Code of Conduct for Staff

Date of issue:  December 2015
Date of review:  By December 2018
Document code: PHE HR001
Version:  2.0
Introduction

Public Health England (PHE):

- is the expert national public health agency that fulfils the Secretary of State for Health’s statutory duty to protect health and address health inequalities, and executes the Secretary of State’s power to promote the health and wellbeing of the nation
- is an executive agency of the Department of Health and the authoritative national voice and expert service provider for public health
- is an organisation whose culture and values will demonstrate scientific, clinical and analytical rigour, and which is dedicated to providing impartial and objective advice, evidence and expert judgement and taking action on the basis of the best available evidence
- will have operational autonomy. It will be free to publish information and advice it obtains from any source and provide it to whomever it wants.

This Code of Conduct incorporates both the Civil Service Code, which also applies to all our staff, and professional regulation responsibilities.

This Code of Conduct applies to all staff employed by PHE, secondees, agency staff and individuals holding honorary contracts.

All staff must abide by this Code of Conduct as it is a contractual responsibility and therefore forms part of an individual’s contract of employment. This PHE Code applies to all staff employed by PHE, secondees, agency staff and individuals holding honorary contracts.

PHE shall:

- lead on the design, delivery and maintenance of systems to improve health and protect the population against existing and future threats to health
- operate transparently, providing expert, evidence-based information, advice and services to national and local government, public health professionals and the public, showing national leadership for the public health system
- commission and deliver safe and effective services for which it is responsible and public health programmes across the whole life course and across care pathways
- lead on the development of a science and research strategy for the public’s health, vibrant educational programmes for under and post-graduates and continuing professional development
- transform the public health system to rely on a strong and capable workforce, building on the core professionalism and high standards of current practice while working in new ways and with new partners
be an organisation which operates with the highest standards of professional and scientific independence, rigour and integrity; for example, there will be no barrier to PHE staff joining relevant committees subject to the usual selection procedures and processes, or being a member of any appropriate professional body

ensure all staff are aware of policy and guidance on the development and delivery of scientific and clinical advice

appoint jointly with local government the best and most able directors of public health and support them professionally

work with the Local Government Association to ensure that the interests of local government, as a key element of the new public health system, are fully represented in the development of standards and ways of working.

PHE staff shall:

- discharge our statutory functions effectively, efficiently and economically and in line with principles of sustainability
- accept and comply with PHE terms and conditions of employment and associated policies and procedures, including this Code of Conduct and the Civil Service Code
- encourage an ethical culture by committing to uphold the standards governing our own professions and respecting those of other professional groups
- be accountable through the relevant PHE director to the Chief Executive. In this the Chief Executive is supported by the PHE Board and PHE Leadership Team. Arrangements will be put in place for professional accountability to the relevant professional lead
- adhere and abide by the standards of competence, honesty, integrity and other professional behaviours as defined by our respective professional bodies or regulatory bodies, and retain the freedom and duty to follow their professional codes
- conduct ourselves openly and transparently, with integrity, impartiality and honesty – we shall never deceive or knowingly mislead others including customers, the public, colleagues, the Department of Health, Ministers or Parliament
- demonstrate our understanding of and commitment to the Civil Service and PHE values and standards of behaviour (The PHE People Charter – attached as Appendix 1), alongside our relevant professional codes, which will be assessed through our recruitment, selection and appraisal processes
- not misuse our official position or information acquired in our official duties to further our private interests or those of others
- comply with the PHE Conflict of Interest Policy
- deal with public enquiries efficiently, promptly and without bias or maladministration and offer the public the highest standards of conduct and service
- provide objective information to the public at the earliest appropriate stage to enable them to make decisions about improving or protecting their health, giving the greatest regard to the public’s interest when deciding what information to place in the public domain and when to do so
• be aware of all PHE policies and guidance, for example, PHE media handling
guidance, refer all media calls from the outset to the PHE Communications
directorate and involve the PHE Communications directorate in all activities which
may require media handling. Similarly all freedom of information (FOI) requests
must be referred to PHE’s public accountability function in the Corporate
directorate. Nothing in this Code shall, however, override professional, statutory or
common law obligations to keep confidential or to disclose certain information
• many staff are also covered by a number of professional regulatory bodies for
example, General Medical Council (GMC), General Dental Council (GDC), Nursing
and Midwifery Council (NMC), UK Public Health Register (UKPHR), Health Care
Professions Council (HCPC) and The Society for Radiological Protection (SRP);
these are not part of an individual’s contract of employment, but are recognised as
having a valuable role for those staff covered by them. PHE welcomes and
supports those who are registered with a regulatory body.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

• PHE has a duty to make you aware of the PHE Code of Conduct, and of the Civil
Service Code. If you believe that you are being required to act in a way which
conflicts with this Code, PHE must consider and deal with your concern, and make
sure that you are not penalised for raising it
• you have a duty to speak openly and clearly to the public to improve the public’s
health to the best of your ability. This is consistent with PHE’s role set out in this
Code. The Civil Service Code reinforces this responsibility
• if you have a concern or become aware of actions by others which conflict with this
Code of Conduct, you should start by talking to your line manager or someone else
in your line management chain. If for any reason you would find this difficult, you
should raise the matter with PHE’s ‘nominated officers’ as set out in the PHE
Whistleblowing Policy. These nominated officers, and your line managers, will
always seek a way to resolve any concern you raise informally and through mutual
agreement where appropriate and possible
• if you become aware of actions by others that you believe conflict with this Code you
should report this to your line manager or someone else in your line management
chain; alternatively you may wish to seek advice from your nominated officer. You
should report evidence of criminal or unlawful activity to the police or other
appropriate regulatory authorities
• if you have raised a matter in accordance with this Code of Conduct, and do not
receive what you consider to be a reasonable response, you should report the
matter to the PHE Chief Executive (or the chair of the PHE’s Audit and Risk
Committee, a non-executive member) in line with the process outlined in the PHE
Whistleblowing Policy.
## People Charter

In PHE the way we behave will have the greatest impact on achieving our objectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communicate</th>
<th>Achieve together</th>
<th>Respect</th>
<th>Excel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • communicate openly, honestly and clearly, avoiding jargon  
  • seek out and share knowledge, suggest solutions  
  • encourage, listen and be receptive to others' views  
  • invite, offer and respond to feedback | • work together towards PHE's objectives  
  • nurture open relationships and build trust  
  • work collaboratively with all customers, internally and externally  
  • empower each other and hold each other to account | • treat colleagues and customers as they would wish to be treated  
  • value difference by embracing diversity and inclusion  
  • look after our own wellbeing, and support each other  
  • recognise and celebrate our successes, large and small | • provide excellent service to colleagues and customers  
  • drive personal development and suggest ways to improve  
  • lead by example, acting as a role model internally and externally  
  • maintain professionalism at all times |

Reference code: HR001: Version: Final

UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED