



Institute  
and Faculty  
of Actuaries

# Professionalism Resource Material

Archie the Actuary : Competence & Care

by the Professionalism Awareness Committee

## Archie the Actuary

### Part One – Competence and Care by Roger Dix

Welcome to the world of Archie the actuary. In a series of articles, Archie and his group of friends, some of whom are actuaries, will act as our guide through the elements of the Actuaries' Code and explore its relevance and importance.

Archie had agreed to meet up with some colleagues from the early days of his actuarial career, more years ago than he cared to remember. The conversation ranged over a variety of topics, but Roddy who had had a varied actuarial career, was keen to discuss the requirement in the Actuaries' Code to consider who is being provided with an actuary's advice and/or services.

'What is the profession coming to when it tells us this? It is a statement of the obvious! Presumably beforehand we weren't doing this? Anyway, I fail to see this is an issue for me, as I am a partner for a large consultancy firm,' he said.

'That's how it might seem to you, but for those of us non actuaries who are forced to use you, it is not always clear to us that you have any concept of who your customer is.' This was Gwen, a lawyer with whom Archie was at university. Her legal work brought her into contact with a number of actuaries.

She continued. 'Your training gives you skills of great use in the wider public interest. If I ask you about an interest rate, you will offer a range of answers and possibilities, giving me a wide view. But, if I ask you who your customer is, you appear to have a much more restricted view. If you could see that the customer question is at least as wide as the interest rate question, you would provide a much better service in the public interest.'

Roddy wasn't convinced: 'I am the direct link with our clients, so I fail to see what this means.'

Archie intervened: 'You are both right, but you should both see the other's point of view. Roddy, whilst you clearly liaise directly with clients, how would this help your team members who deliver work for a client? They could doubtless view you as dealing with the actual client, and view you as their client as you control their output. As for Gwen's view, I have a lot of sympathy for it, but we must ensure we balance our views on public interest and a definable client. Public interest should influence the advice we offer, but I am always keen to have a clearly defined client for work I perform - it is from them that I obtain feedback to improve what I do.'

Roddy grudgingly agreed. 'I suppose you are right, but that still doesn't explain why it has been introduced.'

'Welcome to a principles-based world, Roddy', said Gwen ' where the principles include all aspects, particularly the good ones.'

For more information about the Actuaries' Code, please visit [www.actuaries.org.uk](http://www.actuaries.org.uk) or contact Fiona Goddard on 0131 240 1302 or [fiona.goddard@actuaries.org.uk](mailto:fiona.goddard@actuaries.org.uk).