



# **EMPLOYEE CODE OF CONDUCT**

## Contents

1.	Introduction.	2
2.	Duties and Responsibilities	2
3.	Accountability	3
4.	Aims and Values	3
5.	Equality	3
6.	Obligation to the Public	3
7.	Obligation to Colleagues	3
8.	Conflicts of Interest	4
9.	Political Activity	4
10.	Integrity	5
11.	Use of Resources	5
12.	Official information	5
13.	Safety	5
14.	Reporting of Misconduct	5
	Version History	6
	Appendix 1 – Sign off sheet	7
	Appendix 2 – Explanatory Memorandum	8

## 1. Introduction

Waterway Ireland's Code of Conduct sets out the standards required from all employees in order to support its commitment to excellence and the provision of a high quality service to its sponsoring departments, its customers and the general public. This code provides information and guidance on a range of issues, to ensure that all employees are aware of the standards expected from them and are able to apply these standards in their day to day work.

All employees are required to read the code of conduct and be familiar with its terms and abide by it throughout their time with Waterways Ireland. This includes any staff who may be employed through an agency. Employees are also required to sign a declaration stating that they have read and understood the Code.

Any queries on the Code of Conduct should be raised with an employee's line manager or the Human Resources Section, who will provide assistance and support on the correct application of the terms of the code.

Employees should also familiarise themselves with Waterways Ireland's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, which will be used to deal with any cases of alleged misconduct that may arise.

## 2. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All Waterways Ireland employees, including agency employed staff, have a duty to:

- Discharge public functions in a reasonable manner and in accordance with the law;
- Uphold ethical standards governing their profession;
- Conduct themselves with integrity, impartiality and honesty;
- Observe the terms of relevant statutes, North and South; and
- Not deceive or knowingly mislead the institutions of Government, North and South; the sponsoring departments, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in the South and the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) in the North); the Department of Finance; Department of Finance & Personnel; the North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC) or the public.

Waterways Ireland's Chief Executive, who is the designated accounting officer, has overall responsibility for propriety within the organisation, including conduct and discipline.

### **3. ACCOUNTABILITY**

Waterways Ireland employees must be aware:

- That Waterways Ireland is accountable to the NSMC; and
- Of the respective roles of the sponsoring departments ( DHLGH and DfI), the Department of Finance, Department of Finance & Personnel and Waterways Ireland as set out in the Financial Memorandum, which is available from the Chief Executive or the Directors.

### **4. AIMS AND VALUES**

Waterways Ireland aims to provide the highest possible standard of service at all times to the public. This applies in particular to Waterways Ireland's customers, who use the waterways for recreation and other valid purposes.

### **5. EQUALITY**

Waterways Ireland is fully committed to promoting equality of opportunity. Waterways Ireland employees must treat members of the public, colleagues and all other people encountered through work with the same high level of courtesy and respect, and must not discriminate against people on the grounds of religious belief, political opinion, race, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability, family status or membership of the Travelling Community. Employees should refer to Waterway Ireland's Equal Opportunities Policy, which is issued to all employees, for more information on equality in Waterways Ireland. It is also available on the public share drive or from the Human Resources Section.

### **6. OBLIGATION TO THE PUBLIC**

Waterways Ireland employees who deal with the public shall do so efficiently, promptly and without bias or maladministration. Waterways Ireland employees shall offer the public the highest levels of conduct and service. In particular, they shall bear in mind that customer care is a priority and that assistance should always be provided in a timely and courteous manner. All members of the public, with whom employees come in contact, shall be treated with courtesy and respect.

Employees should refer to Waterway Ireland's Code of Practice for Quality Customer Care for more information in this regard. All employees are issued with this Code and any queries should be addressed to the Marketing & Communications Division.

### **7. OBLIGATIONS TO COLLEAGUES**

Waterways Ireland employees shall show courtesy and consideration in their dealings with colleagues and be willing to assist and co-operate with their colleagues at all times.

Waterways Ireland employees must at all times be free to work without the threat of bullying or harassment from colleagues or managers. Employees shall ensure that their behaviour does not endanger or cause distress to their colleagues, and shall familiarise themselves with Waterways Ireland's policy "Protecting Dignity at Work"- A Policy & Procedure for Dealing With Bullying & Harassment, which has been issued to all staff.

## **8. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

A conflict of interest may arise if employees use or are in a position to use information or knowledge that they acquire through working in Waterways Ireland, for the purpose of furthering their own private interests or interests of others.

Waterways Ireland employees need to be aware that their private interests or any activity that they may be involved in outside of work, should not give rise to a conflict of interest with their public duties and role within Waterways Ireland. Employees shall not misuse their official position or any information acquired in the course of their official duties to further their private interests or those of others, or engage in any activity which could create a conflict of interest.

Any employee who is concerned about a conflict of interest arising should inform their immediate manager or the Chief Executive. In particular, the Chief Executive, Directors, Regional Managers, Heads of Function, and employees working directly with clients and contractors have a responsibility to ensure that any possible conflicts of interest are identified at an early stage and that appropriate action is taken to resolve them.

Employees who are involved in roles in Waterways Ireland that are more likely to give rise to a conflict of interest are required to sign an annual Conflict of Interest disclosure.

The Conflict of Interest Policy provides more detailed guidance and is available on the Intranet.

## **9. POLITICAL ACTIVITY**

The rules regarding employees engaging in political activity vary between North and South. In the South, employees above the level of clerical officer are prohibited from standing for local, national or European election or engaging in any form of political activity. All other employees, North or South, may engage in political activity provided that it does not infringe on their public duties or role in Waterways Ireland.

Employees who are involved in political activity shall always be conscious of their public duties and exercise proper discretion, in order that no conflict of interest arises. Employees shall not use their position in Waterways Ireland for party political gain or personal political gain and shall not deliberately associate Waterways Ireland with any specific political party.

## **10. INTEGRITY**

Waterways Ireland employees shall not use their official position to receive; to agree to accept; or to attempt to obtain any payment or other consideration for doing, or not doing, anything to show favour, or disfavour, to any person. Any offer of such payment or inducement must be reported immediately to the Chief Executive. Employees shall not receive benefits of any kind from a third party, which might reasonably be seen to compromise their personal judgement and integrity. Employees will be subject to anti-corruption legislation in the respective jurisdictions, as appropriate.

## **11. USE OF RESOURCES**

Waterways Ireland employees shall endeavour to ensure that organisational resources are utilised efficiently and economically and not misused.

## **12. OFFICIAL INFORMATION & CONFIDENTIALITY**

Waterways Ireland employees owe a general duty of confidentiality to their employer. They are required, therefore, to protect official information held in confidence. Nothing in this code shall override existing statutory or common law obligations to keep confidential or, in appropriate cases, to disclose certain information. Where employees are in doubt about providing information to an enquiry, from whatever source, they should consult their line manager for advice.

Waterways Ireland employees should continue to observe the above duty of confidentiality after they have ceased employment with Waterways Ireland. Individual employees will be made aware of any rules on the acceptance of business appointments after resignation or retirement that may apply to them specifically.

## **13. SAFETY**

In accordance with the Waterways Ireland “Safety Statement”, employees are obliged to comply fully with all safety procedures and to use plant and equipment in a safe manner in line with relevant procedures, including the use of required personal protective equipment. Employees are also required to report without delay accidents and incidents, defects to plant and equipment, deficiencies in workplace safety or in work systems.

## **14. REPORTING OF MISCONDUCT**

As outlined in the Code of Conduct, Waterways Ireland is firmly committed to maintaining the highest standards of ethics, honesty, openness and accountability. Employees who have concerns about matters at work can usually resolve them easily by discussing them with their immediate line manager. However, when concerns arise about potential breaches of the law, health and safety issues or financial malpractice, please refer to our ‘Whistleblowing and Protected Disclosures Policy’ which is available on the Waterways Ireland Intranet.

*All matters raised will be treated in the strictest confidence, in so far as reasonably possible.*

**Version History**

Version	Author	Approved/Agreed	Ratified	Comments
1.0				
2.0	Wendy McKeown		27/01/2020	Legislative and contact details updated
3.0	Joy Drugan	Approved by SMT 16.12.2020	At IR forum 13.10.2021	Removal of whistleblowing/reporting of concerns to new specific policy  Section 8: Reference to Conflict of Interest policy on Intranet  Update of sponsor department in the South.

***Appendix 1***

**I have read and understood the contents of Waterways Ireland's Code of Conduct.**

**Name in Block Capitals:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Section:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



## **Appendix 2**

### **Waterways Ireland Code of Conduct - Explanatory Memorandum**

#### **1. Introduction**

This explanatory memo provides additional information and references in respect of specific issues raised during the trade union consultation process. This is to ensure that employees understand the background to the content of the Code and also where they can go to for further information. This memorandum is for internal use by employees only and should be read in conjunction with the Code of Conduct.

#### **2. General Reference Materials**

The Waterways Ireland Code of Conduct is issued to all Waterways employees and is based on relevant civil service guidelines that govern the conduct and behaviour of employees in public bodies, as follows:

North – Chapter 1 & Various Annexes – Conduct & Discipline Section – NICS Staff Handbook

South – Circular 26/04, The Civil Service Code of Standards & Behaviour

The standards outlined in these respective guidelines provide an overall framework, within which public employees are required to act, to ensure that the highest level of transparency and responsibility are exercised in the use of public money and public resources.

Any deviations from these guidelines, that are proposed for the Waterways Ireland Code of Conduct are subject to full review and approval from the NSMC.

#### **3. Political Activity**

Different guidelines are in place in the North & South with regard to the participation of employees at different levels in political activity and a number of restrictions exist. In the South, staff above clerical level are not allowed to engage in any form of political activity.

The Code outlines the general principle and then requires an employee to seek clarification in respect of their particular position vis a vis the relevant more detailed civil service guidelines.

The following may be referred to for further information:

North – NICS Handbook - Conduct Chapter 1.18.1 & Annex 8

#### **4. Integrity**

Whilst, the giving of gifts or benefits of some kind is often a common feature of the business world, it is critical that the receipt of such gifts or benefits by employees of Waterways Ireland from third parties does not set an expectation of reciprocity in respect of business dealings. Waterways Ireland is obliged to ensure that all its dealings, particularly in respect of the procurement of services using public money, are fully transparent and cannot be attributed to any form of influence.

To avoid employees being put in this position, where they may feel “obliged” to “return a favour” in some way or which could create perceptions of favouritism, employees are not allowed to receive gifts or benefits above a certain level. Waterways Ireland’s detailed guidelines in this regard on the receipt of and giving of hospitality and gifts should be read.

In addition, Section 1.9 Conduct Chapter NICS Handbook and Circular 26/04 – Section 16 Gifts should be referenced.