

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this code is to provide a clear framework within which Board members, employees, volunteers and any third party service provider of the Great North Air Ambulance and Subsidiary Company are expected to conduct themselves. *Any reference to the charity and or The Great North Air Ambulance Service throughout this document also refers to the subsidiary company.*

The Great North Air Ambulance seeks to promote a culture that encourages candour, openness and honesty at all levels of the charity.

We are committed to delivering a high standard of service to anyone who engages with any aspect of our work and all employees, trustees, volunteers and contractors working on behalf of GNAAS are required to behave in an appropriate and professional manner.

PRINCIPLES

Individuals are expected to have regard for the impact of their personal behaviour on the charity colleagues, service users, customers, the environment and our community.

The charity receives a substantial income from public sources, organisations, charitable trusts etc. It is essential that all these stakeholders can have confidence that the organisation maintains the highest standards of conduct in financial matters and seeks to maintain high standards of probity and ethical behaviour.

Individuals owe a duty of loyalty to the organisation. Individuals are expected to perform their duties on behalf of the charity faithfully, diligently and to the best of their abilities.

This code covers some of the most important issues relating to personal conduct, and gives a framework of standards and behaviour guidelines, but it is not intended to be exhaustive.

STANDARDS OF PERSONAL BEHAVIOUR

Accountability

You are required to:

- Act with honesty and integrity and in accordance with any professional standards, governing laws and legislation that apply to the post you hold and/or the responsibilities you perform for, or on behalf of the Great North Air Ambulance Service.
- Comply with any training provided to you by the Great North Air Ambulance Service, and where relevant your professional body, in connection with those responsibilities.
- Adhere to the policies and procedures of the Great North Air Ambulance Service.
- Take responsibility for your actions, decisions and behaviour, and follow your reporting lines to facilitate the effective resolution of problems.

Duty of Care

As an employer GNAAS has a duty of care to its employees, volunteers and contractors which means that they shall take all steps that are reasonably possible to ensure their health, safety, and wellbeing.

Legally employers must abide by relevant health and safety and employment law, as well as the common law duty of care.

Duty of Candour

Candour is defined as “The volunteering of all relevant information to persons who have or may have been harmed by the provision of services, whether or not the information has been requested and whether or not a complaint or a report about that provisions has been made”

The obligations associated with the statutory duty of candour are contained in regulation 20 of The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014.

The statutory duty applies to organisations, not individuals, though it is expected that an organisation’s staff cooperate with it to ensure the obligation is met.

Conflict of Interest

Conflict of interest arises when a person participates in a decision about a matter which may benefit or be seen to benefit that person. In all such cases it is important that decisions are taken in a fair and balanced way that can withstand external scrutiny. Conflicts of interest should be identified and declared so that individuals are not involved in decisions where their actions could be seen as biased. [\(See Conflict of Interest policy\)](#)

Delegated Authority

All individuals who have been delegated authority must not act outside or exceed their delegation. [\(See Policy for delegated authority and scheme of delegation\)](#)

Equal and Diversity

One of the charities core values is the promotion of inclusivity and valuing diversity’ and we seek to encourage this in the makeup of our employees, volunteers and contractors. The organisation seeks to ensure that the work environment for individuals is supportive, and one where individual respect is shown to all. All individuals, regardless of their gender, race, ethnic background, culture, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, age, religion, socio-economic status or any other factor will be supported and encouraged to perform to their potential. [\(See Equal Opportunities policy\)](#)

Harassment and bullying

Personal harassment/bullying takes many forms but whatever form it takes personal harassment is always serious and is totally unacceptable.

We deplore all forms of personal harassment and seek to ensure that the working environment is sympathetic to all our employees, volunteers and contractors.

The charity will take action against inappropriate behaviour which shows lack of respect for others or which leads people to feel threatened. [\(See Personal Bullying and Harassment Policy\)](#)

Health and safety

The charity places a high priority on providing a safe working environment and will act positively to minimise the incidence of all workplace risks as required by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and other associated legislation. All activities should be carried out with the highest regard for the

health and safety of employees, visitors and the public. Our aim is excellence in health and safety, by means of continuous improvement of standards, and the comprehensive use of risk assessments so as to systematically remove the causes of accidents/incidents and ill-health. This, together with more specific aims and objectives, reflects the charity's commitment to promote individuals wellbeing. Employees, volunteers and contractors have a duty to take care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions and must co-operate with GNAAS to help meet their legal requirements. **(See Health and Safety Policy)**

Performance and Supervision

GNAAS expects individuals to follow all reasonable rules and instructions given by those supervising or managing their activities and work areas.

The organisation does not undertake an annual appraisal process, but instead uses an on-going cycle of 1:1 meetings between line managers and each member of their team.

All individuals are expected to maintain satisfactory standards of performance in line with their contracts and agreements.

The volunteer co-ordinator/mentor will hold regular support and supervisions sessions with all volunteers in group meetings or alternatively on a 1-1 basis. **(See 1:1 guidance notes)**

The charity expects trustees to follow the charity's code of governance and to act in line with the legislative requirements placed upon them. The chair of the board undertakes an annual appraisal session with all board members.

Conduct outside work

All employees, contractors, volunteers and trustees of the charity are required to conduct themselves in a professional manner and to ensure that their actions do not result in a negative impact on the organisation or bring the name of the charity into disrepute. The organisation does not seek to dictate how individuals conduct themselves in their personal lives. However, unlawful, anti-social or other conduct by individuals which may jeopardise the charity's reputation or position will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure (for employees) or other relevant process for non- employees.

Use of Social Media

Any issues or material relating to GNAAS that could adversely affect the charity must not be placed on a social networking site. This means that work related matters must not be placed on any such site at any time either during or outside of working hours and includes access via any computer equipment or mobile device. **(See Social Media Policy)**

Statements to the Media

Any statements to newspapers, radio television etc. in relation to our business will be given by the Head of Media and Communication under the direction of the CEO/ Directors

Access to confidential information

All information that has been acquired by you acting as an employee, trustee, volunteer or contactor of the charity both during and any time after termination, relating particularly to that of the charity, or that of other persons or bodies with whom we have dealings is to be kept confidential, except as required by law or in the proper course of their duties.

Any breach of confidentiality will be taken seriously and may result in action against any individual including disciplinary action or notification to the relevant authority.

Data protection

The charity holds and processes information about employees, trustees, volunteers, contractors and other data subjects for administrative and commercial purposes. When handling such information, the charity, and all individuals who process or use any personal information, must comply with the Data Protection Principles which are set out in the Data Protection Act 1998. (See **Data Protection Policy**)

Bribery/Gifts

Bribery is a criminal offence. The Charity prohibits any form of bribery. We require compliance, from everyone connected with our business, with the highest ethical standards and anti-bribery and corruption laws applicable. Integrity and transparency are of utmost importance to us and we have a zero tolerance attitude towards corrupt activities of any kind, whether committed by employees or by third parties acting for or on behalf of the Charity.

It is prohibited, directly or indirectly, for any employee or person working on our behalf to offer, give, request or accept any bribe i.e. gift, loan, payment, reward or advantage, either in cash or any other form of inducement, to or from any person or Company in order to gain commercial, contractual or regulatory advantage for the Charity, or in order to gain any personal advantage for an individual or anyone connected with the individual in a way that is unethical.

Raising matters of concern

The Great North Air Ambulance Service is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect employees, volunteers, and contractors, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the charities work to raise their concerns. Individuals should usually raise their concerns through their line management structure. Where an individual has a concern regarding breaches of the law or propriety by the charity this should normally be raised through the Chief Executive or the Chair of Trustees. (See **Whistle Blowing Policy**)

Breaches of this code

This code of conduct has been drawn up to provide a source of guidance to the charity's employees, volunteers, trustees and contractors. It is not a contractual document and can be amended at any time by the charity. All individuals must comply with both the provisions of this code and the charity's policies and procedures, breaches of which will be taken seriously and may result in action against the individual, including disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Please refer to both the Staff handbook, Policies and Procedures Manuals and Sharepoint for further information and guidance.