

Updates to Ethical Principles for Individuals

December 2025



Cyber security professionals operate in a rapidly changing environment. It is essential that they have the relevant skills, expertise, and ethical judgement to undertake their roles effectively. To become professionally registered, individuals are required to commit to a code of ethics (our Ethical Principles for Individuals) that demonstrates their commitment to promote credibility, integrity and professionalism.

In November 2025, we consulted on several minor updates to these Principles. The updates were designed to expand on, and provide clarification for, a number of key points.

Below, you can find a comparison of the previously used language and the updated language, as well as details of the rationale behind any changes.

 You can find our full ethical principles on our website at ukcybersecuritycouncil.org.uk/ethics-in-cyber-security

1) Professionalism

Previous Language

- I will conduct myself in a professional manner, taking time to consider my actions and language.
- I will maintain high professional standards
- I will assist others when they need help, guidance, or advice.

New Language from December '25

- I will conduct myself in a professional and respectful manner, being thoughtful with my actions and language.
- I will act with objectivity and fairness and treat others with dignity and respect.
- I will represent the profession well and consider the impact of my actions on individuals, society, and the profession.
- I will offer constructive guidance where appropriate.

Key Changes:

- Professionalism has been moved to the beginning to avoid confusion about target audience.
- We have made expectations clearer. Feedback on “take time” and “assist[ing] others” demonstrated that these were interpreted very variably and could inadvertently place more significant burdens on individuals interpreting them literally.
- We have added reference to representing the profession well.

2) Fair Business Practices

Previously referred to as Fair Competition.

Previous Language

- I will not make unjustified comparisons or competitions with other providers when carrying out my business.
- I will not misrepresent the functionality of their products nor the abilities of their staff.
- I will not enter into arrangements or agreements with competitors that will facilitate anticompetitive practices.

New Language from December '25

- I will not make false or misleading comparisons with other providers when carrying out my business.
- I will not misrepresent the functionality of products or staff of my own organisation or my competitors.
- I will not engage in fraudulent or anticompetitive practices, and I will challenge and report such if I witness them.
- I will be transparent with clients and act in their interest while upholding my responsibilities to my employer, my profession and society.

Key Changes:

- We have updated this from “Fair Competition”, encompassing broader responsibilities not only to competitors, but to clients.
- We have clarified “unjustified” as this was ambiguous wording.

3) Honesty

Previous Language

- I will be honest in the conduct of my activities and services.
- I will neither make nor endorse false or unjustified statements.
- I will not withhold important information.

New Language from December '25

- I will balance the need for honesty and confidentiality and neither inappropriately conceal nor reveal information.
- Only when required for a legitimate cyber security purpose will I mislead others.
- I will challenge inappropriate dishonesty where I see it.

Key Changes:

- We have incorporated reference to confidentiality, understanding that this is a key principle of cyber security that may be at odds with honesty.
- We have updated wording to acknowledge that some legitimate cyber security activities will involve limited, responsible use of dishonesty.
- We have added a broad requirement to challenge dishonesty.

4) Inclusion

Previous Language

I will always act in a non-discriminatory manner, showing respect for others.

New Language from December '25

- I will treat people equitably and judge them by their actions, competence, and character, not their immutable characteristics.
- I will respect the diversity of the cyber security profession, showing consideration, respect, and support for others.
- I will challenge discrimination, exclusion and disrespectful behaviour when I witness it.

Key Changes:

- We have clarified that discrimination based on immutable characteristics is the target of the prohibition, not any difference in treatment.
- We have added positive duties to include and challenge discrimination.

5) Integrity

Previous Language

I will always act with integrity and not in any way as to cause malicious detriment to others.

New Language from December '25

- I will be accountable for my actions.
- I will be objective and handle conflicts of interest with objectivity and integrity.
- I will not cause wilful or negligent detriment to people, organisations, or systems.

Key Changes:

- We have clarified what integrity means within this principle.

6) Lawful Behaviour

Previous Language

- I will demonstrate ethical behaviour and comply with applicable laws, legislation, and regulations.
- I will act morally as well as lawfully in my practices.

New Language from December '25

- I will comply with applicable laws, legislation, and regulations and seek advice when I am unsure how to do so.

Key Changes:

- We have added an expectation of seeking advice where individuals are not sure about the legality of an action.
- We have removed reference to moral behaviour, as it is subjective by person, culture and time.

7) Competence

Previous Language

I will acquire and maintain the professional knowledge and the skills required to perform my business function as the cyber security sector evolves, seeking support and guidance when needed.

New Language from December '25

- I will maintain and grow my knowledge, skills, and competence.
- I will be honest about my knowledge, skills, and not misrepresent my competence, especially where it could put others at risk.
- I will seek guidance and support where I need it, especially when trying new things.

Key Changes:

- We have added requirements to seek support where needed and be honest about competence.
- We have removed reference to being sufficiently competent for a business function.
- Both changes reflect feedback that cyber security professionals, by necessity, often learn by doing

7) Reporting

Previous Language

- I will practice responsible reporting when cyber security risks, vulnerabilities and threats are identified.
- I will practice responsible reporting of unlawful activity that is witnessed or suspected.
- I will not retaliate against someone who reports on violations.

New Language from December '25

- I will practice responsible reporting* to appropriate authorities when cyber security risks, vulnerabilities and threats are identified; or when unlawful activity is witnessed or suspected.
- I will report breaches of these Principles by other registered cyber security professionals to the UK Cyber Security Council.
- I will support others to responsibly report, and will contribute to an environment where people feel able to report concerns

* Responsible reporting is timely, accurate, and proportionate reporting in good faith to the appropriate authorities.

Key Changes:

- Reporting has been moved to the end as it references all preceding Principles.
- We have clarified the meaning of responsible reporting.
- We have removed a narrow prohibition on retaliation and replaced it with a positive duty to support.