

Responsible Gambling Strategy Board – Code of Conduct

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Code of Conduct sets out the framework within which all members of the Responsible Gambling Strategy Board (RGSB) are required to act, and the core values and standards of behaviour they are expected to uphold. This Code forms part of the terms of appointment for members of the Responsible Gambling Strategy Board.
- 1.2 This Code is based on the model provided by the Cabinet Office Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies¹.
- 1.3 The Code may be reviewed and updated from time to time.

2. Key principles of public life

- 2.1 The key principles upon which this Code of Conduct is based are the Seven Principles of Public Life². These are:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must 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 in order to gain financial or other material benefits 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 to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should 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 so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

¹ [Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies, Cabinet Office](#)

² [The 7 Principles of Public Life, Committee on Standards in Public Life](#)

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.

3. Values and standards

3.1 Members of the Responsible Gambling Strategy Board must at all times:

- adhere to the Seven Principles of Public Life;
- comply with this Code and ensure that they understand their duties, rights and responsibilities, and that they are familiar with the function and role of the Board and any relevant statements of Gambling Commission and Government policy;
- observe the highest standards of impartiality, integrity and objectivity in relation to the advice the Board provides;
- be accountable to the Gambling Commission, stakeholders and the public more generally for the Board's activities and for the standard of advice it provides;
- not misuse information gained in the course of their service for personal gain or for political purpose, nor seek to use the opportunity of their position on the Board to promote their private interests or those of connected persons, firms, businesses or other organisations; and
- not hold any paid or high-profile unpaid posts in a political party, and not engage in specific political activities on matters directly affecting the work of this body. When engaging in other political activities, Board members should be conscious of their public role and exercise proper discretion.

4. Role of Board members

4.1 Members of the Board have collective responsibility for its operation. They must:

- engage fully in collective consideration of the issues, taking account of the full range of relevant factors, including any guidance issued by the Gambling Commission and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport;
- respond appropriately to complaints; and
- ensure that the Board does not exceed its powers or functions.

4.2 Communications between the Board and the Gambling Commission or Ministers will generally be through the Chair, except where the Board has agreed that an individual member should act on its behalf. Nevertheless, any Board member has the right of access to the Chair of the Gambling Commission on any matter which he or she believes raises important issues relating to his or her duties as a Board member.

4.3 Individual Board members can be removed from office by the Chair of the Gambling Commission if they fail to perform the duties required of them in line with the standards expected.

5. The role of the Chair

5.1 The Chair has particular responsibility for providing effective leadership on the issues above. In addition, the Chair is responsible for:

- ensuring that the Board meets at appropriate intervals, and that the minutes of meetings accurately record the decisions taken and, where appropriate, the views of Board members;
- submitting the Board's advice to the Gambling Commission;
- representing the views of the Board to stakeholders and the general public; and
- ensuring that new Board members are briefed on appointment, and providing an assessment of their performance, on request, when members are considered for re-appointment to the Board or for appointment to the board of a public body.

6. Members' interests

- 6.1 Board members must ensure that no conflict arises, or could reasonably be perceived to arise, between their public duties and their private interests – financial or otherwise.
- 6.2 It is the responsibility of individual Board members to ensure that they are familiar with the body's rules on handling conflicts of interests, that they comply with these rules and that their entry in the body's register of members' interests is accurate and up-to-date.

7. Personal liability of Board members

- 7.1 Legal proceedings by a third party against individual Board members of advisory bodies are very exceptional. A Board member may be personally liable if he or she makes a fraudulent or negligent statement which results in a loss to a third party; or may commit a breach of confidence under common law or a criminal offence under insider dealing legislation, if he or she misuses information gained through their position. However, the Gambling Commission has indicated that individual Board members who have acted honestly, reasonably, in good faith and without negligence will not have to meet out of their own personal resources any personal civil liability which is incurred in execution or purported execution of their Board functions. Board members who need further advice should consult the Secretary to the Board.

8. Allowances

- 8.1 Board members should comply with the rules set by the Board and the Gambling Commission regarding remuneration, allowances and expenses (see separate Remuneration, Expenses and Subsistence policy). It is the responsibility of Board members to ensure compliance with all relevant HM Revenue and Customs' requirements concerning payments, including expenses.

9. Gifts and hospitality

- 9.1 Board members are expected to ensure that any acceptance of gifts and hospitality relating to their role on the Responsible Gambling Strategy Board can stand up to public scrutiny. Gifts should be declined wherever possible and any offers should be reported to the Secretary to the Board. Where it would be ungracious or otherwise difficult not to accept, Board members should inform the Secretary of the gift, the estimated value and the donor. Members must take responsibility to ensure that a record is placed in the hospitality register, which will be maintained by the Secretary of the Board.

10. Freedom of information

- 10.1 The Responsible Gambling Strategy Board is not subject to any legal requirements regarding freedom of information. Nevertheless, where information is formally requested in the context of freedom of information, the Responsible Gambling Strategy Board will observe the processes and requirements set out in the Freedom of Information Act. Coordination of the release of information is handled by the Secretariat who will liaise with the Gambling Commission's Information Manager.

11. Correspondence and media enquiries

- 11.1 Correspondence relating to the work of the Responsible Gambling Strategy Board, whether by letter or email, received by Board members must be referred to the Secretary to the Board, who may consult the Chair, for advice on the most appropriate response.
- 11.2 Any media enquiries must also be referred immediately to the Gambling Commission's Head of Communications, who will liaise with the Secretary to the Board and/or Chair about the appropriate handling and response.

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