

Human Resources Policies and Procedures

Code of Conduct

UCD/HRO/Conduct/048

NHSBT Code of Conduct UCD/HRO/Conduct/048
Version Issued : February 2013v1.2

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This Code of Conduct will apply to all staff employed by NHSBT. It is impossible to provide an exhaustive list of rules and this Code therefore serves as a guide to indicate the standards of conduct, performance and behaviour that are expected of our staff. This document should be read in conjunction with other professional codes of conduct where necessary.

All staff members should consider themselves to be ambassadors of NHSBT and should act in a manner that creates a positive image to our donors, customers and fellow colleagues working within the organisation. It is the responsibility of all staff members to ensure that their actions do not bring the organisation into disrepute by any means, inclusive of any social media communities or platforms. All staff are also employed to undertake specific tasks and responsibilities on behalf of the Organisation, and should aim to discharge these duties efficiently and to the best of their ability at all times, and in accordance with reasonable instructions.

1. Attendance

Staff should be punctual and attend work in accordance with the terms contained in their contracts of employment and with the working patterns prescribed within each workplace location. NHSBT has positive HR policies to ensure unauthorised absence from work is eliminated, and staff with genuine health problems are provided with reasonable support to return to normal working patterns at the earliest opportunity. Staff should ensure that they are familiar with the rules concerning the granting of leave and the notification of sickness absence, and follow these at all times.

It is a contractual requirement that staff attend medical appointments as required. Where a member of staff is referred for an occupational health appointment and does not attend appointments without good reason and without advising their line manager in advance of the reasons for their non-attendance, their non-attendance will be subject to investigation and disciplinary action may result. If an individual misses three consecutive appointments the matter will be investigated and if there is no good reason for non-attendance disciplinary action will be taken.

Failure to attend for work can cause serious disruption and reduction in quality to the service being provided and places an unnecessary and unreasonable burden on fellow colleagues who have to cover. Absence, which is unauthorised, could constitute gross misconduct.

2. Relationship with others

As ambassadors of NHSBT, all should treat those they come into contact with in a polite, courteous and respectful manner. Everyone, including work colleagues as well as the public, should be treated with courtesy, and abusive or threatening language or behaviour, acts of harassment, victimisation or discrimination will not be tolerated. Such behaviour could constitute gross misconduct. The Organisation expects staff to abide by the various related Codes of Practice, the Dignity at Work Policy and MPD 961 Safeguarding Adults and Children

Dignity at Work aims for the promotion of a workplace which recognises and respects individual difference and rejects bullying & harassment as destructive, to the recipient, the harasser, and the organisation and its stakeholders.

It is our intent to create a working environment in which every employee is treated with dignity in their place of work. In order to achieve this, staff, managers and Trade Unions will work together to ensure that all forms of bullying & harassment are removed from the workplace.

3. Work Performance

NHSBT believes that every member of staff has the right to know what is expected with regard to work performance and key objectives, and to have regular and open feedback on how well they are doing, as well as appropriate training and support. Knowledge & Skills Framework (KSF) is an effective appraisal and performance management scheme that provides staff and their managers the opportunity to communicate on a regular basis. Staff are expected to work to their agreed job descriptions and performance objectives, and to undertake their duties in accordance with standards and procedures that have been prescribed locally.

Staff should not refuse to carry out a reasonable instruction from their manager to carry out specific tasks. To ensure the efficient operation of NHSBT, staff are expected to be flexible and to undertake such duties as are required under their contract of employment and to expect that these duties will vary over time to meet changing business needs.

4. Health & Safety

All staff, including the officers and managers of NHSBT, have a duty of care under common law as well as under Health and Safety Regulations to ensure that they follow laid down Health and Safety procedures and work in a way that will not place themselves, their colleagues or the public at risk. All staff must carry out instructions concerning health and safety and ensure that they are aware of the local Health & Safety policies and procedures in their own workplace. Failure to do so could constitute gross misconduct in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy. The Organisation will be introducing or reviewing appropriate policies, and staff will be required to abide by these at all times.

5. Confidentiality

During the course of work, staff will come into possession of confidential information concerning the business activities and intellectual property of NHSBT, and personal information relating to donors, patients, customers, members of staff and others. This is privileged information, which staff are under statutory and/or common law duty to protect. The rules applicable to different types of confidential information are as described in NHSBT's Information Risk Policy and associated Information Classification Matrix. All personal identifiable information held within NHSBT is subject to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Human Rights Act 1998, The Computer Misuse Act 1990 and the Caldicott Principles.

Examples of protection include preventing unauthorised persons gaining access to any confidential information either by discussing such information in public areas or failing to ensure paper or computer records are protected from access or theft. Specific advice for protecting information in locations other than NHSBT premises is provided in the NHSBT Remote Working Policy.

It is the responsibility of all NHSBT employees to ensure they do not commit or, by failing to act, allow any data security or confidentiality breaches. Any reported breach will be investigated and where appropriate disciplinary action taken.

Employees must not disclose confidential information to the press, or any other third party without the express permission of the Information Asset Owner or nominated deputy. Confidential information, whether personal or business-related, must not be discussed with family, friends or others outside work.

Failure to comply with the requirements of the Information Risk Policy or Raising a Matter of Concern (Whistle Blowing) Policy or other related documents may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

6. Acceptance of Gifts

It is an offence for any member of staff to accept a gift, money, hospitality, trips or any other consideration by way of an inducement or reward. Staff may be liable to prosecution under the provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Acts, in addition to loss of their employment and superannuation rights. However, casual or seasonal gifts (diaries, calendars or gifts of similar limited

value) or modest hospitality (lunch in the course of a working visit) which is not in any way connected with performance of duties or a bribe or inducement in connection with business, may be accepted provided that this acceptance is disclosed immediately to the immediate line manager.

7. Declaration of Interests

All members of staff must declare to NHSBT through their line manager if they or their close relatives or associates have a controlling or significant financial interest in a business or any activity or pursuit which may compete for a contract to supply goods or services to NHSBT. It will be the responsibility of Chief Executive and Directors to produce guidelines concerning the position of staff who do declare an interest.

Staff must ensure that they do not:

- Abuse their official position for personal gain or to benefit their family or friends.
- Seek to advantage or further private business or other interests, in the course of their official duties

8. Dress and Appearance

As ambassadors of NHSBT, staff will be expected to dress in an appropriate manner that will not cause unnecessary offence to our donors, customers or other members of staff. Staff should also give attention to their overall grooming and ensure, adherence to GMP requirements relevant to the work being done that clothing, hair, accessories etc. are generally clean, neat and tidy. Where uniform policies are in place these must be followed

9. Physical Assault

Any physical assault on a donor, patient, member of staff or member of the public on NHSBT premises, or whilst on NHSBT duties, will normally constitute gross misconduct, although mitigating circumstances will be taken into account, particularly in cases of self defence or the appropriate restraint of another individual.

10. Wilful or Malicious Damage

All property belonging to the organisation, members of staff, patients, donors, and NHSBT customers should be treated with respect at all times. Any deliberate or wilful damage to NHS property, or the property of others on NHSBT premises or whilst on NHSBT duties will be treated seriously and could constitute gross misconduct, although mitigating circumstances will be taken into account.

11. General Negligence

All staff are expected to undertake their work with due regard for the health and safety, well-being and property of other staff, patients, donors and members of the public. Any member of staff who is found to be negligent of their duty of care or who disregards laid down standards, policies and procedures resulting in a threat to the health or well-being of others, property of NHSBT or others, discredit to NHSBT or an employee of NHSBT will be subject to disciplinary action.

12. General Fitness for Duty

In order to discharge responsibilities safely, efficiently and effectively, staff are expected to be generally fit for work. Staff must not report for duty under the influence of alcohol, drugs or other substances to the extent that it may affect their own performance or safety, or the safety of others. The consumption of alcohol, or the misuse of drugs or other substances is not permitted during any period of duty. Staff who are considered to be under the influence will be suspended immediately in order that the matter can be investigated. The organisation recognises that some staff do experience personal or medical problems which become associated with the use of alcohol, drugs or other substances. Every effort will be made, with the co-operation of the employee, to provide counselling and support to overcome the difficulties in order to protect the individual's employment. Refer to the Alcohol, Drug and Substance Abuse Policy. Termination of employment will be considered as a last resort where all attempts to seek the co-operation of the employee or to bring about an improvement, have failed.

13. Criminal Offences

NHSBT reserves the right to apply for a Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), previously known as Criminal Records Bureau (in Scotland called a 'Disclosure Scotland') if the duties of the role they are undertaking, or any role for which they may apply requires this, as indicated by the DBS Code of Practice and in line with any relevant legislation.

If an employee accepts a caution, is charged with, or convicted of a criminal offence, whether committed during work time or outside work, this is not normally in itself reason for disciplinary action. However NHSBT and its officers will consider the effect the charge or conviction has on the employees suitability to do the job, their relationship with NHSBT, their work colleagues and Donors or customers.

Where NHSBT consider the conduct warrants disciplinary action due to its nature, e.g. conduct which may result in loss of confidence in the individual, or has the potential to bring the service into disrepute, whether or not it concludes in remand or conviction, it will be investigated, and may lead to disciplinary action or dismissal. Where the conduct requires prompt attention there is no requirement to await the outcome of criminal proceedings, and each case will be carefully considered before any action is taken under the NHSBT Disciplinary Policy. In certain circumstances NHSBT has a legal duty to make a referral to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (see the Employment of Ex-Offenders & Referrals to the Independent Safeguarding Authority Policy).

Where the alleged offence has no bearing on employment, but the employee is not available for work because they are in custody or on remand, NHSBT will decide, dependent on the needs of the organisation, whether the employee's job can be held open. This will be decided through the disciplinary process, held in their absence.

Any allegation of fraud may be referred to the NHS Counter Fraud office during the course of the internal investigation.

14. Outside Employment/Activities

In general, staff are not precluded from accepting other employment outside their contractual commitment with NHSBT. However, any such further employment should not adversely affect the member of staff's ability to discharge their commitments under their contract of employment with NHSBT. The effect of alternative employment can have implications under the Working Time (See Additional Employment Policy) Regulations. Therefore it is the responsibility of staff to advise their line manager of the number of hours and working pattern they will be working with the alternate employer in order that the impact can be considered.

Any outside activity that impacts negatively on NHSBT's reputation may be subject to disciplinary action following a full investigation.

Failure to adhere to this Code of Conduct could seriously affect the image of the service provided by NHSBT, thus necessitating disciplinary action or dismissal, dependent upon the seriousness of the incident.

15. Representing NHSBT on External Groups or Bodies

NHSBT staff who sit on any external groups or bodies representing the organisation have a responsibility for ensuring that they do so in a professional manner that will not bring NHSBT into disrepute. Staff also have a responsibility for ensuring that the appointing manager is kept informed of any decisions taken by the group that will affect NHSBT business or that will require change in process or practice. Staff will need to ensure that the group or body have a comprehensive understanding of any position held by NHSBT at the time of the meetings and any potential impact of considered changes.