

PBNI Code of Conduct for Staff

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Document Control Sheet

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0.1	July 2016	First Draft
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1. Introduction

This document sets out a Code of Conduct for all staff of PBNI describing the standards of conduct expected of them as they go about their daily work.

As a non-departmental public body, it is mandatory for PBNI to adopt a Code of Conduct for their staff.

The PBNI has responsibilities as an employer. These are set out in its own Code of Practice.

The code is intended to complement rather than replace or duplicate existing PBNI policies and it forms part of the wider package of legislation, requirements and guidance that relate to the employment of staff.

The code forms part of the broader collection of terms and conditions, legislation, practice standards and PBNI policies and procedures that are applicable to all staff.

PBNI expects its staff to adhere to this Code and may take disciplinary action if workers fail to do so.

In general, PBNI staff are also expected to adhere to the Seven Principles of Public Life as set out by the Nolan Committee. These can be found in Appendix A.

The definition of staff for the purposes of this code of conduct is an employee i.e. any person under a contract of employment with PBNI including temporary/fixed term contracts.

It is also the expectation that any person supplied through an employment agency (agency worker) will adhere to this code of conduct while they are engaged in carrying out duties for the PBNI.

2. Duties and Responsibilities

- a) Staff of PBNI should familiarise themselves with the code and should act in accordance with the principles set out in it.
- b) Staff of PBNI are appointed on merit on the basis of fair and open competition and are expected to carry out their role with a dedication and commitment to PBNI and its guiding principles and values as set out in its Corporate Plan.
- c) Staff of PBNI have a duty:
 - to discharge public functions reasonably and according to the law;
and
 - to recognise ethical standards governing particular professionals, particularly those relating to the Social Work profession.

The Chief Executive, as accounting officer, has overall responsibility, working under the Board, for propriety in a broad sense, including conduct and discipline.

3. Accountability

a) Staff of PBNI should be aware:

- of their accountability to the Board
- of the respective roles of PBNI and its sponsor department, the Department of Justice as set out in the [Management Statement](#) along with its associated [Financial Memorandum](#).
- that the Minister responsible for PBNI is ultimately accountable to the Northern Ireland Assembly for its independence, effectiveness and efficiency.

b) PBNI staff should at all times conduct themselves with integrity, impartiality and honesty. They should not deceive or knowingly mislead the Board, Ministers, the Assembly or the public.

c) PBNI staff are accountable for the quality of their work and should, where possible, take responsibility for maintaining and improving their knowledge and skills.

4. Conflicts of interest

Staff of PBNI should abide by its rules with regard to private interest and possible and potential conflict with their public duty; the disclosure of official information; and political activities. They should not misuse their official position or information acquired in their official duties to further their private interests or those of others. All staff should ensure that any possible conflicts of interest are identified at an early stage and that appropriate action is taken to resolve them.

5. Impartiality

PBNI staff must not allow their personal views to determine any advice they give or course of action they take in their work. While PBNI recognises and respects the rights of all employees to hold personal opinions, employees should ensure that the expression of those opinions does not constitute a conflict of interest for their role within PBNI. Employees who have concerns about whether or not there is a potential conflict of interest should raise the matter with an appropriate manager.

6. Integrity

Staff of PBNI should conduct themselves with honesty and impartiality in the exercise of their duties, should always act in a way that is professional, and that deserves and retains the confidence of all those with whom they have dealings. In general employees' private interests must not be such as to have the potential for allegations of impropriety or partiality to be sustained thereby bringing the PBNI into disrepute. As a consequence, staff should never receive benefits of any kind from a third party which might reasonably be thought to compromise their personal judgement or integrity. In this field, perception is as important as reality.

Under the Bribery Act 2010 employees of public bodies may be required to prove that the receipt of payment or other consideration from someone seeking to obtain a contract is not corrupt.

7. Relations with the public

Staff of PBNI who deal with the public should do so as sympathetically, efficiently and promptly as possible, and without bias or maladministration. The public is entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct and service from all PBNI staff.

8. Use of resources

Staff of PBNI should try, at all times, to ensure the proper, economic, effective and efficient use of resources, having proper regard to the best interests of the public.

9. Confidentiality

In the course of their duties, staff of PBNI will have knowledge of, or access to, confidential information. Staff of PBNI owe a general duty of confidentiality to their employer under common law. It is also a condition of their employment that they agree to be bound by the provisions set out in PBNI's Confidential Information Agreement.

10. Data Protection

Staff of PBNI should be aware of their obligations under the Data Protection Act (2018) and Freedom of Information Act (2000) as set out in the Board's separate policy statements on Data Protection and Freedom of Information.

In short, all information held by PBNI, including the personal information of employees and service users, will be fairly and lawfully processed to enable PBNI to comply with its legislative and policy responsibilities in this area.

All staff of PBNI are responsible for applying the correct [Data Protection principles](#) when dealing with the information that they process and hold.

11. Dress Code

The PBNI does not operate a formal dress code for its employees, however employees must ensure that their dress is appropriate for the situation in which they are working and that they present a professional image to the public and service users.

12. Staff concerns about improper conduct

- a) If staff of PBNI believe that they are being required to act in a way which:
- is improper, illegal or unethical
 - is in breach of a professional code
 - may involve possible maladministration, fraud or misuse of public funds
 - is otherwise inconsistent with this Code

they should either raise the matter through their line manager in the first instance or approach the Board Secretary, Director of Probation or Chairman of the Board, who will treat the matter in confidence in accordance with the [Whistleblowing Policy](#).

Staff should also draw attention to cases where:

- they believe there is evidence of irregular or improper behaviour elsewhere in the organization, but where they have not been personally involved;
- there is evidence of criminal or unlawful activity by others;
- they are required to act in a way that, for them, raises a fundamental issue of conscience.

b) PBNI recognises its accountability to the Department of Justice. If a member of staff feels unable to raise his or her concern using the steps above, or feel that his or her concern was not properly dealt with, he or she may raise it with the Minister of Justice or with the Director of Justice Policy in the Department of Justice.

Further details can be found in PBNI's [Whistleblowing Policy](#).

13. After leaving employment

Owing to the nature of the services provided by PBNI, disclosures of confidential information may have implications for individuals and the public over many years.

Staff should therefore continue to observe their duty of confidentiality after they have left PBNI's employment, regardless of how or why employment has ended.

The Seven Principles of Public Life (Nolan Principles)

Selflessness

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material 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 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 the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

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 public interests.

Leadership

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

These principles apply to all aspects of public life.