



Contact Health Ltd

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Employee Handbook Issue and Updates

Pages	Issue Number	Date	Details
All	2	August 2020	Employee Handbook Created

WELCOME TO Contact Health Ltd

Hello and welcome!

We employ around 25 employees in medical positions. We're a friendly team with years of collective industry experience and it's an exciting time to join us. We hope you find this handbook interesting and informative; for the benefit of doubt, this handbook is not intended to form part of your contract of employment.

We're looking forward to welcoming you to the team and hope that you will find your time at Contact Health Ltd both enjoyable and rewarding.

This Handbook has been created in order to support you throughout your employment with the Company. Its aim is to provide general information on the Company, set out general rules of conduct and assist you in your role. It should be viewed as a reference tool and a guide to the key policies and procedures we seek to use as a business. Whilst this Handbook does not form part of your contract of employment, it is still important that you familiarise yourself with its contents as you are required to act in accordance with these policies and procedures and follow the company's required practises at all times.

Should you have any questions with regard to the content of this Handbook then please speak to your Manager.

As a Company, we will review this non-contractual Handbook on a regular basis and will advise you in writing of any major changes, with appropriate notice of their introduction. Minor changes may also be circulated to the business from time-to-time.

We would like to wish you every success during your employment whether you recently joined us or whether you are an existing employee. We hope that your experience of working here will be positive and rewarding.

SECTION 1 - GENERAL RULES & INFORMATION

CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT / TERMS & CONDITIONS

As an employee of the Company you will have received an employment contract setting out the terms and conditions of your employment, one of which is the requirement for you to read the Employee Handbook.

The Company reserves the right to change these terms & conditions and employment policies and practices from time to time. You will be notified at the earliest opportunity of these changes by way of general notice to all employees affected. Where there is a contractual change to your terms and conditions of employment, you will be written to confirming those changes.

PROOF OF RIGHT TO WORK IN THE UK

As a business we do need to comply with the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006. This Act states that employers can only hire people who can work legally within the UK. Prior to a formal offer of employment being made, you will be required to provide the necessary documentation that proves your identity and verifies that you are eligible to work in the UK. Should, during your employment, your immigration status change, you must submit into your Manager proof of your renewed eligibility before the current time period expires. Should you fail to produce these documents or for whatever reason you have your immigration clearance revoked, the Company reserves the right to terminate your employment. During your employment the Company may at any time ask to see your right to work in the UK, settlement status and/or identity documents, which you will be required to present.

BACKGROUND REFERENCE CHECKS

Prior to your onboarding, previous employment references will be obtained. Your employment may not be confirmed until these references have been carried out and the results are satisfactory.

PROBATION PERIOD

All new employees will be subject to a probation period which is used to monitor and review performance, conduct, timekeeping, sickness absence and attendance. Your contract of employment will provide details on the length of your probation. At the end of the probation period your employment will either be confirmed to you, or in exceptional circumstances extended for a further period if there are areas that need improvement. In some cases, during the probation period the Company may terminate your employment providing one week's notice, if we do not wish to or unable to offer permanent employment. Any outcome will be provided to you in writing. Please note that we reserve the right not to apply full disciplinary procedures during your probationary period.

PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

Performance management within the business allows Managers to help track the progress of their teams and provide support to enable personal development. The performance review process is a continual cycle throughout the year where you and your Manager will continually meet to discuss your role and your performance within that role. Once a year a formal performance review meeting (or appraisal review), will take place where the objective of that meeting is to review the previous year's achievements and to discuss any future training, development and career planning relevant to you and the Company.

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Training and development is designed to enhance, update, improve and refine the knowledge and skills of individuals. The Company provides a range of training and development activities, which covers general / health and safety induction training, company mandatory training, programmes relating to the enhancement of skills for an employee's current position, or programmes leading to a professional or academic qualification.

Training requirements will be identified during the performance review process. However, you can make a request for training and development at any time through your Manager.

The Company will consider financial support for costs associated with training for proficiency at work and/or career development. If you are interested in pursuing longer-term training opportunities in excess of 1 week you will be required to sign up to a training programme and repayment plan agreement.

COMPANY INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Communication takes on many forms and plays an essential role to the success of any company - it supports clarity, certainty and understanding. The Company will communicate on issues that relate to day-to-day operations and the long-term growth of the business. It will also communicate regularly and often, formally and informally, as an organisation, in teams and individually. In communicating information about the business activities and plans for the future, the Company also wishes to encourage you to provide feedback, including ideas, suggestions and proposals as to how the business can improve the way in which it operates.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Whilst working for the Company, and for a period of 6 months after leaving the Company, whether voluntary or otherwise, you will not disclose, make known, divulge or communicate any information in relation to the Company's trade secrets, techniques, customer database, pricing policy, or method of carrying on business (whether verbal or written) to any person not authorised to receive it, including customers.

PAYMENT / REVIEW OF SALARIES

Salaries are paid in arrears on the second day of the following calendar month by BACS transfer, for the hours worked in the previous month. An individual payslip showing number of hours worked (if applicable), gross pay, net pay, fixed and variable deductions will be given to you each month. Your salary will be reviewed annually, however the Company is under no obligation to grant an increase.

DEDUCTIONS FROM WAGES

In some circumstances the Company may be required to make deductions directly from your salary, for example for overpayment of wages / unauthorised absence / clawback of training costs / to cover speeding fines / personal calls from company mobile phones / unauthorised absence. You agree that where you owe any money to the Company or a deduction is required, you authorise the Company to make the appropriate deductions from any sums payable to you. Further details are provided within your contract of employment.

PENSION SCHEME

Subject to the rules of the relevant pension provider you may be eligible to be enrolled into the pension scheme put in place by the Company, which may be amended from time to time. Details of the pension arrangements are provided within your contract of employment.

CHANGES TO PERSONAL DETAILS

To help us to assist you, especially in cases of emergency, it is essential that all information on your personnel file is complete, correct and up to date. Should at any time your personal details change then you are required to inform your Manager.

PUNCTUALITY

Punctuality and regular attendance are essential to you and your team's success. If for any reason you cannot make it into work, will be late, or have to leave early, please notify your Manager before your scheduled start / leave time. It is imperative that you speak to someone in person. You must not leave a message on voicemail.

HOLIDAYS

You are entitled to 28 days paid holiday in each holiday year, inclusive of the bank and public holidays as designated for the UK by the Government (this is equivalent to a full time employee working 5 days a week), pro-rata in accordance to the number of hours you work.

Annual leave starts to accrue as soon as you start working and is paid at a rate of 12.07% per hour additional to your basic rate of pay

If you choose to take your holiday, the year runs from 1st January to 31st December. Your contract of employment will provide details on your annual leave entitlement. For those who work part time hours, your holiday entitlement will be calculated based on a pro rata basis (based on the equivalent to a full-time employee working 5 days a week).

Your holiday entitlement accrues monthly, and if your employment starts part way through the holiday year, your holiday entitlement during your first year will be calculated on a pro-rata basis. The calculation will include the bank and statutory holidays.

For those who have a fixed term contract, your annual holidays will be accrued at the rate of 1/12th of the annual entitlement for each complete month worked.

Holiday pay is calculated based on your current rate of pay (including commission payments / overtime / bonuses, if applicable). For those whose working hours vary from week to week or has irregular hours (i.e shift workers or term-time workers), the reference period used for determining a week's pay when calculating holiday pay will be 52 weeks. The Company will be required to look back at the previous 52 weeks worked in which you received pay. Any weeks worked but unpaid or any weeks not worked will not be included in the calculation i.e. if in the previous 52 weeks you had 2 weeks unpaid leave the reference period will need to be extended to 54 weeks to take into account the 2 unpaid weeks.

Should you have been employed for less than 52 weeks, the holiday pay reference period should include as many whole weeks of pay information as are available. For the purpose of the holiday reference period a week is defined within the Employment Rights Act 1996 as: starting on Sunday and ending on Saturday.

You will not be entitled to take holidays during your probation period, unless otherwise authorised by your Manager, although you will continue to accrue holiday.

All holidays must be pre-approved by your Manager via the holiday request procedure. Your Manager has the right to refuse your request on the grounds of workload or other absences; you should therefore not assume that a holiday will be agreed until you have their express agreement.

If the Company needs to refuse a holiday request because of business needs, it should be noted that it we will not be responsible for any financial commitment made by you, prior to authorisation. Should you have a request refused and fail to arrive at work, the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence where disciplinary action may be taken.

We ask for as much notice as possible when booking holidays, however a minimum of one months' notice is required for a holiday of one week's duration or more and at least one weeks' notice if your intention is to take occasional days.

In some cases, it may be necessary to restrict holidays at certain times of the year, limit the number of employees that can take annual leave at any one time, or to use a specific number of days within each quarter or half of the year. There may also be occasions where your Manager may instruct you to take your leave within specific dates.

You are not allowed to carry forward into the next holiday year any outstanding holiday and you will not be entitled to any payment for any unused holiday entitlement.

SICKNESS AND ABSENCE

The Company recognises that on occasion absences from work are unavoidable, please refer to the Sickness Absence Policy & Procedure for further details. Types of absences can include the following:

Sickness Absence - If you are absent from work due to sickness, you should refer to the Sickness Absence Policy & Procedure.

Emergency Absence - If you require emergency time off to provide temporary care for a dependent, then you must refer to the Time off for Dependents Policy.

Unplanned Emergency Leave - If you require emergency time off to attend to a domestic emergency, then you must refer to the Unplanned Emergency Leave Policy.

Routine Appointments - You are expected to organise routine and scheduled appointments, such as medical, dental, hospital etc, outside of your normal working hours. Where this is not possible, please inform your Manager. Depending on the time you need to take out, your Manager may request that you make this time up, or if this is not possible then your absence will be unpaid.

Jury Service and Attendance at Court as a Witness - If you are called for jury service, or as a court witness, you will be granted unpaid leave of absence. You should therefore claim for loss of earnings from the court. You will normally be given a Form from the court asking for confirmation of your normal wages/salary.

Time off for Religious Observance - You should make any requests for time off for religious observance to your Manager as early as possible or as soon as after the start of your employment. Although you have no legal or contractual right to religious leave or time off to pray, we will consider all such requests. Time off for religious observance must be taken from your rest periods or annual holiday entitlement, or you may also make a flexible working request in accordance with the Flexible Working Policy.

Public Duties - The Company is legally obliged to permit you time off to complete any public duties, i.e. magistrate or school governor etc. Time off for public duties will be unpaid, unless you choose to use your annual holiday entitlement. You should consult your Manager before taking on any public duties which will require you to take time off work.

Trade Union Duties - The Company is legally obliged to permit you time off to carry out your trade union duties. Time off for such duties will be unpaid, unless you choose to use your annual holiday entitlement. You should consult your Manager before taking on any trade union duties which will require you to take time off work.

Armed Forces Reserve - Employees who belong to one of the Armed Forces Reserve may be entitled to unpaid leave to attend training courses arranged by the Armed Forces.

DRESS & APPEARANCE

It is important for the Company to maintain a professional image at all times. If it's a requirement for your role, the Company may provide you with a uniform or items of clothing or safety shoes which you are expected to wear, take care of and launder and return to your Manager if your employment is terminated for any reason. Other than items of clothing supplied by the Company, you are expected to wear clothes that, whilst functional, are appropriate for a working environment. Items that are revealing, conveys offensive messages are not permitted. If you frequently meet with clients or prospects, you should conform to a more formal dress code. If you have any queries relating to this dress and appearance code, you should speak to your Manager.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

Any personal property such as jewellery, cash, credit cards, clothes, cars, motorbikes or bicycles etc, left on Company premises is done entirely at your own risk. You are strongly advised not to leave any valuables

unattended, either on our premises, in our vehicles or in your own vehicle. The Company does not accept liability for loss or damage to any personal property whatsoever.

ACCESS KEYS & ALARM HOLDERS

If assigned as a Key Holder, you must abide by the following terms:

- The issued key(s) will remain the property of the Company.
- The key and alarm code will be issued only for the sole use of you as the Key Holder and it must not be loaned or otherwise provided to a third party / anyone else under any circumstance.
- You are responsible for any abuse or damage caused by your key.
- The site must always be left secure when you leave the site.
- The key(s) must be returned when you cease to be entitled to hold them.
- No copies of the key(s) are to be made under any circumstance.
- The Company reserves the right to withdraw the key(s) from you without reason at any time.

MOBILE, TELEPHONE & CORRESPONDENCE

Company telephone / mobile phone or postal facilities must not be used for private purposes without prior permission from your manager. If, for any reason, personal use is made of these items then arrangements must be made to pay the cost price of all services used. Abuse of these facilities will be considered a potential disciplinary matter.

CLEAR DESK

At the end of your working day or where you leave the office for an extended period during the day, you must tidy your desk and tidy away all work-related paperwork and files either into your desk drawer or a suitable filing cabinet, that must be locked.

EYE TEST AND DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT

Employees who are "users" of display screen equipment (DSE) under the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992, have a legal right to an eyesight test, on request. The eyesight test should be booked with an optometrist or doctor and include a vision test and an eye examination. You will need to arrange and pay for the test yourself and then the Company will reimburse you via the expenses procedure. If the test shows that glasses are required for DSE use, the Company will reimburse you for a basic pair of glasses, via the expenses procedure. A prescription certificate or letter from your optometrist or doctor confirming that your glasses are required for DSE use, will be required.

GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

The Company does not wish to interfere with customer and client relationships, but it is important that guidelines are in place when giving or receiving gifts including entertainment such as lunch or dinner.

Other than gifts of low value and which are mere tokens (such as promotional pens, calendars and stationery), employees of the Company are not permitted to accept any gifts from customers, suppliers or other third parties.

The Company recognises that there may be exceptional instances when refusing a gift will cause significant offence or embarrassment. In such instances and where practicable, any employee minded to accept a gift should first seek approval from their Manager. If it is not possible to gain prior approval, the accepting employee should inform their Manager as soon as possible after receiving the gift which must subsequently be donated to a charity of the Company's choice.

Any gifts accepted must be recorded within the "Hospitality and Gifts Register".

The same will apply to corporate hospitality, where any hospitality offered must be recorded within the same Register.

LAY OFF & SHORT TIME WORKING

The Company reserves the right to instigate periods of lay-off. A lay-off happens where the Company cannot provide you with work on a temporary basis, but we see this as a short-term measure only. We will not seek to terminate your employment in these circumstances.

The Company also reserves the right to instigate periods of short time working. Short time working may happen when the Company needs to temporarily lay you off for a number of days a week whilst maintaining the same rate of pay per hour for the time you are working.

During lay-off or short-time working you will be entitled to a statutory guarantee payment, limited to a maximum of 5 days in any period of 3 months, set annually by the Government.

TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

Your contract of employment will provide details of your notice period and certain obligations that you must keep to when you leave. On termination of your employment you must immediately return to the Company, in accordance with any instructions which may be given to you and within your contract of employment, all items of property belonging to the Company in your possession or under your control.

During your notice period your Manager may nominate dates on which you must take some or all, of your outstanding statutory annual holiday entitlement (if applicable), provided that advance notice is given to you.

Normally during your notice period, you would continue coming into work, however the Company reserves the right to assign you to any other duties or to place you on garden leave. During such periods you will continue to receive your basic pay and other contractual benefits due to you.

The Company reserves the right to make a payment in lieu of notice.

SECTION 2 - POLICIES & PROCEDURES

DISCIPLINARY POLICY & PROCEDURE

Foreword

The Company requires good standards of conduct, attendance and performance, and this Policy is to ensure that any concerns over an employee's conduct or performance is handled in a fair, consistent and timely manner, with the intention of bringing about an improvement. It is intended to encourage an improvement using discussion, advice and positive action.

Prior to commencing the disciplinary procedure, if your Manager is concerned about your conduct, attendance or performance they will try to resolve this with you at the earliest opportunity by having an informal conversation with you, rather than allowing the situation to escalate.

As part of this conversation your Manager will raise their concerns with you and discuss your understanding of the Company policies and procedures, ask you to explain the reason you are not meeting the required standards and whether any additional support, training and/or coaching is required to ensure that you are able to meet the required level of expectations. Timescales in which to improve may be set.

General Principles

- The Company reserves the right not to utilise this disciplinary procedure where you have less than 2 years' service
- The procedure may be implemented at any stage if the alleged misconduct warrants such action
- No disciplinary action will be taken until the case has been fully investigated
- Dismissal for a first breach of discipline can only happen in the case of gross misconduct where the penalty will be summary dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice
- You will have the right of appeal against any disciplinary penalty imposed
- Where time limits are referred to in the course of this procedure, they may be varied by agreement between you and the Company

Conduct Issues

Investigation

The Company is required to promptly and thoroughly investigate any matter that is reasonably suspected or believed to contravene the Company's policies or procedures. The investigation is a fact-finding exercise to collect relevant information on an issue and to consider whether there is a case to answer to.

Should you be subject to an investigation you will be informed of this fact as soon as possible. While an investigation will be completed as quickly as possible, it always needs to be thorough and fair, and some investigations may take longer depending on the case and how many people need to give information.

You may be required to attend an investigation meeting which will normally take place without notice, however in some circumstances you may be provided with notice. If such a meeting is held you will be informed at the outset that the meeting is an investigatory one and you will be provided with the details. The Company reserves the right to dispense with an investigatory meeting and to proceed directly to a formal disciplinary hearing.

The Company may allow you to be accompanied at the investigation meeting by a work colleague however, if you do choose to be accompanied, your companion must be available at that time and must not delay the process.

Once the investigation is complete, and depending on the outcome of the investigation, the Company will decide whether or not to proceed with the disciplinary proceedings. If it is found that there is no case to answer to, you will be informed of this fact and no further action will be taken.

Suspension

The Company reserves the right to suspend you from work whilst a disciplinary offence is being investigated. The purpose of suspension is for when it is necessary to remove an employee from the workplace, i.e. to allow time for a 'cooling off period' for both parties, for the protection of an employee or another person, to prevent an employee influencing or being influenced by others or to prevent possible interference with evidence. This would only be for the time that an investigation is taking place. Suspension is not a disciplinary sanction, nor does it mean that the outcome has been decided.

When suspended you will receive written confirmation of suspension and you will regularly be updated during this time. During any suspension from work, you'll receive your normal pay and contractual benefits, but you must not contact any colleagues unless without authorisation from your Manager first, nor contact customers or suppliers, nor attend business premises or access any company's email systems.

If during your suspension you fail to attend an investigation meeting without good reason, the Company may decide to carry on with the investigation without your input. Or if you fail to attend without making contact to explain your absence, the absence will be treated as unauthorised and therefore unpaid until you provide a satisfactory explanation.

The Disciplinary Hearing

If it is decided that there is a disciplinary case to answer to, the Company will write to you, giving you a minimum of 48 hours' notice and advising you of your right to be accompanied to the hearing. Your chosen companion may be a work colleague, trade union official or a trade union representative (who has been certified by their union as being competent to accompany a worker). Your companion can comment and ask questions during the meetings, but they may not answer any questions on your behalf. They can talk with you during the meeting, ask for an adjournment on your behalf and take notes on your behalf.

The Company may require you to choose someone else in circumstances where it believes the chosen companion may have a conflict of interest or may prejudice the meeting or it would be unreasonable to allow your chosen companion to attend.

If you or your chosen companion are unable to attend the disciplinary hearing you must contact the disciplinary Manager who has been assigned to chair the hearing before it takes place, to advise them of this and your reasons why you are unable to attend. You should suggest an alternative date for the rescheduled hearing to take place, but this should be no more than 5 working days after the original date scheduled for the hearing. You will then be provided with one further opportunity to attend the hearing and if you are unable to attend again, a decision may be made in your absence. If your chosen companion cannot attend the rescheduled hearing, you should find an alternative person to accompany you as we will not normally re-schedule the meeting beyond 5 working days.

There will also be an official note taker present at the hearing.

During the hearing you will be given the opportunity to state your case, seek further explanation of the allegations and challenge any evidence. You may also state any mitigating circumstances you wish to be taken into account.

Should new evidence be brought to light after the disciplinary letter has been issued to you then the disciplinary Manager will provide such details to you as soon as possible. If it is deemed as minor evidence by the disciplinary Manager then they have the right to use it within the disciplinary hearing, provided that sufficient time has been given to you and your work colleague / trade union official to review prior to the hearing. If it is deemed as serious evidence, then the disciplinary Manager may postpone the hearing in order to provide you with enough time to review the evidence.

There may be times when the disciplinary Manager will need to adjourn the meeting, i.e. to speak to additional witnesses or investigate a point further. If this is the case the hearing will be adjourned and you will be invited to

attend a re-convened hearing at a new date and time, or you will be written to confirming the outcome of the disciplinary hearing. In most cases you will be provided with the outcome at the end of the hearing and this will then be followed by a letter, usually within 5 working days.

Disciplinary Sanctions for Conduct Issues

There are three levels of disciplinary sanctions:

- First written warning - If the issue is more serious or if a further issue arises, a written warning may be appropriate. The warning will be confirmed to you in writing and will set out the nature of the issue, the action required to improve and what will happen if there is no improvement. This warning will remain on your personnel file for 12 months, or such longer period as may then be specified in the warning letter. If no further offence has occurred within this 12-month period, the warning will be disregarded.
- Final written warning - If the issue being considered is exceptionally serious, or if your conduct remains unsatisfactory after previous warnings, or a further offence occurs, a final written warning may be issued. The warning will be confirmed to you in writing with the same content as with a first written warning. It will also state that any further incidences of misconduct may result in your dismissal. This final written warning will remain on your personnel file for 12 months. If no further offence has occurred within this 12-month period, the warning will be disregarded.
- Dismissal - Dismissal may occur in a number of circumstances, those are being guilty of an act of gross misconduct, or if you have previously been issued with warnings and a further incident occurs which we consider to have a cumulative effect which justifies dismissal. The disciplinary decision will be confirmed to you in writing.

Gross Misconduct

If it is established that you have committed an act of gross misconduct, you will normally be dismissed without notice. Any decision to dismiss will only be taken after a full investigation and a properly conducted disciplinary hearing. You will have the right of appeal to any decision. Examples of gross misconduct are:

- Theft and unauthorised possession of any property belonging to the company, client or any employee
- Deliberate falsification of records or any other form of dishonesty
- Wilfully causing harm or injury to another employee or other person on the premises
- Performing an action that is likely to cause injury to other people or damage to company property
- Gross insubordination, for example, wilful refusal to obey a reasonable instruction
- Intoxication by reason of drink or drugs
- Possession or administration of drugs or alcohol on the company's premises
- Discrimination or harassment of any kind
- Unacceptable, abusive or violent behaviour towards company employees, customers, clients or other persons who have contact with the company
- Any act, conduct or omission, which the company considers being in breach of the company contract or which brings the company into disrepute
- Breach of health and safety issues
- Sending, receiving, downloading, displaying or disseminating material that discriminates against, degrades, insults, causes offence to or harasses others
- Accessing pornographic or other inappropriate or unlawful materials
- Downloading or disseminating copyright materials
- The covert recording of any company meetings or proceedings, including disciplinary and grievance hearings and appeals
- Issuing false or defamatory statements about any person or organisation via our computer systems
- Any comment on a social media site which brings our name into disrepute or is false or defamatory in any way

- Unauthorised sharing of confidential information about the company or any person or organisation connected to us
- Loading or running unauthorised games or software on our systems
- Disqualification from driving, when driving is a requirement of your role
- Serious intentional or irresponsible damage to the employers' property
- Serious breach of employer rules

This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

Special Cases

An employee being charged or convicted with a criminal offence is not in itself a reason for disciplinary action. The Company will consider whether the offence or alleged offence is one that makes the employee unsuitable for their type of work. In such circumstances the Company will establish the facts of the case and consider whether the facts warrant starting the disciplinary procedure. Similarly, an employee cannot be dismissed solely because they were absent from work as a result of being remanded in custody.

Right of Appeal

If you disagree and are unhappy with a disciplinary decision, you may appeal. If you wish to appeal, then you must do so in writing to the next level up to the person that heard the disciplinary. This must be done within 5 working days of the decision and in accordance with the process as set out in your decision letter. Your appeal should clearly state the reasons why you wish to challenge the decision and you should provide as much detail as possible, including your desired outcome. You can appeal on the following grounds:

- The disciplinary Manager's findings and level of disciplinary action being taken
- A procedural concern which may have affected the decision

You retain your right to be accompanied at the appeal hearing by either a work colleague, trade union official or a trade union representative (who has been certified by their union as being competent to accompany a worker).

Arrangements to hear the appeal will normally be made without reasonable delay and where possible within 7 working days of the receipt of your written appeal. Where this is not possible, the hearing will be scheduled as soon as possible thereafter. An appropriate Manager who has not previously been involved in the investigation or disciplinary process will conduct the appeal hearing and an independent note taker will also be present.

Following this appeal hearing, the decision can either be taken to uphold, decrease or remove the original disciplinary sanction (the sanction given at the disciplinary hearing cannot be increased by the appeal Manager) and you will be provided with this outcome in writing as soon as is reasonably practicable.

The appeal is the final stage of the process and once this has been completed there will be no further right for review.

Capability Issues

Capability refers to an employee's skills, aptitude, ability and knowledge in relation to the job that they are employed to do. Lack of capability will normally lead to unsatisfactory performance and it is therefore important to ensure that any capability issues are identified and rectified quickly.

Capability is different to misconduct. Capability is not a deliberate failure to perform, poor attitude, or failure to meet standards as a result of carelessness, negligence or idleness; these matters are of misconduct. Capability instead refers to situations where an employee is genuinely trying to perform to the required standard but is not able to do so.

Formal Process

If it is found that the informal approach is not successful as improvements have not been sufficient enough nor sustained, we would manage your performance through a series of formal capability review meetings, with the aim of supporting and helping you to improve your performance. If you are required to attend a capability review meeting to discuss your performance, you will be advised of this in writing and you will be provided with a reasonable amount of notice to attend. You must make every effort to attend the review meeting and failure to attend on 2 occasions or more without notice of a justifiable reason may result in the meeting still going ahead in your absence.

You will be provided with any relevant documentation that will be referred to within the review meeting, such as 1-2-1 meeting documents, informal conversation documents, performance improvement plans and any other documentation relevant to your performance.

Stages for Capability Issues

There are 3 stages to the formal capability review process:

- **First Capability Review Meeting** - During this meeting your Manager will review your progress against previous actions that have been discussed with you during the informal stage. You would both agree and document what actions and/or objectives must be met in order to achieve improved performance. These actions will then be documented using a performance improvement plan detailing how and when you are to achieve these improvements. You will also discuss what training, support or development is required, and by whom and when. A date for the 'follow up capability review meeting' will also be agreed so you understand the timescales of when the improvement needs to be achieved by.
- **Follow Up Capability Review Meeting** - A 'follow up capability review meeting' will always be arranged to discuss the actions set at the 'first capability review meeting' and to understand if any further support is required. If it is identified that your performance has improved, your Manager will agree further review timescales with you so as to help and support you in ensuring that the improvements are sustained. During this period, the performance improvement plan will continue to be used so continued improvement can be documented and a review period can be agreed. If at the end of that review period your performance has been maintained, there will be no further requirement to continue with the performance improvement plan. However, should there be a decline in the agreed standards of performance, the capability process will continue from this stage.

If during the 'follow up capability review meeting' it is identified that there has been little or no improvement in your performance, and all training requirements have been implemented, your Manager will proceed to the next stage of the capability process and arrange for a 'final capability review meeting' to take place.

- **Final Capability Review Meeting** - If during the 'final capability review meeting' it is identified that your performance has improved, your Manager will agree further review timescales with you so as to help and support you in ensuring that the improvements are sustained. The performance improvement plan will continue to be used during this period so improvement can be documented, and a review period can be agreed. If at the end of the review period your performance has been maintained, there will be no further requirement to complete the performance improvement plan. However, should there be a decline in the agreed standards of performance the capability process will continue from this stage.

If, however it becomes clear that there continues to be little or no improvement in performance, your Manager will need to consider the possible outcomes of this meeting. The possible outcomes of a 'final capability review meeting' are:

- Redeployment (where a suitable vacancy exists and is acceptable to you)
- Demotion (where a suitable vacancy exists and is acceptable to you)
- Dismissal (with notice) where there is not another available role or where you have rejected redeployment or demotion

In most cases you will be provided with the outcome at the end of the meeting and this will then be followed by a letter confirming this, usually within 5 working days. If the Manager needs to carry out further reviews relating to your performance, or you have provided your Manager with further information they need to consider prior to making a decision, your Manager will arrange for you to attend a rescheduled 'final capability review meeting'.

At the 'final capability review meeting' you have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague, trade union official or a trade union representative (who has been certified by their union as being competent to accompany a worker) and you must advise who your companion is prior to the meeting taking place. Your companion can comment and ask questions during the meeting, but they may not answer any questions on your behalf. They can talk with you during the meeting, ask for an adjournment on your behalf and take notes on your behalf. There will also be an official note taker present at the meeting.

If you or your chosen companion are unable to attend the 'final capability review meeting' you must contact your Manager before the meeting takes place to advise them of this and your reasons why you are unable to attend. You should suggest an alternative date for the rescheduled meeting to take place, but this should be no more than 5 working days after the original date scheduled for the meeting. You will then be provided with one further opportunity to attend the meeting and if you are unable to attend again, a decision may be made in your absence. If your chosen companion cannot attend the rescheduled meeting, you should find an alternative person to accompany you as we will not normally re-schedule the meeting beyond 5 working days.

If you are unable to attend a capability meeting due to ill health, consideration will be given to making reasonable adjustments, such as holding the meeting at a different location or allowing you to make written representations.

Suspension

The Company reserves the right to suspend you from work at any time during the capability procedure. This is when the Company may consider the issue to be a serious neglect of duty, or where the employee's continued presence could put the Company, themselves or others in jeopardy. Suspension is not a sanction, nor does it mean that the outcome has been decided.

When suspended you will receive written confirmation of suspension and you will regularly be updated during this time. During any suspension from work, you'll receive your normal pay and contractual benefits, but you must not contact any colleagues without authorisation from your Manager first, customers or suppliers, nor must you attend business premises or access any company's email systems.

Right of Appeal

If you wish to appeal the findings or any action taken at the 'final capability review meeting' you can do so by writing to the next level up to the person that held the review. The appeal must be made in writing, within 5 working days of the decision and you can appeal on the following grounds:

- The Manager's findings and level of action taken
- A procedural concern which may have affected the decision

Your appeal should clearly state the reasons why you wish to challenge the decision and you should provide as much detail as possible, including your desired outcome.

Where possible, in most cases the appeal will be heard within 7 days, but if this is not possible you will be advised.

An appropriate Manager who has not previously been involved in the capability process will conduct the appeal hearing and an independent note taker will also be present. You will also have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague, trade union official or a trade union representative (who has been certified by their union as being competent to accompany a worker).

Following this appeal hearing, the decision can either be taken to uphold the original decision or remove the original decision and provide you with further opportunity to improve your performance. You will be provided with this outcome in writing within [5] working days of the appeal meeting.

The appeal is the final stage of the process and once this has been completed there will be no further right for review.

Raising a Grievance During a Conduct or Capability Procedure

If you wish to raise a grievance whilst you are going through either procedure, you should raise this with your Manager in the first instance or if this is not possible or appropriate, with their Manager. Depending upon what your grievance is related to, they will confirm whether it should be dealt with as part of or separate to the ongoing procedure. Either procedure will not normally be delayed as a result of a grievance being received.

Resignation During a Conduct or Capability Procedure

Should you wish to resign, you should put this in writing to your Manager stating the reasons for your resignation. If it is believed that you have acted hastily, we may discuss this with you to allow you the opportunity to reconsider your decision. During your notice period any review meeting or disciplinary hearing that you were invited to, would still go ahead, if this was due to take place before your leave date.

Normally you would be required to work your full contractual notice period, unless otherwise agreed by your Manager.

Confidentiality

The Company shall process personal data collected during this procedure in accordance with its General Data Protection Policy. Data collected will be held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes of completing the capability or conduct procedure.

GRIEVANCE POLICY & PROCEDURE

Foreword

This Policy is intended to ensure that any problem, complaint or concern raised by an employee is dealt with in a fair, timely and consistent manner. A grievance can be an issue or problem that's affecting an employee at work, this could include an organisational change, working conditions, pay and benefits, discrimination, treatment by colleagues, concerns relating to health and safety, a breach of statutory employment rights or any other issue affecting an individual's employment.

Informal Grievance Procedure

Where possible, you should always try to resolve any grievance or complaint with your Manager on an informal basis first. Your Manager will discuss any concerns with you and attempt to resolve the matter within a reasonable timescale. Where it is not possible for you to talk to your immediate Manager, or if the grievance concerns them, you should instead talk to the next most senior person.

If the grievance has not been resolved or cannot be settled informally, the matter should be dealt with in accordance with the formal grievance procedure.

There will be times however when the nature of what is raised will need to be addressed more formally straight away. This will be discussed with you first.

Formal Grievance Procedure

If the grievance has failed to be resolved through the informal route, you must submit a written statement detailing the nature of the grievance to your Manager, making it clear that it is a formal grievance. The statement must include what happened, what you see the outcome to be, any key dates and times, names of any key witnesses and any other information to support the formal grievance. Where it is the Manager who is the subject of the grievance, you should instead submit your statement into the next most senior person.

Upon receiving the statement, a formal meeting will be arranged with you in order to discuss the grievance. The formal meeting will be held without unreasonable delay and usually no longer than 5 working days after the statement of grievance is received.

You have the right to be accompanied at the grievance meeting by a work colleague, trade union official or a trade union representative (who has been certified by their union as being competent to accompany a worker) and in advance of the meeting you must advise the Manager that will be hearing your grievance as to who your companion will be. Your companion can comment and ask questions during the meeting, but they may not answer any questions on your behalf. They can talk with you during the meeting, ask for an adjournment on your behalf and take notes on your behalf. There will also be an official note taker present at the meeting.

If you or your chosen companion are not able to attend, you can ask for the meeting to be postponed by up to 5 working days. If your chosen companion isn't able to attend the revised date, you will need to find an alternative companion who can accompany you.

The meeting will be held by a grievance Manager who will be impartial, with no previous involvement in the case. You'll be given the opportunity to put forward your grievance and outline why it was submitted and the grievance Manager will ask you questions on any aspects of your grievance where they need further clarification. The grievance Manager will consider any explanations that you put forward and talk through each of the points which you have outlined in your grievance.

If possible, you should explain how you think the grievance could be resolved.

The meeting will always be adjourned so consideration can be made with regard to all points raised. In most cases the grievance Manager will need to investigate your grievance further and will provide you with time scales for its completion, which would normally be for no longer than 5 working days. If, however an extension is required, the grievance Manager will write to you to advise you of this. Once the full investigation is complete the grievance Manager will write to you confirming the outcome of the hearing, and any action they intend to take to resolve the grievance (if appropriate). There are three potential outcomes to a grievance raised and those are; uphold, partially uphold and not uphold.

The grievance Manager will inform you of your right to appeal if you are not satisfied with the action taken. Any action taken shall be monitored and reviewed, as appropriate, to ensure it effectively deals with the issue.

In addition to the three outcomes, a recommendation may be made for mediation to take place, where both parties are happy to get together and discuss the concerns to help build positive working relationships, especially between colleagues where communication has broken down.

All grievances are taken seriously, and you will not suffer any detriment if you raised the grievance in good faith, even if your grievance isn't upheld. If, however the Company finds that a complaint has been raised to deliberately harm somebody (or the Company) and be of a malicious nature, then action under the Company's Disciplinary Policy & Procedure may be taken.

Appeal

If you don't agree with some or all of the findings, you can appeal against the grievance Manager's decision. You should submit your appeal in writing within 5 working days of receiving your grievance outcome letter (details of where to send your appeal will be detailed within the letter). When writing the letter make sure you are clear as to the reasons for your appeal, provide any additional evidence you may wish to add, any details of additional witnesses you may wish to include and what outcome you are seeking. This will help the appeal Manager review your case.

An appropriate Manager who has not previously been involved in the grievance process will conduct the appeal hearing without unreasonable delay and usually no longer than 5 working days after the appeal is received. An independent note taker will also be present, and you can be accompanied by a work colleague, trade union official or a trade union representative (who has been certified by their union as being competent to accompany a worker).

Following the appeal hearing, the appeal Manager will conduct further investigations and will confirm their decision to you in writing within 5 working days of the appeal hearing. If, however an extension is required, the grievance Manager will write to you to advise you of this. As this is the final stage of the grievance procedure, their decision will be final with no further right for review.

Can A Grievance Be Raised After Employment With the Company

If an ex-employee wishes to raise a complaint, we will treat this on a case by case basis depending upon the nature of the complaint.

Confidentiality

Grievances will be handled with as high a degree of confidentiality as is practicable. Confidential records of the grievance will be kept in the employee's personnel file in accordance with our General Data Protection Policy. 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.

SICKNESS ABSENCE POLICY & PROCEDURE

Foreword

The Company recognises the importance of ensuring that an employee who is genuinely unwell will be supported and treated fairly and consistently. However, we do have to ensure that any sickness absence taken by an employee impacts as little as possible on the business.

This Policy sets out procedures for both short and long-term absence. Short Term Absence is defined as any absence that is less than 4 weeks. Long Term Absence is defined as any absence that is more than 4 weeks.

The Reporting of Sickness Absence

On the first day of any absence from work caused by sickness or injury you must inform your Manager or other nominated member of staff. This contact should be made by telephone prior to your start time. Unless otherwise agreed you must not email or text. Calls made on your behalf i.e. from a partner or family member etc, will not be accepted unless in exceptional circumstances.

During the call you must indicate the reason for your absence, its likely duration and when the illness started. You should also provide a contact number so that your Manager is able to contact you, if required.

You should continue to make regular daily verbal contact with your Manager during your sickness absence unless it has been agreed otherwise between you and your Manager, or a Statement of Fitness For Work ('fit note') has been received from you. If a fit note has been received, then you should agree with your Manager on how regular the contact needs to be.

For the first 7 calendar days of your absence (including weekends and rest days), you do not need to obtain a fit note from your GP. When you return to work (if you return to work within 7 days) you will be required to complete a Self-Certification Form and attend a 'return to work' discussion. The only time you may be asked to obtain a fit note from your GP when absent for less than 7 days, is if during a pre-booked holiday you fall ill and you wish to transfer those holidays into sickness absence days.

If the period of absence goes beyond 7 days (this includes weekends and rest days), then you must obtain a fit note from your GP and forward this to your Manager without any delay. Your GP will make two recommendations on the fit note:

- Not fit for work
- Maybe fit for work taking into account a possible phased return to work, adjusted hours, amended duties and / or workplace adaptations

Should your fit note state 'not fit for work' then you must not return to work prior to the end date stated on the fit note. Should your fit note state that your GP would need to reassess your fitness for work at the end date, then you must not return to work until a final fit note has been issued by your GP that states you are 'fit to work'.

If the fit note states you may be fit for work taking into account a GP's recommendations, you must discuss these recommendations with your Manager so a review can take place. This would form part of your return to work discussion where we would discuss any recommendations by your GP to see if it's possible to accommodate those, and also agree on any further review meetings that may be necessary.

If the recommendations cannot be accommodated, then you would remain off work until your current fit note expires.

If you are admitted to Hospital a Medical Certificate must be submitted for both entry and discharge.

Please note that if you fail to provide a fit note for any absence from work that is 8 or more calendar days, your absence will be treated as unauthorised and may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Statutory Sick Pay

If absent from work, the Company will pay statutory sick pay (SSP) in accordance with current employment legislation. The first 3 days are known as “waiting days” for the purposes of Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). For the latest rates on SSP go to - <https://www.gov.uk/employers-sick-pay/entitlement>. SSP is payable for up to 28 weeks.

You may not be entitled to statutory sick pay in some circumstances, for instance if you have exhausted your entitlement, are receiving statutory maternity pay, are in the 4 week period before your baby is due, are in custody on the first day of illness, or you have received ESA (Employment Support Allowance) in the 12 weeks prior to commencing employment.

Only during any long-term sickness absence (4 weeks or more), can a request be made to take holiday entitlement that has been accrued.

Unauthorised Absence

If you fail to attend work and do not make contact with your Manager as per the above guidelines, then your Manager will try to get in contact either by calling you direct, contacting your emergency contact or visiting you at your home. Unauthorised absence may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Medical Reports

It may be necessary for us to obtain a medical report at any time during your employment to allow us to understand and assess any medical condition you might be suffering from. You have the right to withhold your consent to us obtaining a medical report, but bear in mind that if you do, we may have to assess your state of health and its impact on your continuing employment without the benefit of the information in that report.

We may also require you to undergo a medical examination by a doctor nominated by us. Again, if you refuse to undergo a medical examination without good reason, then that may be regarded as a failure to follow a reasonable management instruction and may therefore be subject to disciplinary action being taken.

In reasonable circumstances the Company can refuse to allow an employee to return to work until they have seen a consultant nominated by the Company, regardless of whether you have been signed as fit to return back to work by your GP.

Any information obtained will be used in order to understand the impact of any medical conditions on your ability to attend work and/or perform your role. This information will allow us to make sure you are receiving the right level of support from the Company, including whether we are required to make any adjustments as a result of any medical condition/s.

Frequent Short-Term Absence

Persistent absenteeism has a detrimental impact on your colleagues and on the Company. As such your Manager will monitor attendance levels on a regular basis. Please note that it’s not the genuineness of absence that is being reviewed but the amount of absences that have been incurred. If we believe your level of absence is unacceptable then you may be subject to absence management proceedings. These proceedings will mirror the Company’s Disciplinary Policy & Procedure to ensure clarity, openness and fairness.

In order to assess whether absence levels are excessive and unacceptable, your Manager will use the trigger point of 3 or more separate periods of absence within any 3 month rolling period. If you meet this trigger, then your absence levels will be investigated by your Manager where disciplinary action may be taken.

Please note that if you work part time, the trigger points will be pro-rated depending on the number of hours you are contracted to work.

From Short Term to Long Term Absence

Sickness absence of 4 weeks or more usually occur for example when you have a serious illness, medical condition or when you have undergone a surgical operation that means you need time to recuperate. This can be caused by either a single lengthy absence or many absences.

Long-Term Absence

An absence review meeting (Stage 1) will usually take place when you have been absent from work for 4 weeks or more. This is not only for your Manager to gain an understanding of how you are progressing but to also identify what support you may need and how we can facilitate a return to work in some capacity. During the meeting the following would be discussed:

- Understand how you are and discuss any medical advice that has already been received to date
- Discuss when you can return to work and agree a return to work action plan (if applicable)
- Ensure you understand the relevant policies and procedures relating to your absence
- Discuss obtaining your consent relating to obtaining further medical advice
- Provide you with any business updates
- Discuss any concerns that you may have regarding your absence
- Discuss additional support that can be offered

Following the Stage 1 absence review meeting, if it has not been possible to discuss and/or agree a possible return to work date, the next stage would be for your Manager to hold a further Stage 2 absence review meeting, which would be a further meeting to review the actions set following Stage 1. If at that stage a return to work date cannot be agreed in some capacity, a final Stage 3 absence review meeting would take place.

Prior to each meeting you will be contacted either by your Manager to agree a suitable date, time and venue. You will then be written to confirming the details of the absence review meeting and provided with any supporting documents that will be used as part of the meeting such as notes taken from any absence reviews / return to work discussions etc.

If you do not respond to efforts made to contact you, or you do not co-operate with attempts to agree a date, time and venue then your Manager will be entitled to set a time and place for the meeting without your agreement.

You must make reasonable steps to attend any meetings or discussions and if you fail to repeatedly attend without notice or good reason, the meetings may go ahead without you. You should also ensure that you inform your Manager of any support / adjustments that you may require that would enable you to participate in the meeting.

Right to be Accompanied

If a return to work date is unable to be reached and you are invited to attend a final Stage 3 absence review meeting, you have the right to be accompanied at this meeting by a work colleague, trade union official or a trade union representative (who has been certified by their union as being competent to accompany a worker) and you must advise your Manager in advance of the meeting as to who your companion will be.

Your companion can ask questions during the meeting, but they may not answer any questions on your behalf. They can talk with you during the meeting, ask for an adjournment on your behalf and take notes on your behalf. There will also be an official note taker present at the meeting.

If you or your chosen companion are unable to attend the meeting you must notify your Manager before the meeting takes place to advise them of this and your reasons why you are unable to attend. Any requests to reschedule the meeting should include a list of suitable times and dates where you both can attend within 5 working days of the original scheduled meeting.

What to Expect During Review Meetings

During each review meeting your Manager will review any supporting medical evidence available. This would include any medical reports that have been obtained. Alternatively, if consent to a medical examination by a medical practitioner or consultant, nominated by the Company has not already been provided, your Manager may discuss this with you further.

Your Manager will encourage an open and honest discussion with you, in order to understand what may be causing your continued absence from work and will also agree a date for any further review meetings.

If it is identified that you're able to agree arrangements for a return to work, your Manager will agree further review timescales with you. The purpose of this is to support you in ensuring that the return to work is sustained and that the appropriate adjustments are in place to support with this.

Phased Return to Work / Action Plan

When a medical assessment or an up to date fit note is received, which confirms you are fit to return to work, your Manager will work with you to agree an action plan to facilitate your return, which may include:

- Refresher training course (training in relation to your role)
- Additional training courses that you feel would help your return to work
- Any additional support you may require
- Any reasonable adjustments to your working environment that can be made
- Health and safety assessments (if applicable)

Depending upon the nature of your illness and the medical advice given, if an immediate return to work is not achievable, we can (where reasonable) offer you a phased return to work. You must however fully return to work within a maximum of 3 months of your return to work date. During your phased return to work you will be paid for the actual hours that you work.

If your medical condition is such that you may not be able to return to your normal duties and/or your condition qualifies as a disability, we will consider whether there are any 'reasonable adjustments' that can be made to support your return to work.

Upon your return to work, a return to work meeting will be held, and your Manager will document what has been discussed and any next steps.

If following your return to work, your attendance declines, the process would continue from whatever Stage was reached as part of your review meetings.

Termination of Employment on Grounds of Ill Health

If it becomes clear that a return to work cannot be agreed, taking into account any supporting evidence obtained, your Manager will consider the following options before making a decision on your employment, (Stage 3) review meeting:

- Redeployment (where a suitable vacancy exists that is acceptable to you)
- Demotion (where a suitable vacancy exists and is acceptable to you)
- Dismissal (with notice) where there is not another available role or where you have rejected redeployment or demotion

A letter confirming the outcome of the final Stage 3 meeting would be sent to you which will also provide details on your right to appeal. You can appeal the outcome by writing to the next level up to the person that held the final absence review meeting. The appeal must be made in writing, within 5 days of the decision. Your appeal should clearly state the reasons why you wish to challenge the decision and you should provide as much detail as possible, including your desired outcome.

Where possible, in most cases the appeal will be heard within 14 days, but if this is not possible you will be advised.

An appropriate Manager who has not previously been involved in the process will conduct the appeal meeting and an independent note taker will also be present. You will also have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague, trade union official or a trade union representative (who has been certified by their union as being competent to accompany a worker).

Prohibited Activities During Your Short or Long-Term Absence

During your absence the Company does not permit you to:

- Participate in any sports, hobbies or social functions or any other activities, attend and participate in religious or other meetings if these activities could aggravate the illness or injury or which could delay recovery. The exception to this rule would be where your GP has prescribed exercise for you or where you have been granted prior written permission by your Manager to attend a meeting during sick leave.
- Undertake any other employment whether paid or unpaid.
- Engage in any work around the home or for a friend / third party in terms of home improvements, working on a car, etc.
- Engage in any activity which is inconsistent with the nature of your alleged illness or injuries.
- Go on holiday whether pre-booked or ad hoc during any period of sick leave except where this is authorised in writing by your GP as convalescent leave after an operation or with the prior consent of your Manager.

Please be aware that this list is not exhaustive but merely shows examples of the kind of activities which the Company draws your attention to.

Disability

We will always account for any disability in the application of this Policy. Where necessary, we will carry out any necessary assessments to see if there are any reasonable adjustments that could be made to your job or other aspects of your working arrangements to minimise absenteeism or to assist with your return to work.

Medical Suspension

If we are concerned about your health and safety at work, or that the health and safety of others is being affected by your physical and/or mental health, you may be suspended on medical grounds pending further investigation to establish that you are fit to work. You will receive full pay during the period of your suspension.

ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY

Foreword

The Company recognises that an employee may sometimes experience problems travelling to and from work during periods of severe weather conditions or major disruptions to public transport e.g. train strikes or major incidents affecting travel or public safety.

Whilst the Company is committed to protecting the health and safety of all its employees and recognise that a flexible approach to work arrangements may be necessary during such times, we must also ensure that the business and our clients are not unduly disrupted by external factors. Therefore, the purpose of this Policy is to clarify the responsibilities of every employee in respect of attendance at work during severe weather or when there are disruptions to public transport.

Reporting for Work

In the event of adverse weather and travel disruption you should make every effort to report for work at your normal start time. This may include leaving extra time for your journey and/or taking an alternative route to work. Travel on foot or by bicycle should also be considered where appropriate and safe.

If you are unable to attend work on time or at all, you should telephone your Manager as soon as possible and before your normal start time on each affected day. If you are unable to attend work initially, you should check the situation throughout the day in case it improves. If conditions improve sufficiently, you should report this and attend work unless told otherwise.

Employees should take steps to obtain advice on the position from the appropriate external agencies e.g. the Police, public transport information services, the internet etc.

If you do not make reasonable effort to attend work or fail to make contact without good reason, you may be subject to disciplinary action being taken for unauthorised absence. We will consider all the circumstances to include the distance you had to travel, local conditions in your area, the status of roads and/or public transport and the efforts made by other employees in similar circumstances.

If you are absent from work because of extreme weather conditions or other travel disruption you will not generally be paid for any periods of non-attendance. You can request to take paid holidays or work additional hours at an alternative time to make up for the time you have been absent, although we cannot guarantee that the Company will agree to this.

If the Company cannot operate because of adverse weather conditions or other exceptional circumstances, we may require you to take holidays during this time or exceptionally, we may impose a period of lay-off.

Alternative Working Arrangements

You may be required to work from home or from an alternative place of work, if possible. You will be advised of any such requirement and will receive your normal pay in these circumstances. You may sometimes be expected to carry out additional or varied duties during such periods.

Leaving Work Early

If severe weather conditions or major disruptions to public transport occur during the working day, Management will decide on a case-by-case basis whether to allow an employee to leave work early. The Company will again base its decision on the circumstances of the employee, i.e distance from home to work, mode of transport, how viable it is for the employee to work from home for the rest of the day, and on the needs of the Company.

RIGHT TO SEARCH POLICY

Foreword

The Company aims to build and maintain with its employees a relationship characterised by mutual trust and respect. However, in order to protect the business, customers and employees against those that may not maintain those standards, it is important that there is a procedure in place that sets out a clear guidance on what to expect.

As referred to within your contract of employment, the Company reserves the right to carry out personal searches of employees in the workplace. These searches may form part of a random search or may be targeted to specific individuals or departments based on specific information received by the Company.

Level of Searches

The Company reserves the right to undertake searches, including:

- A physical search of the employee
- A search of all baggage (both personal and that owned by the Company)
- A search of any vehicle on the Company's property (both personal and owned by the Company)
- A search of all work areas (including but not limited to desks, lockers and cabinets, locked or otherwise)

The Company will ensure that the level of search is fair and reasonable, taking into account all of the circumstances giving rise to it.

Circumstances Where You May be Searched

Being asked to be searched does not necessarily mean that you have done anything wrong and below is a list of some examples of when the Company may carry out searches within the business:

- As part of a routine spot check
- When a random search of a department has been organised
- The area that you work in, or are visiting, has been identified as an area of belongings being lost
- Where there are known incidences or ongoing problems with unauthorised removal of company property
- Where a worker or visitor has reported a loss on our premises of any personal belongings e.g. handset, bag, purse
- If we are conducting an investigation that could constitute gross misconduct e.g. unauthorised removal of stock

Conduct of Searches

The search will be conducted by an authorised employee of the Company or an agent or contractor on behalf of the Company. Those undertaking the searches will have received training on how to conduct searches.

The request will be for an immediate search, but you can ask for a work colleague to accompany you (providing this doesn't prevent or delay the search taking place) and a senior member of staff will also be present as a witness. Where possible, we will always seek to conduct any searches away from customers or colleagues. The Company will ensure that searches are conducted sensitively and where possible will take into account your religious observance when carrying out any searches, for example if you are required to remove your headwear, we will ensure where possible that this is carried out in a private room.

If you are asked to consent to a search you will be required to complete a Stop & Search Authorisation Form.

If a search is undertaken on a random selection of employees, a fair selection process will be used.

We appreciate that there may be genuine circumstances where you have items on you which may cause suspicion but we would ask you to use your judgement and think about how you can protect yourself from this happening, as any products / data that is found on you where you have not provided an adequate explanation may be

confiscated and the incident may be reported to the Police. However, once we have established the item is yours it will be returned back to you.

A written record will be made of any searches that are undertaken.

Physical Search of the Person

A physical search will be carried out in a private room, by authorised personnel of the same sex and in the presence of a senior member of staff.

Search of Baggage, Vehicles and Work Areas

The Company reserves the right to search both its own property and the personal belongings of any employee.

Refusal to Undergo a Search

If you refuse to undergo a search, no search will take place. You will however be given a reasonable period of time to reconsider your refusal. If you maintain the refusal to undergo a search you will be required to complete a Stop & Search Authorisation Form giving details of the reasons for your refusal.

If you unreasonably refuse to undergo a search, you will be suspended on full pay and the Company will undertake a full investigation. This may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

If the Company believe that there is evidence that you have committed an illegal act, this will be reported to the Police.

Disciplinary Action Following a Search

If a search reveals evidence that you have committed an illegal act, such as theft or the possession of an illegal substance, you will be given the opportunity to explain the situation before the decision to suspend is made.

However, the Company reserves the right to suspend any employee on full pay and undertake a full investigation. This may lead to disciplinary action being taken. The Company may also report the incident to the Police.

Complaints

If you have a complaint about the way in which a search has been conducted, you can raise this informally with your Manager. If you prefer to raise a formal complaint, you should refer to the Company's Grievance Procedure.

Equal Opportunities

In line with its equal opportunities and dignity at work policies, the Company will take steps to ensure that this Policy is not used in a discriminatory manner against any employee, and that no individual is unfairly targeted.

EXPENSES POLICY & PROCEDURE

Foreword

This Policy sets out the rules on how an employee can claim for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties for the business. It's also to ensure that the employee is properly reimbursed for legitimate business expenses and to ensure that these expenses are treated appropriately for tax purposes.

Procedure

The Company 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 Company's Expense Claim Form. Expenses will not be paid, or may be returned to you, if supporting evidence or enough detail is not provided with the Expense Claim Form. This should include the reasons why the expense/s were incurred and original receipts or invoices that are dated.

When claiming for travel expenses on public transport, you should enclose or attach the tickets showing the departure point and destination of your journey. Credit and debit card statements will not be accepted.

Once completed and signed, you should submit your Expense Claim Form to the Operations Manager within 30 days of the expense being incurred. If this is not practical, written approval for any extension will be required from the Operations Manager. The Company reserves the right to withhold any payment where written approval has not been sought.

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

Travel Expenses

To claim for fuel expenditure, when using your own car for business travel, you should set out the distance in miles of the journey undertaken on your Expense Claim Form. Mileage will be paid at a rate determined by the Company and there will be no passenger allowance.

Private mileage, including home to work mileage, cannot be claimed under any circumstances.

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

Rail Expenses

Where possible, rail journeys will be booked well in advance to benefit from any discounts for early booking. Rail travel will be booked as standard class, except where advance booking allows first class travel at standard class fares or lower.

Taxis Expenses

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

- There is no other appropriate form of transport available
- Where there are several employees travelling together
- Where personal security and safety of employees is an issue

Meals and Accommodation Expenses

If you are required to undertake business travel and you incur a cost on accommodation or a meal (food and drink) you should supply or attach receipts and invoices with your Expense Claim Form for all hotel and meal expenses.

If, however 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.

Business Entertainment / Gifts Expenses

Any entertainment booked for clients, suppliers or other business contacts must be approved in advance by your Manager. You should submit:

- Details of the individuals whom you wish to invite
- The name of the Company that they represent
- The nature of the entertainment, including date and location
- The business reasons for the entertainment

The Company will approve only business entertainment proposals that demonstrate a clear business objective and that are appropriate for the nature of the business relationship. The Company 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).

Christmas Parties / Annual Event Expenses

Any team event such as a Christmas meal or celebration for a Team will be subject to your Manager's approval.

Expenses That Will Not Be Reimbursed

The Company 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
- Cash advances or withdrawals from an ATM machine

False Claims

If the Company considers that any expenditure claimed was not legitimately incurred on behalf of the Company, it may request further details from you. The Company will thoroughly investigate and check any expense claim as it sees fit. 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 Company's Expenses Policy & Procedure will not be tolerated, and the Company will take disciplinary action where appropriate.

COMMUNICATIONS, EMAIL, INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Internet Use

The Company provides access to the internet for the sole purpose of business and to assist you in the performance of your duties.

The Company recognises that you may need to use the internet for personal purposes and such use is permitted provided that it is reasonable, during break times and does not interfere with the performance of your duties. You may be asked to justify the amount of time you have spent on the internet or the sites you have visited.

Users of the internet should be aware of the following guidelines:

- You must not use the internet to gain or attempt to gain unauthorised access to computer material or private databases, including restricted areas of the Company's network.
- You must not intentionally or recklessly introduce any form of malware, spyware, virus, or other malicious software to the communications equipment or systems of the Company.
- You must not access or attempt to access any information which they know or reasonably ought to know is confidential or restricted.
- You must not download or install any software without the express permission of your Manager.
- You must not download, view or pass on any offensive imagery by email or internet. Whilst it is difficult to define what constitutes offensive imagery, broadly speaking it includes but is not limited to content that relates to sex, race, nationality, sexual orientation, age, religion, belief, disability, all of which can promote harassment, discrimination or illegal activity.

Social Media Use

For the purposes of this Policy, types of social network and social media platforms include but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Pinterest, Tumblr, Instagram, YouTube.

You are not permitted to access social media sites from the Company's computers or devices at any time, unless it is for the requirements of your role. However, the Company recognises that you may want to use the internet for personal purposes and such use is permitted provided it is only from your own laptop or handheld device, is reasonable, is during break times and does not interfere with the performance of your duties.

Users of social media should be aware of the following guidelines:

- Unless specifically instructed to do so, you should make it clear that they are posting on social media as yourself, not as the Company, and that all opinions and ideas expressed on social media are that of you and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Company.
- You are forbidden from making statements or posting messages which, in the Company's view, are detrimental to the Company or likely to bring it into disrepute.
- Any communications that you make in a personal capacity must not breach confidentiality or copyright and must not include logos of the Company.
- You must not do anything that could be considered as discriminatory, bullying, harassing and offensive to other employees.
- If on posting, contributing or creating any content which identifies or could identify you as an employee, contractor, or worker of the Company, or in which you discuss your work or experiences relating to the Company, you must at all times ensure that your conduct is appropriate and consistent with your contract of employment and the corporate image of the Company.
- Company email addresses may not be used to sign up to any social media websites, unless for work-related purposes, however you should be aware that the Company email address will cease to function should you cease to work for the Company and will result in the social media account(s) in question being inaccessible.

Email Use

Any Company business which is conducted via email must be conducted using Company email and is under no circumstances to be conducted through any other personal email address or account. The Company recognises that you may need to send personal emails, which are permitted provided that it is reasonable, during break times, does not interfere with the performance of your duties and is in compliance with this Policy.

Email users should be aware of the following guidelines:

- Before communicating via email, you should satisfy yourself that it is the most suitable mode of communication, particularly where time is of the essence.
- Emails should be worded appropriately and in the same professional manner as if they were a letter.
- You should be careful not to automatically copy in everyone that was copied into the original message you are responding to, as this may result in inappropriate or unlawful disclosure of confidential information and / or personal data.
- You should take care with the content of emails, in particular avoiding incorrect or improper statements and the unauthorised inclusion of confidential information or personal data.
- You must not email any business documents to any personal email accounts.
- If you do use Company email for personal reasons, you will be deemed to agree to the possibility that any emails sent or received may be subject to monitoring.
- The downloading, viewing, or passing on of offensive imagery by email is strictly prohibited. Whilst it is difficult to define what constitutes offensive imagery, broadly speaking it includes but is not limited to content that relates to sex, race, nationality, sexual orientation, age, religion, belief, disability, all of which can promote harassment, discrimination or illegal activity.
- Be aware of the ease with which computer viruses can travel via emails and cause immense damage to computer systems. Therefore do not introduce any form of computer virus or malware into the corporate network. Treat unsolicited e-mails with extreme caution, particularly if there is an attachment included.

Monitoring of Email and Internet use

The Company monitors the use of its electronic communication systems. It has the ability to access your email accounts and reserves the right to monitor and view any emails viewed or sent via the Company's computer system. Any inappropriate use of the internet will be reported to your Manager or relevant Director to take the appropriate action.

A Director or Manager may request access to individual email accounts in the event of sickness or holiday absence in order to deal with business related emails.

Confidential Documentation

You should not print out hard copies of e-mails or documents just to read them, unless it is necessary for you to do so. This is to reduce the amount of paper that the Company uses, which in turn reduces the amount of printing costs, filing space needed and it also helps reduce the Company's carbon footprint. All information stored on the Company's computer and e-mail systems are backed-up, so you will not lose the information unless you have specifically deleted it.

If you are required to print out information, it should be cleared from printers immediately, particularly if the information is confidential or contains personal data. You have responsibility to ensure that nothing should be left lying on printers, or photocopiers both throughout the day and at the end of the day.

Any paperwork that you no longer need must be put into the recycling bin on a daily basis, and you must ensure to use the Company's shredding facilities.

Paperwork that you do need should be acted upon and then appropriately filed away.

Security of Computer Systems

Where individual passwords have been issued, it is your responsibility to ensure that these remain secure and are not divulged to other individuals. You should not send emails using a fake identity or another person's identity.

The security confidential information and personal data in particular is governed by the Company's General Data Protection Policy, which you must comply with at all times. Workstations and screens should be locked when you are away from the machine and hard copy files and documents should be secured when not in use.

If you have been issued with a laptop, tablet, smartphone, or other mobile device, that device should be kept secure at all times, particularly when travelling. Mobile devices must be passcode-protected and, where more secure methods are available, such as fingerprint / eye recognition, such methods must be used. Confidential information, personal data, and other sensitive information stored and/or accessed on a mobile device should be kept to a minimum. Users should also be aware that when using mobile devices outside of the workplace, information displayed on them may be read by unauthorised third parties, for example, in public places and on public transport.

If using Company issued mobile devices you must not connect such devices to public wi-fi networks, for example, in cafes, restaurants, or on public transport.

Company Telephone System Use

The Company's telephone lines are for the exclusive use of Company business. Essential personal telephone calls regarding domestic arrangements are acceptable, but excessive use of the Company's telephone system and/or mobile phones are not permitted. Telephone calls made and received on the Company's telephone lines may be recorded and may be routinely monitored to ensure customer satisfaction or to check the telephone system is not being abused. If the Company discovers that the telephone system has been used excessively for personal calls, disciplinary action may be taken.

Company Mobile Phone Use

Company mobile phones are provided at the discretion of the Company on the basis of your role. Any Company mobile phone and equipment / accessories supplied to you remain the property of the Company at all times and must be returned to the Company on demand or, on your last day of employment.

Company mobile phones are strictly for company business use only and will be monitored. Failure to comply with this Policy may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Personal Mobile Phone Use

The Company prohibits the use of mobile phones for reasons that are not related to work during normal working hours. Personal phone calls are to be taken outside of working hours or during breaks. At the discretion of your Manager, where it is an emergency, personal calls may be permitted during your working hours.

Etiquette

Company and personal mobile phones should be turned off when it could be distracting, i.e during meetings / training sessions. If visiting other Companies, you must observe any restrictions imposed by them.

Misuse and Compliance

If found to be misusing the Company's internet and communication facilities, disciplinary action may be taken.

COMPANY VEHICLE / DRIVERS POLICY

Foreword

Under the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007, the Company has a duty of care to ensure that its employees who drive on company business do so safely, courteously and in accordance with the law.

If you are issued with a company car, car allowance or are required to drive on company business irrespective of the vehicle you use, employees must conduct themselves in accordance with this Policy and shall use their own judgment to ensure they reduce the risks to themselves and to others.

It is important to note that car allowance schemes and company car schemes are both subject to alteration with notice and after consultation by the Company. While the Company will try and assist individuals who are unfavourably impacted by any legislative changes where it is economically reasonable to do so, the Company is not responsible for compensating any employees for the adverse effects of legislative changes.

Responsibilities for all drivers on company business are as follows:

Driving License Checks

You must at all times hold the appropriate category of driving licence for the vehicle you drive, this includes holding a UK driving licence. All drivers must submit their original driving licence for validation when starting employment. Should at any time you receive a motoring offence, or your licence is disqualified, suspended, revoked or lost then you are to immediately inform your Manager. When your licence is returned after a ban it is your responsibility to inform your Manager.

Security

Your vehicle must be locked at all times when you are away from the vehicle, no matter how short the time away. Any alarm / immobiliser which is fitted to your vehicle must also be alarmed at all times when away from your vehicle. Valuables such as mobile phones, laptop computers etc, should never be left unattended in your vehicle. Anything heavy, hard or otherwise dangerous objects must be stored in the boot of the car as these can become missiles on car impact.

Alcohol & Drugs

You will not be permitted to drive any vehicle on Company business whilst under the influence of alcohol. For the avoidance of doubt only zero alcohol is permitted when driving on Company business or within a Company car. You will not be permitted to drive any vehicle on Company business whilst under the influence of drugs. Prescription or over the counter drugs must only be used in accordance with manufacturer's instructions or medical advice. If in any doubt you must discuss this with your GP.

Eyesight

You must undergo regular eye-sight tests, or immediately if you suspect you have a sight problem.

Mobile Phone Devices

You must neither initiate nor answer a mobile telephone call whilst driving a vehicle (unless using a hands-free device). Mobile telephones can be left on during a trip to alert you of any incoming calls. Should you need to make or receive a call then you must first leave the road and bring the vehicle to a stop, in a safe parking area.

Medical Conditions

Any medical condition affecting you which is likely to impair the ability to drive must be reported to your Manager immediately. If your GP has advised against you driving a vehicle then you must not drive any vehicle until such time that your GP certifies that you are fit to drive again.

Personal Injury / Illness

In the case of being involved in a road traffic accident or incident you need to decide if you have sustained an injury which makes it unsafe for you to drive. If in any doubt, do not drive on and contact your Manager immediately. On your return to the office ensure you enter the details of your injury into the Company's Accident Book.

Winter-Time Driving

Make sure your vehicle is equipped with good wiper blades, and that wiper arms are exerting enough pressure on the blades to ensure a clean sweep. Tyres with good tread are essential for good cornering and handling on slippery roads. Occasionally try out your brakes, or gently depress your accelerator whilst driving.

Further Points to Note

If you are required to drive on Company business, then it will be your responsibility to ensure that evidence of suitable insurance is demonstrated for your privately-owned vehicle that is being used for business. You may also be asked to provide evidence of a current MOT Certificate. Any change to a privately-owned vehicle used for business in regard to insurance conditions, must be reported to your Manager.

In addition to this, you will be responsible:

- For your own safety, for any passengers or company equipment carried in the vehicle and for ensuring that the vehicle is safe to use
- To ensure that passengers are carried only in accordance with the vehicle manufacturer's design specification, with a seat for everyone and only one person per seat
- To ensure that seat belts are installed for the driver and passengers, and worn on all journeys
- To take a break of at least fifteen minutes if driving continuously for 2 hours, this is to ensure that you do not suffer fatigue
- For wherever possible, to share driving on journeys of over 2 hours duration
- To plan journeys to avoid travel in adverse weather and working in excessive hours
- To not stop on the hard shoulder of a motorway except in an emergency

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

Fines for road traffic offences must be settled by the driver.

Company Car

Your contract of employment will specify if you are entitled to a company car as part of your remuneration / benefits package. Your entitlement is subject to the following terms and conditions of this Policy. If you do not comply with your obligations under this Policy, the Company shall be entitled, at its sole discretion, to withdraw or limit your use of the company car.

The Company reserves the right to decide by what means Company cars will be provided (for example, by lease or purchase).

You may choose any make and model of car in accordance with your grade and the limits and criteria as laid down by the Company from time to time. The Company reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to amend the limits and criteria from time to time.

Before choosing a car, you should obtain written confirmation from management that the proposed choice, together with any optional extras, will be acceptable to the Company.

Subject to review by the Company from time to time, Company cars will be renewed every 4 years or after 80,000 miles at the Company's sole discretion. The interchanging of company cars before the agreed period has expired is not permitted without the permission of a Director.

Any person driving the vehicle must hold a current, valid UK Driving Licence to drive the vehicle, and should not be disqualified from holding or obtaining such a licence.

If, for any reason, you are suspended from work, placed on garden leave or working out a period of notice, the Company reserves the right to withdraw your company car and pay an allowance equivalent to the value of the normal use of the car instead.

If your employment status should change from full time to part time status (for these purposes a reduction in your work pattern of 1 day or more), the Company reserves the right to change your company car to a car allowance. In this event your car allowance will be pro-rated.

If on returning the company car there is any damage, or repairs are needed to be carried out, then deductions may be made from your salary. Deductions may also be made in the case of any fines incurred by you.

The road fund licence and insurance for each vehicle will be renewed automatically by the Company when due.

If issued with a company car you must ensure that;

- The car is well maintained and serviced on a regular basis at the expense of the Company (as per specific manufacturer's or the leasing company's requirements), and with an up to date MOT at all times
- Windows, mirrors, lights, tyres and number plates are checked and washed on a regular basis
- You are responsible for parking your vehicle overnight in the safest position possible at that location
- The specific manufacturer or leasing company is made immediately aware of any suspected faults, defects or damages so that corrective action can be taken
- The car is only driven by you unless permission is obtained from management, if it is your intention to allow your company vehicle to be used by other employees then you must ensure that the driver has provided you with a clean and valid UK Driving Licence to drive that vehicle
- Smoking will not be permitted within a company car
- Where vehicles are furnished with a first aid kit, any items in this kit that have been used must be replaced by you at the earliest opportunity
- No change or alteration may be made to the manufacturer's mechanical or structural specification of the vehicle
- In the case of breakdown or vehicle failure, you must try to position the vehicle in a safe place for both driver and vehicle and contact [your Manager / HR] immediately or the relevant breakdown recovery company to arrange recovery / repair

In the event of damage or injury you are required to follow the below procedure;

- If your company car is involved in an accident which causes damage to property or another vehicle, or injury to any person or animal, you are required to give your name and address, the name and address of the owner, the registration number of the vehicle and the name of the insurance company to any person having reasonable grounds for requiring such information i.e the Police. If for some reason it is not possible to give this information at the time of the accident, the matter must be reported to the Police as soon as possible, but within 24 hours of the occurrence
- Any damage to a company vehicle must be reported to [your Manager in order for repairs to be completed in a timely manner

Failure to comply with any of the above conditions could result in either a down-grade of company car on renewal, suspension of using a company car for a fixed period of time or dismissal for negligent use of the Company's property.

Fuel costs incurred on Company business will be reimbursed at the specified rate per mile and should be recovered as expenses in the normal way. Copies of petrol receipts must be provided to the Company (credit card receipts alone will not suffice) and should at least cover the business mileage claimed.

In the event that your job role / grade is changed (for whatever reason) to one that does not hold the entitlement to a company car, the car will be removed at the time your job changes.

Car Allowance

Your contract of employment will specify if you are entitled to a car allowance as part of your remuneration / benefits package. Your entitlement is subject to the following terms and conditions of this Policy. In the event of a loss of licence, car allowance payments will cease, any alternative payment (such as travel allowance) may be agreed with management but is not a contractual obligation. If you do not comply with your obligations under this Policy, the Company shall be entitled, at its sole discretion, to withdraw the car allowance.

The car allowance is not payable in respect of motorbikes, mopeds etc.

If issued with a car allowance you must ensure that;

- Your car is a full 4 seat coupe, saloon, hatchback or estate (pure sports cars are not permissible)
- Your car is under 5 years old at all times, not just when purchased
- The total mileage of your car does not exceed 80,000 miles at any time in use for company travel
- Your car has an engine capacity of at least 1.4 cc but not more than 3.0 cc
- Your car should be "appropriate" to the level of car allowance being paid
- Your car is well maintained and serviced on a regular basis and with an up to date MOT at all times
- Windows, mirrors, lights, tyres and number plates are checked and washed on a regular basis
- Where your car is furnished with a first aid kit, any items in this kit that have been used must be replaced by you at the earliest opportunity
- Your car is insured with suitable business as well as private cover, the Insurance Certificate must be produced annually to your Manager who will check that the cover is suitable

You will be responsible for all expenses of the car including maintenance, insurance, road tax, MOT testing, HP or other interest etc. In addition, with your insurance company, you are responsible for all accidental damage, the handling and settlement of insurance claims etc

You will be entitled to claim business mileage in line with the current HMRC rates. Mileage cannot be claimed for commuting between your home and normal workplace unless you intend to continue to another venue. Parking costs will be paid upon proof of receipts.

In the event of the vehicle concerned being under repair then the employee will be expected to make their own arrangements as appropriate, to fulfil their business travel. Under these circumstances, the Company will continue to reimburse business mileage payments only, provided this is pre-authorized by your Manager.

The Company will pay through the payroll a monthly car allowance. This will be subject to tax. It will not form part of your pensionable salary. In the event of you moving to a part time status (for these purposes a reduction in your work pattern of 1 day or more), the car allowance will be pro-rated.

In the event that your job role / grade changes (for whatever reason) to one which does not carry entitlement to a car allowance then the allowance will be removed at the date your new job commences.

Company Van and Commercial Vehicles

If you have been provided with the use of a company van / commercial vehicle, you will not be subject to tax on the use of this vehicle, provided that the use of this vehicle is limited to business purposes only and travel to and from work (if applicable).

To ensure that no tax liability arises from the use of the company van / commercial vehicle, you will be asked upon allocation of the vehicle to sign a private use declaration. This declaration will state that the vehicle will only be used for business purposes only and to travel to and from work (if applicable).

Any other personal use will result in the appropriate taxable benefit being applied to you.

If your role it is to drive a company van / commercial vehicle, you will be issued with a Drivers Handbook from your respective Transport Office.

The road fund licence and insurance for each vehicle will be renewed automatically by the Company when due.

Your driving should be safe and in accordance with legal requirements.

It is your responsibility to see that the company van / commercial vehicle is not used by anyone other than yourself or authorised employees. No passengers, except for Company employees, are allowed in the company van / commercial vehicle without the prior permission of management.

No change or alteration may be made to the manufacturer's mechanical or structural specification of the vehicle without prior written permission from your Manager.

The driver of the company van / commercial vehicle is responsible for ensuring that the oil and water levels, battery and brake fluid and tyre pressures are maintained and that the tread of all tyres conforms to the minimum legal requirement at the start and end of every journey.

Unless contrary arrangements exist in writing between you and a Director you will only be reimbursed for fuels and oil used for business trips. Claims must be submitted through an Expense Claim Form accompanied by receipted bills where the vehicle cannot be filled up on our fuel account.

Where any damage to a Company vehicle is due to your negligence or lack of care, we reserve the right to insist on you rectifying the damage at your own expense or paying the excess part of any claim on the insurers. Repeated instances may result in disciplinary action being taken.

In the event of an accident or injury you are required to follow the below procedure:

- If company van / commercial vehicle is involved in an accident which causes damage to property or another vehicle, or injury to any person or animal, you are required to give your name and address, the name and address of the owner, the registration number of the vehicle and the name of the insurance company to any person having reasonable grounds for requiring such information i.e the Police. If for some reason it is not possible to give this information at the time of the accident, the matter must be reported to the Police as soon as possible, but within 24 hours of the occurrence
- Any damage to a company van / commercial vehicle must be reported to your Manager in order for repairs to be completed in a timely manner

As the Driver of a company van / commercial vehicle you should ensure that it is kept locked when not in use and the contents should be stored out of sight, preferably in the boot. If a vehicle is stolen, we are required to prove to the insurance company that there has been no negligence and, therefore, we must hold you responsible in the event of such negligence. In the case of theft of a vehicle or stolen contents the Police will be informed.

ALCOHOL & DRUGS POLICY

Foreword

The Company is committed to providing a safe, healthy and productive working environment, for all its employees, contractors, workers, customers and visitors. To do that, we will take all reasonable steps to reduce and if possible, eliminate the risk of injuries or incidents occurring due to colleagues suffering from the effects of alcohol or drug abuse.

This Policy applies to all employees, contractors and workers of the Company irrespective of their role, and is applicable to all our Company sites, including company vehicles.

Whilst the Company accepts that alcohol and drug abuse are areas of health and social concern, we also recognise that they can have a detrimental effect on work performance, behaviour, sickness absence and accidents.

Consumption of drugs (including prescription and over the counter drugs) and alcohol during working hours implicates the health and safety of the individual and others, since these substances impair coordination, judgement, and decision making. Irresponsible behaviour resulting from the misuse of drugs and/or alcohol may damage our reputation and/or business, and as such, is a policy matter.

Definitions of Terms Used in this Policy

Alcohol abuse – we define alcohol abuse as any drinking, either intermittent or continual, which interferes with health and/or social functioning and/or work capability or conduct.

Drugs – we define drugs as illegal, prescribed and over the counter medicines and solvents. In the case of prescribed and over the counter drugs, we recognise that the possession and use by the employee is legitimate.

Drug abuse – we define drug abuse as the use of illegal drugs, the deliberate misuse of prescribed or over the counter drugs, and the use of solvents, either intermittent or continuous, which interfere with health and/or social functioning and/or work capability or conduct.

Legal

We need to ensure that problems are dealt with effectively and consistently and adhere to our legal obligations under the following legislation:

- Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, we recognise the duty to protect the health, safety, and welfare of employees and others who are (or may be) affected by their activities, as far as is reasonably practicable
- Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, we will carry out a risk assessment to identify workplace hazards and put measures in place to minimise these risks
- Under the Misuse of Drugs Act (1971), it is illegal for anyone, to produce, supply or be in possession of illegal drugs. Employers may be liable if they knowingly allow an employee, customer, or service user to dispense, manufacture, possess, use or sell drugs on their premises

Policy Requirements

You must not report, or try to report, for work having consumed drugs or alcohol likely to render you unfit and/or unsafe for work. If you do so then this may be regarded as an act of gross misconduct where disciplinary action will be taken.

It is a criminal offence to be in possession of, use, sell or distribute an illegal substance. If any such incidents take place on our premises, our clients' premises, in our vehicles or at a business function, they are likely to be regarded as gross misconduct where disciplinary action will be taken, and in addition you will be reported to the Police.

You must not consume or be in possession of alcohol whilst on our premises, our clients' premises or in our vehicles. If any such incidents take place, they are likely to be regarded as gross misconduct where disciplinary action will be taken.

We understand that alcohol may be consumed during the day outside of work i.e. at leaving parties or celebrations, or where employees are involved in corporate entertainment with suppliers, when this occurs you are expected to take a responsible attitude. You should remember that you may then be returning to work, and anyone returning back to work impaired or having consumed an unreasonable level of alcohol, will not be tolerated. If alcohol is consumed, you must not drive a vehicle.

If a Manager has a concern about your performance or behaviour as a result of an unreasonable level of alcohol intake (i.e. at lunchtime or after returning from an event), then your Manager has the right to address those concerns with you.

Identifying a Problem

Substance misuse may become apparent through a number of signs, some of which are mentioned below, which could indicate an issue:

- Persistent short-term absence
- Frequent unauthorised absence
- Recurrent small accidents
- Poor time keeping
- Inconsistency in work performance
- A breakdown in working relations
- Paranoia / aggression / behavioural changes
- Deterioration in physical appearances, such as dental problems / weight loss

The Company are aware that these factors can also be a result of other causes, and as such Management will use all the information at their disposal and discretion to identify a potential problem. Colleagues may be the first to notice when an employee is misusing substances. Should you therefore suspect that a colleague may have an alcohol or drug problem, you should either try to encourage your colleague to seek help from their GP / support service, or report the matter to your Manager (particularly if your colleague is involved in a safety critical job).

Employee Responsibilities

All employees are required to be aware of and comply with this Policy. Employees also have a duty of care under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 (Section 7a) not only for your own health and safety, but the health and safety of others who may be affected by your acts or omissions.

It should be recognised that prescribed and over-the-counter medicines may cause impairment to your performance at work, as such you must seek advice from your GP or Pharmacist on any medicines you are taking. You should inform your Manager of any possible side effects of your medication so it can be understood if they may impact your ability to perform in your role, if they have any safety implications and if any adjustments need to be made for you whilst taking this medication.

Manager Responsibilities

Managers are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of this Policy and for dealing with issues which are related to alcohol and drug use. All Managers have a responsibility to immediately address with you any concerns regarding impairment or suspected dependency of alcohol or drugs. They must also advise HR.

Voluntary Referral

Employees who suspect or know they have a drug or alcohol problem are encouraged to seek support at an early stage from either their GP or specialist support service. In such instances, we recognise that it is up to the discretion of the employee to inform their Manager.

Management Referral

Managers will offer support to employees who are suspected of having an alcohol or drug problem. If the problem has become apparent because of a decline in work performance, your Manager will look to support you through a performance improvement plan where you will be required to demonstrate improvement. If performance does not improve, disciplinary action will be taken.

The Company is aware that in some instances, alcohol and drug dependency is defined as an illness and as such actively encourages those employees who are experiencing difficulties with alcohol or drugs to seek help from their Manager. Your Manager will then endeavour to assist in sourcing advice and support. This may include obtaining external advice from Occupational Health who will advise on what support is required for you and what restrictions and/or adjustments may need to be accommodated for you, as well as understanding your ability to perform in your role. Following this your Manager will place you on a support programme where you are required to demonstrate improvement and a satisfactory completion. If an improvement is not made, then disciplinary action will be taken.

The Company will provide employees the opportunity to attend treatment within work time. If you are absent, the usual sick arrangements as per the Sickness Absence Policy, will apply.

Misconduct

In circumstances where an employee breaches this Policy, such as reporting for work drunk or being under the influence of drugs at work, we will consider this behaviour as misconduct where disciplinary action will be taken.

In circumstances where an employee, for example, is violent at work whilst under the influence of any substance or deals illicit substances at work or any other very serious incident, we will consider this behaviour as misconduct where disciplinary action will be taken.

It is important to note that should an employee, with a dependency to alcohol or drugs, only declare they have a dependency issue after a serious misconduct issue has arisen, that employee will still be subject to the same disciplinary procedures as any other employee who breaches this Policy. It is therefore strongly encouraged that you disclose any alcohol or drug dependency problems voluntarily at the earliest opportunity and before any issues which may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Relapse Following Treatment

We acknowledge that relapse is common with alcohol and drug problems and, in normal circumstances, we will support employees through one relapse after treatment. We will treat subsequent relapses on a case-by-case basis. During any review, we will take into account the needs of the department and the business. Disciplinary procedures may begin following subsequent relapses.

Return to Work

If there has been a requirement for you to take leave from work in order to attend rehabilitation and/or treatment, after successful completion of treatment, the Company will try to make sure that you return to your existing role. However, if you are unable to fulfil your required duties, the Company will consider alternatives duties.

SMOKING POLICY

Foreword

The Company recognises the importance of the health, safety and welfare towards its employees so has developed this dedicated smoking policy in order to help comply with our legal duties.

Smoking causes serious damage to the health of smokers and research has also shown that second-hand smoke causes cancers, heart and respiratory diseases in non-smokers as well.

Restrictions on Smoking

In the interests of Health and Safety, Insurance and the Smoke Free (Premises and Enforcement) Regulations 2006 and the Health Act 2006, the Company prohibits smoking in any of its buildings and premises, unless within the designated outside areas.

Smoking is also not permitted in any company vehicles or in any vehicles being used or hired for Company business. Private vehicles which are used for occasional business purposes are exempt from this.

Smoking on Company premises or in Company vehicles constitutes an offence under the Health Act. If a member of staff does not comply with this Policy, disciplinary action may be taken.

Displays signs that make it clear that smoking is prohibited on its premises (and in vehicles) will be located at all entrances to its buildings. You should make every effort to ensure that if you are a smoker your clothes and breath do not smell of smoke.

Electronic Cigarettes

The Company acknowledges that some employees may wish to make use of electronic cigarettes ("e-cigarettes") in the workplace, particularly as an aid to giving up smoking. E-cigarettes (sometimes referred to as personal vaporizers or electronic nicotine delivery systems) are battery-powered products that release a visible vapour that contains liquid nicotine that is inhaled by the user.

Although they fall outside the scope of smoke-free legislation, the Company prohibits the use of e-cigarettes in the workplace. The rationale for a ban on e-cigarettes is that:

- Although they do not produce smoke, e-cigarettes produce a vapour that could provide an annoyance or health risk to other employees
- Some e-cigarette models can, particularly from a distance, look like real cigarettes, making a smoking ban difficult to police, and creating an impression for visitors, customers and other employees that it is acceptable to smoke

If you are found smoking on the Company's premises (where it is not permitted), disciplinary action may be taken.

Smoking on Customer and Supplier Premises

If you are excluded from any of our Customer sites for smoking, such an act will be considered to have taken place on our own premises, as such you will be subject to the same disciplinary action as if the smoking had taken place on our premises.

You will personally be liable for any fines for breach of the Smoke-Free Regulations and will be required to pay any fines if you are prosecuted.

REDUNDANCY POLICY

Foreword

The Company will always try to safeguard, as far as reasonably possible, the job security of our employees and will only consider redundancies when absolutely necessary during times of changes in the availability of work, technology and organisational requirements.

If we do need to make compulsory redundancies, the Company will always try to consider:

- Natural wastage
- Restrictions on recruitment
- Retraining and redeployment to other parts of the business
- Reduction or elimination of overtime
- Introduction of short time working or temporary layoff
- Seeking applicants for early retirement or voluntary redundancy
- Termination of the employment of temporary or contract staff

During the redundancy process, the Company will ensure that:

- The total number of redundancies made is kept to an absolute 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
- Support and advice is provided to employees selected for redundancy to help them find suitable work when their employment has come to an end

Consultation

If there appears to be a situation which could lead to redundancies, the Company will consult with the potentially affected employees at the earliest opportunity. The Company will carry out individual consultations with you even if it runs parallel with any requirement for collective consultations. Timescales will be appropriate to ensure that a full and thorough consultation can take place.

All consultations between the Company, appropriate representatives and individual employees will be carried out with a view to reaching an agreement, avoiding or minimising the number of redundancies, and determining the selection criteria to be used. We will encourage you to come up with suggestions as to how redundancies can be avoided or minimised.

During the consultation process, the Company will give you the full reasons as to why redundancies are necessary and enough information in order to allow you to input into the process. That will include:

- The reasons for the proposed redundancies
- Numbers and descriptions of employees affected
- Proposed method of selecting the employees who may be dismissed
- Proposed method of carrying out the dismissals, taking account of any agreed procedure, including the period over which the dismissals are to take effect
- How redundancy payments, other than the legal minimum, will be calculated

Selection Criteria

The Company will ensure that the process of identifying the categories of employees which are at risk of redundancy (the "Pool") and the selection criteria applied to the pool are objective, non-discriminatory and is capable of independent application.

The selection criteria will vary depending on circumstances, but the following factors may be applied:

- Attendance record
- Disciplinary record
- Skills or experience
- Standard of work performance (based on objective supporting evidence)
- Aptitude for work

Redeployment

The Company will make all reasonable efforts to redeploy employees who are selected for redundancy, to suitable alternative positions, if available.

During the consultation process, those employee's effected will be informed of all the available vacancies within the Company and will be given an opportunity to discuss those in more detail.

Whilst priority will be given wherever possible to employees under threat of redundancy, the Company reserves the right to select the best available candidate in relation to any given vacancy.

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

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 Manager.

Termination of Employment

Following the selection and consultation, and where it is determined that there is no practicable alternative, those employees who have been selected for redundancy will be notified by the Company in writing. The letter will confirm the date that your employment will be terminated due to redundancy, the circumstances which have led to you being selected for redundancy, details around payments due if applicable (i.e redundancy / final salary payment / payment in lieu of notice / holiday and any other additional payments) and the right to appeal process.

Depending on the circumstances, the Company may waive its right to insist on employees working their notice and instead give a payment in lieu of notice. Employees with 2 or more years' service may be entitled to a statutory redundancy payment.

Appeals

You can appeal the decision for redundancy in writing, the appeals process will be set out in the letter which confirms your redundancy.

SECTION 4 – COMPLIANCE

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

Foreword

All employees must conduct their business in a way that ensures full compliance with the rule of law and the rules that apply to the Company. All employees of the Company are bound by their contract to follow our employee Code of Conduct whilst performing their duties. We outline the components of our Code of Conduct below:

Compliance with Law

All employees must protect our Company's legality. They should comply with all environmental, safety and fair dealing laws. We expect employees to be ethical and responsible when dealing with our company's finances, products, partnerships and public image.

Respect in the Workplace

All employees should respect their colleagues. We won't allow any kind of discriminatory behaviour, or harassment or victimisation. Employees should conform with our Equal Opportunities Policy in all aspects of their work, from recruitment and performance evaluation to interpersonal relations with employees. We look to create a positive working environment.

Protection of Company Property

All employees are expected to treat the property of the Company, whether material or intangible, with respect and care. All Company equipment must not be misused or used in a thoughtless manner.

Professionalism

All employees must show integrity and professionalism in the workplace.

Bribery and Corruption

All employees must conduct business activities in an ethical and lawful way.

Fraud

The Company does not tolerate fraud, and all employees have a responsibility to report any signs of fraud or suspected fraud.

Security of Information

Sensitive commercial information and personal employee information must be kept confidential.

Social Media Policy

You are not permitted to access social media sites from the company's computers or devices at any time, unless it is a requirement of your role. When using social media you must not disclose confidential information including any customer detailed information. You should also be aware of protecting yourself and your own privacy on such sites.

Data Protection

The collection and retention of personal data must be for legitimate purposes. All information relating to the personal details of employees, customers and suppliers must be respected.

Conflicts of Interest

Employees owe a duty of loyalty and fidelity to the Company. Employees are expected to perform their duties on behalf of the Company faithfully, diligently and to the best of their abilities. If you are aware or are unsure as to whether a conflict of interest exists, then you must seek advice from your Manager.

Harm to Business or Reputation

Employees must refrain from engaging in conduct that could adversely affect the business or reputation of the Company. Such conduct includes, but is not limited to, publicly criticising the Company, its management or its employees, or engaging in criminal conduct or other behaviour that could destroy the business or reputation of the Company.

Clients and Suppliers

The Company promotes its services fairly to all its clients and suppliers. We expect the same standards of them as we expect from our employees. The Company delivers a quality service to its clients and protects the clients' confidentiality and only use their information for proper business purposes.

Ethical Practices

The Company and its clients are committed to ethical trading practices, to protect their workers and safeguard their reputation.

DATA PROTECTION AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION STATEMENT

The Company will comply with all statutory requirements of data protection law including that of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 1998. Any personal or sensitive information in which the Company holds for its employees and clients is covered by this legislation. The Company ensures that the information is kept securely whether that be paper based or in electronic format.

All data is obtained, used and stored so as to comply with the legal requirements of data protection by taking all reasonable steps to ensure the accuracy and confidentiality of such information.

It is the responsibility of anyone that holds such data to ensure that the legal requirements under data protection are complied with, and effectively implemented, at all times.

If any breach of data protection rules is discovered such as the leaking or hacking of personal or sensitive data, this should be reported immediately to a Manager, and any immediate action should be taken to close down such leaks. The Manager will ensure this is properly investigated with the appropriate reporting actions being taken if necessary.

You must not disclose data which may cause distress or hardship to present, former or potential employees, clients, customers or suppliers of the Company.

You can make a request for access to the information held on you by the Company. If you want to make such a request for this, you must do so by completing and providing a Subject Access Request Form to your Manager.

If, at any time during your employment, the Company discovers that you have provided any false or misleading information, the Company reserves the right to terminate your employment.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Foreword

The Company is committed to creating the best possible working environment for you and we believe in operating a Policy of providing fair treatment and ensuring our workplace is free from any kind of inequality. As such all job applicants, customers, suppliers, workers and employees of the Company will be treated in a similar manner.

To that end the purpose of this Policy is to promote equality, fairness and opportunities for all in our employment and to prevent discrimination on the grounds of nine protected characteristics, listed as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Religion, belief or lack of religion/belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

We oppose all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination.

Our commitment is:

- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of our employees are recognised and valued
- That every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect for all where no form of bullying intimidation or harassment will be tolerated
- For training, development and progression opportunities to be made available to all employees
- For equality in the workplace with good management practice that makes good business sense
- To review all our employment policies regularly to ensure fairness
- To ensure that breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and may result in disciplinary action being taken
- Ensure this policy is fully supported by senior management and has been agreed with Trade Unions and, or employee representatives

Types of Discrimination

The Company is committed to creating a work environment where the below types of discrimination will not be tolerated:

Direct discrimination - this occurs when a person or a policy intentionally treats a person less favourably than another on the grounds of one of the nine protected characteristics (race, sex, pregnancy and maternity, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, disability, religion or beliefs, age or sexual orientation).

Indirect Discrimination - is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied that is discriminatory in relation to individuals who have a relevant protected characteristic (although it does not explicitly include pregnancy and maternity, which is covered by indirect sex discrimination) such that it would be to the detriment of people who share that protected characteristic compared with people who do not, and it cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Bullying and Harassment - bullying includes offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power which is meant to undermine, humiliate or injure the person on the receiving end, and harassment is unwanted conduct relating to the nine protected characteristics which has the purpose of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

All reported allegations or any evidence of bullying and harassment will be investigated and if appropriate, disciplinary action may be taken.

This applies to bullying and harassment in the workplace and in any work-related setting outside, such as business trips, work-related social events, organised or funded by the company.

Victimisation

The Company will not tolerate the victimisation of a person for making allegations of bullying and harassment in good faith, or a person that is supporting someone to make such a complaint. In situations of victimisation, disciplinary action may be taken.

Procedure

The Company is an equal opportunity Employer. Every Manager and employee has a personal responsibility for the implementation of this Policy. Any instance of doubt about the application of this Policy or other questions should be addressed to your Manager as should any requests for special training.

The Policy applies to every aspect of employment including recruitment and selection, performance reviews, promotion and reward, training, disciplinary, conditions of work and selection for redundancy.

Where possible we always try to resolve any issues informally as we believe that addressing the concerns as soon as they arise is the best solution.

Sometimes people are not aware that their behaviour is unwelcome or upsetting. You may feel able to approach the person yourself, or may request the assistance of your Manager, or a colleague. You should keep a note of the date and what was said / done (and this would be referred to in the event of a formal complaint).

If, however the issue cannot be resolved on an informal basis or the situation is too serious, you would need to consider raising a grievance using the Company's Grievance Policy and Procedure. All complaints will be investigated promptly, and if appropriate, disciplinary proceedings will be brought against the alleged harasser.

In very serious cases, a criminal offence may have been committed and you may wish to report such a matter to the Police. The Company can arrange for someone to accompany you to make a complaint to the Police.

Anyone who harasses any other employee on the grounds covered by our Equal Opportunities Policy will be subject to disciplinary action being taken. In serious cases, such behaviour will be deemed to constitute gross misconduct and, as such, could result in summary dismissal.

ANTI-BRIBERY POLICY

Foreword

The Company is committed to conducting all of its business in an honest and ethical manner. We take a zero-tolerance approach to bribery and corruption and are committed to acting professionally, fairly and with integrity in all our dealings wherever we operate.

The Company is committed to complying with all anti-bribery and anti-corruption legislation including, but not limited to, the Bribery Act 2010 (“the Act”) and ensures that no bribes or other corrupt payments, inducements or similar are made, offered, sought or obtained by us or anyone working on our behalf.

This Policy applies to all individuals working at all levels, including managers, and employees, and any other person providing services to us.

Definition of Bribery

A bribe is a financial or other advantage offered or given:

- To anyone to persuade them to or reward them for performing their duties improperly
- To any public official with the intention of influencing the official in the performance of their duties

Consequences of Bribery

Anyone or any organisation found guilty of bribery under the Act may face fines and/or prison terms. In addition, high legal costs and adverse publicity are likely to result from any breach of the Act.

For employees of the Company, failure to comply with this Policy and/or with the Act may result in:

- Disciplinary action being taken
- Criminal penalties under the Act which may result in a fine and/or imprisonment for up to 10 years

For the Company, any breach of this Policy by any employee or business associate may result in:

- The Company being deemed to be in breach of the Act
- The Company being subject to fines
- The Company suffering negative publicity and further associated damage as a result of such breach

This Policy does not prohibit giving and receiving gifts of low value and normal and appropriate hospitality. However, in certain circumstances gifts and hospitality may amount to bribery and if you are in any doubt about why you are being offered something you should consult your Manager.

We will not provide gifts or hospitality with the intention of persuading anyone to act improperly or to influence a public official in the performance of their duties.

We do not make, and will not accept, facilitation payments or “kickbacks” of any kind. Facilitation payments are typically small, unofficial payments made to secure or expedite a routine government action by a government official. Kickbacks are typically payments made in return for a business favour or advantage. All employees must avoid any activity that might lead to, or suggest, that a facilitation payment or kickback will be made or accepted by us.

We do not make contributions of any kind to political parties. No charitable donations will be made for the purpose of gaining any commercial advantage.

We will keep financial records and have appropriate internal controls in place which will evidence the business reason for making any payments to third parties.

All expense claims relating to hospitality, gifts or expenses incurred to third parties must specifically record the reason for the expenditure.

All accounts, invoices, memoranda and other documents and records relating to dealings with third parties, such as clients, suppliers and business contacts, must be prepared and maintained with strict accuracy and completeness. No accounts must be kept “off-book” to facilitate or conceal improper payments.

You are encouraged to raise concerns about any issue or suspicion of malpractice at the earliest possible stage. No employee will suffer any detriment as a result of raising genuine concerns about bribery, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

HEALTH AND SAFETY STATEMENT

The Company regards the management of health and safety as an integral part of its business.

Our intention is to prevent accidents and work-related ill health by applying current best practice in health and safety management. Proper management of health and safety issues is seen as an integral part of the efficient management of the Company's activities, and critical to developing the professional culture of the business and establishing and maintaining a solid reputation with all of our clients.

Therefore, compliance with current health and safety legislation is regarded as the absolute minimum standard acceptable. The primary source of the law is the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

Our undertaking to both employees, Visitors and Clients include:

- The provision and maintenance of systems of work and equipment that are safe and without risks to health
- Making arrangements to allow the safe use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances
- The provision of such information, instruction, training and supervision as is necessary to ensure the health and safety at work of our employees
- The maintenance of premises in a condition that is safe and without risks to health, and the provision and maintenance of means of safe and risk-free means of access
- The provision and maintenance of a working environment for our employees that is safe, without risk to health, and adequate as regards facilities and arrangements for your welfare at work
- Full employer's liability insurance will be maintained
- Where appropriate health and safety posters will be displayed
- An accident book will be maintained and if necessary, accidents will be reported to the HSE
- Where appropriate we will carry out risk assessments and implement any health and safety measures which we believe are appropriate

Management and staff have responsibility for implementing the specific arrangements made under this Policy throughout the business. All employees are expected to read all relevant sections of the Employee Handbook and familiarise themselves with its provisions and carry out their defined responsibilities. Employees are expected and encouraged to be proactive on health and safety issues as part of the continued development of the health and safety culture of the business.

The Company will provide appropriate training and make available competent health and safety advice and adequate resources including time and money so that legal obligations may be met.

SECTION 5 - FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES

MATERNITY POLICY

Foreword

This Maternity Policy sets out the statutory rights and responsibilities of employees who are pregnant or have recently given birth. The Company implements the maternity rights set down in legislation.

Throughout this Policy various abbreviations will be used, as follows;

Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML)	The first 26 weeks maternity leave that all pregnant women are entitled to, regardless of length of service.
Additional Maternity Leave (AML)	The 26 weeks taken at the end of OML which all pregnant women are entitled to take, regardless of length of service.
Expected week of childbirth (EWC)	The week in which your baby is due to be born as certified by your GP or Midwife within your MATB1 Certificate.
MATB1 Certificate	The maternity benefit certificate given to all pregnant women by their GP or Midwife confirming the expected week of childbirth.
Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)	Payable to you if you take maternity leave and are eligible for maternity pay.
Keeping in touch days (KIT)	Up to 10 days where you can attend work / training sessions etc without bringing your maternity leave period to an end.
Maternity Allowance	Amount paid to you by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) if you are not eligible for SMP. This is not paid through the Company but instead direct by the DWP.
Qualifying week (QW)	The 15 th week before the EWC.
SMP1 Form	The Company will complete this Form when you are not eligible to be paid SMP and this will enable you to claim from the DWP. This Form will be forward to you once we have received your MATB1 Certificate.

Notification of Pregnancy

On becoming pregnant you should notify your Manager as soon as possible, this is to ensure that any risk assessment, information and support is provided to you.

You are also required to inform your Manager of your EWC and the date on which you intend to start your maternity leave. Your original MATB1 Certificate must also be provided to the Company.

You can choose when to start your maternity leave, subject to two restrictions:

- Maternity leave cannot begin prior to the 11th week before the EWC, unless the baby is born prematurely in which case maternity leave will begin the day after the baby is born
- The start of maternity will be triggered automatically if you are absent from work, wholly or partly on account of a pregnancy-related reason within 4 weeks of the EWC

Once you have informed the Company on the above, they will formally respond in writing to your notification of leave plans within 28 days, confirming the date on which you are expected to return to work if you take the full 52-week entitlement to maternity leave.

If you have already provided notification of your maternity start date and subsequently wish to change this, you may do so by giving at least 28 days' notice of the revised start date. This may be earlier or later than the date originally notified.

Health and Safety

The Company has a duty of care to you and as such we will carry out the necessary risk assessments with you. Within those we will look at such areas as fatigue, visual display units, hazardous substances, lifting and carrying, and shift work. If it is found that you are at risk in any way then the Company will take such steps that are reasonably necessary to avoid those risks, i.e amending working hours, job duties.

If it is found that the Company are unable to alter your working conditions to remove these risks, or provide you with a suitable alternative role on a temporary basis, then the Company may need to suspend you on paid leave from work on maternity grounds until such time that there is no risk to your health. This may be for a short time or for the remaining period of your pregnancy until your maternity leave starts.

Paid Time Off for Ante-Natal Care

Once you have advised your Manager that you are pregnant, you will be entitled to take reasonable paid time off to attend antenatal appointments (this right applied irrespective of length of service). This includes GP and midwife appointments but can also include relaxation or parenting classes provided they have been recommended to you by a registered medical practitioner.

You are expected to try and arrange appointments outside of working hours, but if this is not possible then a request for time off will not be unreasonably refused.

You are entitled to your normal rate of pay during periods of absence. After the first appointment, we may ask for evidence of appointments before granting time off.

The father / partner of your baby has the right to unpaid time off work to attend up to two antenatal appointments.

Sickness Absence During Pregnancy

Pregnancy will affect women differently and whilst some employees will have good health throughout their pregnancy, others may need to take time off due to sickness. If during your pregnancy you are absent from work due to sickness, the Sickness & Absence Policy will apply. If after the start of the 4th week leading up to your EWC you are absent from work due to a pregnancy related illness, then your maternity leave will automatically start.

Entitlement to Statutory Maternity Leave

All employees, irrespective of length of service are entitled to up to 52 weeks' statutory maternity leave, consisting of 26 week's OML and then 26 week's AML. Maternity leave should normally commence no earlier than 11 weeks before the EWC, unless the child is born prematurely before that date.

Maternity leave will start on whichever date is the earliest of:

- Your chosen start date
- The day after you give birth
- The day after any day on which you are absent from work for a pregnancy-related reason in the 4 weeks before the EWC

Shortly before the start of your maternity leave, your Manager will discuss with you the arrangements for covering your work.

Entitlement to Statutory Maternity Pay

As well as taking maternity leave you will be entitled to 39 weeks' statutory maternity pay provided:

- You have had 26 weeks' continuous service at the 15th week before your EWC
- Earn more than the lower earnings limit for national insurance purposes

SMP is currently paid at 90% of average weekly earnings for 6 weeks, and then at a sum specified annually by the Government for each week thereafter, or 90% of earnings (whichever is lower) for 33 weeks. SMP is subject to the normal tax and NI deductions. The latest rates for SMP can be found on <https://www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave/pay>

Things to be aware of in regard to SMP:

- Starts when your maternity leave commences
- Cannot start prior to the 11th week before the EWC
- Cannot be paid unless Payroll / HR has received a copy of your MATB1 Certificate
- You must have provided the correct 'notice requirements' as set out within this Policy
- It will be paid directly into your bank account on the same dates as would your usual salary
- It is subject to the normal tax and NI deductions
- It is payable whether or not you intend to return to work after your maternity leave

If you do not qualify for SMP, you may be entitled to receive a 'maternity allowance' payable directly from the Government. Please see the definitions table above for further details.

Compulsory Maternity Leave

If you choose not to take SML, you are still required as a new mother to take compulsory maternity leave, where work is not permitted for a period of 2 weeks after you give birth commencing on the day the child is born, or 4 weeks if you work in a factory.

Holiday and Maternity Leave

Prior to the commencement of maternity leave, you are required to give consideration to your holiday and discuss this with your Manager. The options available to you in regard to taking leave are; add your entitlement to either the beginning or end of your SML or take any remaining leave during the year that you return to work after your SML. During SML your holiday will continue to accrue as if you were working during this period.

Rights During Maternity Leave

During OML and AML your contract of employment continues in force and you are entitled to receive all your contractual benefits, except for normal wages, salary or shift allowance. Any benefits in kind, such as use of a company car, laptop and mobile phone will continue.

If you are a member of the pension scheme, the Company will continue making pension contributions during SML, based on your normal salary. Any employee contributions will be based on the amount of maternity pay you are receiving unless you inform Payroll that you wish to make up the shortfall.

During your maternity leave you can if you wish, agree to work for the Company (or attend training) for up to 10 days during your maternity leave without bringing your maternity leave to an end and without loss of a week's statutory maternity pay. These are known as KIT days. Any work carried out on a day shall constitute a day's work for these purposes, and you will be paid your normal rate of pay.

The Company has no right to require you to carry out any work and you have no right to undertake any work during your maternity leave. If you are interested in using any KIT days, you must speak to your Manager.

Contact During Maternity Leave

The Company reserves the right to maintain reasonable contact with you during maternity leave. This may be to discuss your plans for return to work, to discuss any special arrangements to be made or training to be given to ease your return to work or to update you on developments at work during your absence.

Right to Return to Work After Maternity Leave

You will have been advised in writing of the date on which you are expected to return to work unless however you wish to return to work early, in which case you must provide your Manager with at least 8 weeks' notice.

If you wish to return to work later than the 52 weeks, you may be able to do so if you request annual leave or parental leave. If you decide not to return back to work from maternity leave, then you are required to provide the relevant notice in accordance with your contract of employment.

If returning to work during OML, you will be entitled to return to the same job in which you were employed prior to commencing maternity leave, on terms and conditions not less favourable to those that you were on before. If returning to work during AML, you will be entitled to return to the job in which you were employed prior to commencing maternity leave, or if this is not possible due to changes within the business, you would be offered a similar role on terms and conditions not less favourable to those that you were on before.

If you wish to change your hours or other working arrangements on returning from maternity leave, you should make a request under the Flexible Working Policy.

Failure to return to work by the end of your maternity leave will be treated as unauthorised absence unless you are sick and produce a Fitness For Work Certificate or you have pre-booked holiday leave which has been authorised by your Manager.

Premature Births

If the birth of your baby is early, your maternity pay and leave will automatically start the day after the birth.

Miscarriage and Stillbirth

If your baby does not survive the birth before the end of the 24th week of pregnancy, it is called a miscarriage and you are not entitled to maternity rights. The Company will however support you as much as possible, which may include taking sick or compassionate leave.

If your baby does not survive the birth after the 24th week of pregnancy, it is called a stillbirth and you will be entitled to all the usual maternity rights. Please also refer to our Parental Bereavement Leave Policy.

PATERNITY POLICY

Foreword

This Paternity Policy sets out the statutory rights and responsibilities of employees who wish to take paternity leave. The Company implements the paternity rights set down in legislation.

The Policy aims to provide employees with the time they need to care for their new-born child and support their partner.

Throughout this Policy various abbreviations will be used, as follows;

Expected week of childbirth (EWC)	The week in which your baby is due to be born.
Qualifying Week (QW)	The 15 th week before the EWC.
Statutory Paternity Leave (SPL)	2 weeks leave which must finish within 56 days of the child's birth, providing you have 26 weeks continuous service by 15 th week before EWC.
Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP)	Payable to employees who take statutory paternity leave and are eligible for statutory paternity pay.
MATB1 Certificate	The maternity benefit certificate given to all pregnant women by their GP or Midwife confirming the expected week of childbirth.
Paternity Leave request Form	To be completed by 15 th week before the EWC or matching week to provide details of when SPL will be taken.
SC3 Form	To be completed when applying for SPL and SPP

Unpaid Time Off for Ante-Natal Care

Employees are entitled to unpaid time off to accompany a pregnant woman to up to two antenatal care appointments, if the employee is the father of the baby, or the partner of the pregnant woman.

Entitlement to Statutory Paternity Leave

As long as you have 26 weeks' continuous service at the 15th week before the EWC, you are entitled to a maximum of 2 consecutive weeks statutory paternity leave, which you can choose to take in either 1 or 2 consecutive weeks. Paternity leave must be taken in one go – you cannot take two separate periods of 1 week. Multiple births only trigger one period of leave. SPL must be taken and finish within 56 days of the actual date of birth.

To qualify for paternity leave you must be one of the following:

- The father
- The husband or partner of the mother (or adopter) - this includes same-sex partners
- The child's adopter
- The intended parent (if you're having a baby through a surrogacy arrangement)

Entitlement to Statutory Paternity Pay

SPP will be at the rate set by the Government or at 90% of your average weekly earnings, if this figure is lower than the Government's set weekly rate. SPP is subject to the normal tax and NI deductions. The latest rates for SPP can be found on <https://www.gov.uk/paternity-pay-leave/pay>

Notice Requirements

In order to qualify for SPL and SPP, you need to provide to your Manager, by the 15th week before the EWC, a completed Paternity Leave Request Form and an SC3 Form.

The SC3 Form can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ordinary-statutory-paternity-pay-and-leave-becoming-a-birth-parent-sc3>

You will need to state within the Paternity Leave Request Form when the baby is due, whether you are looking to take 1 or 2 consecutive weeks and when you expect the SPL to commence. If you are unable to provide the exact dates of when you wish to take your leave, you will need to specify a general time, i.e from the date of birth, a certain number of days after the baby is born, or a specific date which is not earlier than when the baby is due.

Rights During Paternity Leave

During your paternity leave your contract of employment continues in force and you are entitled to receive all your contractual benefits, except for normal wages, salary or shift allowance. Any benefits in kind, such as use of a company car, laptop and mobile phone will continue and contractual annual leave entitlement will also continue to accrue.

If you are a member of the pension scheme, the Company will continue making pension contributions during your paternity leave, based on your normal salary. Any employee contributions will be based on the amount of paternity pay you are receiving unless you inform Payroll that you wish to make up the shortfall.

Before the commencement of your paternity leave you will be informed of the arrangements for covering your work and for remaining in contact with the Company whilst you are on leave.

Miscarriage and Stillbirth

If your baby does not survive the birth before the end of the 24th week of pregnancy, it is called a miscarriage and you are not entitled to paternity rights. The Company will however support you as much as possible, which may include taking sick or compassionate leave.

If your baby does not survive the birth after the 24th week of pregnancy, it is called a stillbirth and you will be entitled to all the usual paternity rights. Please also refer to our Parental Bereavement Leave Policy.

ADOPTION WITHIN THE UK POLICY

Foreword

This Policy sets out the statutory rights and responsibilities of employees who wish to take adoption leave. The Company implements the adoption rights set down in legislation.

Throughout this Policy various abbreviations will be used, as follows;

Statutory Adoption Leave (SAL)	52 weeks leave when you have been matched to a child, regardless of length of service.
Ordinary Adoption Leave (OAL)	The first 26 weeks adoption leave that you are entitled to, regardless of length of service.
Additional Adoption Leave (AAL)	26 weeks leave that you are entitled to, regardless of length of service, taken at the end of OAL.
Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP)	Payable to you if you take adoption leave.
Matching Week	The end of the week you are matched with the child (UK adoptions) or the date the child enters the UK.
SAP1	Form issued when you are not eligible for SAP.
Expected date of placement	The date the child is expected to be placed with you.
Keeping in touch days (KIT)	Up to 10 days where you can carry out work / attend training sessions etc without bringing your adoption leave period to an end

Entitlement to Statutory Adoption Leave (SAL)

If you adopt a child through an approved adoption agency you will be entitled to take 52 weeks SAL, regardless of your length of service. This is made up of 26 weeks' OAL followed immediately by up to 26 weeks' AAL.

In circumstances where a couple jointly adopt a child, one may take adoption leave and the other parent may be able to take paternity leave or shared parental leave.

Entitlement to Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP)

As well as taking statutory adoption leave you will be entitled to 39 weeks' statutory adoption pay provided:

- You have 26 weeks' continuous service calculated as at the week in which notification of matching is given by the adoption agency
- Your average weekly earnings are not less than the lower earnings limit for national insurance contributions

SAP is paid at 90% of your average weekly earnings for the first 6 weeks, then the remaining 33 weeks will be paid at the Governments set weekly rate for that tax year, or at 90% of your average weekly earnings if this figure is lower than the Governments set weekly rate. SAP is subject to the normal tax and NI deductions. The latest rates for SAP can be found on <https://www.gov.uk/adoption-pay-leave/pay>

If you do not qualify for SAP, it is recommended that you contact your Adoption Agency to discuss any other financial support that may be available. You would also be provided with a SAP1 Form from the Company within 7 days of your application confirming the reasons why.

In order to be eligible for SAP you must provide proof to your Line Manager of the following:

- Your name and address and that of the agency
- The match date - e.g. the matching certificate
- The date of placement - e.g. a letter from the agency
- Provide the correct notice

Timing of Adoption Leave

Adoption leave can start on the day the child is placed for adoption (starts living with you), or up to 14 days earlier. You should discuss the timing of your adoption leave with your Manager as early as possible.

Notice Requirements

In order to be entitled to take SAL and receive SAP if applicable, you are required to provide to your Manager written notification of your intention to take adoption leave no later than 7 days after the date on which notification of the match with the child was provided by the adoption agency. This must be in writing and must specify the date the child is expected to be placed with you for adoption and the date you intend your adoption leave to start.

You are permitted to bring forward your adoption leave start date, provided that you advise the Company in writing at least 28 days before the new start date or, if that is not possible, as soon as reasonably practicable. You may also postpone your adoption leave start date, provided that you advise the Company in writing at least 28 days before the original proposed start date or, if that is not possible, as soon as reasonably practicable. You must also provide evidence of entitlement to adoption leave and pay by producing a 'matching certificate' from the adoption agency.

Within 28 days of receiving your notice of intention to take adoption leave, the Company will write to you confirming the latest date on which you must return to work after adoption leave.

Time off for Adoption Appointments

The main adopter will be able to take paid time off for up to 5 adoption appointments. The secondary adopter will be entitled to take unpaid time off for up to two appointments. Such appointments must have been arranged by or at the request of the adoption agency. The time off must be taken before the date of the child's placement for adoption with you.

Rights During OAL and AAL

During SAL, your contract of employment continues in force and you are entitled to receive all of your contractual benefits, except for normal wages, salary or shift allowance. Any benefits in kind (such as use of a company car, laptop and mobile phone) will continue and contractual annual leave entitlement will continue to accrue.

If you are a member of the pension scheme, the Company will continue making pension contributions during your adoption leave, based on your normal salary. Any employee contributions will be based on the amount of adoption pay you are receiving unless you inform Payroll that you wish to make up the shortfall.

Before the commencement of your adoption leave you will be informed of the arrangements for covering your work and for remaining in contact with the Company whilst you are on leave.

During your adoption leave you can if you wish, agree to work for the Company (or attend training) for up to 10 days during your adoption leave without bringing your adoption leave to an end and without loss of a week's statutory adoption pay. These are known as KIT days. Any work carried out on a day shall constitute a day's work for these purposes, and you will be paid your normal rate of pay.

The Company has no right to require you to carry out any work and you have no right to undertake any work during your adoption leave. If you are interested in using any KIT days, you must speak to your Manager.

Holiday and Adoption Leave

Prior to the commencement of adoption leave, you are required to give consideration to your holiday and discuss this with your Manager. The options available to you in regard to taking leave are; add your entitlement to either the beginning or end of your SAL or take any remaining leave during the year that you return to work after your SAL. During your adoption leave you will continue to accrue your holiday as if you were working during this period.

Contact During Adoption Leave

The Company reserves the right to maintain reasonable contact with you during adoption leave. This may be to discuss your plans for return to work, to discuss any special arrangements to be made or training to be given to ease your return to work or to update you on developments that are taking place at work.

Right to Return to Work After Adoption Leave

You will have been advised in writing of the date on which you are expected to return to work unless however you wish to return to work early, in which case you must provide your Manager with at least 8 weeks' notice.

If you wish to return to work later than the 52 weeks, you may be able to do so if you request annual leave or parental leave. If you decide not to return back to work from adoption leave, then you are required to provide the relevant notice in accordance with your contract of employment.

If returning to work during OAL, you will be entitled to return to the same job in which you were employed prior to commencing adoption leave, on terms and conditions not less favourable to those that you were on before. If returning to work during AAL, you will be entitled to return to the job in which you were employed prior to commencing adoption leave, or if this is not possible due to changes within the business, you would be offered a similar role on terms and conditions not less favourable to those that you were on before.

If you wish to change your hours or other working arrangements on returning from adoption leave, you should make a request under the Flexible Working Policy.

Failure to return to work by the end of your adoption leave will be treated as unauthorised absence unless you are sick and produce a Fitness For Work Certificate or you have pre-booked holiday leave which has been authorised by your Manager.

Adoptions Outside of the UK

For adoptions which take place outside of the UK in order to qualify for adoption leave you must:

- Have worked continuously for the Company for at least 26 weeks by the time you get your 'official notification'
- Give notice of your intention to take adoption leave no later than 28 days after the date of receipt of the official notification or the date on which you complete 26 weeks' continuous service with the Company (whichever is later)
- You must give notice of both the date the official notification was received and the date the child is expected to enter the UK

In addition, you must provide 28 days' notice of when you wish your period of adoption leave to begin, and within 28 days of the child's entry into the UK inform the Company of the date of entry. If requested you must provide a copy of the official notification, together with evidence of the child's date of entry into the UK. All relevant forms can be requested from the business.

Transfer of Adoption Leave (Shared Parental Leave)

Shared parental leave enables adopters to commit to ending their adoption leave and pay and to share the untaken balance of leave and pay as shared parental leave and pay with their partner, or to return to work early from adoption leave and opt in to shared parental leave and pay at a later date. Please refer to our Shared Parental Leave Policy for further information.

SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY

Foreword

This Shared Parental Leave Policy sets out the statutory rights and responsibilities of employees who wish to take shared parental leave. The Company implements the parental rights set down in legislation.

Shared Parental Leave (ShPL) is a way for eligible parents (individuals that share primary caring responsibilities for a new child) to share the care of their child during the first year of birth or adoption of a child. Parents may also qualify for Shared Parental Pay (ShPP).

This right applies equally to same-sex couples and parents following a surrogacy arrangement.

Throughout this Policy various abbreviations will be used, as follows;

Terms/Abbreviations	Definition
Mother	The person that is the expectant mother, or has given birth to a child, or is the primary adopter. The mother can be a male or female.
Partner	The person that is the biological father or partner of the mother/primary adopter. They must have an enduring relationship with the mother and child.
Expected week of childbirth (EWC)	This starts on a Sunday of the week the mother is expected to give birth.
Shared parental pay (ShPP)	The amount of pay you are entitled to during ShPL.
Curtailment	In this Policy it relates to the ending of leave early.
ShPL in touch days (SPLIT)	Days where you can attend work / training sessions etc. to keep in touch before returning to work permanently after ShPL.
Continuous	A period of ShPL that is taken in one block.
Discontinuous	A period of ShPL that is broken up and arranged around weeks where you will return to work in the interim.

Entitlement to Shared Parental Leave

In order to qualify for ShPL you must either be:

- The child's mother or primary adopter
- The biological father of the child
- The mother, husband, partner, or civil partner or the husband, partner of civil partner of the primary adopter

You must also have been continuously employed for at least 26 weeks by the end of the EWC or notification of being matched with an adoptive child. Additionally, an employee seeking to take ShPL must satisfy each of the following criteria:

- The mother/adopter of the child must be/have been entitled to statutory maternity/adoption leave or if not entitled to statutory maternity/adoption leave they must be/have been entitled to statutory maternity/adoption pay or maternity allowance and must have ended or given notice to reduce any maternity/adoption entitlements
- You must still be working for the Company at the start of each period of ShPL
- Your partner must meet the 'employment and earnings test' requiring them in the 66 weeks leading up to the EWC/matching date to have worked for at least 26 weeks and have earned above the maternity allowance threshold of £30 per week in 13 of the 66 weeks

- You must correctly notify the Company of your entitlement and provide evidence as required

When Shared Parental Leave Can Commence

ShPL cannot begin any earlier than the first 2 weeks after the birth or adoption of the child but can start immediately after this period.

Eligible parents are entitled to share a maximum of 50 weeks' leave within the first 12 months following the birth or adoption of a child. The entitlement ends on the child's first birthday.

ShPL can only be taken in weeks, either as one continuous block or in multiples of complete weeks. The minimum leave that can be taken is 1 week.

If you are the Mother

You can take ShPL after you have taken the legally required 2 weeks of maternity leave immediately following the birth of your child.

If you are the Adopter

You can take ShPL after taking at least 2 weeks of adoption leave.

If you are a Father/partner/spouse

You can take ShPL immediately following the birth/placement of your child but may first choose to exhaust any paternity leave entitlements.

Points to Note

You don't have to decide to take ShPL straight away, as long as you give at least 8 weeks notice and are eligible, you can request ShPL at any time you like during the child's first year (e.g. if you are on maternity leave and decide to reduce your maternity leave by 2 months for your partner to take time off, you can do so if relevant notice is given).

Entitlement to Shared Parental Pay

There is an entitlement of up to 37 weeks ShPP (taking into account the compulsory 2 weeks maternity leave following the birth of the child that is reserved for the mother only). The amount of weeks available will depend on the amount by which the mother/adopter reduces their maternity/adoption pay period or maternity allowance period.

ShPP may be payable during some or all of ShPL, depending on the length and timing of the leave.

In addition to meeting the eligibility requirements for ShPL, an employee seeking to claim ShPP must further satisfy each of the following criteria:

- The mother/adopter must be/have been entitled to statutory maternity/adoption pay or maternity allowance and must have reduced their maternity/adoption pay period or maternity allowance period
- The employee must intend to care for the child during the week in which ShPP is payable

The employee must remain in continuous employment until the first week of ShPP has begun;

- Earned an average salary not less than the lower earnings limit for the 8 weeks prior to the 15th before the EWC or matching date
- The employee must give proper notification in accordance with the rules set out below

Any ShPP due will be paid at a rate set by the Government for the relevant tax year.

Notification of Shared Parental Leave

If you are considering taking ShPL, we encourage you speak to your Manager as early as possible so you can discuss your potential entitlement, to talk about your plans and to enable the Company to support you.

If you are entitled and intending to take ShPL, you must complete one of the following application forms to confirm your intention of taking leave, booking leave or to change a booking leave of notice:

- Shared parental Leave (ShPL) Application Form for Mother/Primary Adopter;
- Shared parental Leave (ShPL) Application Form for Father/Partner.

If you are on maternity leave, you must confirm your curtailment of the maternity leave and pay before applying for ShPL taking into account the first 2 weeks of maternity leave are compulsory.

You must give 8 weeks notice, before any period of ShPL can be taken and to avoid duplication, the notice must be given at the same time as the notice of entitlement and intention and can be a request for either continuous or discontinuous leave.

In addition to notifying the Company of entitlement to ShPL/ShPP, you must also give notice to take the leave and as requested above, notice to take leave must be given at the same time as the notice of entitlement to ShPL.

You can provide up to three requests for leave notices or variations of ShPL during the 50 weeks, specifying leave periods that you are intending to take. Each notification may contain either (a) one continuous block of leave; or (b) 2 or more weeks of discontinuous leave, where you intend to return to work between periods of leave.

ShPL can only be taken in complete weeks but may begin on any day of the week.

Continuous Leave Notifications

A notification can be for a period of continuous leave, which means a notification of a number of weeks taken in a single unbroken period of leave (for example, 6 weeks in a row). You have the right to take a continuous block of leave, notified in a single notification, so long as it does not exceed the total number of weeks of ShPL available to you (specified in either of the Shared Parental Leave (ShPL) Application Forms) and the Company has been given at least 8 weeks' notice.

There will not be a requirement to arrange a meeting with you, unless this is something that you request yourself.

Discontinuous Leave Notifications

A single notification may also contain a request for two or more periods of discontinuous leave, which means asking for a set number of weeks of leave over a period of time, with breaks between the leave where you return to work (for example, an arrangement where you will take 6 weeks of ShPL and work every other week for a period of 3 months).

This notification will be reviewed and you will be provided with one of the following outcomes:

- Consent to the leave request
- Propose an alternative
- Refuse the pattern of leave, with or without suggesting an alternative

Where a request for discontinuous leave can, without further discussion, be approved in the terms stated in the notification form, a meeting may not be necessary.

However, if there are concerns with regard to the notification, your Manager will review this request, weighing up the potential benefits to you and to the Company against any adverse impact to the business.

Your Manager will arrange to meet with you during the 2 week period after your application to discuss the request and the purpose of the meeting is to discuss in detail the leave proposed and what will happen while you are away from work.

Each request for discontinuous leave 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 pattern of ShPL. The discussion during the meeting may also focus on how the leave proposal could be agreed, whether a modified arrangement would be agreeable to you and the Company, and what the outcome may be if no agreement is reached.

If your Manager doesn't agree to your discontinuous leave request, and subsequently you don't agree to any other pattern, you can either withdraw the notification request without detriment, on or before the 15th day after the notification was given or may take the total number of weeks in the notice in a single continuous block.

If you choose to take the leave in a single continuous block, you have until the 19th day from the date that the original notification was given to choose when you want the leave period to begin. The leave cannot start sooner than 8 weeks from the date the original notification was submitted. If you do not choose a start date then the leave will begin on the first leave date requested in the original notification.

Responding to a Shared Parental Leave Notification

Once your notification and leave request has been received, it will be dealt with as soon as possible, but a response will be provided no later than the 14th day after the leave request was made.

All notices for continuous leave will be confirmed in writing.

All requests for discontinuous leave will be carefully considered and once you have met with your Manager and discussed this, the outcome of this meeting will be confirmed in writing as soon as is reasonably practicable, but no later than the 14th day after the leave notification was made.

Variations to Arranged Shared Parental Leave

You are permitted to vary or cancel an agreed and booked period of ShPL, provided that you advise the Company in writing at least 8 weeks before the date of any variation. Any new start date cannot be sooner than 8 weeks from the date of the variation request.

Any variation or cancellation notification made by you, including notice to return to work early, will usually count as a new notification reducing your right to book/vary leave by one.

However, a change as a result of a child being born early, or as a result of the Company requesting it be changed, and you being agreeable to the change, will not count as further notification. Any variation will be confirmed in writing by the Company.

If you wish to vary or cancel your notification, you should notify your Manager immediately.

Rights During Shared Parental Leave

During the period of ShPL, your contract of employment continues in force and you are entitled to receive all your contractual benefits, except for salary. In particular, any benefits in kind (such as use of a company car, laptop and mobile phone) will continue and contractual annual leave entitlement will continue to accrue.

You are however reminded that holiday should wherever possible be taken in the year that it is accrued and where an ShPL period overlaps 2 leave years, you should consider how your annual leave entitlement can be used to ensure that it is not untaken at the end of the holiday year.

If you are a member of the pension scheme, the Company will continue making pension contributions during your ShPP, based on your normal salary. Any employee contributions will be based on the amount of ShPP you are receiving unless you inform Payroll that you wish to make up the shortfall.

Keeping in Touch During Shared Parental Leave

Your Manager does reserve the right to maintain reasonable contact with you during your leave to discuss any arrangements for you to keep in touch during the leave, should they wish to do so. Contact during ShPL can include:

- Discussion in relation to your plans for return to work
- Any special arrangements to be made or training to be given to ease your return to work
- To update you on developments at work during your absence

If you are the employee working for us, you can agree to return to work or attend training for up to 20 days during ShPL without this activity bringing the period of leave of pay to an end. These are known as SPLIT (Shared Parental Leave In Touch) days. Any work carried out on a day or part of a day shall constitute a day's work for these purposes and you would receive full pay for any day worked. If a SPLIT day occurs during a week when you are receiving ShPP, this will be effectively 'topped up' so that you receive full pay for the day in question.

Any SPLIT days worked do not extend the period of ShPL.

Please note that the Company has no right to require you to carry out any work and is under no obligation to offer you any work, during your ShPL. Any work undertaken is a matter for agreement between us and you.

You may wish to use SPLIT days to work part of a week during ShPL. You may also wish to use SPLIT days to effect a gradual return to work towards the end of a long period of ShPL or to trial a possible flexible working pattern. Any such proposals must be discussed with your Manager in the first instance.

In addition to the above, if you have taken maternity leave and ShPL, you will be entitled to both KIT and SPLIT days, as appropriate.

Returning to Work After Shared Parental Leave

You are expected to return to work on the next working day after the end date of ShPL, unless you notify us and advise otherwise.

We do however understand that your circumstances may change when you have children or adopt therefore, there are a number of different ways that the Company can support you upon your return to work, such as flexible working, and we would recommend that you review the relevant policies for further information.

If you are unable to attend work due to sickness or injury, our normal arrangements for sickness absence will apply. In any other case, late return without prior authorisation will be treated as unauthorised absence.

If you wish to return to work earlier than the expected return date, you may provide a written notice to vary the leave and must give us at least 8 weeks notice of your date of early return. This will count as one of your notifications. If you have already used your three notifications to book and/or vary leave then we do not have to accept the notice to return early but may do so if it is considered to be reasonably practicable to do so.

On returning to work after ShPL, you are entitled to return to the same job if your total statutory maternity/paternity/adoption leave and ShPL amounts to 26 weeks or less.

If your maternity/paternity/adoption leave and ShPL amounts to 26 weeks or more, you are entitled to return to the same job that you held before commencing the last period of leave or, if this is not reasonably practicable, to another job which is both suitable and appropriate and on terms and conditions no less favourable.

Special Circumstances and Further Information

In certain situations, your rights and requirements regarding ShPL and ShPP may change. In these circumstances the Company will abide by any statutory obligations and you should clarify any issues or queries with your Manager.

Fraudulent Claims

The Company can, where there is a suspicion that fraudulent information may have been provided or where the Company has been informed by the HMRC that a fraudulent claim has been made, investigate the matter further in accordance with the Company's Disciplinary Policy & Procedure.

PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY

Foreword

This Policy sets out the statutory rights and responsibilities of employees who wish to take parental leave. The Company implements the parental rights set down in legislation.

Parental leave enables you to look after your child's welfare such as spending more time with your children, stay with your child if they are in hospital, looking at new schools, settling children into new childcare arrangements and spending more time with family, such as visiting grandparents.

Who Qualifies For Parental Leave

You can qualify for parental leave if all of these apply;

- You have been employed by the Company for more than a year
- You are named on the child's birth or adoption certificate or have or expect to have parental responsibility
- You are not self-employed or a 'worker' i.e an agency worker or contractor
- You are not a foster parent (unless you have secured parental responsibility through the courts)
- The child is under the age of 18

Entitlement to Parental Leave

You are entitled to a maximum of 18 weeks unpaid parental leave for each child and adopted child, up to their 18th birthday.

Parental leave must be taken in periods of whole weeks (although parents of disabled children are allowed greater flexibility) and should not exceed more than 4 weeks of leave per year, per child.

You will remain employed during any parental leave period, and your employment rights (such as holiday accrual, pay and returning to the same job) are protected. This period would also count towards your continuous employment.

Parental leave applies to each child not to an individual's job. For example, if you use 10 weeks in total during your previous employment, you can use up to a further 8 weeks with your new employer (as this would total the 18 weeks entitlement).

For employees who work part-time, you will receive a pro rata amount of leave.

Conditions of Leave

Applications for parental leave must be made in writing to your Manager using the Parental Leave Request Form. You must give at least 21 days' notice of your intention to take parental leave or if you or your partner are having a baby or adopting, it's 21 days before the week the baby or child is expected. This notice must specify the start date and end date of the leave.

The Company reserves the right to request documentation to confirm your responsibility for the child and the child's age.

Postponing Leave

In some cases, it may be necessary for the Company to postpone your parental leave for up to 6 months from the date you originally requested. This, for example, would be in the case where the business would be harmed by your absence.

Postponement will be confirmed to you in writing no later than 7 days after your request to take leave. This will state the reason for the postponement.

PARENTAL BEREAVEMENT LEAVE POLICY

Foreword

This Policy reiterates the Company's commitment to supporting employees through their grief by ensuring that bereaved parents can take parental bereavement leave.

This Policy applies to employees who have suffered the loss of a child under the age of 18, and to parents who suffer a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

Throughout this Policy various abbreviations will be used, as follows;

Parental Bereavement Leave (PBL)	2 weeks leave for any employee with parental responsibility who loses a child under the age of 18, or suffers a stillbirth from 24 weeks of pregnancy, irrespective of how long they have been with the Company
Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay (SPBP)	Eligible to employees with parental responsibility who with at least 26 weeks' continuous service with the Company and weekly average earnings over the lower earnings limit
Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave Form (SPBL Form)	Form in which to request SPBP (if entitled)

Entitlement to Parental Bereavement Leave (PBL)

Whatever your length of service, you can take PBL if you have parental responsibility (including adopters, foster parents and guardians) of a child who passes away. If you have suffered a bereavement but unsure if you are entitled to PBL, you should contact your Manager for clarification.

For each child who has passed away, a bereaved parent can take 1 or 2 weeks' PBL. PBL is not available as individual days.

Timing of Parental Bereavement Leave (PBL)

If you are a bereaved parent, you are able to take the leave as a single block of 2 weeks or 2 separate blocks of 1 week at different times, within 56 weeks of the date of the death of your child.

Conditions of Parental Bereavement Leave (PBL)

If you intend to take PBL within the first 56 days after your child's death, you can take the leave straightaway without giving a period of notice. This means that you can begin PBL by letting your Manager know no later than when you are due to start work or, if that is not feasible, as soon as is reasonably practicable.

If you intend to take PBL more than 56 days after your child's death, you must provide your Manager with at least 1 weeks' notice of your intention to take PBL.

Cancellation of Parental Bereavement Leave (PBL)

If you have requested to take PBL within the first 56 days of the date of your child's death, you can cancel your PBL as long as you let your Manager know before you would have been due to start work.

If you have asked to begin your PBL more than 56 days after your child's death, you can cancel this as long as you let your Manager know at least 1 week in advance. Any week of PBL that has already begun cannot be cancelled.

Entitlement to Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay (SPBP)

To be eligible for SPBP:

- You must have been employed by the Company for at least 26 weeks' continuous employment by the week before the week in which the child passes away, and still be employed by the Company on the day on which the child passed away
- Your normal weekly earnings in the 8 weeks up to the week before the child's death, are no less than the lower earnings limit for national insurance contribution purposes

If you take PBL and qualify for SPBP, you will be paid at the rate set by the Government for the relevant tax year, or 90% of your average weekly earnings where this figure is lower than the Government's set weekly rate.

For those employees not eligible for SPBP, your leave will be unpaid.

You must give the Company notice of the weeks during which you wish to claim SPBP. You must normally give the Company notice within 28 days of the first day for which you are claiming SPBP. However, if that is not feasible, you can provide the notice as soon as is reasonably practicable.

At the same time as you give notice for PBL, you must provide evidence of entitlement to SPBP, by completing the relevant SPBL Form.

Rights During Parental Bereavement Leave

During PBL, all terms and conditions of your contract, except normal pay, will continue.

Returning to Work Following Parental Bereavement Leave

You have the right to resume working in the same job when returning to work from PBL if the period of leave, when added to any other period of statutory leave (typically maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, or shared parental leave) in relation to the same child, is 26 weeks or less.

If the period of leave taken is more than 26 weeks when returning to work, you will be entitled to return to the job in which you were employed prior to commencing PBL, or if this is not possible due to changes within the business, you would be offered a similar role on terms and conditions not less favourable to those that you were on before.

Confidentiality

When dealing with PBL, any personal data will be collected in accordance with the Company's General Data Protection Policy. The Company will only record the personal information required to deal with a request for bereavement leave and keep this information only for as long as necessary to deal with the request and provide the necessary support.

COMPASSIONATE LEAVE POLICY

Foreword

The purpose of this Policy is to help employees at the time of serious injury, serious illness, serious personal relationship problems or death of an immediate family member or close relative.

Definitions

For the purpose of this Policy, immediate family is defined as the employees' spouse, civil partner, partner, parent, child, sibling, grandparent or grandchild. If the employee is seeking compassionate leave in respect of a close relative's serious illness or death (i.e. someone who is not an immediate family member) you should discuss this request with your Manager to see if compassionate leave applies.

Bereavement

In the event of the death of an immediate family member, you will be granted up to 5 days unpaid leave in any 12-month period. Each case will be viewed sympathetically and the amount of leave granted will depend on a case by case basis. Your Manager will take into account matters such as your relationship with the deceased, domestic responsibilities and travel requirements.

In circumstances where you have lost a child, please refer to the Parental Bereavement Leave Policy.

In the case of death of another close relative, for example an aunt, uncle, cousin or parent-in-law, or a close friend, you may be granted unpaid leave to attend the funeral.

Other Circumstances Where Compassionate Leave is Available

Compassionate leave is available to take care of a dependant or to come to terms with a critical illness or injury of an immediate family member, or to deal with serious personal relationship problems.

Employees in these circumstances will be granted up to 5 days' unpaid compassionate leave for a one-off incident. Each case will be viewed sympathetically and the amount of leave granted will depend on a case by case basis. Your Manager will take into account factors such as the nature of the incident and, if applicable, the closeness of the relationship.

Procedure for Requesting Compassionate Leave

You must inform your Manager of the need to take compassionate leave as soon as reasonably practicable and advise them of the situation. Your Manager will then agree with you as to when you will return to work or when you will next be in contact.

If you wish to take further leave, you will be required to request annual leave in the usual way.

TIME OFF FOR DEPENDENTS POLICY

Foreword

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that as far as possible our employees are able to combine their career along with dependant responsibilities.

Definitions

For the purpose of this Policy, a dependant is a husband, wife, partner, child or parent, whether they live with you or not. It can be any member of your household (but not a tenant or a border or someone that lives in the same household as you) of whom relies on you for care and assistance.

The right to such leave commences on day one of your employment.

Circumstances in Which Right to Time Off for Dependents Applies

You are entitled to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work to deal with certain unexpected or sudden emergencies and to make any necessary longer-term arrangements.

Circumstances for taking such time off could include:

- If a dependant falls ill, or has been injured or assaulted
- When a dependant is having a baby
- To make longer term care arrangements for a dependant who is ill or injured
- To deal with the death of a dependant
- To deal with an unexpected disruption or breakdown of care arrangements for a dependant
- To deal with an unexpected incident involving the employees child during school hours

If you need time off for dependents, then you must inform your Manager as soon as you know that you are going to have to request to take time off. You will be expected to give the reasons for your absence and to provide an estimate of how long you will be absent.

If you are aware of the needs to take time off in advance or need to take a longer period of time off, you should consider taking annual leave or parental leave.

Misuse of the Right to Time Off

Disciplinary action may be taken where any employee is found to be abusing the right to time off.

UNPLANNED EMERGENCY LEAVE POLICY

Foreword

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that as far as possible our employees are able to manage personal situations that may happen with very little or no notice given.

Circumstances in Which Unplanned Emergency Leave Applies

You may need to take time off to attend to domestic emergencies. Emergency leave is classed as unpaid leave and time off will be granted to deal with unforeseen circumstances such as fire, burglary and flooding at home etc.

Emergency leave of up to one day will be granted however, you can, upon discussion with your Manager, request to take this time as holiday leave.

In the event of such an emergency you should ensure that you follow the correct absence reporting procedure and advise your Manager of how long you are likely to be absent from work. You should return to work as soon as the emergency situation is resolved, even if this is part way through your working day.

For emergencies which require you to be absent for more than one day, you must inform your Manager at the earliest opportunity and request that additional time be taken as holiday leave.

Misuse of the Right to Time Off

Disciplinary action may be taken where any employee is found to be abusing this Policy.

FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

Foreword

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that all employees with a minimum of 26 weeks continuous service are aware of their right to request flexible working, should they wish to do so.

Flexible working involves making a statutory request to change any aspect of your contract of employment. It can involve any of, or a combination of the following changes:

- Number of hours you work
- Location of where you work
- Patterns of hours/days you work
- Job sharing

By requesting flexible working, you must understand that:

- If your request is accepted, the changes will be a permanent variation to your contract, and
- You will not be able to request any further changes for at least 12 months from your original application date

Procedure for Requesting Flexible Working

If you wish to apply for flexible working, then you must do so in writing to your Manager using the Flexible Working Request Form. The Form must be fully completed by you, and you will need to specify what changes you are proposing and when you would like them to take effect. You must also include how you think these changes could affect your role, your team and the business.

On receipt of your Flexible Working Request Form your Manager will make an assessment on the impact of your request on the business. In some circumstances it may be possible to accept your application without having to discuss any further detail with you. However, in most cases, your Manager will want to meet with you to discuss your request in more detail. The review may also involve discussions with your team as well as other relevant Managers.

If a meeting is required, your Manager would send you an invite to attend a flexible working meeting. You will be given the right to be accompanied at this meeting by a work colleague.

This meeting will be to discuss the proposed arrangements in depth so that the Company can consider how it would work in practice and the potential impact on the business. It's also an opportunity to find solutions to any difficulties that might result from the arrangements. Therefore, alternatives may be explored with you, such as other possible working arrangements, agreeing the change on a temporary instead of permanent basis or having a trial period.

The meeting may not be face to face and may be held over the telephone or by some other form of communication, but this would be agreed by both yourself and your Manager.

Your Manager will consider your request thoroughly and take into account information gained from yourself and further details from associated teams and/or colleagues etc.

The decision will be confirmed to you in writing and where possible you will be provided with the outcome within [14] working days of the meeting. If this is not possible, you will be kept updated on progress and when you can expect to obtain an outcome.

All requests will be dealt with within a period of 3 months from first receipt of the flexible working application to notification of the outcome to an appeal. This time limit may be extended where both you and the Company are in agreement.

Potential Outcomes

Each request will be considered on a case by case basis, and the Company agreeing to one request will not set a precedent or create the right for another employee to be granted a similar change. There are four potential outcomes to a flexible working request and those are:

- Accept the request
- Accept the request with a trial period
- Accept the request with modifications
- Reject the request

The decision will be provided to you in writing. If any of the first three points apply, the letter will state the effective date and what the changes are. If a trial period is put in place, then the end date of that trial will be included.

If your request is rejected, law dictates that it must be for one of the following business reasons:

- The burden of additional costs
- An inability to reorganise work amongst 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
- A planned structural change to your business

Again, your Manager will write to you to confirm the reasons for the rejection and will also provide you with details of your right to appeal the decision and next steps to take should you wish to appeal.

Withdrawal of a Flexible Working Request

You can withdraw your flexible working application at any time before the decision has been made and you need to notify your Manager of this intention, in writing, as soon as possible.