



# **The Employee Code of Conduct**

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## Introduction

1. The [Our Manchester Strategy](#) sets out all that we have achieved so far as a City: our proud industrial history through to transformational regeneration, harnessing the diverse talents of our workforce and communities. We are known for our spirit of innovation, ambition, enterprise and ability to do things differently. The Strategy sets out how we can accomplish even more as a city through the continued commitment of our workforce.
2. The Employee Code of Conduct supports you to contribute to the achievement of our ambitions by providing a clear set of principles that underpin how we work and the behaviours and standards that are needed to achieve this vision.
3. The council exists for the benefit of the people of Manchester and we are accountable to them. Working in accordance with the code also helps us provide the best possible service to the public. It helps protect our reputation and ensure that we are trusted to deliver high quality services, with the public interest at the heart of everything we do.
4. The Code of Conduct has been developed in line with the statutory requirements. It is part of our constitution and covers all staff employed by Manchester City Council. It does not cover staff employed by schools; however, it is recommended that Governing bodies adopt the key principles, standards and behaviours that are covered in the code. The [Members Code of Conduct](#) is in place to guide the standards and behaviours of Members and is closely linked with the Employee Code of Conduct.
5. If your role entails you working as part of a partnership arrangement with another organisation, the Employee Code of Conduct still applies to you. In addition, those providing services to and on behalf of the council, for example contractors, commercial companies, agency staff and volunteers are required to follow the spirit of the code in the delivery of work for Manchester.
6. The Code is incorporated into your terms and conditions of employment. Individual service regulations and rules provide more detailed guidance for staff, and in some service areas certain roles are governed by specific professional standards and legislation. It is your responsibility to ensure your professional registration is maintained. In some cases, the absence of professional registration will prevent you carrying out your duties.
7. Failure to comply with the Employee Code of Conduct, service or professional standards may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the [Disciplinary Policy](#), actions taken could include dismissal. You should make yourself familiar with the policy which outlines the standards of behaviour expected of you and examples of the type of actions that would require disciplinary action to be taken. A serious breach of this code would include, for example, theft, fraud, or misuse of council

property which are offences classed as gross misconduct. Depending on the circumstances several steps will be taken which are outlined in the policy, including a full investigation by an appropriate manager.

8. You will be indemnified from personal legal action against you if you are acting in good faith in the discharge of your duties in accordance with the [terms of resolution](#) of the Personnel Committee of 20 December 2006.

9. You should seek advice from your Line Manager or Human Resources if you are unclear about any aspect of the code or associated guidance. If you are a manager, you should make sure those who report to you know about and understand the code, and act if there is behaviour which is inconsistent with it.

10. If you are working for another organisation whilst still employed by the Council (for example when undertaking employer supported voluntary work or on secondment) you are expected to continue to act in accordance with this code to help ensure that the public have confidence in us and the services we provide.

## The Seven Principles of Working at Manchester

1. Through engagement with staff and managers across services, **the seven principles of working at Manchester** have been developed. These principles help ensure there is a clear framework of standards which we operate within that have been.

2. The seven principles of working at Manchester have been adapted from The [Seven Principles of Public Life](#), upheld by the Committee on Standards in Public Life. These provide key guidance on the ethical standards which all people who hold public office should comply with and these standards are reflected in the seven principles of working at Manchester which are in place to ensure the principles reflect our priorities as a Council.

3. The [Our Manchester Strategy](#) sets out our key ambitions for Manchester, and our core values, developed through engagement with Manchester people. The [Our Manchester Behaviours](#) sets out the attitude, approach and treatment of others that are needed to achieve these ambitions and these core behaviours are central to this Employee Code of Conduct. The four key behaviours which should guide all our work for Manchester are:

- We take time to listen and understand
- We own it and we're not afraid to try new things
- We work together and trust each other
- We're proud and passionate about Manchester

These behaviours are linked closely to all seven principles and feature throughout the code.

The **seven principles of working at Manchester** set out the standards expected from all of us when working at Manchester: an overview of the seven principles is provided below:

- ***We serve the public***

We are here to provide services to the public and we always deliver the highest standards of service.

- ***Respect for Others***

We treat all people with dignity, consideration, and respect.

- ***Accountability***

We are all trusted to deliver high quality services and in return it is expected that we act responsibly. We are accountable to our Managers, the Council as a whole and the public for our decisions and actions.

- ***Fairness***

We treat people fairly regardless of their age, gender, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or philosophical belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marital status. Decisions are made fairly, consistently and on merit.

- ***Openness***

The public have a right to know and understand reasons behind key decisions. We act and take decisions openly and transparently within the legal framework.

- ***Honesty and Integrity***

We are honest and truthful and act according to the public, rather than our own, interests.

- ***Leadership***

We promote these principles in everything we do and act in ways to inspire public confidence.

## **Principle One: Serving the public**

1. Serving the public is at the heart of what we do, whether we work directly with the public, or provide important 'back office' support that enables customer facing staff to provide the highest possible standards. You should make yourself familiar with any service specific customer service guidance that you are required to follow, in addition to the general standards set out below. This section covers customer service standards and dress code.

### **Customer Service Standards**

1. Members of the public should be treated with dignity and respect. To help build constructive relationships with our service users, we must take the time to listen and understand. We should take a strength-based approach in how we work with service users which means recognising their unique skills and knowledge and the

role they can play in facilitating positive change. This helps us to build better relationships and be more empathetic and responsive to individual needs.

2. You also have a right to be treated with dignity and respect by our service users. You are not expected to tolerate aggressive, abusive, or violent behaviour. This includes hate crimes, which are crimes that are targeted at a person because of hostility or prejudice towards that person's disability, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or transgender identity. If you experience this, you should report this to your manager and be supported appropriately.

### **Dress Code**

1. You are expected to dress appropriately according to the service that is being delivered and your role within the organisation and you should refer to any service specific guidance that applies. For example, in front line services, depending on your role, the dress code may be practical to ensure safety and hygiene standards are met. In some services, the nature of your role may mean that it is important to dress in a way that residents can relate to. In 'back office' services, professional dress may be particularly important due to the client base.

2. In all cases, uniform, and clothing provided for health and safety reasons must be worn. Across services there may however be flexibility on dress on certain days with 'dress down' days and some services may allow staff to wear trainers at work to support active lifestyles.

3. The Council values and welcomes the ethnic, religious and gender diversity of our work force and service dress codes will include ethnic and religious dress requirements to ensure that you are free to wear them.

## **Principle Two: Respect for Others**

1. Trust, listening and understanding are critical [Our Manchester behaviours](#) and essential to developing strong working relationships which will allow us to deliver our objectives. This section covers your relationships with your colleagues, your manager, service users and Councillors. Respectful treatment of others is crucial in your use of Social Media and behaviour outside of work and this is also covered here.

### **Our relationships**

1. Internally it is important that we work as one organisation and have constructive working relationships within our teams and are also able to work across teams, services, and directorates. Externally we need to be adaptable to the distinctive styles and approaches of the diverse range of service users, partners, and agencies that we work with.

2. You should be professional in your behaviour towards colleagues and we should treat each other with mutual dignity and respect. The Council does not tolerate behaviour that undermines dignity or respect or can cause others to think less or be disrespectful towards any individual or group. In addition, if you experience bullying or harassment or at work, this should be reported to your manager, or an

alternative manager if this is preferred, at the earliest opportunity. Please refer to the [Equal Opportunities in Employment policy](#) for information on the framework of protection that is in place to support fairness in the workplace.

3. Complaints can be raised through the [Employee Dispute Resolution Policy](#) which is in place to support fair treatment and resolution of employees complaining about behaviour in the workplace, including harassment and victimisation by other employees or managers.

4. Sometimes, despite best efforts, work relationships break down. The Council has several trained [internal conciliation officers](#) who can support you to resolve conflicts at work without recourse to formal processes. This process can be helpful in resolving issues early on and establishing dialogue between two parties. The aim of internal conciliation is to support both parties find a way forward and new ways of working together through a mutual agreement.

### **Relationship with your manager**

1. Managers have a duty of care to staff and are responsible for ensuring clarity of role, tracking, and monitoring of performance, and setting reasonable standards around behaviour within a particular role.

2. The [‘About You’](#) framework helps facilitate constructive conversations between you and your manager to help you meet your goals and progress key actions. It allows opportunity for you and your manager to discuss key strengths as well as areas you may need support or development.

### **Relationship with councillors**

1. Mutual respect between employees and councillors is also essential to provide high quality services. You are accountable to the council through your Chief Officer. In addition, depending on your role, you may be required to give advice to members as part of your duties.

2. Councillors and officers must not seek to take unfair advantage of their position or seek to exert undue influence on the other party and must remain impartial. Close personal familiarity between employees and individual Councillors should be avoided as this can damage the ability of both parties to act objectively and create a perception of bias with other employees, Councillors and the public. The [Officer/Member Relation Protocol](#) provides more detailed guidance on this respect (Part six, section F of the Council’s constitution).

3. Members have been elected by local people to represent them, the position should be recognised regardless of the parties they represent or your own views. If employees or councillors feel that they have not been treated with respect by the other, this can be raised with the appropriate Chief Officer or the Chief Executive.

### **Relationship with service users**

1. You should ensure that you treat all service users with dignity, respect, and impartiality. Avoid unnecessary personal familiarity with service users you come

into contact within the course of your work. You should not use your position to take or confer unfair advantage of people accessing our services or allow yourself to be unduly influenced by service users.

2. Your role may involve work with vulnerable service users. All support and interactions with these service users during your employment must comply with relevant legislation, professional standards, and service rules.

## **Use of Social Media**

1. Social media channels provide us with unique opportunities to build relationships and to connect and engage with our communities. People are more connected than ever with social media often now their preferred way of communicating with the Council.

2. The aim of our [Social Media Policy](#) is to ensure that social media is used in a respectful way and supports the Council's leadership role in the community, maintaining the trust of all our stakeholders. It is also here to support and protect you as our staff.

3. As the use and popularity of social media continues to grow, the line between what is public and private, personal, and professional can become blurred. Whilst you have a right to a private life, it is important that you are aware of the negative impact that inappropriate personal social media activity can have on the trust in the Council and the services we provide. You are therefore expected to maintain the behaviours outlined in this Code.

4. If you choose to access social networking sites and/or other online forums or blogs you are expected to act responsibly and exercise judgement regarding what is appropriate to post online.

5. Inappropriate or offensive activity on social media that is brought to the Council's attention may result in disciplinary action. As well as damaging to individuals, this can undermine the trust in the Council, our reputation, and the services we provide. Examples include:

- Abusive or threatening behaviour
- Inappropriate comments or material that may be regarded as discriminatory
- False or misleading statements that could have a negative impact on our reputation
- Inciting or supporting somebody to commit a crime or other unlawful act

Even if you do not identify yourself on Social Media as a Council employee these standards apply. This could include content you share, 'like' or 'retweet' as this suggests approval of that content.

6. Be aware of any real or perceived conflicts of interest that could occur if you include service users, their families, friends, contractors used by the council or

Councillors as 'friends' on social media. You should exercise judgement when you decide whether it is appropriate to accept a friend request.

7. Do not publish anything that is confidential to the council or use social media to comment on potentially sensitive matters in any context. This could include, for example politically sensitive information and information about service users who use our services.

### **Official use of social media for Council business**

1. You may be required and encouraged as part of your role to use Council social media accounts to further Council business. Social media is a welcomed and valued tool of engagement however you must be aware that information you post in this context must reflect our values. Social media posts and interactions are public statements and count as a council record as well as evidence of the Council's work. They can be used as reference at any time in the future and you are responsible for anything that you say online.

### **Behaviour outside Work**

1. The principles of behaviour and respect for others outlined in this Code extend to other situations outside work that may result in a conflict of interest or impact on your suitability for your role. For example, abusive, violent, or discriminatory behaviour towards another person outside of your workplace, could be treated as a breach of this code and result in disciplinary action.

2. You should be aware that it is particularly important that behaviour meets the standards outlined in this code at events that are recognised as council led or organised events. This includes informal events such as work Christmas parties and other celebrations organised and including work colleagues.

## **Principle Three: Accountability**

1. As council employees you are responsible for your behaviour, the decisions you make and your use of Council resources and equipment. This section outlines key areas where responsible actions are integral to your role in the Council. This includes your safeguarding duty, your accountabilities in line with key employment policies, environmental responsibility, your use of Council resources and your protection of information.

### **Safeguarding**

1. The Council has a statutory duty to protect children and adults. If, following contacts with adults or children, you have any safeguarding concerns, you should report to the Manchester City Council contact centre (children and adults) by phone on 0161 234 5001. You can also seek advice from your Safeguarding Lead, if appropriate.

### **Attendance**



1. Levels of attendance have a major impact on the quality of services we can provide to the public. The [Managing Attendance Policy](#) sets out the standards required for employees and managers in this area and you should make yourself familiar with this policy.

2. Managers are expected to provide a supportive work environment that promotes health and wellbeing, to enable maximum attendance at work. In return, whilst it is recognised that there may be times when you are prevented from attending work due to ill health, you are expected to take personal responsibility for supporting your health, by, for example attending appointments or treatment programmes where appropriate. You must also follow the attendance reporting and recording procedures set out in the policy.

3. As a Disability Confident Employer we are committed to supporting our disabled employees and those staff with physical or mental health conditions, through providing reasonable adjustments, in line with the Equality Act 2010. Managers are responsible for ensuring that [reasonable adjustments](#) such as, but not limited to; [flexible working](#), aids and adaptations, [disability related leave](#), assistive technology, and job redesign, are identified, put into place in a timely manner and reviewed regularly for effectiveness or a change of circumstance.

## **Performance**

1. You are responsible for delivering work of the highest possible standard to ensure that the public receives the quality services that they have a right to expect. You are expected to seek support where you identify a need and discuss any issues that may be impacting on performance with your Manager.

2. Managers are responsible for communicating clear targets and standards, providing appropriate training and support, and ensuring any workplace assessments and adjustments are implemented. Managers and staff should work together to identify development needs and ensure that suitable development plans are put in place.

3. It is recognised that there may be occasions when there are performance issues that need to be addressed. Please refer to the [Capability Policy](#) for more information. If it is believed that you are wilfully not working to the required standard, this will be dealt with under the [Disciplinary Policy](#).

## **Health and Safety**

1. The Council has a legal duty to ensure that working here is safe and healthy. You also have a personal responsibility for the health and safety of yourself and others. You have a vital duty to raise concerns about health and safety issues, identify hazards, give your opinion on suitable solutions to health and safety problems, participate in training, and contribute to risk assessment and risk control procedures.

2. You must follow established safe systems of work, including the appropriate use of personal protective equipment. You should also comply with instructions to ensure safe systems of work due to Covid-19. At the earliest opportunity report any

accidents, incidents and near misses immediately to your line manager. Ensure you have also read the Council's [Health and Safety Policy](#).

3. Managers are responsible for the active promotion of the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and those affected by the work of their teams through risk assessment and consistent application of health and safety arrangements.

4. You must wear your Council security pass and ensure it is always visible. It is not to be shared with anyone else, and any lost or misplaced security passes should be reported to [Facilities Management](#). It is also important that you do not 'tailgate' through security barriers or doors or allow anyone else following you to do the same. If it is safe to do so, you are expected to challenge anyone in a staff only area who does not have a pass and report it to Facilities Management. Ensure that any visitors you have follow the appropriate visitor protocol that applies to the building.

### **Smoking and Vaping**

1. To ensure that your health is protected at work, you must not smoke or vape in any Council premises. The full details on the restrictions that are in place are available in the Tobacco Control and Vaping Policy. It is also recognised that smoking is an addiction, and you have the option of taking up to two hours paid leave to access an initial smoking cessation consultation.

### **Alcohol and Substance Misuse**

1. The provision of high-quality services may be compromised if alcohol or substances have been misused. [The Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy](#) sets out the manager and employee responsibilities in this area. The council is committed to supporting, wherever possible, staff with alcohol and substance misuse issues. You in return are expected to cooperate with any support and assistance provided.

2. The relevant legal framework in relation to alcohol and substance misuse is contained within the policy; if you commit a criminal offence in relation to this on Council premises, in Council vehicles or at Council-related events, it may lead to disciplinary action which could result in dismissal.

### **Work outside the council**

1. You are responsible for ensuring that any outside work or secondary jobs does not have a negative impact on your work with the Council and that the total number of hours you worked does not exceed the limits on maximum number of hours to be worked per week as set out in the Working Time Regulations 1998 and covered by your NJC terms and conditions. Ensure that you consult with your manager before taking on any additional work so that any impacts can be assessed. You should also contact payroll if additional work is agreed to ensure that your tax code is correct. Managers should keep a record of any relevant information in relation to additional employment on the individual's personnel file.

2. If there are any conflicts of interest arising from any additional employment it is also essential that you declare these interests through the usual process (refer to the Declarations of Interest section, page 16).

## **Volunteering**

1. Volunteering provides a valuable contribution to the community as well as a range of personal benefits and we positively encourage you to participate: both outside work or as part of your allocated volunteering leave as set out in the [Employer Supported Volunteering policy](#).

2. There are also an extensive [range of public service volunteering activities](#) you can get involved in, which provide important support to critical public services. This could include, for example, undertaking Magistrate duties or working as a retained firefighter. You are responsible for ensuring that any additional work you undertake does not conflict with your delivery of your primary role within the Council.

## **Environmental responsibility**

1. We are committed to the rapid reduction of carbon emissions and are aiming for the city and the council to be a zero carbon by 2038 at the latest. You can contribute to achieving this ambition by incorporating zero carbon activities and thinking into your working practices and by making informed choices. You are encouraged to embed this within your day-to-day work by choosing, for example, the lowest carbon mode of business travel wherever possible, avoiding the use of single use plastics and unnecessary use of paper, and recycling rubbish using the recycling bins provided in most offices.

2. Further support about how to reduce your emissions, both in your role and more widely, is available through [Carbon Literacy training](#). Managers are encouraged to discuss this area at About You and Team Meetings.

## **Intellectual property**

1. The Council will seek to recognise and acknowledge the contributions you make as part of your work, however the intellectual property or copyright of anything created at work as part of your job belongs to the Council. You are not entitled to use, sell or otherwise exploit the rights to this copyright/intellectual property without written permission from the Council and breaching this may be a criminal offence. You should not breach any other employee's intellectual property rights.

## **Financial Resources**

1. The Council's [Financial Regulations](#) safeguard our assets and use of resources and you should refer to these when using financial resources, for example when placing orders for goods and services.

## **Use of Council Systems, Property, Vehicles, Facilities and Equipment**

1. The Council's resources are in place to further the council's objectives and deliver council business and should not be used to carry out private work. You must take care when using the council's resources and avoid any damage to them.

2. If you have access to Council assets, which includes property, buildings, cash, equipment, and other assets, including vehicles, you must take responsibility for the security of such assets and ensure assets are managed securely and protected against accidental loss or damage and unauthorised use. Any loss or theft should be reported immediately to your line manager.

3. Where you use council services, for example occupy Council property, claim benefits or use leisure services, you are expected to behave responsibly and with integrity.

### **Use of Internet or Email**

1. The Digital Media Policy provides guidance on the responsibilities of all users of the email system and sets out the consequences of any breaches. Access to email facilities is provided to employees to facilitate council business, but it is recognised that employees may need to use their council account for occasional personal use which is permitted on the conditions set out in the policy.

2. E-mails will also be monitored using filtering software and all email content must comply with the Council's [Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy](#) It is recognised that access to the internet is often essential and necessary for delivering our services. The internet should not, however, be used inappropriately for personal reasons or used in a way which compromises security. Examples of inappropriate use are contained in the Internet and Email Policy.

3. There may be occasions when you need to access Council systems from your own personal devices such as laptops/PCs, tablets, or smartphones. It may also be necessary for you to use your own device to facilitate home or mobile working if you are not provided with a mobile Council device. The Internet and Email Policy also sets out the appropriate use of personal devices for these purposes.

### **Protecting Information**

1. Most of us have, as part of our daily role, responsibility for information that must be safeguarded, for example records and details about residents, service users, other employees or partners and businesses. We are trusted with this information and all employees are accountable for ensuring that information is handled, held or shared appropriately. We must make sure:

- Information is protected against unauthorised access and loss
- Confidentiality is ensured
- The integrity of information is maintained
- That legal and regulatory requirements are met

2. The Council recognises that mistakes can happen and is committed to learning when things go wrong. In support of this approach, we have adopted a [Fair Blame Statement](#). This means that in most circumstances a constructive approach will be taken to understand with you why the mistake happened and there will be no reference to disciplinary processes.

3. You must, however, report any data breaches to your manager immediately and there are some circumstances where formal disciplinary processes will need to be

used. These are, for example, if your behaviour is malicious or criminal in intent, there are repeated mistakes or there is evidence of a reckless failure to follow service procedures.

4. Your responsibilities are set out in the Information Governance policies and guidance that are available on the Council's intranet. You are expected to familiarise yourself with the [12 Golden Rules](#) of protecting information which are available on the intranet. You must complete essential [Information Governance training](#). Full details of the requirements of data protection legislation are covered in the Council's [Data Protection Policy](#)

5. Data Protection legislation allows for organisational fines of up to 20 million euros (or the equivalent in sterling) for non-compliance. You could also face individual criminal charges for offences in relation to obtaining, disclosing, or procuring personal data without appropriate consents and the sale or offering for sale of that data. Appropriate disclosure of information does not limit you from exercising your rights under the Council's [Whistleblowing Policy](#).

## **Principle Four - Fairness**

This section outlines how you can ensure your work is conducted with objectivity and impartiality. It covers Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and political neutrality.

### **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion**

1. Manchester has a rich cultural and ethnic diversity which we celebrate, recognising the positive contribution that our many communities make to the city. We work to meet and exceed our Public Sector Equality Duty which gives us the responsibility of fostering good relationships with our communities, promoting equality and eliminating discrimination.

2. We aim to reflect the community we serve in our workforce: this helps us to better meet the needs of Manchester's communities and brings different perspectives to the work of our teams.

3. Respect for others is fundamental to our behaviour as city council employees, and essential to working together. All members of the local community, service users and colleagues have a right to be treated with fairness and equality regardless of their 'protected characteristic' in line with the Equality Act 2010.

4. 'Protected characteristics' include age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or philosophical belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity. Protection from discrimination extends to perceived as well as actual characteristic. This means that employees must not be treated unfairly due to a characteristic they are assumed to have (even if this assumption is incorrect).

5. Please refer to the [Equal Opportunities in Employment Policy](#) for information on the framework of protection that is in place for staff with protected characteristics, in line with the Equalities Act. You should also ensure you have completed mandatory Equality, Diversity and Inclusion e-learning including role specific

training to ensure you have the knowledge and skills to promote equality both in your treatment of residents/service users and of your colleagues.

6. Our [Equality Objectives](#) promote the development of our understanding of how our work impacts different communities. With a workforce increasingly representative of the communities we serve, this understanding extends to how we interact with each other at work. Through taking the time to listen and understand each other and our differences, we can appreciate individual needs, work flexibly, and adapt our arrangements to meet them where we can.

7. Mutual dignity and respect are vital to strong working relationships. Actions, words, or behaviour that undermine dignity and respect of others will not be tolerated. Any harassment or victimisation at work should be reported to a line manager, or another appropriate manager as soon as possible.

8. The [Flexible Working Policy](#) provides support for employees with responsibilities outside work, including carers who we recognise can also experience disadvantage in the workplace. Services' flexible working practices established as part of 'Our Ways of Working' also allows employees to balance work and personal responsibilities, subject to service needs.

## **Principle Five: Openness**

Openness in all our interactions with the public is essential to developing the trust we need in our services and is part of our ambassador role, acting as proud and passionate champions for the City. This section covers our responsibilities in relation to Freedom of Information, relationship with the press and media and complaints.

### **Freedom of Information**

1. The Council is committed to openness and transparency. We proactively publish a significant amount of information, and make other information publicly available, to support public awareness as well as involvement in our decision making.

2. This principle is supported by The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations which (unless the information falls within a limited number of exemptions) gives individuals the right of access to recorded information held by the Council. Given this, you must ensure that any information (including emails) produced as part of day-to-day work does not conflict with the Council's values, and would not damage public confidence in the Council or its reputation if it were made publicly available

3. All requests for information should be dealt with in accordance with the [Council's procedures](#). Anyone who makes a request has a right both to be told whether we provide the information, and to be provided with any information that we hold related to the request (unless the information falls within a limited number of exemptions).

## **Relationship with the press and the media**

1. If the press contacts you for comment in the course of your work you must seek advice and authorisation from your Head of Service and the Council's Media team before providing any information. Heads of Service are responsible for any decisions on press releases, quotes from officers and photo opportunities which should be made in consultation with the relevant Strategic Director and Executive Member/Committee Chair. Further [advice and guidance](#) on dealing with the press and media is available.

## **Responding to complaints**

1. Complaints from members of the public will be dealt with through the Council's [complaints procedure](#). You are expected to be open and honest in responding to any complaints and investigation, and willing to assist as required.

## **Principle Six: Honesty and Integrity**

1. Honesty and Integrity are fundamental to the relationship we have with our service users and the community we serve and essential to promote our pride and passion in Manchester. This section covers political neutrality, declarations of interest, procurement, recruitment, selection and promotion, gifts and hospitality, criminal offences, fraud and personal financial management and whistleblowing.

### **Political Neutrality**

1. You serve the council as a whole and all Councillors, not just those of the controlling group. You must remain impartial due to your role as a Council employee and not allow your personal or political opinions to interfere with your work. You must ensure that individual rights of all Members are respected and act in accordance with any rules relating to relationships with Members as set out in the [Council's Constitution](#) and the Member/Officer Protocol\_(Part six, section F).

2. On occasions senior officers may be requested to advise or brief political groups. In this instance you must make your Chief Officer aware and seek advice to ensure that this is done in a way which does not compromise political neutrality.

3. If you are in a politically restricted post, this will be incorporated into your terms and conditions of employment and you should be advised on these restrictions as part of your induction into the Council. This means you cannot undertake certain activities, inside and outside work time, to ensure that the influence you have in your role is not used for political purposes inappropriately. These restrictions do not prevent ordinary membership of a political party.

### **Declarations of Interest**

1. You must not misuse your position to further private interests or the interests of anyone you have a close personal relationship with. A conflict of interest or association is a situation where a reasonable person might think that someone in

the same role as you, with the same outside interests, could be influenced inappropriately in the decisions or recommendations you make as part of your work for the council. You should also avoid situations where your involvement or contribution could indirectly compromise the interests or values of the council.

2. Close personal relationships include someone you are married/have a civil partnership with or live with, immediate family (parents, siblings, and children) and close personal friends. If there are any conflicts of interest or association, or potential conflicts of interest or association, you must declare them via the SAP system or by completing a declaration of interest form if you do not have access to SAP.

3. Although it will be necessary for your manager and Head of Service to have access to the information contained in your declaration, to ensure good governance care must be taken to ensure this information is not shared more widely than necessary.

4. There are several types of interest which you should declare which are reflected in the Declarations of Interest Form. These include:

- Interests (financial or otherwise) that you, your spouse/partner, or immediate family have in any contract that the Council has entered into or proposes to enter into (for example your partner runs a business that is tendering for a Council contract)
- Interests (financial or otherwise) that you, your spouse/partner, or immediate family have that could conflict with the Council's interests (for example, you are a trustee or a board member for an organisation that receives Council funding)
- Close personal relationships with people at work that could cause a conflict with the Council's interests (consider relationships with members, employees, staff you manage or staff who manage you, staff in politically restricted posts). This could be, for example you are involved in employment decisions in your service where immediate family also works.
- Membership of any organisation whose membership could conflict with your employment with the Council (for example you are a member of Governing Body at an establishment that receives Council funding).
- Outside work (paid or unpaid) that may impact adversely on your employment in the Council (for example you are a Director or Partner in a Business which has a relationship with the Council)
- Any other known/possible conflicts or outside activities that the Council should be aware of (for example you are involved in policy development in Social Care and a member of your immediate family is in care in the area in which you work)



5. You must by law declare any financial interest that you have in any contract whether it has been or is proposed to be entered into by the Council. This is a statutory obligation set out in the Local Government Act 1972. Failure to comply may amount to a criminal offence.

6. If you do declare any conflicts of interest you should provide the following information:

- The actual or potential conflict and the parties involved
- Context to explain why there is conflict
- Name of the individuals or organisations involved
- Explain if this will be ongoing or specific to a particular decision or piece of work

7. You are required to complete the declaration of interest form as part of the new starter process and submit a revised form annually in April, in line with the financial year. You should consider any new interests that you, your spouse/partner or immediate family or close personal friend may have during the year and any changes should be recorded in a new declaration.

8. Line Managers are required to review every declaration from the staff they manage and take appropriate actions to ensure any risks that could arise are managed effectively. The actions taken should also be recorded via the declarations of form or in SAP. Examples of actions Line Managers can take to manage the risks include redistributing responsibilities across a team or changing approval mechanisms. If paper forms are completed these should be sent to the [employee lifecycle team](#) to be retained on personnel files.

9. Heads of Service should analyse overall patterns of interests that are occurring within the service and ensure any significant risks in this area are escalated to Chief Officers where appropriate.

10. Chief Officer declarations of interest should be reviewed by the Monitoring Officer (or in the absence of the Monitoring Officer the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer) The Monitoring Officer's declarations of interest should be reviewed to the Chief Executive. Decisions should then be made about the appropriate course of action in line with the principles above.

## **Procurement**

1. As set out in the Contract Procurement Rules in the [Council's Constitution](#) (Part 5, Section E), the tendering process must be fair and transparent. If you are involved in the procurement process you should be clear on your role. If you have both a client and contractor responsibility you must be open and accountable in relation to both roles and declare this as a conflict of interest so that appropriate actions can be taken (refer to the Declarations of Interest section for further information on this).

2. You should be fair and impartial when dealing with all service users, suppliers, contractors and subcontractors. Any conflict of interest should be declared, in line with the Declarations of Interest section of this Code, and you should not invite bids from any individual or organisation with whom you have a close personal

relationship. If you have access to confidential information on tenders or costs for either internal or external contracts you should not disclose that information to any unauthorised party or organisation.

3. When awarding contracts, you should be mindful of any potential conflict of interest arising from involvement with external contractors or potential contracts, who employ, in a senior or relevant managerial capacity, people you have close personal relationships with.

4. 'Social Value' must be incorporated into any contract awarded by the council and included in all specifications from providers. This is the value that a contract brings in order to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of a relevant area.

### **Recruitment, Selection and Promotion**

1. If you are involved in the recruitment process you must make sure that all appointments are made on merit. It is unlawful for you to make an appointment which is based on anything other than the ability of the candidate to undertake the duties of the post. You should make yourself familiar with the [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#) and ensure that you undertake the mandatory recruitment and selection training

2. If you have a close personal relationship with the applicant you must not take any part in the recruitment or selection process involving that applicant. The Council's application forms ask candidates to make a declaration of any potential conflicts they are aware of. You must also inform the recruitment manager if a personal or business relationship exists.

3. Similarly, you should not be involved in decisions relating to promotion or pay adjustments for anyone with whom you have a close personal relationship.

### **Gifts and Hospitality**

1. You, or anyone you have a close personal relationship with, should not benefit from your position at the council beyond the pay and reward schemes already in place. Decisions on Council Services, or the quality of Council Services, should not be, or perceived to be, inappropriately influenced. As a general rule, offers of hospitality and/or gifts should be declined.

2. Practical information regarding gifts and hospitality including a template Service Gifts and Hospitality Register and frequently asked questions are available in the Employee Code of Conduct guidance.

3. You must never accept gifts or hospitality in the following circumstances:

- as motivation or reward for delivery of a Service
- where acceptance places you under inappropriate obligation
- if acceptance could be open to misunderstanding

4. Failure to comply with these standards could lead to disciplinary action and possible prosecution under The Bribery Act 2010. On conviction, penalties include up to ten years imprisonment for individuals or unlimited fines. You should refer to the Council's [Anti Bribery Policy](#) and [Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy](#) as appropriate.

### **Accepting Hospitality**

1. You may, as part of your duties, be required to represent the Council where hospitality may be offered. For example, functions within the community, meetings or visits to agencies or contractors. Hospitality includes offers of transport, refreshments, meals, accommodation, or events that would normally be paid for. This list is not exhaustive, which means that something which is not mentioned may still be considered to be hospitality.

2. You must make a judgement regarding whether it is appropriate to accept hospitality in any particular case. Where hospitality is offered it should be recorded in the Gifts and Hospitality Register. If you consider it appropriate to attend the event you should ensure that this is authorised by your Head of Service. You do not, however, need to get authorization to accept a modest working lunch or refreshments received as part of a conference/course that you attend.

3. You should only accept hospitality if there is a genuine need to represent the Council and where the hospitality meets the following criteria:

- Attendance is unlikely to cause any reputational damage
- Refreshments, if provided, are a small part rather than the main purpose of the occasion
- The timing is not likely to give rise to criticism due to decisions being made by the council in relation to the provider of the hospitality

4. Before attending functions, you should establish the purpose of the event, be able to justify your attendance and identify an outcome which will benefit the Council. An example of inappropriate hospitality that you should refuse is attendance at entertainment events (such as drinks parties, fashion shows, sporting events) and other events where there is no clear benefit to the Council. As a guide to whether something is acceptable, you should consider how much a person could reasonably expect to pay to attend a similar function or event run on a commercial basis.

5. If hospitality is declined, the offer should be respectfully but firmly refused, and the organiser informed of the procedures and standards operating within the Council. Any hospitality which has been declined must still be recorded in the Service Register of Gifts and Hospitality.

6. Where specific visits are required in relation to procurement decisions, for example to attend demonstrations or inspect equipment, the Council should meet the cost of such visits to help ensure objectivity.

### **Provision of Hospitality**

1. As a general principle, you should not provide hospitality to anyone you are working with, such as partners or commercial organisations delivering services with or for the Council. Hospitality excludes the provision of light refreshments, such as tea and coffee or water. There are also limited exceptions to this restriction where the provision of hospitality is in the public interest, and necessary to further Council interests. Examples where the provision of hospitality may be appropriate are:

- The provision of low-key refreshments at a meeting with partners which extends beyond normal working hours, where it has been necessary to schedule the meeting at this time
- The provision of modest refreshments to international delegations as part of a civic event

2. Any provision of hospitality should be signed off by your Head of Service. Authorisation should be recorded in a suitable format and available for future reference. Provision of refreshments should not be the main focus of any hospitality that is provided by the Council.

### **Acceptance of Gifts**

1. As a general rule, you should not accept gifts from service users, contractors or outside suppliers, commercial partners, or sponsors. Gifts may be objects, favours, discounts, loans, legacies (gifts left in wills) or other things that are a benefit. This list is not exhaustive, which means that something which is not mentioned may still be considered a gift. Alcohol or money should never be accepted as a gift in any circumstance. All gifts offered (including any declined) should be recorded in your Service Gifts and Hospitality Register.

2. There is a general exception to this rule in relation to gifts of token value which could include pens or inexpensive diaries, which could be received, for example at a conference you attend to develop your professional knowledge. There is no requirement to declare the gift in these circumstances.

3. There are also a few exceptional circumstances where refusing gifts may cause offence and damage relationships with stakeholders. This could be, for example, a customary gift offered by an international delegation during official visits to the city or a very small gift given as a gesture by a service user for services received (for example following a bereavement) where the situation is sensitive, and refusal may cause offence. In these situations, it may not be practical to obtain Head of Service authorisation prior to acceptance and judgement should be applied in each case.

4. In these circumstances it is important that, following acceptance of the gift a decision is made, with your Head of Service, on the most appropriate use for the gift. Options include donating the gift to charity or retaining it within the office if this is not practical. This ensures that you as an individual have not inappropriately benefited from the gift. Heads of Service must indicate they approve the use of the gift in the Gifts and Hospitality Register.

5. When a gift is declined, the offer should be politely but firmly refused and the Council policy relating to gifts explained to the person making the offer. Any gift

which has been declined should still be recorded in the Service Gifts and Hospitality Register.

6. The circumstances surrounding offers of gifts need to be considered. For example, it will be inappropriate to accept even a small token gift from someone the Council is in dispute with, or more than one gift from the same party even if they are all of token value if the total value over a period is substantial. Timing also needs to be considered and any possible connection (either real or perceived) with decisions being made by the Council. If in doubt, you should always discuss this with your Head of Service.

7. Heads of Service are responsible for maintaining registers and ensuring regular review of them. Any issues or risks associated with gifts and hospitality should be escalated to Chief Officers who should have regular opportunity to scrutinise registers.

8. Any offers of gifts or hospitality Chief Officers receive should be referred to the Monitoring Officer (or in the absence of the Monitoring Officer the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer) Any offers of gifts or hospitality that the Monitoring Officer receives should be referred to the Chief Executive. Decisions should then be made about the appropriate course of action in line with the principles above.

### **Criminal Offences**

1. You are expected to work within the law. In addition, failure to uphold the law outside work could damage public confidence in you or the Council. Notify the Council immediately in writing if you are arrested, charged with or convicted of any offence. If the offence damages public confidence in you or the Council; or makes you unsuitable for the job you do, this may impact on your employment and will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy.

2. You must cooperate with any checking process where posts are identified as requiring disclosure of criminal convictions, particularly where there is a legal requirement to do so.

### **Fraud and personal financial management**

1. Whilst your personal finances should remain private, you must ensure that, where you have a financial relationship with the Council outside your contract of employment, that this relationship is conducted with honesty and integrity.

2. You must not deliberately evade any debts owed by you or seek to obtain monies from the Council to which you are not legally entitled. This could include, for example, avoidance of payments or false or inflated claims for Council Tax reliefs, false or inflated claims for benefits, false claims for blue badges, evasion of fines and false claims for compensation. Please refer to the [Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy](#).

3. You are expected to behave responsibly in relation to payments to public authorities. If you are in a situation where you owe Council Tax or have any other

debt to a Local Authority and are struggling to meet your commitments, you are expected to be open and honest and declare this to your manager, so that you can get the support that you need to resolve the situation. There are a range of resources available to you to support you with your [financial wellbeing](#) and advice on council tax arrears is available from our Revenues and Benefits service who can refer you to professional debt counselling where appropriate or support where multiple debts are involved.

4 If you are in breach of these requirements you may be subject to disciplinary action which may include summary dismissal where appropriate.

## **Raising Concerns**

1. If you become aware of any significant deficiency of service provision, wrongdoing, fraud, customer abuse, breach of procedure or malpractice, you must report this to the appropriate level of management.

2. If you become aware of activities that are illegal, unethical or violate this Code, you must also report this in accordance with the [Council's Whistleblowing Policy](#).

## **Principle 7: Leadership**

1. Our responsibility is to our communities, and as proud and passionate ambassadors for Manchester we are all expected to lead by example through our actions and behaviour in line with the principles set out in this code.

2. Those undertaking a leadership role at Manchester are responsible for the delivery of high-quality services through empowering and trusting others, providing positive influence, innovation, and creativity, and modelling the ethical behaviours needed from their teams. Leaders are accountable for the decisions they make and should ensure they are free of bias to maintain public trust.

3. Managers have a duty of care to staff and are responsible for providing a safe, encouraging, and supportive work environment that values diversity and individual talents. Managers are also responsible for ensuring clarity of role, tracking, and monitoring of performance and setting reasonable standards around behaviour within a particular role. Managers should demonstrate trust in their teams whilst providing support when needed, treating employees fairly and consistently.

4. Both Leaders and Managers should pursue any training or development opportunities that will support them to demonstrate the required standards and behaviours in their role.