

# **Code of Conduct for NHS Managers**

As an NHS manager you must

- make the care and safety of patients your first concern and act quickly to protect patients from risk.
- respect the public, patients, relatives, carers, NHS staff and partners in other agencies.
- be honest and act with integrity.
- accept accountability for your own work, the performance of those you manage and of your own organisation.
- demonstrate your commitment to team working by co-operating with all your colleagues in the NHS and in the wider community.

NHS managers must live out the Code of Conduct in every aspect of their work, their actions must demonstrate their commitment to the code.

1. NHS managers must make the care and safety of patients their first concern and act quickly to protect patients from risk. They must:
  - respect and protect patient confidentiality.
  - use resources in the best interests of the public and patients.
  - put the interests of the service before their own interests.
  
2. NHS managers must respect (ie treat with consideration and show esteem to) the public, patients, relatives, carers, NHS staff and partners in other agencies ensuring that no one is discriminated against on grounds of lifestyle, culture, beliefs, race, colour, gender, sexuality, age or social and economic status and that:
  - the public are treated with respect, taken seriously, well informed and able to influence service provision.
  - patients in addition to being treated with respect as members of the public are informed about and involved in their own care, their experience is valued and they are involved in decisions.
  - relatives and carers in addition to being treated with respect as members of the public are, with the consent of patients, involved in the care of their relatives and the people they care for, their experience is valued and they are involved in decisions about the patient's care.
  - NHS staff in addition to being treated with respect as members of the public are valued as colleagues, well informed about the management of the NHS, given every opportunity to participate in decision making and have their ideas and aspirations taken seriously. NHS managers have an obligation to ensure that staff are encouraged to maintain and improve their knowledge and skills and fulfil their potential. NHS staff should be enabled to achieve a reasonable work life balance.
  - partners in other agencies in addition to being treated with respect as members of the public are valued for their contribution to improving health and health services and have their ideas and aspirations taken seriously.
  
3. NHS managers must be honest (ie truthful and free from fraud) act with integrity and will ensure that:
  - they are at all times objective, impartial and act without favour.

- they live by high personal standards in their own use and acceptance of NHS resources including their remuneration.
  - the best interests of the public and patients are upheld in decision making and that decisions are not influenced by gifts or inducements.
  - improper use of or claims on NHS resources are pursued regardless of the seniority or status of the individual.
  - information is presented and used honestly even when this adversely reflects on their own performance or the performance of their organisation.
  - judgements about colleagues (including appraisals and references) are consistent and fair and include all information which has a bearing on a colleague's competence, performance, eligibility and conduct.
4. NHS managers must accept accountability (ie answering as one responsible) for their own work, the performance of those they manage and of their organisation ensuring that they demonstrate their accountability.
- to the public and their representatives by explaining and justifying the use of resources and the performance of the NHS.
  - to patients, relatives and carers by answering questions and complaints in a manner that accepts responsibility for the individual and collective patients' experience, and gives a full explanation of what has happened and of what will be done to deal with poor performance, ensure patient safety and improve service delivery.
  - to NHS staff and partners in other agencies by explaining and justifying decisions on the use of resources and responding in an open manner to suggestions for improving performance, the use of resources and service delivery.
  - to Parliament, Ministers and the Department of Health by explaining and justifying the use of resources and the performance of the local NHS in the implementation of national policy and the delivery of targets.
5. NHS managers must demonstrate their commitment to team working by co-operating (e working together) with all their colleagues in the NHS and in the wider community creating an environment in which:
- teams of front line staff are empowered to work together in the best interests of patients.

- leadership is encouraged and developed at all levels and in all staff groups.
  - the NHS plays its full part in community development and regeneration.
6. Breaches of the Code of Conduct should be investigated fairly. When things go wrong it is right that individuals must be held to account for their actions - in particular if there is evidence of gross negligence, recklessness or criminal behaviour. However in some cases the causes of serious failure stretch far beyond the actions of the individuals immediately involved. Activity to learn from and prevent breaches of the Code needs to address their wider causes.
7. The Code of Conduct is about how managers should behave. NHS managers have the right to be:
- treated with respect.
  - judged consistently and fairly.
  - encouraged to maintain and improve their knowledge and skills and fulfil their potential.
8. NHS managers are subject to the Nolan principles on Conduct in Public Life, to the Corporate Governance Codes of Conduct and Accountability, the Standards of Business Conduct and the Code of Practice on Openness in the NHS. The Code of Conduct for NHS Managers should be observed in this wider context.