# A red and yellow emblem with a red banner and white lines Description automatically generatedCommunity Compass Advisory Group.

# CODE OF CONDUCT & CONFIDENTIALITY

**Advisor Role Description and Confidentiality Agreement**

This document outlines the main activities of a Community Compass Advisory Group member (CCAG). It is not intended to be an exhaustive list and can be amended at any time.

**Purpose of the Role:** To provide independent advice to East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service to assist it in the provision of a fair, equitable and community-focused fire service.

**Advisors will be expected to:**

1. Attend meetings of the group and, when necessary, working groups and/or sub-groups.
2. Share personal knowledge, awareness and experience of community issues with the group.
3. Provide advice to East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, with particular emphasis on:
   1. Helping to improve the understanding of the differing effects that fire service policies and practices have on various communities.
   2. Advising on impact assessments and subsequent community reassurance plans for pre-planned fire and rescue operations and Critical/Major Incidents

4. Provide advice and guidance to East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service on the development of Equality Impact Assessments and the introduction of policies and practices that do not exclude, discriminate or have an unjustifiable adverse impact on any community.

**Selection Criteria**

CCAG members will need to possess the following key attributes, which will form the selection criteria:

* a commitment to improving relations between diverse communities and the Fire Service
* relevant expertise and experience
* to be able to make a dispassionate, considered and ethical assessment of what they experience.
* to critically appraise fire service policies and practices
* to express and explain their views to others.
* to exercise judgement and discretion in the event of a conflict of interest

**De-selection**

Members of CCAG may be de-selected if a member:

* fails to attend more than three consecutive scheduled meetings without giving an apology or reason that is acceptable, other than special or urgent meetings.
* fails to fulfil designated actions or prepare for meetings.
* through their continued membership would undermine the credibility and legitimacy of the group or fundamentally weaken aspects of its work.
* breaches operating protocols, or the core code of ethics.
* breaches confidentiality or puts current operations at risk.

Individual members of CCAG can be de-selected if two-thirds of the full group vote accordingly, and East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service may ask the CCAG to vote on a suggested de-selection of a particular member. The member concerned will be given the opportunity to present their view.

**Financial Implications and Expenses**

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service recognises that if the organisation wants to receive the best advice, the best people should be advisors, and no one should be excluded from being an advisor for financial reasons. Advisors can claim a gratuity at an agreed amount to cover travelling expenses for attending advisory group meetings or where attendance of members has been requested through the inclusion or OD team.

**Code of Conduct and Confidentiality Protocols**

Partiality or favouritism must not be shown by members within the meeting or in the advice they give. It is recognised that by the very nature of the work confidentiality issues will arise. Members can talk about what they do but must respect individual confidentiality and ensure others are not put at risk. It is a prerequisite that members agree to observe the code of conduct and confidentiality protocols it contains.

**Confidentiality**

As a member of CCAG you will necessarily learn of information that has not been made public and is confidential. It will be regarded as a betrayal of trust to breach such confidences. You should never disclose or use confidential information arising from the work of the group for personal advantage of you or of anyone known to you or to the disadvantage or discredit of the group, Fire Service or anyone else. Apart from the breach of trust there may be cause for prosecution under the Data Protection Act 1998 for the breach of confidential information.

**Gifts and Hospitality**

You will need to treat with caution any offer of gift, favour or hospitality that is made to you personally, knowing you to be a member of CCAG. The person or organisation making the offer may be doing so to obtain information or trying to influence a decision. You are personally responsible for all decisions connected with the acceptance or offer of gifts or hospitality and for avoiding the risk of damage to public confidence in an advisory group.

**Disclosure of Interests**

If you have an interest in a matter arising at a meeting of CCAG or through its work you should always disclose it. Having declared an interest, you may be asked to withdraw from the meeting during discussion. It is open to you to declare an interest in any work of the advisory group. Consider whether the public would regard your interest as so intricately connected with the matter in question that you could not be expected to put it out of your mind.

The opportunity to make a declaration of interest can at any point during a meeting and must declare an interest when it becomes apparent, they have one. You should always avoid any occasion for suspicion and any appearance of improper conduct. You should not allow the impression to be created that you are, or may be, using your position to promote a private or personal interest, rather than forwarding the public interest. You should ask yourself whether members of the public, knowing all facts of the situation, would reasonably think that you might be influenced by it.

Having made a declaration it will be open to the group to decide if you continue to take part in discussing a matter in which you have an interest. If opinion is divided and there is equality of votes, the decision of the Chair shall be final. If in doubt about the need to disclose an interest, disclose it anyway and take the advice of the group on whether you should continue to take part in the business under consideration. You are required as a member of CCAG to sign the disclosure below that you will abide by the conditions set out above.

**I have read and understood the Terms of Reference and the Confidentiality agreement /code of conduct and agree to abide by their terms**.

Please return a signed copy of this agreement to **inclusion@esfrs.org**

**Print name……………………………………………………………………………………**

**Signed ………………………………………………. Date…………………………………**