes work mobiles)
- ▶ Continuing to support clients outside of the project's parameters.
- ▶ The buying or selling of goods to or from clients (unless within a retail environment).
- ▶ The giving or receiving of technical services to/from clients (e.g. – repairs, odd jobs, etc.).

### *Line Manager's discretion and recorded*

- ▶ Receiving funds for your team in a way that complies with financial regulations.
- ▶ Receiving a gift for your team.
- ▶ Giving a client a gift.
- ▶ Accepting an invitation to a social event by a client
- ▶ Allowing yourself to be alone with a client in an uncontrolled area e.g. bedroom. (Exception: An emergency situation or in a counselling room, interview room etc where you should follow your relevant project policies & procedures.)

### *At worker's own discretion*

- ▶ Receiving a small gift for yourself. [Less than £10 in value] Although you must consider the consequences of accepting a gift from a client and how they will view this. If in doubt refer to your Line Manager. Some departments may have their own rules.
- ▶ Expressing anger at a client. (Needs to be recorded.)
- ▶ Inappropriate swearing.
- ▶ Disclosing whether you have received personal therapy.
- ▶ Disclosing personal information. In disclosing personal information, a staff member or volunteer must be personally responsible for exercising professional judgement about the validity, wisdom and necessity of such a disclosure with due

account to outcome (e.g. disclosing marital status/sexual orientation).

- Physical contact as a result of emotional disclosure or client instigated (includes hugging).

### *Gifts*

As a charity we need to be careful about how we receive gifts or 'freebies'. In general, where the value is under £10 then staff and volunteers can keep and use these gifts as appropriate, although you must consider how by accepting the gift this will be viewed by the client. If their value is over £10 then it should be reported to your line manager, before anything is done with the gift. Most gifts over £10 will need to be given to the relevant Executive Member who will log it in the 'gifts and gratuities' register. Please check with your line manager your department rules.

Personal gifts may not be solicited under any circumstances.

When you must decline a gift, you should be courteous but firm, and draw the attention of the person making the offer to the existence of this Code.

This £10 rule is set as a maximum. Individual projects may have different guidelines on gifts, but any change will always be below this £10 threshold, never above it. For example, your section may decide not to receive any gifts, whatever the value or gifts up to a value of £2.50. If you're in doubt, talk with your line manager.

### *Hugging*

Hugging and other physical contact is a very difficult area to address. At times during our work, it may be entirely appropriate to hug a client, say after a very difficult disclosure or a big success, but it can also be seen as very inappropriate. Staff and volunteers should always consider the inappropriateness of a hug in mind. Even appropriate hugs should be brief and not very tight. Staff and volunteers should remember that hugging someone of the same sex is not necessarily non-sexual.

### *Potential Clients*

If you are involved in the award of tenancies/licences/contracts or allocation of housing or other services, you must ensure absolute impartiality in the decisions made and avoid any conflict of interest. In some circumstances, legislation prevents YMCA Trinity Group from allocating housing to a relative of an employee. You therefore need to declare it if any of your relatives applies for housing from YMCA Trinity Group.

You must also declare the names of any potential clients with whom you have or have in the past had:

- a family connection
- a business relationship
- a social relationship
- taught or supervised
- worked with on another project





Here for young people  
Here for communities  
Here for you

### *Past/Ex-Clients & Ex-Staff/Volunteers*

In some circumstances, a professional relationship may continue after a client has formally ended their time in a project. Staff and volunteers must remain aware that they continue to represent the YMCA Trinity Group in any ongoing relationship, and attention should therefore be given to your professional conduct. In effect this means – ‘once a client, always a client’. If you have queries around an ongoing relationship and its appropriateness, you should speak with your line manager. It is also important that any ongoing relationship is not to the detriment of current clients. Work with an ex-client should always be approved in advance by your line manager in writing.

Once you’ve left the employment of YMCA Trinity Group, you are not bound by this Code of Professional Conduct. However, if YMCA Trinity Group sees fit it may reserve the right to refuse entry to its facilities or services.

You must not continue relationships with clients once you have left employment, unless this is in another professional capacity.

### *Equality, diversity and inclusion*

An important core value of YMCA Trinity Group is the promotion of inclusivity and diversity. You should ensure that YMCA Trinity Group’s policies concerning equality, diversity and inclusion issues are complied with, both in the letter and the spirit. Equality issues affect every area of YMCA Trinity Group’s work – in provision of services, purchasing decisions and as an employer.

All members of the local community, clients, suppliers and your fellow employees have a right to be treated with fairness and equity.

For details see the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy.

## **BALANCING CONFIDENTIALITY AND OPENNESS**

### *Openness*

The law requires that certain types of information must be available to members, auditors, clients and the public. YMCA Trinity Group may itself decide to be open about other types of information. You need to be aware of which information YMCA Trinity Group is open about, and act accordingly. If in any doubt, you should refer to your line manager and the Privacy Statement relevant for your client group.

### *Confidentiality*

You equally need to be aware of which information must be kept confidential. Personal information about YMCA Trinity Group’s clients, your colleagues or other individuals must be regarded as strictly confidential. Information about such individuals may only be released outside YMCA Trinity Group in line with your Privacy Statement which may require written consent of the individual concerned. Exceptions to this will only be made in meeting over-riding legal requirements and you must have written permission from your manager to do so.

You should not use any information obtained in the course of your employment for personal gain or benefit, nor should you pass it on to others who might use it in such a way (see third paragraph under ‘Tendering and purchasing’ for guidelines on commercially sensitive information.)

For clarification, see the Data Protection policy and the relevant Privacy Statement for your area of delivery.



## TENDERING AND PURCHASING

### *General*

You must exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with all consultants, suppliers, contractors and sub-contractors. All orders and contracts must be awarded on merit, by fair competition.

YMCA Trinity Group has regulations and procedures for ensuring fair tendering or procurement processes. See 'Declaration of Interests'.

No special favour should be shown to any business with which you or your family has some personal or professional connection. The same applies to any business connected with current or recent former employees, or their partners, close relatives or associates.

For more information on tendering and purchasing see the Finance Manual.

### *Confidentiality of information*

If you have access to confidential information on tender costs or other commercially sensitive information, then you must not disclose that information to any unauthorised person or organisation.

### *Use of the employer's suppliers or contractors*

Where possible, and where alternatives exist, you should avoid the use for private purposes of suppliers, contractors, consultants or other organisations used by YMCA Trinity Group.

In practical terms, this may not always be possible or practical. If you use YMCA Trinity Group suppliers or contractors for personal services,

you must achieve a separation between your personal purchasing decision and YMCA Trinity Group's and must not give or receive favourable treatment.

Where you do use such a company, you should make a declaration to your line manager for goods or services and obtain written consent before such use unless the value of annual transactions is less than £1,000.

## EMPLOYMENT MATTERS

### *Ensuring impartiality*

In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, you must not be involved in an appointment where you are related to an applicant or have a close personal relationship outside work with them. Any such relationship should be declared to your line manager, whether or not you are involved in the appointment process.

Similarly, you should not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay adjustments for any other employee who is a relative, partner or close personal friend.

The law and YMCA Trinity Group's procedures lay down rules for appointment, discipline and dismissal of staff. These must be observed scrupulously and impartially, subject always to the duty to act fairly.

Please see details in our staff handbook.





Here for young people  
Here for communities  
Here for you

You must not canvass the support of colleagues or Board Members for any candidate applying for employment. You must also resist and report any attempt by others to do so.

If you (or a member of your family) live in YMCA accommodation, you must not use your position as an employee or volunteer to gain any advantage or preferential treatment.

## OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

### *General*

Your activities outside the workplace are your own business, but in some circumstances could overlap or conflict with the interests of YMCA Trinity Group. If in any doubt, you should declare the matter to your line manager, and seek any necessary written permission. Activities outside of the workplace which may bring YMCA Trinity into disrepute may result in the Disciplinary process.

### *Use of facilities*

No non-YMCA Trinity Group work of any sort should be undertaken at your place of work, and no use should be made of office facilities (such as telephones, postage or access to Administrative support) in connection with such work. The prohibition also extends to unpaid or voluntary activity unless you have written permission from your line manager.

Non-work use of telephones and e-mail should be kept to a minimum.

For more information, go to the IT Policy and procedures.

### *Political campaigning and public activities*

You must avoid any activity in the public arena, which could bring YMCA Trinity Group into disrepute. YMCA Trinity Group have procedures concerning political and campaigning activities, and standing for public office, and these must be followed.

You must follow the expressed policies and procedures of YMCA Trinity Group and must not allow your own personal or political opinions to interfere with your work or impartiality.

### *Hospitality*

You should never accept lavish hospitality, or any hospitality, which could be interpreted as a way of exerting an improper influence over the way you carry out your duties. Nor should you offer such hospitality to others on behalf of YMCA Trinity Group. The timing of hospitality in relation to procurement or purchasing decisions, which YMCA Trinity Group may be taking, is especially sensitive. Above all, you must never solicit hospitality. As a rule, you should not accept hospitality, which YMCA Trinity Group would not reciprocate in similar circumstances.

When you must decline hospitality, you should be courteous but firm, and draw the attention of the person making the offer to the existence of this Code of Professional Conduct. If necessary, you should pay your share of any costs, and claim these from YMCA Trinity Group in the ordinary way.



### *Acceptable hospitality*

You may accept modest working meals and light refreshments without making any declaration or obtaining written consent.

Other hospitality may be accepted, with prior written consent from your line manager, for instance where:

- A. there is a genuine need to impart information or represent YMCA Trinity Group in the community;
- B. an event is clearly part of the life of the community or where YMCA Trinity Group should be seen to be represented;
- C. the hospitality concerns attendance at a relevant conference or course where the hospitality is corporate rather than personal.

All such hospitality received must be recorded in a hospitality register, as should hospitality given on behalf of YMCA Trinity Group.

### *Site visits etc.*

Where you must go with a contractor or supplier to inspect sites or equipment, you should claim the cost of such visits from YMCA Trinity Group in the ordinary way.

### *Sponsorship*

Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor or is seeking to sponsor the activity of YMCA Trinity Group, whether by invitation, tender or negotiation, or voluntarily, the basic conventions concerning the award of contracts, and acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply.



## **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

### *General*

You must ensure that private or personal interests do not influence your decisions, and that you do not use your position to obtain personal gain of any sort, either for yourself directly, or for your family, friends or associates.

You must declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest arising from previous sections of this Code of Professional Conduct.

It may be that you know a client, or a friend/relative of a client. If this is the case, this could present a conflict of interest and should be shared with your line manager. It may be that this will then affect the type of work you can do with this client.

### *Declarations*

You should be meticulous about declaring an actual or potential conflict of interest as they arise, as affecting you, your close family, friends or associates. (Potential conflicts of interest are sometimes referred to as 'dualities of interest'.) You must declare to your line manager any financial or non-financial interests that you consider could bring about conflict with YMCA Trinity Group's interests. These could typically involve the sale or purchase of property or the awarding of contracts to a person or firm but might be in other areas of YMCA Trinity Group's work. If in any doubt, you should seek advice from your line manager.

YMCA Trinity Group will maintain a formal register of the interests of Board Members, staff and volunteers. You will be expected to sign an initial declaration for the register and thereafter to update it whenever



a new interest arises. These registers will normally be available for public inspection, unless there is a good reason for confidentiality.

If you are the Board (or Committee) member of another social landlord or voluntary agency, you should declare conflicts of interest arising in the normal way. The same is true if you are an elected member of a local authority.

### *Conduct in meetings*

If you are present at a Board or Committee meeting, which is discussing an item which poses a conflict of interest for you, you should take no part in the discussion or decision and should declare the conflict and offer to leave the meeting.

### *Membership of certain organisations*

You should declare to your line manager if you are a member of any organisation not open to the public, which has secrecy about its rules or membership or conduct.

YMCA Trinity Group has a Whistleblowing policy and guidelines, which can be found on Cascade.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

YMCA Trinity Group recognises that the internet provides the opportunity to participate in interactive discussions and information sharing through an increasing range of social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs and wikis. Whilst many organisations seek to realise the benefits, social media activity can also pose risks to organisations such as the sharing of confidential information, damage to reputation and compliance with legal obligations.

YMCA Trinity Group recognises that deliberate social media misuse is likely to be rare, but that due to the evolving nature of social media, it is important that staff have guidance on what YMCA Trinity Group deems to be acceptable/non-acceptable use, please refer to the Social Media policy and procedure on Cascade for full details.

## **SUMMARY**

YMCA Trinity Group will always strive to attain the highest professional standards in its work. Using this Code of Professional Conduct with the staff handbook will provide all of the basic operational information that staff, and volunteers require.

At the same time the relevant policies are on available on Cascade, these give more specific rules and guidelines by which we must operate. If you need a point clarified ask your line manager for advice. It must also be recognised that this Code of Professional Conduct is a 'living' document. It may become outdated or superseded as YMCA Trinity Group grows and changes. If you feel that parts of this document are no longer relevant or are preventing certain pieces of work being done, then speak to the HR Manager.

