The SOFEA Commitment

Our Values Statement

"We are committed to supporting people to make a deep connection with themselves and their community. We do this by treating all members of our community with equal compassion and respect and accepting them as they are. As much as we completely accept people as they are, we refuse to accept any limitation on what they might achieve.

We believe in the restorative benefits of education, work and social justice to support people's innate resilience to achieve growth and their potential as human beings."

Values

Making a deep connection with ourselves and our communities goes beyond a transactional approach of trying to get what we want from an interaction. It is a relational approach that seeks to ensure everyone is included.

Accepting people as they are: Nobody's perfect, nobody gets everything right, everyone's at a different point in their journey. Always assume positive intent and respond with unconditional positive regard for the person. But be tough on the issue.

Not accepting limits on what people can achieve means we don't use language such as 'well what do you expect from'... We don't accept inappropriate behaviour and we don't collude with excuses for not trying to be better.

The restorative benefits of education, work and social justice - Learning, hard work and fairness are the keys to our success

Why It Matters

SOFEA exists to create the kind of world we want. That work starts with us. If we want hope, trust, safety, and belonging, then we must build the conditions in our own culture — everybody, every day.

At SOFEA, how we treat each other is the foundation on which the work we do is based.

This Commitment sets out the values and behaviours we all commit to — towards everybody: young people, beneficiaries, partners and our colleagues.

It is the foundation of our healthy, professional culture where everyone can thrive.

This is our commitment to each other.

Our Shared Values

Respect and Compassion

We treat every person with dignity and fairness.

- We listen well, speak kindly, and assume everyone brings value.
- We celebrate each other's efforts and achievements.

We act honestly and hold ourselves accountable.

- We do what we say we will do.
- We are honest when we're struggling or need help.
- We raise concerns openly and appropriately.

We are consistent, confidential, and dependable.

- We keep private matters private (unless safeguarding is at stake).
- We follow through on commitments, big or small.
- We honour the work and boundaries of our colleagues.

We assume good intent and seek to understand, not judge.

- We ask, "What's going on for you?" not "What's wrong with you?"
- We respond to mistakes with kindness for the person and curiosity for the issue.
- We value difference — in background, identity, and approach.
- We check in, notice when someone's not OK, and offer support.
- We look after ourselves and each other, including taking breaks and setting boundaries.
- We never ignore distress, conflict, or exclusion.

This means that we never accept

- Shouting, shaming, or punitive language
- Gossip, cliques, or undermining others
- Discrimination, harassment, bullying or microaggressions from anyone
- Crossing of professional boundaries
- Tolerance for safeguarding (including emotional safety), health and safety, food safety and data breaches.

What are the consequences?

The consequences of continually striving to get this right are that we have a working environment that is built on strong values, that is productive and that we enjoy.

The consequences when things don't go to plan should be that the behaviour is addressed as quickly as possible, deescalated, owned and worked on.

We try very very hard not to use 'external sanctions' such as warnings, etc, but if these are necessary they are applied proportionately and compassionately, because if we don't get it right then the natural consequences will be a less effective, productive and happy workplace which will have a negative impact on all of us and our beneficiaries.

Our Everyday Commitments

As members of the SOFEA team, we all agree to:

- **Be on time, prepared, and present**
- **Communicate clearly, professionally, and in plain language**
- **Give feedback constructively and receive it openly (and be willing to develop our skills in giving and receiving feedback)**
- **Support decisions once made, even if we disagreed initially**
- **Respect different roles, skills, and responsibilities**
- **Value all contributions from anyone who offers one**
- **Take personal responsibility for learning and reflection**
- **Own our impact, and learn from it**

Living the Commitments

We will see this working when we are

- Reflecting regularly on how we embody the values
- Raising concerns constructively — through supervision, HR, or leadership
- Acting with integrity, authenticity and with an ethical mindset
- Communicating responsively - return calls, answer emails, go back with answers when someone asks a question
- Being accountable - take responsibility and own problems, actions and performance
- Following things through - do what we say we are going to do and keep at it until we have finished the job at hand
- Striving to do the best job we can - always push ourselves to do the best we can, aim high
- Taking pride in doing a good job - challenge ourselves to do the best job we can and feel good about it.
- Sharing recognition and shouting when we see something good
- Leveraging the power of teamwork - using our individual skills and those of each other to get the best collaborative results we can
- Challenging ourselves to raise the bar - continuous improvement and seek to learn from these experiences along the way
- Not being afraid to get it wrong - it's about learning from our mistakes, not judging or finger pointing when we get it wrong. Speak up when you see/hear something that isn't right
- How we present ourselves – we will dress respectfully, appropriately and professionally and use language and behave in a way that is respectful towards others

How this Commitment will be communicated and who it applies to:

This Commitment applies to all employees, volunteers, contractors, community partners, young learners and anyone who acts as an ambassador for the SOFEA organisation.

Each individual in SOFEA is equally responsible for the physical and psychological safety of themselves, each other and the environment we work in.

This Commitment will be communicated via induction for new starters and will be fully shared with all current SOFEA people, uploaded onto individuals HR records and training will be refreshed every 3 years.