

# Code of Conduct

Policy date  
31 March 2026

Next review  
31 March 2027

Policy owner  
Board of Trustees

Version  
2.4 - 22 October 2026

## 1. Who this code applies to

Everyone acting for Roots for Change UK CIO, registered charity 1209308, must follow this code: trustees, employees, volunteers, contractors and partners. It applies in person and online, at events, in shops and in partner programmes. The Board is responsible for the code; activity leads must explain it and supervise the people working with them.

Be honest, act within your role and use the charity's powers only for its purposes. Make commitments only when you have authority to do so. Ask your activity lead or an unconflicted trustee for help when a decision falls outside your role. Work overseas must also meet relevant local law and the agreed safeguarding arrangements.

## 2. Respect, equality and dignity

Treat everyone fairly and with respect. Bullying, harassment, discrimination, humiliation, threats and exploitation are unacceptable. Provide reasonable adjustments and accessible communication where required. Do not judge a person's ability or credibility by their language, disability, age or diagnosis.

Explain decisions honestly and protect people's dignity when providing aid or asking for evidence of need. Essential support must never depend on agreeing to publicity, religious or political activity, personal favours or a donation. Respect cultural differences while upholding our safeguarding and equality standards.

## 3. Safeguarding and professional boundaries

Put safety first and follow Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Adults Policy for the activity. Begin unsupervised duties only when the required role assessment, recruitment checks, induction and supervision arrangements are complete. A DBS certificate is one part of this process; it does not authorise someone for every role.

Sexual conduct with children, exploitative relationships, corporal punishment, degrading treatment, coercion and misuse of trust are prohibited. Never offer or withhold support in exchange for money, gifts, sexual contact or other favours. Tell an unconflicted lead about an existing personal or family relationship that may affect boundaries or impartial decisions, and agree appropriate safeguards.

Use approved organisational communications for charity work. Do not arrange secret communications, personal social-media connections or private meetings with children. One-to-one support, transport, home visits or necessary private communication require prior authorisation, a recorded risk assessment and appropriate supervision or visibility. Do not make promises of secrecy about harm.

In immediate danger call 999 in the UK, or the local emergency service overseas. Report safeguarding concerns promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead on +44 7960 287537 and make a factual record. Follow the safeguarding policies, including the alternative route where the lead is unavailable or implicated. Protect people and refer to statutory services when needed; do not wait for a Board meeting or investigate an allegation yourself.

## **4. Confidentiality, data, images and systems**

Use personal information only for its authorised charity purpose. Share only what is needed with people entitled to receive it, and follow Privacy Notice and Data Protection Policy, including its retention schedule and breach procedure. Being able to access a record does not give permission to use it for something else.

Use accounts and devices authorised by the Board or delegated lead, with access controls suitable for the information. Keep passwords private, use multi-factor authentication where available, lock devices and report loss, misdirected messages or suspected unauthorised access immediately. Do not copy beneficiary or donor records into personal accounts, public links or unapproved AI or other online tools.

Before making or using photographs, video, recordings or personal stories, agree the purpose and audience, establish the lawful basis and obtain required permissions. Honour a child's discomfort and assess risk even where a parent has agreed. Do not publish identifying details, locations or sensitive circumstances that could place a person at risk. Essential support must remain available when optional publicity is refused.

## **5. Money, property, gifts and conflicts**

Use charity money and property only for authorised purposes and keep accurate records. For takings and donations, follow Fundraising Policy, Annex A - Cash, banking and reconciliation procedure. For commitments and payments, use its Annex C - General financial authorisation and payment controls. Do not use personal bank accounts for charity funds, pay yourself from collections, approve your own expense claim or bypass independent checks.

Declare financial, personal and loyalty conflicts under Conflict of Interest Policy before joining a relevant discussion or decision. Do not use your position to gain preferential contracts, referrals, aid, jobs or other private benefit. Expenses and other payments must have the authority required by Trustee Expenses Policy and the law. This code does not authorise trustee remuneration.

Refuse bribes, personal cash gifts and gifts linked to preferential treatment. Refer other offered gifts or hospitality to an unconflicted lead before accepting where practicable; record the giver, nature, approximate value, context and decision. Charity donations belong in the donation records, not with an individual's personal gifts.

## **6. Speaking on behalf of the charity**

Be accurate about our activities, impact, finances and your role. Make clear when a statement describes an ambition or estimate. Do not invent credentials, beneficiaries, testimonials, approvals or endorsements, or present a personal opinion as the charity's view.

Official statements to the media, funders or regulators require approval from the Board or someone it has expressly authorised. Pass enquiries outside your authority to [info@rootsforchangeuk.com](mailto:info@rootsforchangeuk.com) or an unconflicted trustee. This approval rule does not restrict truthful evidence to an investigator, legal rights, urgent safeguarding referrals or protected disclosures.

Keep confidential material out of photographs and broadcasts. Do not speak for a partner without permission or promise donors access to vulnerable beneficiaries. Official communications must respect the charity's legal purposes and the limits set out in Fundraising Policy.

## **7. Safe working and role limits**

Follow activity risk assessments, venue rules, emergency arrangements and the directions of a competent lead. Report hazards, near misses, injuries and changes that affect safety. Stop and seek help where a task is outside your training or cannot be performed safely; do not put yourself or others at avoidable risk to protect money or property.

Do not work while impaired by alcohol, drugs or another condition that makes the duty unsafe. Tell the lead privately where an adjustment is needed. Do not provide medical, legal, financial or other specialist advice beyond your qualifications and authorised role; direct people to appropriate services.

## **8. How to raise a concern**

Tell your activity lead, manager or an unconflicted trustee promptly about suspected wrongdoing, harassment, fraud, unsafe practice or a breach of this code. You can raise a concern verbally. For a contact or confidential callback, email [info@rootsforchangeuk.com](mailto:info@rootsforchangeuk.com), call +44 7960 287537, or write to Roots for Change UK CIO, Bargain Outlet, 111-113 King Street, South Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE33 1DP. The person receiving the concern must make a factual record using Annex A.

If your concern involves someone in the usual reporting route, bypass them and speak to an unconflicted trustee or the relevant external authority. You can mark a letter Confidential - for an unconflicted trustee. For sensitive allegations, ask for a secure way to share details rather than using a group or general mailbox. Nobody may control the review of their own conduct.

You do not need internal permission to contact the police, statutory safeguarding services, the ICO, the Fundraising Regulator or the Charity Commission about a matter within their remit. Charity workers and volunteers can use the Charity Commission's reporting service for serious wrongdoing, following its guidance for workers and volunteers.

## **9. Protection from retaliation and fair treatment**

Nobody may retaliate against someone for raising an honestly held concern, helping an investigation or exercising a legal right. This is our standard for everyone, including volunteers and beneficiaries, whether or not statutory whistleblowing protection applies to their status. A concern that is not substantiated is not, by itself, dishonest.

Take requests for confidentiality seriously and explain when information needs to be shared. Do not promise anonymity that cannot fairly or lawfully be maintained. Deliberate fabrication, witness intimidation and retaliation are themselves conduct concerns and must be addressed through an evidence-based, fair process.

## **10. Responding to a possible breach**

The receiving lead must check immediate risks, preserve evidence, check for conflicts and appoint a suitable handler. Follow the safeguarding policies and external advice for safeguarding or criminal allegations. If duties are changed or someone is suspended to protect people, record why and review the arrangement regularly. Explain that protective action is not a finding of guilt.

For other conduct concerns, explain the allegation and relevant evidence to the person involved and give them a reasonable opportunity to respond, with support or adjustments where needed. Staff disciplinary and grievance cases must follow applicable employment rights, contractual procedures and the Acas Code where relevant, including accompaniment and appeal rights. Handle volunteer cases fairly under Volunteer Policy, recognising the distinction between volunteering and employment.

Make a proportionate, reasoned decision and record who authorised it. Outcomes may include no action, clarification, training, support, a warning, changed duties, ending a placement or contract, or a lawful disciplinary sanction. Trustee removal must follow the governing document and legal powers; the code alone does not create a removal power.

Explain the outcome and a review route to an unconflicted trustee or suitable independent reviewer. Use Complaints Policy for the public complainant's response and review; protect confidential personnel details. Record any external referrals, remedial actions, owners and completion dates.

## **11. Induction and review**

Before duties begin, the lead must explain this code, show the person how to raise a concern and record their acknowledgement and training. Acknowledgement confirms that the code has been received and understood. Recruitment and safeguarding checks must still be completed, and legal rights remain unaffected.

The Board reviews breaches, lessons and outstanding actions, and reviews the code at least annually or sooner after a serious incident, a legal change or a material change in activities. Partners must receive the standards relevant to their work and demonstrate appropriate protective arrangements before acting for the charity.