

## LANCASHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE CODE OF CONDUCT

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority recognises that our employees are crucial in ensuring the quality of service provided by Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service.

The purpose of this Code is to clearly outline what employees can expect from Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service and what is expected of you as an employee. It is based on the good customs and practices which are already in operation and the spirit of the Local Government Concordat (which relates to enforcement duties).

### What Employees can expect

1. You are entitled to expect that members of the Combined Fire Authority and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service will treat you with respect and in an open and honest manner.
2. You are entitled to expect fair and reasonable treatment by colleagues, managers and by the Elected Members of the Combined Fire Authority. If you feel unfairly treated you are entitled to make use of the relevant procedures.
3. You have a right to expect confidentiality in respect of any declarations of interest which you make or personal information which is received about you, unless the nature of the disclosure endangers you or your colleagues.

### What is expected of Employees

1. Be an ambassador of the Fire and Rescue Service

As an employee of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service you are an ambassador of the Fire and Rescue Service. In this regard, you are expected to conduct yourself, both on and off duty, in a manner appropriate and compatible with your employment with the Service.

As an employee we ask that in your day to day work you:-

- Display commitment to our values and conduct yourself in a manner consistent with these principles at all times, specifically the following:

<b>Service</b>	Making Lancashire Safer is the most important thing we do and we work in diligent and competent way.
<b>Trust</b>	We trust the people we work with and we contribute to a positive workplace.
<b>Respect</b>	We demonstrate consideration of others and we recognise how our behaviour may impact on others.
<b>Integrity</b>	We do what we say we will do and we work in a professional, positive and non-judgemental way.
<b>Valued</b>	We actively listen and recognise the contribution of others, whatever their role, background, idea, view or approach.
<b>Empowered</b>	We are encouraged to contribute to decision making, to resolve problems and we accountable for our decisions, actions and behaviour.

- Fulfil the obligations placed upon you under the terms of your contract of employment; ie

Be ready and willing to work as specified in your job description.

Attend work regularly and on time.

Be honest and trustworthy.

Follow the lawful instructions of staff who are senior to you or responsible for you.

Take care of LFRS property.

Follow the local established safe systems of work.

- Familiarise yourself with and follow the Health and Safety rules applicable in your particular Area of work/location.
- Adhere to Fire and Rescue Service policies; in particular the Internet and E-Mail Acceptable Use Policy, Whistleblowing Policy and Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Employees using social media and networking websites outside of work must ensure that interactions on these sites (e.g. comments posted on online social forum (such as Facebook or Twitter) do not contain content that could damage the reputation of the Service, or working relationships with Service employees or service users. Content that could be perceived as bullying or harassment is unacceptable. LFRS Bullying and Harassment Policy provides important additional information and staff are expected to familiarise themselves with its content.
- Undertake your duties and responsibilities diligently, remembering that you are a part of a public service.
- Observe confidentiality of information obtained in the course of your employment.
- Do not use any information obtained in the course of your employment for personal gain or benefit, or pass it on to others who might use it in such a way.
- Take care not to use words or phrases inappropriately or carry out action that could be expected to give offence to colleagues or members of the general public. LFRS Bullying and Harassment Policy gives examples of what is regarded as unacceptable behaviour relating to discrimination, bullying and harassment.
- Be aware of the effect that others may have on colleagues and bring to the attention of management by any means you feel are appropriate, any bullying, discrimination or harassment.
- Seek guidance from more senior staff if you are at all unsure, when providing information to the media.
- Provide impartial information to members of the public as clearly and as simply as possible. Where appropriate explaining why remedial work is necessary, over what time scales and clearly distinguishing legal requirements from good practice.
- If employed in a 'regulated activity' post, employees must disclose to the Service, at any time, if they are subject to any ongoing investigation into any matter which may bring into question their suitability; if a referral has been made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and their application status is 'under consideration', 'minded to bar', or if they are 'barred' from working with vulnerable groups, including children.

- Notify your line manager of any known or suspected breaches of the law or policies and co-operate with any investigation. Individuals should be aware of their responsibilities and to whom breaches of law, policies, procedures and regulations should be reported.
- Notify your line manager in the event of you receiving a criminal conviction or a caution.

Failure to comply with the standards of conduct set out under this Code may result in action being taken under the Service's Disciplinary Procedure and could result in dismissal from the Service.

2. Specific aspects of the Code detailed below are covered in the guidance below:

- Gifts and Sponsorship
- Relationships
- Declaration of Person Interest
- Responsibilities of Managerial Staff

### (i) Gifts and Sponsorship

- Ensure that offers of hospitality are only accepted when there is a genuine need to impact information or represent the Fire and Rescue Service in the community.
- Ensure that you do not accept significant<sup>1</sup> personal gifts in the course of your employment. Notify the Chief Fire Officer of any gifts you receive, whether personal or on behalf of the Combined Fire Authority, so that a record can be maintained, (This is for your own personal protection as well as that of the Combined Fire Authority). Notification should be sent to the Director of Corporate services at Service Headquarters.
- Seek approval for sponsorship from outside organisations, so that you do not in any way compromise Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service.

### (ii) Relationships

- Political Neutrality: As an employee of the Combined Fire Authority you must service all councillors and not just those of the controlling groups, and must ensure that the individual rights of all councillors are respected.
- Do not let your personal or political opinions interfere with your work.
- Combined Fire Authority employees holding posts designated as "politically restricted posts" are disqualified from membership of any local authority, other than a parish or community council, from being an MP or MEP and are subject to prescribed restrictions on their political activity. Staff are informed when they occupy a post covered by these regulations and of their rights of appeal.

#### Relationships with Contractors

If you are involved in the letting of contracts or placing orders you should:

- Exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with all contractors, suppliers and sub-contractors.

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<sup>1</sup> £25.00 or more

- Follow the procedures laid down in the Combined Fire Authority Financial Regulations.
- Ensure that no special favour is shown to current or recent former employers or their partners, close relatives or associates in awarding contracts to businesses run by them or employing them in a senior or relevant managerial capacity.
- Ensure that orders and contracts are awarded on merit, by fair competition against other tenders, with no special favour being shown to businesses run by, for example, friends, partners or relatives.
- Ensure that no part of the local community is discriminated against or given preferential treatment
- If you engage or supervise contractors and have any other official relationship with contractors or have previously had or currently have a relationship in a private or domestic capacity with contractors, you must declare this relationship to the Chief Fire Officer.
- If you are privy to confidential information on tenders or costs for either internal or external contractors, you must not disclose this information to any unauthorised party or organisation.
- Take equality considerations into account when awarding contracts.

### Relationships with Councillors:

Employees are responsible to the Combined Fire Authority through its senior managers. For some, their role is to give advice to councillors and senior managers and all are there to carry out the Authority's work. Mutual respect between employees and councillors is essential to good local government. Close personal familiarity between employees and individual councillors can damage the relationship and prove embarrassing to their employees and councillors and should therefore be avoided.

### Personal Relationships between Members of Staff

- From time to time relationships at work can develop between two colleagues and it is important in a working environment to ensure that the conduct of the staff concerned does not become inappropriate.
- Whenever possible, potential problems will be resolved by a senior manager speaking to the employees concerned and asking them to moderate their behaviour, but in more extreme cases it may be necessary to take appropriate disciplinary action.
- Employees involved in appointments should ensure that these are made on the basis of merit. It would be unlawful for an employee to make an appointment which was based on anything other than the ability of the candidate to undertake the duties of the post. In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, employees should not be involved in an appointment where they are related to an applicant, or have a close personal relationship outside of work with him or her.
- Similarly, employees should not be involved in decisions relating to discipline promotion or pay adjustments for any other employees who are a relative or partner etc.

### (iii) Declaration of Personal Interests

- Declare in writing to the Chief Fire Officer any financial or non financial interests (e.g. voluntary organisations, professional associations, school governor) that you consider could bring about conflict with the Combined Fire Authority's interests. Notification should be sent to the Director of People and Development at Service Headquarters.
- If you currently occupy a politically restricted post, you are encouraged to declare in writing to the Chief Fire Officer, membership of any organisation which is not open to the public without formal membership and which has a requirement to a commitment of allegiance or which has a secrecy about rules of membership or conduct.
- All future appointments into politically restricted posts will require a declaration of interest, either at the time of appointment or at a later date.
- Any declaration will be kept of the individual's Personal Record File for reference purposes and declarations should be sent to the Director of People and Development

### (iv) Responsibilities of Managerial Staff

If you are a manager you should promote and follow the principles in this Code by leadership and example. You should:

- Treat staff who report to you in a fair and consistent manner.
- Ensure staff adhere to the principles of equality and fairness, and deal with instances where individuals fail to do so in an open, fair and consistent manner in line with Service Policy.
- Ensure your staff are kept informed of activities and changes going on within the organisation and that ideas and suggestions received are given active considerations and that "feedback" is given to staff where necessary.

### 3. Standards in relation to drugs and alcohol

All members of staff should make themselves aware of the standards expected in relation to drugs and alcohol. The following actions may be deemed as gross misconduct and employees will normally be subject to disciplinary procedures which may lead to dismissal, if they:

- Fail an alcohol test with a higher concentration of alcohol than the drink driving legal limit in their blood, or the equivalent in urine or breath.
- Fail a drugs test.
- Attempt to evade the test (e.g. persistently failing to deliver the required breath sample; spoiling the drug test)
- Refuse to take an alcohol or drugs test without good cause.
- Report or try to report for duty when unfit through alcohol and/or drugs.
- Consume alcohol while on duty (staff 'on call' may consume alcohol, but must remain below the legal drink and drive limit and must not consume alcohol once mobilised).
- Consume, and/or, are found to be in possession of illegal drugs at work.

- Decline or discontinue an approved course of treatment for alcohol or drugs misuse, without good cause.

All staff must present themselves for duty in a fit state with their mental and physical functions unimpaired by alcohol or drugs.

Staff, who are socialising outside of working hours in licensed premises, should ensure they are not visibly displaying the Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service uniform as this may negatively impact on community perceptions of the Fire and Rescue Service.

**NOTE** – *it is acknowledged that staff will on occasions attend official functions in such premises as an official representative of Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service in which case this restriction will not apply.*

- It is not permissible for any staff member, who is required to drive as part of their duties, to consume alcohol whilst at work, including any break or lunchtime or inside any Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service vehicle (staff 'on call' may consume alcohol, but must remain below the legal drink and drive limit and must not consume alcohol once mobilised).
- Drivers must also ensure that they arrive for work in a state which meets the relevant legislation with regard to blood-alcohol levels.
- It is not appropriate for drivers to visit licensed premises whilst on duty in readily identifiable Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service vehicles unless for wholly work related reasons and then no alcoholic beverage must be consumed (staff 'on call' may visit such premises, but must remain below the legal drink and drive limit and must not consume alcohol once mobilised).
- Required drivers, who lose their driving licence through a criminal conviction, will be subject to a disciplinary investigation, this could be deemed as gross misconduct and drivers need to be aware that they could lose their employment if Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service cannot identify suitable alternative employment.
- On the grounds of Health and Safety all employees should bear in mind that even small amounts of alcohol may have a detrimental effect upon reflexes and responses, in particular, whilst operating specialist vehicle equipment, on or in close proximity to the highway or potentially hazardous tools and machinery.
- Employees taking prescription medicines which may impact on their performance at work must declare this to their manager /supervisor before commencing work in order that an appropriate risk assessment may be carried out.
- The supply or sale of illegal drugs on Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service premises or during working time will be regarded as an act of gross misconduct.
- In respect of alcohol, this policy can be relaxed for approved events on Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service premises e.g. leaving and retirement parties etc., with explicit approval at Department Head level, where the employees in question are not returning to duty after the event.