

## Code of Conduct during meetings

There is a wider LINK Southwark Code of Conduct that encompasses these procedures. However, this document is designed to be prominently displayed and/or handed out and agreed to at all LINK Southwark Meetings.

### **Behaviour during Meetings**

1.1 The behaviour of participants at a meeting is important to the success of the meeting. Many people lack the confidence to express themselves fully in a meeting with other people, whereas some find it all too easy to dominate.

1.2 Effective meetings can be achieved if all individuals are committed to some simple ground rules for behaviour before and during meetings.

1.3 All people attending any meeting of the Southwark LINK (hereafter called Participants) **must** agree to:

1.4 Abide by the code of conduct for LINK Southwark and act in a manner that supports equal opportunities for all.

They must:

- act appropriately and treat people and organisations with respect; never being derogatory in their speech or manner
- act in the public interest, and not seek to gain any advantage for themselves, their family or friends;
- act in a way that is fair and unbiased;
- allow everyone to take part without interruption or intimidation and treat everyone equally;
- be open and honest about their actions and decisions, and give reasons for them
- be clear and honest about whether they are giving their personal view or the views of their organisation;
- declare any private interests or interests of their organisation relevant to their involvement with the LINK and seek to resolve any conflict in the public interest;

They must not:

- act or speak in a way that may be perceived as bullying, abusive, discriminatory or derogatory
- disclose confidential information;

- prevent anyone getting information they are entitled to;
- bring the LINK into disrepute;  
*Disrepute: noun the state of being held in low public esteem* (taken from Compact Oxford English Dictionary webpage:  
[http://www.askoxford.com/concise\\_oed/disrepute?view=uk](http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/disrepute?view=uk))
- Speak or claim to speak or give the impression that they speak on behalf of the LINK or claim to be representing the LINK or giving the views of the LINK unless they have been authorised to do so by the Steering Group.
- Not attempt to dominate the meetings for their own purpose or the purpose of a group or organization they are representing.

1.5 All contributions should be addressed to the meeting via the Chair. All Participants are required to respect the ruling of the Chair or the Meeting if the Chair has put an issue to the Meeting.

1.6 All Participants must accept that the time available for LINK Southwark meetings is finite. The Chair of a LINK Southwark meeting is therefore empowered to set the time a contributor is permitted to speak if this is necessary to support the conduct of business. (See 1.4 in relation to equal opportunities)

1.7 Individual and personal disputes should not be allowed to affect conduct within the meeting but should be resolved elsewhere.

1.8 Participants should not have meetings within meetings by discussing issues with other individuals or groups of individuals.

1.9 Participants should respect each others contribution and not interrupt when someone is speaking.

1.10 In contributing to the meeting Participants will ensure that comments they make do not amount to a personal attack on another individual and should avoid using heated, emotional and value loaded language and behaviour.

1.11 Participants must remember that Local Involvement Network partnership work means accepting and abiding by majority decisions. The Southwark Local Involvement Network operates on behalf of all the people of Southwark not for individuals.

1.12 It is very important that decisions taken in meetings are well informed by having appropriate, accurate information and debate on the topics concerned. The wider community and government must be able to feel that decisions, particularly those affecting the spending of public funds, are fair and have not been influenced by the vested interests of those making these decisions or based on misinformation.

1.13 For this reason one of the most important areas of appropriate behaviour during meetings, in addition to the above, relates to declarations of interest.

## **2. Declarations of Interest**

The Agenda will include an item allowing Members to declare whether they have any personal, financial or other material interest in any item on the Agenda. The Chair

and the remaining voting members (Registered Members) of the meeting will then decide whether individuals declaring an interest must leave the meeting for the relevant item or just not take part in the discussion or decision making.

### **3. Confidentiality**

3.1 Meetings may occasionally receive information which is not in the public domain often relating to individuals, organisations or financial matters. It is the responsibility of each individual to ensure that this information remains confidential to the meeting unless prior authorisation has been given by the Chair for this to be discussed elsewhere. Individuals must never use confidential information for their personal advantage or the advantage or disadvantage of anyone known to them or to disadvantage or discredit the Network.

### **4. Breaches of the Code of Conduct during Meetings**

4.1 Any member who does not comply with the Code of Conduct will be asked to leave the meeting by the Chairperson. Any person excluded from an individual meeting because of their behaviour will only be allowed to return to future meetings if they agree to abide by the code of conduct.