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Introduction

This procedure applies to all directly employed staff of the Commission. Board members will be covered by the Standards in Public Life Code of Conduct for members of Public Bodies and the Commission's Board Members Code of Conduct

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to give employees (including NCF staff) guidance on matters regarding the standard of business conduct expected.

Relationships with Colleagues and Others

Employees of the Commission are expected to act responsibly and respectfully in the course of their contact with external parties in carrying out Commission business and in their interaction with colleagues. In this context, employees should refrain from acting in a manner which could be construed as intimidatory, derogatory or as harassment, or in any manner which could have the effect of undermining the individual(s) with whom the employee is in contact.

General Principles

Employees of the Commission should not put themselves in a position where their official and private interests conflict. Employees should not make use of their official positions to further their private interests: gifts or hospitality should not normally be accepted.

Activities Involving the Use of Official Information or Experience

All Commission employees are required to obtain permission from the Chief Executive before undertaking any form of private work which involves the use of official Commission information or his or her Commission experience.

Broadcasts or television appearances by employees of the Commission on matters relating to the work of the Commission should be regarded as official and no question of payment to individuals will normally arise. However, if the work of preparation for the broadcast/television appearance involves private, as well as

official, time the Chief Executive may, at his discretion, allow an employee to retain the whole or part of any fee as appropriate.

Outside Occupation

Employees of the Commission are not allowed to accept any outside employment which would require their attendance at any time during their normal working hours with the Commission. Employees should notify the Commission if they propose to take up outside employment which would, when both or more employments are combined, result in their average working week exceeding 48 hours, the maximum working week laid down in the Working Time Regulations 1998.

Employees are advised not to engage in outside employment which may conflict with their Commission work or be detrimental to it. Employees may not be a member or employee of the Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland while working with the Commission.

Confidentiality

Employees of the Commission have a duty to respect the requirements of confidentiality in the performance of Commission business. Notwithstanding this there are times where it is appropriate to share information with other outside bodies in the course of carrying out the duties of the Commission. Before sharing information, an employee may find it helpful to obtain advice from the Chief Executive and/or Information Governance Manager. If it relates to patient / service user information the Executive Director (Medical), in role as Caldicott Guardian, should be consulted.

No employee of the Commission shall use for his or her own benefit or gain, or divulge to any persons, firms, companies or other organisation whatsoever, any confidential information belonging to the Commission, or relating to its affairs or dealings which may come to the employee's knowledge during the course of his or her duties.

Notwithstanding this, any employee who has genuine concerns about operational issues and service delivery, particularly if the concerns relate to health and safety, malpractice or fraud, has a right to raise these and, indeed, has a responsibility to do so. These concerns should be raised with the employee's line manager or the Chief Executive or in accordance with the guidelines in the Public Interest Disclosure Policy.

To ensure security and confidentiality of information all staff have a responsibility to lock away all relevant paperwork at night or when they will be out of their office for most of the day. Staff also have a responsibility to ensure that confidential information is not left at communal printers or photocopiers.

Contracts and Use of Services of Commission Contractors

All employees of the Commission must notify their line manager of any financial interests or relationship with any manufacturer, supplier or contractor with whom the Commission has or is likely to enter into a contractual relationship.

No employee of the Commission may purchase goods from, or use the services of, a contractor on preferential terms for private purposes, if these terms are given directly or indirectly because of the contractual or other official business relationship between the contractor and the Commission.

Acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality

Employees should, under no circumstances, accept any gift or consideration which may, or may be presumed to, influence a purchasing decision. As a guiding principle, casual gifts offered by contractors or others, e.g. at Christmas time, should normally be declined. Articles of low intrinsic values such as diaries, calendars or other desktop items with a retail value of less than £15.00 need not necessarily be refused. Modest hospitality provided it is normal and reasonable in the circumstances, e.g. lunches in the course of working visits, may be acceptable, though it should be similar in principle to the scale of hospitality which the Commission as an employer would be likely to offer. If in doubt, staff should seek guidance from the Chief Executive.

Use of Official Accommodation and Equipment

No employee of the Commission may make use of, or make available for use, official accommodation and equipment for private purposes without the prior permission of the Chief Executive.

Employees should not make inappropriate or other unauthorised use of IT systems e.g. e-mail and Internet access. The Commission's IT security policy and IT Code of Conduct provide further guidance. If you remain unclear, advice is also available from the Systems Administrator or the Information Governance Manager.