



# Forum code of conduct

## *Incorporating existing policies, procedures and guidance*

Owner	Chief Operating Officer
Approved by (role) and date	Board of Trustees – 29 October 2018

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## 1. Introduction

This document pulls together a number of our policies that inform our organisational working practices. It is aimed to serve as a reference guide to how Forum aspires to live by our values and to what Forum sets as expected standards behaviours at work, while the policies, procedures and guidance governing those behaviours are or, if these are still under development, will be detailed in respective policy documents.

This guidance document will also be used as part of our compliance suite of policies in response to tightened regulations around safeguarding and responsible behaviours.

## 2. Who is this code of conduct for?

We work with a large number of third party consultants, suppliers and partners, as well as persons closely affiliated to our work – our affiliates, volunteers and interns. Therefore, we expect that all our paid staff and parties associated with our work adhere to our code of conduct. Trustees also agree to be bound by this code of conduct as the persons responsible for Forum's governance.

## 3. Our culture and way of working

As a values-based organisation at the forefront of addressing complex global challenges we play a key role in driving systemic change through transformational collaborations, partnerships and building a global community of pioneers and change makers. To achieve systemic change we must lead by example in how we do things and how we work with and learn from each other, our communities, and partners rather than just comply with minimum requirements.

Forum's values<sup>1</sup> underpin the way in which we conduct ourselves in the course of our work. At Forum, we aspire to foster positive team spirit and to provide the best possible working environment for all staff, volunteers and associated persons working with us, one that is based on highest standards of ethics, honesty, and integrity, collaboration and respect, openness and transparency, and inclusion and empathy.

All members of staff play a critical role to help ensure we do this consistently and effectively. We expect you to:

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<sup>1</sup> Statement of our values are provided in Appendix and on our website - <https://www.forumforthefuture.org/our-values>

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- Work with the senior management team (SMT) and trustees to ensure that we comply with our governance responsibilities, charity law, and any other relevant legislation or regulations
- Act in line with our values and value diversity and respect the contribution of each individual
- Understand Forum's objectives and your own role in helping us to achieve these
- Support the SMT and trustees in safeguarding the good name and values of the organisation
- Maintain a safe and trusted environment which safeguards anyone who comes into contact with our organisation including staff, volunteers and any beneficiaries with whom we may work now or in the future
- Maintain the working environment free from unacceptable and inappropriate behaviour and behave in a respectful way towards colleagues, partners and other people with whom you work or come across in the course of work
- Professionally, positively and proactively represent Forum at functions and meetings as required
- Declare any actual or perceived conflict of interest while carrying out your duties
- Uphold the organisation's commitment to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults whom you may come across in the course of your work

Managers have additional responsibility for implementing organisational policies, modelling positive behaviour and dealing fairly, timely and respectfully with issues that undermine our culture.

We should all be committed to creating added value at Forum, but we can only be successful over the long term if we treat each other with respect and consideration in our day-to-day work. You, too, can make a difference.

## 4. How to raise concerns

Forum encourages the culture of openness and transparency and has put in place a number of procedures that encourage and enable you to raise concerns about employment practices without fear of being intimidated or victimised for doing so.

Unlawful discrimination, bullying or harassment will not be tolerated. **The Prevention of Harassment and Bullying at work** and **Grievance policies** set out how to raise concerns both informally and formally, how concerns will be investigated and support for individuals raising a concern as well as for

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staff who are the subject of a complaint. You will not suffer any negative treatment for giving constructive criticism or raising a genuine grievance.

Forum's **Whistleblowing Policy** provides guidance on confidential reporting of concerns about wrongdoing in the workplace.

Forum has a clear policy on **IT and social media usage**<sup>2</sup> forbidding inappropriate use of materials which includes sexually explicit material, obscene remarks and abusive or discriminatory messages.

**Safeguarding policy** sets out Forum's commitment to preventing, reducing and reporting any harm to children and vulnerable adults when they are in contact with Forum staff, volunteers, affiliates or Trustees and how to report concerns.

## 5. Safeguarding

Forum is a charity that does not directly work with or provide services to children or vulnerable adults. However, we believe in taking a systems change approach and make a broader inclusion of safeguarding in relation to protecting all vulnerable groups as well as staff and volunteers from inappropriate behaviour.

Our **Safeguarding policy** aims to promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults across all of Forum's work, in whatever setting it may take place, as well as to provide assurance to our partners and funders that Forum takes steps to identify and manage risks to keep these vulnerable groups safe.

Additionally, we hold every individual and partner company responsible for treating children or vulnerable adults with respect and dignity in adherence with best practice in safeguarding. This includes partners who through our partnership work or on our behalf may from time to time provide services to children or vulnerable adults. Should we initiate any partnership to provide such services, we will take necessary steps to satisfy ourselves that our partners have in place or adopt best practice safeguarding policy.

## 6. Prevention of harassment and bullying

At Forum, we aim to provide the best possible working environment for all staff, volunteers and associated persons working with us, one that is based on collaboration and respect.

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<sup>2</sup> This will be reconfirmed in reviewing the relevant policies

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Forum's commitment to anti-harassment and anti-bullying is stated in the **Prevention of Harassment and Bullying policy**.

We expect all staff, volunteers, and other associated persons to recognise that each individual has the right to the working environment which encourages respectful considerate dignified and non-sexualised working relationships. This expectation extends to non-workplace environments where colleagues come together on work matters or to socialise. It is the duty of every one of us to treat each other people with dignity and respect. We oppose to harassment and bullying in any form. Every one of us is responsible for our own behaviour in this regard. Any threatening, aggressive or bullying behaviour, harassment or unwanted sexual attention, language or behaviour may result in disciplinary action under Forum's disciplinary procedure.

We encourage you to raise any concerns in this area to your line manager or to the HR Manager or to COO. Alternatively you may follow the **Whistleblowing policy**.

## 7. Participation in work-related social events

As a token of appreciation for the work that staff and volunteers do for the organisation, and to foster team spirit and good working relationships, Forum aims to offer you the opportunity to attend social events from time to time. Forum may also run work-related social events to which affiliates, business partners, as well as staff, are invited.

Although such social events usually take place away from the workplace and outside of normal working hours, Forum's code of conduct applies to such events. While management does not wish to put a dampener on people's enjoyment of social events, it is in everyone's interests to impose certain rules of conduct for the protection and comfort of all. Specifically, regardless of whether you are a paid member of staff or a volunteer attending work-related social events, you must adhere to the following rules and principles:

- Consume alcohol only in moderation at work-related social events, irrespective of whether the organisation provides or pays for the drinks.
- It is strictly forbidden for any staff or volunteer to use illegal drugs, including cannabis, at any work-related social event whether on the organisation's premises or not.
- Forum's policy on anti-harassment/bullying applies to work-related social events.
- You should not say or do anything at a work-related social event that could offend, intimidate, embarrass or upset any other person, whether as a joke or not.

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- Swearing and intemperate language are as unacceptable at work-related social events as they are at the office.
- You must not behave in any way at any work-related social event that could bring Forum's name into ill repute.

If you are found to have breached any of the above rules, you may be liable for disciplinary action in line with Forum's procedures, up to and including summary dismissal.

The above rules are in place for the benefit of all members of staff and to ensure that everyone can enjoy work-related social events in an atmosphere of conviviality without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable by another employee's conduct.

## 8. Relationships at work and professional boundaries

As a values-based organisation, we encourage all our staff and volunteers to be friendly towards each other and our partners and work as a team. However, it is important that you do not cross professional boundaries. You should maintain professionalism at all times and under no circumstances should become overfamiliar with business partners, volunteers, affiliates or employee colleagues in a way that may be seen to disrupt the operations or reputation of the business.

Managers and senior employees should think very carefully before dating a more junior person, or before putting oneself in any situation where there may be a real or perceived coercion. Whether your interest is welcome or not, you can end up being accused of harassment, and this can have a severe negative impact on your career and the organisation's reputation. We encourage you to declare any personal relationships arising at work to your line manager or to the HR Manager or to the COO who will take a view on whether there could be any conflict of interest and how to avoid or minimise it.

You should exercise judgement to ensure that your dealings with partners are not open to abuse, coercion, misrepresentation or exploitation on both sides. If at any point you feel unclear about where professional boundaries lie, you should direct your concern to your line manager. If you are found to have acted unprofessionally or inappropriately with colleagues, business partners, affiliates or volunteers, you may be liable for disciplinary action in line with Forum's procedures.

## 9. Conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest is a situation where the personal interest of a person is likely to influence or appear to influence any aspect of his/her duties as an employee of Forum. A conflict of interest may be perceived, potential or actual, and that all such scenarios fall within the scope of this guidance.

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Therefore, you should not, directly or indirectly, engage in, or have any interest, financial or otherwise, in any other business enterprise or activity that interferes or is likely to interfere with your independent exercise of judgement in Forum's best interest.

Situations giving rise to actual or perceived conflicts of interest are many and varied. It is not possible to define all circumstances which may give rise to a conflict of interest, but the following examples are identified to provide some guidance (this list is not exhaustive):

- The use of the Forum's facilities to pursue business, commercial or consulting activities of a personal nature which are detrimental to the business of Forum.
- Conducting business, employment or an activity outside of Forum which adversely affects your ability to perform your duties, or affects your actual performance for Forum.
- Using your position within Forum to influence or obtain directly or indirectly enhancement or gain of career, employment, promotion, training or other financial or non-financial benefit or gain for yourself or a partner, spouse, relative or friend.
- Where you (or your partner, spouse, relative or close family friend) are a party to a contract, or are involved/has a financial interest in a transaction with Forum for goods, services, funding or the like.
- Where you are involved in – or seek to establish – a charity or an organisation with similar objectives to those of Forum.
- As Forum is a non-party-political organisation and it is important for its future that this should remain the case. Therefore any political activity in which you engage and which is or could be perceived by Forum as representing a conflict of interest with your employment with Forum must be disclosed in advance to your line manager.

To avoid possible personal conflict or conflicts of interest, Forum does not allow the recruitment of close relatives in circumstances where one family member would be responsible for managing, supervising, auditing or authorising the work, pay or cash control of the other.

Other situations may create the appearance of a conflict, or present a duality of interests in connection with a person who has influence over the activities or finances of Forum. Should you be in any doubt as to whether an activity involves a conflict or you feel there is a potential conflict of interest in the course of your work, please discuss with your line manager or to the HR Manager or to the COO in the first instance so that a decision can be made as to what course of action the organisation or individual

should take so that the best interests of Forum are not compromised by the personal interests of employees.

## 10. External activities

You should not engage in activities outside of work that would damage the good name of Forum, or the interests of those who use our services. This includes online activities via social media platforms. Please see our IT and Social media usage policy<sup>3</sup> for further guidance on this matter.

We recognise the value to both you and to Forum of outside appointments. However, you should devote your whole working time to your contracted position with Forum, except where we have authorised this.

Forum also has the responsibility to ensure that we comply with the Working Time Regulations in the UK (and other equivalent legislation in India, Singapore and the US) in respect of weekly working hours. You should not take a second job without the express permission of the Chief Operating Officer or the Chief Executive. Where this is unlikely to affect your due diligence to the primary full-time role with us, permission is more likely to be given. Some second jobs could present a conflict of interest, or have a negative impact on your ability to fulfil your role to the best of your ability. In this case we are likely to withhold permission.

## 11. Bribery and other corrupt behaviour

We are committed to promoting and maintaining the highest level of ethical standards in relation to all of our business activities. Our reputation for maintaining lawful business practices is of paramount importance and the Forum's **Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption Policy** is designed to preserve these values. In line with the Bribery Act (2010) and the US Foreign & Corrupt Practices Act, Forum has a zero tolerance policy towards bribery and corruption and is committed to acting fairly and with integrity in all of its business dealings and relationships and implementing and enforcing effective systems to counter bribery.

Forum prohibits employees or associated persons from engaging in any form of corruption, including offering, promising, giving, soliciting or accepting any bribe or other forms of related malpractice. All employees or associated persons are required to avoid any activities that might lead to, or suggest, a conflict of interest with the business of the organisation.

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<sup>3</sup> This will be reviewed to ensure it's currently in line with the developments in the field.



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If you bribe (or attempt to bribe) another person, intending either to obtain or retain business for Forum, or to obtain or retain an advantage in the conduct of Forum's business this will be considered gross misconduct. Similarly, accepting or allowing another person to accept a bribe will be considered gross misconduct. Please refer to the **Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption policy** for further details.

If you suspect or have a reasonable belief to suspect bribery or corruption in the workplace you must report this. If you have concerns about doing so, you should follow the **Whistleblowing policy**.

## 12. Confidentiality and data protection

During the course of your employment, you may find yourself in possession of sensitive information, the disclosure of which could be construed as a breach of confidentiality. This includes, but is not limited to, personal information relating to our business partners and to other Forum staff members or external contacts. It is a condition of your employment that you have a duty of confidentiality to Forum, and you must not discuss any sensitive or confidential matter whatsoever with any outside organisation, including the media and on social media platforms. You should work within the rules of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Forum's **Data Protection policy** when handling personal information. Any such breach of confidentiality would be deemed as gross misconduct except as otherwise provided or as permitted by any current legislation (e.g. the UK Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998) and could lead to your dismissal.

Many of our partners have asked us to sign specific clauses around confidentiality and if working with one of these you should familiarise yourself with the individual requirements.

Personal data on employees is held in accordance with the provisions of Forum's **Data Protection policy and procedures and the Privacy statement**. You are required to familiarise yourself with the provisions of this policy in full.

## 13. Finance

You are required to follow any financial procedures put in place to control all areas of expenditure, recording time and the handling of money. All financial transactions must be properly authorised by the budget holder and be properly recorded. For further details on Forum's monetary controls, your obligations as an employee and all associated processes please refer to **Expenses policy**.

## 14. Health and safety

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Forum has certain legal responsibilities as an employer to preserve, in so far as reasonably practicable, the safety and health of its employees, and of other people who may be affected by its activities.

You should take all reasonable steps to safeguard your own health and safety and that of any other person who may be affected by your actions at work. You must co-operate with Forum to ensure a healthy and safe working environment including observing at all times published safety and fire rules and procedures. You must report to management and enter all accidents into the Accident Book, no matter how small the incident is. Further information about health and safety at work is detailed in the **Health and Safety policy and procedure**.

If you fail to perform your duties under health and safety legislation, you will be liable to disciplinary action under the Forum's disciplinary procedure.

## 15. Monitoring of compliance

The procedures for monitoring of and compliance with the underlying policies is included within those individual policies.

## 16. Procedure and timing for the review of this code

This code of conduct will be reviewed every year to ensure it reflects the latest versions of all the supporting policies. A fuller review as to whether other sections should be included will be undertaken as a minimum every two years. Comments or suggestions on how this code is operating should be sent to the HR Manager.

Version	Date	Changes	Reason	Author
1.1	29/10/2018	New		Natalya de Lance-Holmes
1.2.	27/09/2019	Minor amendments	Remove of footnote (p.2) reference to draft values as these confirmed	Natalya de Lance-Holmes
1.2.	27/09/2019	Minor amendments	Removal of footnote (p.4) reference to renaming of policy Dignity at Work to Prevention of Harassment and Bullying at Work	Natalya de Lance-Holmes

1.2.	27/09/2019	Minor amendments	Appendix A – Forum values – confirmed and stated values	Natalya de Lance-Holmes
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## 17. Appendix A – Forum values

Our values make us who we are. They are both a reflection of our staff as well as an aspiration to strive towards. Forum for the Futures values are:

### **Courageous**

We rise to the urgency and scale of the sustainability challenges we face today.

### **Adaptive**

We are constantly sensing the world around us and changing for maximum impact

### **Empathetic**

We understand ourselves as connected to others and embedded in wider ecosystems.

### **Inquisitive**

We use inquiry and learning to diagnose and solve complex challenges.

### **Playful**

This is critical to learning, creativity, better project outcomes and relationships.

### **Respectful**

We build strong, trust-based relationships that open up the space for constructive action.

## **18. Appendix B – Policies referred to in this Code of Conduct**

The following policies have been referred to in this Code of Conduct and can be found on our shared P drive in Policies folder or provided on request.

- Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption policy
- Data Protection policy and procedures
- Disciplinary policy
- Expenses policy
- Grievance policy
- Health and Safety policy and procedure
- IT and social media usage policy
- Prevention of Harassment and Bullying policy
- Privacy statement
- Safeguarding policy
- Whistleblowing policy