



Code of Conduct for Employees



Transform Sandwell

Working together to transform Sandwell



LIBERATA

Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Disclosure of Information	3
3.	Political Neutrality	3
4.	Relationships	3
5.	Appointment and Other Employment Matters.....	4
6.	Outside Commitments	4
7.	Personal Interests	4
8.	Equality Issues.....	5
9.	Separation of Roles for Procuring and Providing Services.....	5
10.	Corruption	5
11.	Use of Financial Resources.....	6
12.	Gifts and Hospitality.....	6
13.	Sponsorship – Giving and Receiving.....	6

On 7th March 1995 Council approved a 'Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees'. This guidance note summarises the contents of this Code. If you require any assistance in interpreting the code please contact your Outposted Personnel Officer or the Monitoring Officer on 0121 569 3174.

1. Introduction

The public is entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all employees who work for local government.

The Code lays down guidelines to help maintain and improve standards of conduct and seeks to protect employees from misunderstandings or criticisms.

2. Disclosure of Information

The law requires that certain types of information must be available to members, auditors, government departments, service users and the public. If you are in any doubt about the information that you are obliged to disclose, please contact the Monitoring Office on the above number.

Employees should not use or pass on any information obtained in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit.

In July 1990 the Council adopted a Code of Practice covering Access to Information with regard to the decision making process. Further information on the rules governing the decision making process can be obtained from the Committee Services Unit on 0121 569 3194.

3. Political Neutrality

Employees serve the Authority as a whole and any dealings with Councillors and/or political groups should not compromise the employee's political neutrality. Some posts are 'politically restricted' and the postholder cannot engage in any public political activity. There is further information relating to this issue, which can be obtained from your Administrative Officer.

4. Relationships

i) With Councillors

For some employees their role is to give independent advice to Councillors and Senior Managers whilst all employees are responsible for carrying out the Authority's work. Close personal familiarity between employees and individual Councillors can damage the relationship and prove embarrassing to other employees and Councillors and should therefore be avoided.

ii) The Local Community and Service Users

Employees should always remember their responsibilities to the community they serve and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals within that Community.

iii) Contractors

All relationship of a business or private nature with external contractors or potential contractors should be made known to your Head of Service. Orders and contracts must be awarded on merits, by fair competition against other tenders and no special favour should be shown to businesses run by, for example, friends, partners or relatives in the tendering process.

Employees who engage or supervise contractors or have any other official relationship with contractors and have previously had or currently have a relationship in a private or domestic capacity with contractors should declare that relationship to their Head of Services.

5. Appointment and Other Employment Matters

Employees should not involve in an appointment where they are related to an applicant or have a close personal relationship outside work with him/her.

Similarly employees should not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion, or pay adjustments for another employee who is relative, partner etc.

6. Outside Commitments

All employees should not take outside employment which conflicts with the Authority's interests, irrespective whether or the work is paid.

Officers grades above Scale 6 shall not undertake any additional appointment without the express consent of their Head of Service.

No outside work should be undertaken in the office and use of facilities (e.g. access to typists, WP Operators) is forbidden. Correspondence and incoming calls related to outside work are not allowed.

7. Personal Interests

Employees must declare any financial or non-financial interests that they consider could bring about conflict with the Authority's interests (e.g. acting as a school Governor within schools maintained by the Authority).

Employees must declare membership if any organisations not open to the public without formal membership and commitment of allegiance and which has secrecy about rules or membership or conduct (e.g. Freemasons).

Employees needing to declare interests of this nature should do so by contacting their own Head of Service who will advise the Chief Executive accordingly. A register of employees making such declarations will be retained by the Committee Services Unit (Tel: 0121 569 3186 or 3194).

The Authority has produced and circulated a policy governing the relationship between Council employees and voluntary sector organisations. Copies can again be obtained from your Personnel Officer.

8. Equality Issues

Employees should ensure that policies relating to equality issues are compiled with in addition to the requirements of the law, e.g. Race Relations Act, Sex Discrimination Act and the Disability Discrimination Act.

9. Separation of Roles for Procuring and Providing Services

Employees who have responsibility to both procure and provide services must be clear on the separation of the roles related to the provision of services with the Authority and be aware of the need for accountability and openness. Fairness and impartiality must be exercised when dealing with all customers, suppliers, and other contractors and sub-contractors. Confidential information on tenders should not be disclosed to any unauthorised party or organisation.

10. Corruption

It is a serious offence for employees corruptly to receive any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage for not doing anything showing favour, or disfavour, to any person in their official capacity.

11. Use of Financial Resources

Employees must ensure that they use public funds in a responsible and lawful manner. They should strive to ensure value for money.

12. Gifts and Hospitality

Employees should not accept any gift or hospitality given in the course of their duties; other than objects which have a token value e.g., diary, pen, and calculator. (See also 13 Sponsorship - Giving and Receiving overleaf).

13. Sponsorship – Giving and Receiving

Giving: Where the Authority wishes to sponsor an event or service neither an employee nor partner, spouse or relative must benefit from such sponsorship in direct way without there being full disclosure to the Committee Services Unit.

Similarly, where the Authority through sponsorship, grant aid, financial or other means, gives support in the community, employees should ensure that impartial advice is given and that there is no conflict of interest involved.

Receiving: Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor or is seeking sponsor a local government activity, the basic conventions referred to in 12 above apply. Particular care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.

The Authority has previously produced and distributed – ‘Guidance for Employees on the Acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality’. Copies are available from your Personnel Officer.