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Code of Conduct Policy

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Code of Conduct for Employees

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Code of Conduct for Employees

1. Introduction

- a) Our owners and customers expect the highest standards of conduct from all employees who work for YPO.
- b) This framework code of conduct is aimed at ensuring that employees are aware of the standards of behaviour expected of them
- c) The code of conduct covers all employees who have an employment contract with YPO, including relief and casual employees, and as such it forms part of their conditions of employment
- d) Failure to observe the standards set out in this code will be regarded as serious and any breach could lead to disciplinary action under YPO's disciplinary procedure as appropriate, up to and including summary dismissal.

2. Standards

- a) YPO employees are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to all customers, and where it is part of their duties, to provide appropriate advice to elected members and fellow employees with impartiality. Employees are expected to make the appropriate level of management aware of any deficiency in the provision of service. This will be through agreed procedures and without fear of recrimination.
- b) It is the duty of each employee to report to an appropriate manager any impropriety, breach of procedure, unlawfulness or maladministration.
- c) Employees should be aware of the YPO's Whistleblowing Policy, which gives support and protection for any employee who reports any wrongdoing, including impropriety, breach of procedure, unlawfulness or maladministration.

3. Disclosure of information

- a) The law requires that certain types of information must be available to elected members, auditors, government services, customers and the public. YPO may decide to be open about other types of information, and employees must be aware of which information YPO is and is not open about, and act accordingly. If an employee is not sure they should ask for guidance from their manager.
- b) Any requests for information made under the Freedom of Information Act should be referred to the risk, audit and assurance office or a member of the Board
- c) Employees should not use any information obtained in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit, nor should they pass it on to others who might use this information in such a way. Any personal information received by an employee from an elected member, which does not belong to YPO, should not be divulged by the employee without the prior approval of that elected member, except where disclosure is required or sanctioned by the law.
- d) The public is excluded from certain proceedings or meetings associated with the business of YPO. Employees cannot tell the public about the content of the proceedings or corresponding documents relating to YPO, unless required by law or authorised by a member of the YPO Board to do so.
- e) All employees must adhere to the Data Protection Act at all times and specifically not disclose personal information about other employees or customers to a third party without

their agreement to do so (unless exempt under the Act).

4. Political neutrality

- a) Employees have a responsibility to YPO as a whole. It follows that they have responsibilities to all elected members and must ensure their individual rights are respected.
- b) Where employees are required to advise political groups, they must do so in ways which meet the corporate objectives of YPO, and which are balanced to reflect their political neutrality.
- c) Employees, whether or not in a post that is politically restricted, must follow every YPO and must not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work.

5. Relationships / Declarations of Interest

a) Elected Members

The role of some employees is to give advice to elected members directly or through their senior managers. All employees should carry out their work in accordance with YPO policies. Mutual respect between employees and elected members is therefore essential for good local government.

b) Customers

Employees should always remember their responsibilities to all customers and at all times ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery.

c) Contractors

All relationships of a business or private nature with external contractors, or potential contractors, should be made known to your manager. Orders and contracts must be awarded on merit, by fair competition, against other tenders. Special favours should not be shown to businesses run by, for example, friends, partners or relatives in the tendering process. No part of the local community should be discriminated against.

Employees who engage with, supervise or have any official relationship with contractors and have previously had or currently have a private or domestic relationship with contractors, should declare that relationship to your manager.

d) Other employees

Employees must declare any personal relationship with other employees of YPO to their manager where the relationship could cause or be perceived to cause, a conflict of interests. In these circumstances there may be a need to consider alternative employment or a change of duties.

Employees must treat colleagues with courtesy and respect. Verbal or physical abuse, bullying and insubordination to colleagues will not be tolerated.

e) Audit Commission or Local Authority Inspectorate

Employees who are related to, or a close friend of, any member of the Audit Commission or Local Authority Inspectorate, should declare a conflict of interest if that relative or friend is involved in an audit or inspection at YPO.

6. Appointment and Other Employment Matters

- a) Employees involved in recruitment for roles should make sure appointments are made based on merit. It would be unlawful for an employee to make an appointment based on anything other than the ability of the candidate to do the role. To avoid any possible accusation of bias, employees should not be involved in an appointment where

they are related to an applicant, or have a close personal relationship outside work with them.

b) Similarly, employees should not be involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay adjustments for any employee who is a relative, partner etc.

7. Outside commitments

a) Officers graded above scp 28(grade 7 and above) have employment conditions which require them to obtain written consent to take any outside employment (including self-employment such as consultancy work).

b) All employees should be clear about their contractual obligations and should not undertake outside employment which conflicts with YPO's interests.

c) Employees taking other employment must ensure that the total number of hours worked in a week is not, (or is not perceived to be) a risk to their own or colleagues' health and safety. Specifically YPO expects all employees to notify their manager of any other employment, which may result in their total working time exceeding an average of 48 hours a week in line with the working time directive.

d) An employee's declaration of other employment does not remove the right of YPO to take action against any employee if it is deemed to be, or has been, detrimental to YPO's interest or reputation, or where the other employment affects the employee's work performance at YPO.

e) The use of YPO employees and equipment, (e.g. vehicles, computers, telephone, photocopier, etc.) for unofficial purposes is forbidden unless arrangements are made and approval is given by the appropriate manager. Communication relating to other employment is not permitted during working hours.

f) Employees are sometimes requested to give presentations/advice using their professional skills and expertise, for organisations other than YPO. If the work forms part of their YPO duties and is done as an official duty, they must ensure that YPO receives any fee paid.

If the presentation or advice does not form part of their duties, employees may keep any fees, provided that the preparation and the presentation/advice is done in the employee's own time and the employee is not acting as a representative of the YPO.

8. Personal interests

a) YPO respects the rights of employees to a life outside work. It requires employees to clearly separate their employment from activities in their private life. Employees should only present their views, or act on issues outside work, e.g. communications with the media or as a member of a political or pressure group, as a private individual. YPO employees should ensure that when engaging in such activities it is clear that they are not seen as a representative of YPO but as private individuals.

b) Employees should declare any personal, financial or non-financial interests, which may conflict with the YPO's interest by informing their manager in writing.

c) Employees are expected to raise concerns about work-related issues through the YPO official procedures (including trade unions). It is not acceptable for employees to pursue work-related issues, which affect them as a private individual, where there is a conflict between their private interest and their contractual duties as an YPO employee.

d) All activities undertaken during working hours should help, not conflict with, the work of YPO. For example, during work hours employees must not try to persuade customers to

come to a view that is against the accepted YPO view, or involve customers in campaigning activities that go against YPO policy. This paragraph does not restrict employees having the right to legitimate protest on issues relating to their security of employment or changes to their conditions of service.

e) Employees should declare membership of any secret societies to a member of the Board. . The definition of secret society is as follows: “Any lodge, chapter, society, trust or regular gathering or meeting which:

- is not open to members of the public who are not members
- includes a requirement to make a commitment (whether by oath or otherwise) of allegiance in order to gain membership
- includes, whether initially or subsequently, a commitment (whether by oath or otherwise) of secrecy in regard to rules, membership or conduct.”

9. Equality issues

a) YPO is an equal opportunities employer and all employees are under an obligation to ensure they are aware of workplace policies relating to equality issues and ensure that they are complied with.

b) All customers and colleagues have a right to be treated with fairness and equality.

c) Employees should be familiar with YPO’s policy on discrimination and harassment, and ensure they treat customers and colleagues with dignity and respect.

d) If employees consider that they have been subject to discrimination and/or harassment in the course of their employment, they should report this to their manager at the earliest opportunity so the concerns can be investigated and responded to appropriately.

10. Separation of roles during tendering

a) Employees involved in the tendering process should be clear on their roles within YPO and be mindful of the need for accountability and be aware of YPO’s commitment to providing best value at all times.

b) Employees must exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with all customers, suppliers, other contractors and sub-contractors.

c) Employees who have access to confidential information on tenders or costs for internal or external contractors should not disclose that information to any unauthorised party or organisation.

d) 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.

e) Employees must not buy items for personal use through YPO contracts with external contractors.

f) See guidance as listed in the Procurement Manual on the intranet.

11. Corruption, fraud, bribery and theft

a) It is a serious criminal offence for employees, in their official capacity, to corruptly receive or give any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage for doing, or not doing, something or showing favour or disfavour to any person. If an allegation is made, the employee should show that any benefit has not been dishonestly gained.

b) The deliberate falsification of documents is not acceptable. If an employee does this for pay or other financial benefit for themselves or others it may be regarded as a criminal offence requiring police investigation as well as being a serious disciplinary matter. Where deliberate falsification is intended to gain a non-financial benefit such as flexitime credit, this will equally be regarded as a serious disciplinary matter.

c) Theft of either YPO's funds or property is considered gross misconduct under the disciplinary procedure. Borrowing YPO money, even when the employee has every intention of returning it within a very short period of time, is also considered as theft.

d) YPO prohibits the offering, the giving, the solicitation or the acceptance of any bribe, whether cash or other inducement to or from any person or company, wherever they are situated and whether they are a public official or body or private person or company by an individual employee, member, agent or other person or body acting on YPO's behalf in order to gain a commercial, contractual or regulatory advantage for YPO in a way which is unethical or in order to gain any personal advantage, financial or otherwise, for the individual or anyone connected with the individual. Any acts of fraud, theft or other malpractice are also prohibited.

e) YPO will:

- **Culture:** seek to create an anti-fraud, anti-bribery and zero tolerance culture.
- **Deterrence:** work closely with the Lead Authority, Police and other appropriate external agencies to combat fraud or bribery and support national and local initiatives against fraud and bribery if relevant to YPO.
- **Prevention:** seek to ensure new policies, systems and working practices are designed to aid the prevention of fraud and bribery and to revise existing ones to remove any identified weaknesses.
- **Detection:** provide appropriate mechanisms and supporting policies for employees to voice their genuine concerns and protect those who do so.
- **Investigation:** adopt formal procedures to investigate fraud or bribery when it is suspected. (Fraud Response Plan)
- **Sanctions:** deal with perpetrators of fraud or bribery and have no hesitation in referring cases to the Police where it is appropriate to do so.
- **Redress:** will take all reasonable measures in relation to seeking redress in respect of money and assets defrauded.

f) See guidance as listed in the Anti Fraud and Bribery policy on the intranet.

12. Use of financial information

a) Employees must ensure they use public funds in a responsible and lawful manner at all times. They should strive to ensure value for money and to avoid legal challenge to YPO.

b) The application of financial regulations safeguard the YPO's assets and use of financial and other resources. All employees must comply with the regulations when using or collecting public funds. When placing orders for goods and services employees must ensure that all rules are complied with, in particular the Financial and Contractual Procedures Rules.

13. Gifts and hospitality

a) Employees should only accept offers of hospitality if there is a genuine need to pass on information or represent YPO. Similarly they may attend events hosted by organisations with which YPO has formal partnership working arrangements if this is seen to be helping to strengthen the partnership. Offers to attend purely social or sporting functions should only be accepted where YPO should be seen to be represented. They should be properly authorised and recorded by the appropriate manager.

Guidance notes and forms for declaration of gifts and hospitality are available electronically via the intranet

b) When hospitality has to be declined those making the offer should be politely but firmly informed of the YPO's procedures and standards.

c) Employees should not accept significant personal gifts from contractors and outside suppliers. Keeping insignificant items of token value such as pens or diaries is acceptable. Accepting personal gifts of small value from outside suppliers or private individuals may be allowed if it is provided for under a departmental policy, which may supplement the framework set out in this code.

d) If an employee receives a gift with more than a token value without warning, it should be reported immediately to their manager, who will decide whether the gift should be returned.

e) When receiving authorised hospitality, employees should be particularly sensitive to timing in relation to any decision which YPO may be taking affecting those providing the hospitality.

f) Accepting hospitality by attending relevant conferences and courses is acceptable where it is clear the hospitality is corporate rather than personal, and where YPO is satisfied that any purchasing decisions are not compromised. Where visits to inspect equipment etc are required, employees should ensure that YPO meets the cost of such visits to avoid risking the integrity of future purchasing decisions.

g) Employees accepting offers of hospitality are acting as ambassadors for YPO. They must act appropriately, including acting responsibly when drinking alcohol.

h) Care must be taken to make sure that any hospitality provided by YPO is seen to be appropriate and justifiable in terms of the costs and value for money. Any spending relating to providing hospitality must be authorised by the appropriate budget holder. They will keep a record of the spending and the justification for it, in a way, which allows for an open and transparent audit of such expenditure.

14. Sponsorship

a) When an outside organisation wants to sponsor YPO, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the basic rules about accepting gifts or hospitality apply. Particular care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.

b) Where YPO wishes to sponsor an employee or an event, their partner, spouse or relatives, must not benefit in a direct way without there being full disclosure to an appropriate manager of any such interest. Similarly, where YPO gives support to the community through sponsorship, grant aid, financial or other means, employees should ensure that impartial advice is given and there is not a conflict of interest.

Further information is available in the sponsorship / donations policy

15. Contact with the Press and media

- a) Unless specifically nominated and authorised by the YPO Director, employees cannot give reports or speak to the press and media on matters relating to employment with YPO, YPO business or decisions made.. The YPO Board or nominated officers are responsible for dealing with the press and media. Employees with this responsibility should not give views which are contrary to a position taken by YPO and which may be deemed to be critical of any YPO decisions.
- b) This code is not intended to inhibit or restrict the reasonable and legitimate role of trade union representatives (when acting in this role and not in their capacity as an employee) but they are bound, in carrying out their role, to honour the intent of the code.

16. Computer Usage policy

Context

a) All computer equipment provided by YPO is for the use of employees in relation to their work, or for users not directly employed by YPO, but authorised to use the equipment by YPO. Employees should be encouraged to use computer equipment at work for personal learning and development. This should be approved by their manager and comply with the expected standards and restrictions on use as set out in the full policy document.

Standards expected

- b) YPO expects all employees to use the equipment in a responsible and legal manner. The use of offensive, abusive or inappropriate language in e-mails or other communications is forbidden.
- c) All material stored on YPO's systems are confidential, and subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. YPO expects the highest standards of confidentiality to be observed. Employees should clarify any queries about storage and the use of information with their managers.
- d) User codes and passwords are allocated to allow individuals access to only those parts of the system that they need to access. Codes or passwords should not be made known to any other user.

Restrictions on use

Internet and information systems (devices capable of accessing the Internet or running software, including computers and WAP phones etc).

- e) Using YPO's equipment for any of the following purposes is strictly forbidden:
- knowingly sending, receiving, accessing, downloading or posting any material that is illegal, obscene, indecent, abusive, racist, sexist, homophobic or libellous, in breach of copyright, defamatory or otherwise inappropriate
 - pursuing personal business interests
 - engaging in gambling
 - knowingly engaging in any activity which threatens the integrity or availability of YPO's systems
 - using automated internet based information services which push information to the desktop, e.g. news ticker tape services (except for legitimate business use)
 - attempting to breach security systems (hack) whether inside or outside the YPO

- transmitting, receiving, copying or storing digital media (including software, music, video etc) except for legitimate purposes in a way that complies with the copyright and licensing regulations
- playing computer games, accessing chat rooms or similar entertainment.

Personal use

f) Internet and information systems (computers etc) are provided for work purposes, and their use for work will always take precedence. Some personal use will be allowed, but any personal use should be in the employee's own time before or after working hours, or during unpaid lunch breaks and all personal use shall be carried out in line with the restrictions set out in the policy.

g) The private use of telephones and faxes will be allowed but incoming and outgoing calls should be kept to a minimum and made during non-working time.

h) YPO's messaging systems (e-mail, SMS etc) are primarily for business use. Occasional and reasonable personal use is allowed. This should not interfere with the performance of duties and all personal use must comply with the standards and restrictions set out in the policy. Outgoing private messaging must, whenever possible, be made during non-working time.

17. Use of vehicles

a) The use of YPO vehicles is for business use only and employees are expected to take all steps necessary in avoiding endangering themselves and others while operating vehicles.

b) YPO has the right to review any appropriate documents including driving records, proof of a valid licence, vehicle insurance information etc. you should make your manager aware of any driving violations, changes to driver information and driver status immediately.

c) Check arrangements on vehicle use by referring to YPO vehicle use guidance, leased car arrangements and the Driver's handbook or ask your manager.

18. Use of Social Media

YPO employees responsible for managing official customer communications can make reasonable and appropriate use of social media websites as part of their role. It is an important part of how YPO communicates with its customers and promotes its services and communicates with its audience.

Employees must be aware at all times that any YPO related communication through social media platforms they are representing YPO.

Employees using social media as part of their roles should use the same safeguards as they would with any other form of communication about YPO in the public sphere. These safeguards include:

- making sure that the communication has a purpose and a benefit for YPO;
- obtaining permission from a manager before embarking on a public campaign using social media; and

- getting a colleague to check the content before it is published.
- Any communications that employees make in a professional capacity through social media must not:

bring YPO into disrepute, for example by:

- criticising or arguing with customers, colleagues or rivals;
- making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups; or
- posting images that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate content;

breach confidentiality, for example by:

- revealing trade secrets or information owned by YPO;
- giving away confidential information about an individual (such as a colleague or customer contact) or organisation (such as a rival business); or
- discussing YPO's internal workings (such as deals that it is doing with a customer or its future business plans that have not been communicated to the public);

breach copyright, for example by:

- using someone else's images or written content without permission; or
- failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something; or

do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example by:

- making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender reassignment, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age;
- using social media to bully another individual (such as an employee of YPO); or
- posting images that are discriminatory or offensive [or links to such content].

YPO recognises that many employees make use of social media in a personal capacity. While they are not acting on behalf of YPO, employees must be aware that they indirectly represent YPO if they are recognised as a YPO employee or representative or have any links with the YPO brand.

If employees do discuss their work on social media (for example, giving opinions on their specialism or the sector in which YPO operates), they must include on their profile a statement along the following lines: **"The views I express here are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer."**

19. Health and Safety

a) Employees must not act either wilfully or unintentionally in a way, which could put customers, colleagues and themselves at risk. They must adhere to the duty of care set out within the Health and Safety Policy (and associated procedures). These are available from the Health and Safety Officer or via the intranet.

b) Employees required to drive a vehicle, as part of their contractual duties (YPO fleet vehicle, hire vehicle, leased cars or private vehicle) must observe all vehicle use requirements and all aspects of the Drivers handbook.

20. Alcohol and drugs

a) All employees are expected to attend work without being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or have their work performance impaired by alcohol or drugs.

b) Drinking alcohol immediately before, or during the workday, will not be allowed on health and safety grounds c) Where involvement with illegal drugs, or excessive use of alcohol by an employee takes place outside working hours, YPO will consider the impact this may have on their employment. This will include a consideration of any impact on YPO's reputation and/or public confidence.

d) YPO will seek to provide appropriate support to any employee who recognises they have an alcohol/drug dependency problem in accordance with the policy on such issues.

e) All employees must comply with the Alcohol and Drugs Policy

21. Conduct outside working hours

a) Serious misconduct or criminal offences, committed outside working hours, which bring the individual as an YPO employee, or the YPO into disrepute, may be subject to appropriate action under the Disciplinary Procedure up to and including dismissal.

b) All employees are required to notify their manager of any issues of this nature to enable early consideration of their situation.

22. Standards of dress and appearance

a) Employees must ensure their standard of dress i.e. the type and style of clothes, accessories, body art etc - is appropriate to the nature of their duties. Inappropriate dress can create the view that YPO is inefficient, create offence or be interpreted as disrespectful by members of the public, customers and suppliers.

b) Individual departments will determine an appropriate dress code to public, customer and supplier expectations. Where there are codes employees are expected to meet the set standard.

c) YPO values and welcomes the ethnic diversity of its workforce. Dress codes will be sensitive to and take account of cultural and religious dress requirements where it does not negatively impact on service delivery.

d) In all cases employees will be expected to conform to requirements for dress codes which apply for health and safety reasons or which requires a uniform to be worn, to clearly identify YPO employees.

e) This code recognises the need for a consistent approach to standards of dress and appearance within each department so employees can be clear about YPO's expectations.

23. Language

a) The use of swear words, offensive language and/or gestures in conversation and communication with other service users or colleagues is unacceptable at all times.

b) Language, which is perceived by service users and/or colleagues as patronising or overly familiar, is also unacceptable.

24. Unacceptable Behaviour

Unacceptable behaviour can be defined as any action from any individual that can be costly, counterproductive and has a damaging effect on YPO and those involved. Acts of fraud and corruption in particular are treated as serious cases of unacceptable behaviour.

Unacceptable behaviour includes, yet is not limited to the following areas:

- Gifts of YPO material that have not been subject to authorisation through the Obsolete Stock Policy.
- Conducting private work at YPO premises, regardless of its nature.
- Use of YPO facilities for staff events that have no benefit to YPO or its employees and that have not been subject to the correct authorisation process.
- Use of YPO vehicles for transporting private goods/ items or non-YPO employees.(e.g. family members, friends, the general public)
- Employees engaging in non-work related activities during periods of low productivity in working hours.
- Any employee performing private work for any other employee or non-employee during work time, regardless of where it may be.
- The parking of YPO vehicles at employees or non-employees homes or business addresses, unless that vehicle is a lease car allocated to a specific member of staff.
- The receiving of gifts/ hospitality that should not be accepted or are not declared correctly against YPO policy.
- Delivery of private goods to YPO premises.
- Discrimination.
- Harassment.
- Bullying and Intimidation.
- Acts of Misconduct or Gross Misconduct as defined in the Disciplinary Policy

Specific policies relating to the above areas should be referred to.

Acceptable behaviour in the workplace in summary is behaviour that demonstrates the values of YPO.

I have read and been informed about the content, requirements, and expectations of the Code of Conduct for employees at YPO. I have received a copy of the policy and agree to abide by the policy guidelines and those of other associated policies as a condition of my employment and my continuing employment at YPO.

I understand that if I have questions, at any time, regarding this or any other policy, I will consult with my immediate manager or a member of the Human Resources team.

Please read the Code of Conduct carefully to ensure that you understand the policy before signing this document.

Employee Signature: _____

Employee Printed Name: _____

Date: _____