

# Unison Code of Conduct

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## Purpose & Scope

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The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to establish clear guidelines for staff conduct that are consistent with Unison's vision, mission and values.

This Code of Conduct does not replace or modify any Unison policies and procedures. If there is an inconsistency between this Code of Conduct and an applicable policy or procedure, then this Code of Conduct prevails.

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees and volunteers of Unison Housing Limited and each of its subsidiaries:

- Unison Property Corporation Pty Ltd
- Unison Consultancy Limited
- Unison Development Co Limited
- Staff.

References in this Policy to "Unison" mean Unison Housing Limited and each of its subsidiaries.

## Values

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Unison is committed to delivering high quality services in accordance with its values. Staff are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with Unison's values:

- **People:** we put the customer at the heart of what we do, we value each other and we welcome diversity.
- **Respect:** we are respectful of all and welcome open and honest discussion.
- **Positivity:** we have a positive and dynamic approach to our work. We embrace change, learn from our mistakes and seek to find solutions.
- **Accountability:** we say what we say we will do.

## Commitment to Staff

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Unison is committed to providing staff with a safe and secure work environment and ensuring that all staff are treated with honesty, integrity and respect.

Unison provides staff with ongoing training and professional development opportunities that are relevant to their roles to enable them to maximise their potential.

## Equity & Diversity

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Diversity and inclusion are central to a safe and productive workplace. Unison is committed to promoting and encouraging a diverse and inclusive workforce. Unison's *Diversity and Inclusion Policy* contains more information on this important issue.

A diverse and inclusive workplace can only be achieved when all staff understand the importance of diversity and inclusion and act to promote these values daily. Unison recognises that behaviour that is inconsistent with these values undermines Unison's culture and its ability to achieve its purpose.

Unison will take diversity and inclusion into account in all aspects of the lifecycle of its employees, including:

- recruitment
- promotions
- remuneration and benefits
- retention
- training and development.

Unison does not tolerate any form of discrimination, bullying or harassment in the workplace or in connection with work. Staff are expected to understand and comply with the *Equal Opportunity, Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Policy*, which includes reporting any such behaviour.

Unison is committed to continuous improvement in diversity and inclusion. This includes recognising and celebrating success, as well as identifying, addressing and learning from areas where improvement is required.

## Occupational Health & Safety

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Staff must perform their duties in a safe and competent manner in accordance with Unison's *OH&S Policy, OH&S Procedure* and applicable legislation.

Staff must participate in any training that relates to OH&S as directed.

## Professional Conduct

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### Standards of behaviour

Unison staff are expected to:

- treat others with courtesy, dignity and respect.
- act honestly, in good faith and with integrity at all times.
- act in the best interests of the organisation.
- comply with applicable legislative, regulatory and contractual requirements and Unison's policies, procedures and guidelines.
- work safely.
- perform their duties to the best of their ability and be accountable for their performance.
- follow lawful and reasonable instructions given by Unison.

- work collaboratively with colleagues.
- keep their personal views distinct from their professional views.

### Qualifications & checks

Staff must ensure they maintain any qualifications, licenses (including driver's license), accreditations and checks (including police checks and working with children check) and notify the People team of any changes, loss of or suspension of the same.

### Managing staff

Staff members who are responsible for managing other staff are expected to:

- demonstrate leadership by modeling the professional behaviour expected of their teams.
- promote a collaborative and collegial workplace by communicating clearly, being open to constructive comments, questions and concerns, providing ongoing support and feedback to staff and assisting staff to develop professionally via regular catchups and annual performance reviews.
- take appropriate action if a breach of the Code of Conduct or a policy or procedure occurs.

### Attire

Staff are expected to maintain a clean and tidy appearance, having regard to circumstances such as the duties performed, OH&S factors, cultural diversity, local community standards and climatic conditions.

Staff must not wear torn, stained or potentially offensive clothing (for example, T-shirts with slogans or jokes, clothing that is overly revealing or transparent).

Some staff may be required by their line manager to wear a Unison uniform. Uniforms must be kept clean and tidy and are only worn while at work and travelling to or from work. Staff must not wear a uniform at events that do not relate to their work for Unison.

If a staff member and line manager disagree about whether the staff member's attire is appropriate, the matter is raised with the next level of management for resolution.

### Record keeping

Records serve an essential administrative function. Staff must keep full and accurate records as required in the fulfilment of their duties, including capturing, storing, managing and maintaining records in Unison's systems, databases and files.

### Working with children & young people

Unison is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Staff whose roles involve contact with children and young people must:

- prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in all aspects of their work.
- immediately report any actual or suspected child abuse to their line manager.

- comply with all applicable legal and regulatory reporting obligations.

Unison reports and investigates all significant allegations of child abuse or misconduct by a staff member to the Social Services Regulator under the Victorian Reportable Conduct Scheme.

In addition to complying with this and other legal reporting obligations, all people who come into contact with children and young people on behalf of Unison:

- hold a current Victorian Working With Children Check.
- establish and maintain a child-safe environment in the course of their work.
- treat children and young people with respect, acting as positive role models.
- be professional in their actions and maintain strict impartiality.
- contact the police if a child is at immediate risk of abuse (telephone 000).

### Communication & social media

Staff must not criticise or undermine Unison, other staff members, members of Unison’s board of directors, or Unison customers in person or digitally (including via social media, forums or in blog posts). Concerns and complaints regarding Unison, other members of staff or members of Unison’s board of directors must be raised in accordance with relevant policies and procedures.

Staff must not publicly comment to or represent Unison to the media or third parties unless the CEO has given them written approval to do so.

Staff have access to Unison’s information technology systems, including (as relevant to their role) email, databases, computers, internet and social media, during their employment or engagement. While using Unison’s information technology systems, staff must:

- exercise good judgment and behave ethically.
- act in accordance with Unison’s Information Privacy Policy.
- use appropriate language.
- avoid getting personal.
- not send messages that are harassing, defamatory, threatening, abusive or obscene.
- never use Unison’s networks to view, upload, download or circulate messages or material that is: sexually related, violent, offensive or racist, malicious or libelous or relates to illegal activities.

Unison reserves the right to monitor and view any data stored or transmitted using its facilities. Staff must report inappropriate communication or use of social media by others to their line manager or the People Team.

### Smoking

Unison is a smoke free workplace. This means:

- smoking at Unison offices and properties is prohibited (including car parks and garages).
- staff must not smoke with Unison customers.
- if a staff member needs to smoke, they must ensure they are at least 4 metres away from entrances to all offices and buildings.

## Drugs & alcohol

Staff must not:

- consume alcohol or drugs (apart from prescribed or over-the-counter medicine that does not affect the staff member's ability to safely perform their duties) at any time while at a Unison workplace and/or conducting work for or on behalf of Unison.
- attend a Unison workplace, travel to a Unison workplace or conduct any work for or on behalf of Unison while affected by alcohol or other drugs.

Staff who are required to take prescription or non-prescription medications due to a medical condition must seek their doctor's advice on whether the medication may affect their ability to perform their duties. Staff must notify their line manager before performing any work if they are aware that their medication may affect their ability to perform their duties and may be required to take personal leave (sick leave) until they are able to properly perform their duties.

When attending functions or celebrations held by Unison or as a representative of Unison, staff must conduct themselves in a professional and responsible manner and access safe and suitable transport home. Staff must not consume alcohol at an event if they are required to return to work after the event.

## Illegal activities

Staff must not engage in illegal activities of any kind, including activities conducted via the internet or email, in connection with their work. Staff must immediately notify their line manager if they are charged with a criminal offence.

## **Gifts, benefits and entertainment**

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Unison discourages gifts from contractors, suppliers, customers, potential employees, potential contractors or suppliers, or any other individual or organisation.

### Goods

- If goods are received as a gift, they must be declared to the relevant Director who determines what will be done with the gift. If the goods are perishable goods gifted from renters or clients, the relevant Team Leader determines what will be done with the gift.
- Gifts received are distributed to staff or renters as appropriate.
- No gift is retained by any individual staff member.
- Staff must not provide gifts or benefits in any form and must discourage receiving gifts or benefits in any form in connection with their employment or engagement.
- For the avoidance of doubt, staff are not prohibited from accepting token offers of hospitality (such as tea and coffee during a meeting).

### Invitations to events

- Unison recognises that attendance at some events (e.g. a sporting event, Christmas party) may provide a benefit to Unison as an organisation (e.g. in terms of relationship building).

- If a staff member is invited to an event, they must notify their Director and get approval prior to attendance. Approval is based on genuine benefit to Unison.

### Entertainment

Refer to the *Gifts, Hospitality & Entertainment Policy*.

### Compliance

- All offered gifts and hospitality are recorded by the relevant Director in the Gift and Benefit Register in Folio.
- Failure to adhere to these expectations may result in disciplinary action.

## **Reporting Misconduct, Fraud or Corruption**

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Unison supports staff who, in good faith and on reasonable grounds, report concerns about the conduct of other staff. Staff who report concerns about the conduct of other staff must not be victimised.

Staff must report the following matters in accordance with applicable Unison policies and procedures:

- a breach of this Code of Conduct or Unison policy or procedure by another staff member.
- discrimination, bullying or harassment (refer to *Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Policy* and *Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Procedure*).
- another staff member's conflicts of interest (refer to the *Conflict of Interest Policy* and *Conflict of Interest Procedure*).
- potentially criminal activities or suspected corrupt conduct or improper administration by another staff member (refer to *Whistleblower Policy & Procedure, Fraud and Corruption Prevention and Control Policy* and the *Voluntary Modern Slavery Statement*).
- inappropriate conduct by another staff member towards others, particularly children or young people.

Staff speak to the People team if they are unsure which policy or procedure applies to the relevant conduct by another staff member. A staff member is not absolved of their duty to report the above matters because they do not know what policy or procedure applies.

## **Breach of Code of Conduct, Policies or Procedures**

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A breach of this *Code of Conduct* or a policy or procedure may lead to disciplinary action including and up to termination of employment or cessation of engagement with Unison.

Line Managers must take appropriate steps to address a breach as soon as they become aware of it and should speak to a member of the People Team regarding any potential breaches of this *Code of Conduct*, a policy or procedure.

## Grievance

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Unison promotes a workplace where employees feel comfortable raising grievances with their line-manager or more senior levels of Unison management. We ensure that grievances are handled and resolved in an appropriate, fair, transparent and timely manner.

Refer to the *Grievance, Complaints & Conduct Procedure*.

## Conflict of Interest

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Unison must be aware of and manage conflicts of interest in order to:

- preserve its integrity, business interests and the interests of its customers and stakeholders.
- protect itself and employees from any allegations of corruption or preferential treatment.

Staff must:

- avoid conflicts of interest (as defined in the *Conflict of Interest Procedure*).
- identify, declare and manage conflicts of interest in accordance with the *Conflict of Interest Procedure*.
- abstain from any decision-making process in which they could be compromised by a conflict of interest.
- participate in the management and monitoring of conflicts of interest in accordance with the *Conflict of Interest Procedure*.
- report any conflicts of interest involving other staff members to their Line Manager as soon as they are identified.

Failure to report a potential, perceived or actual conflict of interest is taken very seriously and may result in disciplinary action being taken against a staff member up to and including termination of employment.

Refer to the *Conflict of Interest Procedure*.

## Privacy & Confidentiality

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Staff may be given access to Unison's confidential information to carry out their duties.

Staff must not at any time, either during or after ceasing employment or engagement with Unison, use or disclose Unison's Confidential Information, except as authorised or required in the performance of their duties or as required by law.

Staff must take whatever measures are reasonably necessary to preserve the confidentiality of personal Information and must immediately notify Unison of any suspected or actual unauthorised use or disclosure of Confidential Information, whether deliberate or accidental, in line with the *Privacy Procedure*.

Staff must lock their computer before leaving it unattended.

## Unison Property

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### Intellectual property

Staff may produce or create Intellectual Property during their employment or engagement with Unison. Unison owns any such Intellectual Property.

Where Intellectual Property is created by a person who is not a Unison employee (i.e. an independent contractor or an employee of an independent contractor), then the relevant agreement between Unison and that person (or their employer) determines ownership of Intellectual Property created.

Staff members must:

- not infringe the rights of other people in the performance of their duties.
- not use or access Unison’s intellectual property for any purpose other than the performance of their duties.
- seek the permission and advice of the relevant Director before sharing any Unison intellectual property with third parties.
- do all things necessary to assign any Intellectual Property rights to Unison if required by Unison to do so.

### Asset protection

Staff must manage Unison’s assets in a responsible manner and purchase assets in accordance with Unison’s *OH&S Management System Manual* and *Procurement Policy*.

Staff must treat Unison’s property, whether material or intangible, with respect and care and protect it from theft, damage or misuse.

### Use of work resources

Staff must use Unison’s property, equipment and their time efficiently, including:

- only using said resources for appropriate purposes.
- ensuring decisions regarding the use of said resources are reasonable and correctly authorised.
- avoiding wasting said resources.
- seeking to achieve value for money and identifying opportunities to increase productivity.

## Renter & Client Relationships

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### Professional boundaries

Staff are in a position of privilege and trust in relation to Unison renters and clients and are responsible for setting and maintaining appropriate professional boundaries. Staff must not:

- enter into an intimate relationship with a renter/client.
- use their position to financially, sexually or emotionally exploit past or present renter/client.
- borrow money from or loan money to past or present renter/client, carry on trade with a

- renter/client or undertake paid work for a renter/client.
- have social contact with a renter/client (including via social media) unless at Unison approved events.

### Dealing with renters/clients

Staff must act in accordance with Unison’s values when dealing with renters/clients. This means:

- treating them with respect, honesty, courtesy and dignity.
- providing accurate and timely information.
- acting fairly and equitably.
- not engage in abusive, threatening, violent or discriminatory behaviour.
- encouraging a sense of co-operation.

### Written references for renters/clients

Staff may occasionally receive requests from a renter/client for references:

- If providing a reference in a professional capacity (e.g. to a prospective landlord or employer), information provided is restricted to factual, relevant details.
- If providing a reference in a personal capacity, staff must not:
  - represent the reference as being provided by Unison.
  - provide it on a Unison letterhead or using their Unison email address.
  - use their title and position at Unison for the purpose of providing the reference.

## **Signatures & Delegated Authority**

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Staff may be required to enter into contractual agreements on behalf of Unison on the performance of their duties. Staff with authority entering into contractual agreements on behalf of Unison must:

- only enter into contracts on behalf of Unison in accordance with their delegated authority.
- carefully read all documents they are asked to sign.
- not sign a document which they suspect is not true and correct.
- only sign their own name and not permit anyone to sign a name other than their own.
- in correspondence (such as emails and letters) only use their own name.
- not hold themselves as having authority to enter into a contract they do not have the authority to enter.
- ask their manager for further information if unsure of what it is they are being asked to sign.
- not give any person their login details and protect their login details from all people.

## **Definitions**

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**Confidential Information:** means any information whatsoever of a confidential nature including, but not limited to, operating policies and procedures, financial information, business and strategic plans, technology, databases, computer software and programs, employees’ personal information, trade secrets, marketing information, evaluations, supplier, partner and customer information including personal and health information, project planning and details of any Unison intellectual property of which staff become aware or generate in the course of their employment or

engagement with Unison, but does not include information which is in the public domain (other than as a result of a breach of confidentiality by or involving a staff member).

**Gift:** any item of material value that may be considered a benefit including cash, loans, awards, prizes, tickets, meals, accommodation and travel. Any item or service provided at less than the normal commercial value.

**Intellectual Property** means statutory and other proprietary rights in respect of trademarks, designs, patents, circuit layouts, copyrights, Confidential Information, know-how and all other rights with respect to intellectual property as defined in Article 2 of the Convention Establishing the World Intellectual Property Organisation of July 1967, as amended from time to time.

**OH&S:** Occupational Health & Safety

**Personal interest or obligation:** includes financial and non-financial interests or obligations, legal and non-legal interests or obligations and the interests and obligations of relatives, friends or associates.

**Preferential treatment:** includes any direct or indirect benefit a person may gain from giving a gift to a Unison staff member. Preferential treatment includes:

- Preferential access to housing.
- Preferential treatment under the [Residential Tenancies Act 1997](#).
- Preferential access to employment at Unison.
- Preferential access to providing paid services to Unison.

## Document Owner

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The Director People is responsible for the review of this document. Refer to them to suggest any revision.

## Related Information

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### External documents and links

- [Residential Tenancies Act 1997](#)
- [Social Services Regulator Reportable Conduct Scheme](#)