



## **Charities Governance Code: Principles of Good Governance**

**We, the Board of Governors (the governing body), of St. Patrick's Mental Health Services commit to:**

### **Principle 1 Advancing charitable purpose**

*We do this by:*

- 1.1 Being clear about the purpose of our charity and being able to explain this in simple terms to anyone who asks;
- 1.2 Considering whether or not any private benefit arises. If a private benefit arises, considering if it is reasonable, necessary and ancillary to the public benefit that our charity provides;
- 1.3 Agreeing an achievable plan for at least the next year that sets out and budgets for what the organisation will do to advance its purpose;
- 1.4 Making sure the charity has the resources it needs to do the activities planned. If the organisation does not have the resources, a plan will be shown for getting those resources;
- 1.5 From time to time, reviewing what the organisation is doing to make sure it is still acting in line with the charity's purpose and providing public benefit;
- 1.6 Developing the charity's strategic plan and associated operational plans;
- 1.7 Making sure there is an appropriate system in place to monitor progress against the plans and evaluate effectiveness of the work of the charity;
- 1.8 From time to time, considering the advantages and disadvantages of working in partnership with other charities, including merging or dissolving;

### **Principle 2 Behaving with integrity**

*We do this by:*

- 2.1 Agreeing the basic values that matter to our charity and publicise these, so that everyone involved understands the way things should be done and how everyone is expected to behave;
- 2.2 Deciding how to deal with conflicts of interest and conflicts of loyalties. Deciding how the organisation will adhere to the Charities Regulator's guidelines on this topic;
- 2.3 Having a code of conduct for the board that is signed by all charity trustees making it clear the standard of behaviour expected from charity trustees. This will include maintaining confidentiality and what will be done in relation to gifts and hospitality and out of pocket expenses.

### **Principle 3 Leading people**

*We do this by:*

- 3.1 Being clear about the roles of everyone working in and for our charity, both on a voluntary and paid-basis.
- 3.2 Making sure there are arrangements in place for the effective involvement of any volunteers, including what to do if any problems arise;
- 3.3 Making sure there are arrangements in place that comply with employment legislation for all paid staff including recruitment, training and development, support, supervision, appraisal, remuneration and dismissal;
- 3.4 Agreeing operational policies where necessary to guide the actions of everyone involved in the charity;
- 3.5 Making sure to document the roles, legal duties and delegated responsibility for decision making of individual charity trustees and the board as a whole, any sub-committees or working groups and staff and volunteers;
- 3.6 Making sure that there are written procedures in place which set out how volunteers are recruited, supported and supervised while within the charity and the conditions under which they exist;
- 3.7 Deciding how we will develop operational policy in the charity and how the charity trustees will make sure that the policy is put in place and kept up to date.



#### **Principle 4 Exercising control**

*We do this by:*

- 4.1 Deciding the charity's current legal form and governing document are fit for purpose. Making changes if necessary, telling the Charities Regulator in advance that we are doing so;
- 4.2 Finding out the laws and regulatory requirements that are relevant to our charity and complying with them;
- 4.3 Making sure our charity adheres to the Charities Regulator's guidelines if our charity raises funds from the public;
- 4.4 Making sure we have appropriate financial controls in place to manage and account for the charity's money and other assets;
- 4.5 Identifying any risks the charity might face and how to manage these;
- 4.6 Making sure the charity has appropriate and adequate insurance cover;
- 4.7 Having written procedures in place to make sure the organisation complies with all relevant legal and regulatory requirements;
- 4.8 Making sure there is a formal risk register that the board regularly reviews;
- 4.9 Considering adopting additional good practice standards that are relevant to the particular work that the charity does.

#### **Principle 5 Working effectively**

*We do this by:*

- 5.1 Identifying charity trustees with the necessary skills to undertake any designated roles set out in the governance document and other roles as appropriate within the board;
- 5.2 Holding regular board meetings, giving notice of these meetings and providing prepared agendas;
- 5.3 At a minimum, including reporting on activities, reviewing of finances and conflicts of interest and loyalties on board agendas;
- 5.4 Making sure that the charity trustees have the facts to make informed decisions at board meetings and that these decisions are recorded accurately in the minutes;
- 5.5 Considering introducing term limits for our charity trustees with a suggested maximum of nine years in total;
- 5.6 Recruiting suitable new charity trustees as necessary and making sure they receive an induction;
- 5.7 Making sure all of the trustees understand their role as charity trustee, the charity's governing document and this Code;
- 5.8 Committing to resolving problems and emerging issues as quickly as possible and in the best interests of the charity;
- 5.9 From time to time, reviewing how the board operates and making any necessary improvements;
- 5.10 Making sure board packs are sent out with enough notice and include all relevant reports and explanatory papers to enable informed decision making;
- 5.11 Making sure that there is a charity trustee succession plan in place and consider how diversity can be maximised among the charity trustees;
- 5.12 Putting in place a comprehensive induction programme for new charity trustees;
- 5.13 Conducting a regular review that includes an assessment of the effectiveness of the board as a whole, office holders and individual charity trustees, adherence to the board code of conduct and the structure, size, membership and terms of reference of any sub-committees;
- 5.14 Doing regular skills audits and providing appropriate training and development to charity trustees and staff. If necessary, recruiting to fill any competency gaps on the board of the charity.

#### **Principle 6 Being accountable**

*We do this by:*

- 6.1 Making sure that the name and Registered Charity Number (RCN) of our charity is displayed on all of our written material including our website, social media platforms and email communications;
- 6.2 Identifying stakeholders and deciding how the organisation will communicate with them;
- 6.3 Deciding if and how stakeholders are involved in planning, decision making and review processes;



- 6.4 Making sure the organisation has a procedure for dealing with queries, comments and complaints;
- 6.5 Following the reporting requirements of all of funders and donors, both public and private;
- 6.6 Producing unabridged (full) financial accounts and making sure that these and the charity's annual report are widely available and easy for everyone to access;
- 6.7 Making sure all the codes and standards of practice to which the charity subscribes are publicly stated;
- 6.8 Regularly reviewing any complaints the charity receives and taking action to improve organisational practice.

We confirm that our organisation is committed to the standards outlined in these principles. We commit to reviewing our organisational practice against the recommended actions for each principle every year.

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**Danny Kitchen**  
**Chairman of the Board**  
**Date: 5<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

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**Brendan Power**  
**Secretary of the Board**  
**Date: 5<sup>th</sup> November 2019**