



# Code of Conduct

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# Foreword

The UnitingCare Health Code of Conduct is a statement of how we conduct our business, treat our colleagues, our patients and our community. The code clearly identifies the standard of conduct that is expected of UnitingCare Health leaders, employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers in all occupational streams, service delivery and administration settings.

The code also identifies our values and aligns those values to expected standards of workplace behaviours. These behaviours will enable UnitingCare Health to build its reputation across all levels of the Group. This includes hospitals and the corporate group. The values will also ensure continued alignment and enhancement of UnitingCare Queensland, and The Uniting Church in Australia's reputation as both a dynamic business and a caring provider of services into our community.

MESSAGE FROM

# Executive Director of UnitingCare Health

**Excellence in health care is deeply dependent on people — employees, accredited practitioners and service providers. How we all behave and conduct ourselves has an impact on whether our workplaces enable each of us to give of our best. We all carry the responsibility of cultivating in ourselves and each other the behaviours and practices that enable us to behave and perform well in our workplace.**

Our shared values are what defines and separates us from other health care providers — that is, we not only provide excellent clinical care by highly skilled individuals, we provide this care with compassion and respect; by being just; by working together and by leading through learning.

This code of conduct guides, shapes and informs our everyday activities. This is evident in how we care for our patients and their families in our hospitals; how we treat our colleagues; and how we conduct ourselves when we are dealing with people outside the organisation.

These values give us all the opportunity to understand the kind of organisation we work for and to use the values on a daily basis in whatever work we do and whatever relationships we have. UnitingCare Health has made a commitment to live the values at every level of the organisation — from the Executive Director through to every staff member. The values also inform the way in which leadership will be expressed within UnitingCare Health. Our leadership style is action orientated, collaborative, and accountable, formed with integrity, humility and reflection.



UnitingCare Health will be supportive of an employee, accredited practitioner, or service provider who, acting in good faith, reports a breach of this code of conduct or any wrongdoing of any kind which has the potential to damage individuals, the quality of our services, UnitingCare Health or its reputation.

All employees, accredited practitioners and service providers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the code of conduct. It should be read in conjunction with UnitingCare Queensland's Shared Values and Behaviours, found within this document and on the UnitingCare Health portal.

**Richard Royle**  
Executive Director  
UnitingCare Health



# Introduction

In conjunction with the Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (Q.) corporate governance standards, UnitingCare Health has developed a Code of Conduct that applies to all employees, accredited practitioners and service providers in all occupational streams, service delivery and administration settings.

The Code of Conduct sets out the acceptable standard of conduct and workplace behaviour required while working within UnitingCare Health facilities.

The primary aim of the Code of Conduct is to promote a high degree of professionalism by employees, accredited practitioners and service providers in their activities. Employees, accredited practitioners and service providers should behave ethically at all times and encourage others to adopt a similar approach.

At times, decisions will need to be made or actions taken that are not specifically covered in the Code of Conduct. A set of principles have been developed to assist in reaching an outcome which is in the interests of our patients, the community that we serve and UnitingCare Health as detailed in this Code.

# Values

## Compassion

**Through our understanding and empathy for others we bring holistic care, hope and inspiration**

### Behaviours

- I will be responsive to your needs
- I will make time to listen to you
- I will find ways to improve the wellbeing of others
- I will appreciate the gift of volunteering
- I will not ignore or dismiss you
- I will not treat you as a burden

## Respect

**We accept and honour diversity, uniqueness and the contribution of others**

### Behaviours

- I will be honest and truthful with you
- I will encourage you to express your point of view
- I will honour all information that is entrusted to me
- I will speak respectfully to you and of you
- I will not abuse, bully or harass you
- I will not deny or denigrate your culture and beliefs

## Justice

**We commit to focus on the needs of the people we serve and to work for a fair, just and sustainable society**

### Behaviours

- I will speak out if I see people being harmed or abused
- I will be committed in making sure the people we serve, receive the best care possible
- I will use all resources wisely and well
- I will be open and transparent in my action and behaviour
- I will not support a blame culture
- I will not take credit for others' contributions



## Working Together

**We value and appreciate the richness of individual contributions, partnerships and teamwork**

### **Behaviours**

- I will share the load
- I will work constructively with you, regardless of your position
- I will take responsibility for my actions and be accountable to others
- I will acknowledge my way is not the only way
- I will not have an attitude of "it's not my job"
- I will not exclude you

## Leading through learning

**Our culture encourages innovation and supports learning**

### **Behaviours**

- I will foster a creative, fun, passionate and innovative working environment
- I will share my experience and knowledge
- I will nurture the skills and attributes of others
- I will admit to what I do not know and seek assistance
- I will not conceal or withhold knowledge and or information
- I will not resist organisational changes which benefit the people we care for

# The Principles and Standard of Conduct

**The Code of Conduct is based on five key principles for behaviour:**

1. Through our understanding and empathy for others we bring holistic care, hope and inspiration
2. We accept and honour diversity, uniqueness and the contribution of others
3. We commit to focus on the needs of the people we serve and to work for a fair, just and sustainable society
4. We value and appreciate the richness of individual contributions, partnerships and teamwork
5. Our culture encourages innovation and supports learning

**Through our understanding and empathy for others we bring holistic care, hope and inspiration.**

# Compassion



**Our employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers recognise that delivery of health care involves a community trust. UnitingCare Health is committed to building that trust by displaying compassion in all dealings with our people, our leaders, our patients, our health care professionals, and our community.**

UnitingCare Health will be responsive to the needs of our patients and our community by listening to your requests, and by the development of innovative programs to enhance the level of care we are able to provide as healthcare professionals.

Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers should not use their position improperly, or allow their position to be improperly used. Employees, accredited practitioners and service providers should also ensure that any conflict between their personal interest and professional duties is resolved in favour of UnitingCare Health and community interest, or that conflict of interest is clearly disclosed.

Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers should disclose fraud, corruption and maladministration of which they are aware.



## PRINCIPLE 1

# Compassion *continued*

### Standard of Conduct

Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers, will provide quality healthcare for all people regardless of race, gender, or ability. We will act with sensitivity and understanding to the needs of our people, our leaders, our patients, our health care professionals, and our community.

Leaders must display respect, compassion and integrity for our people, other leaders, our patients, our health care professionals, our volunteers and our community. Because our leadership style is action orientated, collaborative, and accountable, formed with integrity, humility and reflection, leaders will:

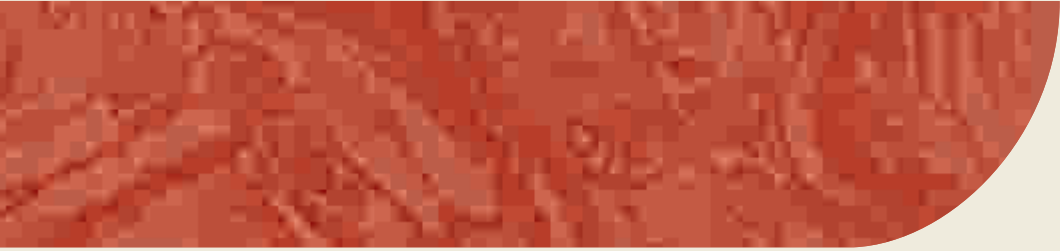
- Model the way
- Inspire a shared vision
- Challenge the process
- Enable others
- Encourage the heart

Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers have a responsibility to ensure confidentiality of information to avoid unnecessary access to and disclosure of:

- Sensitive documents;
- Discussions of personal information about patients, employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners, service providers.

When disclosing official information, employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers must ensure they have UnitingCare Health approval or lawful authority unless this occurs when:

- The disclosure is through discharge of official duties and is consistent with the Code of Conduct requirements;
- The release is authorised by statute or regulation; or
- The information would normally be given to a member of the public.



Approval must be sought by employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers from the Chief Executive Officer, or General Manager, or Director of Medical Services, prior to any public comment being given to any form of media representation.

Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers involved in creating intellectual property as part of their employment or relationship with UnitingCare Health must be familiar with relevant protective legislation, and UnitingCare Health and Hospital policies, procedures and guidelines. Approval must be obtained from the UnitingCare Health Chief Executive Officer or General Manager of the Relevant Hospital before publishing or revealing information, unless required to do so by law or requirement of their employment.

Research activities must be conducted within relevant research guidelines, UnitingCare Health Human Research Ethics Committee requirements, and must comply with professional ethical standards.

Employees must recognise that party-political and professional activities that are not part of employment must be conducted in a clearly private capacity and in private time.

Employees, volunteers accredited practitioners and service providers must not deliberately access, store or forward information electronically in breach of legislation, UnitingCare Health policy or provisions of the Code of Conduct.

Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers must follow UnitingCare Health policy and procedures, including Internet Conditions of Use policy, regarding appropriate Internet access.

# Respect

**We accept and honour diversity, uniqueness and the contribution of others. Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers should treat our people, our leaders, our patients, our health care professionals, and our community honestly, fairly, and with proper regard for their rights and obligations. They should also act responsibly and with respect to legislative and governance requirements when performing official duties.**

## **Standard of Conduct**

Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers should respect the dignity, rights and views of others.

Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers must be courteous, diligent and helpful in dealing with the public and other employees, and impartial and objective in performing their duties.

Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers should avoid all forms of harassment (including sexual, racial and ageist), workplace bullying, mistreatment and other coercive and unethical behaviour. They must not denigrate the cultural, religious or other beliefs of any persons as described in the Anti-Discrimination and Sexual Discrimination legislation.

Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers should be aware that aggression or disrespectful behavioural events will not be tolerated towards our people, our leaders, our patients, our health care professionals, our volunteers and/or our community.

Types of behavioural events may include (but are not limited to):

### Types of Behavioural Events

Profane or disrespectful language	Demeaning or intimidating behaviour	Sexual comments or innuendo
Inappropriate touching, sexual advances	Racial or ethnic jokes	Outbursts of rage or violent behaviour
Comments that undermine the trust in another employee, accredited practitioner, service provider or hospital	Inappropriately criticising health care professionals in front of patients; employees or other accredited practitioners or service providers	Inappropriate arguments with patients, family, employees, accredited practitioners or service providers
Throwing any object	Inappropriate documentation and record keeping	Unethical or dishonest behaviour
Difficulty working collaboratively with others	Repeated failure to respond to calls and or correspondence	Boundary violations with employees, patients or others
Resistance to recommended corrective action	Inappropriate dress and standard of personal hygiene	Failure to carry out reasonable management requests



## PRINCIPLE 2

# Respect *continued*

Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers should not allow personal relationships to adversely affect their service delivery.

UnitingCare Health is committed to the provision of a safe environment and safe systems for our people, our leaders, our patients, our health care professionals, our volunteers and our community, consistent with our commitment to safety and risk management practices.

Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers must be aware of their obligations under Workplace Health and Safety legislation, and take all reasonable steps to ensure their own safety, health and welfare as well as that of fellow employees, accredited practitioners and service providers.

Leaders are obliged to ensure the health and safety of employees, accredited practitioners, service providers, patients and visitors and to ensure that the workplace and workplace practices conform to the relevant legislation and UnitingCare Health policies.





# Justice

**We commit to focus on the needs of the people we serve and to work for a fair, just and sustainable society. UnitingCare Health is committed to conducting our affairs in compliance with all applicable laws including licensing requirements. Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers should uphold the laws of Queensland and the Commonwealth and carry out official organisational decisions and policies faithfully and impartially.**

Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers should act within the UnitingCare Health system of governance and ensure that appropriate organisational structures are used to raise issues. This is not intended to prevent an employee, volunteer, accredited practitioner or service provider from acting independently of the governance structure if required by legislation, professional bodies or UnitingCare Health policy.

## Standard of Conduct

Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers should be familiar with and ensure the Code of Conduct requirements are observed.

Allegations of misconduct or reportable conduct should be referred to the General Manager or Chief Executive Officer of UnitingCare Health. Reportable conduct: is conduct by a person or persons connected with the organisation which, in the view of the whistleblower acting in good faith, is -

- a. Dishonest
- b. Fraudulent
- c. Corrupt
- d. Illegal (including theft, drug sale/use, violence or threatened violence and criminal damage against property)
- e. In breach of Commonwealth or State legislation or local authority by-laws (e.g. Trade Practices Act)
- f. Unethical (either representing a breach of the organisations Code of Conduct or generally)

- g. Other serious or improper conduct
- h. Any unsafe work-practice; or
- i. Any other conduct which may cause financial or non-financial loss to the organisation or be otherwise detrimental to the interests of the organisation.

Whistleblowers will be supported by UnitingCare Health management where issues are reported in good faith.

If employees consider that criminal conduct is occurring, they must refer this to the General Manager of the Relevant Hospital, or Chief Executive Officer of UnitingCare Health.

Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers must maintain knowledge of legislation, standards, UnitingCare Health delegations and other UnitingCare Health policies.

Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers must ensure that UnitingCare Health resources are not wasted, abused or used improperly or extravagantly.

Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers must comply with all reasonable, lawful directions given by UnitingCare Health management or an employee in authority. If an employee believes a direction is unreasonable or unconscionable, they should refer the objection to their Manager. If the Manager believes the direction is reasonable or conscionable, then the employee must either comply or initiate grievance procedures or appropriate policy processes. Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers can initiate a complaint in accordance with complaint management processes.

If an employee, volunteer, accredited practitioner or service provider is charged with an indictable offence or convicted of a criminal offence they must immediately notify the General Manager of the Relevant Hospital in writing.

Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers must act to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people, and minimise risk to children and young people in their care.



## PRINCIPLE 4

# Working Together

**We value and appreciate the richness of individual contributions, partnerships and teamwork.**

**All employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers are committed to working in a cohesive environment which fosters innovation, diligence, care and attention. UnitingCare Health aims for a high standard of administration and health care.**


### Standard of Conduct

Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers must keep up to date with changes in their field of work.

Employees, accredited practitioners and service providers will share knowledge and expertise within UnitingCare Health and within the health care industry to enhance the quality of patient care, but without breaching any confidentiality or intellectual property requirements.

Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers will work together to foster a safe working environment and should report all risk issues within a timely manner and to assist with accurate, effective and systematic identification, analysis, control and evaluation of risks.

To ensure the long term sustainability of UnitingCare Health, employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers are to comply with any code or set of standards governing their activities where they are employed in an established profession. Where it is a requirement of their position, employees, accredited practitioners and service providers must maintain registration with the relevant body, and provide evidence of said registration on an annual basis.



Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers must not engage in any employment outside UnitingCare Health which might be detrimental to the performance of their duties or which might lead to a clash of loyalties or conflict of interest.

Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers must ensure any advice they give is independent, accurate, comprehensive and without bias.

Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers must ensure that personal use of alcohol or any other drug or substance does not adversely affect work performance, or endanger the health and safety of themselves or others. Managers are responsible for releasing affected employees, accredited practitioners and service providers from their duties.

If taking prescribed medication that may affect work performance or others in the workplace, employees, accredited practitioners and service providers must advise their manager or the Director of Medical services. If necessary, alternative duties or reviewed supervision requirements may be required. Instances of misconduct and/or incompetence may be reported to the relevant professional body.

Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers have a general duty under law to take reasonable care to avoid causing harm to themselves or other people.

Dress standards should be appropriate to functions being performed, occupational health and safety, cultural diversity, local community standards and climate. Where a uniform, including identification badge, is required, these must be worn complete and in good order. Please refer to the UnitingCare Health Corporate Image and Uniform policy.



## PRINCIPLE 5

# Leading through Learning

**Our culture encourages innovation and supports learning. UnitingCare Health has a culture of learning and innovation. Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers will be committed to continuous learning and research.**

### Standard of Conduct

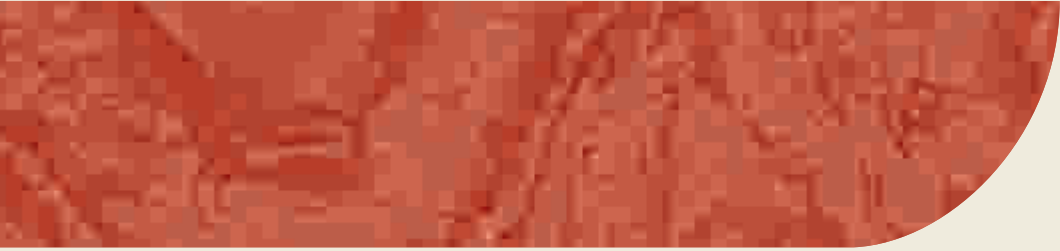
Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers must keep up to date with changes in their field of expertise and work.

Leaders within UnitingCare Health must support development and innovation where possible. As our leadership style is action orientated, collaborative, and accountable, formed with integrity, humility and reflection, development and innovation must display respect, compassion and integrity for our people, other leaders, our patients, our health care professionals, our volunteers and our community.

To achieve this leaders will:

- Model the way
- Inspire a shared vision
- Challenge the process
- Enable others
- Encourage the heart

Leaders within UnitingCare Health must support cross facility projects where possible.



Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers must be competent and appropriately qualified to perform their functions and must ensure that their knowledge and skills are maintained for the duties they are engaged to perform.

The use of work time, property, equipment and facilities is restricted for official purposes unless otherwise approved by the Chief Executive Officer or a delegate. Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers must notify their Manager in cases of suspected wrongful use of UnitingCare Health resources.

Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers should disclose any activities or suspected activities of unlawful, negligent or improper conduct. They should also report any activities they are aware of which pose a danger to public health and safety.

Leaders must ensure that Human Resource Management practices such as recruitment and selection processes, performance evaluation criteria, training and career development are consistent with UnitingCare Health policies, procedures and practices, and legislative requirements.

Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers must pursue best practice standards and strive for continuous improvement in their activities.

Employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners and service providers must work within accreditation criteria and standards.

# Possible responses for breaches to the Code of Conduct

Disruptive behaviour or breaches of the Code of Conduct from employees, volunteers, accredited practitioners or service providers will not be tolerated within UnitingCare Health, and may lead to termination of employment, termination or suspension of accreditation or clinical privileges (in accordance with the UnitingCare Health By-laws for Medical, Dental and Allied Health Professionals), or termination of contracts for service providers. Breaches of conduct and/or disruptive behaviour creates a hostile environment that interferes with the hospital/patient relationship and can result in errors of judgement or emotional outbursts, increase apprehension or anxiety and decrease effectiveness of care and service delivery.

Severe breaches of the conduct may include but is not limited to:

- Aggressive behaviour towards our people, our leaders, our patients, and our community
- Any breach of the UnitingCare Health fair treatment, equity, diversity, bullying or harassment policies
- Breach of Accreditation standards or the UnitingCare Health By-laws
- Breach of confidentiality or intellectual property requirements
- Fraudulent or misuse of UnitingCare Health resources or funds
- Breach of any standard that pertains to a profession.

UnitingCare Health is committed to a systems focused, no blame culture. However deliberate breaches of safe work systems or disregard for safety of others will be subject to disciplinary action or review requirements in accordance with the UnitingCare Health Policy and By-laws for Medical, Dental and Allied Health Professionals.



# Conclusion

Each employee at every level of UnitingCare Health should be aware of the standards stated in this document and therefore the conduct required of them as individuals and as members of their work team.

Enquiries related to the interpretation of, or to compliance with this code should be directed to the UnitingCare Health Corporate HR Director or the Director of Risk and Quality.

The Code of Conduct is subject to annual review by the UnitingCare Health Chief Executive Officer.

# Related Documents

- UnitingCare Health By-laws for Medical, Dental and Allied Health Professionals
- Prevention and Management of Aggression and Bullying Policy
- Prevention of Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy
- Corporate Image and Uniform Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Grievance Resolution and Management Policy
- Fair Treatment Policy
- Workplace Health and Safety Policy
- Financial Delegations Policy
- Email Conditions of Use Policy
- Internet Conditions of Use Policy
- Disciplinary Action Policy
- Complaint Management Policies

# Definitions

**Accredited practitioners:** means an accredited Medical Practitioner, Dentist and Allied Health Professional, who is not an employee of a UnitingCare Health facility but has been granted clinical privileges pursuant to the UnitingCare Health By-laws for Medical Practitioners, Dentists and Allied Health Professionals.

**Behavioural event:** means an episode of inappropriate or problematic behaviour which indicates concerns about an accredited person's level of functioning and suggests potential for adversely affecting patient safety and welfare or organisational outcomes and is further explained in this Code of Conduct.

**Disruptive behaviour:** means aberrant behaviour manifested through personal interaction with accredited practitioners, hospital personnel, health care professionals, patients, family members, or others, which interferes with patient care or could reasonably be expected to interfere with the process of delivering quality care or which is inconsistent with the values of UnitingCare Health and which is further described in this Code of Conduct.

**Employees:** means all employees, managers/leaders and appointed to, employed by, or seconded to any UnitingCare Health facility. Where requirements relate specifically to Managers/leaders, this refers to those employees with the designated responsibility for a department, ward or service.

**Volunteers:** means all persons who volunteer for any task within any UnitingCare Health Facility or within the Corporate Unit.

**Official Duties:** means duties outlined in the UnitingCare Health By-laws and Scope of Practice granted for accredited practitioners, employee position descriptions or service provider's contract arrangement, and as reasonably required by UnitingCare Health.

**Service providers:** means all contractors, agency staff and service providers who have contracts for the provision of services or goods to UnitingCare Health facilities.

**Workplace Aggression:** means any incident where an Employee is abused, threatened or assaulted in situations relating to their work. Within this definition:

- "Abuse" is any unreasonable behaviour that involves the misuse of physical or psychological strength or power;
- "Threat" is a statement of the intent to harm a person or damage their property; and
- "Assault" is any attempt to cause injury to a person and includes actual physical harm.

**Workplace Bullying:** means the repeated less favourable treatment of a person by another or others in the workplace, which may be considered unreasonable and inappropriate workplace practice. It includes behaviour that intimidates, offends, degrades or humiliates an employee, accredited practitioner or service provider, possibly in front of patients, other employees, accredited practitioners or service providers. While this behaviour is distressing, workplace bullying is only constituted where there is repeated unreasonable behaviour.

