



Police Investigations &
Review Commissioner

Code of Conduct

March 2025

Independent and effective
investigations and reviews



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1. Foreword

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EMPLOYEES

The Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC) has an agreed Code of Conduct for Employees (the Code). This is an important document, since it sets out the standards of behaviour the PIRC expects of its staff. You should read it and if you do not understand how the Code applies to you, you should ask your line manager to go through it with you. This will be part of the induction process so all new staff will have it drawn to their attention when they start work.

The Code covers:

- An introduction setting out how the **PIRC's Values** should be translated into the standards of behaviour expected from all staff. It is a requirement for the PIRC to have such a code and in drawing it up we have looked at the standards that apply within the wider public sector and the police service.
- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion** – the PIRC attaches high value to diversity and working to eliminate unlawful discrimination. The Code explains what this means for you.

Identifying and Declaring a Conflict of Interest - it is important to promote public confidence in the PIRC as this could be undermined if it appeared that any member of staff was able to be influenced inappropriately in the way in which they carried out their duties. This section gives guidance on:

- identifying what may be a conflict of interest for you
 - completing the registration form for your personnel file
 - what to do if you are offered a gift or hospitality
 - how what you do outside work could affect your job here
- **Security and Confidentiality of Information** - the PIRC will collect a great deal of very sensitive information and the Code draws your attention to the responsibility you have to keep this confidential and our policies for Security and Data Protection. It also gives you guidance on what to do if you are contacted by the media.
 - **Concerns about Improper Conduct** - the Code also explains what you should do if you have a concern that illegal or improper activities may be going on in the PIRC and how you should raise such concerns - this is sometimes called "Whistleblowing". The PIRC has a policy that covers whistleblowing which should be read on conjunction with this policy.

The Code has three forms attached to it:

1. Declaration of Interests (Appendix A) – Completed forms should be sent to the HR team at HR@pirc.gov.scot for consideration, approval and inclusion in personnel files and for inclusion in the PIRC's Register of Interest if applicable.
2. SLT Declaration of Interests form (**Appendix B**). Completed forms should be sent to the HR team at HR@pirc.gov.scot.
3. United Kingdom Security Vetting (UKSV) National Security Vetting: change of personal circumstances (**Appendix C**).

If you have any queries on how the Code will operate, then please raise them in the first instance with your line manager. Alternatively, as the Head of Corporate Services I would be happy to provide any help or advice on it's interpretation.

This is an updated procedure and we will be monitoring its operation on an ongoing basis and reviewing the Code if necessary. If you have any comments, then please let me or your own manager know.

Yours sincerely

Sharon Smit
Head of Corporate Services



2. Introduction

The PIRC is a values-based organisation. People will work for the PIRC because they believe in what it is trying to do. Its core beliefs will be applied in its day to day work, reinforced through induction and training and articulated in actions and words by those who lead the organisation. We will apply these beliefs both to how the PIRC conducts its own affairs and in its relationships with others.

PIRC's values are:

- Integrity
- Impartiality
- Respect

Integrity

- If the PIRC is to hold the police to account then it must maintain the highest standards itself.
- We need to act, and be seen to act, with integrity in both our private and professional lives.
- We act with integrity in our public statements, acceptance of hospitality and gifts, dealings with stakeholders and use of public funds.
- We will be honest about our mistakes.

Impartiality

We demonstrate our impartiality by:

- Our resolve under pressure.
- The people we appoint.
- The work we undertake.
- Scrupulously avoiding conflicts of interest.
- Our organisational culture.
- The communications we make.

Respect

- We are open to the experience, insights and skills of people of different race, religion/belief, ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity and other backgrounds from both inside the PIRC and from external partners.
- We seek maximum disclosure and regular communications with all parties during the course of a complaint.
- The Commissioner, Director of Operations and our Heads of Department communicate information about our work and performance widely.
- We carefully define what we need to maintain confidentiality or secrecy for operational reasons so that we can protect individuals and retain the confidence of other agencies.
- We work with stakeholders to develop our policies.
- We learn lessons from what we do and take responsibility for our decisions.
- We make sure that communication is two way between staff and the Commissioner and that they share information and experiences.
- The Commissioner accepts corporate responsibility for the work of the PIRC.



3. Purpose and Application of the Code of Conduct

As an employee of the PIRC, you must at all times observe the highest standards of integrity, impartiality and respect in relation to the work you undertake.

The Code provides guidance to employees on how to ensure that their actions and behaviour are consistent with both the PIRC's values and the high standards of conduct required to maintain public confidence in the work of the PIRC.

- You should familiarise yourself with the contents of the Code and act in accordance with the principles and the guidance set out in it.
- You must comply with this Code. You must ensure that you understand your duties, rights and responsibilities, and are familiar with the functions and role of the PIRC and the PIRC's policies and procedures as they affect your job. New employees may be required to attend relevant training or induction courses to assist them in this.
- Failure to comply with the Code may be a disciplinary matter, so you should seek advice or guidance from your line manager or the Head of Corporate Services if you are in any doubt about how this Code applies to you.

Contractors, consultants or agency staff working with the PIRC will be briefed on our Code of Conduct and will be expected to abide by the standards and principles set out in the Code and to seek advice from the Head of Corporate Services when in doubt.

4. Standards of Behaviour Expected

The Commissioner has overall responsibility and is accountable for propriety in a broad sense, including conduct and discipline. The Commissioner also has a duty to ensure that employees' rights are respected.

As an employee you have a right to:

- be spoken to politely
- be treated with respect
- be treated fairly and courteously by colleagues and those outside the organisation for whom we work
- be treated fairly in recruitment, training and promotion
- have your private life and commitments outside work respected
- have your point of view listened to and considered
- expect not to be harassed or intimidated at work and in particular have a right not to be harassed or intimidated because of your race, gender, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion, disability, marital status, age or sexuality
- speak out if you are the victim of bullying, harassment or intimidation and have your complaint taken seriously and properly investigated



As an employee you have a responsibility to:

- act professionally in your dealings with colleagues - treat colleagues as individuals and show sensitivity to their needs
- treat complainants, those investigated and other stakeholders with fairness, courtesy and sensitivity to their needs and the situation they are in
- treat all members of the public sympathetically, efficiently, promptly and without bias or maladministration. Staff of public bodies should offer the public the highest standards of conduct and service
- consider others in the exercise of your duties
- keep in mind the limitations of your own experience and value others' perspectives and experience
- express your point of view without being aggressive or overbearing
- listen to what others say and respect their point of view
- learn from your mistakes
- try to find solutions and work through disagreements with others
- take responsibility for your own learning and development
- take action if you witness or are made aware of any improper conduct, including any act of harassment or discrimination
- not to discriminate unlawfully, for example, in decisions you make
- not to put pressure on others to discriminate unlawfully
- challenge attitudes which demean or denigrate other people (individuals or groups) and develop self-awareness of the impact of your own behaviour
- ensure that your behaviour (at work or outside) and your appearance at work whilst representing the PIRC does not cause embarrassment to the PIRC or reflect negatively on the PIRC in a way that would bring the reputation of the PIRC into disrepute or cause a loss of public confidence in its work

Dress Code

As a PIRC employee you are expected to dress appropriately for the position that you have undertaken. Employees should be aware that their appearance matters when representing our organisation in front of stakeholders, visitors or other parties, and contributes to our reputation and professionalism. This means that employees are normally expected to dress in smart business attire unless otherwise directed by management. An employee's appearance can create a positive or negative impression that reflects on our organisation and culture. Appropriate religious and cultural dress (including head scarves, skull caps and turbans) are permitted at all times unless it creates a health and safety risk to you or any other person.

If additional information is required as to what appropriate work wear is for employment in the PIRC, please contact HR Team.



Use of alcohol or illegal drugs

As a PIRC employee, you cannot drink alcohol during your working hours (including during meal breaks) under any circumstances.

Social events, e.g. leaving parties at which alcohol will be consumed should be arranged after work.

If you are at work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, then that will be regarded by the PIRC as a serious disciplinary matter. If you are prescribed drugs which may affect your ability to do your job, then you should seek advice from your line manager on the health and safety implications of this at the earliest opportunity.

PIRC are responsible for staff even when functions appear of a social nature, e.g. Christmas and other nights out/meals. Employees should therefore ensure that their behaviour does not bring the reputation of PIRC into disrepute.

Please refer to our [Health and Safety Policy](#) for guidance.

5. Accountability

Staff are accountable to the Commissioner who is accountable to the Justice Directorate (the sponsor department) as set out in the Governance and Accountability Framework Document. The Cabinet Secretary for Justice is the Minister responsible for the PIRC and is ultimately accountable to the Scottish Parliament for its effectiveness and efficiency.

PIRC staff should conduct themselves with integrity, impartiality and respect. You should not deceive or knowingly mislead others, including other staff, the PIRC, the sponsor department, Ministers, Parliament or the public.

Public Accountability

Staff of public bodies (including PIRC staff) who deal with the affairs of the public should do so sympathetically, efficiently, promptly and without bias or maladministration. Staff of public bodies should offer the public the highest standards of conduct and service.

Use of Resources

Staff have a duty to ensure that the PIRC's resources are used in the most economical, efficient and effective manner as befits public money.

6. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The PIRC wishes to develop as a learning organisation in which knowledge and learning are shared amongst colleagues and improvement becomes endemic. With this in mind, it is clearly important that colleagues are free to explore and discuss



issues around equality, diversity and inclusion. Nothing in this Code should be interpreted as seeking to prevent or constrain such discussion.

However, it is unacceptable for employees to discriminate unlawfully – either in the decisions they make, or in putting pressure on another person to discriminate or in victimising someone who has raised an issue of potential discrimination in good faith and if you do so, you will face disciplinary action – and may even (if the facts of the individual case merit it) face dismissal.

In addition, PIRC has a policy position on Equal Opportunities, which goes further than the basic legal provisions, and breach of these policies may also be considered a disciplinary matter.

You are expected to understand the concept of institutional discrimination and institutional racism in particular and work to identify and eliminate it in the work of the PIRC and in relationships within PIRC itself and with stakeholders.

The definition of institutional racism is:

The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.

Sir William Macpherson
Stephen Lawrence Inquiry

7. Conflicts of Interest

The purpose of these provisions is to prevent any member of staff being influenced, or appearing to be influenced, by their private interests in the exercise of their public duties. It is not enough not to be influenced, public confidence in the PIRC might be shaken if a member of the public could perceive that an employee might be subject to improper influence as a result of the member of staff's behaviour. You should not misuse your official position or information acquired in the course of your official duties to further your private interests or those of others.

Identifying Potential Conflicts of Interest

Senior Leadership Team (Commissioner, Director of Operations, Head of Investigations, Head of Review & Policy, Head of Corporate Services and Head of Legal Services), will be required to register all interests annually. These will be recorded in the PIRC Register of Interests, held by Information Officer and published on our website. **(Appendix B)**

All other employees are only required to complete the Register of Interest form (**Appendix A**) for occasions where a conflict has been identified and this information will not be held on the PIRC register or published.

In particular you should make known to HR, your Head of Service and your manager:

- Any relative who is: a police officer or employed to work as a member of police or police authority staff; a member of any body affiliated to or associated with oversight of the management of any police force operating in Scotland or seeking to influence the provision of police services in Scotland; or, a member of any other relevant policing authority operating in Scotland.
- Any close personal friendship you may have with: a police officer or anyone employed to work as a member of police or police authority staff; a member of any body affiliated to or associated with oversight or the management of any police force operating in Scotland or seeking to influence the provision of police services in Scotland; or, a member of any other relevant policing authority operating in Scotland.
- If it comes to your notice that a Complaint Handling Review (CHR) application has been received by PIRC from **any** person that you know personally or with whom you have a relationship or connection. Similarly, if an investigation involves any person, with whom you have a relationship or close friendship with be that the complainer or the officer or member of Police staff that is subject of an allegation / complaint), which could lead to allegations of conflicts of interest. If this arises you **must** declare it at the outset to your manager, Head of Department and PIRC HR.
- Any personal financial connection with any organisation or company seeking work from the PIRC
- Any personal relationship with another employee of the PIRC, the Commissioner or anyone seeking work with the PIRC. See [Personal Relationships at Work Policy](#) for further guidance

Registration of Interests / Secondary Employment

Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team must declare their interests (with the exception of trade union membership and membership of a political party) and the information will be available for public inspection. In addition their posts are politically restricted (see below).

Other Employees

All other staff will also be required to declare personal or business interests, remunerated or voluntary employment or activity which may, or may be perceived (by a reasonable member of the public) to, influence their judgement.

Employees who through the nature of their job have a direct influence on the PIRC's decisions should declare all direct or indirect pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests. They should also notify HR team of such interests of close family members and of people living in the same household.



Details of interests declared by employees should be kept up-to-date on a register of interests tracker, which is managed by the Information Officer, and will cover the same areas as those applying to the Commissioner (with the exception of trade union membership and political activities which are covered under Political Activities on page 14). These details are kept confidential and will not be available for public inspection.

Employees should not participate in the discussion or determination of matters in which they have an interest.

Definitions:

- Indirect pecuniary interests arise from connections with bodies which have a direct pecuniary interest, or from being a business partner of, or being employed by, a person with such an interest.
- Non-pecuniary interests include those arising from membership of clubs and other organisations.

Close family members are partners, someone you are married to or live with as if you were married, a parent, a parent-in-law, a son or daughter, a stepson or stepdaughter, the child of a partner, a brother or sister, a grandparent, a grandchild, an uncle or aunt, a nephew or niece, or the husband, wife or partner of any of these people.

Acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality

As a PIRC employee you should not use your official position to receive, agree to accept or attempt to obtain any payment or other consideration for doing, or not doing, anything or showing favour, or disfavour, to any person. You should not receive benefits of any kind from a third party, which might reasonably be seen to compromise your personal judgement and integrity.

Gifts

- You must not accept any gifts in connection with your official duties, except in circumstances where the refusal to accept a gift is judged to cause unnecessary offence.
- In these circumstances you must inform your line manager and register receiving the gift in the Declaration of Interest form at Appendix A, which should be forwarded to the HR team.
- If the retail value of the gift is £50 or under then this may be kept e.g. vouchers.. If the value of the gift is more than £50, it must be passed to Head of Corporate Services who will arrange a suitable destination e.g. donated to a charity designated by the PIRC.
- In all cases of receiving a gift, advice must be sought from your line manager and Head of Corporate Services.



Hospitality

You may accept conventional hospitality provided it is normal and reasonable in the circumstances, for example:

- Tea, coffee, biscuits and sandwiches at meetings
- An invitation to an annual dinner of an organisation with which the PIRC has regular contact
- A working lunch in the course of normal business provided this is not frequent, regular or lavish.

Any hospitality over £25 that is received by you as a PIRC employee in connection with your official duties must be registered on the attached form and submitted to the Head of Corporate Services.

Offers to attend purely social, artistic or sporting functions should be declined.

Under the Bribery Act 2010 (see page 15 below) as an employee of a public body you may be required to prove that the receipt of payment or other consideration from someone seeming to obtain a contract is not corrupt.

Any employee breaching this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.

Other Employment

All those who work for the PIRC are expected to observe the highest possible standards in both their professional and personal lives. Other employment, paid or voluntary, must be declared.

As an employee of the PIRC, you are expected to be fully committed to the work of the PIRC and not to work for another employer. If you wish to take on other employment you must seek permission (which will not be unreasonably withheld subject to there being no conflict of interest with your duties at the PIRC) prior to undertaking this work.

Conflicts may arise, for example, if the other employer is likely to be reviewed by the PIRC or is seeking a contract for goods or services with the PIRC.

Jury Duty

PIRC employees are likely to be considered as exempt from completing periods of Jury Duty. Whilst the organisation is not listed within the names of organisation whose employees are not required to complete the duties of a juror, any employees who receive a citation should indicate on the form they are a PIRC employee and return this to the relevant court.



Conduct Outside Work

Your off-duty time is your own, subject to the following:

- You must not bring the PIRC into disrepute, by doing or saying things that will reflect badly on the PIRC. Although employees have freedom of expression and right to gather and express views, they have a duty to behave responsibly and respect other people's right. Membership of, or the active participation in activities organised by groups or organisations whose values are inconsistent with the PIRC's (e.g. racist organisations) will create reasonable doubt in your ability to comply with the PIRC's values and this Code. Such membership or participation may lead to a management investigation in accordance with the PIRC's Disciplinary Procedures. It is important that you seek advice from your line manager or the Head of Corporate Services in advance of taking part in any event which may fall into this category. You must also tell your line manager as soon as practicable if you inadvertently find yourself in a situation outside work which you had not anticipated and which you believe would cause embarrassment to the PIRC.
- You must not knowingly put yourself in a position where your private interests conflict with the PIRC's and any conflict of interest must be resolved in the PIRC's favour. For example you should not knowingly attend a social event, at which a police officer being reviewed is present, if by doing so you could be perceived by a reasonable member of the public as being open to personal influence in the way in which you do your job. If you do inadvertently attend such an event and find yourself in this situation, you must report it to your line manager or a member of the Senior Leadership Team for their awareness.

Use of Social Media

PIRC, by the nature of the role and function of the organisation may leave some employees open to proactive targeting by individuals and the media due to the types of enquiries carried out.

You are therefore reminded of some of the pitfalls of having social media profiles. Where you do have a profile on platforms such as "Facebook" you should not identify yourself as a member of PIRC personnel.

You should not discuss work related topics on such forums or say anything which undermines the reputation of the PIRC. Such actions could lead to disciplinary action.

Do not share your work email or telephone number on social media.

You must not take on other business, employment or public duties without the permission of the PIRC.

You must abide by the political restrictions set out below.



Please refer to our [Social Media Policy](#) for guidance.

Contact with the Police

You must tell your line manager as soon as practicable if you or a close family member living at the same address as you

- is arrested
- receives a summons or
- is the subject of a police investigation
- if you are a witness in a Police investigation or receive a witness citation

You must immediately advise your Head of Service and the HR Team of any criminal or driving convictions, including any fixed penalty notices.

Political Activities

This section is concerned with party political activity liable to give public expression to political views rather than with privately held beliefs and opinions. It is not intended that these restrictions affect trade union membership or activities.

The PIRC is an independent body and needs to be seen to be acting impartially. Public confidence might be affected if it was believed that an individual member of staff's personal political views were compromising its independence and impartiality.

Employees whether in politically restricted posts or not may be members of a political party (and need not declare it). If you are not in a politically restricted post you may participate in political activities such as helping with administration at the time of a general election or delivering leaflets provided that you are conscious of the standards of behaviour expected of you as set out in this Code and exercise a proper discretion, particularly in regard to the work of the PIRC. On matters directly affecting the PIRC, you should not make political speeches or engage in other political activities.

If you wish to run for office, you must seek advice at an early stage from the Head of Corporate Services and it is likely that you will be required to take a leave of absence to do so.

Please consult the [Social Media Policy](#) for further guidance.

Politically Restricted Posts

Posts at or above Grade C1 are politically restricted.

In addition, certain other posts may be politically restricted as determined by the Commissioner. The Head of Corporate Services will hold a list, so that this information can be included in contractual documentation and recruitment packs.



Posts which might be affected are:

- posts which act as “spokesperson” for the PIRC or
- where the postholder has a significant degree of face-to-face contact with stakeholders, pressure groups, or other bodies or individuals who are seeking to influence the PIRC

AND

- where it would appear to the public that the postholder had some influence over the outcome of the PIRC’s decisions.

If a post is Politically Restricted this means that:

- postholders should not be politically active
- they may not campaign for a political party
- hold political office
- occupy party political posts or
- hold particularly sensitive or high profile unpaid roles in a political party

The Bribery Act 2010

The Bribery Act 2010 ensures Scotland (and the rest of the UK) is at the forefront of the battle against bribery and paves the way for fairer practice by encouraging businesses to adopt anti-bribery safeguards.

The Act reformed the criminal law in Scotland as well as the rest of the UK providing a new, modern and comprehensive scheme of bribery offences that will enable courts and prosecutors to respond more effectively to bribery at home or abroad.

The Act:

- makes it a criminal offence to give, promise or offer a bribe and to request, agree to receive or accept a bribe either at home or abroad. The measures cover bribery of a foreign public official.
- increases the maximum penalty for bribery from seven to ten years imprisonment, with an unlimited fine.
- introduces a corporate offence of failure to prevent bribery by persons working on behalf of a business. A business can avoid conviction if it can show that it has adequate procedures in place to prevent bribery.

The PIRC is committed to transparency and zero tolerance of bribery in pursuit of our corporate objectives. This applies to all staff (permanent and temporary), agency workers, consultants and any other party carrying out business or services on behalf of PIRC.



It should be noted that the Act does not prohibit genuine hospitality or similar business expenditure that is reasonable and proportionate. However, all PIRC staff and consultants must observe the guidelines set out above in 'Gifts and Hospitality' section.

8. Security Clearances

Successful candidates will undergo a Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS) check, National Security Vetting – Security Check (SC), or Developed Vetting (DV) process, depending on appointed position. In addition they will undergo Non-Police Personnel Vetting (NPPV) Level 2 or 3, again depending on appointed position.

Candidates who do not receive the required levels of security and NPPV clearances will not be offered a position with us. These checks can take some time to complete and we advise that notice should be handed into current employer until clearance has been received.

It is important that staff report any changes to their personal circumstances. Any changes can be reported direct to Police Scotland Vetting Unit at policescotlandvetting@scotland.police.uk, Opsec@gov.scot (for BPSS clearances) sgnationalsecurityvetting@gov.scot (for SC/DV clearances) using change of personal circumstances form (**Appendix C**). Changes to be reported include the following:

- If you have entered into a serious or cohabiting relationship
- If your marital status has changed
- If you become aware of anyone you associate with being involved in criminality
- If you have a new partner of more than 6 months
- If, for any reason, you have changed your name
- If you have changed your address
- receiving a Police caution, reprimand, or final warning
- you are arrested or refused bail
- having civil or criminal proceedings brought against them (including all motoring convictions except those restricted to parking infringements)
- If you have changed your nationality (for example, if you have become a dual national).
- If you experience financial difficulties or are subject to insolvency proceedings or a court repayment plan or had a change in financial circumstances (such as inheriting money, or falling behind on repayments).

It is your responsibility to report these changes as soon as they occur.

It is also your responsibility to raise any concerns about an individual or organisational practice that may be in breach of security procedures. Should your vetting be revoked then your employment at the PIRC may come to an end.

Contact HR team for advice and guidance if required.



9. Access to Information

Our beliefs can only be demonstrated by openness. We will aim to provide regular and full information to all those involved in a complaint at all stages of our work subject to necessary sensitivity constraints.

We will define those occasions in which confidentiality or secrecy is required for operational reasons, to maintain the confidence of other agencies and to protect individuals. We will only be trusted with openness if there is complete trust in our ability to maintain confidentiality when required.

Staff of public bodies owe a general duty of confidentiality to their employer at common law. They are therefore required to protect official information held in confidence. Nothing in this Code should be taken as overriding existing statutory or common law obligations to keep confidential, or in appropriate cases to disclose, certain information.

As an employee you must:

- follow PIRC policies in respect of complaint handling and security (including maintaining appropriate confidentiality).
- comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and not use information obtained for one purpose for another.
- keep confidential any personal data on individuals you collect and continue to keep this information confidential even after you leave the employment of the PIRC. You may only divulge this information if ordered to do so by a statutory body, Court of Law or as part of an official enquiry. In this context you may also divulge the information to any person acting as your legal representative.
- not use information gained in the course of your employment for unauthorised purposes
- ensure that all requests from sources external to PIRC for access/disclosure to PIRC information or information held by PIRC are discussed with the Head of Corporate Services before any information is disclosed.
- not discuss or disclose any information held by PIRC in relation to service users with family members, friends or any person not directly employed by PIRC or the Commissioner.
- adhere to these provisions as failure to do so may result in disciplinary action and/or dismissal
- divulge to the PIRC, any information that may have an impact on their / another member of staff's vetting conditions

Writing/Speaking in Public and Responding to the Media

When writing or speaking publicly (either in a formal speech or informally at a meeting) on any matter which could be seen as falling within the remit of the PIRC, as an employee, you are likely to be seen as representing the PIRC or the PIRC's position on an issue, even when you may believe you are writing or speaking as an individual.



Speeches or articles, which relate to PIRC work, should be discussed with the Head of Communications in advance, where appropriate.

You should not make direct contact with the media or respond to media enquiries unless it has been agreed in advance that they should do so. All media enquiries must be directed to the Head of Communications.

10. Concerns about Improper Conduct and Whistleblowing

If you feel you are being asked to do something which you believe:

- to be illegal, improper or unethical
- to be in breach of a professional code
- may involve maladministration, fraud or misuse of public funds
- is inconsistent with the Code

You should raise the matter in the first instance with your line manager. If this is not possible, or you are reluctant to do so, report the matter to the Head of Corporate Services, who has been nominated as the person responsible for handling any employee's concerns about illegal, improper or unethical conduct. The Head of Corporate Services will arrange for the appropriate person to consider the matter. As far as is possible, confidentiality will be maintained.

Staff have a duty to draw attention to matters, even if not personally involved, where:

- there is evidence of criminal or unlawful activity by others
- they believe there is evidence of improper or unethical behaviour or the potential for maladministration

Employees should not investigate these matters themselves as this will give rise to an irresolvable conflict of interest. Provided that these matters are raised in good faith, any employee raising such matters will be supported.

“Whistleblowing” – Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998

The Act is intended to protect employees who report in good faith the wrongdoing of others. It allows employees to complain to an Employment Tribunal if they are dismissed or suffer detriment or victimisation for reporting the wrongdoing.

The legislation does not protect whistle-blowers in all circumstances. A disclosure will be protected if you have good grounds for believing that one or more of the following has occurred or is likely to occur:

- a criminal offence
- a failure to comply with a legal obligation
- a miscarriage of justice
- the endangering of an individual's health and safety
- damage to the environment
- deliberate concealment of information relating to any of the above



Disclosures will be protected if the employee who makes the disclosure:

- does so in good faith to the employer,
- does so in accordance with the agreed procedure set out below,
- reasonably believes the information and any allegation contained in it is substantially true, and
- does not act for personal gain or malice.

PIRC Internal Whistleblowing Procedure

- The matter should be raised with the employee's line manager in the first instance
- If this is not possible it may be raised with the Head of Corporate Services

Please refer to our [Whistleblowing Policy](#) for guidance.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act also allows for matters to be raised externally. For staff of public bodies "protected disclosures" (which meet the above conditions) may be made to a Minister and in the case of the PIRC this would be the Cabinet Secretary for Justice. The disclosure can be made directly or through departmental officials. Employees may seek their own legal advice or contact Protect <https://protect-advice.org.uk/pida/> which is a designated legal advice centre.

11. After Leaving Employment

Staff of public bodies should continue to observe their duty of confidentiality (see Section 9 above) after they have left the employment of the public body

12. Communication & Contacts

This policy will be shared with all employees within PIRC and will be published on our intranet. Queries should be addressed to Head of Corporate Services.

13. Benchmarks Used in Policy Formation

- Existing Code
- SG Model Code for Staff of Public Bodies
- ACAS Conduct & Dress Guidance
- IOPC Code of Conduct
- Brodies Conduct & Dress Guidance



14. Implementation, Monitoring and Review of this Procedure

The Heade of Corporate Services has overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring this procedure.

It is a formal PIRC policy and will be reviewed by the PIRC Senior Leadership Team on an annual basis for any necessary updates and to ensure compliance with statutory requirements.

Any queries or comments about this procedure should be addressed to HR@pirc.gov.scot.

Version Control Data

Title:	Code of Conduct for Employees
Author:	HR Officer and Information Officer
Approver:	SLT
Published: Intranet and/or Internet	Intranet
Version Number:	Version 8
Summary of last modification:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Throughout policy designation and group name changes • Clearer guidance on dress code • Updated guidance on notifying any contact with the police • Updated guidance on notification of potential conflicts of interests • Updated guidance on identifying potential conflicts of interest • Updated guidance on conduct outside of work/use of social media • Updated guidance on registration of interests • Updated guidance on writing/speaking in public and responding to the media • Updated guidance on whistleblowing • Updated Appendix A to include notification of CHR or Investigations conflicts
Modified by:	HR Officer
Date of Modification:	March 2025
Next review date:	March 2026

APPENDIX A

PIRC DECLARATION OF INTEREST FORM

This form should be completed to register your interests in accordance with the PIRC's Code of Conduct for Employees. Please return completed forms to the HR team at HR@pirc.gov.scot.

The Senior Leadership Team (the Commissioner, Director of Operations, Head of Investigations, Head of Reviews & Policy, Head of Corporate Services and Head of Legal Services) are required to publicly declare all direct or indirect pecuniary¹ and non-pecuniary interests² in accordance with the Code of Conduct. SLT interests will be recorded in the PIRC Register of Interests, held by Information Officer.

This form should also be used to log any involvement with the police e.g. speeding fine/points, etc. Staff should notify HR team at HR@pirc.gov.scot or HCS directly at Sharon.Smit@pirc.gov.scot of any sensitive situations concerning policing bodies.

CATEGORY	DETAILS OF THE INTEREST AND WHETHER IT APPLIES TO YOURSELF OR A CONNECTED PERSON, IF APPLICABLE, INCLUDING DATES AND VALUE
Directorships of companies or organisations, whether remunerated directly or indirectly. Please provide a brief description of the business activities of the company or organisation:	
Any other remunerated or voluntary employment or activity (i.e. other than your post at the PIRC). If you have other employment you MUST declare it. Please provide the name of the organisations, trusts or other bodies of which you are a paid/unpaid employee, partner or proprietor. You should also include fees from freelance work and appointments to any public body.	
Details of any appointment to office(s), whether paid or not, and/or membership of any club or other organisation of which you are a member. This should include any organisation associated with or affiliated to a police force in the UK	
Details of each fixed interest shareholding with a nominal value greater than £25,000 or 1% of the share capital held in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sole name of PIRC member • Joint name, with spouse or close family member³ • Sole name of spouse or partner 	



• A representative capacity, for example, as a trustee	
Notification of a relative ³ or close family member who is a serving police officer, employed by a Chief Constable or a member or employee of any organisation which is affiliated to or which is seeking to influence police services in Scotland. Please provide brief details (i.e. relationship to you /the position your relative holds). If this applies to you, you MUST declare it here.	
Notification if a Complaint Handling Review (CHR) application has been received by PIRC from any person that you know personally or with whom you have a relationship or connection. Similarly, if an investigation involves any person, with whom you have a relationship or close friendship with be that the complainer or the officer or member of Police staff that is subject of an allegation / complaint), which could lead to allegations of conflicts of interest. If this arises you must declare it at the outset to your manager, Head of Department and PIRC HR. Please provide details here.	
Any other business, financial or personal interests that are not covered above where there could be perceived to be conflicts of interest to the activities of the PIRC.	
Gifts ⁴ or hospitality ⁵ offered by external bodies or SG/PIRC suppliers and whether this was declined or accepted, e.g. attended dinner sponsored by SG/PIRC supplier	
Details of any speeding fines/points on licence/traffic or other related issues.	

¹ Indirect pecuniary interests arise from connections with bodies/organisations, which have a direct pecuniary interest, or from being a business partner of, or being employed, by a person with such an interest.

² Non-pecuniary interests include those arising from membership of clubs and other organisations.

³ A 'relative' or 'close family member' is a partner, someone you are married to or live with as if you were married, a parent, a parent-in-law, a son or daughter, a stepson or stepdaughter, the child of a partner, a brother or sister, a grandparent, a grandchild, an uncle or aunt, a nephew or niece, or the husband, wife or partner of any of these people.



⁴ Accepted gifts must either be handed to the Head of Corporate Services to be forwarded to the designated charity or if to be kept, a cheque for the judged value of the gift made payable to the designated charity given to the Head of Corporate Services.

⁵ All hospitality judged to be over £25 must be registered



APPENDIX B

Declaration of Interests Form – To be completed annually by Senior Leadership Team and returned to HR team at HR@pirc.gov.scot. Details will be recorded in the PIRC Register of Interests held by the Information Officer and published on the PIRC website.

NAME: _____

POSITION: _____

I declare that I / my direct family member have the following interest(s) which may impact on the work of the PIRC:

ORGANISATION	NATURE OF INTEREST	REMUNERATION	POLITICAL ACTIVITY WITHIN THE LAST 5 YEARS	OTHER FINANCIAL INTERESTS, SHARES AND SECURITY	DIRECT AND INDIRECT FINANCIAL INTERESTS OF CLOSE FAMILY MEMBERS

If none, write 'None' and return the signed form to the HR Team at HR@pirc.gov.scot

Signature:.....

Date



APPENDIX C

[UKSV National Security Vetting: change of personal circumstances - GOV.UK](#)
www.gov.uk

