



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Communities**



Schedule 1 – Code of Conduct



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Department of **Communities**



Code of Conduct: Living our values

Integrity – I show a consistent and uncompromising adherence to honesty and strong moral and ethical principles as set out in our Code of Conduct and consistent with the high expectations of the people we serve.

Courage – I am committed to giving constructive feedback and speaking up to protect our values, people's safety and wellbeing, and the culture we are committed to creating.

Respect – I listen and encourage diverse thinking to achieve the best outcomes, and consistently treat everyone with dignity and sensitivity regardless of the circumstances.

Empathy – I intentionally seek to understand others' perspectives and to play my part in ensuring others feel connected and included whilst recognising the impact of my own beliefs and actions on others.

Accountability – I seek and provide clarity on performance expectations, use Communities' resources in a responsible manner, take personal accountability and hold others to account for delivery of identified outcomes, and keep myself and others safe.

Trust – I am open and authentic, seek to collaborate and build relationships, reliably deliver on my commitments, and consistently demonstrate congruence between my words and actions.

Empowerment – I am driven to deliver high standards and outcomes and to see my colleagues and our clients flourish.



Message from the Corporate Executive

Since our formation in July 2017 the Department of Communities (Communities) has continued the great work of our former agencies, while working more collectively to get better outcomes for the people we're here to serve.

Our **purpose** is collaborating to create pathways that enable individual, family and community wellbeing and our focus is delivering quality services and supports to a diverse range of people across Western Australia.

Our **iCREATE values** (Integrity, Courage, Respect, Empathy, Accountability, Trust, Empowerment) are at the centre of everything that we do. These values support us to '**do the right things**' and provide a strong foundation to deliver on our purpose.

This Code of Conduct will help us put our values into practice every day, in every action and interaction. It sets out the standard of behaviour that is required of us as public servants and as representatives of the Department. We are bound by the Code, as are all Communities employees, irrespective of our position, level or background.

It is critical that everyone knows and follows our Code. There may well be situations where the right course of action is not immediately obvious. We, therefore, expect and rely on you to ask questions and in particular, share your concerns if you see or suspect a breach of our Code. There are people to guide you in a professional and confidential way, including your line manager, any other member of your management team, Public Interest Disclosure Officers and the Employee Relations and Integrity team.

We expect and count on you to act with the highest standards of integrity. Together we can change the way community services are delivered in Western Australia and create a better future for everyone, especially those most in need.

The Corporate Executive

January 2019

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1. Overview

Communities' Code of Conduct (the Code) is an overarching framework that provides guidance on the ethical and professional behaviour expected of employees. This Code is supported by relevant policies, procedures, guidelines and other tools relating to ethical behaviour.

1.1 Purpose led, values driven approach

Communities is about change for the better. Our purpose is 'collaborating to create pathways that enable individual, family and community wellbeing'.

If we are to deliver on this purpose, our decisions, behaviours and actions must be guided by our **iCREATE values** every time, all the time. The Code is one of the tools we have as employees to guide our behaviour and help us to live by the **iCREATE values** below.

Integrity I show a consistent and uncompromising adherence to honesty and strong moral and ethical principles as set out in our Code of Conduct and consistent with the high expectations of the people we serve.

Courage I am committed to giving constructive feedback and speaking up to protect our values, people's safety and wellbeing, and the culture we are committed to creating.

Respect I listen and encourage diverse thinking to achieve the best outcomes, and consistently treat everyone with dignity and sensitivity regardless of the circumstances.

Empathy I intentionally seek to understand others' perspectives and to play my part in ensuring others feel connected and included whilst recognising the impact of my own beliefs and actions on others.

Accountability I seek and provide clarity on performance expectations, use Communities' resources in a responsible manner, take personal accountability and hold others to account for delivery of identified outcomes, and keep myself and others safe.

Trust I am open and authentic, seek to collaborate and build relationships, reliably deliver on my commitments, and consistently demonstrate congruence between my words and actions.

Empowerment I am driven to deliver high standards and outcomes and to see my colleagues and our clients flourish.

1.2 Who must comply with the Code

Our Code applies to all Communities employees, including the Director General and all other members of the Corporate Executive. The Code applies to permanent and fixed term employees, casual employees, officers seconded to Communities and people employed under contracts for service, also known as contractors. It also applies to others in the workplace such as work experience students, trainees, cadets and volunteers. For the purposes of this document, the term "employee" has been used to refer to all these people engaged by Communities and the Disability Services Commission.

2. What the Code means for you

All employee behaviours and actions must comply with this Code, our policies and procedures and relevant legislation. Where a Communities policy doesn't yet exist, you should continue to refer to your Division's existing policies and procedures.

2.1 Uphold our standards

This Code requires all employees to uphold the following standards. Further detail on the conduct consistent with these standards are set out in the following sections.

Personal behaviour

We are committed to behave with integrity and accountability, and treat others with respect, fairness and empathy.

Communication, official information and recordkeeping

We expect information to be kept and used appropriately, and in a way that promotes ethical and transparent decision making.

We respect the privacy and confidentiality of official information.

Fraudulent or corrupt behaviour

We never engage in behaviour that is fraudulent or corrupt, and immediately report information about actual or potentially fraudulent or corrupt activities.

Use of public resources

We are responsible stewards of public resources.

Conflicts of interests, gifts and benefits

We are aware of conflicts of interest and declare and manage them appropriately.

Reporting suspected breaches of the Code

We are committed to identifying and reporting suspected breaches of the Code.

2.2 Seek guidance

The Code does not describe every possible situation you might encounter. If you find yourself in a situation where you are unsure of what to do, you should reflect on Communities' values and purpose, and ask these questions:

- Am I doing the right thing?
- How would others judge my actions?
- How could my actions impact on others?
- Should I discuss this with someone else?

If you are still unsure, you can ask for guidance from a manager and Public Interest Disclosure officers or a member of the Employee Relations and Integrity team via misconduct.reporting@communities.wa.gov.au.

3. Personal behaviour

We are committed to behave with integrity and accountability, and treat others with respect, fairness and empathy

Our personal behaviour influences Communities' relationships with our internal and external stakeholders, which in turn can positively or negatively impact on our ability to deliver on our strategic direction. Modelling high standards of behaviour promotes positive environments in which our clients, colleagues and communities can thrive.

Where a Communities policy or procedure does not yet exist you should continue operating under your Division's existing policies and procedures.

It is expected that you:

- understand and comply with this Code and Communities policies, procedures and legislation, which governs your personal and professional conduct
- act honestly and with integrity in the performance of your duties
- do not engage in harassment, bullying or unlawful discrimination against Committee Members of our services, colleagues or members of the public
- maintain and contribute to a harmonious, safe and productive work environment
- treat the public, Committee Members of our services and colleagues with respect, courtesy and fairness, having proper regard for their interests, rights, safety and welfare
- make decisions fairly, impartially and promptly, and consider all available information, legislation, policies and procedures
- serve the government of the day professionally and impartially and provide timely, well-considered information and policy advice
- display commitment to Committee Members of our services and colleagues by building and maintaining professional relationships
- carry out any lawful and reasonable direction from a manager or someone who has authority to give such a direction
- carry out your duties to the best of your ability and with professional competence
- attend work fit to perform your duties, unimpaired by drugs or alcohol
- dress neatly and appropriately for the nature of your work and workplace
- report any criminal convictions or serious offences committed during the term of your employment
- not cause reputational damage to Communities either in a private or public capacity
- ensure the interests and wellbeing of vulnerable people is your primary focus, especially if you work in a direct service delivery role, including protecting clients from harm and neglect.

4. Communication, official information and record keeping

We expect information to be kept and used appropriately, and in a way that promotes ethical and transparent decision making

We respect the privacy and confidentiality of official information

In the course of our employment we are entrusted with sensitive and confidential information. It is important that we use that information in an appropriate manner.

Confidential information means information that is not publicly available

The integrity and accuracy of our records is extremely important. Complete, accurate and secure records are relied upon for our decision making, and they promote organisational efficiency that will benefit Committee Members of our services and communities.

4.1 Communication and public comment

It is expected that you:

- adhere to any legal requirements, policies and all other lawful directives regarding communication with Parliament, Ministers, ministerial staff, lobbyists, proponents, the media and members of the public
- ensure any conduct with lobbyists is in accordance with Commissioner's Instruction No. 16
- not participate in public and/or online forums in an official capacity or as a Communities employee, except where authorised
- understand the circumstances in which you may use social media in an official capacity
- ensure that public comments made in a personal capacity are not seen or perceived to be an official comment on behalf of Communities or any other public sector organisation
- not disclose, comment or post inappropriate material about Committee Members of our services, colleagues or the Department on work or personal social media sites
- not engage in inappropriate communication with Committee Members of our services by utilising social media
- refer all media enquiries to Corporate Communications unless you are authorised to respond directly.

4.2 Official information and use of information

Official information means non-public information that comes into your knowledge or possession because of your employment.

It is expected that you:

- comply with the *State Records Act 2000* and relevant legislation
- seek advice about the appropriate release of information if you are unsure
- maintain confidentiality and not disclose any official information or documents acquired in your daily duties, other than in the course and for the purposes of your duties as required or enabled by law
- not access Communities databases or information without a legitimate work-related purpose, and be able to demonstrate why the information was accessed if required
- not make improper use of official information obtained in your daily duties for direct or indirect personal or commercial gain for yourself or others, or to do harm to others
- share information with colleagues to support the achievement of Communities' strategic initiatives or where there is a benefit to do so.

4.3 Recordkeeping

It is expected that you:

- meet your obligations under the *State Records Act 2000* and properly document actions, decisions and work practices
- securely store sensitive, confidential information and personal information
- protect intellectual property
- not falsify, destroy, alter or damage public records or back-date information
- ensure personal information about you and Committee Members of our services is accurate, complete, up-to-date and not misleading.

5. Fraudulent or corrupt behaviour

We never engage in behaviour that is fraudulent or corrupt, and immediately report information about actual or potentially fraudulent or corrupt activities

Communities prohibits all forms of fraud and corruption because it harms not only the Department and its reputation but also the Committee Members of our services and the communities in which we work.

Fraud is a dishonest activity that causes actual or potential financial loss to any person or organisation.

Corrupt behaviour is when an employee uses or attempts to use their position for personal advantage or to cause detriment to others.

It is expected that you:

- make ethical decisions
- not engage in any fraudulent or corrupt behaviour
- not use your position or authority to cause a detriment, or to gain a personal benefit for yourself or others
- report any information about actual or potentially fraudulent, corrupt or illegal activities.

6. Use of public resources

We are responsible stewards of public resources

We are entrusted to use public resources on behalf of the community, to deliver outcomes for the public.

Public resources include office facilities, corporate credit cards, motor vehicles, computers, software, photocopiers, phones, printers, other equipment and work time.

It is expected that you:

- use public resources carefully and efficiently
- are accountable for all expenditure, including the use of public money for hospitality and travel
- not use corporate credit cards to incur personal, non-work related expenditure (including travel and other purchases)
- not use work time or resources for political party work, outside employment, external volunteering activities or private financial gain
- use Departmental resources, including portable and attractive items, personal computers, phones, laptops and cars appropriately and for permissible purposes only
- follow legislation and procurement policies to recruit employees
- purchase goods and services following Communities' and other government policies
- report any damage to, or loss of, Communities property or equipment immediately to the appropriate person.

7. Conflicts of interest and gifts and benefits

We are aware of conflicts of interest and declare and manage them appropriately

It is not necessarily wrong or unethical to have a conflict of interest, but it is important that any conflict of interest is properly identified, documented and managed to ensure it doesn't compromise our integrity or the public's confidence in the Department.

Conflicts of interest can be actual, potential or perceived.

7.1 Conflicts of interest

It is expected that you:

- recognise when an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest exists and register it
- appropriately manage conflicts of interest
- not allow any political, private or commercial interests to influence your decisions or actions as an employee (interests include, but are not limited to, family, friends, associates, investments, relationships, voluntary work or group memberships)
- acknowledge that an identified conflict of interest may change over time and ensure that it continues to be managed appropriately throughout your employment
- not engage in nepotism or patronage in decision making, purchasing, awarding of tenders, recruitment, selection, and appointment processes
- seek approval to undertake secondary employment and not engage in inappropriate associations where you have a financial interest or a personal association that may impact on Communities.

7.2 Gifts and benefits

It is expected that you:

- declare all offers and receipt of gifts, benefits and hospitality regardless of whether the offer is accepted or declined
- not accept gifts, benefits and hospitality likely to place you under an actual or perceived financial or moral obligation to other organisations or individuals
- not give or accept gifts, benefits or hospitality that affects, may be likely to affect or could reasonably be perceived to affect the independent and impartial performance of your official duties
- understand that accepting or offering a gift, benefit or hospitality may create a personal interest where one did not previously exist
- understand the circumstances in which you can accept gifts and seek advice if you are unsure.

8. Reporting suspected breaches of the Code

We are committed to identifying suspected breaches of the Code

Reporting suspected breaches of the Code contributes to the integrity of Communities and the wellbeing of our clients, colleagues and communities.

It is expected that you:

- promptly report allegations or legitimate suspicions regarding suspected breaches of the Code
- use the appropriate avenue to raise concerns
- maintain confidentiality when involved in a disciplinary process.

You can report suspected breaches of the Code to:

- your line manager
- any manager
- misconduct.reporting@communities.wa.gov.au or public.interest.disclosure@communities.wa.gov.au which is managed by Employee Relations and Integrity
- a Public Interest Disclosure (PID) Officer listed on The Common
- the 24/7 Misconduct Reporting Hotline on 0466 511 957 which will be answered by a PID officer.

Employees have the option to make disclosures about wrongdoing committed by public sector employees to Communities' PID officers under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003. This Act provides protections to those who make public interest disclosures.

There are also external agencies or bodies that investigate misconduct. Other avenues for reporting misconduct include the:

- Public Sector Commission for minor misconduct
- Corruption and Crime Commission for serious misconduct (misconduct that involves corrupt intent and/or criminal conduct)
- Western Australia (WA) Police for criminal matters
- Ombudsman WA for matters of administration affecting individuals
- Equal Opportunity Commission WA for discrimination matters.

Employee Relations and Integrity can be contacted for advice on any of the above reporting options and processes via misconduct.reporting@communities.wa.gov.au.

9. Breaches of the Code

Communities will address breaches of the Code in a professional and appropriate manner, according to the circumstances of each case. This could include an improvement action or disciplinary action, which can range from a warning to termination of employment. In serious cases, the matter may be referred to the Public Sector Commission, Corruption and Crime Commission or the WA Police.

10. Document control

Publication date	[02 / 2019]
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Owner	Assistant Director General, Governance, Integrity and Reform
Custodian	Assistant Director, Integrity and Standards Directorate

Feedback and enquiries relating to this policy may be directed to misconduct.reporting@communities.wa.gov.au.

11. Amendments

Version	Date	Author	Description
1	January 2019	Assistant Director, Employee Relations and Integrity	Approved by Corporate Executive
2	July 2020	Assistant Director Integrity	Update to include integrity in Department values