



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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Employee Handbook – Section A

The AA - Who We Are

The Arboricultural Association (the AA) was founded in 1964 bringing together the civic and commercial sectors to deliver a united voice for trees. The AA was founded in 1964 as a scientific and educational organisation, keen to promote the care and value of trees in no forest settings. The passion for trees shown by our founders continues to thrive within our Board and members today. We are the largest professional body in the UK for the amenity tree care professional. *Amenity trees are those* with recreational, functional, environmental, ecological, social, health or aesthetic value as opposed to those cultivated as a timber crop.

The AA is regarded by many as being the focal point for world class best practice in arboriculture and is the UK home for all sectors of arboriculture, civic, commercial and academic and the home for all levels of tree care professional, craft, technical, supervisory, managerial or consultancy. Our professional members are increasingly employed and consulted, wherever there are trees, all over the world, to deliver specialist advice and operations. Our purpose is to promote the sustainable management of trees for the benefit of society, in areas where people live, work and play.

The Arboricultural Association is a registered charity with a mission to promote trees and the profession which enables their sustainable management. We are passionate about spreading awareness and increasing knowledge of the benefits of trees and of tree care professionals to the wider public. The Association welcomes anyone interested in working together to further these goals.

The Association is directed and managed through an elected board of Trustees, all of whom are volunteers elected by members at the AGM each year; each trustee is elected to serve a 3-year term. In addition to elected trustees there are a small number of co-opted trustees appointed; these are where specific skills or expertise are required.

The Trustees develop and set the Association strategy and then delegate the responsibility for delivery of the strategy to the Chief Executive (CEO), the AA staff and the various committees and working groups. Three primary committees exist namely Professional, Media & Communications and Education & Training. Several working groups, with specifically set remits, report into these committees.

(More detail can be found on the AA website – www.trees.org.uk)

The AA – Vision & Values.

We have a vision that by 2020: We will raise the profile of our industry through promotion of the associations activities to such an extent that our expertise and resources are increasingly valued, understood and where appropriate utilised or specified as part of common practice.

The AA - 5 Core AA Values

- **Influence** - We will work with partners to raise the profile of the industry, inform the public and persuade those with influence and decision-making authority that amenity trees must become a publicly supported priority in the UK's environmental planning and policy pre-and post-Brexit.
- **Impact** - We will publicise and promote our achievements in the sector so that they are noticed by our peers, the public and government; we will identify, share and promote best practice wherever benefit can be delivered.
- **Inspiration** - We will be at the cutting edge of tree knowledge, set the agenda for trees in the built environment and show leadership on how best to care for and manage amenity trees.
- **Integrity** - We will provide a pool of expertise, with access to information and knowledge, monitored to ensure standards are upheld. We will measure our performance, evaluate how we work, where we need to improve and how we may achieve that.
- **Independence** - As a self-funding group of professionals, we retain an independent voice. Free to influence decision makers and challenge actions and policy that falls short.

AA Administration

An organogram showing the structure of how the AA is administered via its trustees, committees, working groups, branches and staff along with details of the Associations latest strategy can be found on the AA website – www.trees.org.uk/about-us

The AA – What We Do.

As a charity, here are just a few of the many things we do:

- Ensure professional standards are maintained and improved through promotion of membership of our accreditation schemes for businesses (approved contractors) and consultants.
- Deliver the Annual conference in autumn each year; an event where the leading researchers and industry experts share information on the latest breakthroughs and thinking.
- Deliver the annual Arb Show event in spring of each year, a demonstration of the practical side of arboriculture.
- Influence and educate the decision makers within government and NGO's; primarily through our membership of the APPGHG (All Party Parliamentary Group Horticulture & Gardening) and the OHRG (Ornamental Horticulture Roundtable Group).

- We also host our own parliamentary events and actively lobby MP's and MEP's; our aim is to ensure the decision makers understand the importance, value and position of arboriculture.
- We, along with partner organisations, commission and facilitate sector and industry research.
- We offer a grant to support research into a relevant arboricultural topic on an annual basis.
- Provide and maintain downloadable quick reference guides.
- Promotion of careers in arboriculture, apprenticeships, careers event, talks at colleges.
- We offer free corporate membership for all colleges providing Arb training, we also provide FREE membership for students and apprentices, supporting anyone from the very start of any arboricultural career.
- We also deliver a range of student focused events.
- Develop career linked courses.
- Provide information to members and the public via Social media platforms, the web and emails alerts.
- Offers a wide range of training activity; prices for members are heavily discounted to encourage take up in our industry.
 - We also provide a wide range of bespoke training events, these are individually tailored to meet the client needs.
- Communicates standards and information aiding knowledge and understanding of Arboriculture via -
 - Digital webinars (open to all members and non-members which helps increase our international reach).
 - the ARB Mag, eNews, the AA Amenity Conference, the ARB Show, publications and "Latest News" on the Web.
- Take the lead on new industry policy and guidance (i.e. Biosecurity).
- Provide technical advice and support to members.
- We also provide advice to the public; this, due to cost, is somewhat limited as we are a membership organisation operating for the benefit of its members.
- Provide administrative, fiscal and marketing support for our branch network which covers the whole of the UK & Eire.
- We organise and deliver tree climbing competition activities; the winners of which progress to the annual European and World Championships.
- Provide and assist with free or low cost events for branch members and other partner groups (i.e. Tree Officers).
- Develop industry guides and help and advice for Arborists (e.g. Industry Code of Practice, Technical Guides, Guidance notes and AFAG).
- Represent arboriculture through acting as the "Voice of Arboriculture", bringing arboriculture to the respective audiences, building partnerships with associated bodies in related sectors.

(More detail can be found on the AA website – www.trees.org.uk)

The AA – Where We Operate.

Our headquarters is at the Malthouse, Stroud Green, Standish, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire, GL10 3DL.

Most of our staff are based in and work from this building. We do however employ technical staff that are mobile workers, they have office space within both the HQ building and at home.

The Association owns the building we operate in and we currently lease out the upper two floors of the building to tenants.

The Association primarily operates within the UK & Eire and we have a network of 10 volunteer led branches which cover and work within these areas.

Overseas – the Association has a growing overseas membership including a large number in Hong Kong. We have formal partnership agreements, via Memorandum of Understanding agreements, with a wide range of arboricultural organisations world-wide. These agreements enable us to share information and knowledge to the benefit of all our members.

(More detail can be found on the AA website – www.trees.org.uk)

Employee Handbook – Section B

(Changes/Amendments/Queries/Access to latest version).

Changes to the handbook - will normally be communicated to employees in writing, on occasion minor amendments or updates may be communicated verbally.

Employee access to the Handbook - The latest version of this handbook can be found via the Associations SharePoint.

Queries - should employees have queries regarding the contents of the employee handbook they should be addressed, to their line manager or the CEO.

Change in personal circumstances or change of address – the employees must inform their line manager or the CEO in writing in the first instance. Written notification is vital as employee details are held in several different locations (Employee records/Finance/Insurance/Pension/Death in service record etc) and all records will need to be updated.

Employees can subsequently update their personal record on the Breathe administration system.

Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work Policy

Our commitment

The organisation is committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and to avoiding unlawful discrimination in employment and against customers.

The law

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics".

Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful, e.g. refusing to give a reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics.

It is unlawful for an employer to fail to make reasonable adjustments to its requirements, working practices or the physical features of the workplace where these put a disabled job applicant or employee at a substantial disadvantage. It is also unlawful discrimination where a disabled employee is at a substantial disadvantage due to the employer's unreasonable failure to provide an auxiliary aid or service to the disabled employee.

It is generally unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly, harass or victimise a member of the public based on any of the protected characteristics in the provision of services, goods or facilities. It is unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability. The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services. In addition, service providers have an obligation to think ahead and make reasonable adjustments to address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

Dignity at work

The organisation is committed to creating a work environment free of harassment and bullying, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

Some harassment is unlawful discrimination and serious harassment may be a criminal offence.

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, and/or an abuse or misuse of power that is meant to undermine, humiliate or injure the person on the receiving end. Examples of bullying would include picking on someone or setting him/her up to fail or making threats or comments about someone's job security without good reason.

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to relevant protected characteristics, which are sex, gender reassignment, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and age, that:

- has the purpose of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person; or
- is reasonably considered by that person to have the effect of violating his/her dignity or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for him/her, even if this effect was not intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Examples of harassment would include: physical conduct ranging from unwelcome touching to serious assault; unwelcome sexual advances; demeaning comments about a person's appearance; unwelcome jokes or comments of a sexual or racial nature or about an individual's age; excluding an individual because he/she is associated or connected with someone with a protected characteristic, e.g. his/her child is gay, spouse is black or parent is disabled; repeated name calling related to an individual's religion or belief, ignoring an individual because he/she is perceived to have a protected characteristic (whether or not he/she does, in fact, have that protected characteristic), e.g. an employee is thought to be Jewish, or is perceived to be transgender; the use of obscene gestures; and the open display of pictures or objects with sexual or racial overtones, even if not directed at any particular person or relating to his/her actual or perceived protected characteristic, e.g. magazines, calendars or pin-ups.

Conduct may be harassment whether or not the person behaving in that way intends to offend. Something intended as a "joke" may offend another person. Everyone has the right to decide what behaviour is acceptable to him/her and to have his/her feelings respected by others. Behaviour that any reasonable person would realise would be likely to offend will be harassment without the recipient having to make it clear in advance that behaviour of that type is not acceptable to him/her, e.g. sexual touching. It may not be so clear in advance that some other forms of behaviour would be unwelcome to, or could offend, a particular person, e.g. certain "banter", flirting or asking someone for a private drink after work. In these cases, first-time conduct that unintentionally causes offence will not be harassment, but it will become harassment if the conduct continues after the recipient has made it clear, by words or conduct, that such behaviour is unacceptable to him/her.

A single incident can be harassment if it is sufficiently serious.

If you think you are being bullied or harassed, you may be able to sort out matters informally. The person may not know that his or her behaviour is unwelcome or upsetting. You may feel able to approach the person yourself, or with the help of someone else at the organisation. You should tell the person what behaviour you find offensive and unwelcome and say that you would like it to stop immediately.

If an informal approach does not resolve matters, or you think the situation is too serious to be dealt with informally, you can make a formal complaint by using the organisation's grievance procedure. In the case of grievances about bullying or harassment, the normal grievance procedure is modified so that you can choose whether to raise your grievance with your manager or with another manager.

All complaints will be investigated promptly and, if appropriate, disciplinary proceedings will be brought against the alleged harasser. You will have the right to be accompanied by a fellow worker or trade union official of your choice at any meeting dealing with your grievance. You will be kept informed of the general progress of the process of investigation and, subject to data protection requirements, the outcome of any disciplinary proceedings.

The organisation will treat complaints of bullying and harassment sensitively and maintain confidentiality to the maximum extent possible.

You have a right not to be victimised for making a complaint in good faith, even if the complaint is not upheld. However, making a complaint that you know to be untrue may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you.

Your responsibilities

Every employee is required to assist the organisation to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination.

Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the organisation, for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the organisation's disciplinary procedure. Conduct of this type will often be gross misconduct which can lead to dismissal without notice.

Diversity and Inclusion

The organisation is fully committed to the elimination of unlawful and unfair discrimination and values the differences that a diverse workforce brings to the organisation.

The organisation will not discriminate because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. It will not discriminate because of any other irrelevant factor and will build a culture that values meritocracy, openness, fairness and transparency.

All employees are responsible for the promotion and advancement of this policy. Behaviour, actions or words that transgress the policy will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in line with the organisation's disciplinary policy.

Objectives relating to fair and inclusive practices will be included in all employees' performance indicators and will form an integral part of performance reviews throughout the year.

The policy is applicable to all employees, secondees, agency staff, clients, communities, suppliers and contractors, whether permanent or temporary. The policy applies to all processes relating to employment and training and to any dealings with customers and clients. Decisions relating to customers and communities will be based on business-related criteria only and any irrelevant information will not form part of the process.

The policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to reflect changes in the law, demographics and internal business requirements. Progress relating to the policy will be recorded annually and a full report will be presented to the senior management team to debate progress and review the policy status.

Procedure wording: The publication of a diversity policy enables the organisation to send out a strong message of commitment, both internally and externally. Although the diversity policy is a fundamental part of the organisation's diversity strategy, it will be brought to life only if it is reinforced by a focused diversity plan. In order to do this the organisation is committed to the following processes.

Audit

The organisation will:

- undertake an audit, every two years, in relation to policies and procedures, practice of policy and perception of policy and process.

The audit will include a review of all the processes to establish the organisation's position about compliance and best practice. This will be done by administering a questionnaire to all staff, stakeholders and focus working groups/committees.

Policy development

The organisation will:

- benchmark existing policy statements from other organisations and advisory groups;
- develop human resources and other policies (outlining vision, scope, responsibility, accountability and measurements); and
- cascade new policies through business briefings.

Training and education

The organisation will:

- integrate diversity into staff and volunteer training and development programmes;
- establish education programmes for all staff and volunteers (including programmes that move from awareness to behavioural change).

Communication and consultation

The organisation will:

- ensure that communication imagery and graphics are inclusive, and reflect and reinforce the words within the documentation;
- ensure that mainstream business communications reinforce the inclusive messages and become mainstreamed into day-to-day processes; and
- communicate and celebrate the organisation's successes in diversity.

Resources and measurement

The organisation will:

- establish formal reporting lines for monitoring progress against targets and objectives;
- establish formal measurement tools to assess the climate in the organisation (for example regular staff and volunteer surveys).

External profile

The organisation will:

- join appropriate organisations in order to network, exchange best practice and generally raise the organisation's profile;
- build relationships with trade, and the local and national press to develop a good external image and to position the organisation at the leading edge.

Employee Wellbeing Policy

Introduction

The organisation has developed an employee wellbeing policy to manage its obligations to maintain the mental health and wellbeing of all staff. It covers the organisation's commitment to employee health, the responsibilities of managers and others for maintaining psychological health, health promotion initiatives, communicating and training on health issues, the range of support available for the maintenance of mental health, and organisational commitment to handling individual issues.

Objectives

The aim of this policy is to describe the organisation's commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of employees in its broadest, holistic sense, setting out how the organisation fulfils its legal obligations, the responsibilities of different functions and specialists and the range of services available to help employees maintain health and wellbeing. The organisation recognises that wellbeing and performance are linked. Improving employees' ability to handle pressure and to balance work and home life will ultimately lead to improved individual and organisational performance.

Organisational commitment

The organisation has legal obligations under health and safety legislation to manage risks to the health and safety of employees. In addition to reducing safety risks, this means operating the business in a way that minimises harm to employees' mental health, for example by ensuring that the demands of jobs are not unacceptable and having policies and procedures in place to support individuals experiencing mental ill health at work.

The organisation will put in place measures to prevent and manage risks to employee wellbeing, together with appropriate training and individual support. It will also seek to foster a mentally healthy culture by incorporating these principles into line manager training and running regular initiatives to raise awareness of mental health issues at work.

Responsibilities

The organisation has a legal duty of care to employees to ensure health at work, as set out in the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. The organisation will ensure that its policies and practices reflect this duty and review the operation of these documents at regular intervals.

Our outsourced HR support will work with the CEO to help develop policies and procedures to protect the wellbeing of employees, assist line managers in supporting individuals, and liaise as appropriate with occupational health and other medical professionals, with the object of helping employees to maintain good psychological health.

Employees must take responsibility for managing their own health and wellbeing, by adopting good health behaviours (for example in relation to diet, alcohol consumption and smoking) and informing the organisation if they believe work or the work environment poses

a risk to their health. Any health-related information disclosed by an employee is treated in confidence.

If employees believe that their work, or some aspect of it, is putting their wellbeing at risk they should, in the first instance, speak to their line manager.

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

The organisation provides support through an EAP to help employees to deal with work and personal issues that have the potential to affect performance and safety at work.

The EAP provides:

- employees with confidential telephone-based assistance on a range of work-related and personal issues;
- employees with fast-track access to counselling and other support services as appropriate, following an early assessment by telephone; and
- the CEO with anonymised, aggregate management information, for example on usage and the types of issues raised with the EAP, to aid the development of effective wellbeing management practices.

All employees are eligible for EAP services, as are immediate family members with personal problems that have the potential to affect an employee's performance at work.

Access to the EAP is confidential and voluntary and without prejudice to employees' job security or personal development. However, participation in the EAP will not prevent capability, disciplinary or performance management procedures from taking place where appropriate.

Mental Health

There is a lack of understanding about mental health and misperceptions persist. It is often thought to be a sign of weakness, which it is not. Mental ill health is very common - the Government's Department of Health advises that one in four people will experience it at some point in their lives.

There are many types of mental health issue. An issue can happen suddenly, because of a specific event in someone's life, or it can build up gradually over time.

Common mental health issues include:

- stress (this is not classed as a medical condition, but it can still have a serious impact on wellbeing)
- depression
- anxiety

Less common ones include:

- bipolar disorder

- schizophrenia

If you have, or think you have a mental health issue then the organisation will take it seriously and will treat mental and physical health as equally important. We would encourage you to talk to someone about it; either your line manager, a colleague, our outsourced HR service or EAP provider.

Eye and Eyesight Tests

Introduction

Employees who are "users" of display screen equipment (DSE) (also known as visual display units or VDUs) under the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992, have a legal right to an eye and eyesight test, on request.

By providing eye and eyesight tests, the employer aims to improve the comfort, job satisfaction and performance of employees, by allowing the identification and correction of visual defects and thereby helping to prevent eyestrain, fatigue, stress and headaches.

Definition of a DSE user

A person is a DSE user if the following criteria apply:

- the individual normally uses DSE for continuous or near-continuous spells of an hour or more at a time;
- the individual uses DSE this way on a daily basis;
- fast transfer of information between the user and screen is an important requirement of the job; and
- the individual depends on the use of DSE to do their job; the individual has no discretion over the use of DSE; the individual needs significant training and/or particular skills in the use of DSE to do their job; or the performance requirements of the system demand high levels of attention and concentration, for example where the consequences of error may be critical.

Entitlement to eye and eyesight tests

An eye and eyesight test will be provided, on request, to all employees who work with DSE or who are being recruited to work with DSE. Where an employee working with DSE, who experiences visual difficulties that could be caused by their DSE work, requests an eye and eyesight test, the employer will ensure that this is provided as soon possible after the request is made.

The employer will provide eye and eyesight tests at regular intervals following the first test. The employer will be guided by the clinical judgment of the [registered ophthalmic optician/registered medical practitioner with suitable qualifications] as to the frequency of repeat testing.

There is no obligation on employees to have an eye and eyesight test.

Arrangements and payment for eye and eyesight tests

Eligible employees should make a request for an eye and eyesight test via their line manager, using the form for an employee to request an eye and eyesight test.

The employer provides paid time off to attend eye and eyesight tests at a time agreed with the employee's line manager.

Employees may make their own arrangements with a registered ophthalmic optician or registered medical practitioner with suitable qualifications, and the cost will be reimbursed by the employer on receipt of written confirmation from the examining optician that the eye and eyesight test has been carried out.

A record of the test will be kept using the record of an eye and eyesight test form.

Clinical information will be subject to the same confidentiality as other medical records and retained within your personnel record.

Payment for glasses

Where an eye and eyesight test shows that glasses are necessary to correct eye or vision defects for the purposes of DSE work, users may choose more costly appliances (for example with designer frames or lenses with optional treatments not necessary for the work) and the employer will contribute a portion of the total cost of a luxury appliance equal to the cost of a basic appliance.

Working Flexible Hours at the Arboricultural Association

Introduction

Our ways of working have changed over recent years, and this has impacted on the requirement for all staff to be in the office during normal working hours. These are currently Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm with a 30-minute unpaid lunch break.

This change now allows us an opportunity to offer some flexibility around when hours need to be worked in the office and this policy outlines our approach to working flexible hours.

What does the working flexible hours policy cover?

The policy allows you to have an element of flexibility over your working hours to effectively manage your work commitments and your personal commitments. It involves flexible start and finish times around 'core working hours' (when attendance is mandatory) and within the limitations of the 'bandwidth' (the earliest and latest times between which hours can be worked) allows you more choice, subject to the operational requirements, over your working hours.

Eligibility

Subject to the operational needs of the Association to deliver services effectively, working flexible hours is available to all full-time staff.

All staff will be trained and authorised to open and close the offices.

The working days of full-time staff will remain as Monday to Friday.

Core and flexible hours

All full-time staff are expected to be present undertaking their duties during the core hours which are defined as follows:

Start	Finish	Flexible or Core hours
8 am	10 am	Flexible
10 am	2 pm	Core Monday to Thursday
10 am	1 pm	Core Friday
2 pm	6 pm	Flexible Monday to Thursday
1 pm	6 pm	Flexible Friday

These are the standard core hours for full-time staff to whom this scheme applies and should be used for normal working arrangements.

Subject to the operational requirements of the service, full-time staff may work flexibly during 'Flexible' hours. Part-time staff may, subject to the demands on their role, work flexibly if part of their working day falls during 'Flexible' hours.

Working flexible hours differs from Time off in Lieu (TOIL) which can only be accrued through additional hours worked requested or approved in advance by a line manager or a set

requirement to undertake additional hours of work. This would normally be in relation to a specific activity or piece of work during the working week or at weekends.

Principles and operation of the scheme

Principles of the scheme

- 1) Working flexible hours is optional and you may elect to maintain your 'normal' working hours.
- 2) Staff who, by the nature of their contract i.e. part-time hours, or those with working patterns where they are required to undertake duties at a time, may be unable to benefit from the scheme.
- 3) It is not a contractual right and can be reviewed at any time, including on an annual basis or when staff leave/join the Association. It may be amended or withdrawn if there is a detrimental impact on the delivery of the service. If arrangements are changed these will be given in writing.
- 4) It does not alter the existing definition of a working week, defined as 37.5 hours per week and it does not affect the exceptional circumstances when overtime is payable when agreed in advance with your line manager.
- 5) In line with the Working Time Regulations, all staff working more than six sequential hours a day must take a minimum of a 20-minute break which is not counted within the flexi-time scheme i.e. it is taken in staff's 'own time'. For young people under the age of 18 years, a minimum break of 15 minutes is required after four and half hours.
- 6) Weekly working hours, over 37.5 hours per week, can only be accrued with your line manager's approval and must be in whole hours only.
- 7) 'Credit' hours accrued as a result of the scheme must be taken as flexi leave in a minimum of one whole hour.
- 8) A maximum of one working day of 'credit' hours can be carried into the next calendar month and must be taken within that month and any hours accrued in excess of one working day will be lost.
- 9) As a general principle, hours must be accrued in advance of taking flexi leave as there is no debit process; however, in exceptional circumstances and only with prior written approval, you can take up to the maximum of one working day and you must make up this time within the following working month.
- 10) Whole Flexi leave days must be approved prior to taking them or making any commitment for that time as your request may be refused.
- 11) Flexi leave cannot be taken during any Association events e.g., Amenity Conference, ARB Show, Student Conference.
- 12) If you resign from the Association, you are expected to clear any credit hours before leaving as you will not be paid for these and you should make up any debit hours before

leaving. Failure to do so will result in an appropriate deduction being made from your final salary.

13) The start of your working hours is when you start work and not from the point of arriving on site or at your desk.

14) The end of your working hours is when you finish your work and not when you leave site.

15) Its success relies upon the trust between you and your manager and the individuals using the scheme. If this trust is abused then the policy may be withdrawn altogether, an individual may no longer be able to work flexible hours and disciplinary action may be taken. If this is the case, only one warning (verbal or written) will be given before you will revert to normal working hours.

Operating the scheme

1) Any request to take more than two hours of flexi-time in any one day should be agreed by your line manager in advance. You are encouraged to approach your team informally to discuss your request and operational needs prior to consulting your manager. You should be mindful of busy periods within the financial year and your team.

2) A request may be refused if minimum staffing levels cannot be maintained as this may cause undue pressure on the remainder of the team. Appropriate staffing levels will be determined by the line manager or the CEO.

3) Annual leave and then TOIL should always take priority over flexi-time.

4) If you wish to take a full working day off to use flexi-time accrued you must make a request to your line manager normally not less than seven days in advance.

5) The Association recognises that taking flexi leave on a Friday or Monday or before or after a weekend or Bank holiday will be popular so you may only take one (1) of these days each year. These days will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

6) Accrued hours cannot be added onto the beginning or the end of annual leave or sickness absence.

7) If you participate in the flexi scheme you must keep a clear and accurate record of hours worked, including lunch break on your flexible working hours form. This form can be requested at any time by your line manager or the CEO.

8) Flexi records should be reviewed by your line manager on a four-weekly basis and a complete written record must be kept for 3 months.

9) Time taken for medical/dental appointments should be taken from accrued hours unless with prior authorisation by your line manager and must be accompanied by the production of an appointment letter from a hospital or your GP.

Policy on Taking a Second Job

This organisation operates the following policy on the subject of employees taking a second job.

A "second job" for the purposes of this policy is any job, whether paid or unpaid, with any employer and on any type of contractual arrangement or any type of self-employment. The carrying out of public duties does not count as a second job, nor do outside interests such as managing personal investments or membership of a committee where it is not job-related.

Any employee who wishes to take another job must, before commencing the second job, request and be granted written permission. The organisation does not prohibit employees from taking secondary employment and will not unreasonably withhold permission for an employee to work in a second job, provided that the second job does not interfere, and is not likely to interfere, with the performance of the employee's job with this organisation.

To request permission to take a second job, the employee should speak to his/her line manager and inform him/her as to:

- the name of the second employer;
- the type of business in which the second employer is engaged;
- the type of work involved;
- the proposed hours of work; and
- the proposed location of the work.

The line manager will give the employee a decision on whether or not permission is granted. The decision will be given within one week of the request and will be confirmed in writing.

The organisation reserves the right to refuse the employee's request to take a second job if:

- the job is with a competitor organisation or an organisation engaged in the same type of business;
- the job is with a customer or client of this organisation;
- the job is with an organisation that provides goods or services to this organisation, or has any other type of contractual arrangement with this organisation;
- the job or the type of work involved might, in the opinion of this organisation, represent a conflict of interest or might reflect badly on the reputation of this organisation;
- the hours of work would be likely, in the opinion of this organisation, to interfere with the employee's performance, attendance and/or timekeeping;
- the hours involved in the second job might have an adverse impact on the employee's availability to work overtime with this organisation, as required by his/her contract of employment; or
- the total number of hours worked in both jobs would be likely, in the opinion of this organisation, to impact on health and safety, or contravene any of the provisions of the Working Time Regulations 1998.

If the organisation grants permission for an employee to take a second job, the employee's manager will review the arrangements at least once a year. If at any time the employee's manager considers that there might be a problem (for example if the employee frequently appears tired or distracted) the manager should immediately set up an informal meeting with the employee to review the matter.

The organisation reserves the right, at any time, to rescind its permission for the employee to hold the second job if, in the line manager's reasonable view, the second job is having an adverse impact on the employee's performance, attendance or timekeeping (or any other aspect of the employee's employment with this organisation). When permission is rescinded, the manager will write to the employee to give him/her full reasons for the decision and reasonable notice, so as to allow the employee to give notice of termination to the second employer.

Employees who are granted permission under this policy to take a second job have a duty to this organisation to ensure that they remain fit to do their job, for example to make sure that they do not become over-tired through working long hours.

Any employee who acts in breach of this policy, for example by taking a second job (including self-employment) without first obtaining permission, or by lying about or failing to disclose the circumstances of a second job, will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal.

Flexible Working Policy (statutory requirements)

Introduction

The organisation believes that flexible working can increase staff motivation, promote work-life balance, reduce employee stress and improve performance and productivity. All employees who have a minimum of 26 weeks' continuous service have the right to request flexible working and to have their request considered seriously by their employer.

Please also refer to Working Flexible Hours at the Arboricultural Association

Requests for flexible working

A request for flexible working could include a request for a change to the number of hours that the employee works, a request for a change to the pattern of hours worked, a request to job share or a request to perform some or all of the work from the employee's home.

All requests must be made in writing by email or letter. Any request made under this policy must include:

- the date of the application;
- the changes that the employee is seeking to their terms and conditions;
- the date on which the employee would like the terms and conditions to come into effect;
- what effect the employee thinks the requested change would have on the organisation;
- how, in their opinion, any such effect might be dealt with;
- a statement that this is a statutory request;
- whether or not the employee has made a previous application for flexible working; and
- if the employee has made a previous request, when the employee made that application.

Meeting to discuss a flexible working request

Once the line manager receives the request, it will be dealt with as soon as possible, but no later than the deadline set out below. The line manager will usually arrange a meeting to deal with the request. Where a request can without further discussion be approved in the terms stated in the employee's written application, a meeting will not be necessary.

Outcome of a flexible working request

After the meeting, the line manager will consider the proposed flexible working arrangements carefully, weighing up the potential benefits to the employee and to the organisation against any adverse impact of implementing the changes. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis: agreeing to one request will not set a precedent or create the right for another employee to be granted a similar change to their working pattern.

The employee will be informed in writing of the decision as soon as is reasonably practicable after the meeting, but no later than the deadline set out below. The request may be granted in full or in part: for example, the organisation may propose a modified version of the request, the request may be granted on a temporary basis, or the employee may be asked to try the flexible working arrangement for a trial period. The employee will be given the right to appeal the decision if the employee's request is not upheld or is upheld in part.

Reasons for turning down a flexible working request

The line manager will give reasons for the rejection of any request. Those reasons must be for one or more prescribed business reasons, which are:

- the burden of additional costs;
- an inability to reorganise work among existing staff;
- an inability to recruit additional staff;
- a detrimental impact on quality;
- a detrimental impact on performance;
- a detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand;
- insufficient work for the periods the employee proposes to work; and
- a planned structural change to the business.

The line manager must not reject a request for any other reason.

Flexible working requests that are granted

If the request is upheld, the employee and the line manager will discuss how and when the changes will take effect. Any changes to terms and conditions will be put in writing and sent to the employee as an amendment to their contract of employment as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Timescales

All requests will be dealt with within a period of three months from first receipt to notification of the decision on appeal. The line manager should hold the meeting within 28 days of receiving the request and notify the decision to the employee within 14 days of the meeting, so that there is enough time for any appeal to be concluded. Employees who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their request are allowed to lodge an appeal within 14 days of the notification, with the appeal to be heard within 14 days. The employee will be informed of the outcome of their appeal within 14 days of the appeal meeting. These time limits may be extended where both the employee and employer are in agreement. For example, the relevant manager and the employee may agree to extend the time limit to give the employee a trial period on the flexible working arrangements.

Data protection

When managing an employee's flexible working request, the organisation processes personal data collected in accordance with its data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which the organisation receives a flexible working request is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of managing their request for flexible

working. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the organisation's data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the organisation's disciplinary procedure.

Problems with a flexible working request

If an employee is dissatisfied or unclear at any stage throughout the process, they should contact the manager of the individual dealing with the request. If an employee is dissatisfied with the way in which their request has been handled, they should raise a grievance under the organisation's grievance procedure.

If an employee fails to attend a meeting, including an appeal meeting, and then fails to attend a rearranged meeting without good reason, their application will be deemed to have been withdrawn.

Homeworking Policy

The organisation promotes flexible working for staff in all jobs and all grades and, where appropriate, will agree to an employee working partly or wholly from home, provided that such an arrangement is suitable for both parties and is likely to facilitate effective and efficient working.

Individual requests for homeworking will, however, need to be reviewed on their own merits and agreement to a specific request will depend on an objective assessment of whether the employee's work can be done from home without any detriment to the organisation's productivity or client relations. As every job is different and every employee is different, the organisation cannot guarantee that it will agree to every employee's request to work from home.

Employees who are considering putting in a request to work from home should consider whether their skills and attributes include:

- self-discipline;
- the ability to work without direct supervision;
- good organisational skills;
- the ability to manage time effectively; and
- an ability to cope with the potentially conflicting demands of work and family.

This policy aims to describe the working arrangements that will apply when it is agreed that an employee will work from home.

Pay

Employees who work from home will be paid a fixed monthly salary for a defined number of hours of work, with provision for overtime only by agreement.

Hours of work

The organisation will normally expect a homeworker to contact his/her supervisor twice a week.

Homeworkers must ensure that they take adequate rest breaks as required by the Working Time Regulations 1998. They must:

- take a break during each working day of at least 20 minutes, during which they must stop work;
- ensure that they have a daily rest break of at least 11 continuous hours, i.e. the time period between stopping work one day and beginning work the next day must not be less than 11 hours; and
- have at least one complete day each week when no work is done.

Visits to the organisation's premises

Homeworkers are required, on request, to attend the workplace for purposes such as training, performance assessment and team briefings. This will normally not be more

frequent than one day per week and the dates and times of such visits will be agreed in advance. The employee will be paid for time spent at the workplace on such visits.

Visits to the employee's home

The organisation reserves the right to visit the employee at home at agreed times for work-related purposes, including health and safety matters. It is a condition of any homeworking agreement that the employee agrees to accept visits from management in his/her home. Such visits will be for the purposes of:

- delivering and collecting work;
- providing a channel for reporting;
- performance monitoring and feedback;
- general discussions about work-related matters;
- ensuring health, safety and security; or
- any other work-related purposes that the organisation considers appropriate.

Equipment and materials

It is the organisation's policy that all equipment, including computer equipment, and materials necessary for the employee to work from home will be provided to the homeworker by the organisation and maintained (and replaced when necessary) by the organisation.

It is the homeworker's duty to ensure that proper care is taken of equipment and materials provided by the organisation.

Specifically, the organisation will provide to the employee:

- a laptop computer;
- a printer/scanner;
- a mobile telephone; and
- a lockable filing cabinet.

On termination of the employee's employment for any reason, the organisation will have the right to visit the employee's home at an agreed time and retrieve all equipment and documents belonging to the organisation.

Telephone and internet accounts

The organisation will reimburse the employee for all telephone and internet accounts associated with the use of the employee's telephone and computer used in connection with the organisation's business.

The organisation will pay the costs of connection fees for all telephone and internet connections in the homeworker's home.

The organisation will pay all charges on the mobile phone provided by the organisation to the homeworker, with the proviso that this must be used only for work-related purposes.

Security

The homeworker must carry out work for the organisation in a room used only for that purpose and must not allow members of his/her family or third parties who are not employed by the organisation to access or use the organisation's equipment.

Employees who work from home are responsible for keeping all documents and information associated with the organisation's business secure at all times. Specifically, homeworkers are under a duty to:

- keep filing cabinets and drawers locked when they are not being used;
- keep all documentation belonging to the organisation under lock and key at all times except when in use; and
- set up and use a unique password for the computer and any other digital devices.

Furthermore, the computer and other equipment provided by the organisation for the homeworker must be used only for work-related purposes and must not be used by any other member of the family at any time or for any purpose.

Health and safety issues

The organisation is obliged under health and safety legislation to ensure the health and safety of homeworkers in the same way as office-based staff. The organisation is therefore required to ensure that:

- all equipment and systems of work in the employee's home are safe;
- all articles and substances are handled and stored safely;
- an analysis of the employee's workstation is conducted;
- information and training on the safe use of equipment, including display screen equipment, is provided to the homeworker; and
- risk assessments are carried out in respect of the work the employee is carrying out.

All employees who work from home have a duty to ensure, insofar as is reasonably practicable, that they work in a safe manner and that they follow all health and safety instructions issued by the organisation from time to time.

Insurance

The homeworker is responsible for checking that all home and contents insurance policies provide adequate cover for the fact that he/she works from home.

If there is any uplift to these home insurance policies specifically on account of the work for the organisation, the organisation will meet the appropriate extra premium upon delivery by the homeworker of the appropriate receipts and documentation.

Mortgage or rental agreements

The homeworker is responsible for checking applicable mortgage or rental agreements to ensure that he/she is permitted to work from home, and for obtaining any requisite permissions to work from home.

Requests to work from home

Any employee who wishes to work from home should apply under the organisation's flexible working procedure.

The organisation will arrange a meeting with the employee to discuss the feasibility of the employee's request to work from home. It is the organisation's policy to view any requests for homeworking in a positive light and the organisation will, whenever it is possible and practicable, agree to the employee's request.

Short Term Sickness Absence Policy

Introduction

Purpose

The organisation aims to encourage all its employees to maximise their attendance at work while recognising that employees will, from time to time, be unable to come to work because of ill health.

While the organisation understands that there will inevitably be some sickness absence among employees, it must also pay due regard to its operational needs. If an employee is persistently absent from work, this can damage efficiency and productivity, and place an additional burden on the employee's colleagues.

By implementing this policy, the organisation aims to strike a reasonable balance between the pursuit of its operational needs and the genuine need of employees to take time off work because of ill health.

This policy does not form part of employees' terms and conditions of employment and may be subject to change at the discretion of the management.

Definitions

The following definitions are used in this policy:

"Period of sickness absence" or "instance of sickness absence" means any continuous period of sickness absence, of whatever length, during which the employee does not work.

"Short-term sickness absence" means any period of sickness lasting one to 14 calendar days.

"Long-term sickness absence" means any period of sickness lasting 15 calendar days or more.

"Formal review period" means a defined period during which an employee is required to show an improvement in their sickness absence levels under the organisation's sickness absence management procedure.

Scope

This policy covers short-term sickness absence. The organisation operates a separate policy on long-term sickness absence. Once an employee's sickness has lasted 14 calendar days, the organisation's long-term sickness absence policy applies.

Where an employee's absences are being managed under this policy and they then go off on long-term sickness absence, management of their sickness absence will be switched over to the organisation's separate policy on long-term sickness absence.

This policy is formulated on the assumption that, if the organisation suspects there to be misconduct, its separate disciplinary procedure will apply. For example, the organisation may take disciplinary action if there is evidence that:

- absence is not genuine or not for the reason provided;

- the employee is undertaking inappropriate activities while off sick, such as carrying out work for another organisation; or
- the correct sickness absence notification and evidence procedure has not been followed.

This policy applies to employees only and does not apply to contractors, consultants, agency workers or any self-employed individuals working for the organisation.

Notification and evidence of sickness absence

Reporting absence

On the first day of sickness absence, the employee must inform their manager as soon as reasonably practicable that they will not be working because of illness or injury. Preferably, the employee should notify their manager of non-attendance by telephone before they are due to start work and in any event no later than one hour after they are due to begin work. If the employee's manager is unavailable, the employee should contact the next most appropriate person within the department.

The employee should provide a clear reason (i.e. the nature of the illness or injury) why they cannot attend work and estimate how long they think the absence will last. The employee should also be prepared to discuss briefly any consequences of their absence, for example if customer appointments need to be cancelled or any essential work needs to be covered.

Notification of sickness absence must be via telephone, rather than text message, email or social media. In exceptional circumstances where the employee is unable to telephone (for example, because of hospitalisation), another person such as a friend or relative can contact the organisation on their behalf.

If an employee comes to work but needs to leave during the day because of ill health, they should inform their manager before leaving work. If the manager is unavailable, the employee should inform the next most appropriate person within the department.

Sickness absence that begins part way through the day will count as one full day's sickness absence if the employee leaves before completing 50% of their working day. Where sickness absence begins after the employee has completed 50% of their working day, this should be recorded as half a day's absence.

For each subsequent sick day after the first day of absence, the employee should generally telephone their manager as soon as reasonably practicable in the morning. However, managers should use their discretion and can agree different arrangements with the employee, for example if the employee is hospitalised.

Self-certification of sickness absence

If sickness is for seven calendar days or less, on the first day of the employee's return to work/at a return-to-work interview, they must obtain, complete and sign a self-certification form, setting out the dates of absence and the nature of the illness or injury.

The line manager should countersign the form and pass it on to the CEO.

Statement of fitness for work (fit note)

While the first seven calendar days of sickness can be self-certificated, all sickness that last longer than seven calendar days require medical evidence. This medical evidence will normally be in the form of a doctor's fit note, also known as a "statement of fitness for work".

If the employee's sickness lasts for eight calendar days or more, the employee's line manager must ensure that the employee provides a fit note from their doctor as soon as possible.

Sick pay

The organisation operates a contractual sick pay scheme that is more generous than statutory sick pay (SSP).

During sickness absence employees will, in any 12-month period except for the first six months of service, receive sick pay from the organisation at their normal rate of pay for a total of four weeks. This will be followed by a further four weeks at half of normal pay.

The organisation reserves the right to withhold or suspend sick pay under its contractual sick pay scheme at its discretion. Circumstances in which contractual sick pay may be withheld include where:

- the employee has failed to comply with the organisation's sickness absence notification and evidence requirements;
- the employee refuses to attend a medical examination at the reasonable request of the organisation;
- the employee's incapacity has been caused by participation in dangerous sports or activities or any other occupation the employee has;
- the employee makes or produces any misleading or untrue statement or document concerning their fitness to work;
- the employee has given or received notice to terminate their employment; and
- disciplinary proceedings are pending against the employee.

The employee will normally be entitled to receive SSP when contractual sick pay is withheld or suspended, although the organisation can withhold or suspend SSP if it is not satisfied that the employee is ill, and no evidence of sickness is provided.

Employees will be given written notice if their SSP or contractual sick pay is being withheld or suspended.

Sick pay under the organisation's scheme is subject to the usual deductions for PAYE, national insurance, pension contributions, etc.

Payments under the organisation's scheme will be calculated by reference to the employee's basic salary only and any payments made under the organisation's scheme are inclusive of any entitlement to SSP for the same period of absence.

Medical appointments

The organisation recognises that employees will, from time to time, need to attend medical appointments.

Please refer to the policy on Working Flexible Hours at the Arboricultural Association. These arrangements should provide opportunity for the employee to take time off for medical appointments but where time off becomes frequent or regular, or starts to cause difficulties for the employee's department, then time off will be given at the discretion of the line manager.

Where using flexible hours is not possible, employees should endeavour to arrange medical appointments in their own time or, if this is not possible, at times that will cause the minimum amount of absence from work or inconvenience to the organisation.

However, because the organisation accepts that it is not always possible to arrange medical appointments outside working hours, it is the organisation's policy to permit reasonable time off work for such appointments.

Provided that the employee gives their line manager reasonable notice of the date and time of an appointment, time off with pay will normally be granted, although this is subject to the discretion of the employee's line manager.

Employees must obtain approval from their line manager in advance of any appointment. The line manager reserves the right to ask the employee to reschedule an appointment if its timing would cause disruption to the organisation's business. The line manager may also, at their discretion, ask the employee to produce confirmation of the appointment.

Employees who are pregnant have the statutory right not to be unreasonably refused paid time off work for antenatal appointments where the employee's attendance has been recommended by a registered medical practitioner, midwife or nurse. Paid time off in such circumstances will automatically be granted, although employees should endeavour to arrange appointments outside working hours. Nevertheless, the employee should give reasonable notice of the date and time of the appointment to their line manager where possible and the line manager will still have the right to request to see the confirmation of the employee's second appointment and any subsequent appointments.

A prospective father, or partner of a pregnant woman, has the statutory right to take unpaid time off to attend up to two antenatal appointments.

Return to work

On an employee's first day back after any period of sickness absence, the employee should either fill in a self-certification form (where the sickness is seven calendar days or less - see above) or provide medical evidence (where the sickness is longer than seven calendar days - see above).

The line manager should invite the employee to an informal return-to-work interview each time the employee returns from a period of sickness absence.

Sickness absence and annual leave

Sickness during holiday

Where an employee falls sick or is injured while on holiday, the organisation will allow the employee to transfer to sick leave and take replacement holiday at a later time. This policy is subject to the following strict conditions:

- The total period of ill health must be fully certificated by a qualified medical practitioner where it exceeds seven calendar days.
- The employee must contact the organisation (by telephone if possible) as soon as they know that there will be a period of sickness during a holiday.
- The employee must submit a written request no later than 10 days after returning to work setting out how much of the holiday period was affected by sickness and the amount of leave that the employee wishes to take at another time.
- Where the employee is overseas when they fall ill or are injured, evidence must still be produced that the employee was ill by way of a medical certificate.

Where the employee fulfils all of the above conditions, the organisation will grant the employee the same number of days' replacement holiday leave as the number of holiday days lost due to sickness or injury.

If an employee is ill or is injured before the start of a period of planned holiday, and is consequently unable to take the holiday, the organisation will agree to the employee postponing the holiday dates to another mutually agreed time. Any period of sickness absence will then be treated in accordance with the organisation's normal policy on sickness absence. The employee must submit a written request to postpone the planned holiday and this must be accompanied by medical evidence confirming that they are unfit, or are likely to be unfit, to take the holiday.

Holiday during sick leave

An employee who is absent on sick leave will continue to accrue their contractual holiday entitlement and will be given the opportunity to take this at a later date, including in the subsequent leave year, if they do not take their contractual holiday entitlement due to being on sick leave.

An employee on sick leave may apply to take their holiday entitlement while on sick leave. The holiday dates must be approved in accordance with the procedure set out in the organisation's holiday policy.

The organisation will treat personal data collected during the absence management process in accordance with its data protection policy/policy on processing special categories of personal data. Information about how an employee's data is used and the basis for processing their data will be provided in the organisation's employee privacy notice. Where the organisation is relying on its legitimate interests as the legal ground for processing an employee's data, they can object to the processing.

Sickness absence management

The trigger points that are used to decide when action needs to be taken to tackle an employee's sickness absence record are set out below. The stages set out below are guidelines only.

Stage 1

Stage 1 trigger point

The trigger point for a "stage 1" short-term sickness absence formal review is:

- 150 points or 4 or more absences in a rolling 12-month period

Stage 1 invitation

On the employee reaching a stage 1 trigger point, the employee's line manager will invite them in writing to a stage 1 short-term sickness absence formal review meeting.

Stage 1 meeting

The "stage 1" short-term sickness absence formal review meeting will be chaired by the employee's line manager. The line manager will be accompanied by another manager.

Stage 1 outcome

After the meeting, the line manager will set out in writing what has been decided as a result of the stage 1 meeting, for example if a warning is being issued and the employee has been placed on a formal review period, or if the decision is that no further action will be taken.

Stage 2

Stage 2 trigger point

- 300 or more points or 2 absences or more within 6 months in a rolling 12-month period

Stage 2 invitation

On reaching a stage 2 trigger point, the employee's line manager will invite them in writing to a stage 2 short-term sickness absence formal review meeting.

Stage 2 meeting

The "stage 2" short-term sickness absence formal review meeting will be chaired by the employee's line manager. The line manager will be accompanied by another manager.

Stage 2 outcome

After the meeting, the manager will set out in writing what has been decided as a result of the stage 2 meeting, for example if a warning is being issued and the employee has been placed on a formal review period, or if the decision is that no further action will be taken.

Stage 3

- 450 or more points or 2 absences or more within 6 months in a rolling 12-month period

Stage 3 invitation

On reaching a stage 3 trigger point, a senior manager will invite the employee in writing to a stage 3 short-term sickness absence final meeting.

Stage 3 meeting

The "stage 3" short-term sickness absence final formal review meeting will be chaired by the CEO, together with another senior manager present.

Stage 3 outcome

Within five days of the meeting, the manager will set out in writing the outcome of the stage 3 final meeting.

The outcome of the meeting could be:

- a decision to take no further action;
- an offer to make adjustments to the employee's work;
- redeployment with the employee's agreement; or
- a decision to dismiss the employee.

The employee will have a right of appeal. The employee should be informed of their right of appeal in the outcome letter.

Appeal

An employee who is given a warning or is dismissed under this procedure has the right of appeal. The appeal should be sent in writing to Chair of the Association and set out the grounds on which the employee believes that the decision was flawed or unfair.

The employee should lodge their appeal within five days of receiving written confirmation of the sanction imposed on them by the organisation.

An appeal hearing will be convened at least 10 days, and within a reasonable period, after the appeal is lodged. The appeal hearing will be chaired by the Chair of the Association, who will be accompanied by another Trustee or an external HR Consultant.

The employee will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee or a trade union official.

At the hearing, the decision to impose the sanction will be reviewed and the employee will be entitled to make representations about the appropriateness of that decision.

The outcome of the appeal will be confirmed to the employee in writing, explaining the grounds on which the decision was reached. The outcome of the appeal will be final.

Long Term Sickness Absence Policy

Introduction

Purpose

The organisation is committed to dealing fairly and sympathetically with employees who are absent from work for long periods because of ill health. The organisation aims to assist employees on long-term sick leave with their rehabilitation and eventual return to work.

The organisation understands that an employee may have a health condition or injury that means that they are not fit for work, and that the employee's recovery may be a slow process. However, the organisation must also pay due regard to its operational needs. The absence of an employee on long-term sickness absence can damage efficiency and productivity and place an additional burden on the employee's colleagues.

The organisation will consider dismissing an employee on long-term sick leave only after it has made all reasonable and practicable attempts to support their return to work, including any reasonable adjustments if the employee has a disability.

Scope

This policy covers long-term sickness absence. The organisation operates a separate policy on short-term sickness absence. Many of the principles of both policies are the same and so in this policy you will see only the differences between the two policies.

Where an employee is on long-term sickness absence, but returns to work for short periods, the organisation reserves the right to continue to manage their sickness absence under this policy. This is to prevent the organisation from being required to switch between its policy on long-term sickness absence and separate policy on short-term sickness absence solely on the basis that an employee has returned to work for a short period.

Keeping in touch with the employee

The organisation will maintain contact with the employee on long-term sickness absence and once the employee is on long-term sickness absence, the employee's line manager should contact the employee to agree the method and frequency of contact.

In some circumstances, contact with an employee on long-term sickness absence can be maintained via home visits. Home visits will take place only with the prior consent of the employee at mutually agreed times.

Home visits will be conducted by the employee's line manager or CEO. The line manager or CEO manager will normally be accompanied by another Manager or a HR Consultant. Where the employee is female, at least one of the visitors should always be female. The employee may be accompanied during the visit if they wish, for example by a family member or an employee representative.

If the employee would prefer the organisation's representative not to visit them in the home, another location near the employee's home (such as a local cafe or leisure centre) could be mutually agreed.

Sickness absence management

The trigger points that are used when an employee is on long-term sickness absence are set out below.

The stages set out below are guidelines only.

Principles applying at all stages

If the employee does not respond to efforts made to contact them or does not cooperate with attempts to agree a time and place for the meeting, the line manager is entitled to set a time and place for the meeting without the employee's agreement.

While the meeting can take place in the workplace, it may be that the employee's condition necessitates a venue that is away from the employee's place of work. For example, the employee's mobility may be restricted or an employee suffering from work-related stress may be uncomfortable coming to work. The line manager should therefore be open to the meeting taking place in another location. This could be the employee's home (although only if the employee is comfortable with this) or a venue near the employee's home (such as a local cafe or leisure centre).

Stage 1

Stage 1 trigger point

Once an employee has been absent for 14 calendar days, or as soon as it is confirmed that they will be absent for at least 14 days (for example, a fit note has signed them off for that period), their manager should contact the employee to set up a "stage 1" long-term sickness absence formal meeting.

Stage 1 invitation

The line manager should contact the employee to agree a date, time and location for the meeting to take place, at a time that is convenient for the employee, line manager and the other manager attending.

Stage 1 meeting

The "stage 1" long-term sickness absence formal meeting will be chaired by the employee's line manager and another manager will be present to take notes.

Stage 1 outcome

After the meeting, the line manager will set out in writing what has been discussed at the stage 1 meeting.

Stage 2

Stage 2 trigger point

Once the employee is absent for one month, or as soon as it is confirmed that they will be absent for one month (for example, a fit note has signed them off for that period), their line manager should contact the employee and the CEO to set up a "stage 2" long-term sickness absence formal meeting.

"Stage 2" long-term sickness absence formal meetings will also take place every month until the employee returns to work or they have reached three months' long-term sickness absence, at which point a "stage 3" long-term sickness absence formal meeting will take place (see below).

Stage 2 invitation

The line manager should contact the employee to agree a date, time and location for the meeting to take place, at a time that is convenient for the employee and the CEO.

Once the date, time and location of the meeting have been agreed, the line manager should write to the employee inviting them to a "stage 2" long-term sickness absence formal meeting.

Stage 2 meeting

The "stage 2" long-term sickness absence formal review meeting will be chaired by the CEO and the employee's line manager will take notes.

Stage 2 outcome

After the meeting, the CEO will set out in writing what has been discussed at a stage 2 meeting.

Stage 3

Stage 3 trigger point

A "stage 3" long-term sickness absence final meeting will be arranged following the "stage 2" long-term sickness absence process if:

- it is clear from medical advice that the employee is unable to return to their role in the foreseeable future;
- all reasonable steps to assist the employee in returning to work (for example, a phased return, amended job duties, altered hours of work, or workplace adaptations) have been exhausted; or
- the possibility of dismissal has been discussed with the employee.

A "stage 3" long-term sickness absence final meeting will also be arranged once an employee has had a three-month continuous absence period, or as soon as it is confirmed that the continuous absence period will last for at least 3 months (for example, a fit note has signed the employee off for a period that will take them beyond 3 months' continuous absence).

Stage 3 invitation

The line manager should contact the employee to agree a date, time and location for the meeting to take place, at a time that is convenient for the employee, CEO and senior manager.

Once the date, time and location of the meeting have been agreed, the senior manager should write to the employee inviting them to the "stage 3" long-term sickness absence final meeting. The letter should warn the employee that a possible outcome of the meeting is that they may be dismissed by reason of capability.

Stage 3 meeting

The "stage 3" long-term sickness absence final formal review meeting will be chaired by the CEO and a senior manager will also be present to take notes of the meeting.

Stage 3 outcome

After the meeting, the CEO will set out in writing the outcome of the stage 3 meeting. The outcome of the meeting could be:

- a decision for the employee to remain on sick leave until they have recovered (typically where an approximate return date can be identified);
- if applicable, further steps to pursue ill-health retirement or a claim under a permanent health insurance or similar insurance scheme;
- the issue of a warning that the employee's continued absence is unsatisfactory;
- an offer to make adjustments to the employee's work;
- redeployment with the employee's agreement; or
- a decision to dismiss the employee.

Return-to-work arrangements

The organisation will always arrange a return-to-work interview (see below) for an employee returning from long-term sickness absence. Any recommendations regarding a phased return to work or temporary reassignment of duties or redeployment will be discussed.

Holiday Policy

The holiday year runs from 1 January to 31 December. The employee's holiday entitlement is detailed in the contract of employment.

Except where an employee is absent on long-term sick leave, all holiday must be taken during the holiday year in which it is accrued. In exceptional circumstances a maximum of five days may be carried over from one holiday year to the next, but this can be done only with the prior written approval of the CEO. The employee must have a specific purpose for carrying over the holiday and requests to carry over holiday must be received before 30 September detailing the dates when the holiday will be taken. If the carried forward holiday is not taken at the time agreed, the days carried forward will be lost.

All holiday dates must be approved in advance by the employee's line manager. As much notice as possible of proposed holiday dates must be given to the line manager to ensure adequate staffing coverage at all times. Such notice must be at least twice the number of working days that the employee wishes to take as annual leave.

Holiday pay

Holiday pay is calculated on the basis of the employee's current rate of pay.

There will be no payment in lieu of any holiday not taken (except on termination).

Public and bank holidays

The organisation recognises eight public/bank holidays a year, the dates of which vary from year to year. All recognised public and bank holidays are permitted as paid holiday in addition to the annual holiday entitlement specified above.

An employee will not be paid (or where appropriate a deduction will be made from his/her salary) for any bank or public holiday if he/she is absent from work (other than on the organisation's business or unless expressly authorised by the organisation) immediately before or after the bank or public holiday. If absence immediately before or immediately after the bank or public holiday is due to sickness, payment for the bank or public holiday will be made only if a medical certificate is provided. The organisation will in these circumstances reimburse the employee for the cost of obtaining the medical certificate. Where a medical certificate is provided, sick pay will be paid for the absence subject to the terms of the organisation's sick pay scheme.

Holiday entitlement in year of commencement

If the employee joins the organisation part way through a holiday year, he/she will be entitled to a proportion of his/her holiday entitlement based on the period of his/her employment in that holiday year.

During the employee's first year of service, he/she will not normally be allowed, unless otherwise agreed by the line manager, to take more holiday than he/she has actually accrued at the time holiday is taken. Entitlement during the employee's first year is calculated monthly in advance at the rate of one-twelfth of the full year's entitlement.

Holiday pay on termination of employment

If the employee leaves the organisation's employment part way through a holiday year, he/she will be entitled to be paid for any outstanding holiday entitlement for that holiday year that has not been taken by the date of termination.

However, the organisation reserves the right to require the employee to take any outstanding holiday entitlement during any period of notice, whether such notice is given by the organisation or by the employee.

If, on the employee's date of termination, he/she has taken paid holiday leave in excess of earned entitlement, he/she will be required to reimburse the organisation (by means of deduction from salary if necessary) in respect of such holiday.

No payment in lieu of accrued contractual holiday will be made to the employee (and where appropriate a deduction will be made from salary) in the event of his/her termination for gross misconduct or in the event of the employee giving inadequate notice of termination or leaving before the contractual notice period has expired. Contractual holiday for these purposes means all and any leave entitlement provided for in the employee's contract that is over and above the minimum statutory leave period provided for in the Working Time Regulations 1998.

Sickness during holiday (see short term sickness absence policy)

Holiday entitlement during sick leave (see short term sickness absence policy)

Severe Weather and Disruptions to Public Transport Policy

General

The organisation recognises that employees may face difficulties attending their place of work and returning home during periods of severe weather or when there are disruptions to public transport. While the organisation is committed to protecting the health and safety of all of its employees, it must ensure that disruption caused to its services remains minimal. The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities of employees for attendance at work during severe weather conditions or when there are disruptions to public transport and to define appropriate procedures. This policy applies to all employees.

Reasonable efforts to attend work

Employees should use their best endeavours to attend work in all circumstances. However, it is not the organisation's intention that employees put themselves at unnecessary risk when trying to attend work. Members of staff should use their own judgment and, if unable to attend work, contact their line manager or CEO as soon as possible.

When this policy will apply

When severe weather conditions occur or when there are disruptions to public transport, either at the start of or during a working day, a senior member of staff shall contact the police to get advice on the prevailing weather conditions and/or the advisability of travel.

On the basis of the advice received, the CEO will decide whether or not the present policy applies and inform staff accordingly.

If the policy does not apply, all employees will be expected to attend work on time and lateness, or absence may give rise to disciplinary action under the organisation's disciplinary procedure. If the policy does apply, employees should follow the procedure set out below.

Severe conditions or disruptions to public transport occurring at the start of a working day

Employees unable to attend work or delayed by the weather conditions or disruptions to public transport should contact their line manager or CEO as soon as possible.

Lateness

Employees who are delayed will have the opportunity to make up this time at a later date. However, it is open to their line manager to waive this requirement if the lateness is negligible having regard to the severity of the weather conditions or disruptions to public transport and the employees' personal circumstances (eg distance from their home to work and the mode of transport used).

If lateness amounts to half the time of the employee's normal working day, the provisions in relation to absence set out below will apply.

Absence

If an employee has made all reasonable efforts to get to work but failed to do so because of severe weather conditions or disruptions to public transport and the CEO decides that this policy applies, the employee shall be paid as if he/she had attended work.

Severe conditions or disruptions to public transport occurring during the course of a working day

The line manager or CEO should decide on a case-by-case basis whether or not it is appropriate for employees to leave work early. When making this decision, they should take into account the employee's circumstances (ego distance from his/her home to work and the mode of transport), the employee's views and the needs of the organisation.

Line managers/the CEO may require employees who leave work early to take work home with them as appropriate.

Health and safety

While the organisation will ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees, employees are reminded of their duty to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions. This includes taking extra care when travelling to and from work in severe weather conditions.

The organisation recognises that severe weather particularly affects employees whose job involves driving or working outdoors. The organisation will undertake regular risk assessments to ensure that employees working in these conditions are properly instructed, provided with the appropriate clothing and equipment and given sufficient rest breaks.

Family Related Leave

The organisation complies with all statutory entitlements for family related leave and pay. Details can be found on www.gov.uk.

The Government has introduced Parental Bereavement Leave and details can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/parental-bereavement-pay-leave>

If you have a query about maternity, paternity, adoption, ordinary parental leave, shared parental leave or parental bereavement leave and any statutory pay that you may be entitled to please contact the CEO who will advise you that you can contact the AA HR Consultant.

Performance Improvement Procedure

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for resolving a situation where an employee is underperforming and concerns about his or her performance have not been resolved through day-to-day line management and feedback, ideally through the improvement of the employee's performance. As a last resort, the policy specifies the circumstances in which the employee may be redeployed to more suitable work or dismissed on the ground of capability.

Where an employee's poor performance is believed to be the result of deliberate negligence, or where serious errors have been made by him/her to the detriment of the organisation, the organisation may decide to use its disciplinary procedure instead.

A written record of all meetings conducted under this procedure will be made, either by the person holding the meeting or by an additional person arranged by the organisation to take notes. The organisation processes any personal data collected during the performance improvement procedure in accordance with its data protection policy. Any data collected is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of completing the performance improvement procedure. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the organisation's data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the organisation's disciplinary procedure.

Stage 1

The employee's manager will inform him/her of the nature of the problem and confirm this in writing. The employee will be invited to an informal meeting to discuss concerns regarding his/her performance. The meeting will be conducted by the employee's manager.

Following discussion of the problem, the manager may choose to:

- take no further action;
- refer the matter for investigation under the disciplinary procedure; or
- issue guidance to the employee on what he/she needs to do to improve his/her performance.

Stage 2

Where stage 1 does not lead to a satisfactory improvement in the employee's performance, the employee will be invited to a performance review meeting.

The purpose of a performance review meeting is to discuss the employee's performance and decide what measures should be taken, with a view to securing the required improvement in the employee's performance. The meeting will be conducted by the employee's manager.

Where it is considered appropriate by the organisation, a member of the HR department may also be present.

The employee will be given an opportunity to respond to any criticisms of his/her performance and to put forward any explanation he/she may have for the matters identified by the manager as amounting to poor performance.

The outcome of the meeting may be:

- a decision to take no further action;
- a decision to refer the matter for investigation under the disciplinary procedure; or
- the implementation of a performance improvement programme designed to bring the employee's performance up to an acceptable level.

Performance improvement programme

A performance improvement programme is a series of measures designed to help improve the employee's performance. Each measure will ideally be agreed with the employee, although the organisation reserves the right to insist on any aspect of the performance improvement programme in the absence of such agreement.

Each programme will be tailored to the particular situation, but will contain the following elements:

Timescale

The overall timescale in which the necessary improvement must be achieved will be set out, together with the timescale for reaching individual milestones where appropriate.

Targets

The performance improvement programme will specify the particular areas in which improved performance is needed and set out how, and on what criteria, the employee's performance will be assessed. Where appropriate, specific targets will be set that will need to be achieved either by the end of the programme or at identifiable stages within it.

Measures

The performance improvement programme will specify what measures will be taken by the organisation to support the employee in improving his/her performance. Such measures may include: training; additional supervision; the reallocation of other duties; or the provision of additional support from colleagues.

Feedback

As part of the performance improvement programme, the employee will be given regular feedback from his/her line manager indicating the extent to which the employee is on track to deliver the improvements set out in the programme.

If, at any stage, the organisation feels that the performance improvement programme is not progressing in a satisfactory way, a further meeting may be held with the employee to discuss the issue. As a result of such a meeting, the employer may amend or extend any part of the programme.

Review

At the end of the performance improvement programme, the employee's performance will be reviewed. If satisfactory progress has been made, the employee will be notified of this fact in writing. However, if the manager feels that progress has been insufficient, he/she may decide to extend and/or amend the performance improvement programme to such extent as the manager considers appropriate. Alternatively, he/she may decide to refer the matter to a meeting under stage 3 of this procedure.

Ongoing review

Following the successful completion of a performance improvement programme, the employee's performance will continue to be monitored. If, at any stage during the following 12 months, the employee's performance again starts to fall short of an acceptable standard, his/her line manager may decide to initiate stage 3 of this procedure.

Stage 3

If the performance improvement programme has not led to sufficient improvement in the employee's performance, the employee will be invited to attend a formal performance management hearing. The invitation will set out the respects in which the employee's manager believes that the employee's performance still falls short of an acceptable standard.

At this stage, the organisation may seek advice and support from an external HR Consultant.

The hearing will be conducted by the line manager and CEO. The employee will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee or a trade union official.

At the hearing, the employee will be given an opportunity to respond to any criticism of his/her performance and to make representations about any aspect of the way in which the process has been managed.

The outcome of the meeting may be a decision to:

- take no further action;
- refer the matter for investigation under the disciplinary procedure;
- institute another performance improvement programme; or
- issue a formal warning to the employee.

A formal warning will be issued if the hearing concludes that reasonable steps have been taken by the organisation that should have allowed the employee to perform to an acceptable standard, but that these measures have not worked. The warning will explain the nature of the improvement that is required in the employee's performance and state that the improvement must be immediate and sustained. It will also explain that, if the necessary improvement does not take place, the employee may be dismissed.

The warning will remain current for a period of 12 months, after which it will cease to have effect.

Where an employee is issued with a formal warning in accordance with this procedure, he/she will have a right of appeal.

Stage 4

If an employee has been issued with a warning under stage 3 that remains live and the employee's manager believes that his/her performance is still not acceptable, the matter may be referred to a performance dismissal hearing.

The employee will be informed in writing of the grounds on which the hearing is being convened. In particular, he/she will be told of the respects in which his/her performance remains below an acceptable level.

At this stage, the organisation may seek advice and support from an external HR Consultant.

The hearing will be conducted by line manager and CEO. The employee will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee or trade union official.

At the meeting, the employee will have the opportunity to respond to any criticisms made of his/her performance and make representations about how the situation should be treated.

The outcome of the meeting may be:

- a decision to take no further action;
- the issuing of another performance management warning;
- an offer to redeploy the employee to alternative work; or
- a decision to dismiss the employee.

Any offer to redeploy the employee will be entirely at the organisation's discretion. Such an offer will be made only where the organisation is confident that the employee will be able to perform well in the redeployed role. It will normally be offered only as an alternative to dismissal in circumstances in which the organisation is satisfied that the employee should no longer be allowed to continue to work in his/her current role. While the employee is free to refuse any offer of redeployment, the only alternative available will usually be dismissal.

If the organisation believes that there is no alternative role available and suitable for the employee, but that he/she has not met an acceptable standard of performance, the organisation may decide to dismiss. Any dismissal will be with full notice or payment in lieu of notice. The decision to dismiss together with the reasons for dismissal will be set out in writing and sent to the employee.

Where an employee is dismissed in accordance with this procedure, he/she will have a right of appeal.

Appeal

An employee has a right of appeal against a sanction issued under stages 3 or 4 of this procedure. A request for an appeal should be sent in writing to the CEO and set out the grounds on which the employee believes that the decision was flawed or unfair. The request

should be sent within seven days of the employee receiving written confirmation of the sanction imposed on him/her by the organisation.

An appeal hearing will be convened to consider the matter. It will be chaired by the CEO or the Chair of the Association if the CEO has been involved. The employee will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee or a trade union official.

The organisation may seek advice and support from an external HR Consultant.

At the hearing, the decision to impose the sanction will be reviewed and the employee will be entitled to make representations about the appropriateness of that decision.

The result of the hearing will be either to confirm the sanction or substitute any outcome that was available to the panel conducting the hearing at which the sanction was imposed on the employee.

The outcome of the appeal will be confirmed to the employee in writing, explaining the grounds on which the decision was reached. The outcome of the appeal will be final.

Expenses Policy

Purpose

This policy sets out the organisation's rules on how employees can claim for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties for the organisation. The policy covers travel, meals and accommodation, overseas and relocation expenses, business entertainment, gifts and staff parties.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that employees are properly reimbursed for legitimate business expenses and to ensure that these expenses are treated appropriately for tax purposes.

General procedure

The organisation will reimburse you for actual expenditure that is incurred wholly, necessarily and exclusively in connection with authorised duties that you undertake in the course of your employment.

To claim for expenses, you must use the organisation's expenses claim forms, available from the Finance Department and intranet. You should set out the reasons why the expense was incurred on the claim form.

Expenses will not be paid unless supporting evidence is provided, together with a completed expenses claim form. This should include original receipts or invoices with the date and time of the transaction (unless you are claiming for mileage).

Where you are submitting a VAT receipt, you should set out:

- the name and VAT registration number of the retailer or service provider;
- the goods and services provided; and
- the amount of VAT payable.

Once completed and signed, you should submit your expenses claim form to your line manager. Once your line manager has approved the claim form, this should be sent to Finance department.

Expenses claims must be submitted within the month following the expense being incurred. If this is not practical, written approval for any extension will be required from your line manager. The organisation reserves the right to withhold any payment where written approval has not been sought.

The organisation may return an expenses claim form to you without payment if it is completed incorrectly or lacks supporting evidence.

The organisation will pay claims for authorised expenses by BACS transfer into the same bank account into which your salary is paid.

In general, you should not incur expenses other than in the categories listed below as all other expenditure is handled centrally through the organisation's Finance team. However, if you have claims for expenditure other than for those categories listed below, you should seek

written approval from your line manager or the Finance manager before incurring the expense.

The organisation will accept email as written approval where it is required in this policy.

Any queries in relation to this policy should be directed to the Finance manager/CEO.

Travel

Employees and line managers should consider whether or not travel is necessary to meet business objectives or if there are more appropriate means (for example, teleconferencing or videoconferencing).

Air

Any flight must be pre-authorised by your line manager or CEO in writing before being booked. Where possible, flights should be booked well in advance to benefit from any discounts for early booking.

Personal incentives or rewards associated with specific air travel, such as air miles, should not be a factor in determining which flight is purchased for business. The key consideration is whether or not the flight is the most cost-effective for the organisation, unless there is a valid business reason for taking an alternative flight.

You will usually only be permitted to travel in economy class. Where you are required to travel on a long-haul flight (longer than six hours), you may be permitted to travel in premium economy class in certain circumstances. Business class flights may be considered only where a travel schedule indicates a total travel time (leaving home to reaching final destination) exceeding 24 hours or if any single flight is longer than 12 hours. No first-class travel is permitted.

Rail

You may claim for standard class rail fares only or the cheapest available discounted fare. Where possible, rail journeys should be booked well in advance to benefit from any discounts for early booking.

You should, where possible, use any rail cards or season tickets that have already been paid for as part of your normal commute to the office towards any journey taken on business, where this is more economical.

Taxis

You may claim for a taxi fare only in limited circumstances. These are:

- where taking a taxi would result in a significantly shorter travel time than using public transport;
- where there are several employees travelling together; or
- where personal security and safety of employees is an issue, for example taxis may be permitted after dusk.

Use of your own car

It may be appropriate and cost-effective to use your own car when travelling on business, for example if you are travelling with several employees or, where there is limited public transport to your destination, or the journey time is significantly shorter than using public transport. Any use of your own car on business is subject to you:

- holding a full UK driving licence;
- ensuring that your car is roadworthy and fully registered; and
- holding comprehensive motor insurance that provides for business use.

Prior authorisation should be sought from your line manager before using your own car on business.

The organisation accepts no liability for any accident, loss, damage or claim arising out of any journey that you make on business unless caused by the organisation's negligence. The organisation will not pay for the cost of any insurance policy on your own car.

To claim for fuel expenditure, you should set out the distance of the journey undertaken on your expenses claim form. The organisation will pay you a mileage allowance of 45p per mile for business mileage under 10,000 miles and 25p per mile for mileage over 10,000 miles, or such other rate as set out from time to time by HM Revenue and Customs.

The organisation will pay for tolls, congestion charges and parking costs incurred as part of the business journey, where applicable, but not parking fines.

Late night/early morning transport

The organisation will, in exceptional circumstances, reimburse you for late night or early morning transport, including a taxi, if you are required to travel to or from the office, airport, railway station or other destination for specific business reasons. This will apply only where you are required to be at work before 7am or after dusk, or at the airport or railway station before 7am or after dusk. No transport expenses will be reimbursed for any staff social events held by the organisation or employees.

You should seek prior written authorisation for late or early departures from or to work where possible from your line manager or CEO. If this is not possible, you should set out the reasons for the late or early departure in your expenses claim.

Meals/accommodation

As a guideline for business travel, you should book accommodation equivalent to three-star standard or less. You may book hotel accommodation of up to £150 maximum in a major city and £100 elsewhere.

It is your responsibility to ensure that any hotel reservations are cancelled within the required cancellation period if they are no longer required.

If you are required to undertake business travel and you incur a cost on a meal (food and drink) after starting the journey, subject to retaining appropriate evidence of expenditure, you may claim reasonable expenses.

You should supply or attach receipts and invoices for all hotel and meal expenses. You can be reimbursed for a meal once only. If the cost of an evening meal or breakfast is included in the cost of overnight accommodation, you will not be entitled to meal allowances in respect of those meals.

Overseas expenses

When travelling overseas on business, the organisation will reimburse you for authorised expenses at the scale rates recommended by HM Revenue and Customs for an employee travelling outside the UK. These scale rates may be varied from time to time and will be published on the organisation's intranet for employee guidance and information.

You should provide the applicable currency exchange rate for the date on which the expense was incurred. You should use the Reuters' daily exchange rate. The organisation will verify the exchange rate submitted as part of any overseas expenses claim.

The organisation will reimburse you for any travel visas and inoculations required for business travel. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have a valid passport with a minimum of six months remaining prior to the expiry date after the final day of travel.

The organisation will provide business travel insurance for any trips authorised by the organisation.

Business entertainment/gifts

The organisation recognises that corporate entertainment can provide opportunities to strengthen business relationships, enhance the organisation's reputation and deepen prospective clients' or suppliers' understanding of the business. Any entertainment booked for clients, suppliers or other business contacts must be approved in advance by the CEO and/or the Finance manager. You should submit:

- details of the individuals whom you wish to invite;
- the name of the organisation that they represent;
- the nature of the entertainment, including date and location; and
- the business reasons for the entertainment.

The organisation will approve only business entertainment proposals that demonstrate a clear business objective and that are appropriate for the nature of the business relationship. The organisation will not approve business entertainment where it considers that a conflict of interest may arise or where it could be perceived that undue influence or a particular business benefit is being sought (for example, prior to a tendering exercise). The organisation must ensure compliance with all applicable anti-corruption laws, including the Bribery Act 2010.

Any gifts, rewards or entertainment that you receive from clients or suppliers or other business contacts should be reported immediately to the Finance Manager and/ or CEO. In certain circumstances, it may not be appropriate to retain such gifts and you may be asked to return gifts to the sender, for example, where there could be a real or perceived conflict of interest. As a general rule, small tokens of appreciation, for example flowers or a bottle of wine, may be retained by employees.

If you wish to provide business gifts to suppliers, clients or other business contacts, you must seek prior written approval from your line manager and the Finance manager, with details of the intended recipients, reasons for the gift and the business objective. These will only be authorised in limited circumstances and will be subject to a cap of £50 per recipient in any one tax year.

Christmas parties/annual events

Any team event such as a Christmas meal or celebration for a team or department will be subject to the CEO's approval.

Any organisation-wide event hosted by the organisation, such as the Christmas party will be communicated to employees. The budget for such events will be managed centrally.

Please note that the scale of celebrations may vary from year to year, depending on the performance of the organisation. The organisation may choose not to approve or host celebrations for employees where it is not appropriate to do so given the financial circumstances. Alternatively, the organisation may request that employees contribute to their team celebrations or parties, if they wish to attend. Such contributions will not be reimbursable via the expenses procedure.

Expenses that will not be reimbursed

The organisation will not reimburse you for:

- the cost of any travel between your home and usual place of work (except in exceptional circumstances for early morning/late night transport as set out above);
- the cost of any travel undertaken for personal reasons;
- the cost of any travel for your partner or spouse;
- any fines or penalties incurred while on business for whatever reason, including penalties for not paying for a rail ticket in advance of boarding the train and penalties or fines associated with motoring offences, including speeding or parking fines, clamping or vehicle recovery charges;
- any expenses incurred for personal benefit or to improperly influence or reward a business contact; or
- cash advances or withdrawals from an ATM machine.

You are required to pay for any travel costs incurred by your partner or spouse in the event that they accompany you on business. Your spouse or partner must have adequate travel insurance for that journey.

False claims

If the organisation considers that any expenditure claimed was not legitimately incurred on behalf of the organisation, it may request further details from you. The organisation will thoroughly investigate and check any expenses claim as it sees fit. It may withhold payment where insufficient supporting documents have been provided. Where payment has been made to you prior to the discovery that the claim was not legitimate or correct, it may deduct the value of that claim from your next salary payment on completion of the investigation.

Any abuse of the organisation's expenses policy will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to:

- false expenses claims;
- claims for expenses that were not legitimately incurred;
- claims for personal gain;
- claims for hospitality and/or gifts to induce a client or other business contact to take improper action; and
- receipt by you of hospitality and/or gifts from business contacts that may be perceived to influence your judgment.

The organisation will take disciplinary action where appropriate and, in certain circumstances, may treat a breach of this policy as gross misconduct, which may result in your summary dismissal. In addition, the organisation may report the matter to the police for investigation and criminal prosecution.

The credit card limits are as follows:

CEO	£15,000
Senior Manager	£5,000
Other Managers	£2,000

Approval must be by the line manager, the CEO, Chairman or other nominated trustee.

The CEO expenses must be approved by the Chair or nominated Deputy who must be a trustee.

The maximum transaction limit is £10,000.

Dress and Appearance Policy

This policy is designed to guide employees on the required standards of dress and appearance. All employees' appearance must be professional at all times both within the workplace and when representing the organisation.

The policy is not exhaustive in defining acceptable and unacceptable standards of dress and appearance, and staff must use common sense in adhering to the principles underpinning the policy. The management of the organisation will be the sole judge of what is and is not appropriate for the purposes of this policy.

The organisation recognises the diversity of cultures and religions of its employees and will take a sensitive approach when this affects dress and uniform requirements. However, priority will be given to health and safety, security and other similar considerations.

All employees are required to be neat, clean and tidy while at work, whether working on the organisation's premises or elsewhere. Employees whose job does not take them into contact with clients/customers/members of the public may wear casual clothing to work. However, certain items that are not permitted at work are:

- scruffy/torn trousers;
- micro- or very short miniskirts;
- low cut t-shirts, blouses and transparent clothing;
- sports clothing, for example tracksuits and football shirts;
- sweatshirts or t-shirts with slogans or symbols that could cause offence; and
- excessive or unconventional jewellery.

Employees who meet with clients/customers/members of the public must present a positive image of the organisation.

Employees who occupy roles that require protective clothing, ego hard hats, masks and gloves, are required to wear this clothing while carrying out their duties whenever required by law or by the organisation's rules.

Employees should not display tattoos that could cause offence and employees who are client/customer-facing, or in specific roles, may be asked to cover up tattoos. Any employee who is unsure as to whether or not a tattoo may be offensive should speak to their manager. The organisation will have the final say on whether or not a tattoo should be covered up.

Any employee who disregards these rules will be subject to disciplinary action. In serious cases, where an employee's appearance is, in the organisation's view, unacceptable, the employee will be required to return home to change. In these circumstances, the employee will not be paid for the duration of his/her absence from work.

Work Related Social Events

As a token of its appreciation for the work that employees do for the organisation, and to foster team spirit and good working relationships, the organisation aims to offer employees the opportunity to attend social events from time to time. The organisation may also run work-related social events to which clients, as well as staff, are invited.

Although such social events usually take place away from the workplace and outside of normal working hours, the organisation's standard code of conduct applies to such events. While management does not wish to put a dampener on employees' enjoyment of social events, it is in everyone's interests to impose certain rules of conduct for the protection and comfort of all. Specifically, employees who attend work-related social events must adhere to the following rules and principles:

- Employees should consume alcohol only in moderation at work-related social events, irrespective of whether the organisation provides or pays for the drinks.
- It is strictly forbidden for any employee to use illegal drugs, including cannabis, at any work-related social event whether on organisation premises or not.
- The organisation's policy on harassment/bullying applies to work-related social events.
- Employees should not say or do anything at a work-related social event that could offend, intimidate, embarrass or upset any other person, whether as a joke or not.
- Swearing and intemperate language are unacceptable at work-related social events.
- Employees must not behave in any way at any work-related social event that could bring the organisation's name into ill repute.

Any breach of the above rules will render the employee liable to disciplinary action under the organisation's disciplinary procedure, up to and including summary dismissal.

The above rules are in place for the benefit of all members of staff and to ensure that everyone can enjoy work-related social events in an atmosphere of conviviality without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable by another employee's conduct.

CCTV Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out how the organisation's approach to the use of CCTV in the workplace affects employees.

Cameras are located above the main entrance for security purposes. Using CCTV is necessary for the organisation's legitimate interests. Cameras are installed for the purpose of detecting and preventing crime.

The data protection officer is the CEO.

Purpose of CCTV

The organisation will not use CCTV for monitoring the work of employees or finding out whether or not they are complying with the organisation's policies and procedures.

The organisation will ensure that all cameras are set up in a way that ensures that there is minimal intrusion of staff privacy, and that any intrusion is fully justified.

In areas of surveillance, signs will be displayed prominently to inform employees that CCTV is in use. If workers access the relevant areas, their images will be captured on CCTV.

Storage of CCTV footage

Images from CCTV footage will be securely stored, and only authorised personnel will have access to them. Surveillance information may also be shared with law enforcement agencies for the purposes of detecting crime.

The images will be retained only long enough for an incident to come to light and any investigation to be conducted. In normal circumstances, CCTV footage will be securely deleted after 30 days.

Workers whose images are recorded have a right to view images of themselves and to be provided with a copy of the images. Workers making such a request should provide the organisation with a photograph or a description of themselves, together with the relevant time and date of the image, so that they may be easily identifiable. If you want to make a request, please send the request to the CEO.

Workers will be allowed access to such images within one month of the request, although in some cases, particularly where large amounts of data are processed, that time period may be extended to three months.

Email and Internet Policy

Introduction

The organisation encourages its employees to use email and the internet at work where this can save time and expense. However, it requires that employees follow the rules below. It is a term of each employee's contract that he/she complies with these rules, and any serious breach could lead to dismissal. Any employee who is unsure about whether or not something he/she proposes to do might breach this email and internet policy should seek advice from his/her line manager.

Although the organisation encourages the use of email and the internet where appropriate, their use entails some risks. For example, employees must take care not to introduce viruses to the system and must take proper account of the security advice below. Employees must also ensure that they do not send untrue statements about others in emails as the organisation could face legal action for libel and be liable for damages.

These rules are designed to minimise the legal risks to the organisation when its employees use email at work and access the internet. Where something is not specifically covered in this policy, employees should seek advice from their line manager.

Technology and the law change regularly, and this policy will be updated to account for changes as and when necessary. Employees will be informed when the policy has changed, but it is their responsibility to read the latest version of this document.

Use of email

Contents of emails

Emails that employees intend to send should be checked carefully. The use of email to send or forward messages that are defamatory, obscene or otherwise inappropriate will be treated as misconduct under the appropriate disciplinary procedure. In serious cases, this could be regarded as gross misconduct and lead to summary dismissal.

Equally, if an employee receives an obscene or defamatory email, whether unwittingly or otherwise and from whatever source, he/she should not forward it to any other address.

Statements to avoid in emails include those criticising the organisation's competitors or their staff, those stating that there are quality problems with goods or services of suppliers or customers, and those stating that anyone is incompetent.

Corporate information to be included in emails

Employees should ensure that official corporate information is given on any emails that they send. An example of the email layout is provided below:

John Smith

IT Manager

ABC plc

Company No. 123456789

123 Big Road, Bigtown, Big County, AB1 1BA, UK

Tel (+44) (1) 11 1111 111

This message is intended for the use of only the person(s) ("intended recipient") to whom it is addressed. It may contain information that is privileged and confidential. Accordingly, any dissemination, distribution, copying or other use of this message or any of its content by any person other than the intended recipient may constitute a breach of civil or criminal law and is strictly prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender as soon as possible.

CCing

Employees should exercise care not to copy emails automatically to all those copied in to the original message to which they are replying. Doing so may result in disclosure of confidential information to the wrong person.

Attachments

Employees should not attach any files that may contain a virus to emails, as the organisation could be liable to the recipient for loss suffered. The organisation has virus-checking in place but, if in doubt, employees should check with the IT department.

Employees should exercise extreme care when receiving emails with attachments from third parties, particularly unidentified third parties, as these may contain viruses.

Personal use of email

Although the email system is primarily for business use, the organisation understands that employees may on occasion need to send or receive personal emails using their work address. When sending personal emails, employees should show the same care as when sending work-related emails.

When and how email will be monitored

The organisation considers the following to be valid reasons for checking an employee's email:

- If the employee is absent for any reason and communications must be checked for the smooth running of the business to continue.
- If the organisation suspects that the employee has been viewing or sending offensive or illegal material, such as material containing racist terminology or nudity (although the organisation understands that it is possible for employees inadvertently to receive such material and they will have the opportunity to explain if this is the case).
- If the organisation suspects that an employee has been using the email system to send and receive an excessive number of personal communications.
- If the organisation suspects that the employee is sending or receiving emails that are detrimental to the organisation.

When monitoring emails, the organisation will, save in exceptional circumstances, confine itself to looking at the address and subject heading of the emails. Employees should mark any personal emails as such and encourage those who send them to do the same. Where possible, the organisation will avoid opening emails clearly marked as private or personal.

Use of internet

Sensible internet use

Where employees are allowed access to the internet at work, they are expected to use it sensibly and in such a manner that it does not interfere with the efficient running of the organisation. Employees may be called upon to justify the amount of time they have spent on the internet or the sites that they have visited.

The organisation does not currently impose any time limitation on work-related internet use. It trusts employees not to abuse the latitude given to them, but if this trust is abused it reserves the right to alter the policy in this respect.

Removing internet access

The organisation reserves the right to deny internet access to any employee at work, although in such a case it will endeavour to give reasons for doing so.

Downloading files and software

Employees should download files on to only computers with virus-checking software and should check how long the download will take. If there is any uncertainty as to whether or not the software is virus-free or whether or not the time the download will take is reasonable, the relevant line manager and the organisation's IT department should be consulted.

Personal use of the internet

Although the email system is primarily for business use, the organisation understands that employees may on occasion need to use the internet for personal purposes. Employees may access the internet at work for personal purposes provided that:

- such use is limited to no more than 20 minutes in any day;
- the internet is not used to access offensive or illegal material, such as material containing racist terminology or nudity;
- they do not enter into any contracts or commitments in the name of or on behalf of the organisation; and
- they do not arrange for any goods ordered on the internet to be delivered to the organisation's address or order them in the organisation's name.

Employees should not use the internet for personal purposes before working hours begin or after they end. The organisation has security concerns about staff arriving early and leaving late and it is harder to monitor use of the internet at such times.

When and how internet use will be monitored

The organisation reserves the right to monitor employees' internet usage but will endeavour to inform an affected employee when this is to happen and the reasons for it. The organisation considers the following to be valid reasons for checking an employee's internet usage:

- If the organisation suspects that the employee has been viewing offensive or illegal material, such as material containing racist terminology or nudity (although the organisation understands that it is possible for employees inadvertently to view such material and they will have the opportunity to explain if this is the case).
- If the organisation suspects that the employee has been spending an excessive amount of time viewing websites that are not work related.

Monitoring will consist of checking the websites that an employee has visited and the duration of such visits.

Policy on use of Social Media

Introduction

Employees of the AA may be able to access social media services and social networking websites at work, either through charity IT systems or via their own personal equipment.

This social media policy describes the rules governing use of social media at the AA.

It sets out how staff must behave when using the charity's social media accounts.

It also explains the rules about social media accounts at work and describes what staff and volunteers may say about the charity on their personal accounts.

This policy should be read alongside other key policies. The company's internet use policy is particularly relevant to staff using social media.

Why this policy exists

Social media can bring significant benefits to the AA, particularly for building relationships with current and potential members, customers and partners.

However, it's important that employees or volunteers who use social media within the charity do so in a way that enhances the charities prospects.

A misjudged status update can generate complaints or damage the charity's reputation. There are also security and data protection issues to consider.

Policy Scope

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers, within the AA, who use social media while working - no matter whether for business or personal reasons.

It applies no matter whether the social media use takes place on AA premises, while travelling for business or while working from home.

Social Media sites and services include (but are not limited to):

- Popular social media networks like Twitter and Facebook
- Online review websites like Reevoo and Trustpilot
- Sharing and discussion sites like Reddit and ArbTalk
- Photographic social networks like Instagram
- Question and answer social networks like Yahoo answers
- Professional social networks like LinkedIn

Responsibilities

Everyone who operates an AA social media account at work has some responsibility for implementing this policy.

However, these people have key responsibilities:

- The CEO is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the AA uses social media safely, appropriately and in line with the charitable objectives.
- The Marketing Manager is responsible for providing app's and tools to manage the company's social media presence and track and key performance indicators. They are also responsible for proactively monitoring for social media security threats or risks.
- The Marketing Manager is responsible for rolling out marketing ideas and campaigns through our social media channels. They are also responsible for ensuring requests for assistance and support made via social media are followed up and actioned.

The power of social media

The AA recognises that social media offers a platform for the charity to perform marketing, stay connected with its members, supporters and partners whilst building its profile online.

The charity also believes its staff should be involved in industry and sector conversations on social networks. Social media is an excellent way for employees to make useful connections, share ideas and shape discussions.

The AA therefore encourages employees to use social media to support the charity's goals and objectives.

Basic advice

Regardless of which social networks employees are using, or whether they're using business accounts on company time, following these simple rules will help avoid the most common pitfalls:

- **Know the social network.** Employees should spend time becoming familiar with the social network before contributing. It's important to read any FAQ's and understand what is and what is not acceptable on a network before posting messages or updates.
- **If unsure, don't post it.** Staff should err on the side of caution when posting to social networks. If an employee feels an update or message might cause complaints or offence - or be otherwise unsuitable - they should not post it. Staff members can always consult the Marketing Manager, their line manager or CEO for advice.
- **Be thoughtful and polite.** Many social media users have got into trouble simply by failing to observe good manners online. Employees should adopt the same level of courtesy used when communicating via email.
- **Look out for security threat.** Staff members should be on guard for social engineering and phishing attempts. Social networks are also used to distribute spam and malware. Further details below.
- **Keep personal use reasonable.** Although the company believes that having employees who are active on social media can be valuable both to those employees and to the charity, staff should exercise restraint in how much personal use of social media they make during working hours.

- **Don't make promises without checking.** Some social networks are very public, so employees should not make any commitments or promises on behalf of the AA without checking that the charity can deliver on the promises. Direct enquiries to your line manager, the Marketing Manager or CEO.
- **Handle complex queries via other channels.** Social networks are not a good place to resolve complicated enquiries or service issues. Once a member or partner has made contact, employees should handle further enquiries via the most appropriate channel - usually email or telephone.
- **Don't escalate things.** It's easy to post a quick response to a contentious update and then regret it. Employees should always take time to think before responding and hold back if they are in any doubt at all.

Use of social media accounts

Authorised users and creating new accounts

Only people who have been authorised to use the charities social media accounts may do so.

Authorisation is provided by the Marketing Manager or CEO. It is typically granted when social media related tasks form a part of the employee's job.

Allowing only designated people to use the social media accounts ensures the charities social media presence is consistent and cohesive.

Only the Marketing Manager, duly authorised by the CEO, may create accounts in the charities name. If employees believe there is a case for opening a new account this must be raised with the Marketing Manager and CEO. The charity operates its social media presence in line with a strategy that focuses on the most-appropriate social networks, given available resources.

Purpose of the charity's social media accounts

The AA's social media accounts may be used for many different purposes.

In general, employees should only post updates, messages or otherwise use these accounts when that use is clearly in line with the charity's overall strategic aims, goals and objectives.

For instance, employees may use social media accounts to:

- Respond to member, customer or partner enquiries and requests for help
- Share blog posts, articles and other content created by the AA
- Share insightful articles, videos, media and other content relevant to the charity, but created by others.
- Provide followers with an insight into what the AA does
- Promote marketing campaigns and special offers
- Direct traffic to the other AA resources - e.g. AA website
- Support new product or other initiative launches

Social media is a powerful tool that changes quickly. Employees are encouraged to think of new ways to use it and put those ideas to the Marketing Manager or CEO.

Inappropriate content and uses

The AA's social media accounts must not be used to share or spread inappropriate content or to take part in any activities that could bring the charity into disrepute.

When sharing an interesting blog post, article or piece of content, employees should always review the content thoroughly, and should not post a link based solely on a headline.

The value of social media

The AA recognises that social media accounts can generate a number of benefits. For Instance:

- Staff members can make industry contacts that may be useful in their jobs
- Employees can discover content to help them learn and develop in their role
- By posting about the company, staff members can help build the charity's profile online

As a result, the company is happy for employees to spend a small amount of time using their personal social media accounts at work.

Personal social media rules

Talking about the AA:

- Employees should ensure it is clear their social media account does not represent the AA's views or opinions.
- Staff may wish to include a disclaimer in social media profiles; "The views expressed are my own and do not reflect the views of my employer."

Safe, responsible social media use

The rules in this section apply to:

- Any employees using the AA social media accounts

Users must not:

- Create or transmit material that might be defamatory or incur liability for the AA.
- Post message, status updates or links to materials or content that is inappropriate.

Inappropriate content includes: pornography, racial or religious slurs, gender specific comments, information encouraging criminal acts or terrorism, or materials relating to cults, gambling or drugs.

This definition of inappropriate content or material also covers any text, images or other media that could reasonably offend someone on the basis of race, age, sex, religious beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by law.

- Use of social media for any illegal or criminal activities.
- Send harassing or offensive material to others via social media.
- Broadcast unsolicited views on social, political, religious on non-business-related matters.
- Send or post messages or material that could damage the AA's image or reputation.
- Interact with the AA's competitors in any ways which could be interpreted as being offensive, disrespectful or rude.
- Discuss colleagues, competitors or suppliers without their approval.
- Post, upload, forward or link to spam, junk email or chain emails and messages.

Copyright

The AA respects and operates within copyright laws. Users may not use social media to:

- Publish or share any copyrighted material, software or media owned by third parties, unless permitted by that party.

If staff wish to share content published on other website, they are free to do so if that website has obvious sharing buttons or functions on it.

- Share links to illegal copies of music, film, games or other software.

Security and data protection

Employees should be aware of the security and data protection issues that can arise from using social media networks.

Maintain confidentiality

Users must not:

- Share or link to any content or information owned by the AA that could be considered confidential or commercially sensitive.
This might include pricing, details of members or customers, or information about future strategy or campaigns.
- Share or link to any content or information owned by another company or person that could be considered confidential or commercially sensitive.
- Share or link to data in any way that could breach the AA's data protection policy.

Protect social accounts

- Company social media accounts must be protected by strong passwords that are changed regularly and shared only with authorised users.
- Wherever possible, employees should use two factor authentication (mobile phone verification) to safeguard company accounts.
- Staff must not use a new piece of software, app or service with any of the AA's social media accounts without obtaining approval from the Marketing Manager or CEO.

Avoid social scams

- Staff should watch for phishing attempts, where scammers may attempt to use deception to obtain information relating to the AA or its members or partners. Employees should never reveal sensitive details through social media channels. Identities must be verified in the usual way before any account information is shared or discussed.
- Employees should avoid clicking links in posts, updates and direct messages that look suspicious. In particular, users should look for URLs contained in generic or vague sounding direct messages.

Policy enforcement

Monitoring social media use

Company IT and internet resources - including computers, smart phones and internet connections - are provided for legitimate business use.

The AA therefore reserves the right to monitor how social networks are used and accessed through these resources.

Any such examinations or monitoring will only be carried out by authorised staff.

Additionally, all data relating to social networks written, sent or received through the AA's computer system is part of the official AA records.

The AA can be compelled legally to show that information to law enforcement agencies or other parties.

Potential Sanctions

Knowingly breaching this social media policy is a serious matter. Users who do so will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Where appropriate, the AA will involve the police or other law enforcement agency in relation to breaches of this policy.

Data Protection Policy

Introduction

Purpose

The organisation is committed to being transparent about how it collects and uses the personal data of its workforce, and to meeting its data protection obligations. This policy sets out the organisation's commitment to data protection, and individual rights and obligations in relation to personal data.

This policy applies to the personal data of job applicants, employees, workers, contractors, volunteers and apprentices and former employees, referred to as HR-related personal data. This policy does not apply to the personal data of clients or other personal data processed for business purposes.

The CEO has responsibility for data protection compliance within the organisation. Questions about this policy, or requests for further information, should be directed to them.

Definitions

"Personal data" is any information that relates to a living individual who can be identified from that information. Processing is any use that is made of data, including collecting, storing, amending, disclosing or destroying it.

"Special categories of personal data" means information about an individual's racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, health, sex life or sexual orientation and genetic and biometric data.

"Criminal records data" means information about an individual's criminal convictions and offences, and information relating to criminal allegations and proceedings.

Data protection principles

The organisation processes HR-related personal data in accordance with the following data protection principles:

- The organisation processes personal data lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner.
- The organisation collects personal data only for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes.
- The organisation processes personal data only where it is adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary for the purposes of processing.
- The organisation keeps accurate personal data and takes all reasonable steps to ensure that inaccurate personal data is rectified or deleted without delay.
- The organisation keeps personal data only for the period necessary for processing.

- The organisation adopts appropriate measures to make sure that personal data is secure, and protected against unauthorised or unlawful processing, and accidental loss, destruction or damage.

The organisation tells individuals the reasons for processing their personal data, how it uses such data and the legal basis for processing in its privacy notices. It will not process personal data of individuals for other reasons. HR-related data will not be shared with third parties, except as set out in privacy notices. Where the organisation relies on its legitimate interests as the basis for processing data, it will carry out an assessment to ensure that those interests are not overridden by the rights and freedoms of individuals.

Where the organisation processes special categories of personal data or criminal records data to perform obligations or to exercise rights in employment law, this is done in accordance with a policy on processing special categories of data and criminal records data.

The organisation will update HR-related personal data promptly if an individual advises that their information has changed or is inaccurate.

Personal data gathered during the employment, worker, contractor or volunteer relationship, or apprenticeship is held in the individual's personnel file (in hard copy or electronic format, or both), and on HR systems. The periods for which the organisation holds HR-related personal data are contained in its privacy notices to individuals.

The organisation keeps a record of its processing activities in respect of HR-related personal data in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Individual rights

As a data subject, individuals have a number of rights in relation to their personal data.

Subject access requests

Individuals have the right to make a subject access request. If an individual makes a subject access request, the organisation will tell them:

- whether or not their data is processed and if so why, the categories of personal data concerned and the source of the data if it is not collected from the individual;
- to whom their data is or may be disclosed, including to recipients located outside the European Economic Area (EEA) and the safeguards that apply to such transfers;
- for how long their personal data is stored (or how that period is decided);
- their rights to rectification or erasure of data, or to restrict or object to processing;
- their right to complain to the Information Commissioner if they think the organisation has failed to comply with their data protection rights; and
- whether or not the organisation carries out automated decision-making and the logic involved in any such decision-making.

The organisation will also provide the individual with a copy of the personal data undergoing processing. This will normally be in electronic form if the individual has made a request electronically, unless they agree otherwise.

To make a subject access request, the individual should send the request to the CEO. In some cases, the organisation may need to ask for proof of identification before the request can be processed. The organisation will inform the individual if it needs to verify their identity and the documents it requires.

The organisation will normally respond to a request within a period of one month from the date it is received. In some cases, such as where the organisation processes large amounts of the individual's data, it may respond within three months of the date the request is received. The organisation will write to the individual within one month of receiving the original request to tell them if this is the case.

If a subject access request is manifestly unfounded or excessive, the organisation is not obliged to comply with it. Alternatively, the organisation can agree to respond but will charge a fee, which will be based on the administrative cost of responding to the request. A subject access request is likely to be manifestly unfounded or excessive where it repeats a request to which the organisation has already responded. If an individual submits a request that is unfounded or excessive, the organisation will notify them that this is the case and whether or not it will respond to it.

Other rights

Individuals have a number of other rights in relation to their personal data. They can require the organisation to:

- rectify inaccurate data;
- stop processing or erase data that is no longer necessary for the purposes of processing;
- stop processing or erase data if the individual's interests override the organisation's legitimate grounds for processing data (where the organisation relies on its legitimate interests as a reason for processing data);
- stop processing or erase data if processing is unlawful; and
- stop processing data for a period if data is inaccurate or if there is a dispute about whether or not the individual's interests override the organisation's legitimate grounds for processing data.

To ask the organisation to take any of these steps, the individual should send the request to the CEO.

Data security

The organisation takes the security of HR-related personal data seriously. The organisation has internal policies and controls in place to protect personal data against loss, accidental

destruction, misuse or disclosure, and to ensure that data is not accessed, except by employees in the proper performance of their duties.

Where the organisation engages third parties to process personal data on its behalf, such parties do so on the basis of written instructions, are under a duty of confidentiality and are obliged to implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure the security of data.

Data breaches

If the organisation discovers that there has been a breach of HR-related personal data that poses a risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals, it will report it to the Information Commissioner within 72 hours of discovery. The organisation will record all data breaches regardless of their effect.

If the breach is likely to result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals, it will tell affected individuals that there has been a breach and provide them with information about its likely consequences and the mitigation measures it has taken.

International data transfers

The organisation will not transfer HR-related personal data to countries outside the EEA.

Individual responsibilities

Individuals are responsible for helping the organisation keep their personal data up to date. Individuals should let the organisation know if data provided to the organisation changes, for example if an individual moves house or changes bank details.

Individuals may have access to the personal data of other individuals and of our customers and clients in the course of their employment, contract, volunteer period, or apprenticeship. Where this is the case, the organisation relies on individuals to help meet its data protection obligations to staff and to customers and clients.

Individuals who have access to personal data are required:

- to access only data that they have authority to access and only for authorised purposes;
- not to disclose data except to individuals (whether inside or outside the organisation) who have appropriate authorisation;
- to keep data secure (for example by complying with rules on access to premises, computer access, including password protection, and secure file storage and destruction);
- not to remove personal data, or devices containing or that can be used to access personal data, from the organisation's premises without adopting appropriate security measures (such as encryption or password protection) to secure the data and the device;
- not to store personal data on local drives or on personal devices that are used for work purposes; and

- to report data breaches of which they become aware to the CEO immediately.

Failing to observe these requirements may amount to a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the organisation's disciplinary procedure. Significant or deliberate breaches of this policy, such as accessing employee or customer data without authorisation or a legitimate reason to do so, may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

Training

The organisation will provide training to all individuals about their data protection responsibilities as part of the induction process and at regular intervals thereafter.

Individuals whose roles require regular access to personal data, or who are responsible for implementing this policy or responding to subject access requests under this policy, will receive additional training to help them understand their duties and how to comply with them.

Whistleblowing policy

Introduction

The organisation ensures that, if anyone has concerns about things that happen at the AA, there is a safe, fair and effective procedure to enable these concerns to be raised. We have a separate whistleblowing policy for members of the public; service users; members of the AA and anyone involved with the AA. The AA complaints procedure is published on our website.

Background

The law provides protection for workers who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters. These are called "qualifying disclosures". A qualifying disclosure is one made in the public interest by a worker who has a reasonable belief that:

- a criminal offence;
- a miscarriage of justice;
- an act creating risk to health and safety;
- an act causing damage to the environment;
- a breach of any other legal obligation; or
- concealment of any of the above;

is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed. It is not necessary for the worker to have proof that such an act is being, has been, or is likely to be, committed - a reasonable belief is sufficient. The worker has no responsibility for investigating the matter - it is the organisation's responsibility to ensure that an investigation takes place.

A worker who makes such a protected disclosure has the right not to be dismissed, subjected to any other detriment, or victimised, because they have made a disclosure.

The organisation encourages workers to raise their concerns under this procedure in the first instance. If a worker is not sure whether or not to raise a concern, they should discuss the issue with their line manager.

Principles

- Everyone should be aware of the importance of preventing and eliminating wrongdoing at work. Workers should be watchful for illegal or unethical conduct and report anything of that nature that they become aware of.
- Any matter raised under this procedure will be investigated thoroughly, promptly and confidentially, and the outcome of the investigation reported back to the worker who raised the issue.
- No worker will be victimised for raising a matter under this procedure. This means that the continued employment and opportunities for future promotion or training of the worker will not be prejudiced because they have raised a legitimate concern.

- Victimization of a worker for raising a qualified disclosure will be a disciplinary offence.
- If misconduct is discovered as a result of any investigation under this procedure the organisation's disciplinary procedure will be used, in addition to any appropriate external measures.
- Maliciously making a false allegation is a disciplinary offence.
- An instruction to cover up wrongdoing is itself a disciplinary offence. If told not to raise or pursue any concern, even by a person in authority such as a manager, workers should not agree to remain silent. They should report the matter to the CEO or Chair of the Association.

This procedure is for disclosures about matters other than a breach of an employee's own contract of employment. If an employee is concerned that their own contract has been, or is likely to be, broken, they should use the organisation's grievance procedure.

Procedure

(1) In the first instance, and unless the worker reasonably believes their line manager to be involved in the wrongdoing, or if for any other reason the worker does not wish to approach their line manager, any concerns should be raised with the worker's line manager. If they believe the line manager to be involved, or for any reason does not wish to approach the line manager, then the worker should proceed straight to stage 3.

(2) The line manager will arrange an investigation into the matter (either by investigating the matter personally or immediately passing the issue to someone in a more senior position). The investigation may involve the worker and other individuals involved giving a written statement. Any investigation will be carried out in accordance with the principles set out above. The worker's statement will be taken into account, and they will be asked to comment on any additional evidence obtained. The line manager (or the person who carried out the investigation) will then report to the CEO or Chair of the Association, who will take any necessary action, including reporting the matter to any appropriate government department or regulatory agency. If disciplinary action is required, the line manager (or the person who carried out the investigation) will report the matter to the CEO and start the disciplinary procedure. On conclusion of any investigation, the worker will be told the outcome of the investigation and what the board has done, or proposes to do, about it. If no action is to be taken, the reason for this will be explained.

(3) If the worker is concerned that their line manager is involved in the wrongdoing, has failed to make a proper investigation or has failed to report the outcome of the investigations to the board, they should inform the CEO or Chair of the Association, who will arrange for another manager to review the investigation carried out, make any necessary enquiries and make their own report to the board as in stage 2 above. If for any other reason the worker does not wish to approach their line manager they should also in the first instance contact the CEO or Chair of the Association. Any approach to the CEO or Chair will be treated with

the strictest confidence and the worker's identity will not be disclosed without their prior consent.

(4) If on conclusion of stages 1, 2 and 3 the worker reasonably believes that the appropriate action has not been taken, they should report the matter to the proper authority. The legislation sets out a number of bodies to which qualifying disclosures may be made. These include:

- HM Revenue & Customs;
- the Financial Conduct Authority (formerly the Financial Services Authority);
- the Competition and Markets Authority;
- the Health and Safety Executive;
- the Environment Agency;
- the Independent Office for Police Conduct; and
- the Serious Fraud Office.

Data protection

When an individual makes a disclosure, the organisation will process any personal data collected in accordance with its data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which the individual makes the report is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of dealing with the disclosure.

Who regulates the AA's activity and how to contact them?

The AA is a charity registered in England (No. 797997) and our work is regulated by the Charity Commission.

If you have any concerns about the AA work that you would like to bring to the attention of the Charity Commission they can be contacted by telephone on 0845 3000218.

If you would like to email them you can do this through their website: <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk>.

Their postal address is:

Charity Commission Direct

PO Box 1227

Liverpool

L69 3UG

Anti Bribery Policy

Introduction

The organisation is committed to the highest standards of ethical conduct and integrity in its business activities in the UK and overseas. This policy outlines the organisation's position on preventing and prohibiting bribery, in accordance with the Bribery Act 2010. The organisation will not tolerate any form of bribery by, or of, its employees, agents or consultants or any person or body acting on its behalf. Senior management is committed to implementing effective measures to prevent, monitor and eliminate bribery.

Scope of this policy

This policy applies to all employees and officers of the organisation, and to temporary workers, consultants, contractors, agents and subsidiaries acting for, or on behalf of, the organisation ("associated persons") within the UK and overseas. Every employee and associated person acting for, or on behalf of, the organisation is responsible for maintaining the highest standards of business conduct. Any breach of this policy is likely to constitute a serious disciplinary, contractual and criminal matter for the individual concerned and may cause serious damage to the reputation and standing of the organisation.

The organisation may also face criminal liability for unlawful actions taken by its employees or associated persons under the Bribery Act 2010. All employees and associated persons are required to familiarise themselves and comply with this policy, including any future updates that may be issued from time to time by the organisation.

This policy covers:

- the main areas of liability under the Bribery Act 2010;
- the responsibilities of employees and associated persons acting for, or on behalf of, the organisation; and
- the consequences of any breaches of this policy.

Bribery Act 2010

The organisation is committed to complying with the Bribery Act 2010 in its business activities in the UK and overseas.

Under the Bribery Act 2010, a bribe is a financial or other type of advantage that is offered or requested with the:

- intention of inducing or rewarding improper performance of a function or activity; or
- knowledge or belief that accepting such a reward would constitute the improper performance of such a function or activity.

A relevant function or activity includes public, state or business activities or any activity performed in the course of a person's employment, or on behalf of another organisation or individual, where the person performing that activity is expected to perform it in good faith, impartially, or in accordance with a position of trust.

A criminal offence will be committed under the Bribery Act 2010 if:

- an employee or associated person acting for, or on behalf of, the organisation offers, promises, gives, requests, receives or agrees to receive bribes; or
- an employee or associated person acting for, or on behalf of, the organisation offers, promises or gives a bribe to a foreign public official with the intention of influencing that official in the performance of their duties (where local law does not permit or require such influence); and
- the organisation does not have the defence that it has adequate procedures in place to prevent bribery by its employees or associated persons.

All employees and associated persons are required to comply with this policy, in accordance with the Bribery Act 2010.

What is prohibited?

The organisation prohibits employees or associated persons from offering, promising, giving, soliciting or accepting any bribe. The bribe might be cash, a gift or other inducement to, or from, any person or organisation, whether a public or government official, official of a state-controlled industry, political party or a private person or organisation, regardless of whether the employee or associated person is situated in the UK or overseas. The bribe might be made to ensure that a person or organisation improperly performs duties or functions (for example, by not acting impartially or in good faith or in accordance with their position of trust) to gain any commercial, contractual or regulatory advantage for the organisation in either obtaining or maintaining organisation business, or to gain any personal advantage, financial or otherwise, for the individual or anyone connected with the individual.

This prohibition also applies to indirect contributions, payments or gifts made in any manner as an inducement or reward for improper performance, for example through consultants, contractors or sub-contractors, agents or sub-agents, sponsors or sub-sponsors, joint-venture partners, advisors, customers, suppliers or other third parties.

Records

Employees and, where applicable, associated persons, are required to take particular care to ensure that all organisation records are accurately maintained in relation to any contracts or business activities, including financial invoices and all payment transactions with clients, suppliers and public officials.

Due diligence should be undertaken by employees and associated persons prior to entering into any contract, arrangement or relationship with a potential supplier of services, agent, consultant or representative.

Employees and associated persons are required to keep accurate, detailed and up-to-date records of all corporate hospitality, entertainment or gifts accepted or offered.

Corporate entertainment, gifts, hospitality and promotional expenditure

Principle

The organisation permits corporate entertainment, gifts, hospitality and promotional expenditure that is undertaken:

- for the purpose of establishing or maintaining good business relationships;
- to improve the image and reputation of the organisation; or
- to present the organisation's services effectively;

provided that it is:

- arranged in good faith; and
- not offered, promised or accepted to secure an advantage for the organisation or any of its employees or associated persons or to influence the impartiality of the recipient.

The organisation will authorise only reasonable, appropriate and proportionate entertainment and promotional expenditure.

This principle applies to employees and associated persons, whether based in the UK or overseas. However, those with remits overseas will be given further training on the specific procedures that they are required to follow.

Procedure

Employees and, where relevant, associated persons should submit requests for proposed hospitality and promotional expenditure well in advance of proposed dates to the CEO.

Employees are required to set out in writing:

- the objective of the proposed client entertainment or expenditure;
- the identity of those who will be attending;
- the organisation that they represent; and
- details and rationale of the proposed activity.

The organisation will approve business entertainment proposals only if they demonstrate a clear business objective and are appropriate for the nature of the business relationship. The organisation will not approve business entertainment where it considers that a conflict of interest may arise or where it could be perceived that undue influence or a particular business benefit was being sought (for example prior to a tendering exercise).

Any gifts, rewards or entertainment received or offered from clients, public officials, suppliers or other business contacts should be reported immediately to the line manager. In certain circumstances, it may not be appropriate to retain such gifts or be provided with the entertainment and employees and associated persons may be asked to return the gifts to the sender or refuse the entertainment, for example where there could be a real or perceived conflict of interest. As a general rule, small tokens of appreciation, such as flowers or a bottle of wine, may be retained by employees.

If an employee or associated person wishes to provide gifts to suppliers, clients or other business contacts, prior written approval from the line manager is required, together with

details of the intended recipients, reasons for the gift and business objective. These will be authorised only in limited circumstances and will be subject to a cap of £25 per recipient.

Employees and, where applicable, associated persons must supply records and receipts, in accordance with the organisation's expenses policy.

Charitable and political donations

The organisation considers that charitable giving can form part of its wider commitment and responsibility to the community. The organisation supports a number of charities that are selected in accordance with objective criteria, following a risk assessment. The organisation may also support fundraising events involving employees.

What practices are permitted?

This policy does not prohibit:

- normal and appropriate hospitality and entertainment with clients (please see the organisation's expenses policy); and
- the use of any recognised fast-track process that is publicly available on payment of a fee.

Any such practices must be proportionate, reasonable and made in good faith. Clear records must be kept.

Risk management

Principle

The organisation has risk management procedures to prevent, detect and prohibit bribery. The organisation will conduct risk assessments for each of its key business activities where relevant, will identify employees or officers of the organisation who are in positions where they may be exposed to bribery.

Reporting suspected bribery

Principle

The organisation depends on its employees and associated persons to ensure that the highest standards of ethical conduct are maintained in all its business dealings. Employees and associated persons are requested to assist the organisation and to remain vigilant in preventing, detecting and reporting bribery.

Employees and associated persons are encouraged to report any concerns that they may have to the CEO as soon as possible. Issues that should be reported include:

- any suspected or actual attempts at bribery;
- concerns that other employees or associated persons may be being bribed; or
- concerns that other employees or associated persons may be bribing third parties, such as clients or government officials.

Procedure

A form is available from the CEO to allow employees to record any incidents of suspected bribery. Any such reports will be thoroughly and promptly investigated by the line manager or CEO in the strictest confidence. Employees and associated persons will be required to assist in any investigation into possible or suspected bribery.

Employees will also be required to comply with the organisation's whistleblowing policy.

Employees or associated persons who report instances of bribery in good faith will be supported by the organisation. The organisation will ensure that the individual is not subjected to detrimental treatment as a consequence of their report. Any instances of detrimental treatment by a fellow employee because an employee has made a report will be treated as a disciplinary offence. An instruction to cover up wrongdoing is itself a disciplinary offence. If told not to raise or pursue any concern, even by a person in authority such as a manager, employees and associated persons should not agree to remain silent. They should report the matter to the line manager or CEO.

When an individual reports suspected instances of bribery, the organisation will process any personal data collected in accordance with its data protection policy. Data collected from the point at which the individual makes the report is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of dealing with the report of bribery.

Action by the organisation

The organisation will fully investigate any instances of alleged or suspected bribery. Employees suspected of bribery may be suspended from their duties while the investigation is being carried out. The organisation will invoke its disciplinary procedures where any employee is suspected of bribery, and proven allegations may result in a finding of gross misconduct and immediate dismissal. The organisation may terminate the contracts of any associated persons, including consultants or other workers who act for, or on behalf of, the organisation who are found to have breached this policy.

The organisation may also report any matter to the relevant authorities, including the Director of Public Prosecutions, Serious Fraud Office, Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office and the police. The organisation will provide all necessary assistance to the relevant authorities in any subsequent prosecution.

Disciplinary Procedure

Introduction

It is necessary for the proper operation of the organisation's business and the health and safety of the organisation's employees that the organisation operates a disciplinary procedure. The following procedure will be applied fairly in all instances where disciplinary action is regarded as necessary by the organisation's management save to the extent that an informal warning is given for any minor act of misconduct committed by an employee.

The organisation reserves the right to implement the procedure at any stage as set out below taking into account the alleged misconduct of an employee. Employees will not ordinarily be dismissed for a first disciplinary offence.

Where time limits are referred to in the course of this procedure they may be varied by agreement between the employee and the organisation.

Employees have the right to be accompanied at a disciplinary hearing by: a fellow worker; a trade union official employed by the union; or a trade union official who is certified in writing by the union as having the necessary experience or training to act as a companion.

Matters that the organisation views as amounting to disciplinary offences include (but are not limited to):

- persistent bad timekeeping;
- unauthorised absence;
- damage to the organisation's property;
- failure to observe the organisation's procedures;
- abusive behaviour;
- unreasonable refusal to follow an instruction issued by a manager or supervisor;
- absences that are not genuine or not for the reason provided;
- data protection breaches and misuse of the organisation's information;
- smoking or use of an e-cigarette in non-designated areas of the organisation's premises; and
- bribery offences under the Bribery Act 2010.

Investigation

An employee's supervisor or manager (or, where appropriate, a different manager) will promptly and thoroughly investigate any matter that is reasonably suspected or believed to contravene any of the organisation's policies or rules or may otherwise be a disciplinary matter. The employee will be informed as soon as possible as to the fact of an investigation and when it has been concluded.

There may be instances where suspension with pay is necessary while investigations are carried out. The organisation has the right to suspend with pay where there are reasonable grounds for concern that evidence may be tampered with, destroyed or witnesses pressurised before a disciplinary hearing, or if there is a potential risk to the business or other

employees or third parties in allowing the employee to remain at work. Suspension is not, in itself, a form of disciplinary sanction.

Depending on the circumstances of the case, the employee may be invited to attend an investigatory interview. The employee will be informed at the outset that the interview is an investigatory interview. There is no right for employees to be accompanied at an investigatory interview. The organisation reserves the right to dispense with an investigatory interview and to proceed directly to a disciplinary hearing.

Procedure

Where, upon completion of an investigation, there are reasonable grounds to believe that there is a disciplinary case to answer, the employee will be invited to attend a disciplinary hearing before the employee's departmental manager or manager of a similar level to the departmental manager.

In the event of a disciplinary hearing taking place the organisation will:

1. give the employee a minimum of two working days' notice of the hearing;
2. tell the employee the purpose of the hearing, its possible consequences and that it will be held under the organisation's disciplinary procedure;
3. explain the employee's right to be accompanied at the hearing;
4. give the employee written details of the nature of his/her alleged misconduct; and
5. provide to the employee all relevant information (including statements taken from any fellow employees or other persons that the organisation intends to rely upon against the employee) not less than two working days in advance of the hearing.

Where the employee is unable to attend a disciplinary hearing and provides a good reason for failing to attend, the time and/or date of the hearing will be rearranged. The organisation will comply with (a) above in respect of giving notice of the rearranged hearing. Unless there are special circumstances mitigating against it, if the employee is unable to attend the rearranged hearing, the rearranged hearing will take place in the employee's absence. The employee's companion may attend in such circumstances and will be allowed the opportunity to present the employee's case. The employee will also be allowed to make written submissions in such a situation.

Where the chosen companion is unavailable on the day scheduled for the hearing, the employee may request that the hearing be rescheduled to an alternative time that is reasonable and within five working days of the scheduled date.

Role of companion

The employee's companion has the right to address the hearing to put the employee's case, sum up the case and respond on the employee's behalf to any view expressed at the hearing. The companion may also confer with the employee during the hearing. However, there is no requirement for the organisation to permit the companion to answer questions on behalf of the employee, or to address the hearing where the employee indicates that he/she does not wish this.

Data protection

The organisation processes personal data collected during the investigation stage and any subsequent stages of disciplinary action in accordance with its data protection policy. In particular, data collected as part of the investigation stage and any subsequent stages of disciplinary action is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of completing the disciplinary procedure. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the organisation's data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under this disciplinary procedure.

The disciplinary hearing

A disciplinary hearing will normally be conducted by the employee's departmental manager together with the organisation's HR officer (the panel). Any member of management responsible for the investigation of the disciplinary offence(s) shall not be a member of the panel, although such managers may present any relevant facts and material to the disciplinary hearing. The employee will be entitled to be given a full explanation of the case against him/her and be informed of the content of any statements provided by witnesses. He/she will be permitted to set out his/her case and answer any allegations. The employee will be given a reasonable opportunity to ask questions, present evidence and call relevant witnesses. He/she will also be given the opportunity to raise points about any information provided by witnesses. Where the organisation or the employee intends to call relevant witnesses, they should give advance notice that they intend to do this.

The organisation may adjourn the disciplinary proceedings if it appears necessary or appropriate to do so (including for the purpose of gathering further information). The employee will be informed of the likely period of any adjournment. If further information is gathered, the employee will be allowed a reasonable period of time, together with his/her companion, to consider the new information prior to the reconvening of the disciplinary proceedings.

As soon as possible after the conclusion of the disciplinary proceedings, the panel will convey the decision to the employee and will also inform the employee what disciplinary action, if any, is to be taken. The decision will be confirmed in writing. The employee will be notified of his/her right of appeal under this procedure.

Disciplinary action

Where, following a disciplinary hearing, the organisation reasonably believes that the employee has committed a disciplinary offence, the following disciplinary action may be taken:

1. Where a minor offence or offences have been committed, a recorded oral warning may be given. The warning will:
 1. set out the nature of the offence committed;
 2. inform the employee that further misconduct is liable to result in further disciplinary action under this procedure;

3. specify the period for which the warning will remain "live", after such period the organisation will review the warning; and
 4. state that the employee may appeal against the warning.
2. Where either a more serious disciplinary offence has been committed or following a recorded oral warning that remains "live", a further minor offence or offences have been committed by an employee, the employee will receive a first written warning. The warning will:
1. set out the nature of the offence committed;
 2. inform the employee that further misconduct is liable to result in further disciplinary action under this procedure;
 3. specify the period for which the warning will remain "live", after such period the organisation will review the warning; and
 4. state that the employee may appeal against the warning.
3. Where a serious disciplinary offence amounting to gross misconduct has been committed, thereby justifying summary dismissal, but the organisation decides, after taking into account all relevant circumstances, that a lesser penalty is appropriate, or, where an employee commits further disciplinary offences after a first written warning has been issued and remains "live", a final (or combined first and final) written warning may be given. Such a warning will:
1. set out the nature of the offence committed;
 2. inform the employee that further misconduct is likely to result in his/her dismissal;
 3. specify the period for which the warning will remain "live", after such period the organisation will review the warning; and
 4. state that the employee may appeal against the warning.
4. Where the employee has committed further acts of misconduct (these being acts of misconduct other than gross misconduct) following a final written warning given under c. above, the organisation may elect to dismiss with notice or payment in lieu of notice.
5. Where the organisation reasonably believes that an employee has committed an act of gross misconduct, the employee may be summarily dismissed without notice.
6. Where a final written warning is given to an employee under c. above, the organisation may also impose on the employee:
1. disciplinary suspension without pay;
 2. loss of seniority;
 3. in line with any provision in the contract of employment, stoppage of pay for such period as the organisation thinks fit in the circumstances subject to a maximum of two weeks; or
 4. in line with any provision in the contract of employment, transfer to a job of a lower status.

The above sanctions may be imposed in conjunction with other forms of disciplinary action, or as an alternative to dismissal.

Expired warnings

Expired warnings will be retained on an employee's personnel record as it may be necessary to take account of the warning when considering future conduct, for example establishing a pattern of behaviour or an awareness of the relevant rules. Documentation relating to the expired warning will not normally be retained unless there is a justification for this.

Appeal

An employee may appeal against any disciplinary sanction imposed against him/her, with the exception of an informal oral warning. Wherever possible, the appeal will be heard by a senior manager who has not been involved in the decision to impose the disciplinary sanction on the employee. The appeal manager is obliged to consider any representations made by the employee, the employee's companion and those of the manager who conducted the investigation and the manager who conducted the disciplinary hearing and imposed the disciplinary sanction. Should any new evidence be introduced on appeal, the employee will be given the opportunity to consider it and raise comments. Once the relevant issues have been thoroughly explored, the appeal manager will decide whether or not to uphold the disciplinary sanction. In the event that the appeal manager does not find for the employee, the appeal manager shall allow the appeal and shall remove all records of the disciplinary sanction from the employee's record. In the event that the appeal manager does not find for the employee, the senior manager must uphold the disciplinary sanction. In the event that the appeal manager partially finds for the employee, the appeal manager shall partially allow the appeal and impose a lesser disciplinary sanction.

When lodging an appeal, the employee should state:

1. the grounds of appeal; and
2. whether he/she is appealing against the finding that he/she has committed the alleged act or acts of misconduct, or against the level of disciplinary sanction imposed.

The employee must provide written notice of the appeal within five working days of being informed of the disciplinary sanction being imposed against him/her.

Appeal hearings will normally take place within 14 days of receipt of the employee's written notice of appeal.

Upon completion of the appeal, the appeal manager will convey his/her decision to the employee. The decision will be confirmed in writing within one week. The organisation's decision at the appeal is final.

Where there is an appeal against a dismissal, an employee will not be entitled to be paid or reinstated (unless he/she is entitled to notice) between the date of dismissal and the conclusion of the appeal process. In the event however that the decision to dismiss is overturned on appeal, the employee will be reinstated with immediate effect and he/she will be paid for any period between the date of the original dismissal and the successful appeal decision. His/her continuous service will not be affected.

Gross misconduct

Gross misconduct is misconduct of such a serious and fundamental nature that it breaches the contractual relationship between the employee and the organisation. In the event that an employee commits an act of gross misconduct, the organisation will be entitled to terminate summarily the employee's contract of employment without notice or pay in lieu of notice.

Matters that the organisation views as amounting to gross misconduct include (but are not limited to):

- theft or fraud;
- other offences of dishonesty;
- unauthorised absence;
- falsification of a qualification that is a stated requirement of the employee's employment or results in financial gain to the employee;
- falsification of records including reports, accounts, expense claims or self-certification forms, whether or not for personal gain;
- data protection breaches, disclosure of company documents, trade secrets and other confidential information to unauthorised third parties;
- indecency;
- physical violence or bullying;
- deliberate damage to or misuse of property;
- gross insubordination;
- the use or distribution of illegal drugs while at work;
- serious incapability at work brought on by alcohol;
- possession, custody or control of illegal drugs on the organisation's premises;
- serious breach of the organisation's rules, including, but not restricted to, health and safety rules and rules on computer use;
- gross negligence;
- conviction of a criminal offence that is relevant to the employee's employment;
- misuse or abuse of social media in and outside work;
- deliberately accessing pornographic, offensive or obscene material;
- conduct that brings the organisation's name into disrepute; and
- unlawful discrimination or harassment.

Other acts of misconduct may come within the general definition of gross misconduct.

Miscellaneous

This procedure will be periodically reviewed. Any amendment to it will be notified to employees in writing by the organisation's HR manager and such written advice will inform employees as to the date when any amendment comes into effect. This may be by means of the organisation's intranet or via use of notice boards or via email.

This policy is non-contractual, and the organisation may make changes to it from time to time.

Grievance Procedure

Introduction

The organisation believes that all employees should be treated fairly and with respect. If you are unhappy about the treatment that you have received or about any aspect of your work, you should discuss this with your line manager, who will attempt to resolve the situation on an informal basis. If you feel unable to approach your line manager directly, you should approach the CEO or Chair, who will discuss ways of dealing with the matter with you.

Where attempts to resolve the matter informally do not work, it may be appropriate for you to raise a formal grievance under this procedure. A formal grievance should be concerned with the way in which you believe you have been treated by the organisation or managers acting on its behalf, colleagues or about any aspect of your work. Complaints that amount to an allegation of misconduct on the part of another employee will also be investigated and dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

Grievances may be concerned with a wide range of issues, including the allocation of work, your working environment or conditions, the opportunities that you have been given for career development or the way in which you have been managed.

Complaints that you may have about any disciplinary action taken against you should be dealt with as an appeal under the disciplinary procedure.

Grievances raised while you are subject to disciplinary proceedings will usually be heard only when the disciplinary process has been completed. Insofar as a grievance has any bearing on the disciplinary proceedings, it can be raised as a relevant issue in the course of those proceedings.

Mediation

It may be appropriate for the matter to be dealt with by way of mediation, depending on the nature of your grievance. This involves the appointment of a third-party mediator, who will discuss the issues raised by your grievance with all of those involved and seek to facilitate a resolution. Mediation will be used only where all parties involved in the grievance agree.

The right to be accompanied

You have the right to be accompanied by a fellow worker or trade union official at any grievance meeting or subsequent appeal. The trade union official need not be an employee of the organisation, but if he/she is not a fellow worker or an employee of his/her union, the organisation may insist on him/her being certified by the union as being experienced or trained in accompanying employees at grievance hearings.

The choice of companion is a matter for you. Please note that individual workers are not obliged to agree to accompany you. Companions will be given appropriate paid time off to allow them to accompany colleagues at a grievance hearing or appeal hearing.

At any hearing or appeal hearing, your chosen companion will be allowed to address the meeting, respond on your behalf to any view expressed in the hearing, and sum up the case

on your behalf. However, both the hearing and appeal hearing are essentially meetings between the organisation and you, so any questions put directly to you should be dealt with by you and not your companion.

Where the chosen companion is unavailable on the day scheduled for the meeting or appeal, the meeting will be rescheduled, provided that you can propose an alternative time within five working days of the scheduled date.

Accessibility

If any aspect of the grievance procedure causes you difficulty on account of any disability that you may have, or if you need assistance because English is not your first language, you should raise this issue with the person dealing with the grievance, who will make appropriate arrangements.

Data protection

The organisation processes personal data collected during informal complaints and the formal grievance procedure in accordance with its data protection policy. In particular, data collected as part of informal complaints and the grievance procedure is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of responding to the complaints or conducting the grievance procedure. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the organisation's data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the organisation's disciplinary procedure.

Conducting the grievance procedure

The organisation recognises that a formal grievance procedure can be a stressful and upsetting experience for all parties involved. Everyone involved in the process is entitled to be treated calmly and with respect. The organisation will not tolerate abusive or insulting behaviour from anyone taking part in or conducting grievance procedures and will treat any such behaviour as misconduct under the disciplinary procedure.

Formal grievance procedure

Making the complaint

The first stage of the grievance procedure is for you to put your complaint in writing. This written statement will form the basis of the subsequent hearing and any investigations, so it is important that you set out clearly the nature of your grievance and indicate the outcome that you are seeking. If your grievance is unclear, you may be asked to clarify your complaint before any meeting takes place.

Your complaint should be headed "Formal grievance" and sent to your line manager. If your complaint relates to the way in which you believe your line manager is treating you, the complaint may be sent to the CEO.

Further attempts may be made to resolve the matter informally, depending on the nature of your complaint. However, if you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may insist on the matter proceeding to a full grievance hearing.

Before proceeding to a full grievance hearing, it may be necessary to carry out investigations of any allegations made by you, although the confidentiality of the grievance process will be respected, wherever possible. If any evidence is gathered in the course of these investigations, you will be given a copy long enough in advance of the hearing for you to consider your response. In exceptional circumstances, the evidence given by individuals may have to remain confidential. Where confidentiality is necessary, this will be explained to you and an appropriate summary of the evidence gathered will be given to you.

The grievance hearing

The hearing will be held as soon as is reasonably practicable and, subject to any need to carry out prior investigations, within five working days of the receipt of your written complaint. It will be conducted by your line manager and attended by an HR representative. At the meeting, you will be asked to explain the nature of your complaint and what action you feel should be taken to resolve the matter. Where appropriate, the meeting may be adjourned to allow further investigations to take place.

You should ensure that you attend the meeting at the specified time. If you are unable to attend because of circumstances beyond your control, you should inform your line manager as soon as possible. If you fail to attend without explanation, or if it appears that you have not made sufficient attempts to attend, the hearing may take place in your absence.

While you will be given every opportunity to explain your case fully, you should confine your explanation to matters that are directly relevant to your complaint. Focusing on irrelevant issues or incidents that took place long before the matters in hand is not helpful and can hinder the effective handling of your complaint. The manager conducting the hearing will intervene if he/she thinks that the discussion is straying too far from the key issue. The manager may also intervene to ensure that the meeting can be completed within a reasonable timeframe, depending on the nature and complexity of your complaint.

Following the meeting, you will be informed in writing of the outcome within seven working days and told of any action that the organisation proposes to take as a result of your complaint. You may discuss this outcome informally with your manager.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may make a formal appeal.

Appeal

Your appeal should be made in writing to the manager who conducted the initial grievance hearing. You should clearly state the grounds of your appeal, i.e. the basis on which you say that the result of the grievance was wrong or that the action taken as a result was inappropriate. This should be done within seven working days of the written notification of the outcome of the grievance. An appeal meeting will be arranged to take place within five working days of the submission of your formal appeal, wherever possible.

You should ensure that you attend the meeting at the specified time. If you are unable to attend because of circumstances beyond your control, you should inform your line manager of this as soon as possible. If you fail to attend without explanation, or if it appears that you have not made sufficient attempts to attend, the hearing may take place in your absence.

The appeal hearing will be conducted by your head of department or director, who will consider the grounds that you have put forward and assess whether or not the conclusion reached in the original grievance hearing was appropriate.

Following the appeal meeting, you will be informed of the outcome within seven working days, wherever possible. The outcome of this meeting will be final.

Training and Development

The organisation considers it appropriate to base training and development opportunities on the requirements of the business, and decisions about investment in staff training and development will be made accordingly. Staff members are expected to take some ownership of their own development, with support from their managers and the organisation as a whole.

We regularly review our overall level of investment in staff training and development to ensure that adequate and appropriate resources are provided.

Training and development initiatives

The organisation provides a range of training and development opportunities to staff. These fall into four broad categories:

- **Programmes relating to the enhancement of skills for an employee's current position.** These include internal and external courses providing technical training, for example on the use of software packages, and specialist training relating to the skills that employees require for their job.
- **Programmes leading to a professional or academic qualification.** The organisation encourages employees who wish to do so to pursue continuous professional development and where appropriate to gain further qualifications. The organisation will pay a proportion of the fees for a programme that is approved depending on the relevance to the performance of the current role. Up to two days' study leave will be given.
- **Professional Membership Fees.** The organisation will pay for one relevant professional membership fees including any joining fees.
- **Programmes that have a specific management or supervisory focus.** These include internal and external courses on manager development, supervisory skills for line managers, and leadership development programmes.
- **Health and safety training.** This includes courses in manual handling, risk assessment, fire safety, first aid, and food and hygiene regulations.

Decisions on the suitability and applicability of programmes will normally be determined through the performance review process, during which individual training and development needs are identified within a personal development plan. Progress on the acquisition of new skills and knowledge will be monitored throughout this process.

Planning and implementing new initiatives

Any new training initiatives will be planned as a result of training needs analysis activities, which in turn are part of the organisation's performance review process. In addition, the organisation is committed to reviewing training initiatives so that relevant training and development is provided for skills in specific job areas, where work procedures have changed, or where new standards are introduced.

Individual requests for training and development

Employees can request training and development at any time, but this will usually be done within the performance review process, as outlined above. Employees should channel requests through their line manager.

Monitoring and evaluating investment in training and development

The organisation firmly believes that it is critical to the success of both the planning and delivery of training and development activities that the resources invested are monitored and the outcomes achieved are measured. Such outcomes may be demonstrated at an individual, departmental and corporate level. Senior managers have an important role to play in this process. The organisation uses its evaluation findings for future business planning and the planning of continued investment in staff training and development. Accordingly, the evaluation findings are regularly shared with the senior executive team.

Coaching and mentoring

The organisation encourages line managers to provide coaching and mentoring support for staff who are undergoing training and development. Managers have a responsibility to ensure that the skills and knowledge of more experienced staff members are shared with more junior employees to ensure that learning occurs in a planned way.

Recording of training and development activities

Following a performance review discussion, a copy of the approved personal development plan is placed in the employee's personnel file. This information is collated annually to form the basis of the organisation's forward training and development plan. All training attended will be recorded along with costs, including, for example, travel and subsistence expenses and the cost of textbooks. On completion of any internal or external course the employee will complete a course evaluation form.

Equal opportunities

Decisions relating to training and development should be made fairly and consistently, and equality of opportunity should be provided for all staff in this area.

Data protection

When managing an employee's training and development, the organisation processes personal data collected in accordance with its data protection policy. Data collected as part of the operation of the training and development policy is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of managing training and development. Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the organisation's data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the organisation's disciplinary procedure.

Induction training

All new members of staff will receive an induction on their job role. The organisation provides full programmes of general induction training and health and safety induction training.

Notice Periods

This policy is issued to promote guidance on the application of notice periods. Individual notice periods are detailed in employees' terms and conditions of employment. This policy does not form part of employees' terms and conditions of employment or otherwise have any contractual effect. This policy may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time by the organisation at its absolute discretion.

The organisation may agree to release an employee from the requirement to serve his/her full notice period. In these circumstances, the organisation will not pay the employee for the portion of the notice period that he/she is not working. The employee will be asked to sign a letter confirming the agreement reached.

Resignation

An employee who resigns must provide the organisation with his/her notice of resignation in writing. The organisation will not accept notice of resignation as effective unless it is in writing. Upon resignation, the employee will be required to work his/her full contractual notice period, unless otherwise agreed.

If an employee fails to work his/her full contractual notice period without prior authorisation from the organisation, the employee will not be paid for the portion of the notice period that he/she has not worked. The organisation may refer to this in any reference given on the employee's behalf.

The organisation may deduct from the employee's final pay any costs incurred as a result of the employee failing to work his/her full notice period.

Dismissal

Where the organisation dismisses an employee, it will give the employee his/her full contractual notice and, unless otherwise agreed, will require the employee to work the full period of notice.

In certain circumstances, including dismissals for gross misconduct, the organisation may dismiss the employee without notice. If this is the case, the organisation will explain the reason(s) why.

Redundancy

Where the organisation dismisses an employee by reason of redundancy, it will give the employee his/her full contractual notice and, unless otherwise agreed, will require the employee to work the full period of notice.

An employee who is dismissed by reason of redundancy will be given a reasonable amount of paid time off work to look for alternative employment. The arrangements for time off must be agreed in advance by the employee's manager.

Retirement

If an employee is retiring, notice should be given in accordance with the notice period set out in his/her contract of employment.

Rights and obligations during the notice period

During the notice period, the contract of employment will continue to remain in force and the employee will receive full pay and benefits.

During the notice period, the employee remains bound by all the obligations and restrictions expressly set out or implied in his/her contract of employment, including the fiduciary duty and must not take up employment elsewhere. The organisation expects that the employee will conduct him/herself in an entirely appropriate manner during the full period of notice and uphold the high standards of performance required of all employees. This applies no matter who gave notice to terminate the contract of employment and for whatever reason.

If an employee's performance during the notice period falls below the required standards, the organisation may address this as a performance or disciplinary matter and may refer to this in any references given on the employee's behalf.

During the notice period, the organisation may restrict an employee's duties, contact with clients, colleagues and suppliers, access to information or resources and impose any other reasonable practices, to better facilitate a handover and/or to protect business interests.

Return of the organisation's property

The organisation requires employees to hand over to their Line manager or the CEO all property that belongs to the organisation on or before their final working day.

This may include (but is not limited to):

- keys and key cards;
- security and building passes;
- mobile phone;
- laptop;
- removable data storage device;
- credit or charge cards;
- hardcopies of the organisation's material (including copies or summaries and whether in eye readable or machine-readable form);
- company car; and
- any other property belonging to the organisation.

Pay in lieu of notice

The organisation may make a payment in lieu of notice for all or any part of an employee's notice period on termination of his/her employment (rather than the employee working out his/her notice period). This provision, which is at the organisation's discretion, applies whether notice to terminate the contract is given by the employee or by the organisation.

The employee will be compensated by being given a payment in place of this, amounting to the payment that he/she would have received (including payment for accrued but untaken annual leave) if he/she had worked out his/her notice period. A sum constituting the employee's pay in lieu of notice will be transferred into the bank account into which his/her wages are normally paid.

Garden leave

If an employee is placed on garden leave, he/she will not be allowed to come to work, meaning that he/she must stay away from the workplace during the garden-leave period. If he/she is placed on garden leave, the organisation will:

- confiscate any equipment belonging to the organisation that he/she may have, typically a laptop, at the start of the garden-leave period;
- require him/her not to have any contact with clients or customers for work-related purposes during the garden-leave period; and
- prevent him/her from having any contact with another organisation, typically a competitor, during the garden-leave period.

If the employee is placed on garden leave, his/her contract of employment will continue in force until the end of the notice period. This means that, during the garden-leave period, he/she will:

- continue to receive full pay and benefits (with the exception of benefits that are given to allow the employee to do his/her job, such as a work mobile phone or company car) in the normal way;
- remain bound by all the obligations and restrictions set out in his/her contract of employment, including any confidentiality clauses and restrictive covenants contained in his/her contract of employment, save the duty to attend work;
- not be permitted to take up other employment during the garden-leave period; and
- be required to remain available to be contacted by the organisation.

Holiday during notice periods

During the notice period, the organisation may require employees to take annual leave accrued for that holiday year but not taken by the date of termination. The organisation will give the appropriate notice.

If, prior to notice of termination being given by either party, the organisation has authorised an employee's annual leave request, and the annual leave is scheduled to take place during the notice period, the organisation will seek to honour this arrangement. However, the organisation may, if necessary for business reasons, require the employee to cancel all or part of his/her annual leave, on giving the appropriate notice.

If, on termination of an employee's employment, the employee has accrued annual leave that he/she has not taken, he/she will be paid in lieu of this as part of his/her final wages. No payment in lieu of accrued contractual holiday will be made to the employee (and where appropriate a deduction will be made from salary) in the event of his/her termination for

gross misconduct or in the event of the employee giving inadequate notice of termination or leaving before the contractual notice period has expired.

If, on termination of an employee's employment, he/she has taken paid holiday leave in excess of earned entitlement, he/she will be required to reimburse the organisation (by means of deduction from salary if necessary) in respect of such holiday.

Outstanding payments to the organisation

The organisation may deduct from any final pay all monies owing to it from the departing employee. This includes (but is not limited to):

- outstanding loans;
- wage advances;
- expenses advances; and
- holiday taken but not yet accrued.

If the employee's final pay is insufficient to cover the sums owed to the organisation, the employee will enter into a contract with the organisation for the repayment of all sums owed. If the employee refuses to do this, or defaults on any repayment agreement, the organisation may bring a civil claim against the employee to recover the monies (as a debt) and its costs of doing so.

Outstanding payments to the employee

An employee who wishes to claim expenses properly incurred in the course of his/her duties must do so before the end of his/her notice period. The employee must follow the procedure set out in the organisation's expenses policy.

If the employee has not followed the procedure set out in the organisation's expenses policy, the organisation may not repay the expenses to the employee.

Redundancy Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out the organisation's approach to dealing with potential redundancies. It does not form part of employees' terms and conditions of employment and may be subject to change at the discretion of management.

Although the organisation's policy is to avoid redundancies wherever possible, the needs of the business may from time to time require a reduction in the overall number of staff employed or organisational changes or a severe economic downturn that result in some employees being made redundant.

Where this is necessary, the organisation will ensure that:

- the total number of redundancies made is kept to a minimum;
- employees and, where appropriate, their representatives are fully consulted on any proposals and their implementation;
- selection for redundancy is based on clear criteria that will, as far as possible, be objectively and fairly applied;
- all reasonable efforts are made to redeploy or find suitable alternative work for employees selected for redundancy; and
- support and advice are provided to employees selected for redundancy to help them find suitable work when their employment has come to an end.

Consultation

Consultations will be carried out with individual employees as appropriate.

Voluntary redundancy

In order to minimise the need for compulsory redundancies, the organisation may consider requests from employees for voluntary redundancies. Whether or not additional payments will be offered in relation to voluntary redundancies will be a matter for consultation and will depend on the circumstances.

The organisation reserves the right at its absolute discretion to decline requests for voluntary redundancy.

Redundancy selection

The criteria used in selecting employees for redundancy will depend on the existing circumstances and the particular needs of the organisation at the time. However, all reasonable efforts will be made to construct a fair and robust set of criteria following appropriate consultations.

Individual employees who are provisionally selected for redundancy following the application of the criteria will be informed of the fact and invited to a meeting, at which they will be given an opportunity to make representations if they feel that the application of the criteria

results in unfairness to them or that there has been a mistake in the application of the criteria.

Alternative work

The organisation will make all reasonable efforts to redeploy to suitable alternative work any employee who is selected for redundancy. Such employees will be informed of all the available vacancies in the organisation at the time of their selection and will be given an opportunity to discuss with their line manager which vacancies are likely to be suitable for them. While priority will be given wherever possible to employees under threat of redundancy, the organisation reserves the right to select the best available candidate in relation to any given vacancy.

Employees have a separate legal entitlement to be offered any suitable alternative work that is available if they are made redundant while on maternity leave.

Time off work

An employee under notice of redundancy will be entitled to a reasonable amount of paid time off to look for alternative work, attend interviews, etc. Employees wishing to take advantage of this right should make the appropriate arrangements with their line manager.

Termination of employment

Depending on the circumstances, the organisation may waive its right to insist on employees working their notice and instead give a payment in lieu of notice. Employees with two or more years' service may be entitled to a statutory redundancy payment. The amount of this payment will be confirmed when the employee is selected for redundancy and the sum will be paid along with the employee's final salary payment or payment in lieu of notice.

Data protection

The organisation processes personal data of employees, including data that is within the special categories of data (such as personal data concerning an employee's health), collected during their recruitment and while they are employed in accordance with its data protection policy for the purposes of dealing with any potential or actual redundancies. In particular, data collected and processed for those purposes is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals for the purposes of:

- complying with its statutory notification and consultation obligations (including trade union representatives (where a union is recognised) and employee representatives);
- following a fair procedure to ensure that dismissals for redundancy are not unfair;
- selecting employees for redundancy;
- considering alternatives to redundancy;
- offering alternative employment;
- implementing redundancies;
- dealing with appeals against selection; and
- defending legal claims arising from redundancies.

Inappropriate access or disclosure of employee data by an employee of the organisation constitutes a data breach and should be reported immediately in accordance with the organisation's data protection policy. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the organisation's disciplinary procedure.

Trade union representatives, in their capacity as representatives of a trade union, must deal with personal data about employees in accordance with all relevant legal requirements, including the General Data Protection Regulation.

Retirement Policy

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to set out the organisation's approach to the retirement of employees.

Data protection

The organisation processes personal data collected during the retirement procedure in accordance with its data protection policy. In particular, data collected as part of the retirement procedure is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of supporting an employee in his/her retirement.

Retirement age

The organisation does not operate a compulsory retirement age for its employees.

The organisation is committed to equal opportunities for all its employees. The organisation recognises the contributions of a diverse workforce, including the skills and experience of older employees. It believes that employees should, wherever possible, be permitted to continue working for as long as they wish to do so. The organisation operates a flexible retirement policy and employees may voluntarily retire at a time of their choosing.

Retirement procedure

If an employee wishes to retire, he/she should inform the line manager in writing as far in advance as possible and, in any event, in accordance with the notice period as set out in his/her contract of employment. This will assist the organisation with its succession planning.

The organisation will write to the employee acknowledging the employee's notice to retire.

The organisation will arrange a meeting with the employee to discuss arrangements for retirement, including the intended retirement date, succession and handover plans, pension details and phased retirement, if applicable.

Employees should consider their pension provision and take independent financial advice before making any decision in relation to retirement.

Retirement procedure for employee who wishes to retire

If an employee wishes to retire, he/she should inform the line manager in writing as far in advance as possible and, in any event, in accordance with the notice period as set out in his/her contract of employment. This will assist the organisation with its succession planning.

The organisation will write to the employee acknowledging the employee's notice to retire.

The organisation will arrange a meeting with the employee to discuss arrangements for retirement, including the intended retirement date, succession and handover plans, pension details and phased retirement, if applicable.

Employees should consider their pension provision and take independent financial advice before making any decision in relation to retirement.

Workplace discussions (for employees over retirement age)

The organisation will invite all employees to regular workplace discussions with their line managers. These will take place once a year, when performance appraisals are carried out. During those discussions, the relevant line manager will discuss the employee's performance, developmental or training needs and the organisation's and employee's future plans and expectations in the short-, medium- and long-term. During those meetings, employees may discuss their future plans or proposals for retirement.

A record of each workplace discussion will be kept, and a copy given to the employee.

A discussion about possible retirement will not result in the organisation making any assumptions about the employee's commitment to the organisation. The organisation seeks to retain the best talent, including older employees. Workplace discussions are an informal opportunity for both the organisation and employees to plan jointly for the future.

Succession planning

An employee who is shortly to retire will often have considerable knowledge in relation to his/her role and responsibilities. The organisation may require the employee's assistance and cooperation for succession planning.

Prior to retirement, employees should cooperate with the organisation, if requested to do so, by:

- providing full written details of the status of work projects and future steps;
- developing a job description, including key competencies and skills required for the role;
- ensuring a smooth handover of work; and
- assisting in training any successor.

Variation

From time to time we will need to make changes to the Handbook because of organisational change or changes to legislation or regulations and employees will be notified of such changes. The policies and procedures do not form part of the terms of your contract with us, which are provided to you separately.

Declaration

I confirm that I have read, understood and agree to the conditions as stated in the employee handbook and understand that the version of this handbook that applies will be the latest version issued.

Name (print)

Signed

Date