

Environment Canterbury

Staff Code of Conduct

Our vision statement

Canterbury...
a living landscape
rich in natural resources
a flourishing environment
that we all respect and enjoy

Waitaha
Te whenua mataora
Kia whakaora te taiao momona
Ma tatou hei whakawehi ai

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Staff Code of Conduct: THE FOUR PRINCIPLES

First Principle

Staff should always act with integrity and all actions should be able to withstand the closest of public scrutiny.

Second Principle

We all have an obligation to treat our colleagues and the public with courtesy and respect.

Third Principle

Our first priority is to implement the policies of the Council of Environment Canterbury. It is important that all actions and behaviours can withstand the closest of public scrutiny.

Fourth Principle

Employees of Environment Canterbury are expected to fulfil their legal obligations to members of the public, Councillors and fellow colleagues with professionalism and integrity.



Foreword

The strength of local government organisations lies in the extent to which they deserve and hold the respect of their stakeholders and Councillors. In local government this integrity is built on conventions and practices that attach the highest importance on lawful conduct due to process, fairness, probity, professionalism and political neutrality.

Our stakeholders expect us to comply with the letter and the spirit of the law. They expect our official decisions to be made fairly and impartially, rates money to be spent wisely and Council assets used and cared for responsibly. They expect us to be above reproach and official duties performed conscientiously and competently at all times.

The way we all go about our business with stakeholders and the way in which individual staff members interact with Councillors and with other staff members is of prime importance to me and every local government employee. This Code of Conduct provides the rules and guidelines for the way we go about our business.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bryan Jenkins'.

Dr Bryan Jenkins
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Environment Canterbury

Staff Code of Conduct

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Environment Canterbury

Staff Code of Conduct

Purpose

Implicit in our staff values is the requirement for our behaviours to be beyond reproach.

As staff of Environment Canterbury, our actions will be based on and guided by:

- the achievements of stakeholder satisfaction and quality **outcomes**
- **respect** for the needs, aspirations and values of individuals
- **openness, consultation and co-operation**
- **honesty, integrity and fairness**
- **excellence**, innovation and best practice
- cultural awareness and **sensitivity**
- environmental leadership **by example**.

The Staff Code of Conduct deals with the way we go about our business and provides guidance on the standards of behaviour that are to be observed to ensure that these values are upheld.

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to:

- guide staff making work decisions so that decisions are seen to be transparent and unbiased and without any perception of conflict of interest; and
- assist staff in assessing the possible impact of their own behaviour and interests on their roles with Environment Canterbury.

There are four key principles underlying the Code of Conduct that are applicable to all staff of Environment Canterbury and these principles cover two main areas:

1. Personal Responsibilities as they relate to our behaviour

- **Personal conduct**
Acting with integrity, professionalism and impartiality.
- **Interactions with others**
Treating others with courtesy and respect and working within the boundaries of our assigned responsibilities and professional competence.

2. Legal Obligations as a government organisation with an elected council and with decision-making and regulatory responsibilities.

- **Fulfilling legal obligations to the organisation.**
- **Fulfilling legal obligations to the community.**

The Code of Conduct is supplemented by a range of written policies providing additional relevant information or further detail. Breaches of the Staff Code of Conduct will be dealt with as appropriate through Environment Canterbury's formal disciplinary procedures. The disciplinary action taken will be dependent upon the nature and circumstances of the breach and the outcome of the formal investigation.

Application

This Code of Conduct applies to all permanent and temporary employees of Environment Canterbury and to all contractors to Environment Canterbury.

Definitions

Conflict of Interest

A "conflict of interest" is any financial or other interest or undertaking that could directly or indirectly compromise the performance of a staff member's duties, or the standing of Environment Canterbury in its relationships with customers, ratepayers, stakeholders and members of the public. This includes any situation where actions taken in an official capacity could be seen to influence, or be influenced by, an individual's private interests.

Personal relationships

For the purposes of this code of conduct a "close personal relationship" includes:

- a staff member's family (e.g. children, spouse/partner, parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins etc. – whether by blood or otherwise);
- members of the same whanau or iwi as the staff member with whom there is regular and close contact;
- friends; and
- business partners or associates.

Personal relationships do not include those with whom there is little regular contact or intimacy, such as casual acquaintances.

Principle 1: Personal Conduct

It is fundamental to the reputation of Environment Canterbury that we adhere to high moral and ethical principles in all of our dealings with members of the public (this includes customers, ratepayers and stakeholders), colleagues and councillors.

The integrity and impartiality of staff is paramount to the public, and to the Council's trust and confidence in staff. Staff should always act with integrity and all actions should be able to withstand the closest of public scrutiny. The public must have no basis on which to believe that decisions are made, or policies are applied, inappropriately or unevenly.

Performance of Duties

There is an accepted obligation on all employees to properly perform the duties for which they are paid.

This obligation includes the following duties:

- to obey the law
- to obey all lawful and reasonable employer instructions and to work as directed
- to be competent and efficient in the performance of assigned duties
- to refrain from conduct (such as the use of intoxicants) which might impair work performance or bring Environment Canterbury into disrepute
- to consult their employer before undertaking secondary employment, which, in the opinion of the employer, might conflict with official duties
- to show reasonable care, and neither use, nor allow the use of, Environment Canterbury property, resources, or funds for anything other than authorised purposes
- to incur no liability on the part of the employer without proper authorisation
- to comply with all Environment Canterbury policies in their work
- to be absent from the workplace only with proper authorisation.

Relevant policy documents:

Personnel Policy 29

Corporate Governance

Conflict of Interest

Fraud Policy

Avoidance of Conflicts of Interest

It is fundamental to the protection of the reputation of Environment Canterbury that no members of staff have, or appear to have, a conflict between their official responsibilities and their personal interests. Staff should inform their line manager where any actual, or potential, conflict of interest arises that impairs the full, effective, and impartial discharge of their official duties.

In addition, staff should avoid any interest, or undertaking, that could directly, or indirectly, compromise the performance of their duties, or the standing of local government, in its relationships with any outside group or individual. This would include any situation where actions taken in an official capacity could be seen to influence, or be influenced, by an individual's private interests (e.g. company directorships, shareholdings, or offers of employment outside Environment Canterbury).

A situation of conflict may be resolved simply by transferring a duty from the staff member concerned to someone not affected by that particular circumstance. Alternatively, the staff member may be required to restrict, or abandon, the interest or activity that is giving rise to the conflict. However, where these options are not practical, or do not enable the matter to be resolved on a basis which the staff member concerned is able to accept, then ultimately, their resignation from Environment Canterbury may have to be considered.

A potential area of conflict exists for staff who may have to deal directly with Councillors who have approached Environment Canterbury either in their private capacity, or in relation to constituent issues. It is important, for both the Councillor and staff, that any such dealings be addressed, and be seen to be addressed, on the basis of strict impartiality.

If staff are in any doubt about the manner in which to respond to an enquiry from a Councillor, that matter should be referred immediately to their line manager. If there is any doubt about the propriety of a request, the matter should be referred through the Chief Executive, who may consult with the Chairman.

Offers of Gifts or Gratuities

Staff must not use their official position for personal gain. This means not soliciting or accepting gifts, rewards or benefits, which might compromise, or be seen to compromise, their integrity and the integrity of Environment Canterbury and local government in general.

Relevant policy documents:

Personnel Policy 38 Rewards, Gratuities or Gifts

Employment or Business Interests

Before accepting secondary employment or becoming involved in external business interests (including investments or new business proposals), staff must first ensure that the nature of the role, the secondary employer or the business interest does not cause a conflict of interest with the individual's or the organisation's roles and responsibilities.

Relevant policy documents:

Personnel Policy 29 Conflict of Interest

Personal Behaviour

As a general principle, staff members' personal behaviour that does not interfere with the performance of their official duties, or adversely reflect on the integrity or standing of Environment Canterbury, is of no concern to the organisation.

However, Environment Canterbury has a legitimate interest where the private activities of staff discredit Environment Canterbury in its relationships with members of the public.

Whether such activities constitute misconduct will depend on the circumstances in each case. For example, some minor offences against the law may be of no concern to the Chief Executive where they do not involve breaches of trust, or otherwise impair the ability of staff to fulfil their duties. However, other cases may be of greater concern, particularly where some degree of publicity identifies the actions of an individual with Environment Canterbury.

Fraud Policy

As a local government organisation, Environment Canterbury must be seen to uphold the highest standards when it comes to matters of integrity. The organisation is required to provide confidence to the community regarding the administration of ratepayer funds. A fraud policy has been designed to protect the integrity of our financial systems and assets from fraudulent internal activity.

Relevant policy documents:

Corporate Governance Fraud Policy

Use of Environment Canterbury Plant and Equipment

All plant and equipment is to be used only for the purpose provided for, within the law (such as obeying the road rules when driving Environment Canterbury vehicles) and within the capabilities of the item.

Environment Canterbury plant or equipment is not to be used for private purposes without the written permission of the Chief Executive. This requirement is necessary due to issues relating to safety, insurance, protection of equipment and for fairness to all staff.

Principle 2: Interactions with Others

Respect for the Rights of Others

We all have an obligation to treat our colleagues and the public with courtesy and respect. This includes:

- avoiding behaviour which might endanger or cause distress to colleagues, or otherwise contribute to the disruption of the workplace
- avoiding allowing workplace actions or relationships to adversely affect performance when undertaking official duties
- respecting the privacy of individuals when dealing with personal information
- not discriminating against any person because of their sex, marital status, colour, race, ethnic or national origins, age, political opinion, employment status, family status, sexual orientation, disability, religious or ethical beliefs
- not harassing, bullying or otherwise intimidating colleagues or members of the public
- respecting the cultural background of colleagues and members of the public in all dealings
- having regard for the safety of themselves and others in the use of property and resources; and
- respecting the rights of others in regard to access to computer systems, copyright, privacy, defamation, objectionable material and human rights.

Relevant policy documents:

Personnel Policy 5	Harassment Free Workplace
Personnel Policy 28	Personal Information Privacy
Personnel Policy	Occupational Health and Safety Policy

Promotion of Third Party Interests

Staff must avoid acting on behalf of family, friends, business associates or organisations to which the staff member belongs (except for professional associations where the staff member is the recognised, approved nominee or spokesperson) as the representative of third parties in communications or negotiations with the Council, whether as the promotion of associated third party interests may be seen as impinging on the impartiality of the staff member concerned.

Employees may be required by their position to reflect stakeholder views. To ensure that an employee is not seen to be favouring or promoting one party over another, impartial representation and communication is essential.

Limitation on Provision of Advice or Services

Employees must not offer advice or an opinion on matters that are beyond their technical or professional competence, or provide services beyond their defined duties. This may result in some stakeholders being given an unfair advantage

in receiving advice or services that are not provided and has the potential for allegations of providing inappropriate or unqualified advice to be laid. Except where this is explicitly part of their duties (ie. written into their job description), employees may not:

- complete statutory applications on behalf of an applicant;
- assist stakeholders to complete Environment Canterbury documents;
- amend Environment Canterbury records to the benefit of a stakeholder;
- provide advice which could later be used against Environment Canterbury should a legal dispute or enforcement situation occur; or
- provide any legal interpretation.

Publications or Public Addresses

From time to time, Environment Canterbury officers may be invited to present papers on Council policies or processes or wish to cite Environment Canterbury as an example or case study in a professional publication or as part of academic studies.

Where the staff member is presenting the paper or writing the publication in his/her capacity as an Environment Canterbury staff member, the content of the presentation or publication must receive prior approval from their manager and Environment Canterbury is the 'owner' of the policy or process being described, even if the work on the presentation or publication is undertaken in the staff member's own time.

Where a staff member is making the presentation or writing the publication as a private citizen, this must be explicitly stated.

In both cases, the staff member must ensure that his/her duties do not bring Environment Canterbury into disrepute and that confidentiality of information is maintained.

Protocol for Access onto Private Property

There are a wide variety of reasons why Environment Canterbury staff need to visit properties, from taking a water sample to investigating an RMA matter following a complaint. It is important that all property visits are managed professionally and the property owners are treated with courtesy and respect – regardless of the purpose of the visit, there should be no basis for a complaint regarding the level of service or the conduct of an Environment Canterbury employee.

As a general protocol, the following steps should be observed:

- Advising the property owner of the visit beforehand, unless it is a compliance monitoring visit where prior notification is not appropriate or a visit to a suspected unauthorised activity.

- Contacting the owner/person in charge of the activity/property on arrival.
- If unable to locate owner/person in charge despite best endeavours, leave appropriate documentation so the person is aware of the visit and the purpose.
- Providing ID to verify authenticity.

Some Staff are issued with warrants which give them powers under a specific piece of legislation to enter private property without the owner's permission. A Court order is required to enter a dwelling under those circumstances. Staff with warrants should check with their Section Manager if in doubt about the specific powers available to them under their warrant. In other instances, provided you are acting in accordance with duties and powers under either the Local Government Act 2002 or powers given under any other Act, at least 24 hours notice must be given e.g. entering for the purpose of water testing in relation to the Council's own duties to monitor the environment. If you are a visitor to the property for a non-statutory purpose you are subject to the laws of trespass.

Principle 3: Fulfilling Legal Obligations to the Organisation

As employees of Environment Canterbury, our first priority is to implement the policies of the Council of Environment Canterbury. In doing so, it is important that all actions and behaviours can withstand the closest of public scrutiny.

The Local Government Act 2002 sets out the principal responsibilities of chief executives¹, and therefore by implication, local government employees. One of the main responsibilities of chief executives is for the general conduct of employees of the organisation. Other responsibilities include providing advice to the Council and implementing the decisions of Council. Employees are therefore obliged to serve their Councillors within the law, with integrity, and to the best of their ability.

The levels of funding and levels of service in the LTCCP (Long Term Community Council Plan) are irrevocable once finalised, unless a change is agreed to by the Council, and form the basis of all work programmes for the organisation.

Council as Decision Maker

Employees have a role of assisting with the development and implementation of Council's policy, with responsibility for providing honest, impartial, and comprehensive advice to Councillors, and for alerting Councillors to the possible consequences of following particular policies, including unlawful decisions, whether or not such advice aligns with Councillors' views. During the decision-making process, employees must not attempt to undermine or improperly influence council policy (for example, by the unauthorised release of official information), withhold relevant information or seek to obstruct or delay a decision. Once Council has made a decision, it is the duty of employees to implement that decision within the law, whether or not they agree with it.

If employees find themselves in a situation where their conscience constrains them from carrying out a lawful instruction, they should discuss the circumstances and options with their immediate manager. Employees must not do anything to circumvent or undermine Council's policies.

Private Communication with Councillors

Generally, employees have the same rights of access to Councillors as other members of the public. However, given the requirement for employees to remain politically neutral in their work, care and judgement must be exercised before making any private communication with Councillors.

¹ Schedule 7: Clause 33 – 36

As a general guide:

- Employees may communicate privately with any Councillor about matters outside their official duties, but employees occupying senior positions or working closely with Councillors should exercise particular care with such communications;
- Employees may communicate with any Councillor about matters concerning their section, but only after the matter is discussed with the Chief Executive;
- Where a matter is raised directly with a Councillor, the organisation may be directed to provide a suitable response via the Chief Executive;
- An employee is entitled to the same information or level of detail in a response as would be given to any member of the public under the Official Information Act 1982 or the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

Public Comment on Council Policy

Certain employees are authorised to respond to media requests for comment about aspects of Council policy, or its implementation or administration. In general, enquiries from the media should be referred directly to the section manager in the first instance. Official comment on behalf of Environment Canterbury should be made only by employees authorised to do so.

Relevant policy documents:

Personnel Policy 31 Media Policy

Political Participation

Staff must ensure that their participation in political matters does not bring them into conflict, or apparent conflict, in their workplace where they are required to act in a politically neutral manner.

It is important to maintain the organisation's, and the public's, confidence in the impartiality of the advice given, and the actions taken, by employees. Determining what is appropriate in any particular case will depend on the extent of the participation of the individual, the nature of the issue, and the position held within Environment Canterbury.

Standing for Political Office

From time to time, an employee may wish to pursue a direct political involvement at a local, regional or national level. Because a conflict of interest could develop, any such interest must be registered with the Director and Chief Executive well beforehand.

The Chief Executive reserves the right to consider each situation on its merits and one of three determinations will be made:

- no serious conflict of interest exists;

- a conflict exists but can be satisfactorily mitigated by a change in work location or duties. The feasibility of such a change being made shall be dependent on organisational requirements and at the Chief Executive's discretion.
- a conflict exists and ongoing employment with Environment Canterbury is incompatible with campaigning and/or holding office. In such a situation the employee or contractor must decide which they wish to pursue. In this case leave of absence may be offered at the discretion of the Chief Executive during campaigning and if elected resignation will be necessary.

Participation in Public Bodies or Voluntary Associations

Employees are free to stand for, or be appointed to, any office or position on a voluntary body. However, if there is any possibility of a conflict of interest, they should first inform their line manager of their intentions, to ensure that no conflict exists between such participation and their duties and responsibilities as an employee. If the Line Manager considers that there would be a conflict of interest, arrangements need to be made to avoid or resolve the conflict. This may require that an employee is asked not to stand for office, or to resign a position already held.

Confidentiality

Employees have a duty not to reveal or make private use of personal, confidential, sensitive or other non-public information obtained as a result of their employment and to which they have had official or unofficial access, unless required by law to disclose the information. In this context, 'confidential or sensitive information' includes information which, while not explicitly labelled 'confidential' or 'sensitive', is not available to a member of the public.

Employees shall not, either during their employment or after its termination (however caused), disclose or use in any manner, except for the benefit of Environment Canterbury, any confidential or commercially sensitive information relating to the operations of Environment Canterbury, any associated body or company, or any application made to Environment Canterbury by another party which was gained during the course of employment with Environment Canterbury, unless ordered to do so by a Court of competent jurisdiction, or by the written direction of the Chief Executive on behalf of Environment Canterbury.

Duty to Report Unauthorised Activities

We all have a responsibility to respond appropriately to unauthorised activities observed during the course of our daily work – effectively taking a wider responsibility for the environment than that defined by our individual job descriptions. For example: chemical spills onto land or into water, or water abstraction occurring during a restriction period.

An appropriate response includes:

- Reporting unauthorised activities that are having, or could have, significant adverse effects, to the pollution hotline.
- If in doubt about the significance of the incident, phone the hotline anyway.
- Taking photographs if possible.
- Our priority is to minimise adverse affects resulting from an unauthorised incident. However, non-trained staff should only take physical action to minimise an adverse effect if there is no significant risk to themselves or any other person.

Principle 4: Fulfilling Legal Obligations to the Community

Employees of Environment Canterbury are expected to fulfil their legal obligations to members of the public (including customers, ratepayers and stakeholders), Councillors and fellow colleagues with professionalism and integrity.

Professional Relationships with Councillors

Employees must maintain a professional and impartial relationship with Councillors. This convention of political neutrality is designed to ensure that employees can provide strong support for the good management of the natural resources of the Canterbury Region over the long term. It is imperative that employees avoid public criticism of Councillors or any other action that undermines Councillors in the performance of their professional duties.

Relevant documents:

Also relevant to the Staff Code of Conduct is the Environment Canterbury Elected Members Code of Conduct that provides guidance on the standards of behaviour that are expected from the Chair and elected members of Environment Canterbury in their dealings with each other, the Chief Executive, Environment Canterbury staff, the media and the general public.

<http://cobalt/pdf/HR/CodeOfConduct.pdf>

Comment on Submissions

Staff have the ability to have input, through internal processes, into the development of Environment Canterbury policies and practices that they will be responsible for administering or implementing. Any concerns about such matters must be expressed through internal processes only.

When making submissions as a citizen to Council committees or other bodies, staff must make explicit the role in which they are making their submissions.

Individual Comment

In general, employees have the same rights of free speech and independence in the conduct of their private affairs as other members of the public. However, they also have a duty not to compromise Environment Canterbury or Council by public criticism of, or comment on, Council policy.

Employees should ensure that their contribution to any public debate, or discussion on such matters, is appropriate to the position they hold, and is compatible with the need to maintain a politically neutral position. Employees occupying senior positions, or working closely with Councillors, need to exercise particular care in this regard to ensure that they do not say anything that may influence public perception one way or the other prior to a Council decision being made.

In general, personal comments made by employees on matters of Council policy would be regarded as unacceptable if they:

- revealed advice given to the Council during public excluded sessions of Council meetings;
- used or revealed any information gained in the course of official duties where it would be protected by the Privacy Act 1993 which was not already known by, or readily available to, the general public;
- criticised, or suggested criticism to, a proposed or actual Council policy or Council programme, or that of any other Council with which the individual was professionally involved;
- purported to express, or imply, an Environment Canterbury view, rather than clearly expressing a personal view;
- gave openly partisan support to, or criticism of, a political party or Council candidate;
- made a personal attack on a Councillor, work colleague, or any other local government employee; or
- criticised a colleague to a sufficiently strong and/or persistent extent so as to call into question the employee's ability to impartially implement or advise upon a Council policy.

Release of Official Information

The disclosure of official information is subject to the requirements of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987. It should be noted that all information is Official Information and all Official Information is discoverable. The general principle of this Act is that information should be made available on request, unless it is confidential or compelling reasons (as detailed in the Act) exist why it should not.

Official information should be released only in accordance with these requirements and by staff authorised to deal with requests for information. The information that is required to be protected from disclosure is that which is confidential or otherwise protected by the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

Staff authorised to respond to requests made under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 should exercise proper care and discretion in the application of Environment Canterbury procedures. In cases of doubt, staff should seek guidance from their Director. Should the release of politically sensitive material be required, staff should ensure that the Chief Executive is notified well in advance of any information release.

It is unacceptable for staff to make unauthorised use or to disclose information to which they have had official or unofficial access. Whatever the motive, such employees betray the trust put in them, and undermine the relationship that should exist between Councillors and the public. The unauthorised disclosure of information may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal.

Taking part in Political Campaigns

It is suggested that staff in their private capacity do not take part in any activity related to the election campaign of a current or potential elected member. Such activity may include:

- Attendance at private campaign strategy meetings
- Organising public meetings
- Taking part in any activity that could be seen to be a campaign activity (such as canvassing, or writing speeches)
- Writing letters, media releases or speeches clearly linked to a candidate's campaign.

If you do intend to engage in such activity please make your Manager aware.

Some staff have regular duties which require writing media releases, letters, speeches and carrying out administrative tasks for current elected members. Care should be taken to ensure such activities cannot be directly linked to any political campaign.

Staff are free to attend public meetings at which candidates are presenting themselves for election.

Provision of Information to Candidates

All information held by the Council is public information. Where Council information is requested by and supplied to a candidate (including a current elected member), it should be assumed that that information may be used for campaign purposes. The information should be made available to other candidates on request.

Use of Council Resources for Campaigning Purposes

No Council resources (including computers, email, mobile phones, faxes, stationery, photocopiers, stamps, cars and venues) should be used for campaigning purposes. Council-arranged or supported forums or meetings must not be used for campaigning purposes. Staff must not send or forward emails either internally or externally which seek support for a particular candidate or candidates, or use a staff meeting as a platform for encouraging such support.

Council Publications, Website and Other Forms of Communication

All candidates should have access to the same communication platforms.

The Council website giving details of sitting members will remain as current information. However, individual profiles or news releases in the names of individual members will discontinue.

In the August to October editions of Living Here there will not be the regular section "Constituencies and Councillors". In the August edition there may, instead, be a section that describes voting procedures.

Staff should ensure their activities are consistent with the Controller and Auditor-General guidelines “Good Practice for Managing Public Communications by Local Authorities”. A copy is available from www.oag.govt.nz/2004/public-communications/

A register of all media statements issued during the pre-election period will be kept in a folder adjacent to the work-station of the Media Liaison Co-ordinator (Frances Adank). The register will be titled “Register of Media Statements July to Oct 2007 and will be available for inspection at any time by a councillor or staff member. In addition, electronic versions of media statements issued by Environment Canterbury are always available on the website under <http://www.ecan.govt.nz/About+Us/News.htm>

Eligibility of Council Employees to Stand for Election

The law requires that a Council employee who is elected to be a Councillor must resign from their position as an employee of the local authority before taking up their position as a Councillor.

Protected Disclosures

The Protected Disclosures Act 2000 recognises that there may be circumstances when it is difficult for staff to report suspected wrong-doing through the normal channels in Environment Canterbury. Parliament’s aim in passing this legislation was to create an environment that encourages employees to report suspected serious wrong-doing by providing some protection for the employee. The Act sets out procedures to ensure that disclosures are given due consideration and are acted on within a prescribed timeframe.

Serious wrong-doing includes: unlawful, corrupt, or irregular use of public funds or resources; conduct that poses a serious risk to public health or safety, the environment, or maintenance of the law (including the prevention, investigation and detection of offences and the right to a fair trial); conduct constituting an offence; or conduct by public officials which is grossly improper.

Relevant policy documents:

Personnel Policy 40 Protected Disclosures Policies and Procedures

Private Communication with Officials of Key Stakeholder Groups

Given the requirement for employees to remain neutral in their work, care and judgement must be exercised before making any private communications with officials of key stakeholder groups.

As a general guide:

- Employees may communicate privately with any key stakeholder group about matters outside their official duties. Employees occupying senior positions should exercise particular care with such communications;

- Employees may also communicate privately with any key stakeholder group about matters concerning their section, but such matters should first be raised with the Chief Executive;
- Where a matter is raised directly with a key stakeholder group, the organisation may be directed to provide a suitable response via the Chief Executive.