EMPLOYEES' CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction

This code of conduct describes the standards of conduct and practice which all North East Lincolnshire Council employees should follow. The code of conduct does not apply to those employed by schools with delegated budgets unless adopted by the governing body. All elected and co-opted members are required to comply with a separate Code of Conduct which can be found in the Constitution on the Council's website.

The code of conduct is a key component of the Council's code of governance which is part of the Constitution. In particular core principle A lays out the Council's arrangements for "behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law section"

The code of conduct is designed to:

a. promote fairness and consistency in the treatment of individuals.

b. assist in the effective operation of the Council.

c. establish the required standards of conduct of employees of the Council

and

d. maintain satisfactory relationships within the workforce and between the employees and management.

North East Lincolnshire Council employees are expected to provide the highest possible standard of service to the public. Adhering to the Code of Conduct at all times will help us to provide high quality services and promote public trust and confidence in North East Lincolnshire Council.

It is unlikely that this code of conduct will cover all eventualities. In such cases the spirit of the code is deemed to apply.

In order to support employees to adhere to the code, the council commits to:

- ensure written policies and procedures are in place to confirm and encourage statutory and professional good practice.
- recognise the diversity of its employees
- open and effective communication
- consult with employees and recognised trade unions about changes that are likely to affect them

- ensure employees have the appropriate tools, training and development opportunities to enable them to execute their role in the most efficient and effective way

Operation of the code

The code is a key element in the employment relationship. It is therefore an integral part of the contract of employment and should form the basis of an employee's induction. Managers and supervisors must ensure that all employees are aware of and understand the code, providing support and guidance where required to meet the code.

Every employee has a responsibility to report any impropriety or breach of the code of conduct to their manager or other appropriate employee. If a breach of the code is identified, this may constitute misconduct and lead to disciplinary action. Please refer to the Disciplinary Procedure for further details.

The Council operates a Policy for Raising a Concern (Incorporating the Whistleblowing Policy) and enables any individual to register, in confidence, any concerns regarding alleged misconduct and fraudulent or corrupt activity. This can be found on the Council's intranet.

In accepting a contract of employment with the council all employees are bound by the terms of the code, employees must have regard to and understand the code and the standards of conduct and behaviour they must meet at all times.

If an employee is a member of a professional institute or association, they should also comply with any professional code and/or standards issued by that organisation.

If you are appointed to represent the Council on an outside body or organisation you should act according to the rules, constitutions and frameworks set by that outside body. Please refer to 'The Protocol for Council Representation on Outside Bodies' in the Council's Constitution for further information.

The code of conduct encompasses the key principles of public life recommended by the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life, explained as follows:

Selflessness

Employees will act solely in terms of the public interest and should not take decisions which will result in any financial or other benefit to themselves, a relative, close friend or associate.

Integrity

Employees must avoid placing themselves under any financial or other obligation to people or organisations that might influence them in their work for the Council.

Objectivity

Employees must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Employees are accountable to the Council and the public for their decisions and actions.

Openness

Employees should be as open as possible in all actions and decisions taken. Reasons should be given for decisions and information should not be restricted unless this is clearly required by Council policy or the law.

Honesty

Employees should be truthful and have a duty to declare any private interests which might affect their work with the Council**.**

Leadership

Managers should actively promote and support the principles and demonstrate them in their behaviour.

The Code of Conduct

Personal Conduct and Accountability

Employees must:

- be trustworthy and perform their duties with honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity
- not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work
- be ready and able at the agreed times of working to carry out their job.
- honour work commitments, agreements and arrangements and, when it is not possible to do so, explain why to their manager and other individuals
- seek assistance from their manager if they do not feel able or adequately prepared to carry out any aspect of their work, or are not sure about how to proceed in a work matter
- participate constructively in Appraisals and Supervisions and undertake relevant training to maintain and improve their knowledge and skills and contribute to the learning and development of others
- maintain good attendance, report absence in line with the relevant procedure and not act in a manner which would impair recovery or delay a return to work
- act in a manner which would not result in an action against the Council for negligence
- not make or condone any fraudulent claims or activity

- respect confidential information
- seek to understand and follow Council policies, procedures and good practice
- never treat other employees less favourably because they use or are involved in the Council's procedures for reporting misconduct or poor practice
- not behave in a way, in work or outside work, which would call into question their suitability to work for the Council
- adhere to the Council's Social Media Policy when using social media for work or personal use and protect the Council's reputation online at all times
- report any criminal conviction relevant to their job
- either challenge inappropriate behaviour and practice or bring such behaviour to the attention of a manager
- not smoke or consume alcohol on Council premises or when conducting Council business
- not use, possess, distribute or sell illegal drugs on Council premises, or when conducting Council business
- ensure that they have their ID card with them at all times to confirm identity
- not make statements to the media, or any other public statement which concerns the business of the Council unless they have been authorised by their Manager/Director to act generally as a spokesperson
- act in accordance with recruitment and selection policy to ensure that appointments of new employees are based only on merit and the ability of the candidate to undertake the duties of the post

Relationships

Employees must:

- maintain appropriate and respectful relationships with colleagues and councillors at all times
- adhere to the protocol on member and senior officer relations, which is set out in the Constitution, as appropriate.
- declare any personal relationships with councillors to the appropriate manager
- provide appropriate advice to councillors and fellow employees with impartiality as required
- provide the highest possible standard of service at all time
- treat other employees of the Council and partner organisations, members of the public and service users with equity, dignity and respect
- act in accordance with equality and diversity policies and legislation and show respect and consideration for others at all times
- not harass, victimise, bully or discriminate unlawfully against any person
- not prevent any person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled
- not use defamatory language in any communication with colleagues

Health and Safety

Employees must:

- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety, and that of others who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work (things they do or do not do).

- Cooperate with NELC in order to fulfil our statutory duties (this would include; but not limited to, adhering to risk assessment controls, safe systems of work, attendance at any requested training or occupational health referrals).
- Not interfere with, misuse or wilfully damage anything provided in the interests of health and safety.
- Be aware of the Councils Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Policy and Procedures contained within the OHS Management System.
- Follow all controls identified within risk assessments, safe systems of work or outlined within health and safety training (including the use of any personal protective equipment provided).
- Report any accidents, incidents or dangerous occurrences experienced or witnessed during the course of their duties.
- Meet relevant standards of practice and work in a lawful, safe and effective way at all times, including when driving whilst at work.
- Inform their manager (or the appropriate authority) about any personal difficulties that might affect their ability to do their job competently and safely (including any personal demands, lack of control or support or any issues with their working relationships, role or impacts of change).
- Report any medical conditions that may affect their work activities or abilities to carry out their roles.
- Not report nor endeavour to report for work whilst under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.
- Not carry out their duties in the workplace whilst under the influence of alcohol and/or misuse of drugs.

Note: Where an employee is taking prescribed drugs which may have an impact on their ability to undertake their regular duties safely, they must report this to their Line Manager immediately

Resources

Employees must:

- use any public funds entrusted to or handled by themselves in an honest, responsible and lawful manner
- comply with the Financial Procedure Rules (FPRs), as set out in the Constitution, when managing budgets and financial responsibilities
- comply with the Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs), as set out in the Constitution, when letting a contract for goods, works or services
- ensure proper and lawful use of Council property or facilities at all times
- not use Council property or facilities, including information and email, for personal business
- not lose or damage Council equipment and/or property by wilful or negligent act
- be aware of and adhere to ICT security policies and procedures to ensure systems are adequately secured against risks.
- change passwords regularly and not disclose user identifications and passwords to anyone

- Comply with the Council's Information Governance framework to ensure that data and information is available as appropriate and adequately secured against risks
- ensure that no unauthorised person gains access to equipment, data or information
- accurately maintain Council records or documents and not alter or destroy any document or record unless properly authorised to do so
- not disclose information given to them in confidence by anyone, or information acquired which they believe is of a confidential nature, without the consent of a person authorised to give it, or unless they are required by law to do so
- not prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law
- maintain privacy and confidentiality at all times particularly when working in an area other than their normal office due to agile working practices

Personal Interests

Employees must:

- not allow their personal interests to conflict with the Council's requirements in either their official or personal capacity
- not use their position to improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person or organisation
- not be involved in the appointment or any other decision relating to the employment of a relative, associate or close friend (See note below)
- not use their authority or position for personal gain, or to enable colleagues or others to gain personally
- not allow additional employment to affect their ability to carry out their duties or conflict with the interests of, or in any way weaken public confidence in the Council
- read and understand 'Appendix 1- Interests and Gifts and Hospitality and declare any pecuniary interests that they have, or a relative, associate or close friend has in any contract or proposed contract entered into by the Council
- read and understand 'Appendix 1- Interests and Gifts and Hospitality' and declare hospitality, benefits or gifts received as a consequence of employment.
- not have an active political role in or outside of the work place if they hold a post which is 'politically restricted'
- comply with the legal requirement that prevents them standing for election to the Council if they are employed at the time of their formal nomination as a candidate . This includes any period of notice following the employee's resignation.

Note: A relative is defined as a spouse, civil partner, partner, parent, parent-in-law, son, daughter, stepson, stepdaughter, child of a partner, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece or the spouse or partner of any of the above. An associate is defined as a fellow member of a club, association or business partner. A close friend is defined as someone held in particular affection who is in regular contact outside of work.