

Employee Code of Conduct

December 2025

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Code of Conduct outlines the standards, values and expectations for all Bury Council employees. It ensures that all staff operate with honesty, transparency, impartiality and respect for the public, elected members, partners and colleagues. It reflects best practice, statutory guidance and the values of public service.
- 1.2 Employees are expected to conduct themselves with integrity, impartiality and professionalism at all times. This Code forms part of employees' contractual terms and conditions and breaches may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
- 1.3 Employees must report to their immediate supervisor, or the Chief Officer responsible for HR, any impropriety or breach of procedure.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This Code applies to all individuals working on behalf of Bury Council, including permanent and temporary employees, agency workers, and volunteers. The only exception is employees based in locally managed schools, where separate governance and conduct arrangements apply.

3. Core Principles

- 3.1 As employees of Bury Council, we are expected to uphold and model the highest standards of ethical behaviour in all aspects of our work. These standards are not just aspirational; they are essential to maintaining the trust and confidence of the public we serve. Our conduct must reflect the values of local government and support the delivery of inclusive, transparent and accountable services.

The foundation of these expectations lies in the Seven Principles of Public Life, also known as the Nolan Principles. All employees of Bury Council must act in accordance with these principles:

1. Selflessness – Employees should act solely in the public interest. Employees' decisions and actions must benefit the community, not themselves or those they are personally connected to.

2. Integrity – Employees must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try to inappropriately influence their work. Do not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or friends.

3. Objectivity – Employees must act and make decisions impartially, fairly and on merit. This means using evidence, policies and procedures to guide their judgement, especially when dealing with appointments, procurement, or grant-making.

4. Accountability – Employees are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions. They must be prepared to submit themselves to scrutiny necessary to ensure this accountability.

5. Openness – Employees must act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for doing so.

6. Honesty – Employees must be truthful and declare any private interests that relate to their public duties. Resolve any conflicts of interest in a way that protects the public interest.

7. Leadership – Employees must exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. Employees should actively promote and robustly support these principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Bury Council expects all staff to live these principles through everyday conduct. They form the ethical foundation that underpins our decision-making and the quality of the services we deliver to residents and communities.

4. Political Neutrality

- 4.1 Employees represent the authority as a whole. Therefore, they must act impartially in supporting all councillors, not just those of the controlling group, and ensure the individual rights of all councillors are respected.
- 4.2 Subject to the authority's conventions, employees may also be required to advise political groups. They must do so in ways which do not compromise their political neutrality.
- 4.3 Employees, whether or not politically restricted, must follow every lawful expressed policy of the authority and must not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work.
- 4.4 Should the authority decide to appoint political assistants in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 these employees would be exempt from the standards set in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.3.

5. Disclosure of Information

- 5.1 Bury Council is committed to making its decision-making processes open, transparent, and accountable. To meet legal obligations, the Council must

share certain types of information with Elected Members, auditors, government departments, service users, and the public. Additionally, where appropriate, the Council may choose to share other information to further support transparency and public trust.

- 5.2 Employees must understand which information is publicly accessible and which is confidential, and act accordingly. If employees are unsure about the status of any information, employees should seek guidance from their line manager or supervisor.
- 5.3 No employee shall communicate to the public the proceedings of any 'closed' Committee or meeting associated with the business of any Committee, nor the content of any document relating to the authority, unless required by law or expressly authorised by the Chief Executive to do so. Employees making unauthorised communications shall render themselves liable to disciplinary action.
- 5.4 All information accessed in the course of your duties must be treated with the appropriate level of confidentiality. Personal information relating to individuals must not be disclosed unless:
 - The individual has given explicit consent, or
 - Disclosure is required or permitted by law.

Employees must comply with Bury Council's policies on confidentiality, information governance, and information security. It is their responsibility to understand and follow these procedures.

Information should only be shared in response to formal requests. While Freedom of Information (FOI) requests must be made in writing, Subject Access Requests (SARs) can be made verbally. Employees must ensure they handle all requests appropriately and in line with Council policies and relevant legislation.

- 5.5 Employees must not disclose any information that is considered commercially sensitive. This includes information relating to contracts, tenders, or business dealings. Employees must follow all Council policies and procedures regarding the handling of such information, particularly in relation to competitive tendering and procurement processes.
- 5.6 Under no circumstances should employees use information obtained through their role at Bury Council for personal gain or to benefit others with whom they have a personal or financial relationship.
- 5.7 must not use any information obtained during their employment for personal gain or to benefit others. This includes refraining from sharing such information with individuals who might misuse it. If an employee receives personal information from a councillor - such as details about their marital or domestic arrangements - that is not related to Council business, this information must be treated as sensitive personal data. It should not be

disclosed without the councillor's explicit consent, unless required or permitted by law.

6. Relationships

- 6.1 **Councillors** - Employees are accountable to the authority through its senior managers. Many provide advice to councillors and senior managers, and all are responsible for delivering the Council's work. Mutual respect between employees and councillors is essential for effective local government.

Close personal relationships between employees and individual councillors should be avoided, as they may compromise - or appear to compromise - an employee's ability to act impartially. This can undermine trust and confidence in the integrity of the Council's decision-making.

- 6.2 **The Local Community and Service Users** - Employees should always remember their responsibilities to the community they serve and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals within that community as defined by the policies of the authority.

- 6.3 **Contractors** - Employees must declare any business or personal relationships with external contractors or potential contractors. These declarations should be made to their immediate supervisor and reported to both the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Officer responsible for HR. All such declarations will be recorded in an electronic register, overseen by the Chief Executive, and made available for inspection by Members of the Council.

Contracts and orders must be awarded fairly, based on merit and through open competition. Employees must not show preferential treatment to businesses run by friends, partners, relatives, or other close associates. Likewise, no part of the local community should be unfairly disadvantaged in the tendering process.

These requirements form part of the Council's wider approach to declarations of interest. Employees must also report any relevant relationships between suppliers or contractors and their close family members, to ensure transparency and prevent conflicts of interest.

Employees who engage or supervise contractors or have any other official relationship with contractors and have previously had or currently have a relationship in a private or domestic capacity with contractors, should declare that relationship to their immediate supervisor and recorded in the designated electronic register for that purpose by the Chief Executive

7. Additional Employment

- 7.1 Employees must be aware of their contractual obligations and ensure that any additional employment or business activity does not conflict with the interests of Bury Council. While the Council does not seek to unreasonably restrict outside employment, any secondary work must not:
- Interfere with employees' ability to perform their Council duties effectively,
 - Create a conflict of interest, or
 - Bring the Council into disrepute.

A conflict of interest arises when an employee's personal, financial, or professional interests could compromise - or be perceived to compromise - their impartiality or ability to act in the best interests of the Council. Examples include:

- Working for an organisation that provides services to or competes with the Council.
- Holding financial interests (e.g., shares or ownership) in businesses that contract with the Council.
- Accepting roles that could influence impartial decision-making, procurement, or grant allocation.
- Undertaking work that uses confidential Council information for personal gain.
- Engaging in outside employment that overlaps with Council responsibilities or creates reputational risk

If employees are unsure whether outside work may present a conflict, they should discuss the matter with their line manager.

- 7.2 In accordance with [Local Conditions of Service – Section 7](#), employees in posts graded above NJC Grade 9 (or equivalent) are required to devote their full-time service to the Council. These employees must declare any additional employment and obtain authorisation before undertaking such work.
- 7.3 The Council encourages all employees, regardless of grade or role, to declare any additional working hours undertaken outside of their employment with the organisation. This includes any second jobs or freelance work. Providing this information is essential to ensure compliance with the Working Time Regulations and to support the Council's duty of care under health and safety legislation. If an employee's total working hours exceed 48 hours per week, the Council reserves the right to request a reduction in hours to safeguard the employee's health and wellbeing.

8. Declaration of Intent – Consultation

- 8.1 The Council recognises the importance of effective consultation with trade unions in addressing significant matters that impact employees and the

efficient delivery of public services. It acknowledges that joint consultation fosters positive industrial relations, encourages union cooperation, and promotes a collaborative working environment. This approach is essential for making the best use of our human resources and must be embedded within the Council's corporate decision-making processes.

- 8.2 Consultation is already a regular and valued part of the Council's operations. Both Chief Officers and Elected Members are committed to engaging with employees and seeking their views to support successful and sustainable change. Further information regarding this is contained within Appendix A – Consultation Toolkit.
- 8.3 Building on this foundation, the Council is committed to making consultation an integral part of the management process. It is expected that all staff and managers recognise consultation as a fundamental element of good management practice.
- 8.4 Consultation goes beyond simply sharing information. It involves actively seeking the views of trade unions as representatives of the workforce and giving genuine consideration to those views. This requires a willingness from management to delay final decisions where appropriate and to respond constructively to union input.
- 8.5 To strengthen consultation at the departmental level, the Council will:
 - Establish departmental consultative arrangements where they do not currently exist.
 - Place greater emphasis on the quality and outcomes of both formal and informal consultative meetings.
- 8.6 The Council reaffirms its commitment to using the Staff Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) as the appropriate forum for negotiation and consultation on matters affecting multiple departments or involving significant staffing implications.

9. Corruption

- 9.1 Employees must be aware that it is a serious criminal offence for them corruptly to receive or give any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage for doing, or not doing, anything or showing favour, or disfavour, to any person in their official capacity. If employees become subject to a police investigation, arrest, and/or charge with this offence it is for the employee to demonstrate that any such rewards have not been corruptly obtained.
- 9.2 Rewards corruptly obtained will put employees' jobs at risk and are punishable by up to seven years' imprisonment. The Council may seek to recover from individuals (including claiming on pensions).

10. Declarations of Gifts, Hospitality and Conflicts of Interest

- 10.1 The Council is committed to transparency, integrity, and the highest standards of public service. It is essential that all decisions made by the Council are in the public interest and free from undue influence or bias. Employees must act, and be seen to act, in a way that upholds public confidence.
- 10.2 In accordance with Section 117 of the Local Government Act 1972, employees must declare in writing any direct or indirect financial interest they have in any existing or proposed Council contracts. A breach of this requirement constitutes a criminal offence and may result in prosecution and a fine.
- 10.3 Employees are required to declare any:
- Offers of gifts or hospitality
 - Personal interests (financial or non-financial)
 - Relationships or affiliations that may conflict with their role
 - Secondary employment
- 10.4 Declarations must be made using the Council's online declaration form available via the intranet.
- 10.5 The key principles are:
- Employees must not accept gifts, hospitality, or favours that could compromise or be perceived to compromise their impartiality or integrity.
 - All offers, whether accepted or declined must be declared within 5 working days.
 - Failure to declare interests, gifts, or hospitality in line with this policy may result in disciplinary action.

Gifts

- 10.6 The acceptance of gifts by employees from persons who have, or may seek to have, dealings with the Council would be viewed by the public as suspicious and would make the employee concerned and the council extremely vulnerable to criticism.
- 10.7 An employee should, therefore, tactfully refuse any personal gift which is offered to them or a close relative by, or indirectly attributable to any person or body who has, or may have, dealings of any kind whatsoever with the council or, who has applied, or may apply, to the council for any planning or other kind of decision.
- 10.8 When determining whether a conflict of interest exists, employees must consider whether any private or personal interest could reasonably be perceived as compromising, or appearing to compromise, their ability to exercise objective judgment in the performance of their duties.

- 10.9 Gifts should not normally be accepted. The only exceptions are items of trivial or token value, typically up to a maximum of £25.00, such as promotional merchandise (e.g., office stationery, mouse mats) or inexpensive seasonal gifts (e.g., calendars, diaries). These items should be suitable for use or display in the workplace. Alcoholic gifts must always be refused.
- 10.10 Under the provisions of Section 117 of the Local Government Act 1972, employees are forbidden under the colour of their office and employment to accept any fee or reward other than their proper remuneration and any person who contravenes this provision would be liable, on summary conviction, to a fine.
- 10.11 In the event of an employee receiving a gift without warning, which does not fall into any of the exceptions mentioned above, this should immediately be reported to their Head of Service who will be responsible for deciding whether the gift should be returned

Wills

- 10.12 If any employee becomes aware that they have been included as the beneficiary in the will of a client, for whom the council offers or used to offer a service where there is a connection with the employee's work, the employee must inform their Head of Service as soon as possible who will liaise with HR

Hospitality

- 10.13 Employees should only accept offers of hospitality if there is a genuine need to share information or represent the council in the community. Offers to attend purely social or sporting functions should be accepted only when these are part of the life of the community or where the council should be seen to be represented.
- 10.14 When hospitality is declined this should be done courteously but firmly explaining the procedures and standards operating within the council around this.
- 10.15 Hospitality must be authorised and recorded in line with this policy. Employees should be particularly sensitive when accepting hospitality as to its timing in relation to decisions which the council may be taking affecting those providing the hospitality.
- 10.16 Acceptance by employees of hospitality through attendance at relevant conferences and courses is acceptable where it is clear the hospitality is corporate rather than personal, where the council gives consent in advance and where the council is satisfied that any purchasing decisions are not compromised.
- 10.17 Where visits to inspect equipment etc are required, employees should ensure that the council meets the cost of such visits to avoid jeopardising the integrity of subsequent purchasing decisions.

- 10.18 Employees must tactfully refuse offers of hospitality where any suggestion of improper influence would be inferred. Special caution is necessary where hospitality is offered by a person or body having or seeking business with, or a decision from the council, particularly where the offer is to an individual employee.
- 10.19 There should be no cause for concern if the offer is made by another non-commercial public body, for example another Council within Greater Manchester.
- 10.20 Hospitality should only be accepted where it is on a scale appropriate to the circumstances, reasonably incidental to the occasion and not extravagant and where it is apparent that no cause could reasonably arise for adverse criticism about the acceptance of hospitality.

Sponsorship – Giving and Receiving

- 10.21 Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor a local government activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the basic conventions concerning acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply. Particular care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.
- 10.22 Where the Council sponsors an event or service, employees and their partners, spouses, or relatives must not benefit directly from such sponsorship without full disclosure of the interest to their manager. Similarly, where the Council provides support in the community through sponsorship, grant aid, financial assistance, or other means, employees must ensure that impartial advice is given and that no conflict of interest arises.
- If the Council intends to sponsor an event or service, legal advice should be sought, as a formal agreement will likely need to be drafted (e.g., contracts relating to sponsorship). Heads of Service should ensure that appropriate impartial advice is provided in line with circumstances, and consult Legal Services when required.
- 10.23 Employees should disclose any sponsorship arrangement in line with this policy.

Personal interests / Conflict of Interest

- 10.24 Should employees or their close relatives have a personal interest (financial or non-financial including a relationship with contractors of bodies doing business/in receipt of a service/application with the Council) in any matter under consideration by the council or any application to the council where an employee they must declare this to their manager and record it as a potential conflict of interest in accordance with this policy as soon as they become aware of the matter.

- 10.25 Employees must not be directly involved in the processing of any matter or application in which they or any close relative has a personal interest.
- 10.26 Employees must declare in accordance with this policy any membership of an organisation not open to the public without formal membership and commitment of allegiance and which has secrecy rules, membership or conduct

11. Officer Requirement to Declare Related Party Transactions

To ensure transparency and good financial management, Bury Council asks certain employees to complete a Related Party Declaration each year. This is a legal requirement under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and helps with preparing the Council's annual financial accounts according to national rules.

Why this matters

The purpose of the declaration is to identify any relationships or transactions involving employees, their close family, or household members that could influence — or appear to influence — the Council's financial decisions. These are known as related party transactions, and they must be disclosed to ensure our accounts remain fair, transparent, and credible.

Who needs to complete this

Senior officers, including Executive Directors, Directors, and those in positions of financial or operational influence, are required to complete the declaration annually — even if there are no related party interests to report.

What is a 'related party'?

A related party is any individual or organisation that employees, their close family, or household members:

- Control or significantly influence (e.g. own a major shareholding, manage, or hold a key decision-making role); or
- Receive financial benefit from due to a relationship with the Council.

This includes:

- Businesses in which employees or a close relative of an employee have a significant interest (generally considered over 20% ownership or control).
- Voluntary or community organisations employees are involved with that receive Council funding.
- Individuals in an employee's household who work for or receive payments from organisations funded by the Council.

Examples include:

- An employee, or a family member of an employee, owns a company that contracts with the Council.
- Employees are a trustee or committee member of a charity that receives Council grants.

- A member of an employee's household works for a provider commissioned by the Council.

What employees need to do

Each year, relevant employees will be asked to complete a Related Party Declaration form and return it to the Director of Finance. This applies even if the employee has no interests to declare — a nil return is still required.

Employee's responsibilities

- Declare any relevant interests honestly and fully.
- Update their declaration promptly if circumstances change during the year.
- Understand that failing to declare relevant interests could result in a breach of this Code of Conduct and have disciplinary consequences.

By completing this declaration, employees help ensure Bury Council meets its legal duties and maintains public confidence in its financial and ethical standards.

12. Financial Resources and Use of Council Property (Including Intellectual Property)

- 12.1 Bury Council's resources are provided to support the delivery of Council services and the achievement of its strategic objectives. These resources must not be used for personal or private work. employees are expected to take care when using Council property and avoid any misuse, damage, or unauthorised use.
- 12.2 If employees have access to Council assets (including buildings, vehicles, equipment, IT systems, cash, or other property) employees are personally responsible for their proper use and security. Employees must ensure these assets are protected against loss, theft, damage, or misuse. Any incidents involving loss or theft must be reported immediately to the employee's line manager
- 12.3 When using Council services in a personal capacity (e.g. occupying Council property, claiming benefits, or using leisure services), employees are expected to act with integrity and in accordance with the same standards expected of any member of the public.
- 12.4 All employees must comply with Bury Council's Financial Regulations, which are designed to safeguard public funds and ensure the responsible use of financial resources. This includes following correct procedures when placing orders, authorising expenditure, or managing budgets. If an employee is unsure about any financial process, they should seek advice from their line manager or the Finance team.
- 12.5 Any intellectual property or copyrighted material created by an employee in the course of their employment (such as written reports, designs, software,

training materials, or other creative outputs) remains the property of Bury Council. While the Council values employees' contributions, they are not permitted to use, sell, or otherwise exploit this intellectual property without the Council's prior written consent. Unauthorised use may constitute a breach of contract and, in some cases, a criminal offence.

- 12.6 Employees must also respect the intellectual property rights of others, including colleagues, external partners, and third-party organisations. Plagiarism, unauthorised use, or misrepresentation of others' work is strictly prohibited.

13. Separation of Roles During Tendering

- 13.1 Employees involved in the tendering process and dealing with contractors should be clear on the separation of client and contractor roles within the authority. Senior employees who have both a client and contractor responsibility must be aware of the need for accountability and openness and at time discretion and confidentiality.
- 13.2 Employees in contractor or client units must exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with all customers, suppliers, other contractors and sub-contractors, in accordance with any policies and rules determined by the Council, particularly in relation to procurement.
- 13.3 Employees who are privy to confidential information on tenders or costs for either internal or external contractors should not disclose that information to any unauthorised party or organisation.
- 13.4 Employees contemplating a management buyout should, as soon as they have formed a definite intent, inform their immediate supervisor and withdraw from the contract awarding processes.
- 13.5 Employees should ensure that no special favour is shown to current or recent former employees or their partners, close relatives or associates in awarding contracts to businesses run by them or employing them in a senior or relevant managerial capacity.

14. Recruitment and Employment-Related Decisions

- 14.1 Employees involved in recruitment and selection must ensure that all appointments are made strictly on the basis of merit, in line with the principles of fairness, equality, and the ability of the candidate to perform the duties of the post. It is unlawful and against Council policy to make an appointment based on anything other than objective criteria.
- 14.2 To avoid any perception of bias or conflict of interest, employees must not be involved in any part of the recruitment process where the applicant is a relative or someone with whom they have a close personal relationship

outside of work. This includes shortlisting, interviewing, or making final decisions.

- 14.3 Where a senior officer has the authority to appoint staff, they must not appoint a relative to any position without first referring the proposed appointment to the relevant committee for consideration and approval.
- 14.4 Similarly, employees must not be involved in decisions relating to disciplinary matters, promotions, pay adjustments, or performance management for any individual with whom they have a close personal relationship, including relatives or partners. Such involvement could compromise the integrity of the process and lead to allegations of favouritism or unfair treatment.
- 14.5 The Council does not encourage close relatives or partners working together, particularly where one manages the other, due to potential concerns around confidentiality, impartiality, and team dynamics. Where such arrangements exist, employees are expected to maintain professional boundaries and uphold the highest standards of conduct.
- 14.6 Where necessary, adjustments to working arrangements may be considered to avoid conflicts of interest. If relocation or changes are not practical, employees must ensure that personal relationships do not interfere with workplace responsibilities.
- 14.7 For the purposes of this policy, the definition of a close relative is outlined in [Appendix H of the Conditions of Service](#), and includes family members such as parents, children, siblings (including in-laws), grandparents, grandchildren, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and partners (including same-sex partners). Adopted and step-relations are also included.

15. Conduct Outside Working Hours

- 15.1 While employees' personal life outside of work is generally a private matter, as an employee of Bury Council, they are expected to uphold the Council's values and maintain public trust at all times. Employees must avoid any behaviour, whether in person or online, that could reasonably be seen to damage the Council's reputation or bring it into disrepute.
- 15.2 Serious misconduct or criminal offences committed either during or outside of working hours may result in disciplinary action, particularly where such conduct:
 - Impacts the employee's ability to perform their role,
 - Undermines public confidence in the Council, or
 - Brings the Council into disrepute.

This may include, but is not limited to, arrest, offences involving dishonesty, violence, harassment, or misuse of social media

- 15.3 Certain professions are subject to external codes of conduct or regulatory standards. If an employee is a member of a professional body, the employee should be aware that misconduct even outside of work may result in disciplinary action by that body, including being removed from the professional register. Employees are responsible for understanding and complying with any relevant professional codes of practice.
- 15.4 If an employee is issued with a Council uniform and chooses to wear it outside of working hours, they should be aware that they remain identifiable as a Council employee. The employee's conduct while in uniform must reflect the standards expected of them during working hours.

16. Safeguarding

- 16.1 Bury Council is fully committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and supportive working and learning environment, free from abuse, harm, or neglect. All employees have a responsibility to contribute to a culture of safety and vigilance across the Council's diverse services and settings.
- 16.2 The Council actively promotes a safeguarding culture by:
- Clearly defining and communicating safeguarding roles and responsibilities across the organisation.
 - Implementing robust, auditable safeguarding procedures.
 - Providing mandatory safeguarding training for all staff.
 - Allocating appropriate resources to support safeguarding practices.
- 16.3 All employees are expected to familiarise themselves with the Council's safeguarding policies and procedures and to act promptly and appropriately if they have concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child, young person, or vulnerable adult.
- 16.4 For further information and guidance, please refer to the Council's [Safeguarding resources](#)

17. Declaration of Criminal Offences

- 17.1 Employees must declare to the Council:
- If they become subject to a police investigation, arrest, charge or conviction involving a child/vulnerable adult or a serious criminal offence involving any physical assaults or sexual assaults on anybody
 - If they are under assessment by a children's services function over the welfare of their own children or children regularly in their care
 - If they are being charged or prosecuted for a criminal offence that is either reportable to their professional body or standards body, or which could either:
 - bring the Council into disrepute, or
 - result in them being unable to undertake the role for which they are employed (e.g. a driving ban), or

- may result in a prison sentence (suspended or otherwise)

17.2 Notification should be made as **soon as reasonably practical** following any police involvement. The Council will treat such disclosures confidentially and assess the implications on a case-by-case basis.

Declarations must be made to the appropriate Chief Officer, who will consider – with advice from HR and, if the employee works with children or vulnerable adults, in line with LADO/PIPOT procedures respectively – what support could be put in place or action taken. This could include disciplinary action.

17.3 Failure to declare or accurately declare relevant investigations or offences could result in disciplinary action.

17.4 Employees will be supported throughout the process, and any action taken will be proportionate and in line with employment law and safeguarding responsibilities.

18. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

18.1 All local government employees must ensure full compliance with equality-related policies adopted by the Council, in addition to the legal requirements set out in the Equality Act 2010. This legislation protects individuals from discrimination, harassment and victimisation based on nine protected characteristics, including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. In addition to these, the Council recognises and promotes four additional characteristics that reflect our commitment to inclusion and respect within our workforce and community. These are:

- Socio-economic background
- Parental or caring responsibilities
- Veteran status
- Gender identity beyond binary definitions

We operate a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Everyone, whether a member of the local community, a customer, or a colleague, has the right to be treated with fairness, dignity and respect.

If an employee experiences or witnesses behaviour that breaches these standards, they are strongly encouraged to report it. Reports can be made through:

- Line managers

- HR
- The Council's confidential reporting (whistleblowing) channels (please see section 19).

All concerns will be taken seriously and handled in line with our policies to ensure a safe and inclusive working environment.

19. Raising Concerns and Whistleblowing

- 19.1 If an employee become aware of any significant deficiency of service provision, wrongdoing, fraud, customer abuse, breach of procedure or malpractice, they must report this to the appropriate level of management.
- 19.2 If an employee becomes aware of activities that are illegal, unethical or violate this code, they must also report this in accordance with the Council's [Whistleblowing Policy](#). Alternatively, call the dedicated Whistleblowing telephone number on 0161 253 6446 or email whistleblowing@bury.gov.uk.

20. Health and Safety

- 22.1 The Council has a legal duty to ensure that working for the Council is safe and healthy. Employees also have a personal responsibility for the health and safety of themselves and others. Employees have a vital duty to raise concerns about health and safety issues, identify hazards, give their opinion on suitable solutions to health and safety problems, participate in training, and contribute to risk assessment and risk-control procedures.
- 22.2 Employees must follow established safe systems of working, including the appropriate use of personal protective equipment. At the earliest opportunity report any accidents, incidents of third-party abuse and harassment, and near misses immediately to the employee's line manager. Employees must ensure they have also read the Council's Health and Safety Policy.
- 22.3 Managers are responsible for the active promotion of the health, safety and wellbeing of staff, as well as those affected by the work of their teams through risk assessment and consistent application of health and safety arrangements.
- 22.4 When employees are in the office, they must wear their Council security pass and ensure it is always visible. It is not to be shared with anyone else, and any lost or misplaced security passes should be reported to Facilities Management immediately. It is also important that employees do not 'tailgate' through security barriers or doors or allow anyone else following them to do the same. If it is safe to do so, employees are expected to challenge anyone in a staff-only area who does not have a pass and report it to Facilities

Management. Ensure that any visitors employees have follow the appropriate visitor protocol that applies to the building.

21. Environmental responsibility

- 21.1 Bury Council is committed to environmental sustainability and responsible stewardship in all areas of its operations. Employees play a vital role in supporting the Council's environmental objectives and helping to reduce the environmental impact of our activities.
- 21.2 The Council has set a target for both the organisation and the borough to be carbon neutral by 2038. Achieving this goal requires collective action and a commitment to embedding sustainable practices into everyday work.
- 21.3 Employees are encouraged to:
- Consider the environmental impact of their decisions and actions.
 - Choose the lowest-carbon option for business travel wherever possible.
 - Avoid the use of single-use plastics and minimise unnecessary paper use.
 - Use recycling facilities provided in Council buildings and promote waste reduction.
 - Sustainability should be a core consideration in their day-to-day responsibilities, and employees are expected to contribute to the Council's climate goals through informed, environmentally conscious choices.

For further information, please refer to [Bury's Climate Action Strategy and Action Plan](#).

22. Leadership

- 22.1 Our responsibility is to our communities, and as proud and passionate ambassadors for Bury we are all expected to lead by example through our actions and behaviour in line with the principles set out in this code.
- 22.2 Those undertaking a leadership role at Bury Council are responsible for the delivery of high-quality services through empowering and trusting others, providing positive influence, innovation and creativity, and modelling the ethical behaviours needed from their teams. Leaders are accountable for the decisions they make and should ensure they are free of bias to maintain public trust.
- 22.3 Managers have a duty of care to staff and are responsible for providing a safe, encouraging and supportive work environment that values diversity and individual talents. Managers are also responsible for ensuring clarity of role, tracking, monitoring of performance, and setting reasonable standards around behaviour within a particular role. Managers should demonstrate trust in their

teams while providing support when needed, treating employees fairly and consistently.

- 22.4 Leaders and managers should pursue any training or development opportunities that will support them to demonstrate the required standards and behaviours in their role.

23. Interpretation

- 23.1 Any interpretation of this Code should be determined by the Assistant Director of People and Inclusion after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Affairs and HR and relevant Opposition spokespersons.

24. Disciplinary Action

- 24.1 Any serious contravention of this Code may result in disciplinary proceedings.

25. Grievance Procedure

- 25.1 An employee who has a grievance arising from the interpretation of the Code shall have access to the Council's Grievance Procedure.
- 25.2 Any officer or Member who has been involved in an interpretation of the Code which results in a grievance arising should not be involved in the consideration of that grievance.

26. Application of Code

- 26.1 The Code embodies general guidance for all employees of the Council. It is recognised, however, that specific arrangements may be made at Departmental level to address circumstances/situations encountered by certain employees.



Bury
Council