



# **Contractor Code of Conduct**

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# Ongo Contractors Code of Conduct

All suppliers, consultants and contractors are expected to sign up to the ongo Contractors Code of Conduct. When we contract a person or organisation to conduct work on our behalf we expect that they follow the same ethos as our own staff

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### **1. Working with us**

The principles of openness, fairness and accountability are embedded in the way we operate and are provided for by law and regulation.

The ongo Group is committed to maintaining the highest standards of probity, openness and accountability and all people who work for us have a responsibility to protect and safeguard the organisation's assets and its reputation.

We are committed to fostering a culture of drive, partnership and responsibility – being open, integral, accountable and honest.



The seven principles of public life identified by the Nolan Committee guide the content and ethos of this Code of Conduct:

- **Selflessness** – take decisions solely in terms of ongo’s vision and values. You should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, our family and friends.
- **Integrity** – you should not place yourself under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence the performance of your duties.
- **Objectivity** – you should ensure that in the delivery of services, the appointment of staff or the awarding of contracts, you ensure impartiality and that choices are made on merit alone
- **Accountability** – you should accept accountability for your decisions and actions for residents, the providers of public funds and other stakeholders, and submit yourself to whatever scrutiny is appropriate.
- **Openness** – you should be as open as possible about all decisions and actions that you take. You should give reasons for your decisions and restrict information only when individual or commercial confidentiality clearly so demand.
- **Honesty** – you must declare any private interests relating to your duties and take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that is lawful, and protects ongo’s reputation, values and mission
- **Leadership** – you should promote and support these principles by leadership and example



## **Everyday conduct and behaviour**

Ongo expect the highest standards of behaviour from representatives of ongo in your day to day conduct.

## **Professional Boundaries**

It is essential that relationships between employees, Board Members, customers and other stakeholders are conducted within appropriate professional boundaries. These could include:

- Behaving inappropriately or unprofessionally with colleagues, board members, customers and any other business contacts;
- Intimidating, bullying or harassing;
- Influencing customers with your own beliefs and/or personal values;
- With the exception of rent collection, handling customers' money, valuables or keys to customers' property;
- Giving or receiving loans and/or personal money to or from customers;
- Giving financial advice, for example about savings, investments, debt or benefits unless specified within the duties of the role;
- Inviting or influencing a customer to make a will or trust under which you stand to gain personally;
- Visiting customers outside of working hours, unless agreed by the company;
- Initiating close personal relationships, or physical contact with customers;
- Handling or administering customer's medication, including over the counter medication such as aspirin or paracetamol.



## **Conflicts of interest**

Conflicts of interest arise where your personal or private interests may impair your ability to make an objective or unbiased decision on behalf of the organisation. You must ensure that your own interests and your position as a contractor to the Group are not used for personal gain or gain for family, friends or associates. Examples of interests which should be declared include but are not limited to:

- Any relationship, whether current or previous, of a business or private nature which may give rise to a conflict of interest, for example with a customer or ongo employee
- An interest in any property or land being purchased or sold by the Group;

You should be aware that a conflict of interest can cast doubt on your integrity and can also have a damaging effect on the reputation of the Group. In all cases, you must disclose a potential or actual conflict of interest as soon as you become aware of it. A declaration should be made to the Contracts Manager or the Procurement Manager responsible for your contract.

## **Gifts and Hospitality**

Receiving gifts or hospitality from customers creates a relationship that could be seen to influence judgement, place you under obligation or influence (or be perceived to influence) decisions or conduct. For these reasons, there are very limited circumstances where accepting gifts or hospitality is acceptable. Special attention should be paid by the contractor to the Bribery Act 2010.

## **Tendering, Purchasing and Financial Conduct**



You must exercise fairness and impartiality when dealing with sub contractors, suppliers and consultants on behalf of the Group.

You have a responsibility to safeguard financial resources from abuse, theft or waste.

### **Activities Outside of Work**

It is not the intention of the Group to interfere with your freedom to do as you wish in your own time. However, there could be circumstances when your external interests or conduct impacts on the reputation or integrity of the Group.

### **Conduct outside of work**

Examples of conduct outside of work that may negatively impact on the Group include, but are not limited to:

- Inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour at social functions, away days or other events organised by the Group, social committees or independently among colleagues;
- Making derogatory comments about the Group, customers, employees, board members, suppliers, or anyone else associated with the Group, including on social or professional networking websites;
- Unlawful or unruly behaviour which has the potential to affect the confidence of customers, partners or the wider public in the Group.

### **Political Activity**

ongo's work may take it into the political arena but you must ensure that you demonstrate the Group's non-political nature and you must keep personal activities totally separate from the Group's work.



You may well be involved in your private life in political activity. At the same time you must be aware that ongo is non-political. You must ensure that ongo cannot be brought into the political arena or its reputation or status damaged by your personal political activities. When making any political representation, ongo must clearly be seen as presenting a balanced case in support of the Group's key objectives – creating and sustaining truly vibrant communities.

## **Vision and Values**

ongo's work and reputation relies on our partners upholding and promoting the Group's vision and values.

## **Relationships with the Press and Media**

Unless express authorisation has been granted, you must not make any comments or statements or pass on any information to the press or media that relates in any way to the affairs of the Group.

All press and media enquiries should be directed to the ongo PR team in the first instance.

## **Dress Code**

Although we do not want to be too prescriptive in relation to how you should present yourself at work, we do feel that it is helpful to set out some guidelines:

You are expected to attend work dressed in a manner appropriate for your particular duties.

- You must wear protective clothing where this is provided at all times, including hi-viz;
- Dress and general appearance should be clean, tidy and consistent with the ongo's professional image;

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- Name badges and photo ID badges must be worn at all times when on ongo's business. When meeting a customer, you must introduce yourself by your full name and show your photo ID badge as identification;
  - You should be aware that inappropriate dress and/or ornamentation can create the impression that ongo is inefficient, may intimidate, create offence or be interpreted as disrespectful by customers;
  - Ongo recognises and values the diversity of its suppliers and will take account of ethnic and religious dress requirements with sensitivity by ensuring that employees are free to observe them.

## **Health and Safety at Work**

You have a personal duty to abide by Health and Safety rules and procedures at all time.

You must:

- Work in a safe way at all times, including when driving whilst at work
- Wear protective clothing where provided
- Be aware of health and safety policies and procedures and safe working practices
- Ensure that your conduct does not endanger the health and safety of yourself or other employees, visitors, customers and customers of ongo
- Follow risk assessment policies and procedures to assess whether behaviour or circumstances presents a risk of harm to yourself or others
- Report any accidents or dangerous occurrences
- Inform ongo about any personal difficulties that might affect your ability to do your job competently and safely
- Report any medical conditions that may affect your job
- Participate in agreed health and safety training



## **Property and Assets**

You are asked to ensure that you take reasonable measures to protect ongo property and assets from theft, damage or misuse.

## **Personal Conduct**

You are asked to:

- Be honest and trustworthy;
- Communicate in a clear, courteous, accurate and straightforward way;
- Respect confidential information;
- Treat each other with respect;
- Don't display materials in the workplace that other people might find offensive or use language which work colleagues or customers might find offensive.

## **2. Working with Customers**

All work undertaken on behalf of ongo must comply with the legal requirements set out in the Equality Act 2010. There are 9 strands within the Equality Act 2010, these are:

- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Gender
- Race
- Religion
- Marriage & Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Disability

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- Gender Reassignment

Always respect a customer's privacy.

This information document will aid you in working with our customers.

### **Disabled Customers**

- At all times you must recognize the individual rights of disabled people and their particular needs;
- For example, if a customer has a mobility impairment then it is important when working in their home that their movement is not restricted;
- Avoid asking personal questions which have no relevance to your work;
- It is important that you do not do anything that you are not trained to do, for example assisting or lifting a disabled person.

### **Communicating With Deaf and Hearing Impaired Customers**

- There are a different ways in which you can communicate with a person who is deaf or has a hearing impairment;
- Make sure you have attracted the customer's attention;
- Face the person when talking to them, talk clearly and use your usual tones unless the person indicates otherwise, for example raising your voice may distort what you are saying and make it difficult to lip read;
- Be prepared to write things down, however, be aware that this will not always be appropriate since some people who use sign language may not be able to read written text (sentences in sign languages are structured differently);

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- Let the customer know if you will be making excessive noise, for example drilling or hammering;
  - Give clues as to what you are talking about in your face, your body language and the gestures you make;
  - Let the customer know if you have to leave the premises, for example to get work tools or equipment from your van.

### **Blind or Partially Sighted Customers**

On arrival at a property, introduce yourself using, where appropriate, an agreed password or your identification card.

Ask if the customer needs assistance – do not just assume they do.

Use ordinary words and phrases and do not be afraid of using words like ‘look’ and ‘see’.

Explain where you will be working and what you will be doing.

If you need to move items of furniture, ask the customer where you should place them and ensure you replace them in exactly the same position on completion of the job.

Identify a place with the customer, where you can safely leave work materials.

If you have to leave the premises for any reason let the customer know and give them an idea of when you will be returning.

It is not possible to anticipate every customer’s needs but providing clear information about what you will be doing, where you will be working and how the work will be carried out is vital.

### **Vulnerable People**

- Some customers and leaseholders may feel nervous about having a stranger in their home, for example elderly people;

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- If you sense that the person is vulnerable you should give them the opportunity to have another person present when you are working in their home;
  - It is beneficial to both yourself and the customer that you are approachable but formal and that the customer feels confident about asking questions

### **Religious Groups**

- The main religious Groups you may come across are Christianity, Catholicism, Judaism (Jewish community), Islam (Muslim community), Hinduism (Hindi community) and Sikhism (Sikh community).
- You must be sensitive to religious beliefs and practices. For example, do not disturb a religious object without first asking if it can be moved.

If a customer asks you to comply with a particular religious procedure, you should respect their request wherever possible.

Be sensitive to religious practices such as:-

- Religious festivals and holy days
- Prayer and worship
- Pilgrimage
- Dress
- Diet or fasting
- Bereavement

You would not be expected to compromise your safety or ability to complete a task, for example being asked to remove your safety shoes before entering a room but we would expect you to put covers over your shoes.



## **Ethnic Minority Groups**

The use of slang or inappropriate language is unacceptable. At all times be aware of the language you use. For example:

*Black* Often used to refer to African, African-Caribbean, Asian, Chinese and other ethnic minority people. This is an acceptable term.

*Coloured* This term should be avoided

*Non White* This term should be avoided

*Asian* This can be used but it should be noted that some people from the Indian subcontinent do not consider themselves to be Asian. When considering people from other Asian countries, it is acceptable to refer to people by national origin if known, for example Chinese, Japanese.

*Oriental* This term should be avoided

*British* This term relates to citizenship and does not directly relate to ethnic origin so is acceptable.

*Mixed Race* This should not be used to describe someone with dual parentage. The term 'half-caste' should also be avoided.

*Ethnic Minorities* This is generally accepted as the broadest term. The term *immigrants* should be avoided.

## **Violence at Work**

Situations may arise where violence or a threat of violence occur. At all times AVOID confrontations and do not be drawn into arguments. AT THE FIRST SIGN OF THIS HAPPENING, WALK AWAY AND IF ANIMOSITY IS SENSED, CONTACT THE OFFICE AND REQUEST BEING EXCUSED FROM DOING THE JOB.



## **Difficult Situations**

Occasionally you may feel uncomfortable when working in occupied homes by the circumstances or the behaviour of a customer or their guests, for example if they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

In these situations tell the customer you are leaving, explain why and report the problem to ongo. If valuables are left in your work area ask for these to be moved to a secure place. This is to protect you should items subsequently go missing.

## **Communication with customers / information sharing**

You must always respect the data protection laws when handling customer information. Ongo will endeavour to provide you with as much information on our customers to enable you to communicate with them effectively. Translation services will be available where necessary.

Ongo operate a system called **STAR Principles**, these stand for:

Be **S**pecific

Set **T**imescales

Get them **A**greed

Take **R**esponsibility

Provide full instructions to the customers or leaseholders on the use of newly installed equipment and provide manuals when available.

Inform customers immediately if appointments can not be kept and make an alternative arrangement;

## **Safeguarding**



It is essential that if you have any safeguarding concerns that these are reported to ongo immediately. We will signpost the complaint to the relevant organisation.

### **3. Working in Customer Homes and Neighbourhoods**

- Always ask permission before using of customer's facilities including utilities
- It is important to leave the work area in a safe and clean way ensuring all services are restored on completion of the work. Minimise inconvenience by working tidily.
- It is essential that all waste is removed from the area as quickly as possible; skips need to be located in convenient areas for the communities you are working in.
- Scaffolding should be taken down as soon as it is no longer needed.
- When parking your vehicle please take into account the needs of pedestrians and the local community. Ensure that enough room is left on pavements for wheelchair and prams.
- Do not smoke in someone else's home, use radio equipment or leave tools and equipment in areas that may cause a hazard
- You are responsible for any loss or damage you cause. All incidents must be reported to ongo.
- Keep a customer or leaseholder's home safe and do not expose it to unnecessary risk;
- Before visiting a home check to see if there are any special requirements or circumstances;
- Before entering a home, introduce yourself and provide identification;
- Explain the nature of the work you will be carrying out and explain and safety issues;
- Do not enter a home if there are unsupervised children aged less than 18 years old
- Assist the customer in moving furniture and carpets if asked