



Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte  
agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh  
Regulating Health +  
Social Care Professionals

# Code of Conduct

Extracted from Appendix 1 of the  
Code of Corporate Governance  
approved by Council on the 09 12 2021

Health and Social Care Professionals Council

An Chomhairle un Ghairmithe Sláinte agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh

# Code of conduct

## 1. Introduction

In this Code of Conduct, “members” includes members of the:

- ▶ Health and Social Care Professionals Council (“Council”),
- ▶ Registration Boards,
- ▶ Committees of Council,
- ▶ Executive (“employees of Council”).

The objective of Council is to ensure that the highest possible standards of integrity are maintained. This document sets out guidelines to be followed in this regard. Guidelines are formulated to reflect obligations falling on members in their conduct and their deposition of public duties in a spirit of explicitly specifying CORU’s position for all concerned.

This Code sets out Council’s expectations of members. As a Regulator, CORU sets standards for the conduct, performance and ethics of health and social care professionals on CORU’s registers. Council therefore also feels that it is important that members maintain high standards in their role, and that these standards are made public. Members should comply with the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended).

From time to time, Council may appoint external persons to assist Committees of Council or the working group of a Registration Board, to provide particular expertise. This Code of Conduct will apply to such persons to the extent that it does not conflict with the written agreement setting out their terms of engagement.

This Code of Conduct particularly applies to members whenever they take part in CORU business, or whenever they represent CORU.

Members of Council, Registration Boards and Committees of Council should also bear in mind that due to the high profile manner of their role, even when they consider themselves to be working in a private capacity, or for another organisation, they may still be viewed as a representative of, or an ambassador for CORU. They should be mindful of this Code and disclose their outside employment/business interests in conflict or in potential conflict with the business of CORU.

The Executive should not be involved in outside employment/business interests in conflict or in potential conflict with the business of CORU.

In addition, a member whose actions in another role or in private capacity were such that their role as a member was undermined or public or registrant faith in CORU was compromised could have their actions judged against this Code of Conduct, and action taken accordingly.

## 2. Objectives

The objectives of this Code of Conduct are:

- ▶ to set out an agreed set of ethical principles;
- ▶ to promote and maintain confidence and trust in CORU;
- ▶ to prevent the development and or acceptance of unethical practices;
- ▶ to promote the highest legal, management and ethical standards in all activities of CORU; and
- ▶ to promote compliance with best practice governance and management practices in all activities of CORU.

## 3. Principles to ensure high standards

Members should strive to perform their duties in accordance with the highest standards of confidentiality, integrity and honesty, fairness and respect for others and loyalty.

### 3.1 Confidentiality

Some information to which members have access as part of their role will be in the public domain. However, there will be times when they may have access to confidential information which includes, but is not limited to, personal data of CORU's data subjects, privileged information, commercially sensitive information, information received in confidence. This may include papers from private sections of Council, Registration Board or Committee meetings, information from panel hearings or information relating to Council employees.

If a member becomes aware of a breach in confidentiality, they must immediately notify the Chief Executive Officer and/or their relevant Chairperson.

Examples are set out hereunder of how confidentiality is applied in action.

#### Safeguarding information

Members must not disclose any confidential information which they have been given because of their role as a member other than for a proper purpose or if they are required to do so by law.

Members must take appropriate steps to ensure that CORU's confidential information is stored securely.

Members should contact the Chief Executive Officer or their relevant Chairperson if the status of any information is unclear.

#### Engagement with the media

Members will not engage with the media about the work of CORU. If any contact is made with a member by the media/journalist, the media/journalist should be referred to the Communications team in CORU.

#### Maintaining confidentiality after leaving service

When a member resigns or retires, at the end of their term of office or at the end of their contract, all devices provided by CORU to that member must be returned to the CORU Executive in accordance with the directions provided to the member.

In historical instances where hardcopy papers were issued to Council members, Registration Board members or Committee members, the members are required to confirm in writing to the relevant Secretary that the papers have been securely disposed of in an appropriate manner.

CORU's Executive maintains a record of the confirmation provided by the member of their secure return of devices and/or confidential information.

Members are required to note that their obligation not to disclose confidential information and to keep confidential information secure does not cease on resignation, retirement, end of term of office or end of contract.

### 3.2 Integrity and honesty

Members are expected to act with integrity and honesty in carrying out their responsibilities. Examples are set out hereunder of how integrity and honesty are applied in action.

#### Recognising and managing conflict of interest

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Information in relation to obligations relating to the Ethics in Public Office Acts is outlined in

Appendix II (Disclosure provisions/statements of interest) of the Code of Corporate Governance.

Members should conform with procedures laid down in relation to conflict of interests situations.

Information in relation to disclosing a conflict of interest during a meeting is outlined in Section 2.12 of Appendix III (Standing Orders) of the Code of Corporate Governance.

Members should be aware that acceptance of further employment where the potential for conflict of interest arises should be restricted during a reasonable period of time after the exercise of a function in CORU has ceased.

#### Misusing opportunity

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Members will refrain from using the CORU's reputation, resources or time for personal gain or for the benefit of persons and/or organisations unconnected with the body or its activities.

#### Gifts, sponsorship and hospitality

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All members must avoid accepting gifts, hospitality or benefits which could be construed as an attempt to gain influence or favour.

Where gifts, hospitality or benefits are offered as a consequence of CORU business and do not contravene the above, these must be registered with the Chief Executive Officer within a reasonable period of time, usually within one month.

#### Procurement

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Council has approved tendering and purchasing procedures, as well as levels of authority for the approval of expenditure. These procedures must be strictly adhered to by members.

They are designed to provide an objective framework to assess the products/services and value for money of suppliers, and to provide Council with goods and services at competitive prices. The tendering and purchasing procedures are in line with national and EU procurement requirements.

#### Expense claims

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Council's Chairperson is paid an additional allowance by Council for performing his/her functions. This rate is set by the Department of Health in line with government policy.

Other than the Chairperson of Council, Council members, Registration Board members and members of Committees of Council receive no fees for their work. They are however entitled to allowances for travelling and subsistence incurred when attending CORU's meetings or in connection with any of CORU's affairs. The rates are set by the Department of Health in line with government policy. The rates are updated on a regular basis by the Department of Expenditure and Reform and are applied promptly.

Claims for payments or expenses must be made strictly in accordance with the CORU's Travel and Subsistence Policy. Further detail is provided in the Financial Policies provided in Appendix V.

### 3.3 Fairness and respect for others

Members are committed to fairness and respect for others in carrying out their responsibilities.

Members of Council, Registration Boards and Committees of Council should endeavour to attend all CORU meetings and to participate in those meetings having read meeting packs in advance of their respective meetings.

Examples are set out hereunder of how fairness and respect for others are applied in action.

#### **In respect of other members**

As well as being responsible for their own conduct, members also have a duty to treat their colleagues and others with courtesy and respect and have due regard for their safety, health and welfare.

In respect of interactions with social and health care professionals or members of the public

Members will treat all social and health care professionals and members of the public with courtesy and respect.

#### **In respect for staff and operational issues**

Individual members of the Executive do not take instruction from individual members of Council, Registration Boards or Committees of Council.

#### **In respect of suppliers to Council**

Suppliers must be treated fairly and with respect at all times. All suppliers are entitled to fair treatment, and should each have a reasonable opportunity to compete successfully for business.

### 3.4 Loyalty

Members acknowledge the responsibility to be loyal to CORU and to be fully committed to its activities.

## 4. Members' annual performance reviews

Members are required to co-operate with internal auditors in the internal audit process.

Council Members must participate in the annual performance review system and follow the agreed procedure.

## 5. Health and Social Care Professionals Council employees

Council employees, the CORU Executive, carry out the functions of Council, under the strategic direction of Council.

Council places the highest priority on promoting and preserving the health and safety of its employees.

Council members may be asked to sit on selection panels for certain posts, or to consider papers that are presented to meetings on employment issues, but will not take any other part of employment matters.

All employees are responsible to the Chief Executive Officer. The Chief Executive Officer is appointed by Council and managed by the Chairperson of Council.

Any member of Council, a Registration Board or a Committee of Council may comment positively on the work done by employees.

This can be done formally, for example by asking to make a note of their thanks to a particular person or group in a minute, or by speaking to the employee's manager or to the Chief Executive Officer, or more informally, directly to the employee.

Any member of Council, a Registration Board or a Committee of Council with concerns about the behaviour or performance of an employee must always raise these concerns with the Chief Executive Officer, who will deal with the issue in accordance with HR policies.

If a member has a concern about the Chief Executive Officer, this should be raised with the Chairperson of Council.

## 6. Compliance with the Code of Conduct

It is the responsibility of each member to ensure that they are aware of the provisions of this Code of Conduct and adhere to the standards detailed therein.

The Code should be viewed as assisting members in understanding the nature of their responsibilities and in avoiding any difficulty which might arise during the fulfilment of their roles and responsibilities.

Each member must acknowledge the receipt of this Code of Conduct and undertake to comply with the requirements outlined in this Code of Conduct. A copy of the required declaration is included in Section 13 of this Code.

From time to time, Council may assess a member's awareness and knowledge, as well as their compliance with the Code.

## 7. Breach of the Code of Conduct

### 7.1 Members other than employees

Any minor breach of this Code of Conduct will be dealt with in the first instance informally, for example by the relevant Chairperson drawing the breach to the member's attention during a meeting or similar.

If a Council member is concerned that another member of Council may be in breach of this Code of Conduct, they should raise their concerns with the Chairperson of Council.

Where there is evidence of a deliberate, serious or continued breach of this Code of Conduct this will be taken up by the Chairperson of Council, in a special convened meeting if appropriate.

If a Registration Board member is concerned that another Registration Board member may be in breach of this Code of Conduct, they should raise their concerns with the Chairperson of the Registration Board.

Where there is evidence of a deliberate, serious or continued breach of this Code of Conduct, this will be taken up by the Chairperson of the Registration Board, in a special convened meeting if appropriate.

If a member of a Committee of Council is concerned that another Committee member may be in breach of this Code of Conduct, they should raise their concerns with the Chairperson of the Committee.

Where there is evidence of a deliberate, serious or continued breach of this Code of Conduct, this will be taken up by the Chairperson of the Committee, in a special convened meeting if appropriate.

### 7.2 Employees

If an employee breaches the Code of Conduct, this will be dealt with in the first instance informally by the Chief Executive Officer.

If an employee is concerned that another employee may be in breach of this code, they should raise their concerns with the Chief Executive Officer.

Where there is evidence of deliberate, serious or continued breach of this Code of Conduct by an Employee, this will be taken up by the Chief Executive Officer in an appropriate manner and in accordance with HR policies.

## 8. Removal of a Council Member from office

A Council member may be removed from office as provided in [section 24](#) and/or [Schedule 1 Section 5](#) of the Act.

## 9. Removal of a Registration Board Member from office

A Registration Board member may be removed from office as provided in [section 34](#) and/or [Schedule 2 Section 5](#) of the Act.

## 10. Removal of a member of a Committee of Council from office

A member of a Committee of Council may be removed from office in accordance with the termination clause outlined in the letter of appointment.

## 11. Communication of Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct will be available on CORU’s website and is brought to the attention of members on respective portals and CORU’s Intranet.

## 12. Review of Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct shall be reviewed by Council whenever necessary, and when possible, on an annual basis.

## 13. Declaration of compliance

I have received, read and understood this Code of Conduct and I undertake to comply with the terms of this Code of Conduct.

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

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

*(BLOCK LETTERS)*

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



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