

CODE OF CONDUCT

**Author:** Corporate Secretary

**Date of Release:** 15th July 2015

**Version No. & Status:** 2.0 Final

**Approved By:** HRA Board

**Supersedes Version:**  0.2

**Review Date:** July 2016

**Owner:** Chief Executive

**Scope of Policy:** HRA

**BACKGROUND**

On 1st January 2015 the Health Research Authority (HRA) became a Non Departmental Public Body (NDPB) with its statutory basis established under the Care Act provisions of 2014, Chapter 23, Part 3, Chapter 2. As a statutory body, the HRA will not be required to act under direction of the Secretary of State for Health as it is directly accountable to Parliament. It will however continue to work in accordance with the Framework Agreement with the Department of Health which stipulates:

“HRA will develop a code of conduct for board members, all staff, (including contractors and agency staff) and volunteer REC members who will comply with the principles in the Cabinet Office’s model code for staff of executive non-Departmental public bodies, which includes rules on conflicts of interest, political activity and restrictions on lobbying”.

This Code of Conduct is applicable to directly employed members of staff and agency workers. It also applies to secondees and contractors but only to those who provide a service fundamental to the achievement of HRA business objectives. It is not applicable to volunteer committee members or to Board Non-executive Members who are catered for under different Codes of Conduct.

As a directly employed member of staff, secondee, agency worker or contractor you are appointed on merit on the basis of fair and open competition and are expected to carry out your role with dedication and a commitment to the HRA and its core values.

This Code of Conduct supports good government and ensures the achievement of the highest possible standards in all that the HRA does. This in turn helps the HRA to gain and retain the respect of ministers, Parliament, the public and its stakeholders.

The HRA hopes you can take pride in living up to these requirements.

# HRA VALUES

It is the HRA’s expectation that each of us demonstrates the ability to embed its values in the roles we undertake. The values which drive the HRA are:

* **Inspiring leadership**  
  Enabling people and teams to develop and deliver dynamic, innovative and transformative services and systems.
* **Integrity**  
  Being fair, ethical and honest in everything we do.
* **Trusted**  
  Being respected for delivering to consistently high standards.
* **Transparent**  
  Being accountable and open about all aspects of our work.
* **Collaborative**  
  Listening to and working with others to identify and make improvements to the health research environment.
* **Empowering**  
  Supporting independent thinking  and decision-making.

# This code sets out the standards of conduct expected of you.

**GENERAL STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

The standards of conduct the HRA expects of you are integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality. In this code:

* ‘integrity’ is putting the obligations of public service above your own personal interests;
* ‘honesty’ is being truthful and open;
* ‘objectivity’ is basing your advice and decisions on rigorous analysis of the evidence; and
* ‘impartiality’ is acting solely according to the facts and relevant issues.

**Integrity**

You must:

* fulfil your duties and obligations responsibly;
* always act in an ethical way that is professional and deserves and retains the confidence of all those with whom you have dealings;
* act to ensure equality, fairness and a culture of non-discrimination and treat all you have dealings with with respect and courtesy;
* carry out your budgetary and financial obligations responsibly to make sure public money and other resources are used responsibly and efficiently;
* deal with the public and their affairs fairly, efficiently, promptly, effectively and sensitively, to the best of your ability;
* ensure you have authorisation for any contact with the media, including the use social media, on any issues of relevance to HRA or where you may be asked to represent the HRA in a professional capacity, only commenting on issues of relevance to HRA and in such a way as would not bring the HRA into disrepute;
* respect and protect confidential information;
* keep accurate official records and handle information as openly as possible within the legal framework; and
* comply with the law and uphold the administration of justice.

You must not:

* misuse your official position, for example by using information acquired in the course of your work to further your private interests or those of others;
* accept gifts or hospitality or receive other benefits from anyone which might reasonably be seen to compromise your personal judgement or integrity; and
* disclose official information without authority (this duty continues to apply after you leave the HRA).

**Honesty**

You must:

* set out the facts and relevant issues truthfully, and correct any errors as soon as possible; and
* use resources only for the authorised public purposes for which they are provided.

You must not:

* deceive or knowingly mislead; and
* be influenced by improper pressures from others or the prospect of personal gain.

**Objectivity**

You must:

* provide information and advice on the basis of the evidence and accurately present the issues, options and facts;
* take decisions based on the facts and relevant issues; and
* take due account of expert and professional advice.

You must not:

* ignore inconvenient facts or relevant issues when providing advice or making decisions; and
* prevent the implementation of decisions `by refusing to carry out actions which flow from those decisions.

**Impartiality**

You must:

* carry out your responsibilities in a way that is fair, just and equitable and reflects the HRA’s commitment to equality and diversity;
* serve the HRA to the best of your ability in a way which maintains impartiality (including political impartiality) and is in line with the requirements of this code, no matter what your own beliefs are; and
* act in a way which deserves and retains the confidence of the public.

You must not:

* act in a way that unjustifiably favours or discriminates against particular individuals or interests;
* act in a way that is determined by individual considerations or use official resources for personal purposes; and
* allow your personal views to determine any advice you give or actions you take in a professional capacity.

**ADDITIONAL EXPECTATIONS**

All employed members of staff, secondees, agency workers and contractors are expected to:

* attend regularly and punctually and not be absent from duty without permission;
* observe Health, Safety and Welfare policies and rules at all times;
* observe and be appropriately informed on all HRA policies;
* observe security requirements, e.g. the wearing of name badges, at all times;
* carry out duties and instructions given by managers and other senior managers promptly and efficiently to the required standard;
* comply with arrangements made for notification of sickness;
* ensure that work outside HRA employment does not adversely affect HRA employment, nor in any way hinder or conflict with the interests of the HRA;
* not conduct private business on HRA premises or in paid time. This is forbidden unless official permission is obtained from the appropriate senior manager;
* ensure compliance with HRA requirements in relation to standards of business conduct such as standing financial instructions and declaration of interests: and
* disclose a financial interest in contracts in which the HRA is or is likely to be involved.

Directly employed staff are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the conduct rules incorporated in the Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

**RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The HRA has a duty to make you aware of this Code and its values. If you believe that you are being required to act in a way which conflicts with this Code, the HRA will consider your concern and make sure that you are not penalised for raising it.

If you have a concern, you should start by talking to your line manager or someone else in your line management chain. If for any reason you would find this difficult, you should refer to the Whistleblowing Policy.

If you become aware of actions by others which you believe conflict with this code you should report this to your line manager or someone else in your line management chain; alternatively you may wish to seek advice from HR. You should report evidence of criminal or unlawful activity to the police or other appropriate regulatory authorities.

This Code is part of the contractual relationship between you and your employer. It sets out the high standards of behaviour expected of you which follow from your position in public and national life.

The HRA hopes you can take pride in living up to these standards.

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| Name |  |
| Date |  |
| Signature |  |

# Related Documents

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| **Related Documents** |  |
| Disciplinary Policy and Procedure | Intranet |
| HRA Declaration of Interests and Acceptance of Gifts Policy | Intranet |
| The Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure | Intranet |
| Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedure | Intranet |
| Dress Code Policy | Intranet |
| Standing Financial Instructions, Scheme of Delegation and Standing Orders | Intranet |
| HRA Health, Safety and Welfare Policy | Intranet |
| Equality and Diversity Policy | Intranet |
| Information Governance and Security Policy | Intranet |
| HRA Declaration of Interests and Acceptance of Gifts Policy | Intranet |

**Dissemination and publication**

The HRA Quality Assurance Department is responsible for logging the approved version of the policies, procedures and associated documents onto the Document Control System and the subsequent publication on the intranet/website.

**All versions are logged onto the Document Control System and published on the intranet/website.**

**No other copies are stored on the Shared drive or on personal drives.**

**If changes are required to the document a copy can be obtained from the HRA Quality Assurance Business Manager.**

# Document Control

**Change Record**

| Version Status | Date of Change | Reason for Change |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |
| 0.1 | 06/05/2015 | Replaces all previous versions for ISO 9001 |
| 0.2 | 16/06/2015 | Amends after EMT 15.6.15 |
| 1.0 Final for Consultation | 17/06/2015 | Approved by EMT Excludes EIA for Clarity |
| 2.0 Final After Consultation | 15/07/2015 | Amends after consultation |
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**Reviewers**

| Name (name of reviewer and/or management group reviewing) | Date | Version Reviewed |
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| EMT | 16/06/2015 | 0.2 |
| EMT | 14/07/2015 | 1.0 and consultation responses |
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**Distribution of Approved Versions**

| Platform (e.g. HRA intranet or website) | Date of Publication | Version Released |
| --- | --- | --- |
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| Intranet |  |  |
| Website |  |  |
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