

**Slough Borough Council
Employee Code of Conduct**

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Employee code of conduct
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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

As an employee of the council, you are involved from basic to complex issues associated with the provision of community services. The way you carry out your duties must promote and maintain public confidence and trust in the work of the council and its employees.

Although there is no single set of rules that can answer all ethical questions, the council's code of conduct provides an ethical framework for the decisions, actions and behaviour of your work as a public official. If you find yourself in a situation where there is no clear agreement on what is 'the right thing to do', you can:

- discuss the situation with your line manager to work through the issues
- contact Human Resources for assistance

1.2 What is the code of conduct?

This code of conduct is designed to provide guidance about what is expected from you in your daily work and in your dealings with elected members, colleagues and the public. Also as the council's work is democratically controlled and open to public scrutiny and often sensitive, the council's success is dependent upon public confidence in its employees.

All council employees must be familiar with the code of conduct. This document forms part of your contract of employment and you are required to comply with its contents. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, which could include dismissal.

For this reason, it is important that you read the whole of this document and ask your manager or supervisor for clarification if there is anything in it that you don't understand and needs explaining. It will be assumed that you understand its contents and agree to comply with your contract of employment and all the rules and policies etc, to which it refers...

This code of conduct will:

- help you to understand how you can fulfil your ethical obligations in performing your role
- set clear expectations for your conduct as a public employee in the council
- provide guidance to help you deal properly with ethical issues you may encounter in your work.

1.3 Who does the code apply to?

The code applies to all employees and anyone acting as an employee of Slough Borough Council.

The code may also apply to contractors, consultants, or volunteers. The council's continued association with these individuals and / or their organisations requires them to observe and comply with the code.

Elected Members have their own code of conduct.

Breaches of the code and standards set by the council may result in disciplinary action.

If you are unsure about any aspect of the code, please raise it with your manager or supervisor at the earliest opportunity.

1.4 What does the council expect from you?

The council exists to provide services to the public.

All these services are delivered by people - the council's employees. For the council to run efficiently, it is important that you understand your work and your responsibilities whilst at work. You also need to understand how your activities outside work may affect your ability to do your work during working hours.

In summary, you are required to:

- Attend work in a condition where you are able to carry out your duties safely and effectively.
- Act honestly.
- Act with dignity and treat all others with dignity and respect.
- Work in accordance with the terms and conditions of your contract of employment and job description.
- Understand and apply the council's rules, policies and procedures.

1.5 What you can expect from the council:

So that you are clear about your responsibilities, the council has various rules, procedures and policies that affect all employees. Some of these are governed by law and others that are specific to the council. There may also be very particular rules, requirements or codes that apply to your job or work area which you will have been told about before you start work. You will be advised should these rules or procedures change during your working life with the council.

In summary, you are required to:

- You are clear about what is expected of you
- You have a safe and healthy working environment
- You have a work environment that is free from discrimination, harassment or bullying
- You are offered relevant training and development opportunities, within available resources

1.6 Where can you find details of the policies, procedures and standards that apply to you?

The various sections of this document summarise the council's key policies and procedures in respect of behaviour and the ways in which you are required to work.

If you are affected by any of the policies contained in this document or you are in any doubt about how they apply to you, you should always refer to the detailed rules or the policies and procedures in full available on the SBC Insite or a paper copy from your line manager.

2. Standards of behaviour

2.1 Workplace behaviour and personal conduct

You should treat colleagues, elected Members and members of the public with dignity and respect.

Verbal conduct

Avoid language which is offensive, abusive, sexually suggestive, aggressive or designed to intimidate. This applies when talking to or about colleagues / the community / Members. You must also avoid unreasonable derogatory remarks, unwelcome flirting or sexual advances

and malicious gossip. You should be sensitive in your use of language and the ways in which you communicate. Equally you should avoid being over-sensitive to idiomatic expressions or the etymology of words which are in current usage where these are not generally regarded as offensive.

English is the operational language of the council and you should avoid using other languages in the workplace if it deliberately excludes other colleagues as it could lead to accusations of favouritism or bias against you.

You can liaise with a service user in their mother tongue if they do not speak English for ease of communication

Non-verbal conduct

You need to be aware of the effect of non-verbal conduct on others. You must not display offensive pictures or objects or written material (including slogans on clothing), graffiti, badges or designs. You must also not make sexually suggestive gestures, behave in ways likely to offend common decency or adopt physically threatening or aggressive poses.

Misuse of position and power

You should responsibly hold position and power and not encourage inappropriate or offensive behaviour / conversations with or about or to colleagues / community / Members. It should be recognised that power, held by individuals and groups, can be derived not only from status (e.g. management positions) but also from age, length of service, physical strength, social popularity, strength of a group etc. Abuse of position of power can include bullying, excluding someone from conversation, from full participation at work or restricting work or development opportunities.

For example:

- offensive, abusive, belittling or threatening behaviour directed at an individual or group is unacceptable
- when dealing with aggressive or agitated customers, you should deal with the person without aggression or bias. If you are concerned about the behaviour of a customer towards you, please refer to the [dignity at work code of practice](#)
- you must not engage in any behaviour of a sexual nature that is unwelcome as it is unacceptable and unlawful conduct such as leers, suggestive notes or e-mails, innuendo, or touching

2.2 Grievances

If you have a concern or grievance in relation to certain aspects of your employment then you can use the grievance procedure. This provides an opportunity for you to formally lodge a grievance that has not been resolved through the [dignity at work informal stage for bullying and harassment](#). Any employee who submits a grievance in good faith will not suffer any adverse consequences as a result of submitting the grievance. See [grievances](#) page and [dignity at work code of practice](#) for further information.

2.3 Reporting absence

If you are unable to attend work for any reason, you must advise your manager as soon as possible. In the specific case of sickness absence, to enable your manager, you must advise your manager to make alternative arrangements for your work to be covered. Further information is available in the council's [Sickness Absence Policy](#).

2.4 Misconduct

The code of conduct guides and assists employees acting in good faith. If, in your decisions, actions or conduct you wilfully fail to comply with the standards outlined in the code of conduct, you will be guilty of misconduct and are likely to fall subject to disciplinary action, which could include dismissal. Refer to [council's disciplinary policy & procedure](#) for further information.

2.5 Learning and development

You are obliged to participate in relevant learning and development opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to perform your job and to enhance the delivery of services to the community.

You should seek feedback on your work performance and reasonably engage in any plans for improving your work performance with your line manager.

2.6 Alcohol and drugs

You must not consume alcohol, use illicit drugs or other illegal substances while at work. You must also ensure that the use of any of them does not adversely affect the work performance and safety of yourself or others and does not bring the council into disrepute.

Similarly, if you are taking legally prescribed or over-the-counter drugs, you must ensure that their use does not adversely affect your work performance and the safety of yourself and others.

If you are a supervisor or manager, you will need to consider the options available for assisting employees who are required to take legally prescribed drugs and whose level of performance has been impaired. In these circumstances, a risk assessment should be undertaken with the assistance of the occupational health service and seeking HR advice.

Further guidance is available in the council's [drug and alcohol policy](#).

For example, if you are:

- On call, you should not consume alcohol in the event that you are recalled to work.
- Taking prescribed medication, you should ensure you are well aware of any side effects that may impair your ability to do your job.

2.7 Health, safety and well-being

You have a personal and legal responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 for yourself, colleagues and visitors to the council's buildings and premises.

These responsibilities are identified in the [council's health and safety policy](#). In summary, the policy states that you must:

- look after the health and safety of yourself and others who may be affected by your actions or failure to carry out certain actions at work
- co-operate with your manager, attend training sessions, carry out reasonable instructions

Any activity that presents a significant risk to the health, safety or well-being of an employee or other person must have been subject to a written risk assessment. This is a tool which managers must use to determine the safest and best way of carrying out the work, including appropriate training, personal protective equipment etc. Appropriate safety controls should

all be summarised on the risk assessment or safe system of work procedure and provided to the relevant employees.

You must follow the resulting safe system of work to ensure your safety and that of others is not put at risk. If these are not in place, speak to your manager in the first instance or your Health and Safety adviser.

For example, you must:

- comply with the instructions given for workplace health and safety at the workplace by the council
- use personal protective equipment if the equipment is provided and you have been properly instructed to use it
- not wilfully or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided for workplace health and safety at the workplace
- not wilfully place at risk the health and safety of any person at the workplace
- not wilfully injure yourself
- report to your supervisor any workplace hazards that cannot be immediately rectified.
- ensure that you comply in practice with any guidelines given for performing manual handling tasks
- take all reasonable steps to ensure that employees you supervise are following guidelines and have access to job-specific training

3. Protecting the council and employees

3.1 Other employment

Your contract of employment prevents you from undertaking other employment without the written permission of your manager and department director in advance.

It is important that you ensure that any additional employment does not conflict with the interests of the council or affect your ability and credibility to do your job or attendance at work. You must also ensure that council time and resources are not utilised in connection with any approved private employment and adhere to not portraying yourself as employee or agent of the council when undertaking private work.

All staff must complete the [electronic declaration of interest](#) form annually or when their circumstances change.

3.2 Use of authority

You should not use your official position, status, powers or authority to seek to improperly influence a decision or action.

You are expected to provide honest, impartial and comprehensive advice regardless of your personal assessment on a matter. If your personal views conflict with the performance of your official duties or if you believe that you cannot act impartially, you should contact your line manager and attempt to resolve the conflict.

When requested, you are expected to provide Members, the chief executive, line managers and co-workers with advice which is independent based on an accurate representation of the facts and as comprehensive as possible.

When exercising a discretionary power, you should ensure that the power is being used properly, impartially, equitably and is consistent with relevant legislation, delegations, procedures or guidelines. In exercising any power associated with your employment, you must ensure that you are either statutorily authorised to do so or that you have been delegated the power by a person with the necessary authority to issue the delegation.

3.3 Conduct outside working time

Generally, what you do outside work is your own personal concern, but you should avoid doing anything that might adversely affect the reputation of the council or bring the council into disrepute. In your official capacity (as a council employee) or personal capacity, you must not allow your personal interests to conflict with the council's requirements or use your position to improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person. If you are not sure whether or how this may affect you in your council role, speak to your manager.

For example, you should not:

- Use your status or position to obtain a transfer, promotion, advancement or appointment for yourself or another person or to improperly influence a selection process.
- Falsify or improperly edit or destroy official records.
- Seek to obtain a more favoured status for a funding application or for services to a particular stakeholder.
- Instruct an employer to do any of the above

3.4 Social media

There is popularity and use of social media websites such as blogs, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter. These are useful tools for communicating and engaging with the public and are already being used by some employees for this purpose. You must make sure that your use of and participation in, social media websites does not bring the council into disrepute, or breach your obligations under the employee code of conduct. You are advised that you must not post derogatory remarks / statements about the council on social media sites.

You should also follow the council's internet usage policy, which contains detailed provisions on the use of the council's information systems and IT facilities for both council related activities and personal use. These policies are intended to set the standards of behaviour expected from employees in relation to their use of social media websites.

In general your private interests must not have the potential for allegations of impropriety or partiality to bring the council into disrepute. This includes standards of behaviour outside the working environment and in the use of social media in relation to elected members, fellow officers and the general public.

3.5 Public comment on council policy and administration

'Public comment' in this section includes public speaking engagements, comments on radio and television, letters to newspapers, and expressing views in books, journals or notices if it is expected that the comments will spread to the community at large.

All media requests for information and enquiries that relate to policy and procedures or operational activities must be referred to the council's communications team. The council procedure should be followed in these instances.

When making authorised public comment in an official capacity, you must:

- ensure it is part of your official role
- not misrepresent the facts concerning government or council policy or administration
- comply with the confidential information provisions of the Data Protection Act

In your capacity as a private citizen, you have the same rights as any other member of the public to openly discuss or comment on community and social issues. However, there are some circumstances where you may still need to take care in making such comments. For

example, a situation could arise when public comment, although made in a private capacity, may appear to be an official comment on behalf of the council. In such circumstances you should indicate clearly that your comment is made in a private capacity and does not represent the official view of the council.

It is your responsibility to take all reasonable steps to ensure that any comment will be understood as representing your personal views as a private citizen. If you are a workplace representative of a trade union or professional association, you should ensure that when you make public comment, it is clear that comment is made on behalf of the union or association you represent and not the council.

3.6 Financial commitments

As a council employee we expect you to honour all financial commitments and fees payable to the council. As a council employee, it is particularly important that council tax, rents and other money payable to the council are settled promptly. Failure to pay money owed to the council undermines your integrity as a council officer and may lead to disciplinary action in addition to civil or criminal action.

3.7 Criminal charges and convictions

The council requires all applicants for jobs to disclose all contraventions of, or failures to comply with, any provisions of law, whether committed in the UK or elsewhere, unless the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act applies and the rehabilitation period has expired. In some circumstances, Disclosure and Barring Service checks are conducted on all successful applicants for certain positions in the council.

Once you are an employee and during your course of employment with the council, you must notify the council in writing if you are charged with any offence or if you are convicted of any offence. If you are charged with an offence, the notice must be given immediately after you are charged (i.e. next working day). If you are convicted of any offence, the notification must be given immediately after you are convicted (i.e. next working day). It should be noted that the term "conviction" includes a finding of guilt, regardless of whether or not a conviction is recorded. Failure to notify the council in either case will constitute grounds for disciplinary action.

3.8 Use of council property, facilities and equipment

Council facilities are to be used for the council's business and for no other purpose unless you have your director's (or their nominees) permission beforehand.

Reasonable personal use of telephones, photocopiers, computers and faxes is allowed provided you have been authorised to do so by your manager. However, no private work may be carried out in the council's time, or on the council's premises or with the use of the council's equipment.

The council allows reasonable, non-official use of internet and email, as long as individual or service performance is not compromised or adversely affected as a result. Your line manager can provide you with clarification as to what constitutes reasonable, non-official use. However, as a general rule, such use should be restricted to outside of working hours, during lunch breaks etc. Please see [Internet Usage Policy](#) for further information.

Misuse or damage to council property is regarded as a very serious matter and dealt with through the council [disciplinary procedure](#).

3.9 Dealing with the council's money

You must ensure that you use public funds and resources entrusted to you in a responsible, honest and lawful manner. You should strive to ensure value for money to the local community and to avoid legal challenge to the council.

Should you have responsibility for budgets and/or purchasing, you must ensure that you understand and comply with the [council's financial procedure rules](#).

When committing council money, you must ensure that there is an approved budget for such expenditure and that the expenditure is within the limits that you are personally authorised to incur.

If you are involved in the tendering process and dealing with contractors, you must be very clear on the separation of client and contractor roles within the council.

There is a zero tolerance approach towards fraud, corruption and theft. The council has an obligation to ensure the authority is not put at risk of money laundering whether its from an external or an internal source; therefore if you have any suspicions regarding the source of any funding you are receiving on behalf of the authority you must seek advice from the Corporate Fraud and Investigations team. For example, if someone is trying to pay for something the authority is providing in a large amount of cash and you suspect the person handing the funds to the council may have obtained it through any criminal activity.

Further details on how this is dealt with can be seen on the [corporate fraud and investigations](#) page on the intranet.

3.10 Conflict of Interest

If a conflict occurs between your private interests and public duties you must resolve the conflict in favour of your public duties. You must complete annually the electronic declaration of interest form or when your circumstances change. On the form you must declare any personal or immediate family private interests that may give rise to a conflict of interest with your official duties, particularly if you are involved in making decisions affecting contracting, tendering or regulatory functions.

Examples of conflicts (or perceived conflicts) between personal interests and public duties that should be declared and in some cases avoided include:

- employees in positions that could influence or be perceived to influence, funding allocations, accepting appointments to executive or management positions in organisations that receive or seek to receive funding from the Council
- staff who have access to Council computer databases of customers\updating their own personal records or those of close relatives
- as a purchasing officer liaising with a supplier who employs one of your close relatives
- employees being contracted to provide services to the Council outside of their paid employment
- generating work which involves travel to provide an opportunity to visit friends
- a supervisor who is in a position to approve higher duties or provide other benefits to a subordinate where a close personal relationship exists (such as a partner or family member or close personal friend)
- involvement with an interview panel when a relationship exists with one of the applicants

3.11 Gifts, favours, hospitality and sponsorship

As a council officer, you may be in situations where you are offered gifts or hospitality which could include:-

- meals and/or drinks
- invitations to social or other events
- gifts (monetary or otherwise)
- favours or services in kind

You are strongly advised to refuse or return any gifts, hospitality or other favours from persons inside or outside the council. When declining a gift or hospitality you should courteously but firmly inform those making the offer of the procedures and standards operating within the council.

Where the refusal of an unsolicited gift may cause offence, the gift may be donated to the Mayor's official charity and the donor informed accordingly in writing.

It is also an offence to accept any gift or consideration in the knowledge or belief that it is intended as inducement or reward, whether the employee receiving it is influenced or not. If you are considering acceptance, discuss it with your line manager before doing so. Any gifts not refused must be used communally for the benefit of the service or facility as a whole or donated to charitable or community use. In addition staff dealing with planning applications or the provision of other services to individuals should never accept gifts or hospitality.

Before accepting a gift or hospitality staff should consider –

- the timing of decisions for letting contracts for which the provider may be bidding (under no circumstances should gifts or hospitality be accepted from a contractor during a tendering period)
- whether the gift or hospitality is appropriate e.g. an inexpensive promotional pen or diary may be accepted but more expensive items, such as a bottle of whisky, must be declined.
- similarly, lunch at on-site cafeterias or invitations to local cultural events as a representative of the council may be appropriate whereas invitations to prestigious sporting events, theatre tickets or personal invitations where you are not attending in an official capacity are not appropriate

The process for registering gifts, favours and hospitality is to report it immediately to your director whether or not you plan to accept it. Your director may decide that acceptance is not appropriate. Having reported the offer you should complete the register of gifts and hospitality maintained by your director.

The following information will be recorded:-

- the person or body making the offer
- the member of staff to whom the offer was made
- the gift or hospitality offered
- the circumstances in which the offer was made
- the action taken by the member of staff concerned
- the action taken (if any) by the director

The chief executive and monitoring officer and assistant director of Human Resources may have access to every register. Every member of staff is entitled to see what is recorded in the register against their name and the general public can apply for access to the register from the council's Monitoring Officer.

Vulnerable clients

Staff dealing with vulnerable clients such as care workers and home helps must inform their director in writing of any gifts from clients or their relatives/friends. These must not be accepted without the prior written approval of the director. Staff in such circumstances should never accept personal gifts from their clients.

Officers dealing with planning applications should never accept gifts or hospitality from a planning applicant nor from their agent.

Where an outside organisation wishes or is seeking to sponsor a local government activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the basic conventions concerning acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply. Particular care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.

3.13 Political, professional and trade union activity

Employees in politically restricted posts are unable to undertake certain political activities within the following broad categories:-

- writing or speaking publicly on politically controversial issues
- canvassing at any election on behalf of a political party or at elections for councillors' MPs or MEPs
- holding office in any political party
- publicly declaring yourself a candidate for councillor, MP or MEP

The ban on seeking elected office is written into the rules governing who is eligible for election. The ban on political activities is incorporated into individual contracts of employment. The employees holding the following posts should be politically restricted:-

- employees in posts paid at or above spinal column point 44
- employees giving regular advice to committees or sub-committees
- employees who regularly speak to journalists or broadcasters on behalf of the council

A list of politically restricted and sensitive posts approved by the council is held by Human Resources.

Under the Local Government (Political Restrictions) Regulations 1990, the failure of a postholder holding a politically restricted post to comply with the restriction will result in disciplinary action being taken on the grounds of misconduct.

Employees DO NOT need approval to undertake voluntary work or work for trade unions or political parties (subject to the provisions of the 1989 Local Government Housing Act), provided this work does not conflict with or react detrimentally to the council's interests as outlined above.

The council may not give approval if the additional employment:-

- places the employee in a position where their duties and private interests may conflict
- affects the employee's health or ability to maintain acceptable standards of work
- might weaken public confidence in the Council's conduct of business
- involves the employee being in direct competition with the council for work / contracts

3.14 Information disclosure and confidentiality

As a council employee, you may obtain information that has not been made public and is still confidential. You must never disclose information given in confidence by anyone, or information acquired which you believe is of a confidential nature, without the consent of a person authorised to give it or unless you are required to by law.

You must not prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law. You must not disclose confidential information for your own personal use or for use by anyone else known to you, or to the disadvantage or the discredit of the council or anyone else.

You must always observe the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the council's procedures for the release of personal information held about other employees or members of the public. Breach of confidentiality may be considered a disciplinary offence, which could result in dismissal. Please see [Data Protection](#) page on the intranet for further information.

When you leave your employment with the council, you must still respect the confidentiality of official information that may have been available to you in the course of your duties and not use this information for private, commercial or political gain.

3.15 Intellectual property

Intellectual property is a legal term that refers to the rights and obligations received and granted, including copyright. Ownership of intellectual property is determined by considering the circumstances in which it was conceived and developed. The council owns the copyright in material made by, or under its direction. Whether you are an employee or a contractor, copyright in material you produce in the course of your work belongs to the council, unless otherwise explicitly provided for in your contract of employment. These should not be removed from council premises or passed on to a third party without express consent of the council.

3.16 Security

You must visibly display your identification badge at all times while you are on any council premises. All employees are required to challenge anyone in an employee and/or secure area of the council's premises without either an employee ID or visitor's badge. You must not allow any individual not displaying an ID badge to follow ("tailgate") you into any secure area of the council's premises.

If you come to work without your badge, you must report to the nearest customer services point to collect and use a temporary replacement. If you lose your ID badge, you must report it immediately to your manager.

If you have a visitor coming to see you at the council's premises, you must follow the visitor arrangements and ensure that they wear their badge at all times.

4. Ways of working

4.1 Managerial roles and responsibilities

As a manager, you have a responsibility to set a good example for employees through your own behaviour and attitudes, especially in relation to upholding the ethical principles, obligations and standards as set in this code of conduct.

- you should ensure that employees understand performance standards expected from them and objectively assess their performance against these standards

- you must ensure that relevant legislation, delegations, and council policies and procedures are accessible to all employees in your workgroup
- you should ensure that all employees who report to you are familiar with the requirements and objectives of their job, and have access to the information, training, supervision, feedback and work conditions needed to achieve them
- you should be honest and objective in reporting the skills and qualities of employees in testimonials; references and performance reports, ensuring your decisions can be substantiated against objective standards and indicators
- you are required to act promptly, thoroughly and fairly when responding to, or investigating grievances and reports of breaches of the code of conduct

To avoid any accusation of bias, you must not be involved in the appointment of any applicant if you are a relative or friend to them. Similarly, you must not be involved in decisions relating to discipline promotion or pay adjustments for any employee who is a relative, partner or friend. If you are in any doubt, you should discuss the matter with your manager.

You should ensure your leadership and management style:

- is based on open, honest and thorough communication
- provides for optimum working conditions within the resources available to you
- supports positive performance management processes, including access to related learning and development opportunities for employees
- supports the right of employees to engage in open dialogue with you, and to pursue relevant conflict and grievance management options when issues arise

4.2 Following instructions

You are expected to follow all reasonable and lawful instructions related to your work given by a person with the authority to issue such instructions.

You should accept that you may not personally agree with all decisions made by your manager.

You may refuse to comply with an instruction that appears to be unlawful and report the matter to an appropriate senior officer.

You should tell the person giving an unreasonable instruction that the instruction is, in your view, unreasonable and allow them the opportunity to respond. In the interim, you are generally required to carry out the instruction unless:

- there is a danger to a person's health and safety or
- a conflict of interest may exist or
- it does not comply with council policy and practice

Managers must be able to justify their instructions and decisions in line with their delegations, authority, and Council policies and procedures, and be open and respond promptly to constructive questions.

4.3 Working with councillors

Mutual respect between employees and councillors is essential to good local government. Close personal familiarity between employees and elected Members can damage the relationship and cause embarrassment to other employees. Such familiarity should be avoided. The council has agreed a Member / officer protocol that councillors and officers must comply with. Councillors have their own code of conduct that they are also required to comply with.

4.4 Working with local community and service users

You should always remember their responsibilities to the community they serve and should provide courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals within the community. All employees are required to be familiar with and implement the council's policies on customer focus and equalities. Employees must ensure that the principles within those policies and those of individual departments are followed when liaising with the local community / services users and / or talking about them both internally and externally.

4.5 Working with colleagues

The council expects relationships between work colleagues (including those between managers and team members) to be supportive, co-operative and respectful. This applies to all employees including those engaged as trainees / NVQ / work placements / students, temporary staff and volunteers. You should behave in a way that enhances the performance and well-being of others and the effectiveness of council services.

Unauthorized absences, neglect of duty, disobedience of orders and insubordination are all examples of unacceptable behaviour. Issues like these will be treated seriously and will result in action under the Council's [disciplinary policy and procedure](#).

Employees should not have managerial responsibility for those with whom they have close private relationships (e.g. partners and family). If such a relationship arises, during the course of your employment, it must be declared to your Director.

If employees find themselves being treated other than in a professional and respectful manner they should initially seek assistance from their line manager. If this is not possible or the problem is not resolved then redress can be sought through the council's [grievance procedure](#), or [dignity at work](#) policy. Employees must not confuse this with legitimate management of their performance by their manager, which is a necessary feature of any effective organisation.

4.6 Working with contractors

You are expected to develop effective co-operative working relationships with contractors, suppliers and service partners and behave in a professional manner. All relationships of a business or private nature with external contractors, or potential contractors, should be recorded in the electronic declaration of interest form. Orders and contracts must be awarded in accordance with the Council's [procurement process](#). No special favour in the tendering process must be shown to businesses run by, for example, friends, partners, or relatives. No part of the local community must be discriminated against.

4.7 Dress Standards

Your dress style must reflect appropriate workplace health, safety and security considerations applicable to your job and work environment. See [dress code policy](#) for further information.

5. Breaches of the Code and Whistleblowing

If you are concerned about any practice you see in the council which you think conflicts with the code of conduct, you should obtain advice from your manager, Trade Union representative, or any other appropriate person as identified in the council's policies referred to in the code of conduct.

The Public Interests Disclosures Act 1998 and the council's whistleblowing policy provide safeguards for employees and public officials who disclose unlawful and improper conduct including breaches of this code. The council recognises decision to report a concern can be

difficult one to make because of fear of reprisal from those responsible for the malpractice and the council will not tolerate harassment or victimisation. It will take appropriate action to protect those who raise a concern in good faith.

Disclosures might be about:

- incorrect administration
- negligent or improper management affecting public funds
- official misconduct including fraud, corrupt and dangerous/improper behaviour

Failure to do so could implicate you in the misconduct. Public interest disclosures should be made directly to the Monitoring Officer.

Any suspicion of money laundering must be reported in the first instance to the council section 151 Office. See [whistleblowing page](#) for further information.

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