

Personal Relationships at Work Policy

1. Introduction

When working closely together, staff may form friendships and sometimes personal relationships. The organisation is duty bound to ensure all staff behave appropriately, adhere to standards of conduct set out in organisational policies and avoid behaviours which could lead to allegations of impropriety.

This policy sets out the expected standards regarding personal relationships connected to the organisation. Any breach of the terms of this policy may result in the disciplinary procedure being instigated.

For the purposes of this policy, the term “personal relationships” is defined as any relationship, from friendship to two people ‘being in a relationship together.’ This policy applies to all staff, workers and volunteers acting on behalf of the organisation.

This document does not form part of a contract of employment and may be changed from time to time in line with current best practice and statutory requirements, and to ensure business needs are met. Staff will be consulted and advised of any changes as far in advance as possible of the change being made, unless the change is required by law.

2. Policy Aims:

- To clearly outline standards and expectations concerning personal relationships at work.
- To outline how to manage any situations out with the expected standards in accordance with this policy.
- To manage situations which may arise in a fair, consistent and appropriate way and comply with all relevant discriminatory legislation.

3. Responsibilities

Staff Responsibilities

- To not allow any close personal relationships with anyone associated with the organisation to impact or affect judgement or decisions while at work.
- To declare any close personal relationship with a colleague or any other person associated with the organisation to the Chief Executive or Senior Management Team.
- To respect the workplace and colleagues.
- To not behave inappropriately during working hours, nor outwith working hours with any matters connected or associated with the organisation.
- To be aware of behaviour in any public or social media interaction with regards to personal relationships at work.
- To follow the highest standards of behaviour at all other internal or external events.

Manager Responsibilities

- To treat any information concerning a personal relationship at work in the strictest of confidence. The information will be recorded on the personnel files of both staff members.
- To discuss the situation with those involved, this will be done by an appropriate senior manager. It may be deemed appropriate to avoid any conflict of interest to move one

or both staff members to another post, department, section, team or consider other working arrangements in line with the needs of the organisation. In these circumstances, the organisation will discuss options with both staff and seek to reach an agreement regarding the transfer of one or both. If there is risk to the organisation and appropriate measures or working arrangements cannot be put in place, the organisation may consider termination of one or both parties.

- To apply similar principles to staff who is in a close personal relationship with a service user, contractor or supplier, in particular where their post has the authority or a close connection with the individual, the relationship must be declared to the line manager. In these circumstances, the staff member may be transferred to another post, department, section, team or consider other working arrangements in line with the needs of the organisation. If there is risk to the organisation and appropriate measures or working arrangements cannot be put in place, the organisation may consider termination of one or both parties.
- In situations where a close personal relationship with a Governing Body Member or, another volunteer, service user, client, customer, contractor or supplier, the Governing Body Member/volunteer will be excluded from any discussions connected to the person they have a personal relationship with. If this is not possible or appropriate, the Governing Body member may be required to step down from their position.

Organisation Responsibilities

To ensure fair, equal, reasonable and consistent treatment of all staff regarding any aspect of the implementation of this policy.

To ensure all those with line management responsibility are reasonably trained in the practical application of this policy.

To regularly review and update this policy in line with legislation and best practice.

4. Termination

If termination of employment is the last and final consideration available after other avenues have been explored, the following fair process will be followed:

- The staff member will be invited to put forward suggestions for a suitable alternative working arrangement which meet the needs of the business.
- The Senior Officer will take all suggestions and consider them.
- The Senior Officer will produce a comprehensive and succinct report outlining the business reasons why it is not appropriate to continue the employment.
- The staff member will then be invited to a formal meeting with a copy of the senior officer's report and any other information the panel will have available to them.
- At the meeting, they will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or workplace colleague and will be given the opportunity to put forward their case.
- The meeting will only be conducted by those with authority to dismiss.
- The panel will then deliberate the information put before them before making a decision.
- The decision of the panel will be communicated in writing to staff within five working days of the decision being made together with details of how to appeal the decision.



- If terminated, staff will be paid all accrued annual leave, TOIL and flexi accrued but not yet taken as at the date of termination. Payment in lieu of notice will be made as set out in the contract of employment if a decision to dismiss is made.

5. Data Protection Act 2018

The organisation will treat all personal data in line with obligations under the current data protection regulations.