Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh

Regulating Health + Social Care Professionals

Guide to the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics

Plain English
Approved by NALA

Tús Áite do Shábháilteacht Othar
Patient Safety First

Guide to the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics

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Important information for registered professionals

It is important that you read, understand and meet the standards set out in your profession's Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics. This document provides the background to the Code and we hope answers some of your questions.

What is the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics?

The Code sets out the standards of conduct, performance and ethics which you must apply during the course of your work.

It is developed by your Registration Board and is specific to your profession.

What does the Registration Board do?

The Registration Board is responsible for:

- setting the code of professional conduct and ethics
- setting the qualifications for entry to the Register
- establishing and maintaining the Register of members for that profession
- assessing and recognising qualifications gained outside the State

- approving and monitoring education and training programmes for entry to the Register
- setting the requirements for continuing professional development.

Each profession has its own Registration Board at CORU.

Each Board has 13 members and a lay majority (more lay members than health and social care professionals).

Why does each profession have its own Code?

While many of the standards are common across the professions, having a Code for each profession means that issues specific to your work are covered.

Who develops the Code?

The Code is developed by your Registration Board in consultation with the public, members of your profession, representative bodies and employers. It is developed after a new Registration Board is established but before the Register for that Board opens.

Why is the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics important?

The Code is important because it sets out the standards that you must follow.

If someone makes an allegation of professional misconduct against you, your conduct will be measured against these standards if a fitness to practise hearing is deemed necessary.

Do I have to comply with the Code?

Yes, as a registered health and social care professional you must comply with the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics.

A breach or breaches of this Code could amount to professional misconduct, a fitness to practise hearing and you receiving a disciplinary sanction.

What is included in the Code?

The Code includes the responsibilities of a registered professional. These are divided into three categories:

1. **Conduct**
2. **Performance, and**
3. **Ethics.**

Common standards which underpin the profession specific codes, can include:

1. **Conduct**

- Act in the best interests of service users
- Respect the confidentiality and privacy of service users and their families
- Maintain high standards of personal conduct and behaviour
- Provide information about conduct and your competence.

2. **Performance**

- Address health issues related to your fitness to practise
- Obey laws and regulations
- Act within the limits of your knowledge, skills, competence and experience

- Keep your professional knowledge and skills up to date
- Get informed consent from service users
- Communicate with service users, carers and other professionals
- Assist and advise colleagues, recently qualified registrants and students
- Teach, supervise and assess students and other professionals
- Supervise tasks that you give to others
- Keep accurate records
- Address health and safety risks
- Address risks to service users.

3. Ethics

- Demonstrate ethical awareness
- Respect the rights and dignity of service users
- Carry out your duties in a professional and ethical way
- Undertake research in an ethical manner
- Make sure that your advertising is truthful, accurate and lawful.

Where can I get a copy of the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics?

If the Register for your profession has opened, you will be able to download the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics on www.coru.ie.

You will also receive a copy of the Code with your Certificate of Registration which is posted out to you.

Want to find out more?

You can find out more information on our website www.coru.ie

If you have any questions, you can call (01) 293 3160 or email info@coru.ie

This guide contains general information. It is not advice on any particular matter. You should not act or refrain from acting on the basis of any material contained in this guide, without seeking further appropriate advice as necessary.

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