

County council code of conduct

(Updated 16.05.2024)

1. Introduction

The public is entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all Lancashire County Council employees, who must conduct themselves and Council business in compliance with the highest professional standards and in accordance with legislative requirements.

This Code of Conduct sets out the behavioural standards that must be upheld by employees of the Council.

2. General Principles

The following general principles apply to employees of the County Council are embodied within the requirements of this Code.

Standards in Public Life

Employees serving the public must at all times practice and exhibit the following behaviours through the course of their work:

- Selflessness;
- Integrity;
- Objectivity;
- Accountability;
- Openness; and
- Honesty.

Organisational Values and behaviours

The Council has developed a set of [values and behaviours](#) that employees are expected to demonstrate through the course of their work. These define a Lancashire County Council employee and underpin the specific requirements that are set out within this Code.

Employees may also be subject to other service specific or organisational values.

3. Status of the Code

The Code sets out the minimum standards of conduct and forms part of the Council's terms and conditions of employment.

4. Application of the Code

This Code applies to all employees of the Council, except those employed in delegated schools (although the Code is recommended for adoption by delegated schools).

If you are in any doubt about any provision of this Code or what is expected or required of you, you must raise any issues you have with your line manager.

Inevitably some of the issues covered in the Code may affect senior, managerial and professional employees more than others but the principles apply to all employees. Non compliance with the Code may result in action being taken under the Council's [Disciplinary Procedure](#) (see section 7 below).

Any breach of professional Codes of Conduct, where these apply to employees as a result of their professional role, is unacceptable and may also result in action being taken under the Council's [Disciplinary Procedure](#).

If you consider that other employees may be guilty of misconduct you have a duty to report this to your line manager or raise it through one of the other available policies or procedures (e.g. the Council's [Whistleblowing Policy](#)).

You must not treat employees who report (or who intend to report or are suspected of reporting) potential misconduct any less favourably than other employees.

5. General Requirements as an Employee of Lancashire County Council

As an employee of Lancashire County Council you must and you are required to:-

1. Fulfil the obligations placed upon you under the terms of your contract of employment, e.g.:
 - Be ready and willing to work as specified in your role profile.
 - Undertake your duties and responsibilities effectively, efficiently and diligently.
 - Conduct your work in a co-operative manner.
 - Attend work.
 - Be punctual in time keeping.
 - Be honest and trustworthy.
 - Obey reasonable management instructions.
 - Take care of yourself, your colleagues and others whilst at work.
 - Take care of Council property.
2. Adhere to the Council's [Statement of Ethical Standards](#).
3. Adhere to all corporate and service-specific policies and procedures.
4. Demonstrate the Council's (and other organisational or service-specific) values and behaviours through the course of your work.
5. Follow any local rules laid down for your work location.
6. Familiarise yourself with, and follow, the Health and Safety rules that apply to your particular area of work/location, including compliance with the Council's [Smoke-free Policy](#).

7. Show respect for all people that you come into contact with in the course of your duties (e.g. the public, fellow employees, employees from other agencies, etc) and demonstrate continually whilst at work your commitment to ensuring equality and respect for all. Employees must not engage in any activity whilst in or outside of work that may be, or may be perceived to be, a hate incident or crime.
8. Demonstrate impartiality in respect of any decisions you take and advice you provide on behalf of the Council.
9. Maintain the confidentiality of any confidential information obtained in the course of your employment and ensure that the reputation of the Council is protected at all times. You must not:
 - disclose information given to you in confidence by anyone, or information acquired that you believe is of a confidential nature;
 - use any information obtained in the course of your employment for personal gain or benefit, nor should you pass it on to others who might use it in such a way; or
 - give information to the media unless you are authorised to do so (see point 12 below regarding the arrangements in relation to contact with the media).

Employees using social media and networking websites outside of work must also ensure that interactions on these sites (e.g. comments posted on online social forums such as Facebook) do not damage the reputation of the Council or working relationships with Council employees, customers, or people who use Council services. Bullying or harassment of Council employees, customers or people who use Council services via online social media and networking sites is unacceptable.

10. Follow the Council's policies/procedures governing:

- Trade Union duties and activities (as appropriate for members of Trade Unions) and as set out in the Council's [Facilities Agreement](#).
- Your personal responsibility as an employee for reporting absence/changed circumstances, claiming payments/expenses/allowances, etc.
- Use of facilities - at work, you may have access to facilities, such as office equipment, computers, telephones, transport, etc. These facilities are not intended for private use. Where some personal use is permitted, you must observe any corporate protocols, including the [Internet, Email and Telephone System Acceptable Use Policy](#).
- Your professional responsibilities in respect of the service provided to users and/or other customers.
- Intellectual property (e.g. designs, programmes, drawing and inventions) - the ownership and copyright of work you produce for the Council will normally belong to the Council. Further guidance on this issue can be obtained from the Director of Law and Governance.
- Outside employment/activity - employees must not undertake any additional outside employment or activity which is in conflict with the Council's interests/business and/or their duties as employees of the Council. Employees paid above Scp 19 on the Lancashire pay spine, or equivalent, must seek permission prior to undertaking any additional outside employment or engaging in any other business.
- Any managerial responsibilities you may have, including those relating to operational, financial and HR matters, and statutory obligations.

- Membership of any organisation that is not open to the public without formal membership and which has a commitment of allegiance or secrecy about rules of membership or conduct.
11. Use the appropriate lines of communication to express views/issues relating to your employment or employing service (i.e. via your line manager, your normal management hierarchy or by using the appropriate Council policy or procedure). You must not bypass normal management arrangements and contact councillors direct to involve them in matters that officers of the Council are expected to deal with.
 12. Follow the Council's arrangements in relation to contact with the media. You must acknowledge and accept that as a Council employee all press enquiries concerning the business of the Council should be channelled through the Communications Service, who offer support and advice on all matters relating to the media.
 13. Notify your line manager* of any known or suspected breaches of the law or Council's policies, procedures and regulations, and co-operate with any investigation of such breaches. (* If you feel unable to approach your immediate line manager on a specific matter, you should notify a more senior manager responsible for the area of the service in which you work or use the confidential whistleblowing line – 01772 532500.)
 14. Disclose to the Council as required on appointment, or at any time, if you are arrested/being investigated by the police, any criminal charges/convictions and cautions (including driving offences, particularly where these have resulted in disqualification) in accordance with the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Being charged or in possession of a conviction or caution may not necessarily debar you from appointment or lead to disciplinary action. However, failure to disclose where required will be considered under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure and may result in dismissal.
 15. If employed in a 'regulated activity' post, disclose to the Council on appointment, or at any time if you are subject to any ongoing investigation into any matter which may bring into question your suitability, if a referral has been made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and your application status is 'under consideration', 'minded to bar' or if you are 'barred' from working with vulnerable groups, including children.
 16. Serve all councillors equally (not just those of the controlling group), ensuring that the individual rights of all councillors are respected. You must not allow your own personal or political opinions to interfere with your work. Close personal familiarity between employees and individual councillors should be avoided. A protocol on councillor/officer relations is set out within the Council's [Constitution](#).
 17. Undertake training courses and learning/e-learning modules as required by your job role or employment with the Council.
 18. Notify your line manager of any personal relationship in or outside of work which may result in your honesty/objectivity/integrity being challenged in your role with the Council. No direct management reporting line must exist between employees who are involved in a personal relationship. In such circumstances you must disclose the personal relationship to your Head of Service, or other senior manager as appropriate, at the earliest possible opportunity to enable alternative management reporting arrangements to be put into place.

19. Disclose any known relationship between yourself and a candidate who has applied for a Council post where you are involved in appointing to the post. All appointments must be made on the basis of merit in line with the Council's [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#) and associated processes.
20. Notify your line manager of any change in your personal circumstances which could affect your ability to fulfil the role in which you are employed.
21. If supplied with a uniform or clothes/overalls for your role with the Council, you must wear these whilst carrying out your duties. All other employees are required to dress in a way that is appropriate to the work they have to do, as determined by their line manager or recognised conventions (e.g. smart clothes for court appearances, public meetings, etc).
22. Take care to ensure that your personal hygiene and also your personal appearance is appropriate having regard to the conventions of your workplace and internal/external working environment.

In addition to complying with the above, you are also expected to conduct yourself, both on and off duty, in a manner appropriate to and compatible with your employment with the Council.

6. Political Restrictions

Certain employees hold politically restricted posts that are defined in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 as:

- specified posts, such as the Head of the Paid Service, the Monitoring Officer and Chief Officers. These post holders are restricted without exemption or appeal; or
- posts that meet the duties-related criteria for determining a 'sensitive' post, unless the post holder appeals successfully against such a determination. These posts are defined as those that (i) give advice on a regular basis to the employing authority, or (ii) speak on behalf of the authority on a regular basis to journalists and broadcasters.

If you hold a 'politically restricted post' you are disqualified from membership of any authority, other than a parish or community council, from being a MP or MEP and are subject to prescribed restrictions on your political activity. Further information about political restrictions is available on the [Council and Democracy website](#).

If the post you hold is politically restricted, your line manager will notify you of this on appointment.

7. Employee Compliance

Failure to comply with the standards of conduct set out under this Code may result in action being taken under the Council's [Disciplinary Procedure](#), and could result in your dismissal from employment with the Council.

Further information about levels of misconduct can be found within the Council's [Disciplinary Procedure](#).

