

# Report

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| Report to:       | <b>Corporate Resources Committee</b>            |
| Date of Meeting: | <b>7 July 2009</b>                              |
| Report by:       | <b>Executive Director (Corporate Resources)</b> |

|          |                                      |
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| Subject: | <b>Code of Conduct for Employees</b> |
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## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ obtain approval of the revised Code of Conduct for Employees and refer the revised Code to the Executive Committee for approval.

## 2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the revised Code of Conduct for Employees be referred to the Executive Committee for approval.

## 3. Background

- 3.1 The Council's Code of Conduct provides guidance on different aspects of behaviour for employees of South Lanarkshire Council and essentially sets out the minimum standards of behaviour expected of employees.
- 3.2 The Code of Conduct for Employees was last revised and approved by the Corporate Resources Committee in April 2006. In order to ensure that the code continues to provide clarity for employees, the code has been reviewed and updated.

## 4. Proposals

4.1 The attached revised version of the code was required as a result of outcomes from working groups, changes in legislation and Council policy and/or procedure updates. The main changes include:-

- ◆ inclusion of the new Code of Good Governance which was approved by the Executive Committee on 25 January 2009
- ◆ clarification around employees' personal conduct during or outside of working hours
- ◆ inclusion of information for anyone who works in a care position, either with children or vulnerable adults, and whose name is placed on either lists held by the Scottish Executive, must advise their Executive Director immediately
- ◆ following a review of the accessibility of the Council's IT policy, the code of practice and policy documents that define the acceptable use of the Council's IT network and telephone systems were renamed to the IT Acceptable Use Policy and Employee Acceptable Use Handbook
- ◆ updating the section on Register of Gifts, Hospitality and Services to advise that information contained within the Register may be released to other parties in line with the principles of the Data Protection Act

- ♦ revision of the section on the confidential procedure for reporting concerns at work to encourage employees to use the procedure if appropriate and enhance ways in which employees can report confidential concerns.

## **5. Employee Implications**

- 5.1 The content of the revised code will be communicated to all current employees through a Works magazine article and a Management Bulletin/Personnel Circular. It will also be issued to all new Council employees.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 Costs of reprinting the Code of Conduct booklet will be met by current budgets and there are no other financial implications.

## **7. Other Implications**

- 7.1 None.

## **8. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

- 8.1 Although this report recommends a change to an existing policy, this policy area has been screened for equalities issues and is not relevant to the Council's equalities duties and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.
- 8.2 The revised Code of Conduct has been discussed and agreed with the Personnel Managers' Group and with the trades union through the JTUC Executive.

**Robert McIlwain**  
**Executive Director (Corporate Resources)**

16 June 2009

## **Link(s) to Council Objectives/Values**

- ♦ excellent employer
- ♦ people focused
- ♦ fair and open
- ♦ working with and respecting others

## **Previous References**

- ♦ Corporate Resources Committee – 5 April 2006

## **List of Background Papers**

- ♦ Code of Conduct for Employees published April 2006

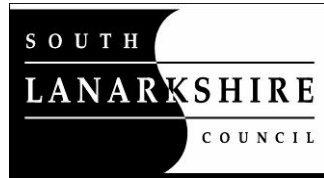
## **Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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**Help us get it right**

# **Code of conduct for employees**

**Revised May 2009**

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## 1. Introduction

This Code of conduct has been developed by the Council following the adoption by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (Cosla) of the National Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees.

The public expects a high standard of conduct from all local government employees. This Code sets out the minimum standards expected of all employees of South Lanarkshire Council. These standards will be used as a benchmark of good practice by the Local Government Ombudsman where a complaint of maladministration has been made. The Code also incorporates "The Seven Principles of Public Life" identified by the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life. These are listed overleaf, as slightly altered by COSLA to place them in local government context, and are explained in the Council's approach to good governance.

The Code does not affect employees' rights and responsibilities under the law. Its purpose is to provide clear and helpful advice. While a breach of this Code may result in disciplinary action, it is designed to provide guidance on the standards of conduct appropriate for a public service employee. Any employee who has difficulty in meeting any of the standards contained in the Code, should contact their line manager, Resource personnel section or trade union official for advice.

As the Council provides a wide range of services, some sections of the Code may be more relevant to some employees than others, but all employees must comply with the standards and principles set out in the Code. Some employees may also be subject to the provisions of a code of conduct produced to meet the requirements of a professional body such as the General Teaching Council (GTC) or Scottish Social Services Commission (SSSC).

**Note:** Details of how to access copies of relevant Council policies and codes referred to in this document are provided at the end of this document.

## 2. Standards in public life

### 2.1 The "Seven Principles of Public Life"

The "Seven Principles of Public Life" were identified by the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life and are set out below as adapted by Cosla.

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| <b>Selflessness:</b>   | You should not take decisions which will result in any financial or other benefit to yourself, your family and friends. Workplace decisions should be based solely on the Council's best interests.            |
| <b>Integrity:</b>      | You should not place yourself under any financial or other obligation to an individual which might influence you in your work with the Council.  |
| <b>Objectivity:</b>    | Any decisions which you make in the course of your work with the Council, including making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for awards or benefits must be based solely on merit. |
| <b>Accountability:</b> | You are accountable to your Council as your employer. Your Council, in turn, is accountable to the public.   |

- Openness:** You should be as open as possible in all the decisions and actions that you take. You should give reasons for your decisions and should not restrict information unless this is clearly required by Council policy and permitted or required by the law.
- Honesty:** You have a duty to declare any private interests which might affect your work with the Council.
- Leadership:** If you are a manager, or team leader, you should promote and support these principles by your leadership and set an example.

## **2.2 Code of good governance**

The Council has a Code of good governance which encompasses the culture, systems, processes and values by which South Lanarkshire conducts its business and delivers services.

The Code is designed to provide an overview of what good governance actually means South Lanarkshire Council by relating it to individuals, Services and Resources. It also links to key strategies and plans including the Single Outcome Agreement, the Council Plan, Resource Plans, Service Plans and the Personal Development Review (PDR) process.

One of the key aims of the Code is to provide a document which highlights the responsibilities and commitments that employees agree to when undertaking any work, activity or decision on behalf of the Council. Full details of the relevant principles and values are contained in the Code, which is available on the intranet. Examples relating to employees include but are not limited to:-

- ◆ being honest;
- ◆ being fair and open;
- ◆ working with and respecting others;
- ◆ being accountable, effective and efficient;
- ◆ taking informed and transparent decisions;
- ◆ showing integrity; and
- ◆ being objective

The practical application of the Code of good governance requires employees to take individual responsibility and action in line with Council values. Some examples are provided in the Code of good governance – Appendix A, which is available on the intranet. Examples include but are not limited to:-

- ◆ adhering to codes of conduct;
- ◆ declaring all interests and hospitality offers and acceptances;
- ◆ keeping accurate and accessible records;
- ◆ not tolerating unfair discrimination;
- ◆ delivering work and commitments on time; and
- ◆ acting within the law

## **3. Personal conduct**

Employees should be aware that the way they behave reflects the image of the Council. Managers will explain to their employees the standards of behaviour expected of them.

Employees must not attend work under the influence either of alcohol or illegal drugs, as these may affect their ability to undertake their duties safely and effectively and may damage the Council's public image. The use of Council vehicles or machinery is prohibited while an employee is under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or any prescribed medication that may affect their ability to drive or operate machinery safely. Employees should refer to the employee information leaflet "Driving safely at work" for further details.

Any employee who does attend work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs should understand that they are likely to be liable to disciplinary proceedings which may lead to dismissal. However, the Council has a policy to assist employees with an addiction problem and help and support is available through the Employee Support Team in Corporate Personnel Services.

Any employee charged with, or convicted of a criminal offence must advise his/her Executive Director immediately. Any employee working in a care position and whose name is placed on the list held by the Scottish Executive of those Disqualified to Work with Children, or Adults at Risk, whether this is on a provisional basis or not, must also advise his/her Executive Director immediately.

Employees, like all South Lanarkshire residents, have a duty to make any payments due to the Council in good time, and should be aware that the Council will make regular checks to ensure that employees are not in arrears with payments such as Council Tax, rent etc. Advice for employees facing financial difficulties is available from sources such as Benefits and Revenue within Housing and Technical Resources and Money Matters.

Any employee who claims benefits such as Housing and discounts such as Council Tax to which they are not entitled are likely to be liable to disciplinary proceedings and this may lead to dismissal.

The Council's values are based on promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discriminatory practices and prejudice. Therefore, regardless of personal beliefs and opinions, the Council expects all of its employees to behave positively towards one another as well as to service users. Bullying, harassing, intimidatory or discriminatory behaviour or language, in any form is unacceptable. The Council's policy on "Dignity at Work" sets out the standards expected and how employees can raise complaints.

Under the Code of good governance employees are expected to take responsibility for the decisions that may take as part of their employment. They should work within the law and be aware that the decisions they take may be scrutinised. If an employee feels that they require further training/guidance for the role they carry out, they should raise this with their line manager either directly or through the performance development review process.

#### **4. Dress code**

Many Council employees provide valuable "front line" services, and are in regular contact with service users and the public. They therefore represent the public image of the Council.

The Council requires employees to adopt certain dress requirements and generally dress appropriately for the type of work they do. While recognising the diversity of cultural traditions, and what might be considered a "reasonable adjustment" in respect of any disabled employee, each Resource will advise its employees of any specific appearance and dress requirements. These standards will reflect the services provided by the Resource and the work undertaken by the employees concerned.

Unless agreed with their line manager for specific situations, name badges, where provided, will be worn at all times. Employees should also show their Council ID pass as appropriate, for example, when carrying out a home visit.

Corporate wear, where provided, will be worn as required, and maintained in a reasonable condition.

Personal protective equipment and clothing provided for an employee's safety will be worn as appropriate for the type of work being undertaken.

## **5. Relationships**

### **5.1 Elected Members**

Both Elected Members and employees are public servants and as such indispensable to each other. Employees are responsible to the council and their role is to support and give advice to Elected Members and to carry out their work under the direction and control of the council and its committees.

Any undue familiarity between Elected Members and employees should therefore be avoided as it is inappropriate and may be perceived wrongly or be embarrassing to others.

### **5.2 The public and service users**

Employees should always behave in a courteous and helpful manner with members of the public as users of services, or citizens.

All members of the public should be treated fairly, equitably and consistently, in accordance with the principles of the Council's equal opportunities policy.

### **5.3 Conduct towards colleagues**

Council services are best delivered by employees who work together in the best interests of service users. Employees should therefore respect each other, their beliefs and opinions, and behave in an appropriate manner at work.

The Council's policy on "Dignity at Work" identifies discrimination, harassment and victimisation as constituting serious misconduct, which will not be tolerated.

This policy is available on the intranet or by contacting Corporate Personnel Services.

### **5.4 Voluntary bodies or organisations**

The Council recognises the vital contribution which the voluntary sector makes to the quality of life in South Lanarkshire, and has developed a policy on volunteering to encourage its employees to volunteer.

However employees should also be aware of the possibility of a conflict of interest should they participate as a volunteer with an organisation which they might also come into contact with during the course of their work, and take appropriate steps to avoid this happening. Should such a situation arise, an employee should advise their line manager.



## **6. Confidentiality**

**See also section 10 on Disclosure of information**

### **6.1 General duty**

The Council routinely handles information not only to enable services to be delivered to the public but also as part of its management system. Some of this information must be dealt with confidentially and only released to authorised individuals, for example, information which may relate to service users, other employees, tenders or contracts that are to be awarded.

Releasing confidential information is a very serious matter, and employees should check with their line manager if appropriate, before giving information to a third party.

Employees should also be careful not to divulge confidential information relating to the Council or its employees to others outside their work.

The Council is bound by various pieces of legislation, including the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts. Each of these has specific requirements and guidance and employees should seek advice from their line manager. See also section 10 on disclosure of information.

### **6.2 Committee proceedings**

The Council is a democratic organisation which is publicly accountable and as such the Council's committee proceedings are subject to public scrutiny.

However, employees should not communicate information regarding any proceedings of a committee meeting or the contents of any document relating to the Council, unless this is required under the provisions of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended or the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, unless they have been expressly authorised to do so.

Further guidance is provided in section 10 Disclosure of information.

### **6.3 Private information relating to employees**

Information concerning an employee's private affairs will not be supplied to any person out-with the service of the Council unless their consent has been obtained. However, this does not apply where there is a statutory duty on the Council to provide the information, or if the Council is required to do so by a court order or warrant, or as required by Audit Scotland as part of ongoing work on the National Fraud Initiative.

## **7. Political neutrality**

Local Government employees should carry out their duties and serve the council and all Elected Members regardless of their political outlook in a politically neutral way.

A number of posts are "politically restricted" in terms of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and employees holding these posts will have been advised. Such employees are disqualified from becoming or remaining, a member of a Local Authority, the Scottish Parliament, the House of Commons, European Parliament or carrying out certain political activities.

Any employee who is asked by an Elected Member to provide assistance with a matter which is clearly party political, or which does not have a clear link with the work of the Council, should politely refuse and explain that the matter has to be referred to their line manager.

It is acknowledged that some employees will have a close working relationship with Elected members depending on the Elected Members role and responsibilities within the Council.

Political groups may seek advice from employees in which case the following procedure should be adopted:

- The office bearers of the political group should contact the Chief Executive and outline the type of advice they are seeking.
- The Chief Executive will decide whether attendance at the meeting is appropriate and which employee(s) should attend.
- Once the employee has given advice to the group, they must leave the meeting before any decision is made.
- Strict confidentiality must be observed by the employee. The discussion in one political group must not be revealed to another.

## **8. Conflict of interest**

### **8.1 Private interests**

Council employees must not allow any private interest to influence their decisions at work, and must not use their position to further their own interests, or the interests of others who do not have a right to benefit under Council policies.

Any interest in the work of the Council, on the part of the employee, close family members or members of an employee's household, must always be declared. If an employee is in any doubt about the relevance of their private interests, they should clarify the position with his/her line manager.

The delivery of Council services should also not be compromised by any conflict of interest which might arise between employees. Employees should therefore take steps to prevent any potential conflict of interest between their personal and professional relationships at work.

Employees should also be aware of the potential for actual or perceived conflict of interest in situations where a close personal relationship exists or develops between employees working in the same team or section, and particularly where one of the employees has a supervisory/line management responsibility for the other. In such a situation, advice should be sought as appropriate from a senior manager.

### **8.2 Contracts**

Employees must be fair and impartial in their dealings with contractors, sub contractors, service providers and suppliers. If an employee is involved in the tendering process, they must follow the Council's standing orders relating to contracts.

Employees must notify the Chief Executive, in writing, if it comes to their knowledge that a contract in which they have a personal financial interest, whether direct or indirect, has been or is about to be, entered into by the Council. Employees must not disclose

confidential information on either internal or external contractors to any individual or organisation unless authorised to do so.

Where appropriate, the Council will require an employee working in a particularly sensitive area to enter into a restrictive covenant, that is a contract which binds the employee upon leaving the employment of the Council not to act in a way which might damage the interests of the Council.

### **8.3 Membership of private clubs/organisations**

Employees must declare any membership of a private club/organisation whether open to the public or with a restricted membership, which a member of the public may reasonably think could influence the decisions or actions the employee makes on behalf of the Council and might result in a conflict of interest with regard to any aspect of their employment with the Council.

### **8.4 Paid work outside the council**

The Council will allow employees to undertake paid work outside the Council, unless there is a clear conflict of interest or it is likely to have an adverse effect on the work of the Council. Any employee wishing to undertake paid work of any kind outside the Council, must obtain prior written approval from his/her line manager or the appropriate personnel section.

Employees should not seek to gain business in the course of carrying out their Council duties, e.g. by arranging to undertake private work, and are not allowed to use the equipment or resources of the Council in any outside work whether paid or unpaid.

Approval to undertake other paid work will be reviewed should there be any change in the employee's working arrangements for example, an increase in contracted hours or change of duties or post. It is the employee's responsibility to advise their line manager of any existing agreement should they move post within the Council.

This procedure is in the interests of employees and is intended to protect them and to ensure compliance with health and safety requirements and the working time regulations.

### **8.5 Lectures, broadcasts etc.**

The Council will normally allow employees to accept invitations to give lectures appropriate to their professional/occupational standing, however, an employee should first obtain approval from his/her Head of Service or appropriate personnel section.

Any fees received for lectures, broadcasts etc. given within normal working hours, excluding out-of-pocket expenses will be paid to the Council, otherwise time taken to present the lecture, broadcast etc. must be set against the employee's annual leave entitlement. Fees may be retained for any lectures, broadcasts etc. given out-with normal working hours.

## **9. Use of Council equipment or resources**

### **9.1 Use for other purposes**

Employees wishing to use Council equipment, for example to work at home, as part of their personal development or for study purposes must obtain permission from their line manager and have the item logged out by the responsible officer listed in the inventory guidelines. Reasonable care must be taken with all such equipment.

Whilst employees are allowed some personal use of IT equipment at their workplace for example, access to internet and use of e-mail, this should not adversely affect their work or breach and Council policy. Employees should be aware that telephone, e-mail and internet usage is monitored.

Employees are not allowed to use Council equipment or resources in any outside work (see section 8.4)

### **9.2 Security of information**

If IT or communications equipment is being used at any time it is essential that any information that can be accessed using the equipment is kept secure. Advice and guidance is available in the following documents which can be accessed on the intranet:

- IT acceptable use policies
- Information security policy user responsibility statement
- The risk management bulletin on laptop security

## **10. Disclosure of information**

As previously stated in section 6 Confidentiality, various pieces of legislation such as the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act and the Data Protection Act govern how information be managed and the circumstances under which it can be disclosed.

Employees should therefore be careful not to divulge confidential information relating either to the Council, a service user, another employee or someone else with whom the Council has had contact such as tenderers/contractors unless authorised to do so. This includes making contact with the media.

There are specific procedures to be followed and these are summarised below under the relevant piece of legislation.

### **10.1 The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002**

The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act (FOISA) introduced a general right of access to information held by the Council. The right of access by someone to see, or get their own personal information is covered by the Data Protection Act (See section 10.2 below).

The Council has produced a Publication Scheme which sets out all the information it publishes, how it can be obtained and whether any charges apply. Guidance on handling requests for information is available on the Council's intranet. The Publication Scheme is available on the Council's website.

Employees who might receive a request for information should follow the guidance notes and the categories of information that might be requested, and seek advice as appropriate from their line manager.

There are a few general principles to note:

- The only legal requirement is that the request is made in a permanent format such as writing, e-mail or fax. Anyone making a verbal request should be advised of this. Employees may not ask the applicant the reason for their request.
- Except in a small number of cases, the Council must provide the information requested
- FOISA only applies to information that the Council has at the time of the request. There is no requirement for the Council to create records or carry out a specific piece of work such as analysing information, just to meet a request.

Employees should be aware that it is a criminal offence to alter, deface, block, erase, destroy or conceal information with the intention of preventing disclosure of that information after the Council has received an FOISA request, unless permitted to do so under the provisions of the Act.

Any employee who does so is likely to be liable to disciplinary proceedings.

## **10.2 Data Protection Act 1998**

The right of access to on employees' or service users' personal information held by the Council, is covered by the Data Protection Act.

The Act places strict security requirements of any personal data held by the Council, whether this is paper based and held in a structured filing system, or in electronic format.

This means that an employee asked by an individual to provide access to his or her own personal information, must seek advice from their line manager and follow an agreed procedure. Generally any requests must be made in writing, and proof of identity will be required before the access is provided.

Unless there is a statutory requirement, or a court order or warrant has been obtained, information relating to an employee's private affairs will not be released without their prior consent. Any Council employee wishing access to their personal file must do so by contacting their Resource personnel section who will make appropriate arrangements.

(See also section 6.3 Private Information Relating to Employees).

## **10.3 Contact with the media**

The Council recognises that in the course of their day to day work there may be occasions where employees will deal directly with the media, such as schools giving information about sports days, fetes, holiday arrangements.

However all other contact with the media (press/television/radio) should be made through the Corporate Media Officer team.

If an employee is in doubt they must contact his/her line manager or the Head of Corporate Communications and Public Affairs, Corporate Resources.

This requirement does not apply where an accredited Trade Union official contacts the media in their trade union capacity and not as a Council employee.

Any employee wishing to disclose information in the public interest should use the confidential reporting procedure described in section 10.4.

#### **10.4 Confidential procedure for reporting concerns at work**

The public rightly have an expectation of high standards from public organisations such as the Council, both in terms of the services provided and ethics. The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, provides a process whereby an employee can report concerns about serious wrongdoing or improper behaviour. This could apply to an aspect of individual behaviour or Council practice.

The Council's procedure on confidential reporting enables employees to raise such concerns internally rather than going directly to an outside person or body. The procedure applies to the following areas:

- a possible criminal offence
- a failure to comply with a legal obligation
- a miscarriage of justice
- a danger to the health and safety of an individual
- damage to the environment
- deliberate concealment of information tending to show that any of the above matters is being deliberately concealed
- gross breach of the Council's code of good governance
- Mis-use of Council assets (for example, Council computers or vehicles) time or other suspected fraud which may require investigation

Employees can raise their concern with their Head of Service, their Executive Director, the Council's Monitoring Officer the Head of Legal (Corporate Resources), the Council's Risk and Audit Manager, a trade union representative or, where this is not appropriate, the Chief Executive. The Council will ensure that any employee reporting a concern under the Act will not experience any detriment as a result. This applies, as long as the report has been made in good faith, even if following investigation, there is found to be no substance to the allegation. Only where a false allegation has been made deliberately or maliciously, will the matter be viewed seriously, and the complainant may lead to disciplinary action.

Any employee considering making a disclosure out-with the Council, for example to the press, should be aware that they may not automatically be protected by the Act. Before doing this, in their own interest, they should seek advice from their trade union or a legal adviser.

Full information on the procedure is provided in an employee information booklet detailing the "Procedure on Confidential Reporting" which is available on the intranet or from Personnel Services, Corporate Resources. The Council also has a Fraud Prevention Strategy details of which are available on the intranet under Finance & Information Resources.

## **11. Rights as a citizen**

### **11.1 Expression of personal views**

As a citizen, an employee is entitled to express legitimate views about the Council. However, this does not include using any private information gained, either directly or indirectly, through their employment with the Council.

In the work capacity, employees should not criticise the Council, verbally or in any written communication, whether through the media, at public meetings or directly with members of the public. Remember good governance principles and values must be followed in any work, activity or decisions undertaken on behalf of the Council.

Employees who hold a politically restricted post should be careful not to verbally or in any written communication favour any particular political party.

### **11.2 Access to Elected Members**

As an individual citizen or service user, an employee can raise a complaint about the services of the Council with his/her Elected Member.

However, any complaint relating to the employee's work with the Council, should be taken up through the appropriate complaints procedure e.g. the policy on Dignity at Work or grievance procedures.

## **12. Register of gifts, hospitality and services**

The Council has established a policy on the declaration of gifts, hospitality and services. Generally, no employee should accept gifts, gratuities etc. from any customer or service user other than a token item. Frequent personal gifts, hospitality or services should not be accepted from the same source. The main points of the policy are outlined below:

- Employees should not accept personal gifts, hospitality or services from anyone, which would, or might appear to place that individual under any obligation. Frequent personal gifts, hospitality or services should not be accepted from the same source.
- Should an employee be offered a personal gift, hospitality or services which they estimate is more than a token gesture, they should discuss the matter with their line manager. Any decision to accept an offer must be authorised by the employee's line manager who will countersign the pro forma.
- All offers of personal gifts, hospitality or services which have an estimated value of more than £25 should be registered, whether accepted or not, as this provides a record of the offer having been made. Those which have an estimated value of £25 or less, do not need to be registered.
- Completed and signed pro formas must be returned to the Head of Administration Services, Corporate Resources who holds the register of personal gifts, hospitality or services. An employee can see the entries recorded against their name at any time.

Information within the Register may be released to other parties through Freedom of Information in line with the principles of the Data Protection Act.

## **13. Operation of policies**

### **13.1 Recruitment**

All appointments to the Council will be made on the basis of merit and in line with the Council's Recruitment Policy. Any employee who participates in the recruitment process must immediately disclose any relationship, or other interest, known to exist between themselves and any of the applicants to the chair of the selection panel or their Head of Service. A decision will then be made as to whether it is appropriate for the employee to continue in the recruitment process, either as a member of the selection panel or in any other role such as in administering a test.

Any canvassing by employees of the Council, either directly or indirectly, with regard to recruitment, will immediately disqualify a candidate, however, this does not preclude them from acting as a referee where appropriate.

### **13.2 Operation of personnel policies**

Managers and supervisors involved in the operation of the Council's employment policies, for example Maximising Attendance, Scheme of special leave or Discipline or Grievance procedures, must do so fairly and equitably.

As described above, any personal interest or relationship must be declared to a senior manager who will decide whether the individual should continue to be involved in the process.

## **14. Equal opportunities**

The Council is committed to ensuring that equality and diversity considerations are central to all that it does. This includes tackling all forms of discrimination and harassment, promoting equality of opportunity and removing the barriers that groups and individuals may experience in accessing Council services or employment opportunities.

The Council's policy on equality and diversity identifies the following grounds on which people may experience discrimination, harassment or less favourable treatment:

- age
- disability
- gender or gender identity
- race, colour or ethnic origin
- caring responsibilities
- sexual orientation
- employment status
- ex-offender status
- religion/belief or none
- trade union activity.

The Council has developed a range of employment policies and employee benefits intended to attract, retain, develop and support the diverse workforce it requires to deliver services to the people of South Lanarkshire. As part of this commitment to a positive working environment, any instances of discrimination, harassment or victimisation at work will be viewed as a serious matter and dealt with appropriately.



Any employee who feels that they have been the victim or witness to of unfair treatment can raise a confidential complaint using the procedure set out in the Council's Dignity at work policy. Support and advice will be available from your Resource Personnel Section and/or the Personnel Adviser (Employee Support) in Corporate Personnel Services.

## **Relevant policies and codes**

### **Employment policies:**

A copy of these can be obtained by contacting the Corporate Personnel helpline telephone: 01698 454667 or on the intranet.

The hyperlink is provided below:

### **Employee Information**

Policy on Equality and diversity

Policy on Dignity at work

Grievance procedures:      local government employees  
   teaching staff

Disciplinary procedures:   local government employees  
   teaching staff

Recruitment and selection policy

Confidential procedures for reporting concerns at work

IT Acceptable use policies

### **Disclosure of information**

Publication scheme

Fraud prevention strategy

Data protection policy

Information security policy

### **Corporate Standards**

Code of good governance

Employer liability insurance cover

Managers' handbook on corporate standards

### **Codes of practice**

Code of practice for Social Work employees