



Meeting of East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership	Integration Joint Board
Held on	19 August 2015
Agenda Item	9
Title	Code of Conduct
Summary	
To advise of the requirement for all Members of the Integration Joint Board (IJB) to subscribe to the Code of Conduct for Members of Devolved Public Bodies.	
Presented by	Eamonn Daly, Democratic Services Manager, East Renfrewshire Council
Action required	
That members of the Integration Joint Board note the contents of this report and arrange to subscribe to the Code of Conduct for Members of Devolved Public Bodies.	
Implications checklist – check box if applicable and include detail in report	
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy
<input type="checkbox"/> Staffing	<input type="checkbox"/> Property
<input type="checkbox"/> Legal	<input type="checkbox"/> IT
<input type="checkbox"/> Equalities	<input type="checkbox"/> Efficient Government

EAST RENFREWSHIRE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP

INTEGRATION JOINT BOARD

19 AUGUST 2015

Report by Chief Officer Designate

CODE OF CONDUCT

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To advise of the requirement for all Members of the Integration Joint Board (IJB) to subscribe to the Code of Conduct for Members of Devolved Public Bodies.

RECOMMENDATION

2. That members of the Integration Joint Board note the contents of this report and the requirement for members to subscribe to and comply with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Members of Devolved Public Bodies.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000 (the Act) provides for Codes of Conduct for members of relevant public bodies and imposes on those bodies a duty to help their members comply with the relevant code. Accordingly, the Standing Orders for the Integration Joint Board (IJB) (Standing Order 9.1) prescribe that members of the IJB shall subscribe to and comply with the Standards in Public Life – Code of Conduct for Members of Devolved Public Bodies.

4. Members of the Board of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde have already subscribed to the Code of Conduct for Members of Devolved Public Bodies. A copy of the Code and the related Guidance Note are attached as appendices 1 and 2. The Code requires Members to register their interests, both financial and non-financial.

REPORT

5. All members of the Integration Joint Board should subscribe to the Code of Conduct for Members of Devolved Public Bodies to ensure transparency.

6. All Members of the IJB must observe the rules of conduct in the Code. They must comply with these and review regularly, at least annually, their personal circumstances with this in mind. They must not at any time advocate or encourage any action contrary to the Code.

7. Members should note that the Act sets out the provisions for dealing with alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct for Members of Devolved Public Bodies and the sanctions that can be applied in the event of a breach. These are set out in Annex A to the Code which is appended to this report.

8. The Integration Joint Board will require to create a Register of Members Interests. A form will be provided to members to enable them to register relevant interests. This should be done within one month of today's meeting.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE REPORT

Legal

9. Work undertaken to prepare for integration will ensure that the Integration Joint Board complies with the requirements of the legislation.

Other

10. There are no financial, human resources, property, IT, equalities or sustainability implications arising from this report.

CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

11. The Head of Board Administration, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

CONCLUSIONS

12. Members are complying with the relevant legislation in complying with the provisions of this report and with the Standing Orders of the IJB. Codes of Conduct offer members clarity as to the standards of conduct that are expected of them in the important role which they exercise.

REPORT AUTHOR AND PERSON TO CONTACT

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act, 2014

Standing Orders for Integration Joint Board

Model Code of Conduct for Members of Devolved Public Bodies

February 2014



MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS OF DEVOLVED PUBLIC BODIES

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

1.1 The Scottish public has a high expectation of those who serve on the boards of public bodies and the way in which they should conduct themselves in undertaking their duties. You must meet those expectations by ensuring that your conduct is above reproach.

1.2 The Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000, “the Act”, provides for Codes of Conduct for local authority councillors and members of relevant public bodies; imposes on councils and relevant public bodies a duty to help their members to comply with the relevant code; and establishes a Standards Commission for Scotland, “The Standards Commission” to oversee the new framework and deal with alleged breaches of the codes.

1.3 The Act requires the Scottish Ministers to lay before Parliament a Code of Conduct for Councillors and a Model Code for Members of Devolved Public Bodies. This Model Code for members was first introduced in 2002 and has now been revised following consultation and the approval of the Scottish Parliament. These revisions will make it consistent with the relevant parts of the Code of Conduct for Councillors, which was revised in 2010 following the approval of the Scottish Parliament.

1.4 As a member of a public body, it is your responsibility to make sure that you are familiar with, and that your actions comply with, the provisions of this Model Code of Conduct.

Appointments to the Boards of Public Bodies

1.5 Public bodies in Scotland are required to deliver effective services to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population. In addition, the Scottish Government’s equality outcome on public appointments is to ensure that Ministerial appointments are more diverse than at present. In order to meet both of these aims, a board should ideally be drawn from varied backgrounds with a wide spectrum of characteristics, knowledge and experience. It is crucial to the success of public bodies that they attract the best people for the job and therefore it is essential that a board’s appointments process should encourage as many suitable people to apply for positions and be free from unnecessary barriers. You should therefore be aware of the varied roles and functions of the public body on which you serve and of wider diversity and equality issues. You should also take steps to familiarise yourself with the appointment process that your board (if appropriate) will have agreed with the Scottish Government’s Public Appointment Centre of Expertise.

1.6 You should also familiarise yourself with how the public body’s policy operates in relation to succession planning, which should ensure public bodies have a strategy to make sure they have the staff in place with the skills, knowledge and experience necessary to fulfil their role economically, efficiently and effectively.

Guidance on the Model Code of Conduct

1.7 You must observe the rules of conduct contained in this Model Code. It is your personal responsibility to comply with these and review regularly, and at least annually, your personal circumstances with this in mind, particularly when your circumstances change. You must not at any time advocate or encourage any action contrary to the Model Code of Conduct.

1.8 The Model Code has been developed in line with the key principles listed in Section 2 and provides additional information on how the principles should be interpreted and applied in practice. The Standards Commission may also issue guidance. No Code can provide for all circumstances and if you are uncertain about how the rules apply, you should seek advice from the public body. You may also choose to consult your own legal advisers and, on detailed financial and commercial matters, seek advice from other relevant professionals.

1.9 You should familiarise yourself with the Scottish Government publication “On Board – a guide for board members of public bodies in Scotland”. This publication will provide you with information to help you in your role as a member of a public body in Scotland and can be viewed on the Scottish Government website.

Enforcement

1.10 Part 2 of the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000 sets out the provisions for dealing with alleged breaches of this Code of Conduct and where appropriate the sanctions that shall be applied if the Standards Commission finds that there has been a breach of the Code. Those sanctions are outlined in **Annex A**.

SECTION 2: KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

2.1 The general principles upon which this Model Code is based should be used for guidance and interpretation only. These general principles are:

Duty

You have a duty to uphold the law and act in accordance with the law and the public trust placed in you. You have a duty to act in the interests of the public body of which you are a member and in accordance with the core functions and duties of that body.

Selflessness

You have a duty to take decisions solely in terms of public interest. You must not act in order to gain financial or other material benefit for yourself, family or friends.

Integrity

You must not place yourself under any financial, or other, obligation to any individual or organisation that might reasonably be thought to influence you in the performance of your duties.

Objectivity

You must make decisions solely on merit and in a way that is consistent with the functions of the public body when carrying out public business including making appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits.

Accountability and Stewardship

You are accountable for your decisions and actions to the public. You have a duty to consider issues on their merits, taking account of the views of others and must ensure that the public body uses its resources prudently and in accordance with the law.

Openness

You have a duty to be as open as possible about your decisions and actions, giving reasons for your decisions and restricting information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

You have a duty to act honestly. You must declare any private interests relating to your public duties and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

You have a duty to promote and support these principles by leadership and example, and to maintain and strengthen the public's trust and confidence in the integrity of the public body and its members in conducting public business.

Respect

You must respect fellow members of your public body and employees of the body and the role they play, treating them with courtesy at all times. Similarly you must respect members of the public when performing duties as a member of your public body.

2.2 You should apply the principles of this Model Code to your dealings with fellow members of the public body, its employees and other stakeholders. Similarly you should also observe the principles of this Model Code in dealings with the public when performing duties as a member of a public body.

SECTION 3: GENERAL CONDUCT

3.1 The rules of good conduct in this section must be observed in all situations where you act as a member of a public body.

Conduct at Meetings

3.2 You must respect the chair, your colleagues and employees of the public body in meetings. You must comply with rulings from the chair in the conduct of the business of these meetings.

Relationship with Board Members and Employees of the Public Body (including those employed by contractors providing services)

3.3 You will treat your fellow board members and any staff employed by the body with courtesy and respect. It is expected that fellow board members and employees will show you the same consideration in return. It is good practice for employers to provide examples of what is unacceptable behaviour in their organisation. Public bodies should promote a safe, healthy and fair working environment for all. As a board member you should be familiar with the policies of the public body in relation to bullying and harassment in the workplace and also lead by exemplar behaviour.

Remuneration, Allowances and Expenses

3.4 You must comply with any rules of the public body regarding remuneration, allowances and expenses.

Gifts and Hospitality

3.5 You must not accept any offer by way of gift or hospitality which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on your part to show favour, or disadvantage, to any individual or organisation. You should also consider whether there may be any reasonable perception that any gift received by your spouse or cohabitee or by any company in which you have a controlling interest, or by a partnership of which you are a partner, can or would influence your judgement. The term "gift" includes benefits such as relief from indebtedness, loan concessions or provision of services at a cost below that generally charged to members of the public.

3.6 You must never ask for gifts or hospitality.

3.7 You are personally responsible for all decisions connected with the offer or acceptance of gifts or hospitality offered to you and for avoiding the risk of damage to public confidence in your public body. As a general guide, it is usually appropriate to refuse offers except:

- (a) isolated gifts of a trivial character, the value of which must not exceed £50;
- (b) normal hospitality associated with your duties and which would reasonably be regarded as appropriate; or
- (c) gifts received on behalf of the public body.

3.8 You must not accept any offer of a gift or hospitality from any individual or organisation which stands to gain or benefit from a decision your body may be involved in determining, or who is seeking to do business with your organisation, and which a person might reasonably consider could have a bearing on your judgement. If you are making a visit in your capacity as a member of your public body then, as a general rule, you should ensure that your body pays for the cost of the visit.

3.9 You must not accept repeated hospitality or repeated gifts from the same source.

3.10 Members of devolved public bodies should familiarise themselves with the terms of the Bribery Act 2010 which provides for offences of bribing another person and offences relating to being bribed.

Confidentiality Requirements

3.11 There may be times when you will be required to treat discussions, documents or other information relating to the work of the body in a confidential manner. You will often receive information of a private nature which is not yet public, or which perhaps would not be intended to be public. You must always respect the confidential nature of such information and comply with the requirement to keep such information private.

3.12 It is unacceptable to disclose any information to which you have privileged access, for example derived from a confidential document, either orally or in writing. In the case of other documents and information, you are requested to exercise your judgement as to what should or should not be made available to outside bodies or individuals. In any event, such information should never be used for the purposes of personal or financial gain, or for political purposes or used in such a way as to bring the public body into disrepute.

Use of Public Body Facilities

3.13 Members of public bodies must not misuse facilities, equipment, stationery, telephony, computer, information technology equipment and services, or use them for party political or campaigning activities. Use of such equipment and services etc. must be in accordance with the public body's policy and rules on their usage. Care must also be exercised when using social media networks not to compromise your position as a member of the public body.

Appointment to Partner Organisations

3.14 You may be appointed, or nominated by your public body, as a member of another body or organisation. If so, you are bound by the rules of conduct of these organisations and should observe the rules of this Model Code in carrying out the duties of that body.

3.15 Members who become directors of companies as nominees of their public body will assume personal responsibilities under the Companies Acts. It is possible that conflicts of interest can arise for such members between the company and the public body. It is your responsibility to take advice on your responsibilities to the public body and to the company. This will include questions of declarations of interest.

SECTION 4: REGISTRATION OF INTERESTS

4.1 The following paragraphs set out the kinds of interests, financial and otherwise which you have to register. These are called "Registerable Interests". You must, at all times, ensure that these interests are registered, when you are appointed and whenever your circumstances change in such a way as to require change or an addition to your entry in the body's Register. It is your duty to ensure any changes in circumstances are reported within one month of them changing.

4.2 The Regulations¹ as amended describe the detail and timescale for registering interests. It is your personal responsibility to comply with these regulations and you should review regularly and at least once a year your personal circumstances. **Annex B** contains key definitions and explanatory notes to help you decide what is required when registering your interests under any particular category. The interests which require to be registered are those set out in the following paragraphs and relate to you. It is not necessary to register the interests of your spouse or cohabitee.

Category One: Remuneration

4.3 You have a Registerable Interest where you receive remuneration by virtue of being:

- employed;
- self-employed;
- the holder of an office;
- a director of an undertaking;
- a partner in a firm; or
- undertaking a trade, profession or vocation or any other work.

4.4 In relation to 4.3 above, the amount of remuneration does not require to be registered and remuneration received as a member does not have to be registered.

4.5 If a position is not remunerated it does not need to be registered under this category. However, unremunerated directorships may need to be registered under category two, "Related Undertakings".

4.6 If you receive any allowances in relation to membership of any organisation, the fact that you receive such an allowance must be registered.

¹ SSI - The Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000 (Register of Interests) Regulations 2003 Number 135, as amended.

4.7 When registering employment, you must give the name of the employer, the nature of its business, and the nature of the post held in the organisation.

4.8 When registering self-employment, you must provide the name and give details of the nature of the business. When registering an interest in a partnership, you must give the name of the partnership and the nature of its business.

4.9 Where you undertake a trade, profession or vocation, or any other work, the detail to be given is the nature of the work and its regularity. For example, if you write for a newspaper, you must give the name of the publication, and the frequency of articles for which you are paid.

4.10 When registering a directorship, it is necessary to provide the registered name of the undertaking in which the directorship is held and the nature of its business.

4.11 Registration of a pension is not required as this falls outside the scope of the category.

Category Two: Related Undertakings

4.12 You must register any directorships held which are themselves not remunerated but where the company (or other undertaking) in question is a subsidiary of, or a parent of, a company (or other undertaking) in which you hold a remunerated directorship.

4.13 You must register the name of the subsidiary or parent company or other undertaking and the nature of its business, and its relationship to the company or other undertaking in which you are a director and from which you receive remuneration.

4.14 The situations to which the above paragraphs apply are as follows:

- you are a director of a board of an undertaking and receive remuneration declared under category one – and
- you are a director of a parent or subsidiary undertaking but do not receive remuneration in that capacity.

Category Three: Contracts

4.15 You have a registerable interest where you (or a firm in which you are a partner, or an undertaking in which you are a director or in which you have shares of a value as described in paragraph 4.19 below) have made a contract with the public body of which you are a member:

- (i) under which goods or services are to be provided, or works are to be executed; and
- (ii) which has not been fully discharged.

4.16 You must register a description of the contract, including its duration, but excluding the consideration.

Category Four: Houses, Land and Buildings

4.17 You have a registerable interest where you own or have any other right or interest in houses, land and buildings, which may be significant to, of relevance to, or bear upon, the work and operation of the body to which you are appointed.

4.18 The test to be applied when considering appropriateness of registration is to ask whether a member of the public acting reasonably might consider any interests in houses, land and buildings could potentially affect your responsibilities to the organisation to which you are appointed and to the public, or could influence your actions, speeches or decision making.

Category Five: Interest in Shares and Securities

4.19 You have a registerable interest where you have an interest in shares comprised in the share capital of a company or other body which may be significant to, of relevance to, or bear upon, the work and operation of (a) the body to which you are appointed and (b) the **nominal value** of the shares is:

- (i) greater than 1% of the issued share capital of the company or other body; or
- (ii) greater than £25,000.

Where you are required to register the interest, you should provide the registered name of the company in which you hold shares; the amount or value of the shares does not have to be registered.

Category Six: Gifts and Hospitality

4.20 You must register the details of any gifts or hospitality received within your current term of office. This record will be available for public inspection. It is not however necessary to record any gifts or hospitality as described in paragraph 3.7 (a) to (c) of this Model Code.

Category Seven: Non-Financial Interests

4.21 You may also have a registerable interest if you have non-financial interests which may be significant to, of relevance to, or bear upon, the work and operation of the body to which you are appointed. It is important that relevant interests such as membership or holding office in other public bodies, clubs, societies and organisations such as trades unions and voluntary organisations, are registered and described.

4.22 In the context of non-financial interests, the test to be applied when considering appropriateness of registration is to ask whether a member of the public might reasonably think that any non-financial interest could potentially affect your responsibilities to the organisation to which you are appointed and to the public, or could influence your actions, speeches or decision-making.

SECTION 5: DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

General

5.1 The key principles of the Model Code, especially those in relation to integrity, honesty and openness, are given further practical effect by the requirement for you to declare certain interests in proceedings of the public body. Together with the rules on registration of interests, this ensures transparency of your interests which might influence, or be thought to influence, your actions.

5.2 Public bodies inevitably have dealings with a wide variety of organisations and individuals and this Model Code indicates the circumstances in which a business or personal interest must be declared. Public confidence in the public body and its members depends on it being clearly understood that decisions are taken in the public interest and not for any other reason.

5.3 In considering whether to make a declaration in any proceedings, you must consider not only whether you will be influenced but whether anybody else would think that you might be influenced by the interest. You must, however, always comply with the objective test ("the objective test") which is whether a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard the interest as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your discussion or decision making in your role as a member of a public body.

5.4 If you feel that, in the context of the matter being considered, your involvement is neither capable of being viewed as more significant than that of an ordinary member of the public, nor likely to be perceived by the public as wrong, you may continue to attend the meeting and participate in both discussion and voting. The relevant interest must however be declared. It is your responsibility to judge whether an interest is sufficiently relevant to particular proceedings to require a declaration and you are advised to err on the side of caution. If a board member is unsure as to whether a conflict of interest exists, they should seek advice from the board chair.

5.5 As a member of a public body you might serve on other bodies. In relation to service on the boards and management committees of limited liability companies, public bodies, societies and other organisations, you must decide, in the particular circumstances surrounding any matter, whether to declare an interest. Only if you believe that, in the particular circumstances, the nature of the interest is so remote or without significance, should it not be declared. You must always remember the public interest points towards transparency and, in particular, a possible divergence of interest between your

public body and another body. Keep particularly in mind the advice in paragraph 3.15 of this Model Code about your legal responsibilities to any limited company of which you are a director.

Interests which Require Declaration

5.6 Interests which require to be declared, if known to you may be financial or non-financial. They may or may not cover interests which are registerable under the terms of this Model Code. Most of the interests to be declared will be your personal interests but, on occasion, you will have to consider whether the interests of other persons require you to make a declaration. The paragraphs which follow deal with (a) your financial interests (b) your non-financial interests and (c) the interests, financial and non-financial, of other persons.

5.7 You will also have other private and personal interests and may serve, or be associated with, bodies, societies and organisations as a result of your private and personal interests and not because of your role as a member of a public body. In the context of any particular matter you will need to decide whether to declare an interest. You should declare an interest unless you believe that, in the particular circumstances, the interest is too remote or without significance. In reaching a view on whether the objective test applies to the interest, you should consider whether your interest (whether taking the form of association or the holding of office) would be seen by a member of the public acting reasonably in a different light because it is the interest of a person who is a member of a public body as opposed to the interest of an ordinary member of the public.

Your Financial Interests

5.8 You must declare, if it is known to you, any financial interest (including any financial interest which is registerable under any of the categories prescribed in Section 4 of this Model Code).

There is no need to declare an interest which is so remote or insignificant that it could not reasonably be taken to fall within the objective test.

You must withdraw from the meeting room until discussion of the relevant item where you have a declarable interest is concluded. There is no need to withdraw in the case of an interest which is so remote or insignificant that it could not reasonably be taken to fall within the objective test.

Your Non-Financial Interests

5.9 You must declare, if it is known to you, any non-financial interest if:

- (i) that interest has been registered under category seven (Non Financial Interests) of Section 4 of the Model Code; or
- (ii) that interest would fall within the terms of the objective test.

There is no need to declare an interest which is so remote or insignificant that it could not reasonably be taken to fall within the objective test.

You must withdraw from the meeting room until discussion of the relevant item where you have a declarable interest is concluded. There is no need to withdraw in the case of an interest which is so remote or insignificant that it could not reasonably be taken to fall within the objective test.

The Financial Interests of Other Persons

5.10 The Model Code requires only your financial interests to be registered. You also, however, have to consider whether you should declare any financial interest of certain other persons.

You must declare if it is known to you any financial interest of:-

- (i) a spouse, a civil partner or a co-habitee;
- (ii) a close relative, close friend or close associate;
- (iii) an employer or a partner in a firm;
- (iv) a body (or subsidiary or parent of a body) of which you are a remunerated member or director;
- (v) a person from whom you have received a registerable gift or registerable hospitality;
- (vi) a person from whom you have received registerable expenses.

There is no need to declare an interest if it is so remote or insignificant that it could not reasonably be taken to fall within the objective test.

You must withdraw from the meeting room until discussion of and voting on the relevant item where you have a declarable interest is concluded. There is no need to withdraw in the case of an interest which is so remote or insignificant that it could not reasonably be taken to fall within the objective test.

5.11 This Model Code does not attempt the task of defining “relative” or “friend” or “associate”. Not only is such a task fraught with difficulty but is also unlikely that such definitions would reflect the intention of this part of the Model Code. The key principle is the need for transparency in regard to any interest which might (regardless of the precise description of relationship) be objectively regarded by a member of the public, acting reasonably, as potentially affecting your responsibilities as a member of a public body and, as such, would be covered by the objective test.

The Non-Financial Interests of Other Persons

5.12 You must declare if it is known to you any non-financial interest of:-

- (i) a spouse, a civil partner or a co-habitee;
- (ii) a close relative, close friend or close associate;
- (iii) an employer or a partner in a firm;
- (iv) a body (or subsidiary or parent of a body) of which you are a remunerated member or director;
- (v) a person from whom you have received a registerable gift or registerable hospitality;
- (vi) a person from whom you have received registerable election expenses.

There is no need to declare the interest if it is so remote or insignificant that it could not reasonably be taken to fall within the objective test.

There is only a need to withdraw from the meeting if the interest is clear and substantial.

Making a Declaration

5.13 You must consider at the earliest stage possible whether you have an interest to declare in relation to any matter which is to be considered. You should consider whether agendas for meetings raise any issue of declaration of interest. Your declaration of interest must be made as soon as practicable at a meeting where that interest arises. If you do identify the need for a declaration of interest only when a particular matter is being discussed you must declare the interest as soon as you realise it is necessary.

5.14 The oral statement of declaration of interest should identify the item or items of business to which it relates. The statement should begin with the words "I declare an interest". The statement must be sufficiently informative to enable those at the meeting to understand the nature of your interest but need not give a detailed description of the interest.

Frequent Declarations of Interest

5.15 Public confidence in a public body is damaged by perception that decisions taken by that body are substantially influenced by factors other than the public interest. If you would have to declare interests frequently at meetings in respect of your role as a board member you should not accept a role or appointment with that attendant consequence. If members are frequently declaring interests at meetings then they should consider whether they can carry out their role effectively and discuss with their chair. Similarly, if any appointment or nomination to another body would give rise to objective concern because of your existing personal involvement or affiliations, you should not accept the appointment or nomination.

Dispensations

5.16 In some very limited circumstances dispensations can be granted by the Standards Commission in relation to the existence of financial and non-financial interests which would otherwise prohibit you from taking part and voting on matters coming before your public body and its committees.

5.17 Applications for dispensations will be considered by the Standards Commission and should be made as soon as possible in order to allow proper consideration of the application in advance of meetings where dispensation is sought. You should not take part in the consideration of the matter in question until the application has been granted.

SECTION 6: LOBBYING AND ACCESS TO MEMBERS OF PUBLIC BODIES

Introduction

6.1 In order for the public body to fulfil its commitment to being open and accessible, it needs to encourage participation by organisations and individuals in the decision-making process. Clearly however, the desire to involve the public and other interest groups in the decision-making process must take account of the need to ensure transparency and probity in the way in which the public body conducts its business.

6.2 You will need to be able to consider evidence and arguments advanced by a wide range of organisations and individuals in order to perform your duties effectively. Some of these organisations and individuals will make their views known directly to individual members. The rules in this Model Code set out how you should conduct yourself in your contacts with those who would seek to influence you. They are designed to encourage proper interaction between members of public bodies, those they represent and interest groups.

Rules and Guidance

6.3 You must not, in relation to contact with any person or organisation that lobbies do anything which contravenes this Model Code or any other relevant rule of the public body or any statutory provision.

6.4 You must not, in relation to contact with any person or organisation who lobbies, act in any way which could bring discredit upon the public body.

6.5 The public must be assured that no person or organisation will gain better access to or treatment by, you as a result of employing a company or individual to lobby on a fee basis on their behalf. You must not, therefore, offer or accord any preferential access or treatment to those lobbying on a fee basis on behalf of clients compared with that which you accord any other person or organisation who lobbies or approaches you. Nor should those lobbying on a fee basis on behalf of clients be given to understand that

preferential access or treatment, compared to that accorded to any other person or organisation, might be forthcoming from another member of the public body.

6.6 Before taking any action as a result of being lobbied, you should seek to satisfy yourself about the identity of the person or organisation that is lobbying and the motive for lobbying. You may choose to act in response to a person or organisation lobbying on a fee basis on behalf of clients but it is important that you know the basis on which you are being lobbied in order to ensure that any action taken in connection with the lobbyist complies with the standards set out in this Model Code.

6.7 You should not accept any paid work:-

- (a) which would involve you lobbying on behalf of any person or organisation or any clients of a person or organisation.
- (b) to provide services as a strategist, adviser or consultant, for example, advising on how to influence the public body and its members. This does not prohibit you from being remunerated for activity which may arise because of, or relate to, membership of the public body, such as journalism or broadcasting, or involvement in representative or presentational work, such as participation in delegations, conferences or other events.

6.8 If you have concerns about the approach or methods used by any person or organisation in their contacts with you, you must seek the guidance of the public body.

ANNEX A

SANCTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE STANDARDS COMMISSION FOR BREACH OF THE CODE

(a) Censure – the Commission may reprimand the member but otherwise take no action against them;

(b) Suspension – of the member for a maximum period of one year from attending one or more, but not all, of the following:

- i) all meetings of the public body;
- ii) all meetings of one or more committees or sub-committees of the public body;
- (iii) all meetings of any other public body on which that member is a representative or nominee of the public body of which they are a member.

(c) Suspension – for a period not exceeding one year, of the member's entitlement to attend all of the meetings referred to in (b) above;

(d) Disqualification – removing the member from membership of that public body for a period of no more than five years.

Where a member has been suspended, the Standards Commission may direct that any remuneration or allowance received from membership of that public body be reduced, or not paid.

Where the Standards Commission disqualifies a member of a public body, it may go on to impose the following further sanctions:

(a) Where the member of a public body is also a councillor, the Standards Commission may disqualify that member (for a period of no more than five years) from being nominated for election as, or from being elected, a councillor. Disqualification of a councillor has the effect of disqualifying that member from their public body and terminating membership of any committee, sub-committee, joint committee, joint board or any other body on which that member sits as a representative of their local authority.

(b) Direct that the member be removed from membership, and disqualified in respect of membership, of any other devolved public body (provided the members' code applicable to that body is then in force) and may disqualify that person from office as the Water Industry Commissioner.

In some cases the Standards Commission do not have the legislative powers to deal with sanctions, for example if the respondent is an executive member of the board or appointed by the Queen. Sections 23 and 24 of the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000 refer.

Full details of the sanctions are set out in Section 19 of the Act.

ANNEX B

DEFINITIONS

“Chair” includes Board Convener or any person discharging similar functions under alternative decision making structures.

“Code” code of conduct for members of devolved public bodies

“Cohabitee” includes a person, whether of the opposite sex or not, who is living with you in a relationship similar to that of husband and wife.

“Group of companies” has the same meaning as “group” in section 262(1) of the Companies Act 1985. A “group”, within s262 (1) of the Companies Act 1985, means a parent undertaking and its subsidiary undertakings.

“Parent Undertaking” is an undertaking in relation to another undertaking, a subsidiary undertaking, if a) it holds a majority of the rights in the undertaking; or b) it is a member of the undertaking and has the right to appoint or remove a majority of its board of directors; or c) it has the right to exercise a dominant influence over the undertaking (i) by virtue of provisions contained in the undertaking’s memorandum or articles or (ii) by virtue of a control contract; or d) it is a councillor of the undertaking and controls alone, pursuant to an agreement with other shareholders or councillors, a majority of the rights in the undertaking.

“A person” means a single individual or legal person and includes a group of companies.

“Any person” includes individuals, incorporated and unincorporated bodies, trade unions, charities and voluntary organisations.

“Public body” means a devolved public body listed in Schedule 3 of the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000, as amended.

“Related Undertaking” is a parent or subsidiary company of a principal undertaking of which you are also a director. You will receive remuneration for the principal undertaking though you will not receive remuneration as director of the related undertaking.

“Remuneration” includes any salary, wage, share of profits, fee, expenses, other monetary benefit or benefit in kind. This would include, for example, the provision of a company car or travelling expenses by an employer.

“Spouse” does not include a former spouse or a spouse who is living separately and apart from you.

“Undertaking” means:

- a) a body corporate or partnership; or
- b) an unincorporated association carrying on a trade or business, with or without a view to a profit.



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**GUIDANCE ON THE
MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT
for
MEMBERS of DEVOLVED PUBLIC BODIES**

I N T E G R I T Y I N P U B L I C L I F E

Standards matter: A review of best practice in promoting good behaviour in public life. Extracts from the 2013 report by the Committee on Standards in Public Life

“Codes do not have an impact simply by existing. Principles and rules are necessary but not sufficient to create high standards. Organisations also need the right culture, effective monitoring and strong leadership.”

“Many of the requirements for high standards require action at organisational level. But high standards also require individuals to take personal responsibility – by observing high standards themselves, by demonstrating high standards to others through their own behaviour and by challenging inadequate standards when they see them. Mindlessly following rules and processes is not enough if people do not also engage their judgement about what is important. An individual who has internalised sound ethical principles and the reasons they are important is better able to make appropriate decisions than someone simply following a set of rules”

“Practice what you preach – hypocrisy is very damaging to trust.

Introduction

The public rightly expects exemplary standards of behaviour from those serving on the boards of public bodies when undertaking their duties. It is your personal responsibility to comply with the requirements of the Model Code of Conduct as adopted by your public body and your actions should be part and parcel of winning the public's respect and trust in the work you do.

There is a statutory framework governing behaviour in public life, comprising:

- Codes of Conduct which members of devolved public bodies must comply with when carrying out their duties;
- A set of arrangements for dealing with complaints that a member of a public body has acted inappropriately and has contravened the Code of Conduct.

Each public body has a Code of Conduct, based on the Model Code, and each will also have its own internal policies which apply the Code in the context of the body's work.

It is essential to note that as a member of a public body
it is your personal responsibility
to make sure you are familiar with the Code of Conduct and internal policies for your public body and that your actions accord with these.

In other words, simply ticking boxes is not enough; you have to understand the reasons behind good ethical behaviour and apply these thoughtfully on a case by case basis.

This note offers a brief guide on what the Code means for you as a Member of a public body but it is not a substitute for the Code itself, which contains more detail. As a Board Member you must read and abide by the Code.



Section 2: Key principles of the Model Code of Conduct

Exemplary standards of behaviour mean behaving and, importantly, being seen to behave in accordance with nine key principles of public life which you as a Board Member are expected to uphold in carrying your duties. More detail about each principle is provided in the Code. In brief they are:

- Duty
- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability and Stewardship
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership
- Respect

The Code of Conduct is there to help you interpret and to apply these principles. However it is your responsibility to do the thinking and make sure you are meeting the provisions of the Code. In working through this process you may need to exercise your judgement. Sometimes making that judgement is difficult but there are two crucial points: you must exercise it objectively; and

you should bear in mind that perception by informed members of the general public, who know the facts, is an important factor.

This is not the same thing as members of the public not *liking* a decision made or opinion expressed legitimately in the course of your work; it is more about whether you have acted properly.

The Code of Conduct applies to your actions as a member of a public body. However, bear in mind that opinions you express in a personal capacity will attach to you in all your walks of life. It is very difficult to persuade people that you can take a different view, or even have an open mind, in your capacity as a Member of a Devolved Public Body from a view you may have expressed in your personal capacity. This is particularly pertinent in respect of using social media where the separation of public and private comments can be very unclear to someone reading them.

If you need advice, the following sources may help:

- The Code of Conduct;
- Your public body's Standards Officer;
- Your public body's own internal policies (e.g. on use of facilities; gifts; etc.);
- The "On Board" manual published by the Scottish Government.
- Information published on the websites of the Standards Commission for Scotland and the Commissioner for Ethical Standards

You should always think ahead. If you have any concerns about a possible problem, speak to your Standards Officer, Chief Executive or Chair so that action can be taken before a situation becomes a serious problem or a complaint is made against you.

The following information provides a brief guide to the sections in the Code of Conduct – for more details about each section it is important to read the Code of Conduct:



Section 3: General Conduct

You must treat everyone you come into contact with in the course of your work for your public body with courtesy and respect, even if you disagree with their views. A board functions most effectively when diverse views are debated openly and respectfully, and the decisions reached collectively are likewise respected. It also functions most effectively when everyone understands and respects the different and complementary roles of the executive (staff) and non-executive (board members).

[Gifts and hospitality](#)

The general rule is that you should not, in your role as a Board Member, accept gifts or hospitality. If you do, there is always the risk it could be interpreted as you being given or invited to something which you wouldn't normally attend, and therefore you may potentially be influenced to show favour towards whoever offers you these gifts and hospitality. Even if this is not the case, there is a risk that your actions could be interpreted that way.

Clearly judgements have to be proportionate. The Code sets out some guidelines to help you decide what action you should take. Your public body should also have an internal policy on the acceptance of gifts/hospitality which will set the Code's guidelines in the context of your particular organisation's work.

[Confidentiality](#)

Although Freedom of Information legislation provides widespread public access to information, it is legitimate in some circumstances for a public body to require information and documents to be treated in a confidential manner. Sometimes it is a matter of timing – information that may eventually be released but for the moment it must be kept confidential. You must respect the requirement for confidentiality, even if you do not agree with this requirement.

A related point is that it is not acceptable to disclose information (even if not explicitly confidential) to which you have privileged access as a result of your position if this disclosure leads to personal or financial gain, or is used for political purposes, or would result in damage to the reputation of your public body.

[Using Public Body Facilities](#)

The equipment and assets (IT, telephones, photocopiers, meeting rooms, offices etc.) of a public body are paid for by taxpayers – you should only use them in accordance with the organisation's policies. Generally this means only using them in connection with legitimate business of the organisation.

[Social Media](#)

When using social media the distinction between work and private life can get blurred, and hastily made comments can get misconstrued. You should be mindful of your role and take care not to compromise your position as a member of a public body by publicly undermining (or appearing to undermine) the actions of the organisation, staff or colleagues. This applies whether you are using your own or the organisation's equipment to access and post comments on social media.

[Appointment to Partner Organisations](#)

If you become a director or board member of a company as a nominee of a public body, you need to be conscious of potential conflicts of interest between your two positions. The main point to bear in mind is that if you are nominated in order to represent your public body's interests, then you are still bound by the Code but you may also be required to abide by the rules of the board you have been appointed to. More is said about this in the section on declaration of interests.



Sections 4 & 5: Interests

To ensure complete transparency of decision making by public bodies, and to avoid accusations that members are being inappropriately influenced, the Code requires that you make open to public view all your relevant interests. “Relevant Interests” are all the circumstances that might be considered to affect your judgement during the course of your work for a public body. There are two elements to this – registration of interests and declaration of interests:



Section 4: Registration of Interests

Your public body has a statutory duty to keep a register of the interests of its Members, and this information must be available for public view. It is your responsibility to keep your entries in the register up to date. **You must read the relevant section of the Code for more information.**

Details about two of the categories, namely Category 1 – Remuneration; and Category 2 – Related Undertakings; are considered so important this information must be registered whether or not it is relevant to your role in the public body.

Information about the registration of other interests in relation to the remaining categories is detailed within the Code of Conduct.

Category 3 – Contracts;

Category 4 – Houses, Land and Buildings;

Category 5 – Interests in Shares and Securities;

Category 6 – Gifts and Hospitality;

Category 7 – Non Financial Interests;

Under these categories, you may need to make the judgement on whether the interest could be considered relevant to the work of the public body and whether someone looking in from the outside might consider that your vote or support for a decision could be biased as a result of your interest. If you are in any doubt you should register the interest.

There is no requirement to *register* the interests of those connected to you; however, there **may be** a requirement to *declare* such an interest.

When deciding whether to register gifts or hospitality, remember that they could be offered from any source and not only when you are taking part in official business. The important point to think about is whether these could, or the perception is that these may, influence you in your role as a board member of your public body.



Section 5: Declaration of Interests

This is an area of the Code which comes under particular public scrutiny. It is important that the public and other interested parties have confidence that decisions are being made in accord with the public interest and not for any other reason. So in addition to your entries in the Register of Interests, you may need to declare an interest at a Board or Committee meeting of

Directly Elected Members:

Direct elections: if you sit on a public body as a result of a direct election (separate from Council elections) you do not automatically have a conflict of interest (and need to declare) just by virtue of being directly elected; but you still need to apply the objective test on a case by case basis.

Dispensations

The Code does allow for dispensations and these may be granted by the Standards Commission. In the vast majority of cases, however, applying clear reasoning to the objective test should be the guide.



Section 6: Lobbying and Access to Members of Public Bodies

Public bodies aim to be open and accessible to the views and opinions of others, and to make their decisions based on the widest possible evidence and arguments. As a Member you will probably be approached by those wishing to make their views known. This is perfectly legitimate but care is needed, and in these situations you should **be guided by the Code**, in particular:

- Do not do or say, anything that could be construed as your being improperly influenced to take a particular stance on an issue;
- You must not give or be perceived to give preferential access to any one side of an argument
- You must not accept any paid work in which you give advice on how to influence the public body and its members.



Roles, Responsibilities and Sources of Information:

The Chair of the Board

The Chair has additional responsibilities over and above those of Board Members. The Chair should ensure that all Board Members have a proper knowledge and understanding of their corporate roles and responsibilities which should include strategic leadership and the conduct of the Board business. You should seek the advice of your Chair if you are unsure about how to handle an issue.

Scottish Government Sponsor Team

Sponsor teams are responsible, on behalf of Ministers, for the bodies they sponsor. They are the day to day link between the body and the Minister and should ensure, amongst other things, that the public body has in place a Code of Conduct for Board Members approved by Scottish Ministers.

Duties of Public Bodies covered by this framework:

- Promote the observance by its Board Members of high standards of conduct and assist Members in observing the Code of Conduct for Members. This could include offering training for new Members, or refresher courses from time to time;

- Must have a designated Standards Officer to assist board Members observe the requirements detailed in the Code of Conduct and to ensure that the organisation keeps the Register of Members' Interests available, up to date and open to public view

The Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public Life in Scotland (Commissioner for Ethical Standards)

- Is independent of Government, Scottish Parliament and the Standards Commission for Scotland when investigating alleged contraventions of the Code;
- Receives complaints about the conduct of Members. Complaints can be made by anyone, including members of the public, or staff and Members of the public body you work with.
- If the Commissioner for Ethical Standards considers that there has been a breach of the Code a report about the investigation and the outcome from that process will be issued to the Standards Commission.

The Standards Commission Scotland (Standards Commission)

- Is independent of Government, Scottish Parliament and the Commissioner for Ethical Standards when considering alleged contraventions of the Code of Conduct;
- When a report is passed to it by the Commissioner for Ethical Standards, the Standards Commission determines what action will be taken following consideration of the case.
- Should the Standards Commission hold a Hearing and a breach of Code is determined it will thereafter apply one of the sanctions available to it as detailed in the Ethical Standards Act;
- Provides guidance to public bodies on;
 - the promotion and observance of high standards of conduct by members of devolved public bodies and assist them with that task.
 - the registers of interests for members of devolved public bodies.



Last Word

This guide is designed to help you abide by the Code of Conduct and meet the expectations that bear on those who serve in public life. If in doubt, and before you act, you should seek advice from your Chair, Chief Executive or Standards Officer.

Useful Addresses

Standards Commission for Scotland	www.standardscommissionscotland.org.uk
Commissioner for Ethical Standards	www.ethicalstandards.org.uk
Scottish Government – On Board Guide	www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/07/11153800/0
Scottish Government – Model Code of Conduct	Http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0000/00442087.pdf
Scottish Government – Ethical Standards	http://scotland.gov.uk/governance/ethical-standards
Audit Scotland	http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk
Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000	http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2000/7/contents



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