



# Code of Conduct policy and procedure

Galway Simon Community

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## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 Galway Simon Community has developed a unified Code of Conduct (the Code) that applies to all individuals employed or full-time volunteering in our organisation.
- 1.2 This code of conduct defines the standards of behaviour expected of an individual in order to ensure that the organisation is effective, open and accountable; that individuals have productive and supportive relationships with each other, clients and other persons who interact with the organisation.
- 1.3 Galway Simon Community is committed to providing the highest possible code of standards and behaviours and quality of care to all people within the Community. Each individual has a responsibility to uphold the values of the organisation to ensure their practice reflects high standards of behaviour.

## 2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy and procedure is to set out the standards of behaviour expected from individuals employed or full-time volunteering in the organisation which are required in their role within Galway Simon Community. (*Individuals refers to employees, full-time volunteers, students, trainees and interns*)

## 3. SCOPE

- 3.1 This policy and procedure will apply to employees, full-time volunteers, students, trainees and interns within Galway Simon Community and any person engaged in any capacity to provide services or advice to, or on behalf of, the provider or its funded agencies on a consulting basis.

## 4. OBJECTIVES OF THE CODE

- 4.1 The primary objective of the Code is to ensure the safety of all individuals, employed, or full-time volunteering in the organisation and those who access our services i.e. our clients.
- 4.2 We strive to ensure that the quality and standards of our services is continuously improving.
- 4.3 The 'Code' will establish a single, shared ethos in all services provided publicly or privately, in any setting; residential homes, community, individual homes, offices and shops.
- 4.4 The Code recognises that our social care staff work in an environment involving a complex set of interactions between individuals, teams, external organisations every day and that, to achieve this objective, they must be supported in doing so.

## 5. PRINCIPLES OF THE CODE

- 5.1 The principles, together with our values, guide our actions under this Code of Conduct.
  - 5.1.1 **Client Centeredness/Putting People First** – we will put the needs and the voices of clients, and those providing the services, at the centre of all of our work, treating all individuals with kindness, dignity and respect. We will strive for equity in access and care for all.
  - 5.1.2 **Kindness, Dignity and Respect** – we will be kind, respectful and courteous in our dealings with clients, organisations and each other.
  - 5.1.3 **Openness and Transparency, Honest Communication, Learning and Accountability** – we will communicate with openness, transparency, and honesty, ensure learning when any individual(s) has suffered harm as a result of our care and accept full responsibility for our actions.
  - 5.1.4 **Excellence, Effectiveness and Efficiency** – we will take personal responsibility for excellence in our work, and seek continuous improvement through self-evaluation and innovation.
  - 5.1.5 **Working Together/Teamwork and Client Involvement** – we will commit to collaborative working, and engage with people providing, and people using, the services in improving and developing all aspects of our work.

## 6. LEGISLATION/OTHER RELATED POLICIES

- 6.1 This policy is informed by *'Supporting a Culture of Safety, Quality and Kindness: A Code of Conduct for Health and Social Service Providers* developed by the Department of Health, (May 2018).
- 6.2 The Legislation which informs this policy includes the Health Acts 2004 to 2007 and the Mental Health Act 2001.
- 6.3 Many of the expectations of an individual set out in this code of conduct policy below will be addressed in more detail in the specific policies of the organisation and/or in an individual's contract of employment, or an agreement in respect of a full-time volunteer.
- 6.4 The Code of Conduct policy and procedure should be read in conjunction with the following Galway Simon Community policies and it is not intended to be a substitute for such policies:
  - 6.4.1 Client's Complaints policy and procedure.
  - 6.4.2 General Complaints policy and procedure.
  - 6.4.3 Vulnerable Adult Protection policy and procedure.
  - 6.4.4 Complaints pertaining to an individual (*employee, full-time volunteer, student, intern or trainee*) policy and procedure
  - 6.4.5 Protective Disclosures 'Whistleblowing' policy and procedure
  - 6.4.6 Acceptable use policy and procedure.
  - 6.4.7 Disciplinary policy and procedure.
  - 6.4.8 Grievance policy and procedure.
  - 6.4.9 Dignity at Work, policy and procedure.
  - 6.4.10 Drugs and Alcohol policy and procedure.
  - 6.4.11 Recruitment & Selection policy and procedure.
  - 6.4.12 Health & Safety statement.
  - 6.4.13 IT & Communications policy and procedure.
  - 6.4.14 Volunteer policy and procedure

## 7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 7.1 The **Board** of Galway Simon Community will be accountable for the overall implementation of the Code.
- 7.2 **Senior Management Team**, The Chief Executive Officer and other individuals occupying an executive position with a specific governance remit for functions such as Finance, Client Services, HR, Property, Fundraising & Communications and Line Managers, with responsibilities for the day-to-day running of the departments/services, will be accountable for the implementation of the code in their respective functions.
- 7.3 **Human Resources**: must ensure that an individual(s) working or full-time volunteering in the organisation are made aware of this Code, are given appropriate guidance and are updated on any changes, and act responsibly upon any reported breaches.
- 7.4 **Line Managers** are responsible for supporting individuals within their department/service in carrying out their duties and always, in terms of their conduct, serve as an example of how individuals should conduct themselves in order to reflect the values of Galway Simon Community and take seriously any breaches of the Code that are brought to their attention. All Line managers will implement, uphold and promote training and development opportunities to support individuals to continually strengthen and develop their skills and knowledge and ensure that they have the competence to perform their work in line with best practice guidelines and the strategic objectives of the organisation.
- 7.5 An **Individual(s)** is responsible to ensure they carry out their duties in a manner that is consistent with this Code and to proactively advocate in the best interests of the organisation at all times, and challenge others to do the same. Furthermore, an individual is responsible to fulfill their duty of care at all times, which requires them to always act in the best interests of an individual(s) and others and not act, or fail to act, in a manner that results in harm to any person(s).

## 8. PROCEDURE

**8.1 Interactions with Clients:** An individual(s) (*as defined above*) when working with, or on behalf of clients should maintain the highest standards of behavior in the performance of their duties as follows:

- Show respect for clients to include their values and beliefs.
- Be respectful at all times of the privacy of personal/medical information of clients.
- Proactively work collaboratively and in partnership with clients.
- Work with a client(s) in a responsible manner, setting clear boundaries and communicating these boundaries explicitly from the outset of the working relationship.
- Outline clearly the terms on which a service is being offered to a client prior to the commencement of a working relationship, to include outlining their rights and responsibilities and the consequences of when the rules are not adhered to. Any revisions of these terms must be agreed in advance.
- Acknowledge a client in a sensitive and open manner, if they meet them in public; at a social gathering, and/or other settings, without becoming involved socially with them. However, they should be cognisant of client confidentiality and that they may not wish to be identified as a 'client'.
- Must not get involved with a client in a friendship, a formal business relationship or a sexual relationship.
- Must remain accountable for relationships with former clients and must exercise caution if entering into a friendship, a formal business relationship or a sexual relationship. The decision about any changes in relationships with former clients should consider whether the issues and power dynamics present during their working relationship, with that client have been resolved and properly ended.
- Be aware about the inequality of power that exists between them and a client and thus avoid any physical or psychological harm to them, through their actions in the provision of services.
- Be aware that they may be offered gifts by clients from time to time. Such a practice should be discouraged. However, it may be appropriate to accept a token gift on occasion and if so, it must be discussed with the Line Manager and acknowledged within the team prior to any gift being accepted.
- Not disclose inappropriate details about their own personal life to clients, *for example an individual should not give clients their home address or telephone number*. If their address or telephone number has been disclosed this should be reported to the Line Manager and/or the Head of Client Services immediately.
- Should not discuss personal or any other details about one client with another.
- Should be cautious and stop to consider all physical contact with a client. It may not be appropriate to have any physical contact with a client, even if they are very distressed and the immediate reaction of an individual may be to offer them support through touch.
- Must not impose any of their personal beliefs on a client or use their position of power in the professional relationship to suggest that the adoption of their own beliefs will or could lead to preferential treatment.
- Must ensure that when on duty that they dress in a way that is functional, adheres to health and safety requirements and is sensitive to the client group.
- Must take the responsibility of bringing to the attention of their Line Manager any issue(s) relating to clients which they have concerns about and addressing them through the appropriate channel(s).
- Identify if and when the relationship is inconsistent with the aims of Galway Simon Community and be aware of social, legal and professional consequences of any act, which may be

professionally, morally, legally or ethically questionable. If in doubt, guidance and clarification should be sought from their Line Manager.

**8.2 General Procedures for all Individuals** (*as defined above*): An individual(s) should maintain the highest standards of behaviour in the performance of their duties as follows:

- Fulfill their role as outlined in their contract of employment and job description to a satisfactory standard.
- Perform their duties to the best of their ability in a safe, efficient and competent manner.
- Follow the organisation's policies and procedures, as well as, any instructions and directions reasonably given to them.
- Act honestly, responsibly and with integrity.
- Treat others with fairness, equality, dignity and respect at all times.
- Respect the privacy of confidential information of clients, colleagues or other services.
- Act in a manner that is in line with the principles and values of the organisation and that enhances the work of the organisation.
- Communicate respectfully and honestly at all times with colleagues and all persons who interact with Galway Simon Community.
- Maintain high standards of service delivery by discharging responsibilities conscientiously, honestly and impartially, always acting within the law and performing duties with efficiency, diligence and courtesy.
- Observe safety procedures, including obligations concerning the safety, health and welfare of others, in line with training provided to them.
- Report any health and safety concerns even when it is not within their area of responsibility.
- Raise concerns about possible wrongdoing in the workplace with the Designated person in line with the Protective Disclosure's 'whistleblowing' policy and procedure.
- Direct any questions regarding the organisation's policies, procedures, support or supervision to their Line manager and/or HR.
- Address any issues or difficulties about any aspect of their role or how they are managed in line with the organisation's Grievance policy and procedure.
- Keep confidential matters strictly confidential, in compliance with the Confidential policy and procedure.
- Exercise caution and care with any documents, material or devices containing confidential information and, at the end of their employment with Galway Simon Community returning any such document(s), material(s) or device(s) in their possession.
- Seek authorisation before communicating externally on behalf of the organisation, in compliance with the Communications policy and procedure.
- Comply with the organisation's Information Technology policy and procedure;
- Declare any interests that may conflict with their work or the work of the organisation (*e.g. other business interests or employment*). If any doubt arises as to what constitutes a conflict of interest, employees may seek guidance from their Line Manager and/or HR.
- Undertake relevant training to maintain and improve knowledge, skills and work practices.
- Maintain an appropriate standard of dress and personal hygiene.
- Disclose the fact to their Line Manager and/or HR, if they have been charged with, or convicted of, a criminal offence by prosecuting authorities (*or given the benefit of the Probation of Offenders Act 1907 as amended*). This may have implications for their employment which will be addressed in compliance with data protection legislation, as amended and the limitations on the circumstances in which it is possible to process such information.
- Recognise the limits of their competencies and expertise and only provide services or interventions for which they are qualified by education, training and experience.

- Take responsibility for seeking appropriate levels of support and supervision to avoid fatigue and burnout so that they can reach their full potential
- Maintain the highest standards of integrity by conducting oneself with honesty, impartiality and truthfulness, never seeking to use improper influence, in particular, never seeking to use political influence to affect decisions, implementing and abiding by guidelines in respect of offers of gifts or hospitality and avoiding conflicts of interest.
- Act in good faith toward and in the best interest of Galway Simon Community and its funders.
- Act impartially in the performance of their duties.
- Carry out duties in a party-political neutral manner.
- Ensure that views and/or actions taken related to public political activities are not presented or interpreted as official comment on behalf of Galway Simon Community.
- Have due regard for Galway Simon Community resources to ensure proper, effective and efficient use of public and fundraised monies.
- Not use their position to benefit themselves or others with whom they have personal or business connections.
- Not receive or accept benefits of any kind from a third party which might reasonably be seen to compromise personal judgement or integrity. All gifts and benefits received must be disclosed to their Line Manager.
- Not accept hospitality of any kind from a third party which might reasonably be seen to compromise personal judgement or integrity. *Every care must be taken to ensure that any acceptance of hospitality does not influence, or be seen to influence, the making of a decision.*
- Inform the Line Manager immediately and not present for work if they are prescribed any medication that impairs their ability to carry out their work safely and competently.

### **8.3 Individuals in the organisation are expected NOT to:**

- Bring the organisation into disrepute (*including through the use of email, social media and other internet sites, engaging with media etc.*), refer to *Communication policy and procedure*.
- Engage in any activity which may cause physical or mental harm or distress to another person (such as verbal abuse, physical abuse, assault, bullying, or discrimination or harassment on the grounds of gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller community), refer to *Dignity at Work policy and procedure*.
- Consume alcohol or take illicit drugs during working hours or whilst engaged in project work which constitutes gross misconduct on the part of an individual, refer to *Drugs and Alcohol policy and procedure*.
- Be under the influence of alcohol or drugs or entering the premises smelling of alcohol while attending work or volunteering, resulting in a loss of control, which may be witnessed by a client, and places them in a situation that undermines their credibility from a client's perspective. Disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal can ensue, refer to *Disciplinary policy and procedure*.
- Be affected by alcohol, drugs, or medication which will affect their ability to carry out their duties and responsibilities during working hours.
- Provide a false or misleading statement, declaration, document, record or claim in respect of Galway Simon Community, its employees' volunteers, or Board of Directors.
- Engage in any activity that may damage property belonging to Galway Simon Community.
- Take unauthorised possession of property that does not belong to them.
- Engage in illegal activity in the workplace.
- Improperly disclose, during or after their employment with Galway Simon Community, confidential information gained in the course of their work.

- Seek or accept gifts, rewards, benefits or hospitality from a third party in the course of their work, which might reasonably be seen to compromise their integrity or personal judgement.

#### **9. BREACH OF CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

- 9.1 If the organisation becomes aware that the code of conduct policy and procedure has been breached, a written notification will be sent to an individual, outlining the organisation's concerns and requesting a reply to the allegations presented, within 7 days.
- 9.2 Where an employee is found to be in breach of the standards outlined in this Code of Conduct, this may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal in accordance with the organisation's Disciplinary policy and procedure and any other policy and procedure relating to the breach of the code of conduct.
- 9.3 The principles of natural justice will be applied throughout any process undertaken.

#### **10. COMMUNICATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW**

- 10.1 This policy and procedure will be communicated as appropriate and will be subject to regular monitoring and review in consultation with an individual(s) working or full-time volunteering in the organisation.

## **Appendix 1- Definitions**

### **The Board**

The Board are appointed members who jointly act as the governing body and oversee the activities of Galway Simon Community under the scope of the Code.

### **The Management Team**

The Chief Executive Officer and other individuals occupying an executive position with a specific governance remit for functions such as Finance, Client Services, HR, Property, Fundraising & Communications and Line Managers, with responsibilities for the day-to-day running of the departments/services.

### **Individual**

An individual in Galway Simon Community includes employees, full-time volunteers, students, interns and trainees who are engaged in any capacity to provide services to Galway Simon.

### **Service**

Anywhere housing, health or social care is provided either privately or publicly in any setting. Examples include but are not limited to: residential homes, community outreach, individual homes, offices and shops.

### **Client**

The term client includes people who use housing, health and social care services of Galway Simon Community.