

Code of Conduct for Members of An Chomhairle Leabharlanna

Intent and scope

An Chomhairle Leabharlanna is the statutory body established under the Public Library Act 1947 which advises the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and library authorities on the development of public libraries in Ireland and promotes co-operation through the Irish library and information services sector.*

This code sets out the standards of conduct required of all members of An Chomhairle Leabharlanna in view of An Chomhairle's key role in the library sector in Ireland.

Objectives

The objectives of the Code are the:

- establishment of an agreed set of ethical principles;
- promotion and maintenance of confidence and trust and
- prevention of development or acceptance of unethical practices.

General Principles

These are Integrity, Information, Obligations, Loyalty, Fairness, Work/External Environment, Responsibility and Review.

Integrity

Members and officers of An Chomhairle Leabharlanna must be (and be seen to be) selfless and objective. They must adhere to the highest standards of personal and professional integrity specifically :

- disclosure by members of outside employment/business interests in conflict or in potential conflict with the business of An Chomhairle;
- avoidance of the giving or receiving of corporate gifts, hospitality, preferential treatment or benefits which might affect or appear to affect the ability of the donor or the recipient to make independent judgement on business transactions;
- conduct of purchasing activities of goods/services in accordance with best business practice;
- ensuring that accounts/reports of An Chomhairle accurately reflect its business performance and are not misleading or designed to be misleading;
- avoidance of use of An Chomhairle's resources or time for personal gain, for the benefit of persons/organisations unconnected with An Chomhairle or its activities and
- commitment not to acquire information or business secrets by improper means.

* The functions of An Chomhairle Leabharlanna are declared under Section 79 of the Local Government Act, 2001

- Where a conflict of interest arises at a meeting, the member concerned should declare his/her interest, and take no part in the relevant discussion, decision or action. In circumstances where a board member is unsure as to whether or not a conflict of interest exists or is material, he/she should discuss the matter with the chairman prior to the meeting. If in doubt, declare and offer to withdraw.
 - Where a conflict of interest exists and the member does not declare his/her interest and/or offer to withdraw, the chairman should take appropriate action to ensure that An Chomhairle (and the member concerned) is not compromised.
 - The fundamental principle is that members should not use, or give the appearance of using, their public position to further their interests. This is an area of particular importance and even a reasonable and/or innocent action can be misinterpreted.
- ***Information***
 - support by members of An Chomhairle for the provision of access by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna to general information relating to An Chomhairle's activities in a way that is open and enhances its accountability to the general public.
 - respect the confidentiality of sensitive information held by An Chomhairle. This would constitute material such as:
 - commercially sensitive information (including, but not limited to, future plans or details of major organisational or other changes such as restructuring);
 - personal information and
 - information received in confidence by An Chomhairle.
 - observe appropriate prior consultation procedures with third parties where, exceptionally, it is proposed to release sensitive information in the public interest.
 - comply with relevant statutory provisions (e.g. data protection legislation, the Freedom of Information Act, 1997).
 - ***Obligations***
 - fulfil all regulatory and statutory obligations imposed on An Chomhairle;
 - compliance with detailed tendering and purchasing procedures, as well as complying with prescribed levels of authority for sanctioning any relevant expenditure;

- introduce controls to prevent fraud including adequate controls to ensure compliance with prescribed procedures in relation to claiming of expenses for business travel;
 - Members should use their reasonable endeavours to attend all Board meetings; and
 - acceptance of positions following employment and/or engagement by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna can give rise to the potential for conflicts of interest and to confidentiality concerns. The members of An Chomhairle should, therefore, in a manner most effective to it, deal with the issue of post resignation/retirement employment, appointment and/or consultancy of its members and officers by the private sector and should ensure that any procedures that it may have put in place in this regard are monitored and enforced.
- ***Loyalty***
 - acknowledge the responsibility to be loyal to An Chomhairle and fully committed to all its activities and
 - acknowledge the duty of all members to conform to highest standards of business ethics.
- ***Fairness***
 - compliance with employment equality and equal status legislation;
 - commitment to fairness in all business dealings and
 - value stakeholders and treat all stakeholders equally.
- ***Work/External Environment***
 - place highest priority on promoting and preserving the health and safety of the officers;
 - ensure that community concerns are fully considered and
 - minimise any detrimental impact of the operations on the environment as far as is practicable within the terms of An Chomhairle.
- ***Responsibility***
 - circulation of this Code of Conduct and a policy document on disclosure of interests to all members for their retention;
 - all members to acknowledge receipt and understanding of the documents issued to them under the terms of the Ethics of Public Office Acts 1995 and 2001
- ***Review***
 - The members Of An Chomhairle Leabharlanna commit to review the Code of Conduct as appropriate.

The code was adopted by An Chomhairle at its meeting of 22nd February 2005