**Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner**

**for Essex**

**Staff Code of Conduct**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Version Control | Version 1.0 | June 2023 |
| Reviewed By  | P Brent-Isherwood | June 2023 |
| Policy owner | P Brent-Isherwood | June 2023 |
| First Published | P Brent-Isherwood | October 2023 |
| Next Review Date | P Brent-Isherwood | June 2026 |

**Version history**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Version****Number** | **Date** | **Reason for review** | **Comments** |
| **1.0** | October 2023 |  | First publication |

1. **About this Policy**

Version:1.10.0.3

Hash:0ouQ5sd3MeRoBkzoO9ybYNSP/04=

Ensuring that everybody who works for or on behalf of the PFCC behaves ethically and with integrity at all times is essential to creating a working environment where colleagues feel safe and valued and are inspired to do their best work. Making sure that everyone behaves in accordance with this Code of Conduct is therefore an essential element of our ongoing efforts to create and maintain a great place to work.

The Staff Code of Conduct outlines the PFCC’s commitment to upholding the highest standards of ethnics and integrity. The aim of the Code is to support each employee of the PFCC in understanding and being aware of their duties and responsibilities as public servants, in order to help them deliver the highest professional standards in their service to the PFCC and to the public, as well as in their interactions with Essex Police, the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service and other partners. If you are faced with a compliance concern or an ethical dilemma, this Code should provide you with easy-to-understand information to guide your decisions. It sets out the general standards of conduct expected of all PFCC employees and provides examples of these standards but is in no way exhaustive. It is not possible to cover every situation or standard within this Code. If you have any questions or need any guidance, please speak to your line manager, the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer or the Strategic Head of Policy and Public Engagement (the Deputy Monitoring Officer).

This Code of Conduct takes into account the requirements of the law and also what is regarded as best practice. It is consistent with the seven “Nolan Principles” of Public Life set out in section 28(1) of the Localism Act 2011:

* Selflessness
* Honesty
* Integrity
* Objectivity
* Accountability
* Openness
* Leadership

It is also consistent with the policing Code of Ethics and the two further policing principles of **fairness** and **respect**. All employees are expected to adhere to these nine principles at all times.

1. **Applicability**

Elected politicians and staff within public sector organisations are continuously in the public eye and therefore their conduct must be second to none. This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of conduct expected of everyone working on behalf of the PFCC. It applies to all employees (including those on secondment from other agencies / organisations, agency workers, interim staff and contractors) who are representing the PFCC either by working on their estate and / or representing them at an organised event where they are in attendance in that capacity. It is also acknowledged that there may be occasions where behaviour outside of the workplace may impact on the employment relationship between the PFCC and the employee.

It should be noted that, where employees are covered by ethical standards which govern their professions, this Code is not intended to replace, but rather to complement these.

The PFCC is subject to a separate but related Code of Conduct, which can be found as a Schedule to the Constitution.

1. **Policy Statement**

The PFCC’s Vision for Essex is that *safe and secure communities are the bedrock on which we build success and wellbeing for all.*

In pursuit of this, all employees are under a duty to serve the PFCC and the public by carrying out their work diligently under the direction and guidance of a senior manager within the PFCC’s office. Every employee should carry out their roles and implement the decisions of the PFCC to the best of their abilities. In return, the PFCC will strive to be an employer of choice through the creation of a positive, responsible, innovative, open and rewarding working environment in which ability and delivery is valued, encouraged, developed and recognised.

The reputation of the PFCC depends largely on the conduct of them and their employees and what the public believes about their conduct. In addition, promoting a culture of respect and treating each other well enables us to work better together. As such, the PFCC is committed to ensuring that colleagues at all levels treat each other with humanity, dignity, and respect. We stand against all forms of discrimination, promote equality, foster good relations and celebrate difference.

As public servants, the PFCC expects a standard of conduct from their workforce which reflects the principles set out by the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life. All employees should ensure that they:

• Treat all colleagues and service users respectfully and empathetically, taking into account their cultural and individual needs and perspectives and complying where relevant with the Victims’ Code.

• Conduct and present themselves at all times professionally and in manner befitting a representative of the PFCC.

• Take decisions solely in terms of the public interest, not to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

• Do 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.

• Are objective in carrying out public business and make choices based on merit, including when making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits.

 • Are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

• Are as open as possible about all the decisions and actions they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

• Declare any private interests relating to their public duties and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

• Promote and support these principles by leadership and example. This includes challenging as appropriate any predatory, misogynistic or otherwise inappropriate or discriminatory behaviour.

**4.0 Policy Principles – Standards and Expectations**

All staff are expected to treat others with respect and fairness, to uphold the law, and to behave at all times in a manner that is consistent with the PFCC’s values:

Integrity

We will:

* Do the right thing for the people of Essex.
* Value our relationships and build them on transparency, honesty and trust.
* Respect, support and listen to our partners and the public.
* Value and embrace all individuals for their diverse backgrounds, experiences and ideas.
* Keep promises and commitments made to others.

Accountability

We will:

* Involve others in decisions and actions that affect them.
* Take responsibility for our own actions.
* Promote communities in which everyone takes responsibility for improving their own environment.
* Demonstrate strong leadership and live our values.
* Offer support and challenge to each other and to our partners.
* Celebrate success and learn from experience as a team.

Commitment

We are:

* Proud of what we do and passionate about serving the people of Essex.
* Committed to do it once and do it right.
* Determined to find solutions and achieve results that make a positive difference.
* Committed to working in partnership with the public and partner agencies.
* Open to innovation and new ideas.
* Committed to making our workplace a positive environment where people want to work.

In addition, all staff are expected to behave in accordance with our corporate behaviours, although the level to which they are required to do this will vary depending on the nature of their role and their position within the organisation. Your role profile will tell you the level to which you are expected to demonstrate these behaviours and how you might go about demonstrating this.

|  |
| --- |
| **Corporate Behaviours** |
| Analyse critically | Emotionally aware |
| Collaborative | Innovative and open-minded |
| Deliver, support and inspire | Take ownership |

The sections that follow set out the standards and expectations of all employees. They reflect the PFCC’s expectation that everyone who represents them will:

• Treat people with respect at all times and without discrimination, harassment, or bullying.

• Act with integrity, including being open, honest, truthful, accurate and consistent.

• Make fair and objective decisions, based on evidence, without discrimination or bias.

• Use any public funds entrusted to them in an efficient, responsible and lawful manner that is in accordance with the PFCC’s Financial Regulations.

• Never act or take inappropriate decisions to gain personal financial or other material benefits.

• Behave in an ethical and moral way which makes our organisation a positive place to work. • Recognise and challenge behaviour where it falls short of our standards and expectations.

The following behaviours will not be tolerated:

* Anything which may cause a breach of equalities legislation, or of the PFCC’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
* Intimidate or attempted intimidation of any person who is or is likely to be:
* A complainant;
* A witness to a complaint or grievance, or
* Otherwise involved in the administration of any investigation or proceedings.
* Anything which compromises or is likely to compromise the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the PFCC.
* Anything which could reasonably be regarded as bringing the PFCC’s office or the elected office of the PFCC into disrepute.

**5.0 Policy**

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

An inclusive culture creates an environment in which individual differences, experiences and capabilities contribute to the overall success of the organisation. As such, the PFCC is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and diversity and to eliminating unlawful discrimination, be this direct (where one person is treated less favourably than another, either deliberately or accidentally, due to any protected characteristic or other unjustifiable reason) or indirect (whereby unjustifiable conditions or requirements have a disproportionately adverse effect on people of particular demographics or protected characteristics).

All staff are expected to:

* Treat others with kindness and acceptance at all times
* Think carefully about their words and actions, and never say or do anything that others may find offensive
* Foster a sense of belonging in the workplace, supporting diversity of thought and background, and actively working to eliminate any unconscious biases in the way we work
* Promote equality of opportunity in the delivery of services
* Comply with the PFCC’s equality, diversity and inclusion statements and policy
* Respect any differences within and between those who work for the PFCC and to whom they provide services
* Challenge discrimination and prejudice in all its forms and to ensure that all colleagues and service users are treated fairly, respectfully and with dignity. This includes speaking up when they hear or witness disrespectful behaviour.

The PFCC is an equal opportunities employer and will not discriminate in its employment practices nor in the provision of any services for the public by reference to any of the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010. Any form of discrimination or harassment is prohibited. Those involved in the recruitment of staff must ensure that there is no direct or indirect discrimination in the job description or person specification, or in the selection process. Where existing employees are concerned, managers and supervisors should avoid any discrimination in any employment matter, including training, promotion and discipline.

Everyone working for the PFCC has a role to play in building, maintaining and supporting accessibility for colleagues and service users. Where requested, we will provide reasonable adjustments for staff and service users with disabilities and other special needs. If you require an adjustment due to a disability or medical condition, please speak with your line manager or contact Occupational Health.

The safety and security of our colleagues and service users is paramount. The PFCC will not tolerate and threatening or violent behaviour towards any colleagues, service user or member of the public. Nor will they tolerate any sexual, physical or mental harassment[[1]](#footnote-1) by any employee towards any other colleagues, service users or members of the public. All staff must take responsibility for their conduct towards one another in order to ensure that behaviour cannot be perceived by others to be of an inappropriate nature. Any allegations of such behaviour will be considered under the relevant policy and may result in disciplinary action.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups

All staff must ensure that vulnerable adults and children remain safe during their dealings with the PFCC. Any safeguarding concern or matter relating to welfare must be reported immediately to the member of staff’s line manager in the first instance. Information relating to reporting concerns can also be found on the websites of the Southend, Essex or Thurrock Safeguarding Adults Board or Safeguarding Childrens Board, as appropriate. It should be noted that, depending on the circumstances, failure to report a safeguarding or welfare concern may be regarded as negligence and dealt with appropriately.

Use of Information and Confidentiality

Staff will often have, or be in a position to obtain, information which is confidential. This might relate to the work of the PFCC, members of the public who come into contact with them, contractors and / or other staff. Such information must never be passed on to anyone who is not entitled to have it, nor to be used for the personal advantage of the member of staff or anyone else. This includes confidential information about tenders or the costs of contracts.

All employees have a responsibility to protect confidential information from unauthorised access and disclosure, so we must take all reasonable steps to protect and safeguard such information, e.g. by password protecting confidential documents and not removing them from the workplace without permission. All colleagues are required to:

* Access and store confidential information only on approved devices.
* Consider confidentiality when holding conversations or using a screen. When sharing a working space with others (whether in the office or at home), try to hold conversations where they are less likely to be overhead. Using headphones minimises the possibility to be overheard on conference calls.
* Take care with print outs / papers. At the office, we have confidential waste bins / shredders. When working out of the office, safely store print outs / papers until you can dispose of them in a confidential waste bin.

Staff are not to:

(a) Discuss confidential matters in public

(b) Disclose information given to them in confidence by anyone, or information acquired by them which they believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, except where:

(i) They have the consent of a person authorised to give it;

(ii) They are required by law to do so;

(iii) The disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional advice, provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or

(iv) The disclosure is:

(a) Reasonable and in the public interest, and

(b) Made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the PFCC

(c) Prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law.

(d) Forward, share or upload confidential or classified information using personal messaging apps, social media or other online accounts such as personal email accounts.

Data Protection

We must all safeguard our information systems against viruses, data breaches and other risks. All staff are required to protect the PFCC’s information systems by:

* Always handling information in accordance with the Government Security Classifications
* Never using unauthorised devices on our network
* Never accessing unauthorised websites
* Never sharing passwords or access codes

Personal data is information about who you are, where you live, what you do and more. It’s any and all information that identifies you as a data subject, such as addresses, medical information, photographs etc. Further information can be found here: [Data Protection Act 2018 (legislation.gov.uk)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents/enacted). Everyone responsible for using personal data has to follow strict ‘data protection principles’. They must make sure the information is:

* Used fairly, lawfully and transparently
* Used for specified, explicit purposes
* Used in a way that is adequate, relevant and limited to only what is necessary
* Accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date
* Kept for no longer than is necessary
* Handled in a way that ensures appropriate security, including protection against unlawful or unauthorised processing, access, loss, destruction or damage

There is stronger legal protection for more sensitive information, such as race, ethnic background, political opinions, religious beliefs, genetics, health etc, and there are

separate safeguards for personal data relating to criminal convictions and offences.

Wherever personal data is used for purposes other than personal or household processing, the organisation behind it is the controller. Data Controllers, such as the PFCC, have the responsibility of deciding how personal data is processed and protected. Data Controllers can delegate the processing of personal data to Data Processors who will then process data on behalf of the Data Controller. The Data Processor would not have any reason to have the data if the Data Controller had not asked them to do something with it.

All staff are required to:

* Collect and access records only for legitimate business purposes.
* Keep and dispose of information according to the PFCC’s Records Retention Policy.
* Keep software security up to date. If you need to share data with others, choose a secure messaging app or online document sharing system. If you have to use email, which isn’t always secure, consider password protecting documents and sharing the passwords via a different channel, like text.
* Password protect systems and files using strong passwords. The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) recommends using three random words together as a password (e.g. 'coffeetrainfish'). Use different passwords for different systems and resist the urge to write them down.
* Be extra vigilant about opening web links and attachments in emails or other messages. Don’t click on unfamiliar web links or attachments claiming to give you important updates.
* Double check names and addresses when sending letters. If unsure, please check with recipient prior to sending, send registered or special delivery, hand deliver (if possible) or email with an attached pdf document. Password protect the pdf document and provide the password in a separate email or via another channel.
* Disable the auto-complete function for email addresses as sending emails to the wrong recipient is one of the most common data breaches.
* Treat emails as postcards. Remember that, once you send an email, it is auditable and available for all to see – so be careful what you send.

The Police Fire and Crime Commissioner’s Office has 72 hours to notify the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) of any data breaches. You must advise your manager and / or the Data Protection Officer (DPO) or Senior Information Risk Officer (SIRO) *as soon as* you are aware of the breach / near miss. Contact details within the office are:

Data Protection Officer: Suzanne Humphreys (Suzanne.humphreys@essex.police.uk)

Senior Information Risk Officer: Darren Horsman (Darren.horsman@essex.police.uk)

Conflicts and Disclosure of Interests

Staff are not to allow their personal interests to come into conflict with those of the PFCC and are to avoid situations that may lead others to question their objectivity. Conflicts of interest may arise in relation to:

* Outside employment, including self-employment and consultancy work
* Membership of an advisory board or board of directors, or equivalent fiduciary roles for a charitable, not-for-profit, religious or sociable organisation
* Unpaid professional activity for any entity that has a relationship with the PFCC’s office
* Financial interests or investments
* Relationships with Government or other officials who have influence over matters affecting the PFCC’s business

Members of staff are required to disclose to the Monitoring Officer if they have a disclosable pecuniary interest, other pecuniary interest or non-pecuniary interest in any business of the PFCC when they are asked to advise on the decisions of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, or have delegated authority to make a decision on their behalf. The Monitoring Officer will make and record a disclosure of the existence and nature of that interest, whether or not such interest is already registered on the Register of Interests.

Where a member of staff has an interest in any business of the PFCC which would otherwise be a disclosable pecuniary interest, but by virtue of its sensitivity (see below) details of the interest are not registered in the PFCC’s published Register of Interests, they need not disclose the nature of the interest.

*Disclosable Pecuniary Interests*

A disclosable pecuniary interest in any business of the PFCC exists if it is of a description set out below and is either an interest of a member of staff, or an interest (of which a member of staff is aware of their spouse, civil partner or a person they are living with as a spouse or civil partner (hereinafter referred to as “a relevant person”).

A disclosable pecuniary Interest is an interest which relates to or is likely to affect:

(a) Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on by a member of staff or a relevant person for profit or gain

(b) Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the PFCC) made or provided in respect of any expenses incurred in carrying out duties as a member of staff of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

(c) Any contract for goods, services or works which has not been fully discharged between a member of staff or a relevant person and the PFCC or a body in which they have a beneficial interest.

(d) A beneficial interest in any land in the county of Essex.

(e) A licence of any land in the county of Essex (alone or jointly with others) that a member of staff or a relevant person occupy for a month or longer.

(f) Any tenancy where, to the member of staff’s knowledge, the landlord is the PFCC and the tenant is a body in which the member of staff or a relevant person has a beneficial interest.

(g) Any beneficial interest in securities of a body which, to that member of staff’s knowledge, has a place of business or land in the county of Essex and either:

(a) The total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body, or

(b) The beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of the share capital of that body, if of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class.

If a member of staff has a disclosable pecuniary interest then:

(a) The function will not be exercised personally but will be delegated or dealt with in some other manner to ensure the conflict of interest does not arise.

(b) They are not to seek improperly to influence a decision about that the exercise of that function.

*Other Pecuniary Interests*

A member of staff will have a pecuniary interest in any business of the PFCC where it relates to or is likely to affect:

(a) Any person or body who employs or has appointed them

(b) Any contract for goods, services or works made between the PFCC and the member of staff, or a firm in which they are a partner, or a company of which they are a remunerated director, which has been fully discharged within the last 12 months

If a member of staff has another pecuniary interest in any business of the PFCC which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice their judgement of the public interest:

(a) The function will not be exercised personally but will be delegated or dealt with in some other manner to ensure the conflict of interest does not arise.

(b) They are not to seek improperly to influence a decision about that the exercise of that function.

*Non-Pecuniary Interests*

A member of staff will have a non-pecuniary interest in any business of the PFCC where it relates to or is likely to affect:

(a) Any body of which they are a member or in a position of general control or management

(b) Any body:

(i) Exercising functions of a public nature;

(ii) Directed to charitable purposes; or

(iii) One of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)

of which they are a member or in a position of general control or management

(c) The interests of any person from whom they have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50

(d) A decision in relation to that business which might reasonably be regarded as affecting their wellbeing or the wellbeing of a relevant person to a greater extent than the majority of other council taxpayers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the county of Essex.

*Registration of Interests*

All staff are required, either within 28 days of their appointment, or of becoming aware of the interest, to register details of:

(i) Any disclosable pecuniary interests they have in the business of the PFCC

(ii) Any other pecuniary interests they have in the business of the PFCC

(iii) Any non-pecuniary interests they have in the business of the PFCC

by providing written notification to the PFCC’s Monitoring Officer.

*Outside Employment*

All employees, as part of their terms and conditions of service, are required to obtain written consent to undertake any outside employment, in accordance with the Business Interests – Staff Declaration Policy. Outside employment which conflicts with the PFCC’s interests will not be authorised.

Even when authorised to pursue outside interests, staff must refrain from progressing personal matters or their private business or voluntary sector interests during working time or using PFCC equipment or resources. When undertaking any authorised outside employment, staff should also be careful to follow the PFCC’s rules on the ownership of intellectual property. More detail is available if required from either the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer or Human Resources.

Use of Financial Resources

Confidence in the integrity of the PFCC and their staff team will be shaken if there is any suspicion that they could have been influenced in any way by any improper motive. With this in mind, it is expected that all staff will:

(a) Not use or attempt to use their position improperly to confer on or secure for themself or any other person an advantage or disadvantage.

(b) When using or authorising the use by others of the resources of the PFCC:

(i) Not use those resources for their personal benefit or for the benefit of their friends or family or any other person in relation to any business interest of theirs.

(ii) Not use those resources improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes).

Staff involved in commissioning and grant giving, and / or in the authorisation of payments to staff or suppliers must ensure that they use any public funds entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner. They should strive to ensure value for money to the local community and to avoid any legal challenge to the PFCC.

Such staff must be conversant with the PFCC’s Financial and Procurement Regulations and ensure fairness and impartiality when dealing with all suppliers, contractors, applicants and tenderers, in accordance with these regulations. No favour must be shown during the process to businesses or organisations in which the employee has any financial or controlling interest or which is run by anyone with whom the employee has any form of business or personal relationship, and any such relationship must be declared. If any ongoing management of grants or contracts already awarded or involvement in payment to contractors may be similarly affected, the employee should consult their line manager in the first instance.

Employees must ensure that any personal claims for expenses are accurate and claimed in accordance with agreed procedures and rates.

*Fraud, Bribery and Corruption*

Staff must ensure that any financial procedures for which they are responsible conform to the PFCC’s Financial and Procurement Regulations and are secure against theft and fraud. Employees are likely to be the first to notice anything unusual in the PFCC’s financial dealings and are required to report any actual or suspected irregularities via the agreed procedures.

Staff are reminded that it is a criminal offence to be involved in any fraudulent and / or corrupt activities, either within the course of or outside of work.

Hospitality, Gifts and Sponsorship

Staff must never offer or accept anything of value in order to influence a business decision or be seen to do so. It is a serious criminal offence for any public servant to accept money or any other form of inducement as a reward for doing or not doing something or showing favour or disfavour to any person or organisation. As such, employees must only accept offers of hospitality where there is a genuine need to impart information to or to represent the PFCC in the community, as part of its service or corporate activities. There is no objection to staff accepting insignificant items of token value, such as a pen or a diary, from contractors or outside suppliers, but if they are in any doubt regarding the appropriateness of this, they should politely decline.

Members of staff are required, within 28 days, to notify the PFCC’s Monitoring Officer in writing of any gift, benefit or hospitality with a value in excess of £50 which they have been offered in a professional capacity from any person or body other than the PFCC, providing details of:

• What the gift or hospitality was

• Who it was from

• Whether it was accepted or declined

• if accepted, the reason / justification for acceptance

• Estimated value

The Monitoring Officer will place their notification on a public register of gifts and hospitality, along with details as to whether it has been accepted or declined.

When receiving authorised hospitality, employees should be particularly sensitive as to its timing in relation to decisions the PFCC may be taking that may affect those providing the hospitality. The Monitoring Officer or Strategic Head of Policy and Public Engagement (Deputy Monitoring Officer) can advise on this.

Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor a PFCC activity, the same conventions concerning the acceptance of gifts and hospitality apply, and particular care should be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.

Where the PFCC wishes to sponsor an event or service, neither an employee nor any partner, spouse or relative of any employee must benefit from such sponsorship without there being full disclosure of any such interest.

Political Impartiality

It is vital that both the PFCC and the public can be confident that their employees will service the PFCC loyally and impartially, whatever political party they may represent. In line with this, all staff of the PFCC except the Deputy PFCC are politically restricted and must not allow their own personal or political opinions to impact their work or cause detriment to the PFCC. All employees are entitled to their own political views, but must never use work time or resources to progress their own personal political activities.

When selecting staff, the only question under consideration should be which candidate would best fulfil the duties and responsibilities of the post in line with the agreed recruitment policies. Personal or political affiliations must not influence the decision. If anyone attempt to canvass support for any candidate, this must be resisted and reported to the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer.

In order to avoid any perceived conflicts of interest, employees who are members of any organisation which is not open to the public without formal membership and commitment of allegiance, and which has secrecy about rules of membership or conduct, are required to declare this membership in the register of employee’s interests.

Use of Social Media

If employees use social media in their personal life, they must not allow this to conflict with the business of the PFCC or their reputation. They must not reference their work for the PFCC, the business of the PFCC or any decisions they have made in any way that may be considered controversial or which could otherwise cause upset. Employees should familiarise themselves with the PFCC’s Social Networking Policy and comply with it at all times.

Use of Equipment and Assets

Through their roles, staff will have access to equipment, assets and materials that belong to the PFCC, and are expected to take reasonable care to prevent loss or damage to such equipment and assets (including documents and premises) at all times.

Any facilities or assets provided by the PFCC to assist the discharge of duties (including telephone, email accounts, photocopying, scanning and faxing facilities) are provided for professional use in connection with this employment only. The PFCC’s property should not be removed from their premises or utilised for personal use unless appropriate permission has been given.

Employees are expected to protect the PFCC’s assets by:

* Securing any PFCC property in their care against theft, loss or damage and reporting any such incidents immediately.
* Reporting any assets that are defective or in need of repair.
* Ensuring that there is no unauthorised access to or modification of the PFCC’s computer equipment, programmes or data. No hardware or software (including computer games) should be installed onto any of the PFCC’s computers.
* Making themselves aware of the PFCC’s Data Protection and other information security policies and adhering to them at all times. Improper, fraudulent or malicious use of IT systems is a breach of the PFCC’s policies and could lead to disciplinary action.

Health and Safety at Work

All staff must, by law, take reasonable care of the health and safety of themselves and those who may be affected by anything they do at work, including their colleagues and service users. This means that they must:

* Carry out their work in a safe and proper manner, having regard at all times to their own health and safety and that of their colleagues and the public.
* Familiarise themselves with corporate health and safety policies and procedures and comply with these at all times.
* Report any hazards they may notice, or any concerns about the manner in which they are directed to carry out their duties, to either their line manager or the Chief Executive as Head of Paid Service.
* Immediately report any accidents, incidents or near misses in accordance with agreed procedures.

Staff should not do anything, whether intentionally or recklessly, which might interfere with anything provided in the interests of health, safety and welfare. Nor should they undertake any tasks in a manner which might endanger themselves, their colleagues or any member of the public. If any member of staff is unsure about the safety procedures relevant to their role, or how to access protective clothing or equipment, they should consult their line manager in the first instance.

*The Influence of Alcohol and Drugs*

Alcohol and recreational drug use impair our ability to perform at our best and can place others at risk. Staff must therefore not present themselves for work still under, or recovering from the effects of, alcohol, drugs or other substances.

There may be certain limited occasions on which staff may be permitted by management to consume a small amount of alcohol during working hours (for example, during a staff Christmas meal), but otherwise they should not consume or be under the influence of alcohol or other substances whilst at their place of work or on duty elsewhere.

Support is available for colleagues who may be struggling to manage their relationship with alcohol and / or drugs. Please speak to your line manager or contact the Employee Assistance Programme if you need assistance.

*Smoking*

Smoking (including of e-cigarettes) is not permitted on the PFCC’s estate other than in designated areas. Smoking on duty outside of such areas could lead to disciplinary action.

*Driving on PFCC Business*

Employees who are required to drive in the course of their work must comply with the standards set out below, as well as the law:

* Staff must never drive under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, or having consumed prescription or over-the-counter drugs or other substances where it is clear that their ability to drive could be affected.
* Staff must ensure that their vehicle is roadworthy, well-maintained, appropriately insured and taxed, and suitable for the purposes for which it is being used.
* Staff must only drive on PFCC business in accordance with the terms of their licence.
* The use of any mobile phone whilst driving on PFCC business is strictly prohibited unless using a compliant hands-free device.

When using a pool car, all the related terms and conditions must be adhered to, including:

* Complying with speeding regulations and driving in accordance with the Highway Code.
* Ensuring that vehicles are appropriately secured.
* Notifying any police intervention or driving offence committed whilst using a pool car.
* Notifying if they are involved in a road traffic accident whilst driving the vehicle.
* Making every effort to avoid incurring parking tickets and other penalties, and immediately notifying if these are issued. Employees are personally responsible for the payment of such.
* Only using pool cars on official business and not for personal use.

Dress Code and Personal Hygiene

The manner in which employees present themselves at work directly affects the PFCC’s image and reputation. The PFCC therefore expects their employees to present themselves and dress in a professional manner whilst at work and whilst representing them. This includes being clean, tidy, presentable and maintaining good personal hygiene at all times. Staff should refrain from dressing in a manner that could cause offence or embarrassment to the public and / or colleagues, or which could undermine the image and reputation of the PFCC (e.g. by either under- or over-dressing).

Where managers feel any employee is dressed inappropriately for the workplace, their concerns will be brought to the attention of the employee. Any employee unclear about the appropriateness of any form of dress should seek guidance from their manager.

Working and Personal Relationships

*Relationships with Colleagues*

The PFCC promotes freedom of expression and open communication, whilst still expecting all employees to follow this Code of Conduct. We expect all staff to foster a well-organised, respectful and collaborative working environment, and to avoid offending colleagues, participating in serious disputes and disrupting our workplace.

We expect managers and supervisors to delegate duties to team members taking into account their competences and workload. Likewise, we expect team members to follow legitimate management instructions and complete their duties with skill and in a timely manner.

All employees must make themselves available for reasonable contact and communication with their colleagues, supervisors or team members. No employee may unreasonably refuse to work with a colleague within or outside of the organisation. Except in exceptional circumstances, employees are expected to work collaboratively where appropriate in order to deliver the best outcomes for the people of Essex. If any employee believes that they have reasonable ground(s) to refuse to work with any individual internally or externally, they should discuss this with their line manager in the first instance and, if necessary, pursue the matter through the appropriate procedure.

Any employees who are in a relationship which could be considered as presenting a conflict of interest, or impacting on the delivery of their role, should complete a declaration of interest to their line manager. Any circumstances in which it is reported that a close personal relationship is having a negative impact on employment decisions, compliance with policy or service delivery, based on the evidence. Close personal relationships may include (but are not limited to) those between members of the same family and those connected via marriage or similar relationships. Any such relationship between colleagues will be risk assessed, and consideration given where one of the individuals has:

• Supervisory / management responsibility for the other

• Access to confidential and / or sensitive information about the other

• Access to certain resources or can influence decision making which may affect the other.

Following completion of a risk assessment, it may be necessary to take proportionate action, in consultation with the employees concerned, to ensure there is no breach of the PFCC’s policies. However, ultimately, it is the responsibility of each employee to ensure that no conflict develops or arises as a result of their personal relationships, and they must take reasonable steps to avoid any such conflict. For example, no member of staff is to be involved in any decisions relating to the discipline, access to training, promotion, appraisal or pay, or the consideration of any complaints or grievances against any other employee who is a relative or partner or theirs, or with whom they have any other close personal relationship.

*Relationships with the Public*

The reputation of the PFCC depend largely on how members of the public and service users are dealt with by their employees in their day to day contact with them. Employees should always be courteous, helpful and efficient when dealing with enquiries. They should supply whatever information the individual is entitled to about the services and activities of the PFCC and do all they can to ensure that they receive any services or other assistance to which they are entitled. The need for any service should be assessed impartially and professionally, avoiding any personal prejudice in providing or refusing any service or assistance.

Dealing with Complaints

All complaints must be dealt with in accordance with the PFCC’s Complaints and Expressions of Dissatisfaction Policy.

Dealing with the Press and Media

Most staff will not be required or permitted to deal with the press or media and should forward any such enquiries to the Strategic Head of Policy and Public Engagement or the Communications and Engagement Manager. You may not speak to the media or press on the PFCC’s behalf without the prior approval of the PFCC, Deputy PFCC, Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer or the Strategic Head of Policy and Public Engagement.

Attendance

Employees must adhere to their contractual hours and any flexible working arrangements agreed with their manager, and operate time recording as required, including when working from home. We can make exceptions on occasions when colleagues are unable to do this but, generally, we expect employees to be punctual and to work contracted core hours.

If employees are unable to attend work for any reason, including sickness, they must give notification of this in line with the agreed procedures before their scheduled start time on their first day of absence, including when they are due to work from home. Failure to notify their manager that they are unable to attend work may be deemed as unauthorised absence.

Annual leave must be booked in advance in accordance with the Leave Policy.

Training

The PFCC offers a wide range of training to staff. Colleagues are expected to play a proactive role in identifying their own training and development needs through the Personal Development Review (PDR) process and to undertake any relevant training related to their roles and responsibilities. In line with this, employees must attend training events as and when required and adhere to any post entry training agreements.

Criminal Convictions and Misconduct outside of Work

All members of staff are expected to act within the law at all times, including when off duty. Employees should notify the vetting department immediately of any police intervention such as a caution, arrest, fine, conviction or pending prosecution for any criminal offence, whether committed at work or outside working hours. The vetting department will then review the seriousness of the offence committed relative to the role held and the reputation of the PFCC.

**6.0 Roles and Responsibilities**

Everyone working for or on behalf of the PFCC has a collective responsibility for creating and maintaining a safe and respectful working environment. As such, we are all responsible for acting with integrity, in compliance with the law and this Code.

All members of staff are responsible for protecting and upholding the ethics and integrity of the organisation, including through compliance with this Code of Conduct. Each member of staff is expected to be accountable for their own behaviour, decisions and actions; to be willing to listen and learn from experience, and to challenge – through the agreed procedures and without fear of recrimination – any behaviour that falls short of the standards set out in this document or other PFCC policies and procedures.

Managers are role models and, as such, it is every manager’s responsibility to lead the organisation and their individual team(s) with authenticity, honesty and integrity. They should celebrate and value individual differences and ensure that this policy is adhered to by all their staff. All managers and supervisors are expected to:

* Encourage team members to come to them with questions and concerns, and to make themselves available to listen to team members and help them make sound decisions.
* Continually scrutinise organisational practices and procedures, and take personal responsibility for identifying, recommending and implementing opportunities for improvement.
* Take swift action to protect employees from any potential retaliation against team members who share concerns or ask questions.

*Speaking Up*

We value and encourage a transparent environment where everybody feels comfortable holding one another to account to complying with our values; asking questions, respectfully disagreeing, and raising concerns where they do not feel this is the case. If you are asked to do something that makes you feel uncomfortable, or if you see or hear behaviour that does not comply with this Code, the law, or our values, please raise your concerns. Be an upstander, not a bystander.

**7.0 Consequences of Non-Compliance**

We expect all colleagues to treat one another, the public and our service users with dignity and respect. Any complaint that a member of staff has not adhered to this Code of Conduct will be taken seriously, will be subject to a thorough investigation and dealt with through the disciplinary procedure where appropriate.

Failing to cooperate or interfering with any misconduct investigation may also result in disciplinary action. Colleagues are not to retaliate against anyone who raises a concern or participates in an investigation in good faith. Any such retaliation will also result in disciplinary action.

Some breaches of the Code of Conduct may constitute gross misconduct, which could result in summary dismissal if proven. Those engaged through an agency or other contract may have their services dispensed with in line with their terms of engagement.

Some breaches of the Code of Conduct (such as theft, bribery, fraud, physical violence or sexual offences) may also constitute criminal offences. In these instances, the PFCC will involve the police and any relevant professional bodies or organisations as appropriate.

Other violations arising from the contravention of this policy, such as breaches of the Data Protection Act, could lead to fines being levied against the PFCC and could potentially also result in civil or criminal action being taken against the PFCC and / or the individual(s) involved.

**8.0 Monitoring and Review**

The PFCC reserves the right to amend this Code of Conduct from time to time. It will be reviewed by or on behalf of Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner within three years of the date of publication to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. Such review may take place earlier if required by changes in legislation, regulations or best practice.

1. **Related Policies and Procedures**
* Agile Working – Line Manager’s Guide
* Anti-Fraud and Bribery Commitment
* Being Considerate Colleagues
* Business Interests – Staff Declaration Policy
* Complaints and Expressions of Dissatisfaction Policy
* Confidentiality Declaration
* Constitution
* Data Protection Policy
* Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
* Ethics and Integrity Framework
* Financial and Procurement Regulations
* Information Security for Agile Working
* Leave Policy
* Records Retention Policy
* Schemes of Delegation and Consent
* Social Networking Policy
* Staff Discipline Procedure
* Use of Communications Policy
1. Defined as any repeated or unwanted comments, suggestions or physical contact that are found intimidating, upsetting, humiliating, objectionable or offensive, or which otherwise affects a person’s dignity at work [↑](#footnote-ref-1)