**Code of Conduct for AfN Trustees, Committee Members & Volunteers**

This Code is intended as a guide for members of Council, Committees and Volunteers of the Association for Nutrition (AfN), so as:

* to provide an indication of the standards of conduct and accountability expected;
* to provide an understanding of legal and ethical duties;
* to assist in the undertaking of responsibilities and
* support productive and effective relationships.

This Code is aimed at promoting effective, well-informed and accountable regulatory and charitable governance. It is not intended to be a definitive or authoritative statement of the law.

In addition to this Code, individuals on Council, Committees, Volunteers and Working Groups are expected to have a knowledge of the contents of the articles of association, rules of the association and relevant policies and procedures.

**Scope**

This Code applies to Council, any committee, working group, task and finish group, volunteers and to every venture of the Association to which Trustees/Committee Members/Volunteers may be appointed or over which they may have jurisdiction or responsibility whether explicit or implied.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this Code is to provide all Trustees, Committee Members and Volunteers with guidance on the standards of behaviour and conduct expected by the Association.

This Code supports the decision-making process through which a judgement on absence, ability and/or fitness to practise of a Trustee, Committee Member or Volunteer to discharge the functions of a member may be made.

**Values**

Public benefit and the high standards of personal and corporate conduct, based on the Nolan principles (explained below), underpin this Code.

The Association recognises its obligations to all those with whom it has dealings. In particular, the Association is committed to combating any discrimination within the Association on the grounds of race, ethnic or national origin, gender, religion, age, disability or sexual orientation. The Association is committed to treating individuals fairly, with dignity and respect, and thus expects integrity, honesty and fairness to be displayed by its Trustees, Committee Members and Volunteers in the same way as that expected of its employees and Registrants. There are additionally specific duties expected of the Trustees under equality legislation and detailed within equality training on appointment to post.

**Standards of conduct**

All AfN Trustees, Committee Members and Volunteers must ensure they adhere to the highest standards of conduct in the performance of their duties. In 2017 the Charity Commission developed the Charity Governance Code, which incorporates the 7 principles of public life (the ‘Nolan Principles’).

This Code of Conduct respects and endorses the 7 Nolan principles and good governance:

1. Selflessness
2. Integrity
3. Objectivity
4. Accountability
5. Openness
6. Honesty
7. Leadership

(The Nolan Principles of conduct in public life apply to the conduct of individuals - as opposed to the Charity Governance Code principles, which apply to governance of the whole charity. Nolan Principles are used widely in Codes of Conduct and are recommended for charities and public sector bodies)

***Selflessness:***

AfN Trustees, Committee Members and Volunteers should take decisions solely in terms of the public benefit. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, their friends or their institute/organisation. All AfN Trustees, Committee Members and Volunteers will complete declarations of interests and should include on here declarations of loyalties, which should also be declared at each meeting if relevant to a discussion point.

***Integrity:***

AfN Trustees, Committee Members and Volunteers should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their duties. Nor should an individual place themselves in a situation where they could potentially bring the reputation of themselves, the organisation or profession into question, either directly or indirectly by association. There should be consideration of whether an individual should rescind their post or reconsider their participation if this is a possibility, real or perceived.

***Objectivity:***

In carrying out AfN activities, including making decisions, appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for registration, fellowships, recognition or benefits etc., members should make choices purely on merit and skills and not on connections. Any individual with a connection must declare this so that consideration can be made as to whether they are excluded from decision making votes.

***Accountability:***

AfN Trustees, Committee Members and Volunteers are accountable for their decisions and actions. Understanding and accepting collective responsibility for decisions made by Council/Committee/Regional Rep Teams/Working Groups, by which a member is still bound by shared responsibility even if they abstained, voted against or were absent from the vote. Individuals should respect, support, carry out and not undermine decisions made collectively or by majority, and consider resigning if not prepared to accept collective responsibility for any such decisions.

***Openness:***

AfN Trustees, Committee Members and Volunteers 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. Meetings and correspondence should be inclusive and respectful of diversity in all its forms, with discussions considered and constructive, listening carefully to others views and challenging sensitively.

***Honesty:***

AfN Trustees, Committee Members and Volunteers 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. This should relate to conflicts of interests and conflicts of loyalties, actual or perceived.

***Leadership:***

AfN Trustees, Committee Members and Volunteers should promote and support these principles by their own leadership and by example.

**The AfN Code of Conduct for Trustees, Committee Members & Volunteers**

**Respect confidentiality**

* I will respect confidentiality on any matter that is disclosed to me by the Association, even after leaving the office to which I am appointed.
* I will ensure I handle all materials shared with me in line with GDPR requirements.
* I understand that confidentiality should not restrict genuine whistleblowing, with respect to which any concerns should be reported to the relevant authority after all internal avenues have been exhausted.

**Maintain appropriate boundaries**

* I respect and support the authority delegated to the Senior Staff at the Association and, through them, to others for the day to day management of the organisation
* I will maintain clear and appropriate boundaries between my Trustee/Committee/Volunteer role and any other roles I have within the Association (Registrant, Assessor etc.), recognising the potential for conflict of interest or loyalty

**Uphold our reputation**

* I will uphold the public reputation and trust of the Association and UKVRN at all times;
* I will remember that public benefit is the core purpose of the activities of the Association and the UKVRN and is central to all activities;
* I will behave at all times as an ambassador for the Association, the nutrition profession and nutrition regulation;
* I will conduct myself in public forums (including any personal social media accounts) in such a way so as to uphold the Association’s and profession’s good reputation, even after leaving the office of Trustee/Committee Member/Volunteer, and especially with regard to any matters that may reasonably be deemed contentious, having been discussed in closed session, within confidential or restricted correspondence.

**Be clear about my commitment**

* I will contribute fully and actively to the work of Council/the Committee/Region/Working Group. I understand that at a minimum this means making every effort to prepare for and attend meetings, take part in any decisions circulated by email outside of meetings, and participate in induction, training and development activities; strive to serve my full term of office but also to consider resigning if I can no longer commit the time and resources that the role requires;
* I will actively engage in discussion and debate in meetings; contributing in a considered and constructive way, listening carefully, challenging sensitively and avoiding conflict.
* I will give apologies to both the Chair, and supporting AfN staff member, at the earliest opportunity for known absences, and no less than one week, prior to a scheduled meeting if I am not able to attend, so as to not cause issues with quorate numbers, a delay in starting teleconferences or result in a cost to the Association for physical meetings.
* If I am not able to attend a face-to -face meeting in person, I will contact the supporting AfN staff member at least one week in advance to arrange attending the meeting by phone, Zoom or Skype where facilities enable this to occur.
* If I cannot attend a meeting I will read and submit written comments on the meeting papers no less than 48hrs prior to the meeting to the Chair and supporting AfN staff member.
* I will participate in collective decision making, accept a majority decision of the board and will not act individually unless specifically authorised to do so.
* I understand that if I am absent from three meetings within a twelve month period, I may be removed as a Trustee/Committee Member/Volunteer/Working Group Member, as set out in Rules of the Association. The joining of a meeting for less than 60% of the duration of the meeting will not count as attendance of a full meeting.

**Actively support this Code of Conduct**

* I understand that Trustees/Committee Members/Working Group Members/Volunteers must not make statements to the press or media or at any public meeting relating to the Association or the proceedings of the Council or its committees without first having written agreement from the Association’s Deputy Chief Executive & Communications Manager or in their absence the Chief Executive.
* I agree that it is unethical for Trustees/Committee Members/Volunteers to publicly criticise, canvas or reveal the views of other Trustees/Committee Members/Volunteers which have been expressed at meetings of the Council, its committees, working groups or volunteers, and will not do so.

**Complaints and Breach of Code**

* I will raise any concerns I have regarding a breach of this Code with the Honorary Secretary/Chair of Committee.
* I understand that providing the concern is made in good faith, and in the reasonable belief that the disclosed concern shows poor governance practice, the matter will initially be taken forward informally. If unresolved or, if the concern is of necessary severity, this will be escalated for a formal FtP investigation and action. This may result in the Registrant having their appointment to Council/the Committee/Working Group/Volunteer position rescinded and even investigation into their UKVRN Registration status if it is of extreme severity and a matter of public safety and reputation concern.

**Agreement**

* I agree to uphold the AfN Code of Conduct for Trustees, Committee Members, Working Group Member and Volunteers, and will endeavour to perform my duties as a Trustee/Committee Member/Working Group Member/Volunteer to the best of my ability.

Signature:

Name:

Date: