

Statistics New Zealand Code of Conduct

The Departmental context

Statistics New Zealand is a Public Service department and our overarching outcome is “*an informed society through official statistics*”; our mission is turning data into relevant knowledge, efficiently.

The department needs to demonstrate high standards of professionalism and integrity. Our cornerstone principles of integrity, confidentiality, data security and statistical excellence reinforce that requirement, together with our operating values of connecting, communicating, and leading. These principles and values must be reflected in the conduct and behaviour of the people who work for the department i.e. us.

This **Statistics NZ Code of Conduct (Code)** highlights the aspects of our conduct and behaviour that are critical to the successful execution of our roles, at departmental and individual levels. Our impartiality, trustworthiness and objectivity are critical if we are to continue to enjoy the confidence of our Minister, ministers, public and state service colleagues, business, communities and citizens.

This *Code* should be seen as a guide for our behaviour rather than a strict set of rules. Ultimately discretion and sound judgement are what counts. The *Code* is intended to assist staff to make good judgement calls and to remind us of the risks, potential pitfalls and conflicts, of which we must remain mindful.

This is an important document for all departmental staff regardless of position and location. It lets us know, in plain language, how we must undertake our roles in order to maintain high standards of integrity and conduct. We are expected to abide by these ethical requirements, and that means reading this Code and referring to it, as needed, in the course of our work.

Relationship of State Services Code of Conduct and other documents

On joining Statistics New Zealand, staff are provided with a copy of the *Standards of Integrity & Conduct* (a Public Service / State Sector wide Code issued by the State Services Commission in June 2007). The SNZ Code of Conduct mirrors that SSC document, and all new staff are required to sign a declaration that this departmental Code of Conduct has been received. This Code references a number of related departmental policies and practices, which are available under Corporate Policies in Lotus Notes (specific extracts are also contained in employment agreements).

If unsure then seek advice

This Code does not attempt to list all the circumstances where ethical issues may arise. If you are unsure about how a situation fits within the principles and guidelines then talk to:

- your First Level Leader, Local Area Leader, Team Leader, Manager
- a member of the Executive Leadership Team (including the Government Statistician and Chief Executive)
- Human Resources

- your Union Delegate

Code of Conduct

As a minimum, all staff are required to act and behave in accordance with the SSC Standards of Integrity and Conduct, as outlined below:

FAIR

We must treat everyone fairly and with respect
We must be professional and responsive
We must work to make government services accessible and effective
We must work to make a difference to the well-being of New Zealand and all its people

IMPARTIAL

We must maintain the political neutrality required to enable us to work with current and future governments
We must carry out the functions of Statistics New Zealand, unaffected by our personal beliefs or views
We must provide robust and unbiased advice
We must respect the authority of the government of the day

RESPONSIBLE

We must act lawfully and objectively
We must use Statistics New Zealand's resources carefully and only for intended purposes
We must treat information with care and use it only for proper purposes
We must work to improve the performance and efficiency of Statistics New Zealand

TRUSTWORTHY

We must be honest
We must work to the best of our abilities
We must ensure our actions are not affected by our personal interests or relationships
We must never misuse our position for personal gain
We must decline gifts or benefits that place us under any obligation or perceived influence
We must avoid any activities, work or non-work related, that may harm Statistics New Zealand's reputation or the reputation of the State Services.

The State Services Commission website (www.ssc.govt.nz) provides detailed information about the [Standards of Integrity and Conduct](#) listed above and the State Services Commission's description of [what it means to be professional](#) in the public sector.

Statistics New Zealand's Principles and Values

We have defined three cornerstone principles and three operating values that both reinforce and build on the core State Services behaviours:

Cornerstone principles:

- Integrity
- Confidentiality and data security
- Statistical excellence.

Operating values:

- Connecting
- Communicating
- Leading.

These are discussed in more detail in this Code of Conduct.

INTEGRITY

By integrity, we are talking about being ethical and meeting the high standards of behaviour and practice required by Statistics New Zealand. The statistics we produce are objective and trustworthy, and we are transparent in the methods we use.

This departmental principle encompasses all four of the State Service Commission standards listed on page 2 of this document, i.e. fair, impartial, responsible and trustworthy. Illustrative examples are provided.

Maintain political neutrality

A major characteristic of New Zealand's constitutional arrangements is that state sector organisations are apolitical, or politically neutral. Political neutrality is therefore an essential attribute for staff at Statistics New Zealand. Participation in political activities must not bring into doubt our ability to serve the Government of the day with political neutrality. For us, that is further reinforced by Principle 1 of the United Nations' Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics: "...official statistics ...are to be made available on an impartial basis by official statistics agencies to honour citizens' entitlement to public information".

Staff need to exercise discretion about airing any political views in public – whether in support of or opposition to the government. When government has taken a decision it is the duty of Statistics New Zealand staff, as public servants, to carry out that decision whether or not we personally agree with it.

We must not allow participation in party political activities or special interest groups to conflict with the need to conduct ourselves in a politically neutral way in our official duties. Specific guidance on political activity and participation for public servants in an election year is issued by the State Services Commission, and is communicated across the department. This guidance also covers the case where public servants wish to stand for election to Parliament. The guidance can be found on the SSC website:

<http://www.ssc.govt.nz/political-neutrality-guidance>

Case study - Invitation to attend a social function

Celia is a Statistical Analyst and has been invited to attend the opening of an art exhibition by one of the organisations she deals with. She discusses it with her manager and it is agreed that it would be a useful networking opportunity for her. Once the official invitation arrives, however, she discovers that the function is also a fundraiser for a

political party. Given the need for Statistics New Zealand staff to be politically neutral she decides to decline the invitation.

Respect the authority of the government of the day

The role of the Public Service is to serve the government, and as departmental employees we are “responsible” to the Minister. Maintaining the confidence of the Minister means not only keeping the Minister informed of issues relating to Statistics New Zealand but ensuring there are “no surprises” regarding work implementation and delivery. When informing the Minister on statistical matters we need to remember that we also operate under the equal access principle for statistics, so that no one gets preferred access to statistics before their release; consistent with Protocol 5 of *The Principles and Protocols for Producers of Tier 1 Statistics*, 2007.

We are expected to advise the Minister in advance of situations likely to have an impact on the government’s responsibilities, and issues that may attract public interest or political comment. The caveat is the one mentioned above - no one gets preferred access to statistics before their release. With this exception, we should operate a “no surprises” way of working as this neither interferes with Statistics New Zealand’s independent decision-making role nor its operational responsibilities.

Statistics New Zealand staff have the same rights of free speech and independence in the conduct of their private affairs as any citizen. We have an obligation, however, not to compromise Statistics New Zealand, or the Minister and government, by public comment or criticism on issues or matters we have been involved or associated with in our official role. Such work-related public comment will be regarded as unacceptable if it:

- criticises or challenges proposed or existing government policy and its implementation;
- seems to express or imply an organisational view;
- reveals advice given to the Minister, or to other ministers;
- gives openly partisan support to, or critical comment of, a political party;
- constitutes a personal attack on, or criticism of, the Minister, a minister, official or colleague.

As Statistics New Zealand staff we must not make public comment on departmental matters unless expressly authorised by a senior manager to do so. This covers speaking in public, talking to the media or expressing views in print and publications when those views could be taken to represent a formal Statistics New Zealand position. Examples of media include national or local newspapers, radio or television, community magazines, hobby group newsletters, the Internet (including private websites, chat rooms/groups and news groups), and anything that is being published or broadcast.

Case studies – Commenting on matters of government policy

David recently joined Statistics New Zealand and is extremely interested in politics. He has found a chat room on the Internet that has spirited debate about the pros and cons of current government policy. David is considering whether to start contributing to the discussion. He needs to be aware that he must not divulge any information that he has gained in the course of his work at Statistics New Zealand in the chat room. Even if David contributes anonymously there is a possibility that his connection with Statistics New Zealand could be found out. He needs to consider the implications there would be for Statistics New Zealand’s political neutrality should his workplace become known.

Su-Lin is part-way through a field interview at a household and thinks it’s going well until the homeowner loudly declares that he was a local candidate for a party that believes in less Government and bureaucracy. He begins a tirade against the current Government and Statistic’s NZ’s role in collecting information for its “political masters in Wellington”. Su-Lin politely explains that she does not hold a view on those matters

and that she is merely trying to carry out her job. As the householder appears unwilling to stop the tirade and complete the survey she correctly discontinues the interview, removes herself from the situation and promptly reports the incident to her manager.

Act lawfully and effectively

We are expected to obey the law and act within the letter and spirit of the law at all times. The purpose of many of Statistics New Zealand's policies and procedures is to give effect to the requirements of the law. The law includes common-law obligations such as not being absent without approval; undertaking the duties for which we are paid to the required standard; carrying out all lawful and reasonable employer instructions; working as directed; and operating competently, efficiently and safely in our work.

Use departmental resources appropriately

The department also has a statutory duty to use resources efficiently, effectively and economically. We need to follow careful processes for procuring and using our department's resources and in disposing of assets that are no longer required.

All Statistics New Zealand's property, business tools, resources and money must:

- be used for Statistics New Zealand's business purposes only;
- not be removed from the workplace without proper authorisation and, if granted, be protected to the best of our ability;
- be treated with care and used sensibly and economically, being aware that any use of Statistics New Zealand's property or business tools is a use of public funds.

Business tools are any resource or equipment made available by Statistics New Zealand to us for carrying out our duties. Examples include telephones (including mobile phones), photocopiers, faxes, stationery, taxi cards, credit cards, and personal computers and related computer facilities e.g. use of the Internet and other databases.

Where limited personal use of a business tool has been approved, the use is still a privilege. We are expected to exercise good judgement with regard to frequency, volume and purpose for which we use Statistics New Zealand's equipment, work resources and other business tools.

With the increasing use of technology the integrity and security of our systems is vital. Statistics New Zealand has issued separate *Information Technology (IT) Security Policies*, under Corporate Information: Our IT Environment, that provides guidance for the use of Statistics New Zealand information systems. Other policies and guidelines, such as Credit Cards usage and Sensitive Expenditures and Gifts, can be found in Lotus Notes, under Corporate Policies. If in any doubt about the appropriate use of departmental property, tools and/or resources please talk to your manager.

Case study - Travel

Tane is keen to attend a conference being held overseas, as part of his professional development. He has mentioned it to his manager who has indicated that Tane may be able to attend but he has yet to receive formal sign-off. When Tane is looking at flight arrangements for the trip he discovers a very cheap airfare but it has to be booked immediately. Tane decides to book the tickets.

Comment: Statistics New Zealand policy is that all travel must be approved by a person's manager and a signed travel request form is required before any flights can be booked. Staff are not to arrange their own travel; it needs to be done through Travel bookings email address.

Be honest

We are expected to act honestly and that means being truthful and open. Being honest requires us to set out facts and relevant issues truthfully and to correct errors as soon as possible. We must be careful about providing only some of the facts about an issue, as provision of only some of the facts may mean we are telling only half the truth.

This obligation is not only work-related. It arises at any time when the consequences of dishonest conduct may have an impact on public trust or on the confidence that the Minister, ministers, Parliament, others in the State Services, or the wider community, can have in Statistics New Zealand.

Protected Disclosures Act

The reporting of any type of wrongdoing is necessary to maintain the highest standards of integrity and behaviour required by Statistics New Zealand. As employees we should not ignore any misconduct or wrongdoing that we become aware of within Statistics New Zealand.

The Protected Disclosures Act 2000 in Corporate Policies, under Whistleblowing within Statistics New Zealand, covers the circumstances of suspected or actual wrongdoing. The Act details the situations when a disclosure of ‘serious wrongdoing’ can be made within the department or to another appropriate authority and the protections that exist for the person making the disclosure.

The Act states that all public sector organisations are required to have appropriate internal procedures for receiving and dealing with disclosures of “serious wrongdoing” in or by that organisation. At induction all new staff are told about the Protected Disclosures Act.

Avoid conflicts of interest

As Statistics New Zealand staff we need to avoid situations that might compromise our integrity and ensure that no conflict exists, or appears to exist, between our private interests and our official duties.

We must avoid any financial or other interest or undertaking that could directly or indirectly compromise the performance of our duties, or the standing of the department. This would include any situation where actions taken in an official capacity could be seen to influence or be influenced by our private interests (e.g. company directorships, significant shareholdings, offers of outside employment).

Where any actual or potential conflict of interest arises with the full, effective and impartial discharge of our official duties, we must inform the Government Statistician and Chief Executive (via our manager) as soon as possible. The Government Statistician and Chief Executive will then determine the nature and degree of the conflict as it relates to our official duties, and decide upon the best course of action to resolve it.

In the course of our employment we may come into contact with information concerning a business enterprise in which we have a significant interest, or where a conflict of interest arises, and we need to disclose the nature of that interest to our immediate manager. We are not to make unauthorised use of information to which we have had access in the course of work.

Many situations of conflict of interest may be resolved simply by transferring a duty from the staff member concerned to another employee not affected by the particular circumstances giving rise to the conflict. Alternatively, we might be required to restrict or

abandon the interest or activity giving rise to the conflict. Where these options are not practical, however, or do not enable the matter to be resolved on an acceptable basis, then, ultimately, the option of resignation from the department may need to be considered.

Case study - Conflict of interest

Phil has joined the Prices Unit. In a conversation with his new manager the topic of working with market sensitive information is covered. Driving home from work that day Phil reruns the conversation and wonders whether he should mention to his manager that he has a share portfolio, and his wife works for a marketing firm which has a wide-ranging client base.

Comment: The simple fact that Phil wonders whether there might be any potential issues is sufficient to warrant a follow up conversation with his manager to raise the matter. This provides both with the opportunity to consider any possible conflicts of interest, and to anticipate and avoid situations that might place Phil and the department in a compromising position.

Case study – Personal connections

Molly has been asked to be a member of a recruitment panel. When she sees the shortlist she realises that her sister-in-law has applied for the position. Molly advises the head of the interview panel and it is decided that, given the closeness of the relationship, it would not be appropriate for her to remain on the panel.

Avoid any activities, work or non-work, which may harm the reputation of Statistics New Zealand or of the State Services (closely aligned to conflict of interest)

As members of the public, we are fully entitled to participate in community life including public bodies and associations and political parties. Such participation, however, must not conflict with our position and responsibilities in Statistics New Zealand or discredit the department in any way.

If we become actively involved in the activities of a political party we may be creating a conflict of interest with our duties or position in Statistics New Zealand, because our political impartiality may then be called into question. Active participation in a political party must therefore be discussed with Statistics New Zealand in advance. The situation of public servants standing for political office is covered separately in guidance provided on the State Services Commission website, www.ssc.govt.nz i.e. *What is 'political neutrality' and what does it mean in practice?*

Membership of unions and professional associations, and active participation in such groups, are not the sorts of actions that, in themselves, will harm Statistics New Zealand's reputation. Where activities involve direct criticism of, or opposition to, government policy there is a need to ensure that it is part of a collective action.

Involvement in undertakings external to Statistics New Zealand such as secondary employment, self-employment or other commercial enterprises need to be viewed from the perspective that Statistics New Zealand has the primary consideration.

While employed by the department, we must not undertake any other employment without the written permission of the Deputy Government Statistician and Deputy Chief Executive of the business unit. If considering undertaking paid or unpaid work that may conflict with work in Statistics New Zealand it needs to be discussed with management first.

Personal behaviour of staff that does not interfere or impact on the performance of official duties is of no concern to Statistics New Zealand. If the department is to be effective, however, it must have a reputation for discretion. Behaviour that may bring an individual member of staff into disrepute may also discredit the department.

In this light, we must avoid activities which, whether connected with our official duties or otherwise, might undermine the credibility of Statistics New Zealand and jeopardise working relationships with the Minister, ministers, government departments, and other organisations and individuals we work with on an ongoing basis.

We have a responsibility to carry out our duties as efficiently and safely as possible. To this end we must not take illegal drugs, or consume alcohol or other substances, or take or not take any other actions that reduce our ability to perform our duties to the required standards and in a healthy and safe manner for ourselves and other staff.

Borrowing money from, lending money to, or entering into any financial or business arrangement with other employees in Statistics New Zealand is strongly discouraged as it could ultimately compromise our ability to carry out our duties, including any staff management responsibilities.

If we find ourselves facing criminal charges, including traffic offences, we must advise our manager. The department will take into account the nature and circumstances of any conviction, our position, and duties and responsibilities.

There are occasions when staff need to declare their financial interests. We must advise the department of shareholdings or other investments and personal business interests in circumstances where it could be perceived that we stand to gain financial benefit from information gained through our position in Statistics New Zealand (refer also to the previous section on conflicts of interest). This is particularly true for those of us who have access to commercially sensitive information. In many cases only we as individuals may be aware that there is a conflict of interest. We therefore have an ongoing responsibility to notify a senior member of staff if a potential or actual conflict of interest arises.

On leaving the department we are required to maintain the confidentiality of any information we have gained through working in the department.

Case study - Secondary employment

Ruth works part-time at Statistics New Zealand. She is considering setting up her own company to provide website design for non profit organisations. When she talks it over with her manager they discuss the following issues:

- **the likelihood that Ruth's clients will have any relationship with Statistics New Zealand**
- **the amount of time she will spend on the business and the potential impact on Statistics New Zealand**
- **ensuring that Statistics New Zealand time and/or resources are not used**
- **whether there is a potential for a conflict of interest.**

The answers to these questions will help determine if the secondary employment will be agreed to.

Never misuse our position for personal gain

We are not to use our official positions for private gain. Using our positions properly incorporates all the integrity standards. It requires fairness and for us to act within the spirit

and the letter of law and policy. It means that we remain impartial in our work and are not influenced in our decision-making by personal interests or advantage to any person or organisation with which we are connected.

We need to be objective in the way we manage our work, ensuring we are fair, consistent and transparent in what we do. Acting inappropriately will inevitably conflict with the statutory requirement for Statistics New Zealand to function in an efficient and effective way. We must maintain accurate records about what we do, and respond openly to requests for information, so the public can be confident we do not misuse our position.

New Zealanders expect us to work impartially, not to be influenced by personal motives, not to show favouritism and not to misuse public resources for our personal benefit. This means we need to be careful that we do not put ourselves in a position where our work responsibilities could be affected by some other interest. It is equally important that we avoid circumstances where other people could reasonably consider that our personal interests create a conflict with our work responsibilities.

There is always a possibility of conflicts between our professional and personal lives. We need to be alert to this. If such circumstances arise we must be very open and ensure that we have properly disclosed the potential conflict, have distanced ourselves from involvement and avoided acquiring information that could be seen as giving us a personal advantage.

Case study - Use of connections

Simon is in the IT area in Statistics. He has been having difficulty with his broadband connection at home and has had issues getting the problem solved. He jokingly mentions it to a broadband company representative at the end of a work meeting. Later that week he discovers that the problem has been resolved through the actions of this particular company employee.

Comment: Although it was never Simon's intention to seek special treatment this is what in effect has happened. Statistics New Zealand staff need to be aware that if they discuss their personal circumstances then it can be interpreted as a request for action. Steps should be taken to avoid the likelihood of this happening.

Decline gifts or benefits that place us under any obligation or perceived influence

We cannot use our official position for private gain. The guidelines for gifts or benefits are:

- gifts that might compromise, or be seen to compromise, the integrity of Statistics New Zealand must not be accepted;
- gifts that are of more than token value, or are anything but occasional, must be declined;
- gifts and rewards must never be solicited or encouraged.

If we receive a gift as a result of official duties with a value exceeding \$50, where possible, we must first advise management. Even if the monetary value is less than \$50 but we think there is a possible issue about accepting a personal gift then we must discuss this with our manager. They will decide whether it is appropriate to retain the gift or whether the gift is more appropriately considered as a gift to the department.

Human Resources maintains the gift register and any gifts with a real or likely value of \$50 or more must be recorded on a *Gifts and Hospitality Form* which is in the Policy and Guidelines on Sensitive Expenditure and Gifts, in Corporate Policies under Financial Management: Discretionary Expenses. When completed this form is to be sent to the Chief People Officer.

The line between token gifts of appreciation and those that might compromise the recipient is sometimes difficult to draw. While low value expressions of appreciation are acceptable, we need to decline any gift or hospitality that might be seen as placing us under some kind of obligation or that would compromise our integrity.

The following factors are likely to reduce the possibility that a gift or hospitality could be seen as a bribe or inducement for favour:

- it does not occur in relation to negotiations with the donor;
- it has little monetary value;
- it is in line with accepted business practice;
- the purpose is building relationships;
- it is part of an exchange of gifts.

If we think that we have been subject to an improper inducement, or offer of reward, we should promptly bring it to the attention of the department through a Manager or Human Resources.

Case study - Risks of accepting gifts

Lisa is a manager in Statistics New Zealand and has a limited financial delegation. A supplier has sent her some information about their pricing as they are keen to get some business from Statistics New Zealand. When the supplier contacts Lisa he offers to “give her a couple of new products to try out at home”.

Comment: Lisa needs to understand that it is not appropriate for her to accept gifts of this nature as it could be considered an inducement or bribe.

Case study - Gifts and hospitality

Tim is required to purchase some new equipment for Statistics New Zealand. He arranges a number of quotes from different companies. Tim deals with one of the companies on a regular basis and has developed a good relationship with them. When he is discussing the potential purchase with them the manager mentions that he has free tickets to the Bledisloe Cup match that is being held in a few weeks time. When Tim finishes getting all of the quotes he finds that this company offers the best deal.

Comment: If Tim accepts the tickets it creates a risk that he will not be seen as impartial when choosing the supplier. A competitor of the provider could allege that he was given a reward in order to look more favourably on the other provider. Tim and his manager decide that it is not appropriate to accept the gift.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA SECURITY

We set the highest standards for protecting the confidentiality and security of data. Our reputation is one of our most valuable assets. It strengthens public trust and cooperation, and we go to great lengths to maintain it.

We need to maintain the integrity of official statistics, and always observe and maintain the highest standards for protecting the confidentiality and security of data.

Maintaining the integrity and security of official information is a vital issue for Statistics New Zealand. For this reason, on joining the department we are required to agree to, and sign, a *Declaration of Secrecy* form as required by the Statistics Act 1975. No staff member (whether permanent, casual, contractor or secondee) must begin work for the department until that form has been completed and signed.

Statistics New Zealand is very security conscious when it comes to ensuring our data is secure. We have a number of security policies and practices. Information about how to access these

is provided as part of every new employees induction, along with an informative “Traffic Light” Security Summary. Refer to the Security Policies Framework Homepage for further information. Failure to observe relevant security procedures is a serious lapse of duty.

The unauthorised use or disclosure (leaking), by Statistics New Zealand staff, of information to which we have had official access will result in disciplinary action that may include dismissal. This confidentiality requirement continues even after cessation of employment or involvement with Statistics New Zealand.

Official information

The availability of official information is a foundation of our democracy. We need to follow established procedures when responding to information requests, and be alert to the interest that the Minister also has in information held by Statistics New Zealand. When we receive requests to release politically sensitive information we must notify the Minister well in advance of any release.

Public perception about the integrity of Statistics New Zealand will be shaped by the way we manage information. The Official Information Act requires us to give reasonable assistance to applicants so that they frame requests with “due particularity”. This means we should not be evasive in compiling responses, nor answer in a way that will result in an applicant receiving information presented in a misleading way. The obligation for honesty is pervasive.

The disclosure of official information is subject to the Official Information Act 1982 and Privacy Act 1993.

Case study - Keeping information confidential

Staff at Statistics New Zealand may have access to information that other people, including friends and family, are interested in; particularly when official data on a particular topic is being covered by the media. It can be awkward – especially when staff have just joined the department - to decline to “give out information” without appearing to be rude. Most people will understand if it is explained to them. If someone is being persistent then you will have to outline why you are not able to discuss work matters outside the office.

Case study - Confidentiality

William works in Corporate Support and is studying accounting part-time at University. He becomes friendly with a couple of other classmates. One of the class mates starts asking questions about Statistics New Zealand’s preferred suppliers and what the department is charged for certain services. William declines to respond and later finds out one of the classmates works for an organisation that is tendering for some work at Statistics New Zealand.

Case study - Confidentiality

Michelle has just finished a household interview and is going through the polite process of leaving when the homeowner mentions that due to his illness he is looking for someone to paper, paint and renovate the lounge and dining rooms. Michelle leaves, but during the course of another interview two streets down the householder mentions that his son has been made redundant from a local painting firm and is looking for work. While Michelle recognises that it may be of benefit to put the parties in touch with each other she quickly decides against it as she understands that to do so would breach her confidentiality obligations to SNZ and each homeowner.

Comment: Even information that seems quite innocuous can still be useful to other people. William and Michelle need to bear in mind that they each signed an agreement that they must not divulge sensitive work-related information to other people.

STATISTICAL EXCELLENCE

One of our highest priorities is to produce relevant, accurate, and timely data with useful in-depth analysis. We aim to continually improve our technical and quality standards to foster a professional organisation and provide leadership for the Official Statistics System.

Trust and confidence in statistics depends on their relevance, integrity, quality, and coherence as outlined in *The Principles and Protocols for Producers of Tier 1 Statistics*, 2007. Delivering fit-for-purpose statistics means applying our expertise to balancing cost, quality and respondent load. This is the purpose and special role of an official statistics agency, and each of us needs to take up the challenge of finding more efficient, effective, and sustainable ways of making our professional contribution to Statistics New Zealand's work.

Case study – Role of Statistics New Zealand

Jenny, from Statistics New Zealand, is attending a meeting with members of the Canterbury Community Interest Group. At that meeting, one of the group members proposes that the department survey all farmers in Canterbury to obtain their views on a proposed commercial irrigation scheme. There is immediately a positive reaction from some other members at the meeting.

Comment: Jenny needs to respond quickly and advise the group that this is not an appropriate use of public funds, nor consistent with Statistics New Zealand's role which is to objectively report on the country's progress.

CONNECTING

We aim to foster togetherness and openness by working collectively for the benefit of the whole, rather than for ourselves. We share ideas, information and best practice with users, providers, our partners in the Official Statistics System, and with each other.

Being professional, responsive and treating people with respect are at the heart of Statistics New Zealand's value of connecting. Acting in a professional manner requires us to have well developed personal integrity, to be committed to Statistics New Zealand's responsibilities, and to be aware of the extent to which other interests may affect those responsibilities.

Our professionalism is shown by the way we treat people and show them respect. It is shown also in the way we meet the performance standards of Statistics New Zealand, and of our profession.

In our work we need to maintain links with outside organisations, and in doing this it is important we are aware both of our professional responsibilities to Statistics New Zealand and of the need to maintain good relationships with a wide range of outside organisations and individuals.

In a small country it is almost inevitable we will know, personally, some of the people we need to deal with on an official basis. It is important to be alert to the implications of this, and to exercise appropriate discretion. We need to act fairly and impartially, and record processes to ensure transparency.

We need to contribute to the smooth functioning of Statistics New Zealand by:

- not discriminating against anyone;
- protecting the privacy of people accessing services;
- not harassing, bullying or otherwise intimidating colleagues or members of the public;

- respecting the cultural background of colleagues and members of the public;
- having proper regard for the safety of others;
- avoiding behaviour that may endanger or cause distress to colleagues;
- not allowing workplace relationships to adversely affect our work performance;
- valuing equality and diversity by understanding our differences.

Sexual, racial or any other form of harassment, such as workplace bullying, is completely unacceptable.

Case study - Harassment

Tony has just joined a team within Statistics New Zealand. The rest of the team have worked together for a long time and are very close knit. They like to make jokes about each other and give each other a hard time. Initially Tony enjoys the banter but after a while he becomes fed up with some of the comments that are directed at him, particularly as they imply that he is not very good at his job. Tony feels uncomfortable raising the issue with anyone because he thinks that he will be thought of as a poor sport. He is starting to feel unhappy, however, when he thinks about having to go to work each morning and recently called in sick because he couldn't face the comments.

Comment: Tony needs to talk to his manager or another trusted person (eg Union Delegate) about what is going on and how he is feeling. Statistics New Zealand promotes a work environment where staff treat each other with mutual respect. It is unacceptable if any staff member feels picked on, or is the butt of others' jokes. The department has an anti-harassment policy and zero tolerance for workplace harassment and bullying.

COMMUNICATING

We strive to communicate in an open and effective manner with respondents, with data users and with each other. Through transparency in our processes, we aim to increase all New Zealanders' awareness and understanding of official statistics.

One of our immediate departmental outcomes is to ensure that users have access to official statistics, and that what we provide is relevant, meaningful, interesting and easily-accessible and understood, while avoiding emotive or biased language. A hypothetical example might be observing that this is the second quarter in a row of negative growth, without using the word "recession" which is emotive and might provide an inappropriate signal.

Effective communication also requires us to tailor products, services and language to different audiences, without providing preferential or unequal access for favoured audiences. For example, publishing information on the quality of statistics rather than telling some selected audiences only about the series strengths and weaknesses.

We need always to look for customer-focused alternatives to traditional ways of providing information, and consider different ways of most effectively communicating and connecting with citizens.

LEADING

Leadership by example - we aim to guide other organisations in the production of official statistics. To improve our own leadership capabilities, Statistics New Zealand provides resources, support and encouragement for ongoing staff development.

We are committed to developing strong leadership capability within Statistics New Zealand and being exemplars of good leadership practice in the official statistics system. That includes the important role we have in promoting the use of the Principles & Protocols of Official

Statistics to and by other agencies. It also involves actively demonstrating the principles and values outlined in this Code of Conduct, and taking initiative and responsibility for upholding and promoting them amongst our colleagues in the official statistics system.

Where to find out more

This *Statistics New Zealand Code of Conduct* does not, and cannot, specify every situation that may arise during the course of our duties. The main source of further advice is your manager. As mentioned, departmental policies are also useful resources.

Human Resources staff are also available to provide assistance to both managers and staff.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct

All of us are expected to conduct ourselves in accordance with this Code of Conduct. Staff behaviour which, after proper consideration, is found to have breached the *Code of Conduct*, may result in disciplinary action being taken against the individual concerned. This action can range from warnings to dismissal.

If we consider, in good faith, that the standards set out in this guide may have been breached by another member of staff we should raise this with management and/or Human Resources. Each breach of the Code will be carefully and impartially considered and investigated.

Decision making checklist

Ethical behaviour involves using good judgement and a logical process of thinking about whether your conduct or actions are appropriate to the situation.

Commonsense and good judgement based on well-reasoned decision making is required in applying the Code to any situation you face.

If you are unsure if an action you are about to take is correct, ask yourself:

- Is it legal? Does it conform to laws and policies?
- Is it reasonable to use government (taxpayer) resources in this way?
- Is it likely to be misconstrued? Consider the public's perception of your proposed actions.
- Is it open to scrutiny? Are your stated reasons for taking the proposed action your real reasons?

And finally, ask yourself:

- Is it sensible? – In the context of other related decisions.

It may be that a proposed course of action meets all the other criteria, but it just isn't sensible. If you are not sure what an appropriate response to a situation is, you should discuss the issue with your manager before taking any action.

Examples of Misconduct

The following are examples of inappropriate conduct and behaviour. The list is not intended to be exhaustive, and Statistics New Zealand will determine the seriousness of any proven inappropriate conduct and behaviour and the action to be taken.

- Breach of s21 of the Statistics Act 1975 relating to Declaration of Secrecy.
- Falsification of or being a party to, falsification of information, records or documents.
- Unauthorised disclosure or use or treatment of information confidential to Statistics NZ or its customers or the public.

- Admitting to, or being convicted of, any offence which, in the opinion of the Government Statistician, brings into question the employee's suitability for continued employment with Statistics NZ.
- Consistent failure to meet required and specified standards and levels of performance, (including compliance and legislative requirements) for the role.
- Refusal to complete worksheets, leave records, accident reports, performance management and other similar employment related documents.
- Refusal to carry out a legitimate and reasonable request by a manager.
- Failure to discuss a conflict of interest situation with your manager.
- Not reporting for work without advice to your manager and a valid reason.
- Not observing health and safety legislation or related Statistics NZ requirements.
- Behaviour that unreasonably disrupts the work of others in the workplace.
- Behaviour likely to bring Statistics NZ into disrepute.
- Theft or unauthorised use, possession or movement of Statistics NZ or private property.
- Being intoxicated or under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol at work.
- Accessing, downloading and/or storing material from inappropriate Internet sites, or sending, receiving, passing on, printing inappropriate emails / material in an email.
- Verbal abuse, denigration, intimidation or physical assault of any person while on Statistics NZ business or on Statistics NZ premises.
- Discrimination against another staff member or customer or member of the public in a way that contravenes the principles of the Human Rights Act.
- Sexual, racial or other harassment of any person whilst on Statistics NZ business, or on Statistics NZ premises.