

# BELTA Trustee Code of Conduct

BELTA Trustees are expected to conduct themselves with absolute professionalism and to act in the charity's best interests. Trustees are asked to sign this code of conduct upon election /appointment to the Board, which further lays out what is expected of them, and the potential consequences of any serious breach of this code.

This Trustee Code of Conduct sets out the standards and behaviours, in no order of priority, expected by BELTA from BELTA's Board of Trustees (individually and collectively) when acting on behalf of, or representing, the charity. It is not a list of Trustees' legal duties.

The Board is determined to ensure the organisation inspires confidence and trust amongst its beneficiaries, volunteers, members, staff, supporters and partners. It will do this by demonstrating individual and collective integrity and avoiding any potential or real situations of undue bias or influence in the decision-making of the charity and in its dealings.

## Standards of conduct

Trustees are required to adhere to the highest standards of conduct in the performance of their duties. This code of conduct respects and endorses the principles of good governance in the Charity Governance Code 2017, and incorporates the 7 principles of public life (the 'Nolan Principles'):

1. Selflessness
2. Integrity
3. Objectivity
4. Accountability
5. Openness
6. Honesty

## 7. Leadership

(The Nolan Principles of conduct in public life apply to the conduct of individual trustees -as opposed to the Charity Governance Code principles, which apply to governance of the whole charity. Nolan Principles are used widely in Codes of Conduct and are recommended for charities and public sector bodies. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life/the-7-principles-of-public-life--2>

### **2 As a Trustee of BELTA I promise to:**

#### **Focus**

- ensure that everything the charity does helps (or is intended to help) to achieve the purposes for which it is set up, and no other purpose;
- uphold and support the charity's agreed mission, vision, strategy, policies and plans, and keep myself informed about the charity's work and the external environment

#### **Be accountable**

- seek to inform myself about the views of stakeholders including beneficiaries, staff, practitioners, volunteers and members, and to consider them when making decisions;
- understand that it is not my responsibility to represent the interests or views of any particular stakeholder group at Board but that my duty is to the charity as a whole and its beneficiaries
- hold myself accountable to the charity's beneficiaries, to my fellow Trustees, to the members of the charity, to regulatory authorities, and to the public.

#### **Comply**

- uphold and comply with the charity's governing documents, this Code and the Trustees' Conflict of Interest Policy;

- take ultimate responsibility for safeguarding the charity's beneficiaries and ensure appropriate safeguarding processes, policies and procedures are in place;
- comply with and uphold the Charity's Data Protection policy.

### **Understand**

- be aware of, understand and comply with my legal duties and responsibilities as a charity Trustee and as a company director;
- research or seek advice from the Company Secretary or other suitable professional if any aspect of my legal obligation is unclear.

### **Take advice**

- apply any relevant expertise and experience I have, including professional expertise, to the decision-making process;
- ensure that appropriate professional, legal, reputational, regulatory and financial advice is obtained where necessary, and followed unless Trustees are able to put forward clear and justifiable reasons not to do so;
- understand that not to follow clear professional advice places the charity at risk of intense scrutiny and potential loss of reputation if the reasons for not doing so do not hold true.

### **3 Manage conflicts**

- act with integrity and honesty and at all times in the best interests of the charity as a whole, avoiding situations where any personal, family or professional interests or loyalties may conflict with those of the charity or have undue influence over

my decision-making;

- declare a conflict of interest or loyalty, and where appropriate to opt out of decisions that will affect myself, a family member, close friend or professional associate directly;
- always place the best interests of the charity above any personal, family or professional interests or loyalties.

### **Accept collective responsibility**

- accept collective responsibility for all areas of the Board's work and inform myself about issues which are unfamiliar to me, in the clear understanding that there is no such thing as a 'single issue Trustee';
- engage fully and constructively in collective decision-making of the Board, asking questions and expressing any reservations or disagreement openly and honestly;
- understand that whilst I am entitled to abstain from voting, or to have my opposition to a decision recorded formally, as a Trustee I am still bound by collective responsibility even for a Board decision with which I do not agree, or from which I was absent;
- respect, support and carry out decisions made collectively or by Board majority, and to consider resigning if I am not prepared to accept collective responsibility for such a decision.

### **Promote a positive Board culture**

- seek to promote a Board culture which is open, inclusive and respectful of diversity in all of its forms;
- work constructively and respectfully with fellow Trustees, the

chief executive and executive and leadership teams, staff, volunteers, practitioners, members and others within the Charity;

- never allow personal differences to undermine the charity's progress, and never to encourage or engage in factional disputes or internal politicking which impedes the work of Board, collective decision-making or responsibility;
- respect and support the leadership roles of the Chair, the executive, and any other staff and volunteers having responsibility for any aspect of the charity's work;
- privately speak to the Chair, in the first instance, if I am unsure or concerned about any aspect of my role, the work of the Board or Charity; or to the Vice Chair if more appropriate.

#### **Respect confidentiality**

- respect confidentiality on any matter, even after leaving the office of trustee, and to respect and never undermine planned communications;
- understand that Board confidentiality should not restrict genuine whistle blowing, with respect to which any concerns should be reported to the relevant authority only after all internal avenues have been exhausted.

#### **4 Maintain appropriate boundaries**

- respect and support the authority delegated to the chief executive and executive team and, through the chief executive and executive team, to others for the day to day management of the charity;
- maintain clear and appropriate boundaries between my Trustee role and any other roles I have within BELTA, recognising the potential for conflict of interest or loyalty;

- understand that I am accountable to BELTA when acting as a volunteer or practitioner

. Uphold our reputation

- uphold the public reputation of the charity and those who work in it, including holding ultimate and absolute responsibility for the charity's brand, even if licensed to other entities;

- to conduct myself in public and in public forums (including any personal social media accounts) in such a way as to uphold the charity's and the Board's good reputation, even after leaving the office of trustee, and especially with regard to matters that may reasonably be deemed contentious or having been discussed in closed session

. **Commit to my own learning and development**

- seek guidance and help in my role as a Trustee if I feel I need it or in response to feedback, and participate in processes to review and evaluate Board and Trustee performance;

- engage fully with any performance appraisal or skills audit exercises used to assess the skills and competencies available to the charity and to identify areas for future development and training.

**Be clear about my commitment**

- contribute fully and actively to the work of the Board of Trustees. At a minimum this means making every endeavour to prepare for and attend meetings of the full Board, read Board papers, take part in any decisions outside of Board meetings, and participate in induction, training and development activities for Trustees;

- strive to serve my full term of office but also to consider resigning if I can no longer commit the time and resources that the role requires;
- understand that if I am absent from two consecutive Board meetings without good cause, I may be disqualified as a Trustee under BELTA's Articles of Association.

### **Actively support this Code of Conduct**

Should I believe that a Trustee is, or that multiple Trustees are, acting inappropriately or in breach of this code of conduct, I will instigate (anonymously via the Company Secretary) an investigation as is outlined below. I will respect and uphold the Board's final decision following a hearing and consideration of all available evidence.

### **5 Breaches of this code**

Any suspected substantial breaches of this code shall be considered in the first instance by the Company Secretary, who, together with two trustees: the Chair or Vice Chair or Chair of ..... (in that order, if any is implicated in a suspected breach) will decide whether the suspected breach is serious enough to warrant investigation. Investigation will be led by the Company Secretary plus two Trustees: one appointed and one elected, nominated by the Board by majority vote of those not conflicted. A report on the findings of the investigation, along with any recommendations, will be brought to a closed session of the Board of Trustees. Possible sanctions available to the Board include, but are not limited to, the following actions, which are listed in no particular order:

- requirement for the Trustee in question to undertake relevant and appropriate training
- removal of Chair or Vice-Chair position
- formal disciplinary letter recorded on the trustee's file
- temporary suspension from the Board pending further investigation
- request to resign as a trustee of the charity
- removal of BELTA membership

If a majority of Trustees are not content that an internal investigation has been, or can be, suitably impartial, they may commission an independent complaint review.

**Declaration**

I understand that substantial breach of any part of this code may result in sanctions being brought against me, including being asked to resign from the Trustee Board or, in extremis, removal of my BELTA membership that will render me ineligible to serve on BELTA's Board. Should this happen I will be given the opportunity to be heard. I will respect the Board's final decision by majority vote, following a hearing and consideration of all available evidence, on such a matter.

Signed

.....  
Name

.....  
Date

.....