

# SAFEGUARDING AND THE CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR FUND REPRESENTATIVES

The Welfare Fund of the Tobacco Pipe Makers and Tobacco Trade Benevolent Fund (“the Fund”) recognises the rights of all adults who may look for assistance from the Fund. This Code of Behaviour seeks to ensure that all Fund Beneficiaries (defined below) feel safe in their dealings with the Fund and that they are treated with courtesy and respect by those that work with or otherwise represent the Fund in assessing such applications or in the making of grants to such beneficiaries.

By following this Code, it is intended that all Fund Representatives (defined below) will contribute to strengthening the professionalism and impact of the work of the Fund and have a shared understanding of who we are and how we behave. We expect people who take part in delivering our services and projects to display appropriate behaviour at all times. We hope that by following this Code you will understand and maintain the standard of behaviour expected of you, help to protect Fund Beneficiaries from abuse and inappropriate behaviour, and reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations of abuse being made against you. We are committed to maintaining a culture of safeguarding and to create a fair open and positive culture through all the layers and activities of our organisation so that everyone involved in the work of the Fund feels able to report any concerns, confident that they will be heard and responded to.

In this Code of Behaviour, the following definitions apply:

**Fund Representatives** includes trustees, Forum Court employees, Field Welfare Officers employed on a sub-contractor basis by Forum Court and all paid employees, seconded staff, mentors, students, agency workers, contract, seasonal and unpaid staff and volunteers working on behalf of the Fund in any capacity and in any setting.

**Fund Beneficiary/Beneficiaries** means those individuals who approach the Fund for assistance or who are already beneficiaries together with their families and who may be vulnerable for example, someone who is, or may be in need of, care by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or otherwise be unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation. It also includes children – anyone under the age of 18 years old. Our definition is drafted widely to include the wide range of people that the Fund comes into contact with through its work.

# WORKING WITH FUND BENEFICIARIES

When working with Fund Beneficiaries, Fund Representatives are acting in a position of trust. Fund Representatives are likely to be seen as role models and must act in an appropriate manner at all times. The following list provides a guide for what we consider to be important and appropriate:

* operate within the Fund’s principles and guidance;
* follow the Fund’s policies and procedures at all times;
* comply with safeguarding legislation where relevant;
* ensure that any contact with Fund Beneficiaries is only in direct pursuit of your role with the Fund;
* listen to and respect the dignity of Fund Beneficiaries at all times;
* avoid favouritism and treat Fund Beneficiaries fairly;
* ensure language is appropriate to age and ability and is not offensive;
* challenge unacceptable behaviour and report any concerns and all allegations/suspicions of abuse;
* ensure that any concerns or allegations of abuse are responded to sensitively, respectfully and seriously, referred appropriately and co-operating with the work of statutory agencies as necessary;
* make sure that any Fund Beneficiaries who may be adults at risk, their families and carers know where to go for help if they have a concern;
* act immediately to refer any emergency concerns to the relevant statutory or other appropriate agency, including the Police or local Social Services department;
* respect all Fund Beneficiaries’ individual rights to personal privacy;
* recognise that special caution may be required when you are discussing sensitive issues with Fund Beneficiaries;
* report any breaches of this Code promptly so that we can investigate.

# THINGS TO AVOID – IN NO CIRCUMSTANCES MUST YOU EVER:

* develop inappropriate relationships such as contact with a Fund Beneficiary that is not a part of the work of the Fund;
* do things of a personal nature for a Fund Beneficiary that they can do for themselves;
* act in a patronising way towards any Fund Beneficiary;
* make a connection with a Fund Beneficiary on your personal social media accounts, for example, Facebook or Twitter;
* make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of Fund Beneficiaries;
* act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive;
* make inappropriate promises to a Fund Beneficiary, particularly in relation to confidentiality;
* either exaggerate or trivialise child or adult at risk/vulnerable adult abuse issues;
* rely on your reputation or that of the Fund to protect you;
* allow allegations of abuse or misconduct to go unreported;
* conduct a sexual relationship or indulge in any form of sexual contact with a Fund Beneficiary. Any such behaviour represents a serious breach of trust on the part of the Fund Representative and is not acceptable under any circumstances.

# UPHOLDING THIS CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

All Fund Representatives are expected to abide by these guidelines. In addition, the Fund will support any Fund Representative who experiences or witnesses any inappropriate behaviour (as set out in this Code) from a Fund Beneficiary. In such circumstances, a report of such behaviour should be prepared by the Fund Representative. Any observed breaches of this code whether by a Fund Representative or by a Fund Beneficiary towards a Fund Representative should be reported to Forum Court in the first instance for consideration by the Trustees as soon as is practicably possible.

# ACTION IN THE EVENT OF A BREACH OF CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Any breaches to the requirements of this Code may result in disciplinary action which could lead to dismissal and will be notified to future employers; similarly, volunteers may be removed from their roles.

Serious breaches will also result in a referral being made to the relevant statutory agencies such as the police (both locally and in the UK), the local authority children’s social care department or safeguarding adults board and/or the Disclosure and Barring Service.

**We are committed to reviewing this Code and good practice annually.**

This Code was agreed on 15th September 2022

And last reviewed on:…………………………….