

# MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP CODE FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

## Document Information

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## Document History

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1.0	23/09/2024	Document creation
1.1	07/10/2024	Revisions based on recommendations from the Key Project Team and insights findings.
1.2	11/11/2024	Revisions based on recommendations from Round 2 Stakeholder Group Feedback
1.3	11/12/2024	Revisions based on recommendations from Round 3 Stakeholder and NHS CEO Feedback
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# Introduction

## Why has this Code been developed, and who is it for?

Following the publication of the Messenger review, this Code outlines the core principles and characteristic behaviours expected of every manager and leader working within health and social care. It aims to support the further professionalisation of management and leadership within these sectors.

The principles and characteristics in this Code are informed by and align with key health and social care policies and documents, including but not limited to:

- [NHS Constitution](#)
- [Our People Promise](#)
- [Our Leadership Way](#)
- [Seven Principles of Public Life](#)
- [A Workforce Strategy for Adult Social Care in England](#)
- [A Healthier Wales: our Plan for Health and Social Care](#)

Designed to be multi-professional (i.e. covering clinical, non-clinical and social care roles), the Code will support you, as a manager and leader, by emphasising the non-negotiable principles, clearly defining how you should interact and conduct yourself, as well as offering examples of effective and ineffective practices. The Code also requires managers and leaders to consider and invest in their multidisciplinary relationships with the community, their organisation, their colleagues, their team members, and their service users.

## How is the Code structured?

Each page of the Code represents one of the six (6) core principles. It will contain a definition of the core principle and a list of the expected characteristics and behaviours associated with it. Finally, it includes day-to-day examples of effective and ineffective practices to support your understanding of what good and not-so-good look like.

## What does being a manager and leader working in health and social care mean?

Typically a manager is defined as someone responsible for coordinating and overseeing day-to-day operations within a team, department, or organisation. They are often required to plan, organise, direct, and manage resources and processes to achieve specific outcomes, such as ensuring policies are implemented, standards are maintained, and targets are met.

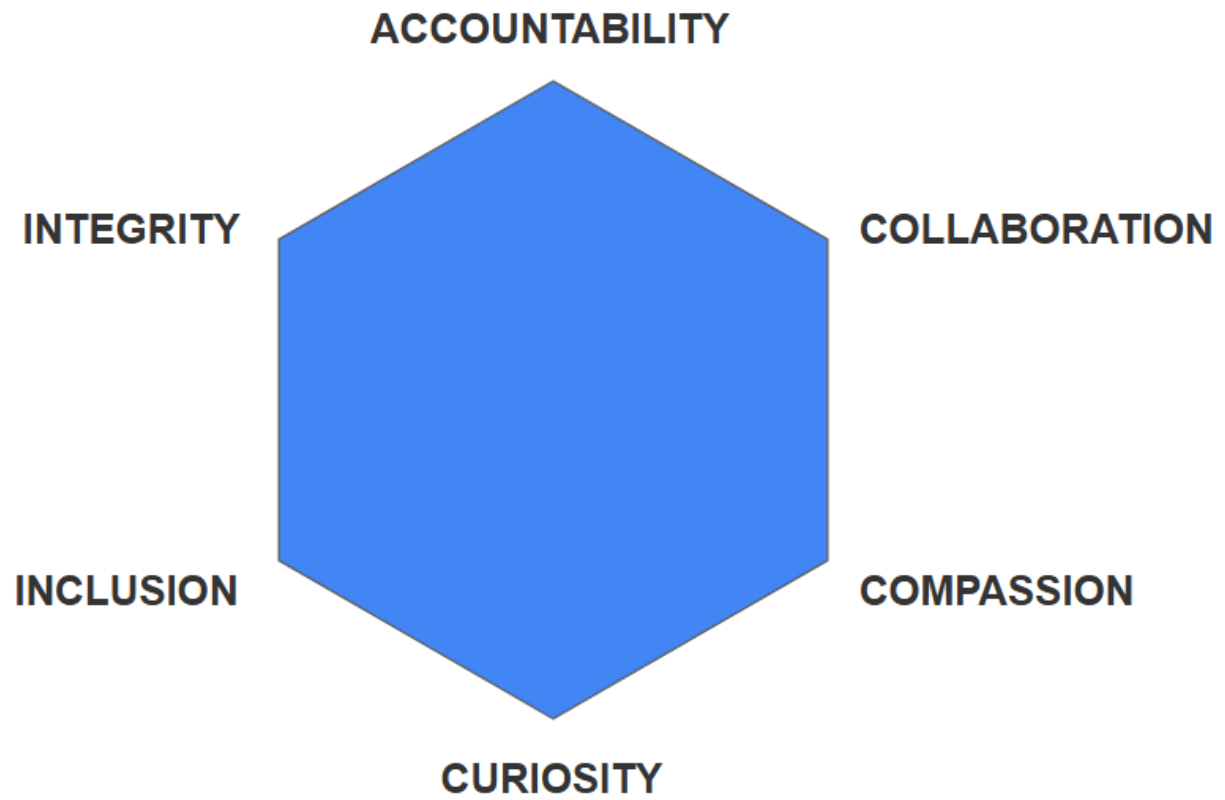
Typically a leader is defined as someone whose role requires them to inspire, influence, and guide others towards a shared vision or goal. This means they are more likely to need to set direction, build trust, encourage engagement, and empower people to contribute their best to drive positive change and long-term success.

Most managers and leaders in health and social care will have roles that require them to manage and lead others, and this means that they likely fit into one or more of the following categories:

- They have direct line management responsibility,
- They are indirectly responsible for achieving outcomes through others
- They lead on key strategically or organisationally important decisions
- They operate at the most senior levels within the organisation, or
- They have responsibility or accountability for managing one or more care delivery services or support/ancillary services.

If the above definition of a manager and leader sounds like you, read on to discover more about the core principles in this Code, and how to leverage them.

## The Core Principles



# ACCOUNTABILITY

## Managers and leaders must:

Own their actions and decisions to achieve the best outcomes and experiences for the people they lead, manage and serve. Guided by justice and fairness, they work autonomously while holding themselves and others to account.

## As a manager and leader, you will:

- Take responsibility for delegated tasks, ensuring completion to high standards.
- Adhere to relevant codes of conduct and practice, setting a positive example for others.
- Admit when you fall short of expectations, demonstrating humility and a commitment to improvement.
- Set realistic and fair expectations for yourself and others, balancing ambition with achievability.
- Recognise and learn from mistakes, respond to serious incidents honestly and transparently, and take appropriate steps to rectify them.
- Maintain transparency in decision-making, ensuring trust, clarity, and integrity in all actions.
- Honour your promises and commitments, understanding the importance of reliability in building trust.
- Embrace your humanity, acknowledging personal challenges and vulnerabilities while remaining focused on delivering results.

## What do effective and ineffective practices look like?

Effective Practice:	Ineffective Practice:
Promptly acknowledges any mistakes, takes ownership, and works collaboratively to prevent them from happening again.	Avoids taking responsibility, shifts blame to others, and fails to resolve issues effectively.
Identifies gaps in support, acts to address them, and involves others in creating sustainable solutions.	Ignores feedback, blames others for challenges, and allows issues to persist without resolution.
Takes ownership of unintended outcomes and collaborates with others to improve results.	Dismisses feedback, avoids responsibility, and undermines trust through inaction.
Addresses gaps openly, involves stakeholders in solutions, and strengthens confidence through collaboration.	Minimises challenges, evades accountability, and weakens trust by avoiding meaningful engagement.

## COLLABORATION

### Managers and leaders must:

Foster respectful, trust-based relationships that harness diverse perspectives and reach beyond team and organisational boundaries. They create an inclusive, people-centred, and future-focused environment, acknowledging everyone's contributions, listening to every voice, and guiding others through change.

### As a manager and leader, you will:

- Create inclusive, people-centred environments to encourage open, respectful communication where all voices are valued.
- Promote teamwork and multidisciplinary cooperation by bridging gaps, inviting external expertise, and building relationships across departments, organisations, and systems.
- Work collectively towards shared goals that improve outcomes and experiences for people, engaging others in decision-making and facilitating inter-organisational cooperation.
- Recognise and celebrate the contributions and achievements of others, fostering a sense of shared success.
- Seek and accept feedback from team members, colleagues, service users, and partner organisations to enhance practices and outcomes.
- Focus on reciprocity and collective benefits, building trust and cohesion that go beyond internal competition.

### What do effective and ineffective practices look like?

Effective Practice:	Ineffective Practice:
Organises meetings with representatives from each group, actively listens to their perspectives, and facilitates an open dialogue to develop shared solutions.	Makes decisions without consulting others, ignoring their input and expertise, leading to inefficiencies and dissatisfaction.
Brings teams together to develop a collaborative solution, gathers feedback, and refines processes based on collective input, fostering trust and improving outcomes.	Imposes a rigid approach without consulting key teams, leading to confusion, resistance, and failure to address core issues.
Organises multi-agency workshops to rebuild trust, encourages shared learning, and facilitates collaborative processes to improve outcomes.	Blames others for challenges, avoids engaging stakeholders in finding solutions, and contributes to ongoing conflict and poor outcomes.
Convenes multi-agency groups to champion shared goals, co-develop strategies, and ensure ongoing collaboration through regular updates.	Focuses solely on one aspect of care, ignoring other partners, leading to fragmented services, lack of coordination, and negatively impacting people's outcomes and experiences.

## COMPASSION

### Managers and leaders must:

Create inclusive, respectful environments where individuals feel valued, safe, heard, and supported to grow and thrive. Rooted in self-compassion and guided by courage, wisdom, and justice, they nurture a culture of belonging, continuous learning, and collective responsibility that improves outcomes and experiences for all.

### As a manager and leader, you will:

- Prioritise the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of colleagues, service users, and yourself.
- Act with empathy, mindfulness, and care, considering the impact of your actions on others.
- Treat everyone with dignity and respect, tailoring your approach to individual needs.
- Foster innovation and continuous improvement aimed at delivering safe, high-quality, effective care.
- Create psychological safety, encouraging open dialogue about concerns, errors, and performance challenges.
- Empower and develop individuals by promoting shared learning, building trust, and supporting team belonging.
- Challenge inappropriate use of power or hierarchy, ensuring compassionate accountability.
- Balance understanding and empathy with the courage to hold difficult conversations and manage performance effectively.

### What do effective and ineffective practices look like?

Effective Practice:	Ineffective Practice:
Approaches people with empathy, offering support and ensuring they feel valued, which improves their confidence and the quality of their work.	Dismisses people's struggles, focusing only on output, which leads to mistakes and negatively affects people's outcomes and experiences.
Acknowledges people's efforts, adjusts timelines where possible, and supports well-being, leading to better morale and improved team performance.	Ignores signs of burnout, pressuring people to meet deadlines, which causes mistakes, delays, and disruption to people's outcomes and experiences.
Reviews workloads, collaborates with staff to improve processes and communicates openly with service users, which enhances trust and service delivery.	Ignores complaints and fail to address staff workloads, resulting in delays and a breakdown in trust with service users.
Engages with the community to identify needs, allocates resources for inclusive services, and improves accessibility, which leads to better outcomes for all.	Focuses on operational goals while overlooking disparities, which worsens inequities and negatively impacts care for vulnerable groups.

## CURIOSITY

### Managers and leaders must:

Maintain a mindset of continuous inquiry, reflective practice, and a passion for learning. By using evidence, embracing diverse perspectives, and encouraging innovation, they challenge assumptions, adapt approaches, and improve outcomes for the people they lead, manage, and serve.

### As a manager and leader, you will:

- Reflect on your behaviours, acknowledge biases and use these insights to grow professionally.
- Ask open-ended questions, listen actively to diverse perspectives, and seek to understand differing viewpoints.
- Regularly review assumptions, applying data, evidence, and risk assessment to guide improvements.
- Encourage colleagues, partners, and service users to share feedback, generate innovative ideas, and collaboratively explore new solutions.
- Maintain a growth mindset, embracing learning opportunities, incremental change, adaptation, and the use of appropriate technology.
- Foster practical innovation by leveraging research and expertise to anticipate trends and enhance outcomes.
- Promote an environment where challenging current practices is welcomed, driving continuous improvement.
- Collaborate across professional, organisational, and system boundaries to achieve meaningful, sustainable enhancements.

### What do effective and ineffective practices look like?

Effective Practice:	Ineffective Practice:
Maintains a curious mindset by asking open-ended questions to uncover the root causes of inefficiencies and encourages brainstorming, leading to innovative solutions and improved patient access.	Dismisses inefficiencies as unavoidable, resist exploring new approaches, and fail to engage the team in problem-solving, leading to continued disruptions.
Adopts an inquisitive approach, seeks input from various stakeholders, and pilots new systems, fostering a culture of experimentation that results in measurable improvements.	Relies on outdated methods without investigating root causes, discourages innovation, and fails to address delays and inefficiencies.
Reflects on assumptions, gathers diverse perspectives, and fosters creativity by developing new strategies, which enhances community involvement and health outcomes.	Assumes traditional methods are sufficient, avoids exploring new ideas, and fails to adapt, leading to disengagement and missed opportunities.
Stays informed about emerging trends, establishes a task force for innovation, and encourages experimentation, ensuring the organisation adapts to future challenges and improves people outcomes.	Avoids engaging with new technologies and relies on outdated strategies, leaving the organisation ill-prepared for future demands.

# INCLUSION

## Managers and leaders must:

Lead by example and consciously champion equity, diversity, fairness, and ethical practice. Creating a culture of belonging ensures everyone feels safe to be themselves, while actively challenging injustices, discrimination, bullying, or harassment.

## As a manager and leader, you will:

- Create an environment where everyone feels safe, valued, supported, and can be themselves.
- Consciously tailor support and resources to individual needs, recognising that everyone is unique.
- Foster allyship, acknowledging the benefits of diversity and working to address inequalities.
- Continuously reflect on and address conscious and unconscious biases, considering their impact on decisions.
- Actively seek out and value input from those who may be marginalised or underrepresented.
- Offer reasonable adjustments so that differences in background, identity, or ability do not limit participation or outcomes.
- Address the root causes of injustices, focusing on prevention rather than merely reacting downstream.
- Engage in continuous learning about cultural humility, inclusivity, and intersectionality to enhance their leadership impact.

## What do effective and ineffective practices look like?

Effective Practice:	Ineffective Practice:
Consults with people to understand their needs, implements inclusive practices, and educates people to create a supportive environment.	Overlooks people's difficulties, expects them to adapt without support, and perpetuates exclusion in the workplace.
Reviews hiring practices, addresses barriers to diversity, and implements inclusive strategies to attract and support underrepresented groups.	Dismisses the lack of diversity as unavoidable, fails to address systemic barriers and limits opportunities for marginalised groups.
Creates safe spaces for dialogue, introduce bias training, and review policies to ensure equity and accountability across the organisation.	Dismisses concerns, assumes existing policies are fair, and fails to provide opportunities for change, reinforcing systemic inequities.
Prioritises equity in strategy, allocate resources to underserved groups, and model accountability by acknowledging privileges and biases.	Avoids addressing disparities, views equity as unrelated to operations, and fails to invest in meaningful change, allowing inequities to persist.



## INTEGRITY

### Managers and leaders must:

Role model the values in this Code through their actions and behaviours, even in challenging circumstances. By acting with honesty, transparency, and high professional and ethical standards, they remain true to themselves, their colleagues, their organisation, and the people they serve.

### As a manager and leader, you will:

- Uphold the highest professional and ethical standards, even when under pressure.
- Demonstrate honesty and transparency, consistently aligning your words with your actions.
- Honour your commitments, following through on promises to build trust and reliability.
- Remain true to the values of the Code, and those of your organisation and profession.
- Acknowledge faults and weaknesses, showing humility and willingness to learn.
- Provide and accept honest feedback, encouraging openness and accountability.
- Approach challenges with authenticity and humanity, understanding the impact of your actions on others.
- Ensure fairness in decision-making and treatment of others, supporting ethical behaviour across your team(s).
- Stand up for ethical principles, even when facing opposition or personal risk, fostering a culture that prioritises safety.

### What do effective and ineffective practices look like?

Effective Practice:	Ineffective Practice:
Addresses issues privately and respectfully, confirms facts, and escalates matters appropriately to uphold transparency and fairness.	Ignores issues to avoid confrontation, compromising ethical standards and undermining trust within the team
Discloses conflicts of interest, removes themselves from decisions, and documents actions to ensure transparency and maintain organisational trust.	Proceeds without disclosing conflicts, prioritising personal interests over integrity and risking reputational harm.
Corrects errors promptly, informs stakeholders, and implements preventive measures, demonstrating accountability and commitment to improvement.	Conceals errors to avoid scrutiny, leaving issues unresolved and eroding trust and accountability.
Makes transparent, ethical decisions, engaging others to find balanced solutions that reflect organisational values.	Implements changes without consultation, disregarding ethical considerations and damaging trust and morale.