



Cancer Research UK's Code of Ethics



Together we are
beating cancer

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Code of Ethics opening message from Michelle Mitchell



We want to bring about a world where everybody lives longer, better lives, free from the fear of cancer. To maintain the outstanding reputation that Cancer Research UK has built and continue to deliver our mission of beating cancer, each of us must consistently act in an ethical way.

Conducting our business honestly and professionally, and in an open and transparent way, is essential to maintain the trust and confidence of the people we exist to serve – people affected by cancer, our supporters and the wider public. Our Code of Ethics serves as a guide for how to approach making difficult decisions and sets out how we're all expected to conduct ourselves at work. It defines how we must act to maintain our reputation and uphold our values.

Our Code of Ethics is for our staff, trustees, volunteers, members, and anyone who represents the charity in an official capacity. It's here to help guide us all individually as we play our part in beating cancer.

Acting ethically isn't about always taking the easy decision. It's about balancing the risks and benefits for the charity to take us that step closer to achieving our mission of beating cancer, in a way that aligns with our organisational values.

Our purpose and values

Cancer Research UK exists to beat cancer. Our values describe the core beliefs that unite us all in this mission.

Our Code of Ethics reflects our organisational values, as these are central to who we are as a charity.

Our refreshed organisation values



Bold

Act with ambition, courage and determination



Human

Act to have a positive impact on people



Credible

Act with rigour and professionalism



Together

Act inclusively and collaboratively

Our ethical commitment

To beat cancer, we need to be here for the long term. Being a sustainable organisation means maximising our investments to meet our goal of beating cancer, looking after our people and making sure our places of work and our events are safe. All of this will help to maintain our reputation.

First and foremost, we must all always comply with the laws and regulations that apply to us and follow the rules that are relevant to our roles. But to succeed in our mission we go beyond that.

We all need to role model the behaviours and actions that have built our reputation. Individually and collectively, we need a strong commitment to making decisions that are in the long-term best interests of people affected by cancer, even when this means choosing the most difficult option in the short-term. Following these principles will allow us to achieve our mission ethically whilst also having a positive impact on society.

Taking collective responsibility for the standards we set ourselves also means having the confidence and courage to speak up if something doesn't feel right, while acknowledging that individual and personal beliefs may well differ from our organisational values.

Purpose and scope of the Code of Ethics

Our Code of Ethics is the foundation on which all our organisational policies, codes and principles have been built. This is a reference guide – not a ‘how to’ manual. It should help you understand how the charity expects you to approach making difficult decisions, guiding you towards delivering the right result for the charity and the people we serve. It should also help you understand how the charity expects you to treat the people you interact with in the course of your job.

The Code of Ethics will help you understand your personal responsibilities, the risks you must consider and how to ask for help or raise concerns. It aims to define our shared commitment to achieving impact, sustaining an ethical culture linked to purpose, and give clear responsibilities resulting in better and more consistent decision-making and standards of behaviour by all. Our Code of Ethics is important and failure to adhere to comply could result in disciplinary action – up to and including dismissal.

We operate in a changing environment that will continue to pose new ethical challenges. To ensure our code remains fit for purpose it will be reviewed every three years.



Who does this apply to?

Our code of ethics is for everyone in the organisation, and we're all responsible for behaving ethically.

Whether you're a permanent, fixed term or temporary colleague, employed by us (Cancer Research UK or Cancer Research Horizons) or engaged as an external secondee, contractor or agency worker, you will be guided by our Code of Ethics and values.

Cancer Research UK is bigger than those we employ and that is why we also ask our Trustees, volunteers, and those who represent the charity in any official capacity (eg the chairs of our funding committees), to commit to the standards and values in our code.

Funding medical research is part of our core purpose. Conduct of biomedical research is subject to specific laws, regulations, governance and ethical requirements. We require researchers (and their host institutions) in receipt of our funding to adhere to our grant conditions and all relevant policies and conditions as outlined in the grant award letter that grantees receive. Whilst our grantees are not explicitly covered by this code, we expect the same ethical standards from our grantees that they can expect from us.

Making the best decision for the charity – our Ethical Decision-making Framework

Our Key Policies, Cancer Research UK Requirements and Guidance can't cover every situation we might come across.. To help you navigate times where there isn't clear guidance for what you should do, we have an Ethical Decision-making Framework to help us all make the best decisions we can. This includes situations where you must make difficult decisions and there may not be a clear right answer.

1

In these circumstances, you should:

- Clarify the facts and the context.
- Consider the different stakeholders and the impact of action(s) on them.
- Consider a range of options and alternatives.

2

You should then ask yourself:

- Is this in line with our vision and mission?
- Is this in line with our values and leadership behaviours (if applicable)?
- Is this sustainable?
- Am I comfortable with any ethical consequences of this action?
- Would I be happy explaining this to our supporters?
- Would I be happy if this happened to me?
- Would it be ok if everyone did this?

3

Yes:

If you answer 'yes' to all the questions above then move ahead, making sure you follow our Key Policies, CRUK Requirements and Guidance

No:

If you answer 'no' to any of the questions above, stop and revisit the issue in discussion with your manager and colleagues before you act.

Not sure:

Get some different perspectives from your manager and colleagues before agreeing the best way forward.

4

Following the standard rules and processes will nearly always create the right result, but there are exceptions to this. If you feel that following a rule or process would result in a poor outcome, or could be damaging to the charity, you should discuss the best way forward with your line manager.

Always talk to colleagues. When making difficult decisions, speak to your manager and other colleagues to get a range of perspectives before making a decision.

How Cancer Research UK makes difficult decisions

To be successful in our mission to beat cancer, we must all consistently act in an ethical way which in turn will uphold our standards and protect our reputation. In areas where decisions can be challenging and involve potential risk to reputation, we routinely seek input from experts and affected stakeholders as well as having multiple balances and checkpoints to ensure we're doing the right thing for the charity. This is in line with Charity Commission guidance on decision-making.

For example, when deciding which organisations we might engage in corporate fundraising with, we have a cross-organisation group that makes recommendations after following a robust process informed by detailed due diligence. This can include expert opinion and views from staff and patients. The most challenging and nuanced decisions are escalated to our Executive Board and, where necessary, onto our Council of Trustees – ensuring that views from leaders in all directorates and our Trustees are considered.



Speaking up – What do I do if I see something that doesn't feel right?



We want everyone at Cancer Research UK to be able to speak up when things don't feel right. If you see or experience any wrongdoing, or something that you don't feel comfortable with, it's extremely important to CRUK that you speak up (provided that you feel comfortable doing so). This will ensure the situation is dealt with, and action is taken to stop it happening again. It also means you can get any support you need.

The first port of call for your concerns is to talk them through with your line manager who can listen and advise on next steps. For day-to-day issues, try to resolve them informally in the first instance. If you don't feel comfortable resolving the issue informally or speaking to your line manager for any reason, there are other channels you can use to report and escalate serious concerns without delay, which are covered in our Code of Conduct.

Decisions made in the best interests of the charity may not always align with your personal views and values. Whilst this may not always feel comfortable, all decisions made by and for the charity are governed by our Code of Ethics and we always make every effort we can to deliver what is in the best interests of the Charity. If you do feel uncomfortable with a decision that has been made, you should raise this with your manager so that they can work through your concerns and help you understand the reason for the decision, even if you might have made a different call yourself.

More details on the different routes and channels available to speak up and make sure the concern you want to raise is dealt with in the fastest and most appropriate way, are included in the Code of Conduct.



Our ethical principles

Our people are our most important asset and we expect the highest standards of conduct, competence, and performance from all who work for or represent Cancer Research UK. Your work must be guided by our ethical principles, enabling us to achieve our ethical commitment. Being compliant is not the same as being ethical. We must all comply with laws and regulations, but ethical decision-making requires us all to go further to do what is right.

Integrity

To be honest, fair, objective and decent in conducting your work, in adherence to our values and ethical principles – and to do this consistently, even when no-one is looking. To make the right decisions for the charity, even when this may mean choosing the most difficult option.

Cancer Research UK will:

- not tolerate bribery, corruption, theft or fraud.
- listen and respond if you speak up when you think something isn't right.
- keep a formal register of any potential conflicts of interest for senior staff and leaders.
- be open and transparent where we can about the decisions that we make and why we make them.

We all must:

- speak up if something doesn't feel right, as long as we feel comfortable to do so, and seek to create a culture where others feel comfortable speaking out.
- know what laws and regulations apply to our roles and follow them at all times.
- declare any potential conflicts of interest – never allow personal interests outside Cancer Research UK, including any duties or loyalties to third parties, to affect our decision-making at Cancer Research UK and avoid placing ourselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try to inappropriately influence us in our work.
- follow the rules and guidance that are relevant to our roles. Only bypass defined processes with explicit permission from the relevant senior person.
- follow our rules and processes for acceptance and refusal of donations, partnerships and gifts – never accept bribes or unauthorised payments.
- keep confidential information provided to, or generated by, Cancer Research UK secure.
- always demonstrate discretion and prudence in our professional communications. If our link to the charity is evident in the public domain, apply the same discretion and prudence to social media activities as outlined in our Protecting our Brand policy.

Respect

To pay due regard to the dignity and privacy of all colleagues, supporters, volunteers and the people affected by cancer whom we serve. To be courteous to those we meet at work.

Cancer Research UK will:

- uphold the law and actively create an environment that encourages respect and acceptance.
- have zero tolerance for bullying, harassment or unjust discrimination.
- support the right for people to hold different views and to express those views in line with the law (in particular, the Equality Act and Human Rights Act) – and in line with our policies.
- use evidence, relevant expertise and, where appropriate, consult those who may be affected to inform decision-making.
- actively work to improve the diversity of staff, volunteers and Trustees, and monitor this regularly.
- create an environment where people of all identities and backgrounds can succeed.
- create an environment where people feel safe to speak up and report unacceptable behaviour from others.
- facilitate a range of staff networks representing different groups.
- provide a wellbeing offering for all staff.
- provide training and guidance to ensure all staff are equipped to meet our standards for respect.

We all must:

- ensure we undertake all relevant mandatory training, so we are clear on the role we are expected to play in maintaining an inclusive and respectful workplace.
- respect differences, taking active steps to include others.
- be professional and courteous, maintain good working relations and create space for colleagues to disagree with you and others respectfully.
- take a rigorous and consistent approach to making decisions on allocating opportunities for colleagues.
- respect confidentiality and privacy of colleagues and supporters.
- ensure concerns are listened to and properly addressed, either informally or formally – never criticise or victimise anyone for speaking up.

Accountability

To take responsibility for one's decisions and actions, and their consequences, and be willing to submit oneself to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this. That means doing the right thing each time, irrespective of whether someone is looking.

Cancer Research UK will:

- provide you with a clear role profile and a named line manager.
- provide mandatory and optional training to support you in conducting your role.

We all must:

- take responsibility for carrying out the duties of our roles, ensuring you make best use of time at work.
- for people manager's, take responsibility for assessing the performance of staff members in a fair and factual manner, in line with agreed focus areas.
- provide advice and guidance to colleagues where appropriate, and exercise adequate supervision and control over tasks we delegate.
- if you're a Cancer Research UK leader, role model the Leadership Behaviours in your day-to-day work.

Responsible and sustainable

To play our part in supporting Cancer Research UK's commitment to being a responsible and sustainable organisation that achieves its mission while maximising the positive impacts it has on people and the planet and minimising its negative impacts, now and for future generations.

Cancer Research UK will:

- develop and implement a sustainability strategy and report regularly on progress.
- maintain our Modern Slavery Statement.
- maintain our supplier code of conduct.

We all must:

- use only what is needed for work and reduce consumption to what is essential using green suppliers where possible.
- only travel for work when necessary to support our mission, favouring public transport, vehicle sharing and train journeys.
- look for more sustainable alternatives considering the whole lifecycle of the product – from how it is made, used, maintained and disposed of.
- Where possible, establish a circular economy for the goods and services we procure, considering sharing, leasing, selling on, repairing and refurbishing.
- minimise waste, re-use what you can and recycle what we can't. Minimise water, energy and carbon use whenever possible.
- apply due diligence to fight modern slavery, human trafficking and child exploitation in our supply chain.

Code of Conduct

sponsorship, assurance and reviews

Code of Ethics sponsor	Executive Director of Policy, Information and Communications The Sponsor has ultimate executive accountability for the content and operation of this code and will coordinate the activity of the business contacts who together manage the day-to-day aspects of this code and its operation.
Policy assurance	The Sponsor will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• make sure this code is reviewed regularly and updated to align with external or internal developments and reflect current best practice.• in collaboration with other colleagues, ensure appropriate levels of awareness and understanding of this code.• put in place the controls and operational metrics needed to provide appropriate assurance that the code is operating effectively. This may include formal audits, compliance checks, regular surveys of staff knowledge, or monitoring of training completion.
Executive Board or Council approval	This code will be reviewed triennially by our Executive Board and the Council, on the recommendation of the Operational Risk Committee (ORC). A proposal from the Sponsor to make any material amendment to the policy will trigger an early review.
Date of last review	November 2023
Next review due	November 2026