

AIUK Code of Conduct

1. INTRODUCTION

Amnesty's central principle is that people make change happen. The more people actively engage in our movement, the more we can promote and protect human rights. We encourage as many people as possible to participate in and feel part of this vibrant movement. Promoting equality and valuing diversity are fundamental to our mission.

We want to create an environment for activists that is open, safe, accessible and welcoming. Everyone has a role to play.

The Code of Conduct provides guidance on the behaviours that we need to uphold. It also details the procedure to follow on the rare occasions when complaints or other issues arise.

2. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This code outlines reasonable guidelines for the behaviour we expect of all Amnesty activists.

Should any situation arise where an allegation may warrant a police investigation or raise child protection concerns, AIUK will seek advice from the police or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

3. DEFINITIONS

An activist is anyone who carries out unpaid activity on behalf of Amnesty International UK, including fundraising, campaigning, training or providing support to other activists.

The code of conduct does not cover AIUK's board. Board members have a separate code that relates to their governance responsibilities.

Volunteers who work in AIUK's offices and shops have their own charter, while staff are governed by a separate code of conduct and employment policies and procedures.

AIUK staff have a separate staff code of conduct.

An 'activist role-holder' has a regular, specific role, for example regional representative, country coordinator, officer of local or student group, member of network committee. Please see the list of activist roles [here](#).

4. FOUNDATIONS

The foundations of this code of conduct are drawn from the following sources:

Amnesty International's core values as articulated in our International Statute

AIUK's behaviour framework: the commitments

AIUK's dignity at work policy

5. AMNESTY'S CORE VALUES

Amnesty International forms a global community of human rights defenders with the principles of international solidarity, effective action for the individual victim, global coverage, the universality and indivisibility of human rights, impartiality and independence, and democracy and mutual respect.

6. BEHAVIOUR COMMITMENTS

Our Commitments describe ways of working that are needed consistently across Amnesty International United Kingdom (AIUK) to make it a better place to campaign and fundraise for human rights. AIUK is a place where everyone feels included, valued and empowered to contribute to Human Rights change through their work. They are a set of common-sense commitments to each other that will help us to work better together for human rights change. These commitments should guide the behaviour of activists in the course of their work with Amnesty:

1. Communication

I listen to others and when I communicate I am respectful, clear, honest and inclusive. I give constructive feedback and allow people to give feedback to me.

2. Collaboration

I seek to build strong, collaborative working relationships. I share my expertise where it's required and encourage others to do the same.

3. Consideration

Guided by our values and strategic priorities, I manage my time and workload and am respectful of the time and workload of others. I am fair and consistent in my decision making and my dealings with others.

4. Change

I innovate and improve the way things are done, learning from any setbacks. I make time to increase my knowledge and skills and support others to do the same.

7. DIGNITY IN ACTIVISM

AIUK is committed to promoting and sustaining a positive and mutually supportive environment where everyone is treated with respect, courtesy, and dignity at all times.

We all have a right to and are responsible for creating an environment free from harassment, discrimination, bullying and victimisation; where unacceptable behaviour is easily identified, challenged, and stopped.

Acceptable Behaviour

All activists have a **personal responsibility** in line with Our Commitments to:

- treat each other with dignity and respect at all times
- value differences and the contribution that others make
- be pro-active in developing and maintaining effective working relationships
- be open, courteous and constructive in the way we communicate with each other
- take appropriate action where there are difficulties in working relationships

Unacceptable Behaviour

This is behaviour that is unwanted, unwelcome and undermines an individual's dignity. It can take many forms ranging from the more subtle - remarks, jokes, excluding individuals from discussions/meetings/social events to the more extreme for example intimidation, aggressiveness and physical attack.

Behaviour may be perceived as unacceptable, even if there was no intent to cause offence; or has overtones that an individual finds offensive, even if it was not directed at them.

Unacceptable behaviour may be a single event, ongoing or a pattern of repeated behaviours where individual incidents are borderline, but when taken together, breach the bounds of acceptability. It could be expressed verbally, written, in actions, via the telephone, e-mail, online or face to face.

Unacceptable behaviour may also be **discriminatory** where an individual or a group of people are treated less favourably as a result of a protected characteristic such as age, disability, gender reassignment (including those undergoing or intending to undergo gender reassignment), marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity (including treating a woman less favourably because she is breastfeeding), race (including ethnic origin, nationality and colour), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Unacceptable behaviour includes, but is not limited to the following:

Harassment is unwanted conduct that has the effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive work environment. This may be based on a protected characteristic or some other reason. It may be persistent, or an isolated incident. However, the key point is the impact on the individual.

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour and often involves an abuse or misuse of power, position or knowledge to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. It is a more general form of *harassment* that is not based on race, sex or any other protected characteristic.

8. FURTHER CONDUCT GUIDELINES

Act within the UK Law

Activists should observe the law and ensure that necessary consents are obtained and notices given for actions and events.

Act within Amnesty International policy

All public actions and statements related to Amnesty's work should be in accordance with Amnesty's policies and positions.

Political impartiality

AIUK is independent of any political party. Activists should not advocate for or against any specific political party in the name of Amnesty. The human rights impact of specific policies is legitimate cause for comment.

Reasonable expenses

AIUK reimburses expenses for some activities. If you are not sure whether yours qualify for reimbursement, ask a relevant staff member. Where expenses are paid, activists should ensure that they are reasonable and should follow [AIUK procedures](#) when making a claim.

Confidentiality

Much of our information is for public consumption. However, some is marked 'internal' or 'for AI members only' and may contain sensitive information. It may not always be apparent why the information is sensitive. Such information and documentation should not be shared beyond Amnesty. Documents marked 'draft', 'for consultation' or similar should be regarded as internal.

Copyright

Material produced by any part of Amnesty International is the property of Amnesty International. Consent for use by recognised activists can be assumed but it can be withdrawn at any time, including for inappropriate use. This also applies to logos and names.

Activists should also ensure that they do not violate copyright laws when using material not produced by Amnesty.

Acceptance of gifts, hospitality or donations

Activists should not accept gifts, hospitality or donations offered as an inducement for preferential treatment or which could be seen as exerting influence over decisions. Small gifts are permissible, as is the acceptance of a facility or service for free (a gift in kind).

It is permissible to receive donations but activists are advised to seek advice before receiving donations of significant value. Permission must always be sought from Community and Event Fundraising (CEFR) team for a donation or gift in kind from a private company that exceeds £5,000. Activists should always check with staff before accepting money from a governmental body (except

for grants made by an educational establishment to its own student body).

Donations collected in the name of Amnesty International must be used to support the organisation's aims and activities which includes the legitimate activities of our groups and networks but not donations to other organisations.

Where activists wish to fundraise for other organisations (jointly or separately from raising funds for Amnesty International) this information must be made clear on all relevant fundraising materials and the fundraising guidelines must be followed.

For more comprehensive guidelines for fundraising as an activist group, see our group fundraising guidelines:

Local Group: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/resources/local-group-fundraising-guidelines>

Student Group: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/resources/student-group-fundraising-guidelines>

Youth Group: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/resources/schools-and-youth-groups-fundraising-guidelines>

Conflict of Interest

Very occasionally a conflict of interest may arise (or be seen to arise) between an activist's work for Amnesty and their other activities. Damage to AIUK's reputation and/or how activists work collaboratively together may arise in these circumstances. Examples might include where a prominent activist role-holder becomes a legislative candidate or where an activist buys a service from their own company or from a relation. We are not generally interested in knowing about membership of other organisations (including political parties) unless the other body is clearly seen as having values at odds with our own.

Activists who are in a relationship with another activist, or an AIUK staff member, should make that known to those activists that they are working closely with.

For group members, any conflict of interest should be declared to other group members. Members of networks, committees, or similar bodies should make a declaration to their chairs.

For other activist role holders the declaration should be made to the Chair of the Activism Sub-Committee via activism@amnesty.org.uk.

Working in Partnership with staff

Staff and activists should work together in partnership to promote the best interests of AIUK. It is important that staff, activists and volunteers work within a culture of mutual respect and an understanding of respective roles at all levels. All communications should be conducted in a respectful and constructive manner.

Differences of opinion and disputes may arise and activists may wish to complain about a member

of staff. If they wish to do so, they can approach the relevant staff manager; they can request a network chair to raise the matter; or they can make a complaint in accordance with AIUK's [feedback mechanism](#). If a staff member wishes to complain about an activist, they will alert their line manager who will instigate the process for responding to complaints about activist outlined the annex below

Drugs Misuse

No activist should consume or be in possession of illegal substances during the performance of their duties for AIUK or at an AIUK event.

Alcohol Misuse

Activists should not be under the influence of alcohol to the extent that their performance or behaviour is impaired during the performance of their duties for AIUK.

Health and Safety

Activists are expected to take responsibility for their own and others's health and safety when undertaking work or organising events on behalf of AIUK. Trained staff can advise on health and safety, including risk assessments. Contact COEH@amnesty.org.uk for advice.

Engaging safely with children and young people

Activists should seek to create an environment where children and young people can make an effective contribution to Amnesty's activism and where their welfare is promoted. Activists must adhere to AIUK's [safeguarding policy](#) and follow AIUK's guidelines for working safely with children. All safeguarding concerns in relation to children and young people will be investigated formally. For safeguarding concerns contact AIUK's Head of Safeguarding.

Engaging safely with vulnerable adults

Activists should seek to create an environment where vulnerable adults can make an effective contribution to Amnesty's activism and where their welfare is promoted. Activists must adhere to AIUK's safeguarding policy [safeguarding policy](#) and follow AIUK's guidelines for working safely with vulnerable adults. All safeguarding concerns will be investigated formally. For safeguarding concerns contact [AIUK's Head of Safeguarding](#).

Data Protection

Activist should act in line with [AIUK's data protection / privacy notice](#).

Acceptance of Awards

Activists may sometimes be nominated for an award (with or without monetary value) as a consequence of their work for Amnesty. This is usually to be welcomed and celebrated. Nevertheless, advice from Amnesty staff should be sought before accepting any award of regional or national significance, or that may receive media attention beyond local media.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

It is preferable that problems are addressed informally. However, this is not always possible. Our formal and informal processes for dealing with issues and complaints about activists can be seen [here](#).

REVIEW AND COMMENTS

Comments are welcome on this Code of Conduct. It will next be reviewed in November 2022. We appreciate that policies and procedures can be improved and welcome suggestions. These should be sent to chair of the Activism Sub-Committee, via email to activism@amnesty.org.uk.

Further information and advice

AIUK's Supporter Care Team provides information and advice to our supporters and will be able to respond to queries arising from this Code or will know where to obtain answers. The team can be contacted by phone on 020 7033 1777) and by email on activism@amnesty.org.uk