

The Code of Conduct

Professional standards for nurses and midwives

You have a duty of care at all times and people must be able to trust you with their lives and health. To justify that trust, you must

- make the care of people your first concern, treating them as individuals and respecting their dignity
- work with others to protect and promote the health and wellbeing of those in your care, their families and carers, and the wider community
- provide a high standard of practice and care at all times
- be open and honest, act with integrity and uphold the reputation of your profession

You are personally accountable for actions and omissions in your professional practice and must always be able to justify your decisions. You must always act lawfully, whether those laws relate to your professional practice or personal life.

Failure to comply with this Code of Conduct may bring your fitness to practise into question and endanger your registration. This Code of Conduct should be considered together with the Nursing and Midwifery Council's rules, standards, guidance and advice available from www.nmc-uk.org.

“Make the care of people your first concern, treating them as individuals and respecting their dignity”

Treat people as individuals

- You must treat people as individuals and respect their dignity
- You must not discriminate in any way against those in your care
- You must treat people kindly and considerately
- You must act as an advocate for those in your care, helping them to access relevant health and social care, information and support

Respect people’s confidentiality

- You must respect people’s right to confidentiality
- You must ensure people are informed about how and why information is shared by those who will be providing their care
- You must not disclose confidential information unless this is done in line with the law of the country in which you are practising

Collaborate with those in your care

- You must listen to the people in your care and respond to their concerns and preferences
- You must support people in caring for themselves to improve and maintain their health
- You must recognise and respect the contribution that people make to their own care and wellbeing
- You must make arrangements to meet people’s language and communication needs
- You must share with people, in a way they can understand, the information they want or need to know about their health

Ensure you gain informed consent

- You must ensure that you gain informed consent before you begin any treatment or care
- You must be able to demonstrate that you have acted in someone's best interests if you have provided care in an emergency
- You must respect and support people’s rights to accept or decline treatment and care
- You must uphold people’s rights to be fully involved in decisions about their care

Maintain professional boundaries

- You must refuse any gifts, favours or hospitality that might be interpreted as an attempt to gain preferential treatment
- You must not ask for or accept loans from anyone in your care or anyone close to them
- You must establish and actively maintain clear sexual boundaries at all times with people in your care, their families and carers

“Work with others to protect and promote the health and wellbeing of those in your care, their families and carers, and the wider community”

Share information with your colleagues

You must keep your colleagues informed when you are sharing the care of others

You must ensure your colleagues understand their responsibilities for each aspect of someone's care

You must work with colleagues to monitor the quality of your work and maintain the safety of those in your care

You must facilitate students and others to develop their competence

Work effectively as part of a team

You must work cooperatively within teams and respect the skills, expertise and contributions of your colleagues

You must be willing to share your skills and experience for the benefit of your colleagues

You must consult and take advice from colleagues when appropriate

You must treat your colleagues fairly and without discrimination

You must make a referral to another practitioner when it is in the best interests of someone in your care

Delegate effectively

You must establish that anyone you delegate to is competent to carry out your instructions

You must confirm that the outcome of any delegated task meets required standards

You must make sure that everyone you are responsible for is properly supervised

Manage risk

You must act without delay if you believe that you, a colleague or anyone else may be putting someone at risk

You must inform someone in authority if you experience problems that prevent you working within this Code or other nationally agreed standards

You must report your concerns in writing if problems in the environment of care are putting people at risk

“Provide a high standard of practice and care at all times”

Keep your skills and knowledge up to date

You must have the knowledge and skills for safe and effective practice when working without direct supervision

You must recognise and work within the limits of your competence

You must keep your knowledge and skills up to date throughout your working life

You must take part in appropriate learning and practice activities that maintain and develop your competence and performance

Keep clear and accurate records

You must keep accurate records of what you tell those in your care, the assessments you make, the treatment and medicines you give and how effective these have been

You must complete records as soon as possible after an event has occurred

You must not tamper with original records in any way

You must clearly sign and date any entries you make in someone's records

“Be open and honest, act with integrity and uphold the reputation of your profession”

Act with integrity

You must adhere to the laws of the country in which you are practising

You must inform the NMC if you have been cautioned, charged or found guilty of a criminal offence

You must inform any other employer you work for if you are suspended from or under investigation at work

Deal with problems

You must give a constructive and honest response to anyone who complains about the care they have received

You must not allow someone’s complaint to prejudice the care you provide for them

You must act immediately to put matters right if someone in your care has suffered harm for any reason

You must explain fully and promptly to the person affected what has happened and the likely effects

Be impartial

You must not abuse your privileged position for your own ends

You must ensure that your professional judgment is not influenced by any commercial considerations

You must ensure any advice you give is evidence based if you are recommending healthcare products or services

Uphold the reputation of your profession

You must not use your professional status to promote causes that are not related to health care

You must only cooperate with the media when you can confidently protect the confidential information and dignity of those in your care

You must uphold the reputation of your profession at all times