



## **Code of Conduct for Council Members**

### ***Purpose***

1. For the Council to command the confidence of all interested parties, it is necessary for the Council members to observe appropriate standards of conduct. The purpose of this Code is to help to ensure that high standards are met and that those who act in the name of the AVPRC are beyond reproach in the way they conduct themselves and the business of the AVPRC. The required standards are set out in this Code that applies to all members of Council upon appointment. Its provisions apply generally to those who sit on committees; sub-committees; working parties, etc.

### ***Principles***

2. In performing their duties, Council members should observe the seven principles of public life ('The Nolan Principles'); namely:

**Selflessness:** holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends;

**Integrity:** holders of public office should avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions to gain financial or other material benefit for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships;

**Objectivity:** holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias;

**Accountability:** holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office;

**Openness:** holders of public office should be as open and transparent as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands;

**Honesty:** holders of public office should be truthful;

**Leadership:** holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

### ***General guidelines***

3. Council members are expected:

- To act in good faith;
- To treat others fairly, equally and with respect;
- To behave in a business-like and professional manner;
- To work collaboratively with colleagues/staff;

- To listen to and value the views of others.
4. Members should also lead by example and demonstrate the values that underpin the culture of the AVPRC:

- Identity;
- Community;
- Professionalism;
- Caring;
- Accountability;
- Courage.

***Specific guidelines***

5. Council members are responsible for ensuring that they have a clear understanding of their role and the role of the AVPRC as set out in this document, and in the regulatory capacity implied by the Veterinarians Act 2005. Having been elected or appointed, they have a responsibility to make themselves available for meetings of the Council and any committees, sub-committees, working parties, etc., to which they have been appointed (unless they are unable, with good reason, to do so); and to be diligent in reading papers and considering issues to ensure that they are making decisions on a fully informed basis.

6. Council members should follow the principles of mutual respect in all their activities and be prepared to accept that others may have equally strong views in good faith that differ from their own. Council members must uphold high standards of courtesy and respect in all Council debates and meetings. Council members should treat colleagues with respect and not engage in any behaviour towards any colleague or member of staff that might reasonably be interpreted as discriminatory, bullying or harassment.

***Collective responsibility***

7. Council members are collectively responsible for the decisions, even if they have voted against, abstained from voting or were absent when the decision was made, and are expected to respect the collective decision.

***Confidentiality***

8. Council members must not disclose information that has been shared with them but designated by the AVPRC as private or confidential.

***Conflicts of interest***

9. The 'Policy for managing conflicts of interest' requires all Council members to file a Declaration of Interest; to keep it up to date; and to declare any additional interests as necessary at each meeting and generally to comply with the requirements of the policy. The policy is reviewed annually for compliance.

***Communication***

10. Council members have a role in communicating with the public and the profession about what the AVPRC does but should take care to ensure that what they say is accurate and consistent with established policies and procedures – if in doubt, they should consult the Chair. Any communication with the media on behalf of the AVPRC must be discussed with the Chair in advance.



11. Council members have a responsibility to distinguish clearly when speaking or writing in any public forum, between the views of the AVPRC and their personal views, or of any other organisation they may be affiliated with.

***Enforcement***

12. Complaints that an AVPRC Council member has breached this Code of Conduct should be made at the earliest opportunity to the AVPRC Chair.

Adapted with permission by RCVS.

Agreed by Council September 2017.