



the british
psychological society
promoting excellence in psychology

Code of conduct for members undertaking activities on behalf of the society

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1. Introduction

Many of the Society's members voluntarily contribute their time and expertise to support a wide range of activities. Their contributions are very much valued by all who benefit from them. In order to support them and to assist and guide them in understanding their roles while undertaking work on its behalf, the Society has adopted this Code of Conduct which sets out our expectations of the behaviour of members undertaking activities on behalf of the Society and the standards we expect from members in making decisions in carrying out their activities. These activities might include, for example, service on a committee or board, running events, or contributing to a document or consultation.

Members engaged in work for the Society are reminded to use the Society's Code of Ethics and Conduct to inform their professional and ethical judgement and behaviour when conducting Society business. This Code of Conduct is not intended to replace any other professional Codes that members may be signed up to, but is intended to be additional, complementary and mutually reinforcing.

All Members undertaking activities on behalf of the Society are required to complete a Declaration of Interest form prior to undertaking activities, and to declare any new interests as they arise.

2. Code of Conduct

It is the responsibility of members working for the Society to act in accordance with the Society's [Code of Ethics and Conduct](#), the Society's Statement of Values, and the Nolan Principles (set out in the Appendix) which are widely recognised and applied in public and third sector organisations.

More specifically, as a member you must:

- respect individual, cultural and role differences including (but not exclusively) those involving age, disability, education, ethnicity, gender, language, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, marital or family status and socio-economic status;
 - respect the knowledge, insight, experience and expertise of others (including fellow members and Society staff);
 - work considerately and respectfully with all, maintaining relationships that respect diversity, different roles and boundaries, and ensure that you do not give offence;
 - contribute positively and interact in a respectful and professional manner even where there are differences in opinion;
 - respect the privacy and confidentiality of others;
 - refrain from engaging in any form of bullying, harassment or victimisation of others:
 - bullying is defined as a persistent pattern of offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour and/or an abuse or misuse of power that may lead to an individual feeling upset, vulnerable, undermined, humiliated or threatened. In some cases, a single incidence may constitute bullying
 - harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal action which has the effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for an individual. Harassment can be an isolated act or it can take the form of repeated behaviour against an individual or group
 - victimisation is defined as occurring when someone is treated less favourably by others because they have, in good faith, or are suspected to have, supported or raised a complaint against bullying, harassment or discriminatory behaviour.
2. Reflect on your own competence and performance:
- operate within your bounds of competence and remain aware of the limits of your competent functioning;
 - withdraw from Society business when your professional competence and behaviour is impaired, or where a conflict of interest arises.
3. Value your responsibilities to others and to the Society:
- not engage in conduct that might bring the Society or the reputation of the profession into disrepute;
 - act in the best interest of the Society as a whole;
 - attend meetings or give apologies in advance for absence, and meet the attendance requirements that apply to a given board or committee;
 - prepare adequately for meetings;
 - actively engage in discussion, debate and voting in meetings – contribute to collective decisions and accept a majority decision;

- follow sound health and safety practices in the conduct of your activities, to ensure your safety and the safety of those who work with you or are affected by your activities. Comply with all health and safety policies and procedures of the Society insofar as they apply to your activities.

4. Value accuracy, clarity and fairness in your interactions with all persons:

- be honest and accurate in representing your professional opinion, experience, and knowledge;
- ensure that your statements and arguments have appropriate justification and do not misrepresent the views of others;
- address any problems that may arise from dual or multiple relationships;
- refrain from promoting your own professional services, research or products when acting for the Society;
- register all interests and declare any potential conflicts of interest and withdraw from any relevant decision-making.

5. Value honesty and integrity:

- ensure that you do not receive any financial or non-financial benefit unless it is explicitly authorised in line with the Royal Charter Statutes and Rules, Charity Commission Guidance or policies agreed by the Trustees of the Society;
- value the highest standards in governance;
- always respect confidentiality and, if the status of information is unclear, seek further advice.

Procedure where a member may not be following the Code of Conduct for members undertaking activities on behalf of the Society

1. Members working for the Society are expected to act within the content and spirit of the Code. Where members consider the Code to be breached, they are encouraged to raise this with the member concerned, where they feel comfortable to do so, with a view to seeking an informal resolution. Chairs of Society Boards/Committees may assist and will provide constructive feedback when problems occur.
2. Given the guidance provided in the Code, it is expected that difficulties will be rare and most will be resolved informally.
3. On the rare occasion that a member commits a serious breach of the Code or fails to respond to constructive feedback from colleagues or senior staff members, any party may raise a concern for consideration under the Member Conduct Rules.
4. If the matter concerns a member's conduct towards a member of staff and falls within the Society's Dignity at Work Policy, then the associated procedure, which has both informal and formal stages, will apply before the matter may be raised for consideration under the Member Conduct Rules.
5. If a matter is raised within the Member Conduct Rules, the Trustees will be advised. Members undertaking activities on behalf of the Society agree to stand aside from those activities during a period of investigation if required to do so by the Trustees. This may occur where the Trustees decide that the evidence suggests that the work of the Society or the wellbeing of individuals may be adversely affected if the member continues with their activities whilst the matter is under consideration. Where a member is required to stand aside there is no implication of a breach of the Code or of the Member Conduct Rules at that stage.
6. The Society reserves the right to identify a member who has been required to stand aside from the activities that they undertake on behalf of the Society. In each case the Society will consider transparency, accountability and fairness to all parties involved.

REFERENCES

British Psychological Society (2021). *Member Conduct Rules*. Leicester: Author.
www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/member-conduct-rules

British Psychological Society (2021). *Code of Ethics and Conduct*. Leicester: Author.
<https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/bps-code-ethics-and-conduct>

Appendix – The Nolan Seven Principles of Public Life

The Seven Principles of Public Life, produced by the Nolan Committee and widely adopted by public bodies and the third sector, provide a code of ethics which is directly relevant to work for organisations such as the Society and these underpin a culture of fairness, transparency and service for the Society for the good of the discipline.

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.



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