**PART M Officer Code of Conduct**

##### M1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

M1.1 Members of the public are entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all Authority employees ('officers'). Compliance with this Code of Conduct is necessary to maintain public confidence in the Authority’s work.

M1.2 The role of officers is to serve the Authority in delivering services to all who live in, work in and visit the Lake District National Park, providing advice and implementing the Authority’s policies. You are expected to provide appropriate advice to Authority Members ('Members') and fellow officers with total impartiality.

M1.3 This Code applies to all Authority employees, permanent and temporary, both in their substantive posts and when representing the Authority on external boards, committees, etc. In performing your duties you must comply with this Code of Conduct. Consultants, agents and volunteer workers must also act in a manner consistent with this Code.

M1.4  You should note that any breaches of this Code may lead to action under the Authority's HR Policies and Procedures. In addition, breach of certain elements of the Code can constitute a criminal offence, which may be referred to the Police.

M1.5  This Code supplements, and does not replace any code or recognised standards of conduct endorsed by any professional body of which you are a member.

M1.6  It is your responsibility to understand and comply with the Code of Conduct and you are accountable to the Authority for your actions. If you have any queries or are uncertain about its content, you should contact your Team Leader for advice.

##### M2 STANDARDS

M2.1 This code is underpinned by the 7 principles set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life. The Authority expects that all officers will demonstrate the following key behaviours in every aspect of performing their duties:

**Selflessness**
You must take decisions based solely on the public interest. You must not allow your private interests to conflict with your professional responsibilities.

**Integrity**
You must not place yourself under any obligation to people or organisations that may, or may appear to, inappropriately influence your work.

 You must not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, your family, or your friends.

 You must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

**Objectivity**
You must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

**Accountability**
You are accountable to the Authority, which is in turn answerable to the public, for your decisions and actions and you must submit yourself to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

**Openness**
You must 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 doing so.

**Honesty**
You must be truthful at all times.

**Duty**
You must uphold the law and act in accordance with the Authority's Core Documents and the public trust placed in you. You have a duty to act in the interests of the Authority as a whole and all communities served by the Authority.

**Respect**
You must respect all other officers, members, partners and the public. You must not act in a disrespectful way towards any individual because of a [Protected Characteristic](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/4) or for any other reason.

**Leadership**
You must exhibit the above principles in your own behaviour. You must actively promote and robustly support these principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

M2.2 You are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to the public and to provide impartial, appropriate advice to Members and colleagues. You are expected, through agreed procedures and without fear of recrimination, to advise management of any significant shortcomings in service provision.

M2.3 You must report any impropriety, fraud or breach of procedure to the Monitoring Officer (the Director of Sustainable Development) or to the Section 151 Officer (the Director of Visitor Services and Resources). The Authority has a [Confidential Reporting policy](https://lakedistrictgovuk.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/WayMarkerOurOrganisation/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B414BB25B-84C7-47DC-A820-05BF35C3E8CF%7D&file=PART%20P%20Confidential%20Reporting%20Policy%20Whistleblowing.doc&action=default&mobileredirect=true) and an [Anti-Fraud, Theft and Corruption policy](https://lakedistrictgovuk.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/WayMarkerOurOrganisation/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B77BB26EF-C3B4-4E88-B404-B1FCF02455BF%7D&file=PART%20O%20Anti%20Fraud%20Theft%20and%20Corruption%20Policy.doc&action=default&mobileredirect=true).

**M3 VALUES**

M3.1 The Authority has the following Values which underpin this Code of Conduct. Our values support the delivery of the vision and our purpose; they are our identity. Our values specify how we will accomplish our goals; they help guide how we make decisions. Our values underpin our policies, procedures and strategies because they provide an anchor and a reference point for all things that happen at the Authority.

M3.2 You should interpret the Code of Conduct in a manner consistent with these values.

**Empowered – we think creatively, encouraging innovation, adapting to change and being willing to take risks.** We are flexible to deliver an excellent service. We are accountable for decisions within our area of responsibility, finishing what we start. We keep the vision, our purpose and values front and centre when making decisions.

**Forward thinking – we plan for the future, recognising that our future sustainability is in our own hands.** We constantly ask ‘how can we improve to create the best experience, service and environment to help our future?’ We take a strategic approach to forward planning and prioritising issues for the Lake District National Park Authority; discovering new ways to bring in money and save money, so we have more to invest in the Lake District. We are committed to making a difference for future generations.

**Leaders – we lead the way, delivering the vision and inspiring people and the landscape to flourish.** We are all leaders in our area of responsibility, with a deep commitment to deliver results. We motivate, support and inspire our people.

**Nurturing – we nurture the Lake District, our teams and where we work, respectfully managing the Lake District National Park on behalf of those who live, work or visit here.** We oversee the conservation and sustainable development of this spectacular landscape of international importance, carefully and responsibly managing the resources which are entrusted in our care.

**Proud – we are proud of the Lake District and what we do at the Lake District National Park Authority, which drives us to be our best.** We take pride in the difference we make together and the way in which we celebrate successes together. We are passionate about working in this special place and we enjoy sharing our stories.

**Team player – we cooperate and work together, creating a sense of belonging where trust thrives.** We actively contribute to and share responsibility for results, asking for input and feedback from others. We respect the opinions of each other and listen attentively. We work collaboratively with our partners, doing what we have committed to do and act in the interest of the public.

**M4 POLITICAL NEUTRALITY**

M4.1 You serve the Authority as a whole. You serve all Members equally and you must respect the individual rights of all Members. You must always advise Members in a way that is politically neutral.

M4.2 You must follow the Authority’s policies. You must not allow your own personal or political opinions to interfere with or prejudice your work. If you think that any policy of the Authority is unlawful you must raise it with your line manager or the Monitoring Officer.

**M5 POLITICALLY RESTRICTED POSTS**

M5.1 If you are in a Politically Restricted post, as detailed in your contract of employment, then you are disqualified from being a Councillor in any local authority (other than Parish or Community Councils), from being an MP or an MEP or from holding office in a political party. You must not canvas at any election or poll and/or speak or write in a way which appears to influence public support for a political party.

M5.2 Politically restricted posts include the following:

Chief Executive

Director of Sustainable Development (Monitoring Officer)

Director of Visitor Services and Resources (Section 151 Officer)

Head of Resources

Head of Visitor Services and Communications

Head of People and Organisational Development

Head of Strategy and Ranger Service

Head of Development Management

Financial Services Manager (Deputy Section 151 Officer)

Authority Solicitor (Deputy Monitoring Officer)

Member Services Co-ordinator

**M6 RELATIONSHIPS WITH MEMBERS**

M6.1Officers and Members are both indispensable elements of ensuring the Authority functions effectively and complies with its statutory purposes and functions.

M6.2Mutual respect between Officers and Members is essential to good local government and working relationships should always be kept on a professional basis.  You should avoid close personal familiarity with individual Members as this could prove embarrassing to other officers and members. You must comply with the [Members and Officers Working Together policy](https://lakedistrictgovuk.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/WayMarkerOurOrganisation/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BB5AE0742-317E-447F-8212-AFB63B3B1D42%7D&file=PART%20N%20Members%20and%20Officers%20Working%20Together%20.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true).

**M7 EQUALITY**

M7.1 Everyone has a right to be treated with fairness, respect and equity.  This right is set out in the Equality Act 2010. The Public Sector Equality Duty (the equality duty) requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

* Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equalities Act.
* Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
* Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

M7.2 The Authority has developed an [Equalities Strategy](https://lakedistrictgovuk.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/WaymarkerPeople/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B717D21DE-A245-487B-BAFF-C6DE8F0A4658%7D&file=Equality%20Strategy%202019.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true) and an Equality Vision which you must strive to achieve. You must comply with the Authority’s policies on equality and human rights issues in addition to legal requirements. You must treat all members of the local community, customers and other employees with respect, fairness and equality.

M7.3  Additionally, the Authority also recognises that all individuals have fundamental human rights and therefore adopts a rights based approach to equality. Under the Human Rights Act 1998 you have an obligation to ensure that service decisions taken are made with reference to a person's basic human rights such as the right to privacy and family life, the right to a fair hearing and the right not to suffer degrading treatment.

**M8 DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION**

M8.1  Openness in decision making within the Authority should be normal practice. The law requires that certain types of information must be available to Members, auditors, government departments, customers and the general public. However, the Authority accepts that some information should not be disclosed and officers must respect the confidentiality of the information they work with.

M8.2 If you are in any doubt as to whether you can release any particular information to a colleague or third party, you should assume that it is confidential and discuss the matter with your line manager before releasing the information. Guidance on disclosure of information to Members is available in the [Members and Officers Working together Policy](https://lakedistrictgovuk.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/WayMarkerOurOrganisation/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BB5AE0742-317E-447F-8212-AFB63B3B1D42%7D&file=PART%20N%20Members%20and%20Officers%20Working%20Together%20.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true).

M8.3 You must not use any confidential information obtained in the course of your work for personal gain or benefit; nor should you pass it on to others who might use it in such a way.

M8.4 You must comply with all current legislation and Authority policies relating to the disclosure of information, such as the Data Protection Act 2018, GDPR 2016, Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and Freedom of Information Act 2000.

 [General Data Protection (sharepoint.com)](https://lakedistrictgovuk.sharepoint.com/sites/WaymarkerLegal/SitePages/General-Data-Protection.aspx)

 [Freedom of Information Request (sharepoint.com)](https://lakedistrictgovuk.sharepoint.com/sites/WaymarkerLegal/SitePages/Freedom-of-Information-Request.aspx)

**M9 OUTSIDE COMMITMENTS**

M9.1 You must not allow official duties and private interests to conflict. You must not undertake any private commitments or activities that may bring the Authority into disrepute or impair your performance or detrimentally conflict with the Authority’s interests.

M9.2  You must not engage in any other business or take up any additional appointments without the written consent from the Authority.  The Authority will not unreasonably stop you from taking additional employment, but such employment must not, in the view of the Authority, conflict with the Authority's interest or bring the Authority into disrepute.

M9.3 The Authority encourages voluntary work, public duties and activities in support of local community groups.

**M10 PERSONAL INTERESTS**

M10.1 Under the [Local Government Act 1972](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1972/70/section/117), you must disclose any financial or non-financial interests you or your partner have, whether direct or indirect, in any contract, company, other public body or any other matter that involves or may involve the Authority. Failure to disclose may be a criminal offence. The definition of an interest is widely interpreted.

M10.2 You must not in any official or personal capacity

(a) allow your personal interests to conflict with the Authority’s requirements or

(b) use your position to confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.

M10.3 You must not use your official position to promote a personal or private interest, contrary to the interests of the Authority or the general public interest. Such interests can arise from family and friends, as well as through membership of, or association with clubs, societies and other organisations. In no way must you create the impression that you are using, or could use, your official position to promote a personal or private interest, contrary to the general public interest.

M10.3 You must consider whether any particular interest might conflict with your duties. You must declare any interest in writing to your line manager and to the Monitoring Officer. [Register of Interests AND Gifts and Hospitality.xlsx (sharepoint.com)](https://lakedistrictgovuk.sharepoint.com/%3Ax%3A/r/sites/WayMarkerOurOrganisation/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B5D1D31AC-9C3D-46D4-8E3D-382BE318F211%7D&file=Register%20of%20Interests%20AND%20Gifts%20and%20Hospitality.xlsx&action=default&mobileredirect=true)

**M11 HOSPITALITY AND GIFTS**

M11.1 A potential source of conflict between private and public interests is the offer of gifts, hospitality, or benefits in kind to officers in connection with their official duties. You must not solicit gifts, additional payments or other personal advantage from any person or organisation who has dealings with the Authority. You must refuse any gift offered to you or to any of your family members, except where listed below.

M11.2 You may accept gifts of token value such as pens, diaries or similar from potential or actual contractors or suppliers. You may keep such items for your personal or business use.

M11.3 You may accept offers of hospitality only if there is a genuine need to impart information or represent the Authority through the particular engagement. Your Head of Service should agree acceptance of the hospitality in advance, and you should record it in the register kept by the Authority Solicitor. You must only accept offers to attend purely social or sporting functions when these are for the benefit of the Authority or in connection with a civic or courtesy visit. Such offers should be approved by your Line Manager and recorded on the Officer’s declaration of Interests spreadsheet. You must refuse offers of hospitality where any suggestion of improper influence is possible. Be especially cautious where hospitality is offered by a person or body having or seeking business with the Authority, particularly where the offer is to an individual.

M11.4 When you have to decline hospitality, you should courteously but firmly inform those making the offer of the Authority’s procedure and standards

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M11.5 When receiving authorised gifts or hospitality you must be aware of its timing in relation to decisions which the Authority may be taking affecting those providing the hospitality. You must decline hospitality which may compromise your impartiality or create the perception of doing so.

M11.6 You may accept hospitality through attendance at relevant conferences and courses. It should be clear that the hospitality is corporate rather than personal, your manager should give consent in advance, and your manager should be satisfied that this does not compromise impartiality or the perception of impartiality in any of the Authority’s decision making, including its purchasing decisions. Where you make authorised visits to inspect equipment or similar, the Authority must meet the cost of such visits to avoid jeopardizing the integrity of any purchasing decisions.

M11.7 On rare occasions it may be appropriate to accept personal gifts. You should not accept gifts or cash that are in excess of £25 in value. You should always attempt to decline the gift, but sometimes this is impractical. If you are to accept any gift with a value in excess of £25.00 you must obtain the approval of your Line Manager to accept the gift. On all occasions, you should record the gift in the register kept by the Authority Solicitor. Your Head of Service will advise whether it is appropriate for you to retain the gift, to share it with other members of your team or apply it for some other purpose.

M11.8 If you require any advice about the treatment of gifts and hospitality, speak to your Head of Service, the Authority Solicitor or the Monitoring Officer. [Register of Interests AND Gifts and Hospitality.xlsx (sharepoint.com)](https://lakedistrictgovuk.sharepoint.com/%3Ax%3A/r/sites/WayMarkerOurOrganisation/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B5D1D31AC-9C3D-46D4-8E3D-382BE318F211%7D&file=Register%20of%20Interests%20AND%20Gifts%20and%20Hospitality.xlsx&action=default&mobileredirect=true)

**M12 SPONSORSHIP**

M11.1 Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor an Authority activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation, or voluntarily, the basic position concerning acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply.  Particular care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.

M12.2 Where the Authority wishes to sponsor an event or service, neither you nor your partner, spouse, or relative, must benefit from such sponsorship in a direct way without there being full disclosure to an appropriate manager of any such interest.

M12.3 Similarly, where the Authority, through sponsorship, grant-aid, financial or other means, gives support to third parties, you should ensure that impartial advice is given, and that there is no conflict of interest involved.

**M13 EMPLOYMENT AND OTHER EMPLOYMENT MATTERS**

M13.1 If you are involved in appointments, you must make these solely on the basis of merit. It would be unlawful for you to make an appointment based on anything other than the candidate’s ability to undertake the duties of the post. In order to avoid any accusation of bias, you must not be involved in any appointment, or any other decisions for any officer, prospective officer or third party where you are related or have a close personal relationship outside work.

M13.2 Similarly, you must not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay adjustments for any member of staff with who is a relative, partner or with whom you have a close personal relationship.

M13.3 You must not let your political or personal preferences influence your judgment when making appointments. You must not canvass the support of colleagues for any candidate, and you must not allow others to canvas you.

**M14 TENDERING AND CONTRACTS**

M14.1 If you are involved in the tendering process and dealing with contractors, you must act solely in accordance with the Authority’s Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders and any legislative provisions.

M14.2 If the Authority is involved in a tender as a client and contractor, you must be clear about the separation of client and contractor roles. Senior employees who have both a client and contractor responsibility must be accountable and open, and must comply with audit requirements.

M14.3 You must not disclose confidential matters on tenders or costs for either internal or external contractors to any unauthorised party or organisation.

**M15 USE OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

M15.1 You must use public funds entrusted to you in a responsible and lawful manner. You must strive to ensure value for money to the public and to avoid legal challenge to the Authority.

**M16 BREACH OF THE CODE**

M16.1 You should make all allegations of a breach of the Code to the Director of Visitor Services and Resources, who will decide the most appropriate way in which to progress the matter.

M16.2 Relevant policies for dealing with such breaches:

 [Anti-Fraud, Theft and Corruption](https://lakedistrictgovuk.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/WayMarkerOurOrganisation/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B77BB26EF-C3B4-4E88-B404-B1FCF02455BF%7D&file=PART%20O%20Anti%20Fraud%20Theft%20and%20Corruption%20Policy.doc&action=default&mobileredirect=true)

 [Disciplinary](https://lakedistrictgovuk.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/WaymarkerPeople/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BD44A4970-A9E9-4741-8002-F3D5767097B8%7D&file=Disciplinary%20Policy%202015.doc&action=default&mobileredirect=true)

 [Grievance](https://lakedistrictgovuk.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/WaymarkerPeople/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B41579984-1886-4DD6-84E9-A123B3A525FA%7D&file=Grievance%20Policy.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true)

 [Data Protection](https://lakedistrictgovuk.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/WaymarkerLegal/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BFF4ACC1F-48A5-4967-80D8-364EA03B86B3%7D&file=Data%20Security%20Breach%20Reporting%20Policy.doc&action=default&mobileredirect=true)

 ICT Policy Framework

 [Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing)](https://lakedistrictgovuk.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/r/sites/WayMarkerOurOrganisation/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B414BB25B-84C7-47DC-A820-05BF35C3E8CF%7D&file=PART%20P%20Confidential%20Reporting%20Policy%20Whistleblowing.doc&action=default&mobileredirect=true)