

Campaign Leader & Campaigner Code

Equal Respect. Clear Responsibility. Evidence-Led Campaigns.

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Campaign Leaders coordinate work within their authorised responsibilities. Every Campaigner and Volunteer deserves equal respect.

1. Purpose and who this code applies to

This Code sets standards for people authorised to lead or take part in Right First Time UK (RFTUK) campaigns. It applies to Campaign Leaders and Campaigners and, where relevant, to Volunteers supporting their activities. Our aim is effective, fair, evidence-led campaigning with clear accountability and respect for everyone involved.

A Campaign Leader is appointed to coordinate a specified campaign or activity. A Campaigner supports campaign activities within an agreed role. Neither title automatically makes someone a Director, statutory company member, employee, legal representative or owner of an RFTUK campaign.

2. Equal respect and delegated authority

Founder, Directors, Campaign Leaders, Campaigners and Volunteers should be treated with equal dignity and respect, although their duties, decision-making powers and access rights differ. Campaign Leaders coordinate responsibilities; they do not hold personal rank over other people.

Directors retain statutory governance duties. Campaign Leaders must act within the authority RFTUK has given them and refer matters outside it to an authorised Director or decision-maker. Delegation may be changed or withdrawn when necessary.

- Delegated authority should be recorded and may specify the campaign purpose, tasks, publication and media permissions, lobbying, evidence handling, access to systems, finances, safeguarding, reporting and review dates.
- A role title does not itself authorise contracts, spending, payments, account opening, organisational statements or access to confidential information.

3. Campaign purpose and reliable evidence

Campaigns must have a defined public-interest purpose. They must not be converted into a private grievance, personal business project, unrelated cause or party-political promotion without proper organisational consideration.

Claims must distinguish verified fact, allegation, opinion, analysis and lived experience. Important assertions should be checked against appropriate primary evidence, including official publications, legislation, relevant court decisions and documented records. Repetition alone is not verification.

Lived experience matters but should be presented accurately and with appropriate permission. People must not be pressured to disclose intimate or identifying information to make a campaign more persuasive.

4. Publication, allegations and corrections

Serious allegations about identifiable people or organisations need enhanced checks before publication. Consider evidence, corroboration, context, public interest, confidentiality, potential legal consequences and whether a fair opportunity to comment is appropriate. A failure to respond does not prove an allegation.

Material factual mistakes must be corrected promptly and fairly under RFTUK's publication and corrections arrangements, even when an error supports the campaign's position.

5. Political independence and election periods

RFTUK is independent and non-party political. People may personally hold political opinions or belong to lawful parties, but their private activity must not be presented as RFTUK activity. They must not use its brand, funds, mailing lists or official accounts for party recruitment, candidate promotion or personal party campaigning.

During an election or referendum period, planned campaign communications and spending must be reviewed for any applicable non-party campaigning, donation, spending or digital-imprint obligations. Escalate potentially regulated activity before publication or expenditure. Personal contact with an MP in a private capacity remains an individual's own choice.

6. Representing RFTUK, lobbying and social media

Only authorised people may speak, publish, lobby, attend meetings or give interviews on behalf of RFTUK within their delegated scope. Describe your role accurately; do not claim professional qualifications, statutory powers, a directorship or external endorsement that you do not have.

Use organisational social media and media channels responsibly. Do not publish confidential material, unverified serious accusations, bullying, threats or personal party promotion. Refer sensitive journalist enquiries and organisation-wide statements for appropriate approval.

7. Safeguarding and protected information

Safety comes before publicity, fundraising or campaign reputation. Activities involving children or adults at risk require suitable planning and safeguards. Never pressure someone to participate, donate, tell their story or appear in media because of their vulnerability.

Report safeguarding concerns through the proper channels; do not carry out an unauthorised investigation or promise absolute secrecy. Contact emergency services where there is immediate danger.

Family-court and other restricted materials must not be published or shared without checking the applicable court orders, reporting restrictions, confidentiality duties and protection of children.

8. Privacy, systems and AI tools

Personal information and confidential records must be used only as necessary and lawfully authorised for the role. Use approved systems, limited permissions and appropriate safeguards. Do not share passwords, give unrestricted dashboard/server access or distribute records through insecure personal channels.

AI and digital tools must follow RFTUK's applicable policies and the provider's current terms. Important AI-generated claims require source checking. Never put passwords, restricted court material, sensitive case records or safeguarding details into an unapproved AI service.

9. Finance, donations and volunteering

Campaign funds belong to RFTUK and must be dealt with under its financial and donation policies. Campaign Leaders cannot approve personal expenses, promise grants, sign contracts or change the use of restricted funds without specific authority. Campaign fundraising must be lawful, accurate and free from improper pressure.

Genuine voluntary roles are unpaid, with no compulsory fixed hours merely because a person volunteers. Reasonable, authorised expenses may be reimbursed. Any paid work must be agreed under a lawful, appropriately authorised arrangement; volunteering must not be used to disguise employment.

10. Conflicts of interest and partnerships

Declare relevant actual, potential or perceived conflicts, including personal disputes, political interests, business relationships, employment, donors or organisations under campaign scrutiny. A conflict may be managed through disclosure, limits on involvement or independent review; it does not always require removal.

External collaboration must be authorised. Campaign Leaders must not sign partnerships, accept conditions or promise RFTUK resources without permission. No partner, donor or sponsor may buy or dictate RFTUK's evidence or findings.

11. Fair conduct, volunteering and accessibility

Bullying, discrimination, harassment, threats, intimidation and retaliation are unacceptable. Genuine disagreement, complaints and constructive criticism must not be treated as disloyalty.

Volunteers can decline tasks, request support or take breaks. Campaign Leaders should communicate clearly, consider disabilities and different communication needs, and provide reasonable adjustments where appropriate. Responsibilities should be allocated fairly.

12. Complaints, safeguarding concerns and speaking up

Concerns about a Campaign Leader or Campaigner may be raised using RFTUK's complaints, safeguarding, financial or speaking-up routes. The subject of a complaint must not decide the complaint about themselves.

Where credible immediate risks to safety, evidence, funds or information security exist, access or authority may be temporarily restricted while concerns are reviewed. A precautionary restriction is not itself a finding of wrongdoing.

13. Records, reporting and training

Campaign Leaders should keep proportionate, accurate and secure records of campaign aims, delegated authority, evidence, major decisions, relevant meetings, publication approvals, conflicts, spending, complaints and corrections. Apply the appropriate privacy and retention requirements.

Provide progress updates and promptly escalate significant legal, safeguarding, financial, election, media, privacy or reputational risks. Role-appropriate guidance or training may be required before higher-risk work or access is authorised.

14. Appointment, review and leaving a role

Campaign Leader appointments should identify the campaign and responsibilities and may be reviewed as activities change. No one automatically acquires another role, directorship, company membership, job or paid contract through campaigning or volunteering.

RFTUK may pause or withdraw delegated authority for justified operational, safeguarding, legal or conduct reasons. Where safe and practicable, explain the concern and offer a reasonable chance to respond before a significant final decision.

People may step down, subject to reasonable handover. On leaving, return RFTUK records, accounts, property and credentials, and do not retain confidential information or use RFTUK branding without authority.

15. Raising questions and reviewing this Code

Questions about campaign roles, spending, public representation, conflicts, safeguarding or conduct can be raised through the RFTUK contact page. This Code is reviewed at least annually and sooner following important changes to law, governance, campaign operations or safeguarding practice.

Read this Code alongside the Articles of Association and RFTUK policies covering safeguarding, volunteering, complaints, financial controls, fundraising, evidence and corrections, data protection, political independence and AI use.

Official guidance

External guidance can change; check the current source before acting on it.

GOV.UK - Volunteers' rights

GOV.UK - Volunteer pay and expenses

GOV.UK - Being a company director

Electoral Commission - Non-party campaigning

Fundraising Regulator - Code of Fundraising Practice

Contact: Use the contact details published at <https://rightfirsttimeuk.com/> for questions or complaints.

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