



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR NIMDTA EMPLOYEES

NORTHERN IRELAND MEDICAL AND DENTAL TRAINING AGENCY

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND MEDICAL AND DENTAL TRAINING AGENCY

INTRODUCTION

1. In 1994 the Government established the Nolan Committee to enquire into standards of behaviour in UK public life and to make recommendations that could be applied generally across the entire public sector to help reassure the public about the behaviour of those charged with responsibility for running our public services. The Committee produced seven principles of public life and recommended that all public bodies draw up codes of conduct that incorporate these principles. The seven principles are set out in Appendix 1.
2. All Agency staff who commit resources directly or indirectly must apply these seven principles. They must be impartial and honest in their conduct of business and remain beyond suspicion. It is an offence under the Prevention of Corruption Act 1906 and 1916 for any employee corruptly to accept any inducement or reward for doing or refraining from doing, anything in his or her official capacity.
3. The purpose of this code is to ensure that all Agency staff are aware of their obligations and to protect them from situations where they may be faced with a real or apparent conflict of interest.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4. Staff should familiarise themselves with the contents of the Code and should act in accordance with the principles set out in it.
5. Managers must adhere to this guidance and ensure that their staff are aware and comply with this Code.
6. Managers should adhere to the Code of Conduct for HPSS Managers as laid out in Circular HSS (SM) 4/2003
7. The Accounting Officer has overall responsibility for propriety, including conduct and discipline
8. Staff have a duty:

- To discharge public functions reasonably and in accordance with the law
- To conduct themselves with integrity, impartiality and honesty
- To recognise ethical standards governing particular professions
- To use the public funds entrusted to them to the best advantage of the service, always ensuring value for money

9. Staff should not:

- abuse their official position for personal gain or to the benefit of their family and friends;
- accept any gifts, inducements or inappropriate hospitality which might place them in a position where there could be a conflict between their private interests and their Agency duties;
- undertake outside employment that could compromise their Agency duties;
- seek to advantage or further their private business or interests in the course of their official duties;
- unfairly advantage one competitor over another or show favouritism in awarding contracts;
- misuse official information.

ACCOUNTABILITY

10. Staff should be aware:

- Of their accountability to the Agency
- Of the respective roles of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) and the Agency

11. Staff should not deceive or knowingly mislead the Agency, the DHSSPS, or the public.

CASUAL GIFTS

12. Gifts which could place an individual in a position of conflict between their private interests and those associated with the execution of their Agency duties should be politely but firmly declined. Staff may accept gifts of low

intrinsic value or small tokens of gratitude (such as diaries or calendars). If in doubt staff must contact their line manager before acceptance.

HOSPITALITY

13. Staff may accept modest hospitality provided it is normal and reasonable in the circumstances. For example, lunches in the course of working visits may be acceptable although the hospitality should be similar to the scale of hospitality which the Agency would be likely to offer. Further details regarding the type and levels of hospital can be found in the Agency's Hospitality Guidelines.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

14. Staff should abide by the rules adopted by the Agency in relation to private interest and possible conflict of public duty; the disclosure of official information and political activities. They should not misuse their position or information acquired in their Agency duties to further their private interest or those of others.

15. Outside interests should be declared to the individual's line manager as should the interests of a spouse/partner or close relative. For these purposes interests include:

- Directorships
- Ownership, part-ownership or material share holdings in companies, businesses or consultancies likely to seek to do business with the Agency

16. A conflict of interest may arise as a result of a member of staff accepting appointment to a post outside the Agency eg a company that does business with or is in competition with the Agency. Where there is any doubt the member of staff must seek advice from his/her manager before accepting any outside appointment.

TENDERING AND CONTRACT AWARD

17. Preferential treatment should not be shown in awarding contracts and staff should ensure when they are preparing a tender that a warning against corruption is included in all invitations to tender.

COMMERCIAL SPONSORSHIP

18. Acceptance by staff of commercial sponsorship for attendance at relevant conferences and courses is acceptable only where the member of staff seeks permission in advance and the appropriate Head of Department is

satisfied that acceptance will not compromise purchasing decisions in any way.

REGISTER OF GIFTS, HOSPITALITY AND INTERESTS

19. A central register of gifts, hospitality and interests will be held by the Chief Executive's Office. Annually the Finance Manager will inform all staff of the requirement to register relevant outside interests and staff will be provided with the relevant form to record such interests. Staff will also be reminded of the requirement to notify their line manager of changes to their interests during the year along with gifts and hospitality received.

STAFF CONCERNS ABOUT IMPROPER CONDUCT

20. If staff believe that they are being required to act in a way which

- is illegal, improper or unethical;
- is in breach of a professional code;
- may involve possible maladministration, fraud or misuse of public funds;
- is otherwise inconsistent with this Code;

they should follow the Agency's procedures for reporting fraud and other criminal acts. Staff should also draw attention to cases where there is evidence of criminal or unlawful activity by others.

21. If through their actions or omissions, managers of staff are found to be in contravention of either this Code then the Agency reserves the right to take legal action.

AFTER LEAVING EMPLOYMENT

22. Staff of public bodies should continue to observe their duties of confidentiality after they have left the Agency's employment.

INDUCTION OF NEW EMPLOYEES

23. As part of their induction all new staff will be made aware of the Code of Conduct.

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Appendix 1

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

Selflessness – Holders of public office 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 - Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity - In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability – Holders of public office are accountable for their decision and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness – Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all 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 – Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership – Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Policy Proforma

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