People and Resources Committee

Meeting Date	12 November 2026
Title	Partner Code of Conduct
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Executive Sponsor	Claire Amor, Executive Director of Corporate Affairs

Executive Summary

The following partner code has gone through a review to ensure it is up to date and fit for purpose. The following minor changes are suggested for the Committee's approval:

i. Updating responsibilities around registration appeals;
ii. Update of job title;
iii. Adding compliance with HCPC guidance and procedures;
iv. Updating our values; and
v. Updating the descriptors of the Seven Principles of Public Life which are now safeguarded by the Ethics and Integrity Commission.

Action required	The Committee is asked to consider and approve the proposal or recommendation.
Previous consideration	The Code of Conduct has been previously considered and reviewed by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT).
Next steps	The updated Code of Conduct will be published and made available to partners. It will be due for its next review in three years.
Financial and resource implications	No financial impact.
Associated strategic priority/priorities	Supporting healthcare workforce development through proportionate, agile regulation.
Associated strategic risk(s)	SR05 - HCPC Culture
Risk appetite	People - open

Communication and engagement	It is important that our policies remain updated and fit for purpose.
Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) impact and Welsh language standards	The Code of Conduct applies to all HCPC partners without any exception.
Other impact assessments	Not applicable
Reason for consideration in the private session of the meeting (if applicable)	Not applicable

Partner Code of Conduct

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Authors:	Uta Pollmann, Partner Project Lead
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1. Introduction

Partners work in several roles for the HCPC. They make important and valuable contributions to HCPC's decision-making processes by providing the following expertise:

- **Panel Members** and **Panel Chairs** together form Panels which conduct hearings and make other decisions in Fitness to Practise cases;
- **Panel Members also** consider and determine appeals made against decisions of the Education and Training Committee (the Committee) or the Registrar;
- **Investigating Committee Panel Chairs** are legally qualified and lead an Investigating Committee Panel to consider allegations of impairment of fitness to practise;
- **Legal Assessors** advise those participating in Fitness to Practise proceedings, ensure those proceedings are fair and legally compliant and assist Panels to draft their decisions;
- **Registrant Assessors** provide professional expertise in Fitness to practise proceedings;
- **Visitors and Lead Visitors** evaluate and report on institutions providing and delivering (or proposing to provide and deliver) approved education and training;
- **Service User Expert Advisors** support registrant visitors in making informed decisions by providing the perspective of a service user or carer;
- **Registration Assessors** assess registration applications to ensure that applicants meet the required standards of proficiency;
- **CPD Assessors** assess registrants' CPD submissions to ensure that they meet the relevant HCPC standards.

HCPC is an open and transparent organisation and Partners should be aware that high standards of conduct and personal integrity are essential to maintaining public confidence in the HCPC.

In performing their roles, Partners are expected to maintain high standards of conduct. This Code of Conduct applies to all Partners and compliance with its terms is part of the contract between each Partner and the HCPC. Partners must ensure that they are familiar with the Code and that their actions comply with its provisions.

The Code of Conduct

2. General principles

Partners are expected to act at all times in the manner of someone associated with a public regulatory body. They must refrain from any illegal, dishonest or unethical conduct at all times, not just when they are providing services to the HCPC.

Partners must:

- act in good faith, with honesty, integrity and probity;
- promote the HCPC's objective of protecting the public;
- comply with the seven principles of public life (set out below);
- treat others equally, fairly and with respect;
- adhere to HCPC's values
    - Trusted, Inclusive, Compassionate, and Innovative;
- take personal responsibility for adhering to this Code of Conduct.

Partners must not:

- act in a manner which may bring HCPC into disrepute; or
- misuse their position for personal gain or to promote their other interests.

3. Non-Discrimination

Partners must treat others with dignity and fairness. Partners must not discriminate against anyone because of their religion, belief, race, colour, gender, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, age, social and economic status or national origin.

4. Conflicts of interest

Partners must disclose any interest which they may have (or might be seen to have) when they are asked to provide service as a HCPC partner and as set out in the Conflict of Interest Policy. Partners must also disclose any interest that could otherwise prejudice any service they are asked to perform.

Partners must consider potential conflicts of interest at the earliest stage possible and declare any interest as soon as they realise it is necessary to do so. A Partner must not participate in any decision or perform any other service until the potential conflict is resolved.

Partners must recognise that:

- in dealing with conflicts of interest, the test to be applied is not whether an interest would influence their decision, but whether a member of the public, acting reasonably, may think that it might have such an influence;
- similar considerations apply to the interests of a spouse or close relative, as a member of the public, acting reasonably, may regard those interests as effectively being the interests of the Partner; and
- the key principle is the need for transparency in respect of any interest which may be regarded by a member of the public, acting reasonably, as potentially affecting the Partner's objectivity.

A Partner who is unclear about any potential conflict of interest should seek guidance from the HCPC Partner team or the relevant department.

5. Confidentiality

Partners must not disclose or make any other use of confidential information to which they have access other than for a proper purpose relating to the performance of services for the HCPC or as required by law.

Partners must take appropriate steps to ensure that confidential papers and information are stored securely and not shared with anyone else.

Partners must promptly notify the HCPC Partner Project Lead of any breach in confidentiality of which they become aware.

A Partner who is unclear about the status of any information should seek guidance from the HCPC Partner team.

6. Performance

Partners must perform their services within the timescales set by the HCPC and to a reasonable and appropriate standard.

A Partner who has accepted work and is subsequently unable to provide services must notify the relevant department immediately. Late cancellations have a financial, reputational and resource impact on the HCPC/HCPTS. Partners need to present a valid reason for cancelling previously accepted work otherwise we reserve the right to give notice to their contractual agreement. Partners need to be available for the full day (if applicable) when they have accepted to provide services or attend training and can't have any other commitments during this time.

A Partner who is unable to provide services for a prolonged period should notify the HCPC Partner team and the relevant department.

Partners must not perform services for the HCPC:

- whilst on sickness leave, maternity/paternity leave, under investigation or suspended from their employment;
- if they are subject to any fitness to practise, disciplinary or similar proceedings;
- in the case of Panel Members, Panel Chairs and ICP Chairs if any provision of Rule 8 of the Health and Care Professions Council (Practice Committees and Miscellaneous Amendments) Rules 2009 (suspension of committee membership)[1] applies;
- in any other circumstances which would bring the HCPC into disrepute.

7. Development

Partners are expected to take full advantage of the development opportunities which the HCPC provides to enable them to keep up to date with best practice.

Partners must complete their induction and refresher training and a Partner who fails to do so will not be permitted to perform services for the HCPC until such time as the training has been undertaken.

Partners must also complete any mandatory training e.g. annual information security training within any timescales specified.

A Partner who, without reasonable justification, persistently fails to attend or does not complete online training is liable to have their contract terminated.

8. Performance review

Partners must participate in the HCPC's performance review system and comply with the associated procedures.

9. Fees and Expenses

Partners must comply with the HCPC's policies and procedures for the payment of fees and expenses.

10. Anti-bribery, gifts and hospitality

Partners must comply with the HCPC's Partner Anti-Bribery, Gifts and Hospitality Policy.

[1] The Health Professions Council (Practice Committees and Miscellaneous Amendments) Rules 2009

Partners must not accept any gift, hospitality or benefit from any person which might be perceived as being capable of improperly influencing any decision the Partner may make on behalf of, or any advice that the Partners may provide to, the HCPC.

A Partner who is unsure about the appropriateness of accepting any gift, hospitality or benefit should seek guidance from the HCPC Partner team.

11. Information Technology

Partners must comply with the HCPC Information Technology Policy and must sign the HCPC Information Systems Agreement prior to being granted access to HCPC information systems.

12. HCPC Partner Policies

Partners must comply and adhere to all HCPC Partner policies, procedures and guidance.

13. Methods of communication

Partners must support the ongoing development of HCPC processes and adapt to variations in methods of communication, processes, procedures and distribution of information.

14. HCPC employees

Partners must respect all HCPC employees and the roles they perform and treat them with courtesy and dignity at all times. It is expected that HCPC employees will show the same consideration in return.

A Partner who wishes to commend the work of any HCPC employee may speak to the employee concerned. However, a Partner who wishes to raise concerns about the behaviour or performance of an employee should inform the HCPC Partner team.

15. Breach of the Code

Compliance with the Code of Conduct is a contractual obligation.

Minor breaches of this Code will, in the first instance, be dealt with informally by the HCPC Partner team in conjunction with the relevant HCPC Head of Department or manager.

Where there is evidence of a serious, deliberate, or continued breach of this Code, formal action may be taken against the Partner concerned, including termination of the Partner's contract.

16. Equality, diversity and inclusion statement

The HCPC adopts a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination on any of the protected grounds in the Equality Act 2010.

We are committed to providing equal opportunities to everyone regardless of age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, gender identity, or marriage and civil partnership.

The Seven Principles of Public Life

Published by the Committee on Standards in Public Life and now safeguarded by the Ethics and Integrity Commission

eic.independent-commission.uk

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.