

# CODE OF CONDUCT FOR TRUSTEES OF THE MOTOR NEURONE DISEASE ASSOCIATION

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Those who serve on the Board of Trustees of the Motor Neurone Disease Association have responsibilities both under Company Law as Directors and under Charity Law as Trustees. As part of this each Trustee is asked to agree to abide by the Code of Conduct which is set out in this document.

## 2. PURPOSE OF THE CODE

The Code aims to define the standards expected of the Association's Trustees in order to ensure that:

- the Association is effective, open and accountable;
- the highest standards of integrity and stewardship are achieved; and that
- the working relationship with any staff and advisers is productive and supportive.

## 3. CODE OF CONDUCT

### 3.1 *Selflessness*

Trustees have a general duty to act with probity and prudence in the best interests of the Association as a whole. They should not act in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, their friends or the organisation they come from.

### 3.2 *Integrity*

The Association's Trustees should conduct themselves in a manner which does not damage or undermine the reputation of the Association or its staff. More specifically they:

- should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their role;
- must avoid actual impropriety and any appearance of improper behaviour;
- should avoid accepting gifts and hospitality that might reasonably be thought to influence their judgement.

### 3.3 *Objectivity*

In carrying out their role, including making appointments, awarding contracts, recommending individuals for rewards and benefits or transacting other business, the Trustees should ensure that decisions are made solely on merit.

In arriving at decisions in areas where they do not have expertise themselves Trustees should consider appropriate professional advice.

### 3.4 **Accountability**

The Trustees:

- have a duty to comply with constitutional and legal requirements and to adhere to best practice in such a way as to preserve confidence in the Association;
- are accountable to the Association's members and other stakeholders for their decisions, the effectiveness of the Board and the performance of the Association.

### 3.5 **Openness**

The Trustees should ensure that confidential information and material, including material about individuals is handled with due care so that it remains confidential.

In addition, they should be as open as possible about their decisions and the actions that they take. As far as possible they should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider interest clearly demands.

### 3.6 **Honesty**

The Trustees have a duty to avoid any conflict of interest so far as is reasonably practicable. In particular they must make known any interest in any matter under discussion which:-

- creates either a real danger of bias (that is, the interest affects him/her, or a member of his/her household more than the generality affected by the decision); or,
- which might reasonably cause others to think it could influence the decision; and
- he/she should declare the nature of the interest and withdraw from the room unless the remaining Trustees agree otherwise

### 3.7 **Leadership**

The Trustees must:

- promote and support the principles of leadership by example;
- strive to attend all meetings regularly, ensuring they prepare for and contribute appropriately and effectively;
- bring a fair and open-minded view to all discussions of the Board and should ensure that all decisions are made in the charity's best interests;
- respect the role of any staff;
- accept and respect the difference in roles between the Board and staff, ensuring that the Honorary Officers, the Board and any staff work effectively and cohesively for the benefit of the Association and develop a mutually supportive and loyal relationship;
- having given delegated authority to any of their number or to any staff, be careful - individually and collectively - not to undermine it by word or action.