

Code of Ethics for Members

1. Introduction

1.1 As a professional body, The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) has a responsibility to define, maintain and uphold the professional standards of all its members.

1.2 Part 9 of the CIEH's Byelaws states that:

"Members shall be obliged at all times to uphold the reputation of their profession and to observe the Laws of the Chartered Institute."

1.3 Byelaw 9 also states that:

"a member may be subject to disciplinary action by the Chartered Institute if found guilty of misconduct. Misconduct shall include failure to comply with the laws of the Chartered Institute, or being found guilty, or subject to an adverse decision, by another body, court or tribunal in respect of an offence or allegation relevant to membership of the Chartered Institute."

1.4 The procedure for dealing with complaints against members and the sanctions or penalties which the CIEH may impose are also included in this document.

1.5 CIEH members are responsible for making sure they are familiar with and understand the current standards which affect their work, and their supporting evidence. Members must be aware of all relevant codes and guidelines issued by CIEH and other appropriate bodies.

2. Purpose of the Code

2.1 **The motto** of the CIEH is "*Amicus Humani Generis*" which translates as "*Friend of the Human Race*". This motto sums up the role of our members, who are concerned about people's health, safety and wellbeing.

2.2 The CIEH has considered the wide range of contexts in which its members work. The aim of the code is that it should apply to all CIEH members, with the focus on the quality of decision making allowing sufficient flexibility for a variety of approaches and methods, but providing ethical standards which apply to all. Members will also need to familiarise themselves with the legal framework, regulatory requirements and other guidance relevant to the particular context in which they work.

- 2.3 Members are likely to need to make decisions in difficult, changing and unclear situations. The CIEH expects that the code will be used to form a basis for consideration of ethical questions, with the principles in this code being taken into account in the process of making decisions, together with the needs of the public and the individual circumstances of the case. However, no code can replace the need for members to use their professional and ethical judgement.
- 2.4 In making decisions on what constitutes ethical practice, members will need to consider the application of technical competence and the use of their professional skill and judgement. They should also be mindful of the importance of fostering and maintaining good professional relationships with the public and other professionals.
- 2.5 A code of conduct or ethics is an essential feature of any profession and underpins the integrity of that profession. This is important because the standing and credibility of the CIEH is defined by the perceptions of those individuals and organisations with which it interacts. A key function of this code is to sustain the reputation of the CIEH and the environmental health profession.
- 2.6 The authority of the CIEH depends on the confidence and trust placed in its membership. Without such authority the CIEH would be unable to achieve the objectives set out in our Royal Charter:

"The object for which the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health was established is to promote for the public benefit the theory and science of environmental health in all its aspects and the dissemination of knowledge about environmental health."

3. Application of the Code

- 3.1 This code, taken together with the Charter, Byelaws, General Regulations and Operational Procedures relating to members sets out the framework to uphold professional standards.
- 3.2 This code is mandatory. It sets out the principles members should follow. It is the basis of all other guidance issued by the CIEH. It is each member's professional responsibility to be prepared to justify any departure from the principles. If a member cannot give a satisfactory account of their behaviour, as judged against the principles, their membership may be at risk.
- 3.3 Members undertaking specific responsibilities as Trustees, Assembly Representatives or in other specialised or representational roles such as committee members or members of the Regional and Special Interest Group Management Boards are also subject to the Code of Conduct for Trustees, Committee members and other representatives.
- 3.4 Potential breaches of the code are dealt with in accordance with the Chartered Institute's Disciplinary Procedures, which commence at Part 6 below.

4. The Four Ethical Principles

- 4.1 This code is based on four ethical principles, which constitute the main domains of responsibility within which ethical issues are considered. These are:

- Integrity
- Competence
- Responsibility; and
- Respect

4.2 These key principles will guide and support members in the work they do and the decisions they make. They should influence all areas and stages of members' professional education and practice. Members should apply them to any work they are involved in, making appropriate judgements about how they apply.

4.3 Below, each principle is further defined by a set of behaviours which we treat as the standards of conduct, setting out the professional conduct that the CIEH expects of its members.

5. Professional Conduct: How to apply the ethical principles

5.1 **Integrity: The health and protection of the public is the prime concern**

5.1.1 The interests of the communities that they serve are paramount: members shall put them before their own interests and those of any colleague or organisation.

5.1.2 Information and advice members provide to the public, employers and colleagues shall be prompt, clear and accurate.

5.1.3 Members shall take swift and appropriate action if they become aware that their health, behaviour or professional performance, or those of a colleague, or the actions of an organisation, may compromise the health of the public.

5.1.4 If members are unsure how to act in a particular situation, they shall seek advice from appropriate colleagues or a professional organisation.

5.1.5 If a member perceives a conflict between two or more principles in this Code, or between them and any other applicable guidance, they shall take the course of action that they judge most likely to protect the public and promote environmental health.

5.2 **Integrity: Being honest and trustworthy**

Members shall:

5.2.1 Be straightforward, honest and fair. A member shall not be associated with reports, returns, communications or other information where they believe that the information: contains a false or misleading statement; contains statements or information furnished recklessly; or omits or obscures information required to be included where such omission or obscurity would be misleading.

5.2.2 Maintain their integrity and justify the trust the public, employers and colleagues have in them and the profession.

5.2.3 Not allow bias, conflict of interest or undue influence of others to override professional judgments: they shall refuse offers of gifts and hospitality that may affect, or be perceived as affecting, their judgement.

5.2.4 Avoid conduct that could affect or undermine the confidence placed in them, the CIEH and the environmental health profession.

5.2.5 Not knowingly mislead anyone.

5.2.6 Deal honestly in all financial matters.

5.2.7 In research, apply best evidence honestly and impartially

5.3 **Competence: Maintaining high standards of professional and personal conduct**

Members shall:

- 5.3.1 Maintain proper standards of work and, where necessary, keep accurate records.
- 5.3.2 Avoid conflicts of interest that may arise between their professional work and the health of the public.

5.4 **Competence: Knowing the limits of competence and acting within them**

Members shall:

- 5.4.1 Develop and update their professional knowledge and skills throughout their working life, undertaking relevant training and learning about best practice.
- 5.4.2 Keep their knowledge, skills and professional performance under continuous review, reflecting on them systematically to identify strengths and weaknesses and complying with all requirements for continuing professional development.
- 5.4.3 Find out about, and comply with, laws and regulations which affect their work.
- 5.4.4 Decline to act if they lack the knowledge, skills, experience or authority to undertake a piece of work; and refrain from providing advice where they have reason to believe they lack the professional knowledge and skill at the level required.
- 5.4.5 Be prepared wherever necessary to refer a matter to an appropriately qualified and experienced colleague.
- 5.4.6 Not present themselves as having a qualification, grade of membership, designation or experience that they do not.
- 5.4.7 Not put forward views on behalf of the CIEH without the authority to do so.

5.5 **Responsibility: Protecting confidentiality**

- 5.5.1 Information that members learn about individuals in the course of their work must remain confidential unless there are justifiable reasons for disclosing it.
- 5.5.2 Members shall disclose information only to those entitled to receive it or to whom they are required or authorised to disclose it, and take effective steps to prevent accidental disclosure.
- 5.5.3 Members shall use information only for its intended purpose unless there are strong environmental health grounds for using it in another way.
- 5.5.4 Members shall ensure the safety of electronic and paper documents in their possession. They shall store and transmit them securely and allow them to be disclosed only to those entitled to see them.
- 5.5.5 Members shall ensure that confidential information acquired as a result of professional relationships shall not be used for the personal advantage of the member or third parties.

5.6 **Respect: Respecting the dignity of individuals and treating everyone fairly**

Members shall:

- 5.6.1 Never abuse their professional position.
- 5.6.2 Treat everyone politely and with respect, in recognising their dignity as individuals and their right to make choices and be involved in decisions which affect them.

- 5.6.3 Treat everyone equally regardless of their gender, race, nationality or ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, transgendered status, religion or belief, marital or civil partnership status.
- 5.6.4 Recognise the differences between individuals and groups and avoid stereotyping.
- 5.6.5 Listen to individuals, groups and communities, and give them the information they need in a way they can use it.
- 5.6.6 Maintain appropriate professional boundaries in their relationships with colleagues and others, and shall not abuse professional relationships.
- 5.6.7 Have respect and demonstrate tolerance for other members of the CIEH, their views and perspectives in respect of professional and technical matters and acknowledge diversity of opinion within the environmental health community

5.7 **Respect: Cooperating with others**

Members shall:

- 5.7.1 Cooperate with other team members and colleagues and respect the role each plays in promoting public health.
- 5.7.2 Communicate effectively and share their knowledge, skills and experience with colleagues, employers and others in the interests of the public.
- 5.7.3 Where possible, assist colleagues in complying with requirements for continuing professional development.
- 5.7.4 Provide proper supervision of tasks they have delegated to others, recognising that they remain accountable for work they have delegated.
- 5.7.5 Be honest and impartial in assessing someone's suitability for employment or the performance of someone they have trained or supervise.
- 5.7.6 Make sure there is an effective complaints procedure where they work and follow it at all times, cooperating fully with those investigating or adjudicating upon a complaint.

6. Disciplinary proceedings for members

- 6.1 Expressions used in these Operational Procedures shall have the same meaning as in the Byelaws of the CIEH unless otherwise stated.

Appellant means a respondent who is appealing against a decision of a Disciplinary Committee.

Complainant means a person making a complaint against a member, and may include the CIEH.

Complaint includes any fact or matter brought to the attention of the CIEH.

Lay moderator means a person (who is neither a member nor a member of staff of the CIEH) appointed by the CIEH for the purpose of regulation.

Lay person means a person (who is neither a member nor a member of staff of the CIEH) appointed for the purpose of regulation.

Misconduct means misconduct as defined in Byelaw 9.

Respondent shall mean a member against whom a complaint has been made.

Screener means a person appointed by the CIEH for the purpose of regulation.

7. A complaint against a member

- 7.1 Any person may bring to the attention of the Chief Executive any facts or matters indicating that a member may have become liable to disciplinary action.
- 7.2 A member shall be under a general obligation of bringing to the notice of the Chief Executive any facts or matters indicating that another member may have become liable to disciplinary action.
- 7.3 Where a complaint against a member is made to the CIEH or any fact or matter comes to the attention of the Chief Executive indicating that a member may be guilty of misconduct, the Chief Executive shall initiate disciplinary procedures

8. Screening and referral

- 8.1 The Chief Executive shall refer the complaint and any supporting evidence to a screener. The screener may make further enquiries or require them to be made (including enquiries seeking comments from the respondent) and shall determine whether or not there is a prima facie case to answer.
- 8.2 If the screener determines that there is a prima facie case to answer, the case shall be referred to a Disciplinary Panel. The complainant shall be advised of this action.
- 8.3 If the screener determines that there is no case to answer the matter shall be referred to a lay moderator. The lay moderator shall consider the decision made by the screener and shall confirm or overrule that decision.
- 8.4 If the lay moderator overrules the decision of the screener and determines that there is, in fact, a prima facie case to answer, then the matter shall be referred to a Disciplinary Panel. The complainant shall be informed of the lay moderator's decision.
- 8.5 If the lay moderator confirms the decision that there is no case to answer then the complaint will not be considered further. The complainant shall be informed of the lay moderator's decision.
- 8.6 Where a case is referred to a Disciplinary Panel, the respondent shall be advised of the proposed date of hearing and of his rights:
 - 8.6.1 To make a submission in writing or in person
 - 8.6.2 To be represented
 - 8.6.3 To call and cross examine witnesses

9. Appointment of Disciplinary Panel

- 9.1 A Disciplinary Panel shall be appointed by the CIEH executive and shall consist of a Chartered Environmental Health Practitioner, and two other persons. At least one member of the Panel shall be a lay person.
- 9.2 No member of the Board of Trustees, Assembly of Representatives or members of any related committees may be appointed to a Disciplinary Panel.

9.3 The three members of the Disciplinary Panel shall determine which of them shall be Chair.

10. Consideration of the complaint by a Disciplinary Panel

10.1 Subject to the availability of the respondent, the Disciplinary Panel shall meet as soon as practicable to consider the case.

10.2 The respondent shall have a right to appear before the Panel.

10.3 The complainant may attend the meeting only if invited to do so by or on behalf of the Disciplinary Panel or if called as a witness by the respondent.

10.4 The Panel may be attended by staff of the CIEH who may respond to requests for information from the Panel. The Panel may seek independent legal advice.

10.5 The Chair may decide whether the proceedings shall be open, in whole or part, to the public, who may be excluded at any time at the Chair's discretion.

11. The decision of the Disciplinary Panel

11.1 The Disciplinary Panel shall consider the case, may deliberate in camera, and shall determine whether the respondent is guilty of misconduct.

11.2 If a finding of guilty is reached, the panel may:

11.2.1 Reprimand the respondent and give advice as to future conduct including recommending a course of action; or

11.2.2 Transfer the respondent to another grade of membership; or

11.2.3 Remove any membership privilege enjoyed by the respondent; or

11.2.4 Terminate the respondent's membership.

12. Costs

12.1 The Disciplinary Panel may require a respondent who has been found guilty of misconduct to pay an amount in respect of the costs of the proceedings, including the expenses reimbursed to any witness.

12.2 In determining sanctions, the Disciplinary Panel may take into account the respondent's previous conduct record, provided that information relating to such record may not be provided to the panel before it reaches a determination.

12.3 If a member resigns after receiving notification of a complaint, then the Chief Executive will determine whether or not to accept the resignation. If the resignation is accepted then the member will be informed that the consideration of the complaint against them will lapse on the condition that it will recommence should they seek to rejoin the CIEH in the future.

12.4 The Disciplinary Panel shall advise the Chief Executive promptly of its decision. The Chief Executive shall inform the respondent of the decision in writing within 14 days.

The Chief Executive may also publish the decision in accordance with guidance issued by Board of Trustees.

- 12.5 The complainant shall be informed of the Disciplinary Panel's decision if no appeal is lodged.

13. Appeals

- 13.1 A respondent who is subject to a guilty finding and sanction may appeal, but only on one or more of the following grounds:

- 13.1.1 That the decision of the Disciplinary Panel was unreasonable given the evidence placed before it
- 13.1.2 That additional evidence (which was not available at the time of the meeting) has subsequently become available and that this evidence could have materially affected the decision of the Disciplinary Panel
- 13.1.3 That the provisions of these regulations were not followed in a material respect resulting in prejudice to the respondent's ability to defend himself
- 13.1.4 That the proposed sanction is disproportionate

- 13.2 Any appeal shall be made in writing to the Chief Executive, to be received within 31 days of the date of posting of the letter containing the decision of the Disciplinary Panel. To be within the deadline, an appeal under this regulation must be substantive (not simply a notice), and shall include any new evidence if this ground is relied upon.

- 13.3 Upon receipt of an appeal, the CIEH shall appoint an Appeal Panel which shall consist of one Chartered Environmental Health Practitioner and two persons who are not members of the CIEH, one of whom shall have a legal or other relevant qualification satisfactory to the CIEH who shall chair the panel. The panel may not include a Trustee on the Board of Trustees, Assembly Representative or a member on any relevant committee, or any person who was a member of the Disciplinary Panel sitting for the case in question.

- 13.4 The Appeal Panel shall meet as soon as practicable to consider the appeal.

- 13.5 The decision of the Appeal Panel, which may be taken by simple majority, shall be binding and shall be communicated to the Chief Executive. Such a decision may be to uphold or overturn or vary the decision and/or sanction of the Disciplinary Panel (and for such a purpose the Appeals Panel shall have all relevant delegated powers)

- 13.6 The decision of the Appeal Panel shall be final.

- 13.7 If the Appeal Panel upholds an appeal, then the case shall be referred back to the Disciplinary Panel for re-consideration in the light of the additional evidence. That the Disciplinary Panel shall have power to uphold, set aside, or vary its previous decision.

- 13.8 The Chief Executive shall inform the appellant and the complainant in writing of the decision of the Appeal Panel, and may publish the decision in accordance with guidance issued by the Board of Trustees.

14. Expenses and indemnity

- 14.1 The Board of Trustees shall have power to pay attendance and other fees to members of the Disciplinary Panel or Appeal Panel and may reimburse to any person attending a Disciplinary Panel or Appeal Panel their reasonable expenses for travelling and subsistence.
- 14.2 The members of the Disciplinary Panel and Appeal Panel are indemnified by the CIEH against all or any legal liability arising out of the disciplinary proceedings and to the extent permissible at law.

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Further information

Published by:

CIEH
15 Hatfields
London
SE1 8DJ
England, UK

www.cieh.org
membership@cieh.org
020 7928 6006

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