

Code of Conduct (Staff)



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1 Introduction

This document sets out the Code of Conduct for staff of Loughs Agency.

2 Duties and Responsibilities

2.1 Staff of Loughs Agency should familiarise themselves with the contents of the Code and act in accordance with the principles set out in it.

2.2 Staff of the Agency have a duty:

- to discharge public functions reasonably and in accordance with the law; and
- to recognise ethical standards governing particular professions.

2.3 It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive to ensure that the standards required by all staff in terms of propriety, conduct and discipline are adhered to.

2.4 The Seven Principles of Public Life

1. Selflessness - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity - Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity - Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability - Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness - Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty - Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership - Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

3 Accountability

3.1 Staff of the Agency should be aware:

- of their accountability to the North South Ministerial Council through the Board of the Agency;
- of the respective roles of the Sponsor Departments North and South (Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland and Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications in Ireland), the Department of Finance, and the body as set out in the Financial Memorandum.
- that the North South Ministerial Council is ultimately accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Oireachtas for the Agency's independence, effectiveness and efficiency.

3.2 Staff of the Agency should conduct themselves with integrity, impartiality and honesty. They should not deceive or knowingly mislead the Board, the Sponsor Departments, the Ministers of the Northern Ireland Assembly or Oireachtas or the public.

4 Conflicts of Interest

4.1 Staff should abide by the rules adopted by the Agency in relation to private interest and possible conflict with public duty; the disclosure of official information, and political activities. They should not misuse their official position or information acquired in their official duties to further their private interests of those of others. Key members of staff, such as the Chief Executive, managers of large contracts, and staff working on contracts, should ensure that any possible conflicts of interest are identified at an early stage, made known to a more senior member of staff and that appropriate action is taken to resolve them.

5 Integrity

- 5.1 Staff of the Agency should not use their official position to receive, agree to accept or attempt to obtain any payment or other consideration (whether this consideration has a monetary value or not) for doing, or not doing, anything or showing favour, or disfavour, to any person. They should not receive benefits of any kind from a third party which might reasonably be seen to compromise their personal judgement and integrity. Staff will be subject to anti-corruption legislation in the respective jurisdictions, North and South, as appropriate.

6 Relations with the Public

- 6.1 Staff of the Agency who deal with the affairs of the public should do so sympathetically, efficiently, promptly and without bias or maladministration.

7 Use of Resources

- 7.1 Staff of the Agency should ensure the proper, economical, effective and efficient use of resources.

8 Official Information

- 8.1 Staff of the Agency owe a general duty of confidentiality to their employer at common law. They are required, therefore, to protect official information held in confidence. Nothing in the Code should be taken as overriding existing statutory or common law obligations to keep confidential or, in appropriate cases, to disclose certain information.

Note: Wilful disclosure of information to third parties that undermines the work of the Agency or its staff may be a disciplinary offence and categorised as Gross Misconduct.

9 Staff Concerns about Improper Conduct

- 9.1 If staff believe 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 either raise the matter through management or approach in confidence a Board Member. Staff should also draw attention to cases where there is evidence of irregular or improper behaviour elsewhere in the organisation, but where they have not been personally involved, or if they are required to act in a way which, for them, raises a fundamental issue of conscience.

9.2 Where a member of staff has reported a matter covered in paragraph 9.1 above and believes that the response is not reasonable to the grounds of their concern, they may report the matter in writing to each of the Sponsor Departments North and South who will jointly investigate the matter further.

- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
Corporate Branch
Room 357
Dundonald House
Upper Newtownards Road
BELFAST
BT4 3SB
Tel: 028 90 765396
- Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications
Elm House
Earlsvale Road
Cavan
H12 A8H
Tel: 00353 1 678 3053

10 After Leaving Employment

10.1 Staff of the Agency should continue to observe their duties of confidentiality (see paragraph 8 above) after they have left the employment of the Agency. Staff should be made aware of any rules on the acceptance of business appointments after resignation or retirement.

11 Document Review and Amendment

This policy will be formally reviewed every 36 months (or sooner if work processes change).

To ensure that each copy of the policy contains a record of all changes, a record of the change or amendments will be kept on the amendment list. The amendment list along with any revised or new pages will then be circulated to all staff.

Amendment List

Date	Section	Brief description of change	Page no.	Version no.
	All	Complete review of all policies	All	1.0
	All	General formatting	All	2.0
09/05/14	11	Inserted date column on amendment list	7	3.0
16/09/15		Removed footer	All	4.0
01/04/16	All	Policy review	All	5.0
23/05/17	9	Policy review - updated Sponsor Department names	5&6	6.0
16/06/17	3	Updated to DAERA and DCCAE	3	7.0
16/06/17	9	Updated address for DAERA	5	7.0
12/04/18	11	Review frequency changed to 36 months	6&7	8.0
28/01/19		Added new logo		9.0
30/10/19	2	Added the Seven Principles of Public Life	3	10.0
29/01/19	9	Updated DAERA address and inserted DCCAE Eircode	6	11.0
28/09/20	All	General formatting and updating contact details of Southern Sponsor Department	All	12.0