

Version	Title	Author	Changes (Summary of changes made)	Authorised	Review Date
1	Code of Conduct	SD/AC	New policy	Board Mtg	

## CODE OF CONDUCT FOR BOARD MEMBERS

### 1. Introduction

As a public office-holder, Board member's actions must be governed by the principles set out in this Code of Conduct. It is their responsibility to ensure that they are familiar with, and comply with, all the relevant provisions of the Code.

### 2. KEY PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

The key principles upon which this Code of Conduct is based are the Seven Principles of Public Life. These are:

#### Selflessness

Board members should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

#### Integrity

Board members should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might, or might be perceived to, influence them in the performance of their official duties.

#### Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including awarding contracts and recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, board members should make choices on merit.

#### Accountability

Board members are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate for their office.

#### Openness

Board members should be as open as possible about the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict

information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

## **Honesty**

Board members have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

## **Leadership**

Board members should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

These principles should inform board member's actions and decisions.

## **3. GENERAL CONDUCT**

### **Use of Public Funds**

Board members have a duty to ensure the safeguarding of public funds and the proper custody of assets which have been publicly funded. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

Board members must carry out their fiduciary obligations responsibly - that is, take appropriate measures to ensure that the body uses resources efficiently, economically and effectively, avoiding waste and extravagance. It will always be an improper use of public funds for public bodies to employ consultants or other companies to lobby Parliament, Government or political parties. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

### **Allowances** <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

Board members must comply with the rules set by the board and the public body regarding remuneration, allowances and expenses. It is their responsibility to ensure compliance with all relevant HM Revenue and Customs' requirements concerning payments, including expenses. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

### **Gifts and Hospitality**

Board members must not accept any gifts or hospitality which might, or might reasonably appear to, compromise their personal judgement or integrity or place them under an improper obligation. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

Board members must never canvass or seek gifts or hospitality. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

Board members must comply with the rules set by the body on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality. They should inform the Chief Executive (or equivalent) of any offer of gifts or hospitality and ensure that, where a gift or hospitality is accepted, this is recorded in a public register in line with the rules set by the body. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

Board members are responsible for their decisions on the acceptance of gifts or hospitality and for ensuring that any gifts or hospitality accepted can

stand up to public scrutiny and do not bring the public body into disrepute.

### **Use of Official Resources** <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

Board members must not misuse official resources for personal gain or for political purposes. Use of such resources must be in line with the body's rules on their usage. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

### **Use of Official Information** <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

Board members must not misuse information gained in the course of their public service for personal gain or for political purpose.

Board members must not disclose any information which is confidential in nature or which is provided in confidence without authority. This duty continues to apply after they have left the board. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

### **Political Activity**

In their public role, board members should be, and be seen to be, politically impartial. They should not occupy a paid party political post or hold a particularly sensitive or high-profile role in a political party. They should <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>abstain from all controversial political activity and comply with Cabinet Office rules on attendance at Party Conferences.

On matters directly related to the work of the body, board members should not make political statements or engage in any other political activity. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

In their official capacity, board members should be even-handed in all dealings with political parties. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

Subject to the above, board members may engage in political activity but should, at all times, remain conscious of their responsibilities as a board member and exercise proper discretion. Board members should inform the Chair and/or the parent Department before undertaking any significant political activity. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

### **Employment and Appointments** <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

If board members wish to take up new employment or appointments during their term of office, they must inform the Chair and/or the relevant parent Department. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

On leaving office, board members must comply with the rules of the body on the acceptance of future employment or appointments. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

## **4. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Board members must ensure that no conflict arises, or could reasonably be perceived to arise, between their public duties and their private interests - financial or otherwise. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

Board members must comply with the rules of the body on handling conflicts of interests. As a minimum, these will require board members to declare publicly any private interests which may, or may be perceived to, conflict with their public duties. The rules will also require them to remove themselves from the discussion or determination of matters in which they have a financial interest. In matters in which board members have a non-financial interest, they should not participate in the discussion or determination of a matter where the interest might suggest a danger of bias. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

It is the board member's responsibility to ensure that they are familiar with the body's rules on handling conflicts of interests, that they comply with these rules and that their entry in the body's register of members' interests is accurate and up-to-date.

## **5 RESPONSIBILITIES AS A BOARD MEMBER**

Board members should play a full and active role in the work of the body. They should fulfil their duties and responsibilities responsibly and, at all times, act in good faith and in the best interests of the body. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

Board members should deal with the public and their affairs fairly, efficiently, promptly, effectively and sensitively, to the best of their ability. Board members must not act in a way that unjustifiably favours or discriminates against particular individuals or interests. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

Board members must comply with any statutory or administrative requirements relating to their post. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

Board members should respect the principle of collective decision-making and corporate responsibility. This means that, once the board has made a decision, they should support that decision. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

Board members must not use, or attempt to use, the opportunity of public service to promote their personal interests or those of any connected person, firm, business or other organisation. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

## **6. RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARDS EMPLOYEES**

Board members will treat any staff employed by the body with courtesy and respect. It is expected that employees will show the same consideration in return. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

Board members will not ask or encourage employees to act in any way which would conflict with their own Code of Conduct. <sup>[L]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>