

Code of conduct policy

An EasyRead guide



Essex County Council



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The aim of this code



The Code of Conduct is a set of rules that tell you how to behave when you are at work.



The code applies to everyone who works for Essex County Council, including trainees and agency workers.



It also applies to people who work for Essex County Council but are **seconded** to a different organisation.

Seconded means that you are away from your regular job for a period of time while you do another job.

Principles



The Nolan Committee was created to tell the government how to improve standards of behaviour in public life.



This code follows the 7 principles suggested by the Nolan Committee:

1. Selflessness
2. Integrity
3. Objectivity
4. Accountability
5. Openness
6. Honesty
7. Leadership

Principles are a set of rules that tell you how to behave.



Selflessness

This means that you put others' needs before your own.



Integrity

This means you should not act or make decisions for financial gain for yourself, your family or friends.



Objectivity

This means you must make decisions fairly, based on the facts.



Accountability

This means you take responsibility for your actions and decisions.



Openness

This means that you make decisions using information that is open to the public. You should not keep secrets.



Honesty

This means that you should always tell the truth.

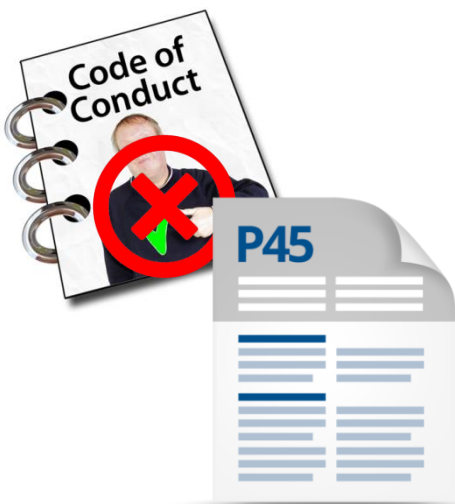


Leadership

This means that you should set a good example and that you will challenge poor behaviour.



If you break the rules of this code you may be punished.



A serious break of the rules is called **Gross Misconduct**. In most cases of gross misconduct you will be sacked.



Managers must investigate claims that someone has broken the rules.

The Monitoring Officer must also tell Council bosses if someone has broken the law.



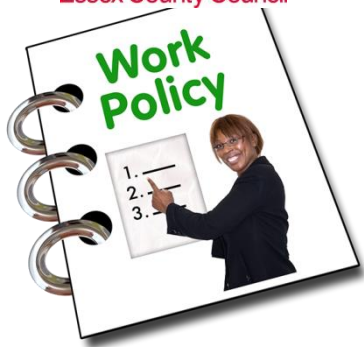
You must help the manager or the Monitoring Officer to investigate if you are asked to.



When you represent Essex County Council you must:



- Follow the rules of this code and work for the good of ECC.



- Follow the ECC's policies and standards that apply to your job.



- Tell your manager if you think you have a **conflict of interest**

A **conflict of interest** is when you need to make decisions that could be helpful or harmful to you.



- Tell your manager if you think someone else has broken the rules of this code.



- Ask your manager if you are not sure what you need to do.

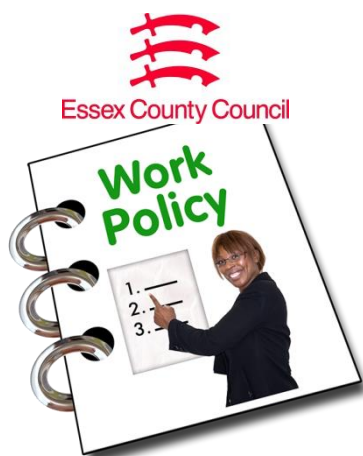
Standards required



Political Neutrality

This means that you do not support a **political party** in public.

Political parties are the Conservatives, Labour, LibDem, Green etc.



- You must follow ECC policies.
- You must make decisions fairly, based on the facts.



- You must not let own views and opinions affect your job.



Working with elected Members

These are people who have been voted for to represent their community at ECC.



- You must work with all Members.
- You must give fair and appropriate advice to Members.



- You must treat Members with respect.



Politically Restricted Posts

The law says that some jobs at ECC must be politically restricted. If you have one of these jobs:



- You must be **politically neutral**.

Politically neutral means that you do not support a political party in public.



- You must not stand for election.



- You must not have a job with a political party



- You must not try to get support for a political party at elections.



- You must not say in public that you support a political party.



Personal conduct

This is how you must behave when you are at work.

- You must do your job the best you can.



- You must come to work at the right time.

If you are not coming to work because you are ill or if you have holiday you must tell your manager.



- When you are at work you must wear your security pass.



- You must tell your manager if you think something isn't working properly.



- You must be polite and treat everyone fairly and with respect.



- You must be clean and wear suitable clothing for your job.



- You must be professional with colleagues.

If you work with a family member you must tell your manager.



- You must tell your manager if you think you have a conflict of interest.



- You must not do anything that might be harmful to ECC. This includes what you say on Facebook and other social media.



- You must not be drunk or take drugs at work.

Medicines are OK.



- You must not use your job at ECC to get special favours.



- You must tell your manager if someone gives you a gift. This could be money or goods.

Gifts and Hospitality



Hospitality is where a company gives you food and drink.

They may do this because they want to do business with ECC or to get a better deal.



- You can accept small gifts but you must tell your manager.

You may be asked to fill in a form to say what you have received.



- You can't accept gifts from **contractors**, suppliers or service users.

Contractors are people who are paid to complete a specific job.



You should ask your manager if you are unsure if you can accept a gift.



You can find more information in the **Gifts and Hospitality Policy**.



Handling ECC money and sponsorship

ECC gets its money from taxes so we must be careful how we spend it.



- You must be able to show what you have spent ECC money on.



- You must follow ECC's financial rules and ask for advice if necessary.



- You must try to get good value for money.



- You must follow policy if your job means you have to spend service users' money.



- You can only get sponsorship from other companies for ECC business.



- You must tell the **Head of Internal Audit** if you think someone is spending ECC's money incorrectly.



- You must not benefit from ECC contracts and you must not treat family members and friends better than anyone else.



Procuring, managing or using ECC contracts

Procurement means the process of agreeing a contract with another company.

If your job involves looking after contracts:



- You must follow the procurement policy when you decide who to give the contract to.



- You must not treat any part of the local community unfairly when you decide who to give the contract to.



Intellectual property

Ideas you have and things you create at work are called Intellectual property.

You must ask your manager if it is OK if you want to tell someone about something you have designed at work.



Reporting improper or illegal activities

If you think someone is doing something against this Code of Conduct you must tell your manager straight away.

The **Whistle-blowing policy** protects people who raise a concern.



Responsibilities when managing others

Managers must:

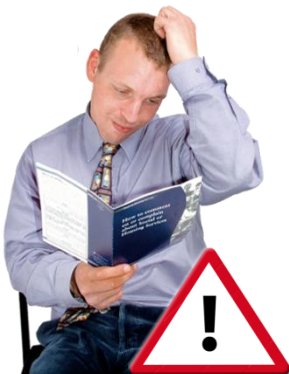
- support their employees and make sure that new employees know what they must do and where they can get help.



- give a job to the person they think can do it the best.



- make decisions about punishments and rewards based on the facts.



- be aware of all risks and make sure that they are managed.



- make sure they know how to contact their employees in case of emergency.



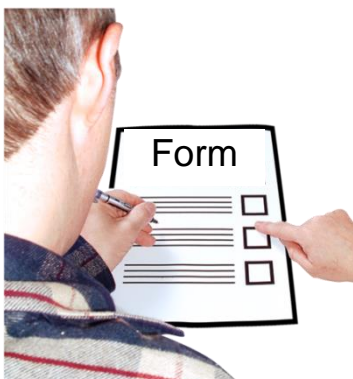
Managers must not interview friends or family members and must not be involved in the decision to give them a job.



Outside work

This is if you volunteer or have another job as well as your job at ECC.

- You must ask your manager if it is OK to have another job.



- You will be asked to fill in a form to tell us about your other job.



Essex County Council

- Your other job must not interfere with the work you do for ECC.



- You must not work more hours than it says is safe in the **Working Time Regulations**.



- You can find more information in the **Permission to undertake outside work policy**.

Equality and Diversity



This is about accepting that we are all different and treating everybody fairly.



- You must treat everyone with respect and value their differences.



- You must not treat anybody unfairly because of their differences.



- You can find more information in the **ECC Equalities strategy** and the **Equality in Employment policy**.



Protecting confidential information

This is about keeping ECC information private.



- You must follow the **Information Security and Communication policies**.



- You must tell your manager if you think any private information has been made public.



- You must name and store information so that only people who are allowed to see can do so.



- You must send any questions from journalists to Communications at press.desk@essex.gov.uk straight away.



- You must not tell anyone your password.



- You must not use information from your job for personal use to gain profit.



- You must not install anything on your computer. This can put ECC information at risk.



Using ECC equipment, materials and property



This is about using the equipment, computers for example, that ECC gives you to do your job.



- You must follow **Health and safety at Work** regulations.

You must wear protective clothing when you need to.



- You must look after the equipment ECC gives you.



- You must tell your manager if anything gets broken.



- You must only use the equipment to do your job.



- You must not use the equipment for anything illegal or to get profit.



- You must only use ECC transport for work purposes.



Working with service users

This is about how you work with people who have a social care service.



- You must give a high level of care.



- You must protect service users' money and information.



- You must tell your manager if you think a service user is not getting the right care.



- You must only give service users' information to people who are allowed to see it.

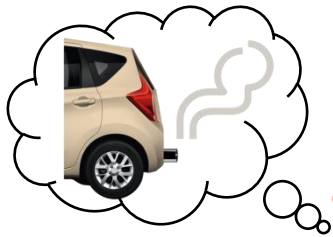


- You must not have a personal relationship with a service user, their family or their carer.



Commitment to the environment

This is about protecting the environment for the future.



- You must think about how your actions may affect the environment.



- You must reduce, re-use and recycle where you can.



- You must help to create policies and practices that are good for the environment.



You can read our policies on the intranet

You can find more information on the Intranet about:

- Business continuity
- Comprehensive Equality policy
- Constitution (including member / officer conduct)
- Corporate risk management strategy and policies
- Data protection
- Data protection in employment
- Declaration of interest
- Disciplinary
- Diversity and equality in employment
- Diversity web pages
- Driving safely
- Driving standards
- Drugs and alcohol
- Equality Impact Assessment guidance
- Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation for Financial Management
- Gifts and hospitality
- Health and Safety
- Employee travel and expenses
- Improving performance
- Our policies on Information Security and Communication
- Our standards for acceptable use of ECC information and facilities (including personal use)
- Our standards for making information available to others when you are not working

- Outside work
- Personal relationships at work
- Politically restricted posts
- Procurement rules
- Procurement web pages
- Risk management
- Sickness absence
- Social media policy
- Whistle-blowing (reporting improper conduct)



You can contact HR by:

Telephone: 03330 134300



Email: HRadviceandsupport@essex.gov.uk

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