

Code of conduct for WLT staff and all those who work on behalf of WLT

WLT expects the highest standard of personal behaviour from its staff and all those who work on its behalf, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.

It is the responsibility of all individuals to be aware of and act in accordance with this code. Breaches of the code will be treated as disciplinary matters in the case of employees; others not employed by WLT may face appropriate sanctions. Line Managers should ensure that their staff are aware of and fulfil their obligations, and should act as role models in the required standards of behaviour.

WLT's general procedures and policies such Financial Misconduct and Corruption, and on Diversity and Equal Opportunities are set out in the Staff Handbook. This code specifically refers to standards of personal behaviour which WLT, its supporters and the general public are entitled to expect.

WLT will not tolerate any form of harassment, bullying, discrimination, personal misconduct or inappropriate behaviour, and individuals are encouraged to report such behaviour that they are subject to, or which they witness. WLT will investigate all allegations and action will be taken where the allegation is proved to be true.

What is bullying and harassment?

Harassment, as defined by ACAS, is unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of men and women in the workplace. It may be related to age, sex, race, disability, religion, sexual orientation, nationality or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident. The key is that the actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient.

Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Whatever form bullying takes, it is unwarranted and unwelcome to the individual.

Avoiding harassment and inappropriate behaviour

All WLT staff should be aware of the impact of their behaviour on others, and consciously avoid behaviour which may even unintentionally cause distress, anxiety and a loss of self-esteem or sense of powerlessness in others. It is understood that close personal relationships may develop between work colleagues and associates, but those initiating such relationships should ensure that this is welcomed by the other party. In particular, those in senior positions should recognise that more junior colleagues may find it difficult to reject contact which is unsolicited or which they find intrusive.

Working with overseas partners

The same high standards are expected of staff working with or visiting partners overseas, where particular care must be taken to observe the acceptable standards of behaviour in that country. It will be considered misconduct if staff do not at all times adhere to the laws and prevailing accepted moral attitudes of a country in which they are travelling. Staff must avoid taking any actions which could harm the relationship between WLT and its partners, and cause WLT reputational damage. Advice can be taken locally with the partner at senior level, but in doubt staff should consult WLT CEO and Director of Conservation.

Reporting and dealing with concerns and allegations

Any individual affected by the behaviour of WLT staff members or others working on behalf of or representing WLT is encouraged to report any concerns or allegations in writing, addressed in the first instance to the CEO. If they feel unable for any reason to approach the CEO, the report should be addressed to the Chair of Trustees.

On receiving a report of personal misconduct, the CEO will notify the Chair of Trustees, and will initiate an investigation in liaison with other senior members of the management team, as appropriate. All allegations will be treated confidentially, and the identity of the person making the allegation will be kept confidential as far as is possible while conducting the enquiry. The person making the report will be kept in touch with progress on the investigation, and will be notified of the outcome promptly when a conclusion has been reached.

If the report or allegation has been found to be proved, the CEO will confirm with the Chair of Trustees the measures to be taken. The procedures outlined in WLT's Disciplinary Procedures will be followed in cases where staff members are found to have been in breach of this code of practice.

Data protection

As far as is possible, WLT will protect the privacy of all individuals concerned in reported cases of personal misconduct but to enable a fair process it may be necessary to disclose the identity of the complainant and the person accused to each other, to others involved in the investigation and in some cases to law enforcement bodies. WLT will not make public statements relating to the case and the identities of those involved, unless the information is already in the public domain or WLT is required to do so for legal reasons.