

DSR 1: Diplomatic Service Code of Ethics

1. The Diplomatic Service is an integral and key part of the government of the United Kingdom. It supports the Government of the day in developing and implementing its policies, and in delivering public services. Members of the Diplomatic Service, like all civil servants, are accountable to Ministers, who in turn are accountable to Parliament. (Constitutionally, civil servants are servants of the Crown. The Crown's executive powers are exercised by the Government.)

2. As a civil servant, you are appointed on merit on the basis of fair and open competition and are expected to carry out your role with dedication and a commitment to the Diplomatic Service and its core values: integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality. In this Code:

- 'integrity' is putting the obligations of public service above your own personal interests;
- 'honesty' is being truthful and open;
- 'objectivity' is basing your advice and decisions on rigorous analysis of the evidence; and
- 'impartiality' is acting solely according to the merits of the case and serving equally well Governments of different political persuasions.

3. These core values support good government and ensure the achievement of the highest possible standards in all that the Diplomatic Service does. This in turn helps the Diplomatic Service to gain and retain the respect of Ministers, Parliament, the public and its customers.

4. This Code sets out the standards of behaviour expected of you. (The respective responsibilities placed on Ministers and special advisers in relation to the Civil Service are set out in their Codes of Conduct: www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/propriety_and_ethics. These are based on the core values.

Standards of behaviour

Integrity

5. You must:

- fulfil your duties and obligations responsibly;
- always act in a way that is professional (including taking account of ethical standards governing particular professions) and that deserves and retains the confidence of all those with whom you have dealings;
- make sure public money and other resources are used properly and efficiently;
- deal with the public and their affairs fairly, efficiently, promptly, effectively and sensitively, to the best of your ability;
- handle information as openly as possible within the legal framework; and
- comply with the law and uphold the administration of justice.

6. You must not:

- misuse your official position, for example by using information acquired in the course of your official duties to further your private interests or those of others;
- accept gifts or hospitality or receive other benefits from anyone which might reasonably be seen to compromise your personal judgement or integrity; or
- disclose official information without authority. This duty continues to apply after you leave the Civil Service.

Honesty

7. You must:

- set out the facts and relevant issues truthfully, and correct any errors as soon as possible; and
- use resources only for the authorised public purposes for which they are provided.

8. You must not:

- deceive or knowingly mislead Ministers, Parliament or others; or
- be influenced by improper pressures from others or the prospect of personal gain.

Objectivity

9. You must:

- provide information and advice, including advice to Ministers, on the basis of the evidence, and accurately present the options and facts;
- take decisions on the merits of the case; and
- take due account of expert and professional advice.

10. You must not:

- ignore inconvenient facts or relevant considerations when providing advice or making decisions; or
- frustrate the implementation of policies once decisions are taken by declining to take, or abstaining from, action which flows from those decisions.

Impartiality

11. You must:

- carry out your responsibilities in a way that is fair, just and equitable and reflects the Diplomatic Service commitment to equality and diversity.

12. You must not:

- act in a way that unjustifiably favours or discriminates against particular individuals or interests.

Political Impartiality

13. You must:

- serve the Government, whatever its political persuasion, to the best of your ability in a way which maintains political impartiality and is in line with the requirements of this Code, no matter what your own political beliefs are;
- act in a way which deserves and retains the confidence of Ministers, while at the same time ensuring that you will be able to establish the same relationship with those whom you may be required to serve in some future Government; and
- comply with any restrictions that have been laid down on your political activities.

14. You must not:

- act in a way that is determined by party political considerations, or use official resources for party political purposes; or
- allow your personal political views to determine any advice you give or your actions.

Rights and responsibilities

15. The FCO has a duty to make you aware of this Code and its values. If you believe that you are being required to act in a way which conflicts with this Code, the FCO must consider your concern, and make sure that you are not penalised for raising it.

16. If you have a concern, you should start by talking to your line manager or someone else in your line management chain. If for any reason you would find this difficult, you should raise the matter with one of the FCO's nominated officers who have been appointed to advise staff on the Code.

17. If you become aware of actions by others which you believe conflict with this Code you should report this to your line manager or someone else in your line management chain; alternatively you may wish to seek advice from your nominated officer. You should report evidence of criminal or unlawful activity to the police or other appropriate authorities.

18. If you have raised a matter covered in paragraphs 15 to 17, in accordance with the relevant procedures in [FCO Guidance, HR Volume 1, Chapter 21, Annex 21F](#), and do not receive what you consider to be a reasonable response, you may report the matter to the Civil Service Commissioners. The Commissioners will also consider taking a complaint direct. Their address is:

3rd Floor,
35 Great Smith Street,
London SW1P 3BQ.

Tel: 020 7276 3163

email: ocsc@civilservicecommissioners.gov.uk

Website: www.civilservicecommissioners.gov.uk

If the matter cannot be resolved using the procedures set out above, and you feel you cannot carry out the instructions you have been given, you will have to resign from the Diplomatic Service.

19. This Code is part of the contractual relationship between you and your employer. It sets out the high standards of behaviour expected of you which follow from your position in public and national life as a civil servant. You can take pride in living up to these values.

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