



Code of Conduct for Members of NHS Golden Jubilee

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE CODE OF CONDUCT

- 1.1 This Code has been issued by the Scottish Ministers, with the approval of the Scottish Parliament, as required by the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000 (the “Act”).
- 1.2 The purpose of the Code is to set out the conduct expected of those who serve on the Boards of public bodies in Scotland.
- 1.3 The Code has been developed in line with the nine key principles of public life in Scotland. The principles are listed in Section 2 and set out how the provisions of the Code should be interpreted and applied in practice.

My Responsibilities

- 1.4 I understand that the public has a high expectation of those who serve on the boards of public bodies and the way in which they should conduct themselves in undertaking their duties. I will always seek to meet those expectations by ensuring that I conduct myself in accordance with the Code.
- 1.5 I will comply with the substantive provisions of this Code, being sections 3 to 6 inclusive, in all situations and at all times where I am acting as a board member of my public body, have referred to myself as a board member or could objectively be considered to be acting as a board member.
- 1.6 I will comply with the substantive provisions of this Code, being sections 3 to 6 inclusive, in all my dealings with the public, employees and fellow board members, whether formal or informal.
- 1.7 I understand that it is my personal responsibility to be familiar with the provisions of this Code and that I must also comply with the law and my public body’s rules, standing orders and regulations. I will also ensure that I am familiar with any guidance or advice notes issued by the Standards Commission for Scotland (“Standards Commission”) and my public body and endeavour to take part in any training offered on the Code.
- 1.8 I will not, at any time, advocate or encourage any action contrary to this Code.
- 1.9 I understand that no written information, whether in the Code itself or the associated Guidance or Advice Notes issued by the Standards Commission, can provide for all circumstances. If I am uncertain about how the Code applies, I will seek advice from the Standards Officer (Board Secretary) of my public body, failing whom the Chair or Chief Executive of my public body. I note that I may also choose to seek external legal advice on how to interpret the provisions of the Code.
- 1.10 I recognise that Boards are comprised of individuals with different backgrounds, knowledge and experiences to ensure diversity of thought and to ensure that input

from, and the perspectives of, all key stakeholders are considered in any decision-making. I will ensure, therefore, that I understand, respect and take account of differences in each other's backgrounds, knowledge and experiences, so these do not become a barrier to progress and to the effectiveness of the board itself.

Enforcement

- 1.11 Part 2 of the Act sets out the provisions for dealing with alleged breaches of the Code, including the sanctions that can be applied if the Standards Commission finds that there is a breach of the Code. More information on how complaints are dealt with and the sanctions available can be found at Annex A.

SECTION 2: KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

- 2.1 The Code has been based on the following key principles of public life. I will behave in accordance with these principles and understand that they should be used for guidance and interpreting the provisions in the Code.
- 2.2 I note that a breach of one or more of the key principles does not in itself amount to a breach of the Code. I note that, for a breach of the Code to be found, there must also be a contravention of one or more of the provisions in Sections 3 to 6 inclusive of the Code.

The Key principles are:

Duty

I have a duty to uphold the law and act in accordance with the law and the public trust places in me. I have a duty to act in the interests of the public body of which I am a member and in accordance with the core functions and duties of that body.

Selflessness

I have a duty to take decisions solely in terms of public interest. I must not act in order to gain financial or other material benefit for myself, family or friends.

Integrity

I must not place myself under any financial, or other, obligation to any individual or organisation that might reasonably be thought to influence me in the performance of my duties.

Objectivity

I must make decisions solely on merit and in a way that is consistent with the functions of my public body when carrying out public business including making appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits.

Accountability and Stewardship

I am accountable to the public for my decisions and actions. I have a duty to consider issues on their merits, taking account of the views of others and I must ensure that my public body uses its resources prudently and in accordance with the law.

Openness

I have a duty to be as open as possible about my decisions and actions, giving reasons for my decisions and restricting information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

I have a duty to act honestly. I must declare any private interests relating to my public duties and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

I have a duty to promote and support these principles by leadership and example, and to maintain and strengthen the public's trust and confidence in the integrity of my public body and its members in conducting public business.

Respect

I must respect all other board members and all employees of my public body and the role they play, treating them with courtesy at all times. Similarly, I must respect members of the public when performing my duties as a board member.

SECTION 3: GENERAL CONDUCT

Board Member Business Conduct – quick guide

- **If in doubt, declare early and ask for advice.** Contact the Standards Officer (Board Secretary). If needed, contact the Chair or Chief Executive.
- **Keep a clear line between governance and operations.** Ask questions and challenge appropriately, but do not direct staff or get involved in day-to-day management (see 3.8 to 3.10).
- **Gifts and hospitality:** never ask for them; refuse unless clearly allowed; record significant offers (even if refused); never accept anything from anyone seeking a decision from, or doing business with, the Board (see 3.19 to 3.27).
- **Commercial contact:** keep contact with suppliers open and appropriate; do not discuss active or upcoming procurements; pass approaches to the right Executive lead.
- **Information:** treat Board papers, draft decisions and sensitive information as confidential; use secure channels; remember information may be released under Freedom of Information or a subject access request and must be managed under record-keeping rules.
- **Speak up:** report concerns about safety, probity, fraud or inappropriate pressure promptly and privately using the routes set out in this Code.

Respect and Courtesy

- 3.1 I will treat everyone with courtesy and respect. This includes in person, in writing, at meetings, when I am online and when I am using social media.
- 3.2 While I am entitled to express my views and to disagree with others, I will do so respectfully. Respectfully challenging the views of others, and allowing my own views to be challenged, helps promote a culture of diverse thinking. I will focus on the issue rather than making personal comments about an individual.
- 3.3 I will not discriminate unlawfully on the basis of race, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability, religion or belief, marital status or pregnancy/ maternity. I will advance equality of opportunity and seek to foster good relations between different people.
- 3.4 I will not engage in any conduct that could amount to bullying or harassment (which includes sexual harassment). I accept that such conduct is unacceptable and may be considered a breach of this Code. Harassment is not limited to conduct defined under the Equality Act 2010 (i.e. unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic). Any decision by the Standards Commission about whether conduct breaches the Code will involve a full, fair and objective assessment of the conduct, intent and reasonably foreseeable impact.
- 3.5 I accept that disrespect, bullying and harassment can be:

- a) a one- off incident,
- b) part of a cumulative course of conduct; or
- c) a pattern of behaviour.

I will be mindful of the impact my conduct may have on others. What may seem harmless to me could be offensive to someone else. Any decision by the Standards Commission about whether conduct breaches the bullying and harassment provisions will involve a full, fair and objective assessment of the behaviour, intent and reasonably foreseeable impact. This will include the perception of the person affected and whether it was reasonable for the conduct to make that person feel offended, humiliated, intimidated, frightened and / or uncomfortable.

- 3.6 I understand that how and in what context, I exhibit certain behaviours can be as important as what I communicate, given that disrespect, bullying and harassment can be physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct.
- 3.7 I accept that it is my responsibility to understand what constitutes bullying and harassment and I will utilise resources, including the Standards Commission's guidance and advice notes, my public body's policies and training material (where appropriate) to ensure that my knowledge and understanding is up to date.
- 3.8 Except where it is written into my role as a board member and/or at the invitation of the Chief Executive, I will not become involved in operational management of my public body. I acknowledge and understand that operational management is the responsibility of the Chief Executive and Executive Team.
- 3.9 I will not undermine any individual employee or group of employees, or raise concerns about their performance, conduct or capability in public. I will raise any concerns I have on such matters in private with senior management as appropriate.
- 3.10 I will not take, or seek to take, unfair advantage of my position in my dealings with employees of my public body or bring any undue influence to bear on employees to take a certain action. I will not ask or direct employees to do something which I know, or should reasonably know, could compromise them or prevent them from undertaking their duties properly and appropriately.
- 3.11 I will respect and comply with rulings from the Chair during meetings of:
 - a) My public body, its Committees.
 - b) Any outside organisations that I have been appointed or nominated to by my public body or which I represent my public body.
- 3.12 I will respect the principle of collective decision-making and corporate responsibility. This means that once the Board has made a decision, I will support that decision, even if I did not agree with it or vote for it.

- 3.13 If I am a member of more than one public body, I may be subject to more than one Code of Conduct. In considering and making any decision on whether and which Code applies, the ESC and Standards Commission will consider whether a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, could reasonably perceive me as having been acting as a member of the specific public body at the time of the alleged breach of the Code. The fact that complainers or witnesses to any conduct may be aware that I am a member of that public body is not in itself sufficient for the Code to be engaged.

Social Media

- 3.14 The rules of good conduct also apply to online activity, including social media. Social media is a term used to describe online technologies, platforms, applications and practices used to share information, knowledge or opinions (for example social networking sites, blogs, wikis, photo/video sharing sites and customer feedback sites). The Standards Commission has produced an Advice Note for Members on the Use of Social Media. This can be found at: <https://www.standardscommissionscotland.org.uk/education-and-resources/professional-briefings>.
- 3.15 The conduct expected of me in a digital medium is no different to the conduct I should employ in other methods of communication, such as face to face meetings and letters. Before commenting or posting, I will consider very carefully whether:
- I understand the immediate and permanent nature of any comment or post I am about to make, and that I will have no control over the extent to which it is shared, and by whom.
 - I would be willing to make that comment or post in-person, face to face.
 - I have such conviction in what I am about to share that I would be prepared to justify it if challenged at a later date.
 - 'Liking', re-posting and sharing comments or posts, or publishing links to other sites could reasonably be regarded in the circumstances as me endorsing the original opinion, comment or information, including information on other sites.
 - I understand that even if I delete my post, it may have been captured by way of a screenshot or otherwise retained in some way (including being automatically cached online) and that fully deleting content once it has been shared online is almost impossible to achieve.
- 3.16 Other important factors to consider when using social media include whether:
- I am identifiable as a member by directly referring to myself as such or indirectly by referring to the public body, or the functions of my role as a member, or through any information or images posted.
 - the account I am using is 'private' and whether I have set my privacy controls accordingly. I will bear in mind that anyone who is able to view my social media content will be able to screenshot and publicly share it, if they choose to do so.

- the number of ‘followers’ I have and whether these individuals are following my account because I am a member of my public body.
- I have complied with any policy my public body has produced on the use of social media.
- information I am posting is confidential and I only have access to it because I am a member of the public body.
- I am demonstrating bias or pre-determination.
- I am using the public body’s equipment and / or my public body’s information technology network or my own; and
- I have complied with the law including defamation, copyright, data protection, employment and equalities or harassment provisions.

3.17 I have a right to freedom of expression under Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). I am entitled to express my views and opinions. The Code does not prevent me from raising points or scrutinising the performance of my public body, provided I do so respectfully and in a way that is compatible with the Code.

Remuneration, Allowances and Expenses

3.18 I will comply with the rules and the policies of my public body, on the payment of remuneration, allowances and expenses.

Gifts and hospitality

3.19 I understand that I may be offered gifts (including money raised via crowdfunding or sponsorship), hospitality, material benefits or services (“gift or hospitality”) that may be reasonably regarded by a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts as placing me under an improper obligation or being capable of influencing my judgement.

3.20 I will never ask for or seek any gift or hospitality.

3.21 I will refuse any gift or hospitality, unless it is:

- a) A minor item or token of modest intrinsic value offered on an infrequent basis.
- b) A gift being offered to my public body.
- c) Hospitality which would reasonably be associated with my duties as a Board member.
- d) Hospitality which has been approved in advance by my public body.

3.22 I will consider whether there could be a reasonable perception that any gift or hospitality received by a person or body connected to me could or would influence my judgement.

- 3.23 I will not allow the promise of money or other financial advantage to induce me to act improperly in my role as a board member. I accept that the money or advantage (including any gift or hospitality) does not have to be given to me directly. The offer of monies or advantages to others, including community groups, may amount to bribery, if the intention is to induce me to improperly perform a function.
- 3.24 I will never accept any gift or hospitality from any individual or applicant who is awaiting a decision from, or seeking to do business with, my public body.
- 3.25 If I consider that declining an offer of a gift would cause offence, I will accept it and hand it over to my public body at the earliest possible opportunity and ask for it to be registered.
- 3.26 I will promptly advise my public body's Standards Officer (Board Secretary) if I am offered (but refuse) any gift or hospitality of any significant value and/or if I am offered any gift or hospitality from the same source on a repeated basis, so that my public body can monitor this.
- 3.27 I will familiarise myself with the terms of the Bribery Act 2010, which provides for offences of bribing another person and offences relating to being bribed.

Suppliers contact and procurement integrity (Board member rules of thumb)

3.28 I will not discuss, influence or appear to influence **live procurements**, contract awards, tender evaluations or supplier selection. Where a supplier approach relates to a live or upcoming procurement, I will redirect it to the appropriate executive lead and avoid engaging on the substance.

3.29 I will avoid private meetings, informal briefings, demonstrations or hospitality offered by current or potential suppliers outside approved organisational arrangements. If supplier engagement is appropriate for Board business, I will ensure it is arranged transparently through the correct route and is capable of being recorded.

3.30 I will not accept gifts, hospitality, travel or accommodation from organisations that do business with, or seek to do business with, my public body, and I will ensure that any significant offers (including those refused) are reported in line with local arrangements (see 3.26).

Sponsorship, donations and fundraising (Board member safeguards)

3.31 I recognise that sponsorship, donations, charitable fundraising and commercial partnerships connected to Board activity must be **transparent** and must follow approved organisational routes. I will not facilitate informal or personal arrangements connected to my role.

3.32 I will ensure that sponsorship or donations are **never linked** (or perceived to be linked) to procurement, contracting, commissioning, approvals or regulatory decisions. Where there is any connection between a donor/sponsor and Board business, I will declare the connection and seek advice.

3.33 Where my personal, professional or charitable involvement could reasonably be seen as influencing Board decisions, I will record and manage this as a potential conflict of interest in line with Sections 4 and 5 and Annex C.

NHS Scotland Standards of Business Conduct (MEL(1994)48) – additional expectations

3.34 I understand that, alongside this Code, NHS Scotland's Standards of Business Conduct apply to anyone involved in NHS business. I will act with probity, openness and impartiality when I make, influence or support decisions that affect NHS resources.

3.35 I will declare all gifts and hospitality offered to me because of my role. This includes significant offers I refuse, where local arrangements require. I will follow NHS Golden Jubilee's Gifts and Hospitality Policy/Procedure and ensure offers are recorded in the NHS Golden Jubilee Gifts and Hospitality Register.

3.36 I will declare any secondary employment or paid roles (for example consultancy, advisory work, speaking engagements, paid directorships or fees) that could overlap with NHS business or create a perceived conflict. Where approval is needed, I will seek it. I will follow NHS Golden Jubilee's Register of Interests arrangements and Conflicts of Interest Policies. I will not take on external work that could undermine, or appear to undermine, my independence as a Board member.

3.37 I will be careful when dealing with pharmaceutical, medical device or other commercial organisations. Any engagement must be appropriate, open and in line with NHS Golden Jubilee's Standing Financial Instructions, Procurement requirements and relevant commercial sponsorship/engagement policies. I will not endorse products or services, accept free samples or other benefits, or let my role be used for marketing.

3.38 If I suspect **fraud, bribery, corruption**, inappropriate pressure, or any attempt to improperly influence decisions, I will report this promptly. I will use NHS Golden Jubilee's agreed routes, including the **Whistleblowing / Raising Concerns Policy**, the **Counter Fraud Policy** and the **Local Counter Fraud Specialist** (as applicable). I can also contact the Standards Officer (Board Secretary), the Chair or the Chief Executive. I will support a culture where concerns can be raised safely.

Confidentiality

3.39 I will not disclose confidential information which should reasonably be regarded as being of a confidential or private nature, without the express consent of a person or body authorised to give such consent, or unless required to do so by law. I note

that if I cannot obtain such express consent, I should assume it is not given. I note that information I produce or receive could be subject to disclosure as this legislation provides individuals with the right to request recorded information held by my Board.

- 3.40 I accept that confidential information can include discussions, documents and information which is not yet public or never intended to be public and information deemed confidential by statute.
- 3.41 I will only use confidential information to undertake my duties as a board member. I will not use it in any way for personal advantage or to discredit my public body (even if my personal view is that the information should be publicly available).
- 3.42 I note that these confidentiality requirements do not apply to protected whistleblowing disclosures made to the prescribed persons and bodies as identified in statute.
- 3.43 I will not provide the media with “off the record” briefings on the content, direction or summary of confidential material or information. Disclosures of this kind can undermine and devalue the work of the Board and its Committees. They can also damage trust and respect between members and employees, and between fellow members.

Use of Public Body Resources

- 3.44 I will only use my public body’s resources, including employee assistance, facilities, stationery and IT equipment, for carrying out duties on behalf of the public body, in accordance with its relevant policies.
- 3.45 I will not use, or in any way enable others to use, my public body’s resources:
 - a) imprudently (without thinking about the implications or consequences);
 - b) unlawfully;
 - c) for any political activities or matters relating to these; or
 - d) improperly

Dealing with my Public Body and Preferential Treatment

- 3.46 I will not use, or attempt to use, my position or influence as a board member to:
 - a) improperly confer on or secure for myself, or others, an advantage;
 - b) avoid a disadvantage for myself, or create a disadvantage for others; or
 - c) improperly seek preferential treatment or access for myself or others.

- 3.47 I will avoid any action which could lead members of the public to believe that preferential treatment or access is being sought.
- 3.48 I will advise employees of any connection, as defined at Section 5, I may have to a matter, when seeking information or advice or responding to a request for information or advice from them.

Appointments to Outside Organisations

- 3.49 If I am appointed, or nominated by my public body, as a member of another body or organisation, I will abide by the rules of conduct and will act in the best interests of that body or organisation while acting as a member of it. I will also continue to observe the rules of this Code when carrying out the duties of that body or organisation.
- 3.50 I accept that if I am a director or trustee (or equivalent) of a company or a charity, I will be responsible for identifying and taking advice on, any conflicts of interest that may arise between the company or charity and my public body.

SECTION 4: REGISTRATION OF INTERESTS

- 4.1 The following paragraphs set out what I have to register when I am appointed and whenever my circumstances change. The register covers my current term of appointment.
- 4.2 I understand that regulations made by the Scottish Ministers describe the detail and timescale for registering interests; including a requirement that a board member must register their registrable interests within one month of becoming a board member and register any changes to those interests within one month of those changes having occurred.
- 4.3 The interests which I am required to register are those set out in the following paragraphs. Other than as required by paragraph 4.23, I understand it is not necessary to register the interests of my spouse or cohabitee.

Category 1: Remuneration

- 4.4 I will register any work for which I receive, or expect to receive, payment or reward. The amount does not matter for whether an entry is required. This includes paid work even if it is casual or minor. I only need to register work where I have received remuneration or am due to receive payment or reward (for example, where I have done the work and I am awaiting payment).

I have a registrable interest where I receive remuneration by virtue of being:

- a) employed
- b) self-employed
- c) the holder of an office;
- d) a director of an undertaking;
- e) a partner in a firm;
- f) appointed or nominated by my public body to another body; or
- g) engaged in a trade, profession or vocation or any other work.

- 4.5 I understand that in relation to 4.4 above, the amount of remuneration does not require to be registered. I understand that any remuneration received as a board member of this specific public body does not have to be registered.
- 4.6 I understand that if a position is not remunerated it does not need to be registered under this category. However, unremunerated directorships may need to be registered under category 2, "Other Roles".
- 4.7 I must register any allowances I receive in relation to membership of any organisation under Category One.

- 4.8 When registering employment as an employee, I must give the full name of the employer, the nature of its business and the nature of the post I hold in the organisation.
- 4.9 When registering remuneration from the categories listed in paragraph 4.4 (b) to (g) above, I must provide the full name and give details of the nature of the business, organisation, undertaking, partnerships or other body, as appropriate. I recognise that some other employments may be incompatible with my role as board member of my public body in terms of paragraph 6.7 of this Code.
- 4.10 Where I otherwise undertake a trade, profession or vocation, or any other work, the detail to be given is the nature of the work and how often it is undertaken.
- 4.11 When registering a directorship, it is necessary to provide the registered name and registered number of the undertaking in which the directorship is held and provide information about the nature of its business.
- 4.12 I understand that registration of a pension is not required as this falls outside the scope of the category.

Category 2: Other Roles

- 4.13 I will register any unremunerated directorships where the body in question is a subsidiary or parent company of an undertaking in which I hold a remunerated directorship.
- 4.14 I will register the registered name and registered number of the subsidiary or parent company or other undertaking and the nature of its business and its relationship to the company or other undertaking in which I am a director and from which I receive remuneration.

Category 3: Contracts

- 4.15 I have a registrable interest where I (or a firm in which I am a partner, or an undertaking in which I am a director, or in which I have shares of a value as described in paragraph 4.20 below) have made a contract with my public body:
- a) under which goods or services are to be provided, or works are to be executed; and
 - b) which has not been fully discharged.
- 4.16 I will register a description of the contract, including its duration but excluding the value.

Category 4: Election Expenses

4.17 If I have been elected to my public body, then I will register a description of and statement of, any assistance towards election expenses relating to election to my public body.

Category 5: Houses, Land and Buildings

4.18 I have a registrable interest where I own, or have any other right of interest in, houses, land and buildings that may be significant to, relevant to, or bear upon the work and operation of my public body.

4.19 I accept that, when deciding whether or not I need to register any interest I have in houses, land or buildings, the test to be applied is whether a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard the interest as being so significant that it could potentially affect my responsibilities to my public body and to the public, or could influence my actions, speeches or decision-making. While it would not include testamentary or succession interests, it could include a matrimonial home or other permanent residence (even if you own another property), if the objective test is met.

Category 6: Interest in Shares and Securities

4.20 I have a registerable interest where:

- a) I own or have an interest in more than 1% of the issued share capital of the company or other body; or
- b) Where, at the relevant date, the market value of any shares and securities (in any one specific company or body) that I own or have an interest in is greater than £25,000.

Category 7: Gifts and Hospitality

4.21 I understand the requirements of paragraphs 3.13 to 3.21 regarding gifts and hospitality. As I will not accept any gifts or hospitality, other than under the limited circumstances allowed, I understand there is no longer the need to register any.

Category 8: Non-Financial Interests

4.22 I may also have other interests and I understand it is equally important that relevant interests such as membership or holding office in other public bodies, companies, clubs, societies and organisations such as trades unions and voluntary organisations, are registered and described. In this context, I understand non-financial interests are those which members of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts might reasonably think could influence my actions, speeches, votes or decision-making in

my public body (this includes its Committees and memberships of other organisations to which I have been appointed or nominated by my public body).

- 4.23 A non-financial interest could include membership of a private society or private club, which has entry requirements or qualifications for membership. A relevant factor is whether the organisation has entry requirements or qualifications (other than payment of a fee or subscription or agreement to terms and conditions of membership), as opposed to being open to all.

Category 9: Close Family Members

- 4.24 I will register the interests of any close family member who has transactions with my public body or is likely to have transactions or do business with it.

SECTION 5: DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Stage 1: Connection

- 5.1 For each particular matter I am involved in as a board member, I will first consider whether I have a connection to that matter.
- 5.2 I understand that a connection is any link between the matter being considered and me, or a person or body I am associated with. This could be a family relationship or a social or professional contact.
- 5.3 A connection includes anything that I have registered as an interest.
- 5.4 A connection does not include being a member of a body to which I have been appointed or nominated by my public body as a representative of my public body or of which I am a member by reason of, or in implementation of, a statutory provision, unless:
 - a) the matter being considered by my public body is quasi-judicial or regulatory; or
 - b) I have a personal conflict by reason of my actions, my connections or my legal obligations.

Stage 2: Interest

- 5.5 I understand my connection is an interest that requires to be declared where the objective test is met – that is where a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard my connection to a particular matter as being so significant that it would be considered as being likely to influence the discussion or decision-making.

Stage 3: Participation

- 5.6 I will declare my interest as early as possible in meetings. I will not remain in the meeting nor participate in any way in those parts of meetings where I have declared an interest (unless those still taking part in the consideration of the matter retire to a separate room).
- 5.7 I will consider whether it is appropriate for transparency reasons to state publicly where I have a connection, which I do not consider amounts to an interest.
- 5.8 I note that I can apply to the Standards Commission and ask it to grant a dispensation to allow me to take part in the discussion and decision-making on a matter where I could otherwise have to declare an interest and withdraw (as a result of having a connection to the matter that would fall within the objective test). I note that such an application must be made in advance of any meetings where the dispensation is sought and that I cannot take part in an discussion or decision-making on the matter in question unless and until, the application is granted.

- 5.9 I note that public confidence in a public body is damaged by the perception that decisions taken by that body are substantially influenced by factors other than the public interest. I will not accept a role or appointment if doing so means I will have to declare interests frequently at meetings in respect of my role as a board member. Similarly, if any appointment or nomination to another body would give rise to objective concern because of my existing personal involvement or affiliations, I will not accept the appointment or nomination.

SECTION 6: LOBBYING AND ACCESS

- 6.1 I understand that a wide range of people will seek access to me as a board member and will try to lobby me, including individuals, organisations and companies. Section 6 of the Code outlines what I can and cannot do when I am approached and lobbied by individuals or groups intent on making their views known. I must distinguish between:
- a) any role I have in dealing with enquiries from the public;
 - b) any community engagement where I am working with individuals and organisations to encourage their participation and involvement, and;
 - c) lobbying, which is where I am approached by an individual or organisation who is seeking to influence me for financial gain or advantage, particularly those who are seeking to do business with my public body (for example contracts/procurement).
- 6.2 In deciding whether, and if so how, to respond to such lobbying, I will always have regard to the objective test, which is whether a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard my conduct as being likely to influence my, or my public body's, decision-making role.
- 6.3 I will not, in relation to contact with any person or organisation that lobbies, do anything that contravenes this Code or any other relevant rule of my public body or any statutory provision.
- 6.4 I will not, in relation to contact with any person or organisation that lobbies, act in any way which could bring discredit upon my public body.
- 6.5 If I have concerns about the approach or methods used by any person or organisation in their contacts with me, I will seek the guidance of the Chair, Chief Executive or Standards Officer (Board Secretary) of my public body.
- 6.6 The public must be assured that no person or organisation will gain better access to, or treatment by, me as a result of employing a company or individual to lobby on a fee basis on their behalf. I will not, therefore, offer or accord any preferential access or treatment to those lobbying on a fee basis on behalf of clients compared with that which I accord any other person or organisation who lobbies or approaches me. I will ensure that those lobbying on a fee basis on behalf of clients are not given to understand that preferential access or treatment, compared to that accorded to any other person or organisation, might be forthcoming.
- 6.7 Before taking any action as a result of being lobbied, I will seek to satisfy myself about the identity of the person or organisation that is lobbying and the motive for lobbying. I understand that I may choose to act in response to a person or organisation lobbying on a fee basis on behalf of clients but it is important that I understand the basis on which I am being lobbied in order to ensure that any action taken in connection with the lobbyist complies with the standards set out in this Code and the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016.

6.8 I will not accept any paid work:

- a) Which would involve me lobbying on behalf of any person or organisation or any clients or a person or organisation.
- b) To provide services as a strategist, adviser or consultant, for example, advising on how to influence my public body and its members. This does not prohibit me from being remunerated for activity which may arise because of, or relate to, membership of my public body, such as journalism or broadcasting, or involvement in representative or presentational work, such as participation in delegations, conferences or other events.

ANNEX A: BREACHES OF THE CODE

Introduction

1. The Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000 (“the Act”) provided for a framework to encourage and, where necessary, enforce high ethical standards in public life.
2. The Act provided for the introduction of new codes of conduct for local authority councillors and members of relevant public bodies, imposing on councils and relevant public bodies a duty to help their members comply with the relevant code.
3. The Act and the subsequent Scottish Parliamentary Commissions and Commissioners etc. Act 2010 established the Standards Commission for Scotland (“Standards Commission”) and the post of Commissioner for Ethical Standards in Public in Scotland (“ESC”).
4. The Standards Commission and ESC are separate and independent, each with distinct functions. Complaints of breaches of a public body’s Code of Conduct are investigated by the ESC and adjudicated upon by the Standards Commission.
5. The first model Code of Conduct came into force in 2002. The Code has since been reviewed and re-issued in 2014. The 2021 Code has been issued by the Scottish Ministers following consultation and with the approval of the Scottish Parliament, as required by the Act.

Investigation of Complaints

6. The requirement to respect all Board employees includes employees of contractors providing services to the Board; and employees of any other organisations where it might be reasonably perceived that the Board (and by implication the member) has a supervisory influence over those individuals. This might, for example, include cleaners or security guards employed by an agency contracted to provide services to the Board and who work in the building and/or solely and entirely on Board work.
7. It should be noted that anyone can make a complaint to the Ethical Standards Commissioner about an alleged breach of the Code. There is no obligation on anyone, including Board employees, to make a complaint even if appears that the Code may have been breached. It may be the case that the matter can be resolved informally. Asking a Board employee to make a complaint could compromise their position. I will not, therefore, act in a manner that may pressure employees into making a complaint.
7. The ESC is responsible for investigating complaints about members of devolved public bodies. It is not, however, mandatory to report a complaint about a potential breach of the Code to the ESC. It may be more appropriate in some circumstances for attempts to be made to resolve the matter informally at a local level.

8. On conclusion of the investigation, the ESC will send a report to the Standards Commission.

Hearings

9. On receipt of a report from the ESC, the Standards Commission can choose to:
 - Do nothing
 - Direct the ESC to carry out further investigations; or
 - Hold a Hearing.
10. Hearings are held (usually in public) to determine whether the member concerned has breached their public body's Code of Conduct. The Hearing Panel comprises of three members of the Standard's Commission. The ESC will present evidence and/or make submissions at the Hearing about the investigation and any conclusions as to whether the member has contravened the Code. The member is entitled to attend or be represented at the Hearing and can also present evidence and make submissions. Both parties can call witnesses. Once it has heard all the evidence and submissions, the Hearing Panel will make a determination about whether or not it is satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that there has been a contravention of the Code by the member. If the Hearing Panel decides that a member has breached their public body's Code, it is obliged to impose a sanction.

Sanctions

11. The Sanctions that can be imposed following a finding of a breach of the Code are as follows:
 - **Censure:** A censure is a formal record of the Standards Commission's severe and public disapproval of the member concerned.
 - **Suspension:** This can be a full or partial suspension (for up to one year). A full suspension means that the member is suspended from attending all meetings of the public body. Partial suspension means that the member is suspended from attending some of the meetings of the public body. The Commission can direct that any remuneration or allowance the member receives as a result of their membership of the public body be reduced or not paid during a period of suspension.
 - **Disqualification:** Disqualification means that the member is removed from membership of the body and disqualified (for a period not exceeding five years), from membership of the body. Where a member is also a member of another devolved public body (as defined in the Act), the Commission may also remove or disqualify that person in respect of that membership. Full details of the sanctions are set out in section 19 of the Act.

Interim Suspensions

12. Section 21 of the Act provides the Standards Commission with the power to impose an interim suspension on a member on receipt of an interim report from the ESC

about an ongoing investigation. In making a decision about whether or not to impose an interim suspension, a Panel comprising of three members of the Standards Commission will review the interim report and any representations received from the member and will consider whether it is satisfied:

- That the further conduct of the ESC's investigation is likely to be prejudiced if such an action is not taken (for example if there are concerns that the member may try to interfere with evidence or witnesses); or
- That it is otherwise in the public interest to take such a measure. A policy outlining how the Standards Commission makes any decision under section 21 and the procedures it will follow in doing so, should any such a report be received from the ESC and can be found via the following link:
<https://www.standardscommissionscotland.org.uk/cases>

13. The decision to impose an interim suspension is not and should not be seen as, a finding on the merits of any complaint or the validity of any allegations against a member of a devolved public body, nor should it be viewed as a disciplinary measure.

ANNEX B: DEFINITIONS

“Bullying” is inappropriate and unwelcome behaviour which is offensive and intimidating and which makes an individual or group feel undermined, humiliated or insulted.

“Chair” includes Board Convener or any other individual discharging a similar function to that of a Chair or Convener under alternative decision-making structures.

“Code” is the code of conduct for members of your devolved public body, which is based on the Model Code of Conduct for members of devolved public bodies in Scotland.

“Cohabitee” includes any person who is living with you in a relationship similar to that of a partner, civil partner or spouse.

“Confidential Information” includes:

- Any information passed on to the public body by a Government department (even if it is not clearly marked as confidential) which does not allow the disclosure of that information to the public;
- Information of which the law prohibits disclosure (under statute or by the order of a Court);
- Any legal advice provided to the public body; or
- Any other information which would reasonably be considered a breach of confidence should it be made public.

“Election Expenses” means expenses incurred, whether before, during or after the election, on account of, or in respect of, the conduct or management of the election.

“Employee” includes individuals employed:

- Directly by the public body;
- As contractors by the public body, or
- By a contractor to work on the public body’s premises.

“Gifts” can include any item of service received free of charge, or which may be offered or promised at a discounted rate or on terms not available to the general public. Gifts include benefits such as relief from indebtedness, loan concessions, or provision of property, services or facilities at a cost below that generally charged to members of the public. It can also include gifts received directly or gifts received by any company in which the recipient holds a controlling interest in, or by a partnership of which the recipient is a partner,

“Harassment” is any unwelcome behaviour or conduct which makes someone feel offended, humiliated, intimidated, frightened and/or uncomfortable. Harassment can be experienced directly or indirectly and can occur as an isolated incident or as a course of persistent behaviour.

“Hospitality” includes the offer or promise of food, drink, accommodation, entertainment or the opportunity to attend any cultural or sporting event on terms not available to the general public.

“Relevant Date” Where a board member had an interest in shares at the date on which the member was appointed as a member, the relevant date is – (a) that date; and (b) the 5th April immediately following that date and in each succeeding year, where the interest is retained on that 5th April.

“Public Body” means a devolved public body listed in Schedule 3 or the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc. (Scotland) Act 2000, as amended.

“Remuneration” includes any salary, wage, share of profits, fee, other monetary benefit or benefit in kind.

“Securities” is a certificate or other financial instrument that has monetary value and can be traded. Securities include equity and debt securities, such as stocks, bonds and debentures.

“Undertaking” means:

- a) A body corporate or partnership; or
- b) An unincorporated association carrying on a trade or business, with or without a view to a profit.

ANNEX C: CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECISION FLOW (BOARD MEMBER QUICK GUIDE)

This quick guide is designed to help Board members apply Section 5 (Declaration of Interests) consistently and transparently. It follows the three stages in the Code:

Connection → Interest → Participation. If you are unsure at any point, **declare early and seek advice** from the Standards Officer (Board Secretary) or Chair / Chief Executive).

Stage	Ask yourself	Action
1. Connection (5.1–5.4)	Do I have any link to the matter (person, organisation, place, prior involvement, family, friend, professional contact)? Is the link already in my Register of Interests ?	If No: proceed as normal. If Yes: go to Stage 2. Tip: even if you think it is minor, consider whether stating it for transparency would be helpful (5.7).
2. Interest (5.5)	Does the objective test apply? <i>Would a reasonable member of the public, knowing the facts, think this connection is so significant that it could influence my discussion or decision-making?</i>	If No: you may still choose to mention the connection for openness (5.7) and then participate. If Yes: you have an interest that must be declared — go to Stage 3. If Unsure: treat as an interest, declare early, and seek advice.
3. Participation (5.6–5.9)	Once I declare an interest, can I stay and take part? Is a dispensation needed or already granted?	Declare early in the meeting (or as soon as the matter arises). Withdraw: do not remain or participate in that part of the meeting unless a dispensation has been granted (5.6, 5.8). Dispensation: if Board business would be unworkable without your input, discuss early with the Standards Officer (Board Secretary) / Chair and apply in advance (5.8).

Common examples (non-exhaustive)

- **Supplier / procurement:** you (or a close family member) work for, advise, or hold shares in a company bidding for or delivering services to the Board.

- **Employment / secondary roles:** your paid/unpaid role overlaps with a topic the Board is deciding (e.g., a partner organisation affected by the decision).
- **Funding / sponsorship:** you are involved with an organisation seeking funding, sponsorship, or a partnership arrangement with the Board.
- **Land / property:** you own property that may be affected by a Board decision (e.g., estate strategy, site development).
- **Personal relationships:** a close friend or family member is directly affected by the decision, or works in an area under discussion.

Reminder checklist

1. Identify the connection (5.1–5.4)
2. Apply the objective test (5.5)
3. Declare early (5.6)
4. Withdraw unless a dispensation is granted (5.6, 5.8)
5. Record/register changes to interests within required timescales (Section 4).
6. When in doubt, seek advice and choose transparency.