

## Officer Code of Conduct

[Change logo](#)

JSCC Approved – ~~13 October 2014~~

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## 1. Introduction

The council believes that its activities demand the highest standards of confidence of the public and that this confidence will derive from the way in which the council and its employees conduct themselves in undertaking its business.

All public sector bodies are required to observe high standards of probity in managing their affairs, and the Committee on Standards in Public Life has identified seven key principles that should be followed.

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

The principles underpin this code and we expect you to read and understand the definitions in Appendix A.

The code is additional to appropriate statutes, sections of the national Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service, the council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and any departmental rules of conduct (that may be issued from time to time by [Directors](#) [Senior Managers](#)).

## 2. Purpose

The council has produced this document for awareness purposes to avoid getting any one into difficulties which include the possibility of being prosecuted or disciplined.

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to provide guidance on standards of behaviour to be understood and carried out by all employees at all levels.

## 3. Scope

This code applies to all employees of West Lindsey District Council including permanent, temporary, part-time, casual and agency staff.

A breach of the code may lead to disciplinary action.

#### **4. Links To Other Policies**

The Code of Conduct sets out the requirements of the council and aims to assist employees in performing their duties to the best of their ability and makes reference to policies of the council.

Employees are required to familiarise themselves with the contents of the Code and the documents referred to therein. It cannot cover every eventuality and if in any doubt or if any additional guidance is required, employees should consult their manager or the People & Organisational Development Team .

All up to date policies and protocols indicated in *italics* after each section, can be found on the council's intranet site – Minerva.

You must ensure that you abide by the council's management procedures known as Approved Codes of Practice these will be held on the council's intranet site – Minerva and you are expected to operate within the framework set out in these procedures. Failure to do so could result in disciplinary action.

#### **5. The Council's Constitution**

The council has certain powers and duties that are set out in a formal document, the Constitution. The council must act under the Constitution and the law; otherwise it will be acting *ultra vires*, that is, beyond the scope or in excess of its legal power or authority. While you may not use the Constitution in your day-to-day work it is a useful reference for all matters relating to the composition of the council, rules about members and committee meetings, financial and procurement procedures and other issues of relevance to officers.

#### **6. Key Points**

There are 3 key points to remember in all that you do, ensure your conduct:

- is never influenced by personal gain;
- could not give anyone reason to question your motives;
- is always in line with the council's policies and procedures.

#### **7. Relations with Members of the Council, Public and Other Officers**

The council frequently works in partnership with other organisations, both in the public and private sector. It is therefore vital that all officers conduct themselves in an exemplary manner in all aspects of their work, in particular:

- Mutual respect between officers and members is essential to good local government, and working relationships should always be kept on a professional basis;
- You should avoid close personal familiarity with individual members as this could prove embarrassing to other officers and members;
- You should deal with the public, members and other officers sympathetically, efficiently, with courtesy and respect and without bias.

## 8. Working for the Council

You should ensure that you remain professionally competent to do your job; that your knowledge remains up to date in accordance with your professional standards; and that you comply with the professional and personal conduct requirements of your professional body or bodies.

If you are required to be a member of a professional body for your role within the council, [as set out in the job description and person specification](#), your annual subscription will be reimbursed.

You have a duty to work within the law and in accordance with our policies and procedures and to behave in a way that reflects well on the council. At no time should you knowingly put at risk public confidence or the interests of the council by your behaviour.

You must not in your official or private capacity conduct yourself in such a manner that could reasonably be regarded as bringing the council into disrepute.

We recognise that managers have extra responsibilities. If you manage staff, you are particularly expected to:

- conduct yourself with exemplary professionalism and probity and lead by example;
- create an inclusive work environment that values diversity;
- make staff aware of this code's requirements as well as any other local or corporate standards, policies and procedures;
- accept responsibility for your own work and the proper performance of the people you manage;
- be familiar with the health and safety and other related policies and be clear about your responsibilities in applying them; and
- take appropriate action on breaches of this code.

It is important that you have a professional and effective working relationship with your manager. Your manager will tell you what is expected of you; respond to any concerns you may have about your work; assess your performance; and give you feedback, with advice on how you can improve.

You should be polite and behave courteously and reasonably in all dealings with your manager. Your manager should be polite, reasonable and fair to you at all times and support you in performing your job.

You must carry out reasonable instructions that your manager gives you to the best of your ability. You must not be negligent in your duties as this may seriously affect the council's reputation or its interests. If there is anything about your job that you are unclear about, speak to your manager.

Your manager will set and agree work objectives with you; and, where appropriate, agree training to assist your career development. You should discuss your training needs with your manager, some training opportunities will depend on business priorities and budget.

Your working hours, location and pattern of work must be agreed with your manager.

Any changes to these must be agreed in advance with your manager.

If you cannot attend work because of sickness, you should always follow our sickness reporting procedure as set out in the Managing Attendance Guidance for Employees and Managers.

You must always dress appropriately for your job and the work you do. If you are issued with a uniform you must wear it and take good care of it, if you are issued with health and safety equipment you must use/wear it.

### **9. Anti Fraud and Anti Corruption**

The council is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity, honesty and integrity and operates a zero tolerance approach to fraud, money laundering, corruption and bribery.

All employees are required to comply with any anti-bribery and anti-corruption legislation. Bribery of any kind is strictly prohibited. Under no circumstance should any provision be made, money set aside or accounts created for the purposes of facilitating the payment or receipt of a bribe.

You should report any concerns, associated with fraud, corruption, bribery or theft to your manager or a Director or through the council's Whistleblowing policy.

A breach of any of the provisions of the Anti-Fraud, Corruption and Money Laundering Policy will constitute a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with in accordance with the council's Disciplinary procedure.

*Anti-Fraud, Corruption and Money Laundering Policy*

### **10. Gifts And Hospitality**

Many council employees have dealings with people outside the council, particularly members of the public, suppliers, contractors and other private organisations. Employees should treat with extreme caution any offer of a gift, favour or hospitality that is made to them personally. The person or organisation making the offer may be doing or seeking to do business with the council, or may be applying to the council for planning permission or some other kind of decision.

It is essential that employees adhere to the overriding principle that they do not compromise their position as public service workers by accepting gifts and/or hospitality and allowing themselves to reach the position where they might be, or might be thought by others, to have been influenced in making an important decision as a consequence. Such gifts may be viewed as bribes and must not be accepted, to do so may compromise the employee and the council and may lead to disciplinary action.

It is also important that the council is seen to conduct its activities with integrity, and does not leave itself or its employees open to allegations of corruption and to bad publicity.

You must not ask for gifts or hospitality and you must not encourage any gift, reward or hospitality from anyone you come into contact with through your official duties. This includes, but is not limited to drinks, meals, tickets to the theatre or sporting events, overnight accommodation, travel or holidays.

You must not accept cash or monetary gifts of any kind, whether in the form of cash, cheques, vouchers or coupons. There are times when receiving reasonable hospitality is acceptable. For example, you may be given light refreshments, tea, coffee, sandwiches when visiting clients or during external meetings while you are working. You do not need to record these in the hospitality register. However, you do need to consider whether the hospitality is reasonable for the occasion or the job you are doing and whether it is similar to the scale of hospitality we would offer clients visiting us under similar circumstances.

You may accept an invitation to a dinner or function of a non-commercial body (society, institute or similar) where you are representing the council or attending a conference or course where it is clear that the hospitality is corporate rather than personal. Such hospitality should be agreed in advance with your manager and recorded in the gifts and hospitality register.

As a general rule, taking part in activities paid for by firms, contractors or suppliers outside office hours or while on leave will be considered inappropriate.

The Gifts and Hospitality Register is ~~held in the Democratic Services Team~~ [Minerva](#). All offers of gifts or hospitality must be recorded, whether or not they are accepted, this ensures that the system is transparent and acts as protection for the employee concerned. However, there is no need to record receipt of promotional material of token value such as desk diaries, calendars or pens.

You must tell your manager if:

- anyone tries to bribe you; or
- you reasonably believe someone has tried to bribe another employee; or
- there is any evidence of corruption or improper behaviour by others.

If your manager is involved, you should report it to a ~~Director~~ [Senior Manager](#).

You must not offer gifts or hospitality to others on behalf of the council.

Any breaches of the requirements relating to gifts and hospitality will result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee(s) involved.

## **11. Relations with Contractors or Suppliers**

It is the responsibility of all officers to ensure that, when administering council contracts, every contract made by or on behalf of the council complies with all relevant European Union and United Kingdom legislation and as provided for in the council's contract procedure rules or other applicable procedures. Any officer who is authorised to carry out any of the council's contract functions must undertake all necessary training effectively to discharge this responsibility. Officers shall not commit the council to incur expenditure for

the supply of goods, services, work or capital projects unless they are authorised under the scheme of delegation and financial provision has been authorised.

You must award contracts or orders on merit, following the procurement evaluation proforma, to achieve best value for the council including the following considerations:

- you must tell your line manager and register in the Register of Interests any relationship you have with a contractor or supplier with whom you are also involved at work.
- if friends or family are involved as potential suppliers, you should not be involved in the process at all and you must not favour current or past officers or their partners, close relatives or associates when awarding contracts or orders to businesses for which they work.
- if the council decides to outsource the supply of any goods or services and you or you and your colleagues are considering a management buy-out you should discuss this with your line manager immediately and register it in accordance with the declaration of interests guide. You must not then take part in any relevant contract awarding process.

#### *Constitution - Contract procedure Rules*

The Register of Private Interests is ~~held in the Democratic Services Team on Minerva.~~

You must not, under any circumstances, accept any item, or property left to you in a will of a client of the council. Any offer of a bequest made to you by a client should be politely refused and you should inform your Manager of the incident at the earliest opportunity.

## **12. Safeguarding**

West Lindsey District Council accepts the social, moral and legal responsibility to implement procedures to provide a duty of care for children, young people, adults at risk and anyone at risk of or experiencing domestic abuse, to safeguard their wellbeing and protect them from abuse when they are engaged in services organised or provided by the council.

The council is required to have policies and procedures in place which outline its response to safeguarding.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, although your work may not directly impact on or relate to children, young people or adults at risk, you have a duty to understand, recognise and respond to safeguarding situations and concerns and you are bound by the council's policy and procedures.

If any employee finds that for whatever reason they do not believe that they can comply with this policy and its associated procedures they must notify the lead safeguarding officer immediately.

~~Safeguarding Policy Children and Young People, Adults at Risk and Managing Domestic Abuse: Policy and Procedure~~



### **13. Other employment**

You are required to devote your full-time attention and abilities to your duties during your working hours and to act in the best interests of the council at all times. Accordingly, full-time employees must not hold any other appointment (paid or unpaid) without the prior approval of their Manager. Part-time employees must disclose any other paid employment which is current or proposed. In either case such employment must not conflict with, or have detrimental effect on, the Service or the council's business.

Permission for employees to operate, own or otherwise participate in the running of an equivalent establishment will not be given. It is expected in such circumstances that an officer will resign his/her appointment if he/she intends to proceed with the enterprise. Failure to do so will lead to appropriate action being taken.

### **14. Involvement in Other Organisations**

Many of the council's objectives are delivered by developing partnership arrangements with other public and private sector organisations or community groups. You may also be asked to take part in voluntary activity or offered a role in a voluntary organisation. In these situations the following applies:

- a. It is important that you clarify the role expected of you and whether you are acting in your own right or as the voice of the council;
- b. If acting for the council, you should clarify what authority is vested in you by the council and other partner organisations by checking with your Manager as to the extent of your participation or authorisation. Liability can arise from formal membership of external organisations, and you should seek further advice from your Manager if you have reason to believe that any liability may arise;
- c. If you are acting on behalf of the council, then you are subject to the Code.

### **15. Health and Safety at Work**

You must ensure that you take the greatest possible care for your own safety and that of your colleagues and of members of the public. This is a legal requirement under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The Act makes you personally liable and you could be prosecuted for any breach as well as being subject to disciplinary action.

All employees are expected to read in their first 2 weeks at work, and follow the council's Health, Safety and Welfare Policy. The policy can be viewed electronically on the council's intranet site or a hard copy can be viewed if you ask your Manager.

Managers should also ensure that agency staff, contractors, visitors etc., working at or on council sites and premises are aware of safety requirements and appropriate associated policies and procedures.

*Health, Safety and Welfare Policy*

## **16. I.D. Cards**

To help prevent security breaches the council has an Identification Card scheme for employees. If an ID card is issued, employees should ensure that they have their ID card with them at all times and if challenged by an appropriate person i.e. another council employee, councillor or somebody working for the authority, they are to show their ID card to confirm their identity. Staff must also wear the Staff Lanyard that they are issued and must not wear a personalised lanyard. The ID cards carry a passport style photograph which will be used for the council's computerised payroll/HR system and other internal systems.

## **17. Political Neutrality** (sensitive posts)

You serve the council as a whole. It follows you must serve all members and not just those of any single political group, and must ensure that the individual rights of all members are respected.

## **18. Politically Restricted Posts**

If your total remuneration exceeds the value of SCP 44 Band 12 as amended from year to year or if you give advice on a regular basis to the Council itself, to the council, Committee, Scrutiny Review Panels or Statutory Boards, or to any Joint Committee on which the council are represented or if you speak on behalf of the council on a regular basis to journalists or broadcasters, your post is designated as a 'politically restricted post' in accordance with The Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Further details can be sought from Human Resources.

Whether or not your post is particularly restricted, you must not allow your own personal or political opinions to interfere with your work.

### *Constitution – Protocol on Member/Officer Relations*

## **19. Proper Use of Council Resources**

The council is responsible for the efficient use of the public resources it controls including financial resources, equipment and its staff. You must not use council premises, property, vehicles or other council facilities unless authorised to do so. You must not do work that is not council work of any sort in council premises or by using council equipment or materials, or during the council's time. Some facilities, such as photocopying may be made available to officers for private use on agreed terms and with prior approval. Use of computers for personal purposes is allowed in employee breaks providing all relevant policies are adhered to see section 20 below.

All officers have a duty to abide by the highest standards of probity in dealing with financial issues. You should assist the council in discharging its obligations to follow proper accounting practices and to secure best value. You must operate within the required accounting standards and timetables to ensure that all the council's transactions, material commitments and contracts and other essential accounting information are recorded completely, accurately and on a timely basis.

You are required to ensure that the council Internal Audit Services and the council's external auditor are given access at all reasonable times to premises, personnel, documents and assets that the auditors consider necessary for the purposes of their work. You are obliged to provide the auditors with any information and explanations that they seek in the course of their work.

*Constitution – Financial Procedure Rules*

**20. Use of Technology, Telephones, Internet and Email**

Use of computers may be an important part of your duties. You should be familiar with the rules relating to personal use of equipment, the prohibitions on accessing or downloading racist, sexist, pornographic or violent websites or material, virus protection and the use of unapproved software.

Officers may make personal telephone calls whilst at work but such calls should be limited and payments made for use.

The council does allow for personal use of email and the internet (if you have reasons to be connected for work purposes), providing that it is not excessive, does not interfere with your normal activities and it is made clear that any message sent is not on behalf of the council.

Unauthorised access to computers and computer systems is an offence under the Misuse of Computers Act 1990, and is punishable in severe cases by imprisonment. Staff must not access or try to access any system for which they have not been authorised by their Manager via a systems access form.

*Computer Telephone and Desk Use Policy*  
*Information Security Policy*  
*Social Media Policy*  
*Internet Acceptable Use Policy*  
*Email Policy*  
*Removable Media Policy*  
*Remote Access Policy*

**21. Raising Concerns at Work – Grievances and Whistleblowing**

If you have any concerns arising from:

- a. Your employment contract or employment in general there is a grievance procedure to be followed. You should raise any such issues with your Line Manager in the first instance.  
*Grievance Procedure*
- b. Any other aspect of the council's operations, such as if you become aware of any activities that you believe are illegal, improper, unethical or in some other way inconsistent with this Code, or the council's Constitution, policies and procedures, there is a procedure for these concerns –

*Whistleblowing Policy and Guidance.*

## 22. Confidentiality

~~Openness in the dissemination of information and decision making should be the norm in the council. However, you must respect the confidentiality of the information to which you have access at work and you must not use it for personal gain or pass it on to others who might use it in this way.~~

~~You must not inform or share information with anyone inside or outside the council, including social media sites, who is not entitled to know for the purposes of their job, what goes on at council meetings held in private or exempt sessions, nor about the contents of council documents which are confidential or exempt (unless requested under the Freedom of Information Act and an exemption applies).~~

~~Information requests will be dealt with under Freedom of Information, Environmental Information or Data Protection and must be processed in accordance with the legislation.~~

~~Data Protection and Subject Access Requests must be verified before processing begins as you need to be satisfied that you are releasing information to those entitled to receive it. Also, if you are asked to disclose any information you should be aware of the rules of the Data Protection Act which make it unlawful to disclose information without the person's consent unless it is for one of the following reasons;~~

- ~~1. The prevention or detection of crime/or criminal activities~~
- ~~2. The prevention of defrauding the council~~
- ~~3. The apprehension or prosecution of offenders~~
- ~~4. The assessment or collection of any tax or duty~~
- ~~5. The organisation is registered by us to receive information~~

~~If you are approached to give information under one of the above headings you should:~~

- ~~1. Satisfy yourself that the request falls under 1. to 5. Above, if in any doubt ask your manager~~
- ~~2. Seek advice from the FOI Team who also have access to legal advice~~

~~It is important to note that the necessity for confidentiality exists not only during employment but also after you have left.~~

~~*Information Management and Protection Policy*  
*Data Protection Policy*  
*Data Protection Breach Policy*  
*Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations Policy*  
*Records Management Policy*~~

~~Delete all of section 22 and replace with the new section from the Data Protection Officer as shown below:~~

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### 22. Confidentiality and Data Protection

Transparency around council business and decision making should be the norm in the council. However, you must respect the confidentiality of the information to which you have access at work and you must not use it for personal gain or pass it on to others who might

use it in this way.

As an employee of the council you will almost certainly have access to and process personal data relating to citizens, councillors, staff or partners. You must only access personal data if you have been authorised to and you must comply with the 7 data protection principles set out in the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018) and the UK General Data Protection Act (UK GDPR). These principals state that all personal data must be:

- (a) processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to individuals ('lawfulness, fairness and transparency');
- (b) collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes ('purpose limitation');
- (c) adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed ('data minimisation');
- (d) accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date ('accuracy');
- (e) kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed ('storage limitation');
- (f) processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures ('integrity and confidentiality');

UK GDPR Article 5(2) adds that:

- (g) The controller (the "council") shall be responsible for, and be able to demonstrate compliance with, paragraph 1 ('accountability');

### **Mandatory Data Protection and Cyber Security training**

As a condition of employment at the council you are required to complete mandatory data protection and cyber security training at the start of your employment and annual refresher training thereafter.

### **Policy Compliance**

If you are adhering to council policies and procedures and only access data you have been authorised to then you cannot be held personally responsible for data breaches.

If, however, you are found to have wilfully disregarded council policies and procedures or accessed personal records without authorisation then you could be subject to disciplinary and/or criminal proceedings. The Data Protection Act 2018 introduced 3 criminal offences relating to processing of personal data which are relevant to staff:

#### **1. DPA 2018 Sect 170: Unlawful obtaining etc of personal data**

It is an offence for a person knowingly or recklessly

(a) to obtain or disclose personal data without the consent of the controller,

(b) to procure the disclosure of personal data to another person without the consent of the controller, or

(c) after obtaining personal data, to retain it without the consent of the person who was the controller in relation to the personal data when it was obtained.

## **2. DPA 2018 Sect 171: Re-identification of de-identified personal data**

It is an offence for a person knowingly or recklessly to re-identify information that is de-identified personal data without the consent of the controller responsible for de-identifying the personal data.

## **3. DPA 2018 Sect 173: Alteration etc of personal data to prevent disclosure to data subject**

It is an offence for a person [Data Controller (the "council") or person employed by the council] to alter, deface, block, erase, destroy or conceal information with the intention of preventing disclosure of all or part of the information that the person making the request would have been entitled to receive.

Staff should also be aware that there are a number of criminal offences set out in the Computer Misuse Act 1990:

- Unauthorised access to computer material
- Unauthorised access with intent to commit or facilitate a crime
- Unauthorised modification of computer material.
- Making, supplying or obtaining anything which can be used in computer misuse offences.

## **Sharing Information**

You must not inform or share information with anyone inside or outside the council, including social media sites, who is not entitled to know for the purposes of their job, what goes on at council meetings held in private or exempt sessions, nor about the contents of council documents which are confidential or exempt (unless requested under the Freedom of Information Act and an exemption applies).

Information requests will be dealt with under Freedom of Information, Environmental Information or Data Protection and must be processed in accordance with the legislation.

Data Subject Access Requests (DSARs) must be verified before processing begins as you need to be satisfied that you are releasing information to those entitled to receive it. Also, if you are asked to disclose any information you should be aware of the rules of the Data Protection Act which make it unlawful to disclose information without the person's consent unless there is a valid exemption listed in Schedule 2.

If you are asked to provide personal information you should seek advice from the FOI Team who also have access to legal advice

It is important to note that the need for confidentiality exists not only during employment but also after you have left.

For more details on the council's information management policies please make sure you read and understand the following policy documents which are available on Minerva.

- [Information Management and Protection Policy](#)
- [Data Protection Policy](#)
- [Data Protection Breach Policy](#)
- [Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations Policy](#)
- [Records Management Policy](#)

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### **23. Private Interests**

Whilst your private life is your own concern, you must not allow your private interests to conflict with your public duty by misusing your official position to benefit yourselves or others. In order to demonstrate openness and transparency in local government and to protect yourself and the council from accusations of bias, you must declare and register certain interests if an actual, potential or perceived conflict arises with regards to a council decision or policy. You will also need to make a further declaration if a declaration you made previously has materially changed.

The Register of Private Interests is ~~held in the Democratic Services Team~~ on Minerva.

You must inform your manager if you are a member of an organisation that is not open to the public, which has a commitment to allegiance (oaths) and secrecy about its rules, membership and conduct. You should make sure that any such membership does not require you to act in a way that will affect your work or damage our reputation.

If an employee has withheld information or provided misleading information, then dismissal could be considered. Normal rules for dismissal should be applied.

### **24. Criminal Convictions**

You are expected to keep within the law at all times during your employment. You must tell your manager if you are arrested and refused bail or charged with any criminal offence and, unless exempt by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, you must tell your manager in writing if you are convicted of any criminal offence, bound over or cautioned about activities outside work.

If you drive on council business, you must tell your manager if you are arrested, charged or cautioned about any Road Traffic Act Regulatory offences. You must tell your manager if you are involved in any civil proceedings that affect your work.

The council reserves the right to periodically request verification of an employee's criminal record by means of a DBS Basic Disclosure certificate.

## **25. Appointment of Staff**

All council appointments must be made in accordance with our recruitment and selection procedures.

The aim of the council is to attract, reward and retain the best people and to make the maximum possible use of the abilities of all its employees. The council will therefore undertake the recruitment, selection and retention of potential employees in the most careful, accurate, professional, legal and fair way to match the requirements of the post. Appointments will only be made on the basis of the skills, experience and aptitude required for the vacancy.

Offers of employment will be made subject to the receipt of a satisfactory employment health declaration, two satisfactory references and a clear basic Disclosure Scotland check.

You must not give job references for employees you manage to any new employer. These are provided centrally by the People & Organisational Development Team. You may give a personal reference so long as it is not on council headed paper and cannot be seen to be a reference from the council.

### *Recruitment and Selection Practical Guidance*

## **26. Canvassing for Appointment**

A candidate for any appointment under the council who knows that he/she is related to any elected Member or officer of the council must, when making an application, disclose that relationship. A candidate who fails to disclose such a relationship or canvasses members in any way will be disqualified for the appointment or if appointed will be liable to dismissal without notice.

You must not let political or personal preferences influence your judgement. You must not canvass the support or lobby colleagues or elected Members and you must resist any attempts by others to canvass you.

You must also apply this consistent approach in connection with discipline, promotion or pay.

## **27. Leaving the Council**

When leaving your job, you should leave your files and records in good order for the person taking over from you. If it is required by your manager, you should put a note on each file giving a brief history of the issues, any action that needs to be taken and when it should be done. You should highlight any important dates and deadlines.

You must return any property when your manager asks you to and always when your employment ends. This includes not only hard copy documents, files and correspondence but also tapes, software storage media and any other property belonging to the council.



After you leave the council, you still have a duty not to disclose personal data relating to others or exempt/confidential information that you have learned in the course of your work at the council.

## **28. Alcohol and Drugs**

All council employees should know and adhere to these basic rules, further guidance can be found in the Workplace Drug and Alcohol Misuse Policy.

The council does carry out workplace screening and this may occur;

- pre-employment
- at random and unannounced
- for cause/post incident/post allegation or complaint

You should not knowingly take any non-medical substance such as alcohol or drugs that may affect your ability to work. You should tell your manager if you are taking any medication that may adversely affect you or the way you do your job.

No employee may carry out their duties or enter council premises, while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

No illegal drugs may be brought onto council premises.

The presence of any drugs or unauthorised alcohol found during working hours is unacceptable and will lead to disciplinary action.

Possession, supply or production of illegal drugs on West Lindsey District Council premises or engaging in such activities outside of work will not be tolerated.

Employees need to know that drugs taken during days off or holiday periods may still be in their system days or even weeks later and may give a positive result if required to give a sample to be tested.

Any breach of the policy may be treated as Gross Misconduct under the council's Disciplinary Procedure and this may result in the termination of employment.

*Workplace Drug and Alcohol Misuse Policy  
Discipline at Work Guidance*

## **29. Contact with the Media**

Relations with the media need to be handled with care to ensure the council's position on any issue is represented properly. Day to day contact with the press and media will normally be handled by the Communications Team, together with the appropriate committee chairman, Leader and relevant officers.

You should refer any media enquiries to the Communications Team.

You may write or give interviews about matters unconnected with your work or the council so long as you are not identified as our employee.

*The Constitution  
Social Media Policy*

### **30. Use of Social Media**

Social media sites provide communication opportunities of reaching out to the council's stakeholders; as an officer of the council you are bound by the 7 Principles of Public Life (Appendix A).

You must not allow your professional and personal use of social media sites to become blurred; you need to be mindful of your duties not to:

- Disclose council information without authority;
- Take part in any political or public activity, which compromises or might be seen to compromise your impartial service to the council and its stakeholders;
- Make derogatory comments about the council, its policies or procedures;
- Make derogatory comments about other council employees, councillors or stakeholders;
- Continue to engage with others who become abusive or aggressive.

Once you have posted items to the Internet, it is very difficult to remove them, great care must be taken before you press the submit button as such comments may lead to disciplinary action.

If you have any concerns consult your manager for advice.

It is important that you are aware that submitting content to social media sites, whether in a personal or professional capacity, that is considered to be derogatory or inappropriate may result in disciplinary action being taken against you. *Social Media Policy*

#### **Appendix A – The Seven Principles of Public Life**

##### **Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

##### **Integrity**

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

##### **Objectivity**

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

### **Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

### **Openness**

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands it.

### **Honesty**

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

### **Leadership**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

**West Lindsey District Council**

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