

OBS Team Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to all Oxfordshire Breastfeeding Support (OBS) paid team members, whether clinical or non-clinical, whether employed or contract. There is a separate **OBS Code of Conduct for Volunteers**. Everyone working for OBS should have knowledge of and be compliant with OBS policies and procedures. This Code of Conduct should be read in conjunction with our [policies](#), the SafeHR Handbook, and the [International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent World Health Assembly resolutions](#).

Taken together, these policies provide the overarching framework for the expected professional standards of conduct, behaviour and practice to be met by team members while performing their role(s) or while otherwise representing OBS. Failure to adhere to the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action being taken or in the termination of a contract.

The following series of statements explain what good practice looks like, and the standards and values that team members are expected to uphold. There is a separate section further down specifically for team members providing clinical support to service users.

Personal expectations

- 1) Be responsible and accountable for personal conduct and practice. Act as a role model of professional behaviour, being respectful, kind and upholding the dignity of colleagues, service users and partners. Uphold the reputation of OBS, and do not bring OBS into disrepute.
- 2) Act with honesty and integrity, treating colleagues, service users and partners fairly and without discrimination, bullying or harassment. Respect the beliefs and opinions of others, recognising diversity of background, experience and individual choice, especially where they may differ from your own. Do not allow your personal views to unduly influence your work and the support you offer. All work should be carried out with regard for the [OBS Equity and Diversity Policy](#).
- 3) Ensure you are mentally and physically fit for work. It is not permitted to be under the influence of alcohol, drugs or medication that may adversely affect behaviour or performance while carrying out your role and/or representing OBS in public, online or via video or phone. Withdraw voluntarily if you feel you are not fit for work. If you have any concerns, speak to the Operations Manager or Chair of Trustees.
- 4) OBS requires the disclosure of any criminal convictions as part of the recruitment process. Inform the Operations Manager or Chair of Trustees as soon as possible if you are arrested or are the subject of a police investigation.

- 5) Declare any potential conflicts of interest to the Operations Manager and/or Chair of Trustees.
- 6) Provide honest and constructive feedback to colleagues. Use feedback to improve your practice and performance. Deal with differences of professional opinion with colleagues by discussion and informed debate, respecting their views and opinions.
- 7) Do not accept monetary gifts, personal favours or hospitality in return for support given to service users. Never ask for or accept loans from anyone using the service. Act with honesty and integrity in any financial dealings you have in your role.
- 8) Be responsible for any money, equipment, property, digital accounts and data belonging to OBS.
- 9) Do not make direct contact with the media or respond to media enquiries where you will be identified as an OBS team member unless it has been agreed in advance with the Operations Manager or Chair of Trustees. If writing, giving an interview or speaking publicly on any matter which could be seen as representing OBS, reflect the policies and stance of OBS.
- 10) Take care when discussing potentially controversial topics in public or online, whether or not they are directly relevant to infant feeding, and be mindful of representing OBS even when you are not working.
 - Maintain professional boundaries online: avoid social media connections with service users or their supporters while you are supporting them.
 - You are responsible for any information you make available online. Content uploaded or opinions expressed can be considered in the public domain, and privacy cannot be guaranteed, regardless of privacy settings applied to personal accounts. This includes the sharing of confidential, discriminatory, illegal or threatening content.
 - Inform the Operations Manager and Chair of Trustees of public or online incidents that could negatively impact OBS's reputation.

What we expect of you as you work

- 11) Treat all service users equitably, and meet individuals' needs with support that is culturally appropriate, evidence-based and in line with best practice.
- 12) Work in partnership with service users, listening to and respecting their needs, preferences, concerns and goals. Respond sensitively and compassionately.
- 13) Communicate clearly and effectively, using terms people can understand. Share information sensitively. Take reasonable measures to meet people's language and communication needs.
- 14) Keep up to date with safeguarding training in line with the [OBS Safeguarding Policy](#), and know where to find the contact details of Designated Safeguarding Leads and the Designated Safeguarding Trustee.

- 15) Raise safeguarding concerns promptly in accordance with the [OBS Safeguarding Policy](#). Acknowledge and act on all concerns raised to you by colleagues, service users and partners, investigating, escalating or dealing with those concerns as appropriate. The Safeguarding Policy also provides details of the whistleblowing process.
- 16) Respect others' right to privacy and confidentiality, in accordance with GDPR law and [OBS's Privacy and Safeguarding policies](#). Be mindful of sharing personal information sensitively and only as necessary, and obtain consent where possible.
- 17) Be aware of, and reduce as far as possible, any potential for harm associated with your practice. Keep to and promote recommended practice in relation to health and safety, controlling and preventing infection. Take all reasonable personal precautions necessary to avoid any potential health risks to colleagues, people receiving support, and the public.
- 18) In order to maintain professional boundaries, avoid sharing personal contact information or making contact with service users outside of official OBS channels. Be mindful of the limits of your role, the limits of OBS services and the boundaries of your professional relationships.
- 19) Keep clear, complete and accurate records of your work. Identify risks and the steps taken to reduce them. Take all steps to ensure records are kept securely.
- 20) Work to further OBS's mission, vision and values in providing local families with skilled, non-judgemental support.
- 21) Obtain written consent when taking photographs or videos of service users and their families in OBS sessions.
- 22) Avoid endorsing or being seen to endorse specific products, services or practitioners.

Additional expectations of team members in clinical roles

- 23) Provide information and support within the scope of your training and practice. Make referrals to healthcare services or other professionals as required. Be mindful of what kinds of activities are covered by your own professional indemnity insurance as well as OBS's organisational insurance. If you have any doubt about your ability to perform a task or give support, raise this with the Clinical Director or Operations Manager.
- 24) Fulfil all registration requirements to practice in your role. Obey all applicable laws, including those regulating the activities of lactation specialists. Complete any training required for your role. Keep your knowledge and skills up to date, taking part in learning and professional development opportunities to maintain and develop your competence to carry out your role safely and effectively. Ensure adequate indemnity arrangements and insurance cover is in place for the scope of practice within OBS.
- 25) Attend OBS clinical supervision sessions and participate in internal opportunities for skills development.
- 26) If you hold roles with other infant feeding or related organisations or practice privately, make clear to families that you are supporting them in your OBS capacity, and be clear about the

limits of this support. In OBS settings, be mindful of personal information that you may have obtained while working in a different role.

- 27) Service users who attend and contribute to OBS sessions may transition into a volunteer role with OBS. Be clear about professional boundaries with the volunteers in your sessions, who may sometimes be receiving ongoing support from OBS and outside organisations.
- 28) Be open and candid with all service users about the support they have been given, including when any mistakes have been made. Act immediately to rectify mistakes or misinformation that could cause potential harm. Document all complaints or mistakes formally and escalate if appropriate so they can be dealt with in a timely manner. Mistakes should be reported and discussed in team meetings, to promote self-reflective practice and a culture of continuous learning and improvement.
- 29) Problems or complaints will be dealt with as set out in the [OBS Complaints and Allegations Policy and Procedure](#). Respond to any complaints made against you professionally. Do not allow a person's complaint to affect the support that you provide them. Use complaints as feedback and an opportunity for reflection and learning.

Accountability

OBS team members are responsible for their own actions and omissions while representing OBS, which helps to ensure that OBS standards are upheld, that services are delivered consistently and that the safety and wellbeing of service users is preserved.

Breaches of any standards outlined in this Code of Conduct may result in a meeting with the Chair of Trustees to assess suitability of a team member for their role. Should this happen, the team member will be given the opportunity to be heard. Consistent or substantial breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in initiation of procedures to terminate their contract with OBS.

Oxfordshire Breastfeeding Support
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