

Code of conduct for Members of The Patient Voices Group

MAY 2011

EAST LANCASHIRE MEDICAL SERVICES (**ELMS**) would like to thank you for volunteering to be an active member of our Patient Voices Group (**PVG**). We value and respect your knowledge and skills and hope that you will have an enjoyable and rewarding time.

Everyone who accesses health and social care services in East Lancashire may apply to become involved with the **PVG**.

Our Code of Conduct sets out what you can expect from **ELMS** and what is expected from you as a member of The Patient Voices Group.

If **ELMS** or the **PVG** does not meet your expectations please speak to us about your concerns. You can also use our Complaints and/or Grievance Procedure, copies of which are available on request.

Signing this Code of Conduct is a condition of Patient Voices Group Membership and serious breaches of it could lead to action under the Standards of Conduct policy. However, signing it does not tie you to a legal relationship.

Other documents you should read:

ELMS Complaints Standards and Grievance Policy

Nolan Principles of Public Life (Appendix 1)

I understand that as a member of the Patient Voices Group I will:

Personal Conduct

- seek out and listen to the views of people who use health and social care services and members of the local community, especially those individuals and groups whose voices are not usually heard
- raise issues for consideration by the PVG which are based on evidence from health and care service users, or the public, which demonstrate this is a matter of wider concern
- not deal with complaints about individual treatment but make sure that people are aware of who can deal with them

- never disclose confidential and sensitive information unless there is a legal duty to do so e.g. in the interests of patient safety
- attend induction training and other opportunities to develop my understanding of ELMS
- make sure that I have read and understood the policies and procedures of ELMS and follow the guidance that I am given
- let the ELMS MANAGEMENT TEAM know of any changes to my employment or personal circumstances which could affect my participation in the PVG
- declare any conflict of interest, or anything that might be seen by other people as a conflict of interest, as soon as it arises and keep the Register of Interests up to date A conflict of interest is defined as 'A situation in which a public official's decision are or could be influenced by the official's personal interests'
- not accept gifts or hospitality which could be seen as trying to influence the decisions, independence or activities of the PATIENT VOICES GROUP
- comply with the laws of England. Those most relevant to ELMS relate to equal opportunities, discrimination, human rights, data protection and freedom of information

Valuing Diversity

- treat all people with respect and act in a way which does not discriminate against or exclude anyone
- act in a fair and responsible way to any staff or volunteers I work with or meet as a member of THE PATIENT VOICES GROUP

Working as a Member

- commit to being an Active Member of the PVG, contributing to the work to the full extent that my personal circumstances permit including, where possible, attending and playing a full part in meetings and/or working groups
- prepare for meetings and events and send apologies when I cannot attend or will be late

- ensure that where I find I am unable to meet a commitment I let the ELMS MANAGEMENT TEAM know as soon as possible
- listen to and respect the views and experiences of other PVG members, and support fellow Members to contribute to the work of the PVG
- present and promote other people's views, which may not always be the same as my own

Collective responsibility

- not work against the majority view of the PVG once a decision has been democratically taken, but I may request that my viewpoint, if it differs, is recorded.
- only carry out work and go on visits agreed by ELMS & the PVG as part of its work plan and in line with the regulations
- have ELMS and/or the PVG agreement before speaking, writing or attending meetings on behalf of ELMS or the PVG.
- ensure that when I am representing the PVG at a meeting or event, that I am speaking on behalf of the PVG and not myself.
- report back to other ELMS and the PVG when I attend anything on behalf of the PVG by completion of a written report within two weeks of undertaking the activity.

Meeting rules

- Switch mobile phones off or turn to silent throughout the duration of the meeting
- Keep contributions relevant to the agenda and contribute appropriately in terms of content and length of contribution
- Show courtesy and respect for others opinions – all members have the right to be heard on matters relevant to the agenda items discussed,
members of the PVG to treat colleagues, staff and visitors with respect
- Raise points of discussion – questions and remarks – through the Chair so as not to prolong the meeting any more than necessary
- Do not use sexist, racist, ageist or homophobic language

- Members should observe time limits for discussions
- The Chair has the power to curtail discussion as appropriate – a member dominating the discussion may be asked by the Chair to give way to other members wishing to speak
- No member should complain on behalf of the PVG without prior discussion and agreement at a meeting of the PVG
- A binding vote is to be taken on issues upon which members disagree – the chair does not have an individual vote unless it is necessary for the chair to give a casting vote in the event of a split decision
- If the code of conduct is breached during a meeting, the Chair/ELMS have the right to suspend and withdraw support for the Meeting
- All meetings of the PVG need to run smoothly and it is hoped that all members will attend regularly and play an active role. However it is also recognised that at times members may not be able to attend meetings regularly for reasons of ill-health etc. and by agreement with the Chair can continue to contribute via regular contact by some other agreed means e.g. email, post etc.

I understand that ELMS will provide me with:

- help to carry out my work on Patient Voices Group.
- advice and support in dealing with any difficulties I am having and guidance with situations that are new to me
- meetings held in venues which enable disabled access
- an introduction to the ELMS when I join, which will include meeting the relevant people and getting the right information including annual reports and minutes of previous meetings
- support to access IT equipment if required
- correct and up to date information, sent to me in a way (such as email or post) and format that I have agreed
- an insurance indemnity when taking part in PVG activities

My name

My signature

Date signed

Appendix I - The Seven (Nolan) Principles of Public Life

Selflessness

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material 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 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.