

Code of Conduct Policy

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1. Introduction

Audit Scotland and our staff must demonstrate high standards of corporate and personal conduct. This can be achieved by embracing our core values, which are:

- Independence, integrity and objectivity.
- Valuing people and ensuring equality and fairness.
- Effective communication.

This Code of Conduct gives you clear and helpful advice about the standards of behaviour expected of you as a member of staff. The Code will be reviewed regularly and is subject to change. A serious breach of the Code may lead to disciplinary action.

In addition, you are expected to comply with the principles of the Ethical Standards for Auditors issued by the UK Auditing Practices Board. Guidance on the use of those standards can be found in the Staff Handbook ('Ethical Standards'). Our Ethical Standards cover:

- Integrity, objectivity and independence.
- Financial, business, employment and personal relationships.
- Long association with the audit engagement.
- Fees, remuneration and evaluation policies, litigation, gifts and hospitality.

You should also keep to the Codes of Conduct of the professional bodies of which you are a member.

The general principles upon which this Code of Conduct is based are:

- Duty - You have a duty to uphold the law and act in accordance with the law and the public trust placed in you. You have a duty to act in the interests of Audit Scotland of which you are a staff member and in accordance with its core functions and duties.
- Selflessness - You have a duty to take decisions solely in terms of public interest. You must not act in order to gain financial or other material benefit for yourself, family or friends.
- Integrity - You must not place yourself under any financial, or other, obligation to any individual or organisation that might reasonably be thought to influence you in the performance of your duties.

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- Objectivity - You must make decisions solely on merit and in a way that is consistent with the functions of Audit Scotland when carrying out public business including making appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits.
 - Accountability and stewardship - You are accountable for your decisions and actions to the public. You have a duty to consider issues on their merits, taking account of the views of others and must ensure that Audit Scotland uses its resources prudently and in accordance with the law.
 - Openness - You have a duty to be as open as possible about your decisions and actions, giving reasons for your decisions and restricting information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
 - Honesty - You have a duty to act honestly. You must declare any private interests relating to your public duties and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
 - Leadership - You have a duty to promote and support these principles by leadership and example, and to maintain and strengthen the public's trust and confidence in the integrity of Audit Scotland and its members in conducting business.
 - Respect - You must respect colleagues and the role they play, treating them with courtesy at all times. Similarly you must respect members of the public when performing duties as a staff member of Audit Scotland.

2. Diversity and Equality

We value and promote diversity and equality of opportunity. We expect you to carry out your work following the principles within our Diversity and Equality policy.

3. Relationships

You may have contact with audited bodies, other organisations or members of the public. You should deal fairly, equitably and consistently with those you come in contact with, and you should always be polite and portray a positive and professional image of Audit Scotland.

People may develop a relationship with you to influence our work or to acquire confidential or sensitive information for personal gain. They may also offer a financial or other benefit to supply them with information. These relationships are inappropriate and bring risks to your personal reputation and that of Audit Scotland (see Section 10 Bribery and Corruption). You must tell your line manager of any such approaches, relationships or offers of financial or other benefits, and you should do this as soon as possible so that Audit Scotland can support and advise you.

Audit Scotland recognises that close personal or domestic relationships with colleagues may exist or develop during the course of their employment. In order that Audit Scotland's business is conducted and perceived to be conducted in a professional and proper manner it is necessary to distinguish between, and take account of, personal relationships which overlap with professional ones in the workplace. If you have any close personal or domestic relationships where that relationship may impinge on your duties and responsibilities this must be declared in confidence to your line manager or senior manager. If necessary upon disclosure of such a relationship and after consultation with both parties, reasonable arrangements will be made to ensure that future working arrangements and potential conflicts do not arise.

4. Contractors, suppliers and consultants

You must be fair and impartial in your dealings with contractors, suppliers and consultants. If you are involved in the procurement or tendering process to appoint contractors, suppliers or consultants you must follow Audit Scotland's procurement handbook, and any other guidance issued.

If you have access to confidential information on tenders or costs for contractors, suppliers or consultants you must not show that information to any unauthorised person or organisation.

All private relationships with actual or potential contractors, suppliers or consultants must be declared, as set out in paragraph five below.

5. Independence, objectivity and conflicts of interest

It is important that you carry out your work with independence and objectivity, and that you do not allow any private interest to influence your decisions. You must not use your position to further your own interests or the interests of others who do not have a right to benefit from our work.

You, or a member of your family or household, may have a private interest which relates to the work of Audit Scotland. It may be a financial one or one which a member of the public might reasonably think could influence your judgement. For example, you may be a member of a public body, an organisation or club and membership might lead to a conflict of interest with your work. This also applies to membership of organisations or clubs which are not open to the public e.g. Freemasonry.

You must declare all such interests to your Compliance Partner / Compliance Manager. A Compliance Partner is appointed for each business group within Audit Scotland. The best way of making such a declaration is to use the [Fit & Proper Self-Assessment Form](#). This information is then retained in a secure area of ishare for three years, after which it is destroyed. The Compliance Partner / Manager will contact you and discuss any issues arising from your disclosure, as appropriate.

Fit & Proper Self-Assessment forms are completed by all new staff and other workers when starting their employment / assignment with Audit Scotland. Audit Scotland annually requests that the Form is refreshed. If, between the annual cycle, your circumstances change and you have information that should be reported to the Compliance Partner then it is your responsibility to do so immediately.

The Fit & Proper Self-Assessment Form is available to download from the Staff Handbook within ishare. Your completed form should be emailed to one of the following mailbox addresses:

Business Group	Compliance Partner	Email address
Audit Services Group	Fiona Kordiak	Fitandproper@ishare.audit-scotland.gov.uk
Audit Strategy Group	Russell Frith	ASfitandproper@ishare.audit-scotland.gov.uk
Corporate Services Group	Diane McGiffen	CSfitandproper@ishare.audit-scotland.gov.uk
Performance Audit & Best Value	Fraser McKinlay	PABVfitandproper@ishare.audit-scotland.gov.uk

6. Openness, disclosure and protection of information

Audit Scotland carries out its work in the public interest and is committed to the principle of openness. You should follow the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act and our FOI policy.

There are occasions when information gathered during the course of your work must be kept confidential, both inside and outside the organisation and after leaving Audit Scotland. For example, when its disclosure would prejudice an investigation, breach confidentiality or contravene the Data Protection Act. This does not apply where there is a legal duty to provide information. You should follow our information and records management guides, including completing information management training if asked to do so.

We take information security very seriously. You must protect our information from inappropriate access, abuse, loss or damage. You must report any instance of this as quickly as possible and help fully in any investigation. Any breach of confidentiality or security may lead to an investigation under our discipline policy. Any wilful breach, such as unauthorised access or supply of information to others, could lead to the termination of your employment and to a criminal prosecution under the Data Protection Act. If you are in any doubt about a matter of confidentiality or security, please check with your manager.

If you are involved in an act that could cause Audit Scotland reputational risk or bring us into disrepute, e.g. you are arrested or charged for a criminal offence, you must tell Audit Scotland as soon as possible.

7. Paid employment outside Audit Scotland

We will normally allow you to undertake paid employment outside Audit Scotland in your own time unless there is a conflict of interest, or it is likely to have an adverse effect on the work of Audit Scotland or on your own performance. A conflict of interest can arise where a member of staff seeks to do work for an audited body or to carry out work which relates to the work of Audit Scotland. Outside employment can adversely affect the work of Audit Scotland if it damages the organisation's reputation. It can affect your own performance if it significantly reduces your ability to carry out your duties. If you do work outside Audit Scotland you must first get the approval of your director/assistant director and then advise the Human Resources team. This procedure is in your interests and will protect you. It will also allow us to meet our legal obligations in relation to family friendly benefits and Working Time Regulations. You are not allowed to use the equipment and resources of Audit Scotland in any outside employment.

If you receive a fee for a publication, broadcast, speech or lecture where you have used official information or your own work experience you must remit that fee to Audit Scotland. This also applies to external work carried out in working hours which attracts a fee. You may keep tokens of appreciation such as book tokens or commemorative items. You should let the Chief Operating Officer know of any tokens received as it will be recorded in a register kept for that purpose.

8. Hospitality

You should not accept or offer hospitality connected with your work unless you can justify it and be sure that it will not lead to criticism from colleagues or the public. In general, modest hospitality may be acceptable in some circumstances for example, a sandwich lunch.

Accepting, declining or giving of hospitality should be declared and recorded in the register kept for that purpose. When accepting or giving hospitality you should get approval from your director/assistant director and then let the Chief Operating Officer know. Hospitality given must be recorded in the register and the expenditure detailed in our financial accounting system. You must make sure that you charge the hospitality to the hospitality code 1255 and the appropriate cost centre for your business group. All reimbursement claims for hospitality given through expenses must follow the travel and expenses policy.

To help you decide what to declare, the following guidance may be useful:

Reporting hospitality received

Items *not* requiring declaration and recording are:

- Working lunches at audited bodies, partner firms, working groups/committees, boards, professional institutes and other public bodies.
- Meals and accommodation related to attendance at conferences, seminars and workshops.

Items that *would* require disclosure include:

- Meals in external restaurants, whether working or not.
- Attendance at functions organised/hosted by professional bodies.
- Receptions held by public bodies, partner firms or other parties where there is a widespread range of attendees, e.g. gallery viewings.
- Functions where the focus of the event is an awards ceremony which involves a public sector element.
- Meals paid for by visiting delegations from other audit offices and Parliaments/Governments.

You should not accept offers to attend social or sporting events unless it would be of benefit to Audit Scotland or where Audit Scotland would expect to be represented.

In exceptional circumstances it may be appropriate to accept hospitality in order to avoid embarrassment or offence for example, hospitality offered from overseas hosts when we are carrying out international work.

You should not accept repeated hospitality from the same source.

Reporting hospitality declined

Any offers of hospitality that you decline must be recorded.

Reporting hospitality given

Items *not* requiring declaration and recording are:

- Working lunches when hosting meetings and conferences with audited bodies, partner firms, working groups/committees/boards, professional institutes and other public bodies. Lunches should be modest in scale and may typically consist of a buffet/sandwiches and tea and coffee throughout the day.
- Travel costs as part of recruitment.
- Consultant travel and accommodation costs where this is part of the consultant's fee.

Items that *would* require disclosure would therefore include:

- Meals provided in external restaurants whether working or not.
- Meals provided to international visitors/groups.

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- Provision of overnight accommodation.
 - Provision of travel, e.g. flights or train tickets.
 - Hospitality at or the provision of theatre or sporting event tickets.

9. Gifts

As a general rule, you must not accept personal gifts although you may keep isolated gifts of a trivial character such as a pen or diary, the token value of which must not exceed £50. Sometimes it may be appropriate to accept a gift of more than token value, for example where refusal would embarrass Audit Scotland or damage an important relationship. The acceptance of such a gift should be approved by your director/assistant director. Where an inappropriate gift is received and you are unable to return it or the donor refuses to accept its return, you should report the circumstances to your director/assistant director.

All gifts above token value will belong to Audit Scotland and are not a personal gift to you. The Chief Operating Officer keeps a register to record gifts, whether they are accepted or declined and to show that acceptance was authorised. The International Liaison Manager keeps a sub-section of the gifts register for work with other countries. Any gifts received while carrying out work for other countries should be recorded in the register.

The giving of gifts is generally limited to international visits, the rules for which are set out in the Policy on visits, and the provision and acceptance of gifts & hospitality in relation to work with other countries. Gifts to visiting delegations are given as mementoes of their visit to Audit Scotland. They should be of modest value (e.g., book, Quaich, paper weight) and should exclude alcohol. Gifts given to non-international visitors or organisations should be recorded in the hospitality and gifts register. Items that would not require disclosure are modestly priced books and pens; alcohol should not be given as a gift.

Gifts recorded in the register must have the expenditure detailed in our financial accounting system. You must make sure that you charge the gift to the hospitality code 1255 and the appropriate cost centre for your business group. All reimbursement claims for gifts given through expenses must follow the travel and expenses policy.

10. Bribery and corruption

Bribery is the offering, giving, receiving, or soliciting of any item of value or advantage to influence the actions of an official or any other person in charge of a public or legal duty.

It is a serious criminal offence for you to:

- give, receive or solicit a bribe (i.e., to corruptly receive or give any gift, loans, fee, reward or advantage) in return for doing or not doing anything
- show favour or disfavour to any person in the course of your work.

An act of bribery by an individual may make Audit Scotland liable of committing an offence. We have a zero tolerance to bribery and corruption, and such an act can lead to dismissal and prosecution.

11. Use of resources

You and your colleagues serve the public, and you must remember this principle when you use Audit Scotland's equipment, materials and resources to ensure value for money and economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

The equipment of Audit Scotland is available to you for use in your personal affairs, provided that:

- it is in your own time
- the cost of any consumables, e.g. paper, postage, telephone calls is met by you
- you are not receiving any fee or reward for the purpose
- you don't store your personal (non-work related) information on Audit Scotland equipment
- you follow our policy on the use of electronic media such as email and the Internet.

12. Appointments

All appointments must be made on merit. If you are involved in the recruitment and selection process and have any kind of relationship which might affect your ability to be impartial, it must be declared to your director/assistant director. Your director/assistant director and the person chairing the selection process will decide whether you can take part in the process. The same procedure must be followed in other HR processes such as grievance, discipline or performance reviews under the Performance Appraisal and Development system.

You must not try to influence board members or a colleague either directly or indirectly to secure your own appointment or promotion, or the appointment or promotion of another person. You must report any instances of this occurring to your director/assistant director and the HR & OD Manager.

13. Media

In your work with Audit Scotland, any contact with the media is likely to come from the Audit Scotland Communications team. If you are approached directly by the media, you should speak with the Communications Manager or one of the communications officers, unless circumstances make that impossible and it is better for you to respond to the media enquiry. In this case you must tell the Communications team afterwards. More detailed advice for Audit Services staff can be found in the Audit Manual. Media training is available for staff most likely to need it. Contact the Communications team or your line manager for more information.

14. Political neutrality

The public expects you to carry out your work in a politically neutral way. You must follow our policies, despite any personal views, and you must not do anything which might call into question the independence and political neutrality of Audit Scotland. You have the right to be a member of a political party, but it would be unsuitable to take part in high profile public party political activity. If you are in any doubt, you should take advice from your director/assistant director.

15. Health and safety at work

We have a duty to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to provide staff with a safe and healthy working environment. We will comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act, any other associated legislation and statutory codes of practice.

You have a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act for the health, safety and welfare of yourself and others, including members of the general public who may be affected by what you do or fail to do at work. You must comply with our Health and Safety policy and co-operate with us in our compliance with health and safety legislation.

16. Fair and reasonable treatment at work

You should expect fair and reasonable treatment from your colleagues and managers. If you feel that you have been unfairly treated or have been discriminated against, there is a grievance procedure that you can use.

We expect you to support and comply with our policies, practices and procedures, both in your dealings with colleagues and those outside the organisation. You should not do anything which might undermine or adversely affect any position or decision of Audit Scotland.

We also have a whistleblowing policy. You should refer to this if you feel that you have been required to act in a way, or have become aware of practices in the organisation, which might be illegal, improper, unethical or in conflict with the principles of this Code.