

# Positive Workplace Behaviours Guidance

Positive behaviours in our workplace enable us to make a positive difference to the lives of New Zealanders. How well we behave in the State services is central to how well we deliver better public services.

Great results come from a great workplace. A great place to work is one where there is a high degree of trust, people respect the integrity of their leaders and colleagues and work together harmoniously to achieve the best results. A great workplace enables people to perform at their personal best.

## This guidance is about the behaviours that create a great workplace

This guidance defines five core values that underpin positive behaviours across the State services and align with the Standards of Integrity and Conduct. The guidance also provides practical examples of behaviours.

### Leaders influence

Leaders greatly influence the values and behaviour of their staff. The core values of an agency are communicated by its leadership. Shared values promote a strong agency culture that becomes “*the way we do things around here*”.

### Agency systems and processes

Agency systems and processes inform what to do and how, and support responsibility and accountability in the agency.

### Agency values shape culture and performance

Creating a great workplace starts with how individuals behave – with each of us setting an example, being responsible for our own actions and mindful of the positive effect we can have on others.

## The five core values that underpin positive workplace behaviours

- ▶ **We value a spirit of service** and a strong customer focus. We are passionate about our work, always professional, and put ourselves in the shoes of the people we serve.
- ▶ **We value teamwork, collaboration and collegiality**. We support our colleagues across the State services, teach and learn from each other and share our knowledge.
- ▶ **We value people** and invest in them to enable the State services to better adapt to change and meet future challenges.
- ▶ **We are responsible and accountable** for what we do. We understand that being responsible means not only owning our actions, but also owning our contribution to building a great workplace with a healthy and positive culture.
- ▶ **We treat all people fairly and with respect**. Difference and diversity are recognised as enriching the State services.

## The challenges

The New Zealand State services are not immune to the challenges that confront most workplaces from time to time. Stressors often affect our behaviour. Different expectations of what is an acceptable way to behave can also present challenges. The reality is that, sometimes, people don't appear to behave in a way that meets State services values or is respectful of others. We know from information we collect that bullying and sexual harassment happens. When it does, it damages the quality of working life and undermines all of our efforts to achieve a great workplace.

## Using this guidance

This guidance on positive workplace behaviours is designed to articulate how the Standards of Integrity and Conduct apply in practice and supplement the comprehensive “*Preventing and Responding to Workplace Bullying*” guidance released in February 2014 by WorkSafe NZ and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment.

Everyone plays a part in creating a great workplace, wherever the work takes place and whether or not the work involves working alongside partners and stakeholders. The New Zealand State services are diverse. We encourage you to read this guidance, consider the values and how the principles apply to your agency and working relationships, whether you work in an office or out in the field.

*This guidance has been developed by the State Services Commission (SSC) in consultation with employee representatives including the Public Service Association (PSA) and other unions, as well as agency representatives and key stakeholders. It is informed by current information on State services workplaces from a range of sources, including the SSC's 2013 Integrity and Conduct survey, the Victoria University of Wellington/PSA's "Workplace Dynamics" survey, and the Kiwis Count and Human Resource and Capability surveys. The guidance refers to State service values, including equality and diversity, and is supported by a literature review, carried out by Victoria University's School of Management.*

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### Internet

This document is available on the State Services Commission's internet site. The URL for this site is [www.ssc.govt.nz](http://www.ssc.govt.nz)

	The Agency	Leaders and Managers	All of us
<b>Spirit of Service</b>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Align agency culture, values and behaviours with strategy</li> <li>▶ Actively promote a spirit of service is in the agency</li> <li>▶ Work collectively with other agencies and stakeholders in the public interest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Lead agency's service ethos</li> <li>▶ Communicate what acting with a spirit of service means for expected behaviours</li> <li>▶ Nurture an informed and open workplace community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Build trust through the way that you work</li> <li>▶ Act impartially</li> <li>▶ Know what being politically neutral means in serving the government of the day</li> <li>▶ Be alert to conflicts of interest and mindful of the responsibilities</li> </ul>
<b>Do</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Make the spirit of service relevant to staff and the agency's culture</li> <li>▶ Focus on quality and continuous improvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Employ people whose values align with the spirit of service</li> <li>▶ Promote a shared service ethic across sectors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Strive to provide a high quality of service and professionalism</li> <li>▶ Reflect on how the public and colleagues experience the way you work</li> </ul>
<b>Do Not</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Overlook the importance and value of always being a professional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ In meeting the needs of the customer, overlook giving the customer a say in the design and delivery of services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Do the bare minimum</li> <li>▶ Be slow to help others</li> </ul>
<b>Teamwork and Collegiality</b>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Communicate the agency's strategy and how each team contributes to the strategy</li> <li>▶ Focus on building effective teamwork and collegiality within the agency and across the sector</li> <li>▶ Coach managers on working with teams; how to have difficult conversations; democratic and participative leadership; and give constructive feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Provide staff with good support</li> <li>▶ Model positive, collegial behaviours</li> <li>▶ Practise open, clear and friendly communication</li> <li>▶ Manage behavioural issues skilfully and constructively</li> <li>▶ Seek regular feedback from staff</li> <li>▶ Be open to challenge and debate</li> <li>▶ Make the workplace fun</li> <li>▶ Seize opportunities to make a collective impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Support others</li> <li>▶ Listen with an open mind</li> <li>▶ Identify shared interests</li> <li>▶ Continuously hone communication skills</li> <li>▶ Find ways to work constructively with others</li> <li>▶ Share information</li> <li>▶ Build relationships and networks</li> <li>▶ Support leaders to work well with other leaders and stakeholders</li> </ul>
<b>Do</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Provide buddy and/or mentoring support for all staff</li> <li>▶ Foster a shared purpose and vision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Work to build relationships with other leaders, in the agency and across the sector</li> <li>▶ Seek stakeholders' input on important issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Inspire the trust of others</li> <li>▶ Reflect on your own communication style and its impact on others</li> </ul>
<b>Do Not</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Overlook building teamwork and collegiality across agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Put off difficult conversations</li> <li>▶ Tolerate or ignore breaches of the Standards of Integrity and Conduct</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Gossip or undermine others</li> <li>▶ Behave rudely or aggressively</li> </ul>

	The Agency	Leaders and Managers	All of us
<b>Valuing People</b>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Create a high trust environment</li> <li>▶ Recruit the best people that you can</li> <li>▶ Develop staff capability and skills as an agency priority</li> <li>▶ Make people management a source of pride for the agency</li> <li>▶ Operate policies that show commitment to preventing unwelcome behaviours</li> <li>▶ Operate effective processes for raising concerns and elevating issues</li> <li>▶ Take steps to minimise the risks of hiring bullies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Provide clear roles and responsibilities</li> <li>▶ Value, recognise and reward staff</li> <li>▶ Ensure performance feedback is always constructive and useful</li> <li>▶ Develop and mentor staff</li> <li>▶ Respect staff's autonomy to do the job</li> <li>▶ Consult staff on decisions that affect them</li> <li>▶ Actively manage well-being and performance</li> <li>▶ Trust staff and back them</li> <li>▶ Value equality and diversity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Value yourself and the contribution you can make</li> <li>▶ Make the effort to connect with people, eg, pick up the phone or visit people</li> <li>▶ Take the initiative to build your own skills, knowledge and career</li> <li>▶ Take opportunities to teach and to learn from/ with others</li> <li>▶ Value other people's skills, knowledge, and contribution</li> <li>▶ Adapt to different working styles to achieve outcomes</li> <li>▶ Support and empower others</li> </ul>
<b>Do</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Make managing change well an agency priority</li> <li>▶ Value and develop the longer-serving staff, not just newer staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Make valuing people in the agency visible</li> <li>▶ Engage with employees and unions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Contribute to others' learning</li> <li>▶ Work to your strengths and develop them</li> </ul>
<b>Do Not</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Overlook the value of institutional knowledge and experience to the agency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Micro-manage</li> <li>▶ Ignore staff development needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Treat colleagues disrespectfully</li> <li>▶ Presume knowledge of others' personal circumstances</li> </ul>

	The Agency	Leaders and Managers	All of us
<b>Being Responsible and Accountable</b>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Run promotion and awareness programmes to highlight integrity in the agency, including positive behaviours, conflict de-escalation and resolution, bullying and fraud prevention</li> <li>▶ Monitor the workplace to assess whether it is free from harassment and unacceptable behaviour</li> <li>▶ Monitor employee engagement through the collection of “agency health” data, including on injury, exit interview responses, sick and stress leave and absenteeism.</li> <li>▶ Define the behaviours expected and explain how to get protection and support and elevate concerns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Encourage staff to speak up, challenge inappropriate behaviour and report suspected wrongdoing</li> <li>▶ Encourage listening as a skill</li> <li>▶ Tackle problems at an early stage</li> <li>▶ Respond immediately to notifications and complaints</li> <li>▶ Manage performance and behaviours well</li> <li>▶ Apply the agency’s policies</li> <li>▶ Ensure staff know how to report their concerns</li> <li>▶ Manage health and safety risks</li> <li>▶ Investigate complaints in a thorough and timely manner</li> <li>▶ Ensure staff are protected from bullying, harassment, and retaliation and feel safe at work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Speak up about bad behaviour</li> <li>▶ Correct mistakes promptly</li> <li>▶ Always work to high standards</li> <li>▶ Ask for help when its needed</li> <li>▶ Own your own work</li> <li>▶ Look after your own health and well-being</li> <li>▶ Maintain work/life balance</li> <li>▶ Exercise tolerance and self-discipline</li> <li>▶ Be familiar with agency policies and behaviour expectations</li> <li>▶ Elevate issues for a decision by the person with the right level of accountability</li> <li>▶ Regularly self-review to identify how you may be able to do things better</li> <li>▶ Actively build your skills and knowledge</li> </ul>
<b>Do</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Create clear and transparent agency policy and processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Coach staff in positive behaviours</li> <li>▶ Take complaints seriously</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Be open and transparent</li> <li>▶ Admit mistakes and learn from them</li> </ul>
<b>Do Not</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Ignore warning signals from monitoring the workplace</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Abdicate responsibility to others</li> <li>▶ Ignore Code breaches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Blame people rather than seek solutions</li> <li>▶ Ignore suspicions about wrongdoing</li> </ul>

	The Agency	Leaders and Managers	All of us
<b>Being Fair</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Require a high degree of procedural fairness in everything the agency does</li> <li>▶ Regularly monitor the workplace culture to ensure it is healthy and safe</li> <li>▶ Ensure staff are inducted on the behaviours, policies and reporting expectations of the agency</li> <li>▶ Act to ensure that staff can trust in the people, processes and outcomes when suspected wrongdoing is reported</li> <li>▶ Prioritise access to ongoing training and up-skilling opportunities for staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Apply a problem-solving approach to issues</li> <li>▶ Be constructive and sensitive when giving feedback</li> <li>▶ Deal decisively with behaviour that doesn't meet the agency's standards</li> <li>▶ Settle differences between staff impartially</li> <li>▶ Distribute workloads fairly</li> <li>▶ Treat applicants for appointments and promotions fairly</li> <li>▶ Get staff feedback about how things could be done better in the agency</li> <li>▶ Ensure that staff feel supported and valued</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Behave fairly and treat others in good faith</li> <li>▶ Follow reasonable instructions</li> <li>▶ Act appropriately, respectfully, and considerately</li> <li>▶ Provide full and useful information</li> <li>▶ Speak well of colleagues and the agency</li> <li>▶ Be open to other people's views</li> <li>▶ Always be aware of the need for "no surprises"</li> <li>▶ Consider others' perspectives and interests</li> <li>▶ Be objective and apply proportionality in making decisions</li> </ul>
<b>Do</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Ensure agency policies are easy to follow and to comply with</li> <li>▶ Monitor the agency's appointments and promotions processes to assure they are fair</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Be alive to how things could appear</li> <li>▶ Be aware of how perceptions of the context can influence a judgement of what is fair</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Speak well of your agency and your colleagues</li> <li>▶ Understand the power of one person to make a difference in the workplace</li> </ul>
<b>Do Not</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Impose unachievable goals, such as impossible targets, unmanageable case loads or unrealistic deadlines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Play favourites</li> <li>▶ Apply different standards of behaviour depending upon a person's role or status</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Treat colleagues as rivals to get the better of</li> <li>▶ Judge others' actions without knowing all the facts</li> </ul>