

Natural England

Staff Code of Conduct

1. The creation of Natural England is a landmark for the conservation and enhancement of England's natural environment. Our responsibility is to ensure that England's unique natural environment including its land; flora and fauna, freshwaters and marine environments, geology and soils are protected and improved. We also have the responsibility to help people to enjoy, understand and access the natural environment.
2. As a member of staff for Natural England, you are expected to carry out your role with dedication and a commitment to Natural England and its expected behaviours: integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality. In this Code:
 - 'integrity' is putting your obligations to Natural England above your own personal interests;
 - 'honesty' is being truthful and open;
 - 'objectivity' is basing your advice and decisions on rigorous analysis of the evidence;
 - 'impartiality' is acting solely according to the merits of the case.
3. These behaviours support good governance and ensure the achievement of the highest possible standards in all that Natural England does. This will enable Natural England to be a distinctive public body committed to people and the environment.
4. This Code sets out the standards of behaviour expected of all Natural England employees.

Standards of behaviour

Integrity

5. You must:
 - fulfill your duties and obligations responsibly;
 - always act in a way that is professional and that deserves and retains the confidence of all those with whom you have dealings;
 - make sure public money and other resources are used properly and efficiently;
 - deal with the public and their affairs fairly, efficiently, promptly, effectively and sensitively, to the best of your ability;
 - handle information as openly as possible within the legal framework;
 - comply with the law and uphold the administration of justice.
6. You must not:
 - misuse your official position, for example by using information acquired in the course of your official duties to further your private interests or those of others;

- accept gifts or hospitality or receive other benefits from anyone which might reasonably be seen to compromise your personal judgment or integrity;
- disclose official information without authority. This duty continues to apply after you leave Natural England.

Honesty

7. You must:

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

8. You must not:

- deceive or knowingly mislead other members of staff or Natural England partners;
- be influenced by improper pressures from others or the prospect of personal gain.

Objectivity

9. You must:

- provide information and advice, on the basis of the evidence;
- take decisions on the merits of the case;
- take due account of expert and professional advice.

10. You must not:

- ignore inconvenient facts or relevant considerations when providing advice or making decisions;
- frustrate the implementation of policies once decisions are taken by declining to take, or abstaining from, action which flows from those decisions.

Impartiality

11. You must:

- carry out your responsibilities in a way that is fair, just and equitable and reflects Natural England's commitment to equality and diversity.

12. You must not:

- act in a way that unjustifiably favours or discriminates against particular individuals or interests.

Political Impartiality

13. You must:

- comply with any restrictions that have been laid down on your political activities.

14. You must not:

- act in a way that is determined by party political considerations, or use official resources for party political purposes;
- allow your personal political views to determine any advice you give or your actions.

Rights and responsibilities

15. Natural England has a duty to make you aware of this Code. If you believe that you are being required to act in a way which conflicts with this Code, we must consider your concern, and make sure that you are not penalised for raising it.
16. If you become aware of actions by others, or are asked to take action, which you believe conflicts with this Code you should report this to your line manager or someone else in your line management chain. If for any reason you would find this difficult, you may wish to seek advice from a nominated officer through the agreed Whistleblowing Procedure. You should report evidence of criminal or unlawful activity to the police or other appropriate authorities.
17. If you have raised a matter covered in paragraphs 15 and 16, in accordance with the relevant procedures, and do not receive what you consider to be a reasonable response, you may report the matter to the Civil Service Commissioners.
18. If the matter cannot be resolved using the procedure set out above, and you feel you cannot carry out the instructions you have been given, you will have to resign from Natural England.
19. This Code is part of the contractual relationship between you and Natural England. It sets out the high standard of behaviour expected of all of us, which follows from our position in public and national life as employees of Natural England.

Helen Phillips

Chief Executive and Accounting Officer
Natural England

12 March 2007

LINKS

Concerns on actions of others	Whistleblowing Procedure	EG P5
Concerns on possible fraud	Anti-Fraud Policy and Procedures	EG P4
Regularity or propriety issues	Regularity and Propriety Guidelines	EG P3
Civil Service Commissioners	35 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BQ	
	020-7276 2617	ocsc@civilservicecommissioners.gov.uk