Community Rail Network Code of Conduct

Last reviewed and updated November 2026

We believe that community rail should be positive, inclusive, collaborative in all it does, enabling everyone to thrive and be themselves, and helping communities to be communities, in all their diversity and richness.

Everyone working and volunteering in community rail, and all those who engage with, support and benefit from community rail, should be treated with respect, and allowed to work, volunteer, engage and contribute in a safe, welcoming environment.

We do not tolerate discrimination in any form, or otherwise disrespectful, derogatory or harmful behaviours, amongst our staff, Board, members, partners, or anyone coming into contact with Community Rail Network and our members.

We expect all our staff, Board, members and partners to respect and uphold the Women in Community Rail Code of Conduct across all their activities and behaviours when working, volunteering or engaging with community rail:

- Promote positive relationships to deliver positive outcomes and discussions;
- Champion diversity and inclusion, aiming to ensure that community rail is welcoming, engaging and respectful for everyone;
- Value others by listening and not making assumptions;
- Challenge bullying, harassment, intimidation and report all negative behaviour;
- Never act in a manner that could bring community rail into disrepute.

We advise community rail partnerships and station groups to manage and promote their activities and meetings in ways that deliberately reinforce and uphold this, including sharing the WICR code with Board/steering group members and meeting attendees, and ensuring policies and procedures are set up to ensure inclusivity and make clear that discrimination and disrespectful, derogatory or harmful behaviours will not be tolerated. Further guidance for members is available in our guidance sheet and from our support & development team.

Dealing with discrimination and inappropriate behaviours

We will stand up to any form of discrimination, including in relation to the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, as well as gender identity, socioeconomic background or class.

We will act promptly, fairly and appropriately in response to any allegations of discriminatory or otherwise inappropriate behaviour towards, or by, any of our staff, Board or other representatives acting on our behalf. This will include an investigation led by a suitable manager, with proposed actions decided by a member of our SLT, or referred to our CEO or Board where appropriate.

In investigating issues and allegations, and considering suitable actions, we will recognise that:

- people experience harm in wide-ranging ways;
- many people struggle to make their voices and concerns heard, and need support and a safe space to do so;
- harm can be created through subtle and longer-term manipulation and patterns of behaviour, as well as through specific and more obvious instances of harassment and intimidation;

- harm can be caused inadvertently: sometimes those causing harm may be unaware of the implications of their conduct and actions, and need to be made aware;
- harm can be deliberate. In such cases we will be uncompromising in our response.

We will always prioritise the safety and wellbeing of our team and all those delivering, supporting, involved in and coming into contact with community rail, doing as much as we can to protect people from harm. If a Community Rail Network member, partner or stakeholder does not uphold our Code of Conduct, we reserve the right to take further action in line with our internal procedures.

Our learning and leadership role

We take seriously our role to lead on and shape an inclusive, positive culture across the community rail movement, with attention to, but also going beyond, protected characteristics, so that community rail is a movement free from discriminatory, disrespectful, derogatory or harmful behaviours. This includes building a culture within our team and Board, and amongst our members and partners, where diversity is celebrated, equity and inclusion are at the forefront, and people's wellbeing and mental health are valued and prioritised.

We will encourage a culture within our organisation and across community rail that supports the reporting and resolution of allegations, suspicions or concerns about any kind of inappropriate or harmful behaviour.

We will seek to continually educate ourselves and our members and partners about all aspects of equality, diversity and inclusion, including undertaking professional development for ourselves and offering/signposting for our members, and introducing a regularly-reviewed and updated EDI policy.

We will ensure our communications and member support services reflect and reinforce this code.

We will ensure we have suitable procedures and documentation so everyone working or volunteering for Community Rail Network, and all our members and partners:

- understand the expectations on them;
- have access to relevant guidance, training and support so they can meet these expectations;
- feel able to raise concerns or make allegations, and understand how these will be addressed, if they experience or witness inappropriate behaviours or don't feel safe and comfortable in their work, activities or contact with Community Rail Network.

If you have a complaint or been made to feel unsafe or unwelcome while engaging with our team or Board, please see our complaints policy. If you have feedback or questions you would like to discuss informally, please contact us on info@communityrail.org.uk.

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