

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

PLACING PEOPLE FIRST



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The following policies do not form part of the Principle Statement of Terms and Conditions of Service and may be amended from time to time. The Day Webster Group ('The Group') consists of Day Webster Ltd and all its subsidiaries.

The timescales listed within the policies will be adhered to wherever possible. However, where there are good reasons, such as the need for further investigation or the lack of availability of witnesses or companions, each party can request that the other agree to an extension of the permitted timescale.

The company reserves the right to seek assistance from external facilitators such as arbitrators, conciliators and mediators at any stage during the procedures, in the interest of seeking a satisfactory outcome for all concerned.

The following policies apply to employees within the Group, irrespective of status (permanent, temporary or fixed) or length of service. A shortened process may be adopted for employees with less than two years of service.

- Grievance Policy and Procedure v1.00
- Capability Policy and Procedure v1.00
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure v2.00
- Probation Policy and Procedure v1.00
- Appraisal Policy and Procedure v3.00
- Redundancy Policy v1.00
- Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure v2.00
- Maternity Policy and Procedure v1.00
- Paternity Policy and Procedure v2.00
- Adoption Policy and Procedure v1.00
- Parental Leave Policy and Procedure v1.00
- Shared Parental Leave Policy and Procedure v1.00
- Carer Policy and Procedure v1.00
- Flexible Working Policy and Procedure v2.00
- Working from Home Policy and Procedure v2.00
- Clear Desk Policy v1.00
- Electric Car Scheme Policy and Procedure v2.00

The following policies apply to all members of staff within the Group irrespective of status (perm, temp, fixed or casual):

- Health and Safety Policy v1.00
- Attendance Policy v1.00
- Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure v1.00
- Social Media Policy and Procedure v1.00
- Alcohol Policy v1.00
- Drugs Policy v1.00

GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

The Group recognises that problems and tensions can arise between people at work and that if such issues are not dealt with and resolved quickly, they may escalate. Accordingly, the company has established a Grievance Procedure, the use of which is open to all employees. The purpose of the procedure is to allow employees to freely express a complaint or matter of concern and to provide a fair and effective method of resolving individual grievances within a reasonable time of any particular issue being raised. The company will then try and resolve the issue raised by means of a discussion and agreed solution.

This procedure should not be abused and should only be invoked for matters of a serious grievance/complaint and not as a way of objecting to a reasonable work instruction or as a forum for airing general discrepancies with employment.

All formal grievances taken up under this procedure must be placed in writing. If an employee has difficulty in expressing their views in writing for any reason, they should contact the HR department, confidentially, who will help the employee prepare their written grievance. Notes arising from any grievance issue will be retained on an employee's personal file.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of the Group, irrespective of length of service.

INFORMAL STAGE

If an employee has a grievance about their employment, they should discuss it informally with their line manager first. The company hopes that the majority of concerns will be resolved at this stage. There is no right to be accompanied by a companion or trade union representative at such informal discussions.

If it is not possible for an employee to talk to their line manager, or if the grievance concerns their manager, the employee should instead talk to the next most senior person or the HR department.

The Group will endeavour to resolve grievances as quickly as possible and where employees are not satisfied with the outcome, employees have the right to escalate the grievance to the next stage.

FORMAL STAGE

STAGE 1

If an employee feels that the matter has not been resolved through informal discussions, they should set out the nature of their grievance in writing to their immediate line manager or HR representative without unreasonable delay. If the grievance concerns an employee's manager, the written statement should be sent to the HR department. A meeting will be arranged without unnecessary delay, and in any event within five working days, and at a time and place which will be notified to the employee in advance in writing. At the meeting, the employee will be allowed to explain their grievance and how they think it should be resolved. All options will be investigated. The manager may need to carry out additional investigations outside the meeting. At this stage, and the appeal stage, the employee may, if they wish, be accompanied by a companion (defined as a work colleague or a trade union representative), and their manager may be accompanied by a member of HR, a second management representative or an authorised deputy.

The employee will be notified in writing of the outcome within five working days, or as soon afterwards as is reasonably possible. Any action taken to resolve the grievance will be monitored and reviewed if appropriate to ensure that the issue is effectively dealt with.

APPEAL STAGE

An employee has the right to appeal against the decision following the grievance hearing. The appeal must be set out in writing and made within five days of receiving written confirmation of the outcome of the meeting.

An appeal meeting will be arranged without unnecessary delay and at a time and place which will be notified to the employee in advance by letter. The employee has the right to be accompanied by a companion at the meeting. Where possible the appeal will be heard by a manager that has not previously been involved in the case and will be dealt with impartially.

The appeal will be fully explored at the meeting, including the reasoning behind the appeal and any new evidence to be considered. The manager will review the facts and carry out any additional investigation if appropriate, before reaching a conclusion. The employee will be notified in writing of the outcome. The manager has the ultimate authority in all grievance matters and their decision is final.

NOTES

The purpose of the grievance procedure is to explore genuine concerns connected with employment. The company takes this duty very seriously. However, in certain circumstances, the company reserves the right to review or refuse to hear grievances.

Where an employee raises a grievance that has already been addressed, the company will ask the employee to provide new evidence that justifies the re-opening of the matter. If, on an initial assessment, the grounds for the grievance appear weak, the company will require the employee to submit further evidence for investigation before convening a grievance meeting.

Where the employee raises a grievance which in the reasonable opinion of the company is frivolous or vexatious, the company reserves the right not to pursue such grievances unless the employee provides relevant evidence.

Where the company has reasonable grounds for belief that an employee is using the grievance procedure to make deliberately false allegations, or as a form of bullying against a colleague or manager, it will be treated as a misconduct matter.

Where an employee raises a grievance during a disciplinary process, and the two matters appear related, the disciplinary process may be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the grievance. Where the grievance and disciplinary cases are unrelated, both issues will be dealt with concurrently.

CAPABILITY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

The company recognises that during employment an employee's capability to carry out their duties may deteriorate. This can be for a number of reasons, the most common ones being that either the job changes over a period of time and the employee fails to keep pace with the changes, or their personal circumstances change (most commonly because of health reasons) and they can no longer cope with the work.

In cases of sickness absence, the procedure below should be read in conjunction with the Group's Sickness Absence Policy.

The procedure should be read in conjunction with the Group's Disciplinary Policy.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of the Group who have successfully completed their probation period.

JOB CHANGES

If the nature of the job changes the company will make every effort to ensure that the employee understands the level of performance expected of them and that they receive adequate training and supervision. If the company has concerns regarding an employee's capability these may be discussed in an informal manner, and, if appropriate, a Performance Improvement Action Plan may be issued and a reasonable time period (minimum four weeks) given for improvement.

If the employee's standard of performance is still not adequate and objectives/areas of improvement have not been met, the employee will be warned in writing that a failure to improve and maintain the performance required could lead to dismissal. A more formal process will be followed under the Group disciplinary process. The company may also consider the possibility of a transfer to more suitable work if possible.

If there is still no improvement after a reasonable time and the company cannot transfer the employee to more suitable work, they will be issued with a final warning that they may be dismissed unless the required standard of performance is achieved and maintained.

If such improvement is not forthcoming after an agreed period of time, the employee will be dismissed with the appropriate notice.

PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Personal circumstances may arise which do not prevent an employee from attending work, but which prevent them from carrying out their normal duties, for instance, a lack of dexterity or general ill health. If such a situation arises, the company will normally need to have details of the employee's medical diagnosis and prognosis so that it has the benefit of expert advice. Under normal circumstances, this can be most easily obtained by asking the employee's own doctor for a medical report. The employee's permission is needed before the company can obtain such a report and it will expect employees to co-operate in this matter should the need arise. When the company has obtained as much information as possible regarding the employee's condition and after consultation with them, a decision will be made about the employee's future employment within their current role or, where circumstances permit, in a more suitable role.

There may also be personal circumstances that prevent an employee from attending work, either for a prolonged period(s) or for frequent short absences. Under these circumstances, the company will need to know when it can expect the employee's attendance record to reach an acceptable level. Again, this may mean asking the employee's own doctor for a medical report, or making whatever investigations are appropriate in the circumstances; including obtaining a second medical opinion for which the employee's continued cooperation would be expected. When the company has obtained as much information as possible regarding the employee's condition, and after consultation with them, a decision will be made about their future employment in their current role or, where circumstances permit, in a more suitable role.

DISCIPLINARY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

These rules set out specific standards of performance and behaviour, and the procedures referred to in this policy are intended to promote consistency and fairness.

The purpose of these rules and procedures is to emphasise and encourage improvement in conduct and performance. They are not necessarily to be construed as punitive action.

Accordingly, every effort is made to ensure that when action is taken under the disciplinary procedure the action is fair and reasonable. Employees are given every opportunity to present their case and there is a right of appeal against any disciplinary decision which is considered to be either unfair or unjust.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of the Group, irrespective of length of service, although a shortened process may be adopted for employees with less than two years of service.

GENERAL RULES

It is not practical to specify all disciplinary rules or offences that may result in disciplinary action, as they may vary depending on the nature of the work. Some key rules are set out below.

- Personal hygiene and appearance must be of a high standard;
- employees are expected to achieve and maintain a good standard of workmanship and to show a conscientious approach to the job, or to the details of that job, to a standard that may be reasonably expected;
- employees are expected to show the skill or aptitude required for the job, especially where such skills are claimed or implied at the time employment commenced;
- the company reserves the right to require employees to agree to submit their person or property to being searched whilst on the company's premises, or at any time at the reasonable requirement of the company;
- employees are expected to act wholeheartedly in the interests of the company at all times. Any conduct detrimental to its interests or its relations with its customers, suppliers, the general public, and other staff members or damaging to its public image shall be considered to be a breach of the company's rules;
- all authorised notices displayed are expected to be read and observed;
- employees must not perform, arrange to carry out any work or activity which could be considered to be in competition with or which adversely affects any of the company's interests;

- to ensure maximum efficiency, employees are engaged on the basis that they must be prepared to undertake reasonable duties, other than those for which they have been specifically engaged;
- employees have an obligation to ensure that they conform to the requirements of the Equal Opportunity and Diversity Statement and the Dignity at Work policy, and must not act in a manner that could be considered to be of an unlawful discriminatory nature against fellow employees, customers or other people with whom they come into contact with on the company's business;
- the telephone or postal services must not be used for private purposes without prior permission;
- confidential or secret information must not be disclosed at any time, either during or after employment; This includes after contractual restrictions have expired.
- an orderly and courteous manner must be maintained in front of customers at all times;
- employees are not permitted to remove material or equipment of any kind from the company or any other place of work without prior written permission;
- where materials or equipment are removed, you are responsible for their safekeeping at all times; and
- the company's or customer's time, material or equipment must not be used for any unauthorised work.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES AND CATEGORIES OF CONDUCT

It is every employee's duty to observe the following general rules and to behave in a reasonable way towards fellow employees, the company, its suppliers, customers, visitors and clients.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

It is not practical to set out all the instances of conduct or capability that may lead to disciplinary action. However, the disciplinary procedure may be invoked as a result of:

- any failure to observe the rules set out in this handbook or any other part of an employee's Contract of Employment/ Terms and Conditions of Service; or
- any other instance of conduct (whether during working hours or not) or job performance, which the company believes could only properly be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

The disciplinary procedure has three main objectives:

- to protect in an equitable manner the safety and interests of all employees;
- to protect the legitimate interests of the Group; and
- to promote good relationships at all levels by ensuring that where action is carried out, it is done promptly, consistently and comprehensively.

The company's aim is to encourage improvement in individual conduct or capability. This procedure sets out the action which will be taken when disciplinary rules are breached, or an individual is underperforming in their duties. Where it is necessary to take disciplinary action to protect either the interests of the company or its employees, the procedure followed will relate to the nature of the offence committed. Where the offence is found to be of a more serious nature, the company reserves the right to apply a more severe sanction than a verbal warning or first written warning.

PRINCIPLES

The procedure is designed to deal consistently with disciplinary issues. No disciplinary action will be taken until the matter has been fully investigated. Wherever possible, the investigation will be carried out by one person and the disciplinary hearing (where appropriate) will be chaired by a second person.

At every formal stage, employees will have the opportunity to state their case and be accompanied by a fellow employee or an accredited trade union representative if they wish. Managers and more senior employees have the authority to take employees through the formal disciplinary process. directors, heads of departments and managers have the authority to dismiss employees.

Employees will not normally be dismissed for a first breach of discipline, except in the case of gross misconduct.

Where a disciplinary sanction is imposed the employee will receive an explanation of the penalty imposed and have the right to appeal against the findings and the penalty.

CATEGORIES OF CONDUCT

EXAMPLES OF MISCONDUCT

Below are listed examples of misconduct which may warrant either a verbal warning or a first written warning. The list is not exhaustive, and, on all occasions, a full and proper investigation must take place prior to the issuing of a verbal warning or written warning.

- Persistent lateness, poor time-keeping and unauthorised breaks;
- absence from work, including going absent during working hours without a valid reason, notification or authorisation;
- smoking in unauthorised areas;
- failure to work in accordance with prescribed procedures;
- incompetence;
- unreasonable standards of dress or personal hygiene; or
- failure to observe company regulations and procedures.

EXAMPLES OF GROSS MISCONDUCT

Listed below are examples of misconduct which may be considered to be gross misconduct and may warrant a final warning, demotion or dismissal. It is stressed however that this list is not exhaustive and that on all occasions a full and proper investigation must take place prior to the issuing of a final warning, demotion or dismissal.

- Fighting, physical assault or dangerous horseplay;
- gross insubordination;
- the use of aggressive behaviour, including violent or intimidating conduct;
- excessive bad language.
- drunkenness and/or drug abuse.;
- breach of safety rules and/or any action which seriously endangers the health or safety of another person whilst at work;
- theft, dishonesty or fraud. This includes unauthorised possession of company property;

- careless damage, negligence or wilful damage to property belonging to the company or other employees;
- fraud or any other offence committed against the company which would be a breach of the law of the land, including receipt of bribes to affect the placing of business with a supplier of goods and services;
- acts of gross negligence or misconduct involving careless or reckless driving. This encompasses serious misuse of a company vehicle including using the incorrect fuel for the engine type;
- loss of driving licence upon conviction where driving is an essential requirement of the job;
- deliberately or negligently making a false entry in the written records of the company, including inaccurate or fraudulent recording of financial transactions, knowingly giving false information or deliberately omitting relevant information on a job application form;
- smoking in non-smoking areas;
- unlawful discrimination, including those of a sexual nature, and harassment or bullying of colleagues and/or subordinates. Bullying and/or harassment may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, and/or an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate or injure the recipient;
- the act of copying company-owned computer software without authorisation. Downloading, loading or use of unauthorised or pirated software on company PCs or any other action likely to allow a virus on to the system, including unauthorised use of CD ROMs;
- the unauthorised disabling of software and/or anti-virus software;
- deliberately accessing internet sites containing pornographic, offensive or obscene material;
- downloading of or sending of inappropriate material in contravention of the System Computer Access and Information Security Policies;
- failure to comply with relevant statutory or regulatory requirements;
- unauthorised use or disclosure of confidential information;
- working for a competitor without permission;
- refusing to allow a search to be carried out in accordance with the company rules;
- convictions for any serious criminal offence while an employee of the company;
- behaviour whether inside or outside work which may bring the company into disrepute;
- publishing material or information in any format in which the company is identified or capable of being identified, and comments are made about the company or any of its employees which in the opinion of the board are detrimental;
- breach of the company's social media rules;
- breaches of confidentiality, prejudicial to the interest of the company;
- breaches of confidentiality/security procedures; or
- serious breach of health and safety rules.

THE PROCEDURE

INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS/COUNSELLING

Other than in a matter of serious misconduct, where an employee's standard of conduct or performance is considered lacking, or a breach of conduct is believed to have occurred, the manager will normally draw the matter to the worker's attention in a private and informal way.

In most cases, this informal discussion should resolve any difficulties identified. If the employee fails to improve or to sustain improvement, the formal procedure will commence.

Where there is a performance issue, an Action Plan will be issued and will normally last a minimum of four weeks. If at the end of the period, the objectives of the Plan are met, no further action will be taken. However, if the objectives/areas of improvement of the Plan are not met, then action may be taken under the formal stages of the procedure. In exceptional circumstances, a short extension to the informal Action Plan may be agreed to achieve a fully satisfactory standard.

Where there is a more serious case of misconduct, or an employee fails to improve their performance and maintain that improvement as mentioned above, the manager of the member of staff should inform HR, who will then decide as to the procedure that should be followed.

THE FORMAL PROCEDURE

NOTIFICATION

If conduct or performance fails to meet acceptable standards, an initial investigation may be conducted, including an investigation meeting. If it is considered that there is a case to answer then a disciplinary hearing will be arranged. The individual will be given a minimum of 48 hours' notice in writing of the meeting in the form of a letter, which will also advise of the details of the alleged breach of discipline. This time can be reduced by mutual agreement.

The formal procedure will be followed if an employee has failed to meet or continue with the objectives set in a remedial Action Plan.

The letter will enclose supporting documentation. All staff have the right to be accompanied by a fellow worker or accredited trade union representative.

THE HEARING

The appointed chair will lead the hearing and a representative of HR, another manager or an authorised deputy will be present to take summary notes and to ensure the correct procedure is followed.

At the hearing, the following will occur:

- the employee will be advised of their rights;
- the employee will be advised of all known facts relevant to the case;
- the employee will be given every opportunity to put forward their case and views;
- their representative (if they are accompanied) can make representations on their behalf;
- there will be an adjournment to consider the facts or to carry out additional investigations; and
- following the hearing, the employee will be advised either verbally or in writing of the chair's decision.

If a disciplinary penalty is awarded, the employee will be made aware of their right of appeal.

WARNINGS

FIRST WRITTEN WARNING

A first written warning is appropriate when:

- an informal discussion has previously occurred, and the misconduct is either repeated or performance has not improved; or
- the offence is considered to be of a more serious nature for which a written warning is more appropriate.

FINAL WRITTEN WARNING

A final written warning is appropriate when:

- an employee's offence is of a serious nature falling just short of one justifying dismissal; or
- an employee persists in the misconduct/poor performance which previously warranted a lesser warning.

DOWNGRADING OR TRANSFER TO ANOTHER POST

This action is appropriate when:

- previous attempts, via the disciplinary procedure, to rectify a problem have failed and this is a final attempt to solve a problem without having to dismiss an employee; or
- an employee is considered by the manager of the department to be incompetent or otherwise unfit to fulfil the duties for which they are employed but where dismissal is not thought to be appropriate.

Downgrading may result in a deduction in pay.

DISMISSAL

Dismissal is appropriate when:

- an employee's behaviour is considered to be gross or serious misconduct; or
- an employee's misconduct/poor performance has persisted, exhausting all other lines of disciplinary procedure.

TIMESCALES FOR THE EXPIRY OF WARNINGS

Warnings issued to employees shall be deemed to have expired after the following periods of time:

- First written warnings – six months
- Final written warnings – twelve months

These timescales remain provided that, during that period, no further warnings have been issued in respect of the employee's conduct and/or capability. The chair in exceptional circumstances may increase the time scales for the expiry of the warnings by six months if deemed appropriate.

Warnings for matters connected with capability or performance will indicate a period of time for improvement and may contain certain recommendations for further training or counselling. Warnings for conduct may require that there is either immediate improvement and/or that there is no repetition of the offence.

Any further disciplinary process that takes place after a previous warning is likely to result in a more serious penalty being imposed even if the second offence is of a different nature to the previous one, particularly where there is evidence that the first warning has not been heeded.

If at this stage the employee demonstrates poor performance while the warning for misconduct is live, he may receive a first warning on grounds of capability. This is because the company would not dismiss for a first offence of poor capability unless it is deemed to be gross incompetence.

FORMAT OF WARNING LETTERS

To avoid any inconsistency or uncertainty, all written warnings will conform to a standard, showing clearly:

- the nature of the offence;
- the seriousness of the offence;
- which stage of the procedure is operating;
- the remedial action required and the review period;
- the penalty for non-compliance;
- details of any previous unexpired warning;
- the duration of the warning;
- the right of appeal and to whom it should be made (and if appropriate, the stage of the disciplinary procedure); and
- details of the next stage of the procedure.

Where dismissal is the outcome the letter will confirm the reason for dismissal and any administrative matters arising from the termination of employment.

APPEALS

Every employee has the right to appeal against the outcome of a disciplinary hearing. The basis of an appeal should normally relate to one of the following areas:

- that the company's procedure has not been followed correctly;
- that the resulting disciplinary action was inappropriate/ not warranted; and
- that new information regarding disciplinary action has arisen.

The appeal will be dealt with impartially and wherever possible by a manager who has not previously been involved in the case.

The appeal should be placed in writing and follow the instructions provided in the outcome letter. The letter should contain the grounds for appeal and should be lodged within five days of receipt of the warning/dismissal letter.

An appeal meeting invite letter will be sent within five days of receiving the appeal letter. The employee has the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or colleague at the meeting.

The findings, decision and outcome of the appeal hearing will be confirmed to the employee in writing. This outcome is final.

SUSPENSION

The company reserves the right to suspend an employee on full pay during a disciplinary investigation. During the period of suspension, the employee will be paid their normal hourly rate but shall not attend their place of work or access computer systems other than for the purpose of attending disciplinary proceedings, including investigatory interviews. Nor shall the employee contact any other employees, suppliers and customers/clients of the company, except the employee's companion, without the company's consent. Any decision to dismiss will be taken by the company only after a full investigation.

The suspension will be for as short a time as is reasonably possible in the circumstances. The purpose of suspension is manifold, and it can be implemented when it is necessary to remove a member of staff from the workplace, for example pending an investigation, or to allow time for a 'cooling down period' for both parties. Suspension may be for the protection of the employee or others, to prevent an employee from influencing or being influenced by others, or to prevent possible interference with evidence. The employee must remain available to answer the company's questions at all times during a period of suspension.

Where an employee falls sick during a disciplinary suspension the company will follow the relevant policy and guidelines. The company may reserve the right to withhold Occupational Sick Pay.

Suspension is not a finding of guilt or a disciplinary measure. It is an administrative measure to allow the investigation of a serious issue/complaint.

An employee suspended from duty will receive written confirmation within three days of:

- the reason for the suspension; and
- confirmation of the date from which the suspension commenced.

PROBATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

A probationary period is essentially a trial period for a new employee as it allows both the employer and the employee to assess objectively if the new recruit is suited to the role, taking into account the individual's overall capability, skills, performance and general conduct.

The Group wants to ensure that all employees are treated fairly and equally and that it is sensitive to the needs of those who may be struggling to adjust to the social or physical aspects of the work environment. Detailed job descriptions, policies and procedures will ensure that the company is clear about the standards and criteria used to assess probationary employees.

In the interests of seeking a satisfactory outcome for all concerned, the company reserves the right to seek assistance from external facilitators such as arbitrators, conciliators and mediators at any stage in the probationary procedure.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of the Group who are within their probation period.

REVIEW MEETINGS

Review meetings and ongoing feedback sessions will be conducted regularly throughout the employee's probationary period, although the frequency will depend on the role and performance.

In the first few weeks of probation, the line manager will meet with them to:

- commence completion of the induction checklist (where applicable);
- clarify responsibilities and establish priorities;
- set out the performance standards and assessment criteria that will be used to evaluate the employee's performance during the probationary period;
- set SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely) objectives, where applicable;
- explain the process of the probationary period, including a programme of regular meetings and key review dates; and
- identify any initial training that may be needed in order for the employee to carry out job role duties.

The table below outlines the typical timetable for probation review meetings.

EMPLOYMENT	FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS/FEEDBACK
First 3 months	Regular feedback/coaching
By the end of the third month	Initial probation assessment review (this may be brought forward if there are serious concerns)
By the end of the sixth month	Final probation assessment review (This may be brought forward if there are serious concerns)

The aim of each review meeting is to:

- review conduct;
- review performance against performance targets, work standards, skills and a value behaviour framework where applicable. Examples include communication skills, reliability and quality of work;
- review attendance, sickness and punctuality records. Patterns/trends of sickness absence or any health concerns that seem to be negatively impacting the business will also be investigated. In some circumstances, an occupational health referral or request for a GP report (either your own or one appointed by the company) may be necessary;
- identify training or developmental needs;
- provide feedback and discuss any work plans and/or requirements of the job;
- identify how the manager can assist the employee to meet the company's objectives, including by making any reasonable adjustments; and
- discuss any issues or concerns of a personal nature.

If at any stage of the probationary period, an employee appears to be having difficulty in achieving the required standard of performance, attendance or conduct, the line manager may meet with them to explain the problem, if necessary, before a review meeting has been scheduled. Practical support will be offered to help the employee achieve the necessary standards, and they may also be referred to other support mechanisms.

In order to ensure an employee is given a fair opportunity to learn a new role, the company will normally give the employee until the end of the probationary period before deciding whether the termination of employment is appropriate. However, if it becomes apparent that the employee is wholly unsuitable for the role in terms of expectations and standards, it may be necessary to consider terminating the employment part-way through the probationary period.

All allegations of misconduct or gross misconduct may be subject to an investigation. The company reserves the right not to follow the full Disciplinary Policy during the probationary period but instead to invite the employee to a probationary review meeting with a possible outcome of dismissal from the company.

FIRST PROBATION ASSESSMENT REVIEW MEETING

At the end of the first three months of an employee's probationary period, the line manager will meet with them to discuss performance and prepare an initial assessment that either indicates that they are making satisfactory progress or identifies areas of difficulty. If any difficulties are identified, an employee will be given confirmation of:

- what they need to do to demonstrate their suitability for confirmation in the job role;
- the reasonable measures that will be taken to support them in achieving the required standard of performance; and
- normal notification that if they fail to achieve the final standard by the date of the final probation assessment review, employment may be terminated.

FINAL PROBATION ASSESSMENT REVIEW MEETING

After six months have passed, the line manager will meet with the employee to make a final assessment of whether their post will be confirmed. The final probation assessment review form will be completed. If the decision is to confirm employment with the company, the form will be forwarded to HR with the recommendation that the employee is to be offered a permanent position. A letter will be issued confirming the same.

If there are concerns about the employee's performance, the final probation assessment review form should be passed to HR outlining the issues. At this stage, a probationary review hearing to assess an employee's suitability for continued employment will be arranged. The meeting may be chaired by a manager who will consider whether to:

- confirm the employee in their post;
- extend the employee's probationary period;
- consider options if appropriate to downgrade and appoint the employee to a lower role; or
- terminate employment.

The employee will be invited in writing to attend this formal meeting to discuss their probation and potential outcomes. They will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or workplace colleague. Summary notes will be made at the meeting.

An extension of the probationary period will be for no longer than three months (unless exceptional circumstances arise) and will allow a final opportunity for improvement. Extensions are used only when an employee's performance is borderline and there are sound reasons for concluding that the employee will be able to achieve the required standard in the future with appropriate support. It may also be appropriate if the employee has had a long, unavoidable, period(s) of absence during which it was not possible to undertake a reasonable assessment.

If an employee's probation is to be extended, the company will confirm in writing:

- the length of the extension;
- the reasons for the extension;
- the performance standards required to be confirmed in post; and
- any further training that will be provided.

The employee will also be advised that their employment may be terminated either at the end of the extended period or sooner if the employee does not meet these standards.

The decision on whether to dismiss, downgrade or extend the probation period will be taken after all evidence and representations have been considered. The decision will depend on what action has been taken so far to support the employee in meeting the company's standards, the extent of the shortfall in each of these areas and any mitigating circumstances.

The employee will be given notification of the outcome at the end of the probationary hearing and, in any event within five working days. If dismissal is considered to be the only option, the employee will be given one week's notice. Employees have the right to appeal against this decision. An appeal would need to be made in writing and addressed to the person detailed in the outcome letter.

PROBATIONARY PERIODS FOR INTERNAL PROMOTIONS/TRANSFERS

If an employee is transferred or promoted to a new role and the duties and responsibilities of the new role are completely different from those of the previous role, they may be subjected to a probationary period of six months before the new post is formally confirmed. The continuity of service will remain unaffected by the promotion or transfer and will remain the date of the employee's first day with the company.

If an employee does not reach the standards required by the new position and there are no alternative roles available, the company may have no option but to terminate an employee's employment. In these circumstances, the employee does not have the right to return to the original job role unless this was specifically agreed as part of the terms of the transfer/promotion.

If the probation period is to be extended, the company will confirm in writing:

- the length of the extension;
- the reasons for the extension;
- the performance standards required in order to be confirmed in post; and
- any further training that will be provided.

An employee will also be advised that their employment will be terminated if they do not meet these standards.

In order for an employee to be given a fair opportunity to learn a new role, the company will normally give the employee until the end of the probationary period before deciding whether termination of employment is appropriate. However, if it becomes apparent that the employee is unsuitable for the role in terms of expectations and standards, it may be necessary to consider terminating the employment part-way through the probationary period.

The employee will be invited in writing to attend a formal meeting to discuss their probation and potential outcomes. They will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or workplace colleague. The employee will be informed of the reasons why their employment has not been confirmed and may be given the right of appeal against the decision.

APPRAISAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

An appraisal is an opportunity for employees and their line manager to engage in a formal discussion about the employee's performance and development, as well as support required from their line manager.

The company runs appraisals every six months. The appraisal meetings are a two-way discussion that focuses on the work of the employee over the review period. In particular, progress made by the employee against achievements set at the last appraisal will be discussed and reviewed. Achievements for the forthcoming review period will also be discussed and set.

The appraisal aims to assist employees to develop to their full potential. It enables employees and line managers to identify strengths and development needs. The appraisal meeting also facilitates a formal discussion about the employee's career aspirations.

The company promotes continuous improvement and job satisfaction across all employees. The appraisal is a formal extension of the regular one-to-one meetings, coaching, mentoring and other training and feedback sessions that the Company operates.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of the Group who have successfully completed their probation period.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Line managers are responsible for conducting the appraisals of their team members. The company will provide line managers with training on conducting appraisals and any ongoing support if required.

Appraisal meetings are conducted every six months. The HR team is responsible for preparing the appraisal packs, collating previous appraisal forms and notes. The current form for the appraisal will be provided and prefilled with the employee's details, absence records and the achievements previously set with the employee's projected learning development level. These packs will be provided to line managers and employees a week before the scheduled appraisal meeting date.

PRE-APPRAISAL EMPLOYEE SELF-ASSESSMENT

The Company will provide employees with a self-assessment form prior to the appraisal meeting. This enables the employee to prepare for the appraisal meeting itself by providing employees with their previous set of achievements which will be discussed during the appraisal.

The self-assessment also helps the employee consider their performance over the review period and some of the issues they may wish to raise with their Line Manager.

Self-assessment forms will be provided a week before the scheduled appraisal.

PRE-APPRAISAL LINE MANAGER PREPARATION

Line managers should ensure that performance issues are not saved up until the next scheduled appraisal meeting. Employees should not be surprised by any information provided at the appraisal relating to ongoing poor performance that the employee has not been aware of, resulting in them not meeting the achievements set. The appraisal is a formal review of performance and ad hoc issues should be raised by the employee's line manager during the course of the appraisal period.

The line manager should gather all relevant documentation regarding the employee's performance in preparation for the meeting in order to provide a valuable assessment of the employee's contribution. Any targets assigned to the employee should be collated and measured against actual performance. Notes should be made on particular areas to be focused on at the appraisal meeting.

THE APPRAISAL MEETING

The Company conducts appraisals for all employees, giving all the opportunity to participate in an appraisal meeting.

The company provides a form that is used in all appraisal meetings. The form is utilised to ensure that all appraisals are conducted consistently, with the same set of points covered for all Company employees.

The appraisal meeting is discussion-orientated and during the meeting, the line manager will run through the appraisal form, which is designed to keep the meeting structured and ensure the line manager facilitates a discussion on the key points of an employee's performance that is consistent across all appraisals.

The line manager will give the employee the opportunity to identify their positive achievements and for these to be considered in the context of the employee's job role. The discussion should focus on the present and future performance in the job role, not on any personal characteristics.

The line manager will ask for the employee's comments as the appraisal proceeds, discussing performance with the employee. The line manager will ensure all parts of the appraisal form are completed.

APPRAISAL OUTCOME

During the appraisal meeting, the line manager and employee will discuss their targets for the following review period. The Company appraisal operates on the basis of targets being set. These will differ dependant on the job role but will be realistic and achievable for the employee to work towards and/or the completion of training courses and development opportunities.

The employee will be given time at the end of the appraisal, to read and review the form. Both the employee and the line manager will sign and date the form.

Where learning needs have been identified, line managers should provide, or arrange access to, training or coaching in order for those needs to be met which will assist the employee in attaining their achievements. A Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) may be put in place to provide a structured supervision process around meeting these learning needs.

If, after these measurements have been implemented and performance reviewed, the employee does not demonstrate sufficient development, the HR department should be consulted on whether formal action is required.

RECORD KEEPING

The HR department retains the appraisal documents for all employees.

These documents include the self-assessment form completed by the employee, the pre-assessment form completed by the line manager and the appraisal form signed by both. Any notes taken by the line manager separately from the form are also retained with the forms.

These documents are stored in the personnel files, which are held confidentially and securely.

The HR department will upload these documents on the employee's electronic file which will be accessible by the employee and line manager for future reference.

REDUNDANCY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

Redundancies may occur for several reasons. The Group may, for example, experience a downturn in demand that is not temporary in nature meaning that it cannot sustain the number of current workforce. Alternatively, there may be business related advancements which require a restructure, or enhancements in technology which streamline processes resulting in a reduced need for employees.

Redundancy is where employment terminates because there is a reduction or a complete halt in the need for a role to be carried out by the company. Dependent on the circumstances, a redundancy situation can entail the complete closure of the company; the reduction or halt in the need for an entire department, or alternatively, a need to reduce the number of roles currently performing a particular function whilst still maintaining the function.

Whatever the reason for the identification of a potential redundancy situation, we will follow the processes set out in this policy to ensure a fair procedure. This policy covers:

- a) The search for alternative measures in order to avoid redundancies;
- b) Consultation with employees;
- c) The selection process;
- d) Voluntary redundancy;
- e) Rights of an employee when identified for redundancy;
- f) Redundancy payments.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees within the group irrespective of status or length of service, including those employed on temporary and fixed-term contracts.

ALTERNATIVE MEASURES

When faced with the prospect of a redundancy situation, The Group will consider the following measures in an attempt to avoid compulsory redundancies:

- a) reduce overtime to a workable minimum;
- b) restrict recruitment where such recruitment could have a bearing on the outcome of any redundancy situation; and
- c) investigate whether measures such as short time working and lay off (without pay other than statutory guarantee pay) or a reduction in terms and conditions of employment are appropriate.

CONSULTATION

All potentially affected employees will be notified of the company's proposals and there will be a full and meaningful consultation process with the affected groups.

At least three meetings will be held before redundancy dismissals take effect, in both group and individual format. The timing of these meetings will depend on the circumstances of the redundancy, including how many employees are affected. Employees will be informed of the dates and times of meetings.

If large numbers are affected i.e. 20 or more proposed redundancies within a period of 90 days or less, consultation will involve trade unions or employee representatives as appropriate and will last for a minimum of 30 days, or 45 days where the number of proposed redundancies within a period of 90 days or less is 100 or more. Where there are no existing (or an insufficient number of) employee representatives, an election will be held. Those elected as representatives will take part in consultation with the company on behalf of the wider affected workforce.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Where it is necessary to maintain a particular function within The Group but with fewer employees, a selection process will take place to identify those employees who are to be made redundant. The criteria to be used will be agreed as part of the consultation process.

Employees will be scored against the agreed criteria by at least two scorers and employees will be able to see their individual scores.

VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY

If redundancies cannot be avoided, consideration will be given to applications for voluntary redundancies, where applicable. Applying for voluntary redundancy does not mean that the employee who has applied will be made redundant. The Group reserves the right to refuse an application for voluntary redundancy.

No final decisions will be made without every opportunity having been given to employees concerned to consult with Management and explore possible alternative positions. If the selection of employees for redundancy becomes necessary, the criteria for selection will be discussed with you at the time.

RIGHTS OF AN EMPLOYEE WHEN IDENTIFIED FOR REDUNDANCY

Employees with two years' service who are under notice of redundancy are entitled to take a reasonable amount of time off to look for work or undergo training. The maximum amount of paid time off is 2/5th of an employee's normal weekly working hours.

Requests for time off should be made to the employee's line manager.

SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT

The Group will undertake a search for alternative roles within the company for employees who are facing redundancy. Suitable alternative roles, where they can be identified, will be offered and a 4-week trial period will begin. If it transpires that the role is not suitable, employment will terminate and the employee will receive statutory redundancy pay (where applicable). Unreasonable refusal of a suitable alternative role will mean that the employee's employment is terminated and no statutory redundancy pay will be payable.

Employees identified as at risk of redundancy who are pregnant, on maternity leave, adoption leave or shared parental leave are entitled to be offered any suitable alternative roles within the company and given first refusal over other affected employees.

For pregnant employees, this protection applies from the point the employee tells the company that they are pregnant and continues to apply for 18 months after either the expected week of childbirth, or the exact date of birth, if the employee informs the company of this, and includes the period spent on maternity leave.

For employees who take adoption leave, the protection will apply for 18 months starting from the date of placement of the child.

For employees who take shared parental leave, the protected period is for 18 months from when the child is born. The employee must have taken six or more consecutive weeks of shared parental leave and not taken maternity or adoption leave for the protection to apply. If less than six consecutive weeks of shared parental leave is taken, protection will only apply during the period of shared parental leave.

If you have any queries about whether this applies to you or how it will affect you, please raise these with your line manager.

REDUNDANCY PAYMENTS

Employees with 2 years' or more continuous service will be entitled to receive statutory redundancy pay which is calculated in accordance with a statutory formula using the employee's age, length of service and weekly pay (which is capped at the statutory level). Employees will be made aware of the amount of statutory redundancy pay they will receive. The business does not operate an enhanced redundancy pay policy.

SICKNESS ABSENCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

OVERVIEW, PURPOSE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

INTRODUCTION

The Group values the health and wellbeing of its employees. The Group recognises that absence due to ill health is unavoidable and that employees may need support whilst off sick as well as when they return to work.

The policy explains how employees should be supported and what managers should do to manage sickness absence in a fair and consistent way, in order to protect our staff, our customers and our business.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees including those employed on temporary and fixed-term contracts. The policy does not apply to individuals employed by agencies or other contractors. Issues relating to sickness absence for non-employees should be referred to the appropriate employer.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Managers will handle sickness issues in their area in a positive, supportive, fair and consistent way, taking account of relevant circumstances in each individual case.

Absence through ill health or injury is highly personal and sensitive. All information regarding employee health will be treated in confidence.

All meetings, interviews and correspondence about sickness absence will remain strictly confidential to those involved. Breaches of confidentiality will be regarded as a disciplinary matter.

The Group understands that sometimes an employee may feel that the nature of their illness is too personal to reveal to their line manager. If this happens, the line manager should refer them to an alternative manager or HR representative, whichever is the most appropriate, where they can discuss this with their confidentiality protected. The terms of this policy will still apply.

The timescales detailed in this policy will be adhered to where possible.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Managers are responsible for providing a safe and supportive working environment for their employees and for ensuring they manage sickness absences in line with this policy:

Key responsibilities:

- Record all sickness absences through the appropriate HR systems, including People HR and payroll reporting procedures;
- monitor sickness absence over time and apply the Sickness Absence Policy sensitively, consistently and fairly;
- ensure that diseases, injuries and accidents are reported to the health and safety representative as soon as possible;
- make all employees aware of the support available to them;
- make sure all employees are adequately trained to carry out their duties safely and effectively, with the required tools and equipment and in a safe environment;
- make sure all employees understand their responsibilities under the Sickness Absence Policy, including reporting absence in the right way and providing the correct documents (such as Self-Certification or Fit Notes) in a timely manner;
- maintain regular and appropriate contact, supporting any employee who is off sick;
- consider reasonable adjustments (in line with medical advice) to enable an employee to remain at or return to work;
- agree to return to work plans, monitor and review;
- conduct a return to work meeting with an employee after any sickness absence and send a Return to Work Form to HR afterwards;
- obtain a Statement of Fitness to Work (Fit Note) if the sickness is longer than seven days from an employee every time they are off sick and send this promptly to an HR representative;
- contact an HR representative as soon as an individual seems likely to be off sick for more than four weeks or for advice on long-term sickness absence cases;
- conduct home visits, welfare meetings and formal meetings for any employee who reaches a trigger point under the policy, and carry out incapacity meetings as appropriate for those on long-term sickness, contacting an HR representative for guidance throughout; and
- handle sickness documents sensitively and securely, ensuring copies of any minutes, letters or return-to-work interviews are sent to an HR representative to be saved to the employee's file.

HR REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

HR representatives are responsible for ensuring active steps are taken to monitor, address and support absence consistently across the business.

Key responsibilities:

- ensure managers understand their role and responsibilities, and provide coaching as required;
- ensure that managers apply best practice to meet company requirements and expected standards;

- ensure that absence data is closely monitored, provide advice and guidance on analysing trends;
- support managers in identifying and recognising the costs of sickness absence;
- evaluate the effects of sickness absence on business performance and drive improvements;
- provide guidance on how to apply the Sickness Absence Policy for all sickness absences;
- understand the support available from an occupational health provider and refer employees where appropriate;
- provide guidance on an employee's return to work, including reasonable enabling adjustments, return to work plans including phasing, and return to work meetings;
- provide guidance on risk assessments and resulting actions, based on legislation in liaison with the health and safety representative;
- provide checklists and letter templates, and review correspondence as needed; and
- provide redeployment support if appropriate to any employees whose health makes them unable to carry out their current role, but who may be able to carry out other roles within the Group if applicable.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

All Group employees are responsible for following this policy when they are absent due to sickness or ill health.

Key responsibilities:

- advise their manager as quickly as possible (refer to notification of sickness section below) if they cannot come to work or need to leave work, so that the manager can provide support, arrange cover and plan for their return. They should also say whether the absence is caused by ill health or an incident/accident at work;
- advise their manager immediately if they believe their work environment is unsafe or if they need additional training to carry out their duties safely;
- advise their manager if they have a health problem which affects, or is affected by, their work;
- keep in touch with their manager when they are off sick, so that the manager can provide support and prepare for their return to work, and ensure contact is made with their line manager if the Fit Note suggests the employee will be fit for work with reasonable adjustments;
- attend meetings as needed: these may be home visits, welfare meetings, formal reviews, return to work meetings or referrals to occupational health. Meetings will be arranged so that the employee can reasonably attend;
- provide their manager with a Self-Certification Form during the return to work meeting, or a Fit Note if they are absent from work for eight days or more or any additional medical documentation which might be required relating to their absence i.e. appointment letters etc;
- the employee can also request a referral to occupational health via HR if they feel they would benefit from this; and
- take steps agreed to improve and sustain their attendance at work.

DISABILITY

The *Equality Act 2010* defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on an individual's ability to carry out normal daily activities. It is unlawful

under UK legislation for an employer to fail to provide reasonable adjustments to a disabled person's working environment, where it is unable to justify this failure.

The Group values the contribution made by all employees and aims to provide a safe and productive working environment for people of all abilities. It is therefore important that line managers/HR give every consideration to making reasonable adjustments to working practices or premises, to ensure these do not put a disabled person at a disadvantage compared with a person without that disability.

Examples of enabling adjustments include:

- physical adjustments to the workplace;
- altering working/role duties, for example lighter duties, work location;
- providing/altering equipment following specialist advice as appropriate from a health and safety representative, for example screen filters, new chair, different desk, wrist supports.
- allowing the staff member to be absent during working hours for rehabilitation, treatment or assessment;
- moving the staff member to a different place of work, including within the same building;
- reducing working hours, either as part of a phased return to work as agreed or permanently, which may require a change to terms and conditions and reduction in pay; or
- adjusting actual hours worked to take account of the disability.

This list is not exhaustive, and managers should consider each case on its own merits, taking medical reports into account and consulting with the employee and HR.

PROCEDURES

NOTIFICATION OF SICKNESS ABSENCE

ADVISING SICKNESS ABSENCE

If an employee is ill, injured or unable to attend work for any reason they must telephone their manager at least one hour before they are normally due to start work. Employees should follow the appropriate process for this. If in doubt they should ask their line manager or HR representative and should contact their line manager on a daily basis unless alternate arrangements are agreed.

Early notification is very important, as it allows the manager to support the employee and make arrangements to maintain service to customers. If the process for notifying sickness absence is not followed and there is no reasonable explanation, the absence may be classed as unauthorised, which could result in the manager following the disciplinary policy.

WHAT TO ADVISE

The employee should give the following information so that the manager can arrange cover, provide support and plan for their return:

- when they became unwell;
- the nature of the illness or the details of any incident/accident that has caused the absence. If the employee does not feel able to discuss the illness with the line manager, the line manager should

- refer them to an alternative manager or HR representative, whichever is the most appropriate; and
- how long the employee expects to be absent for.

KEEPING MANAGERS INFORMED DURING LONG-TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE (FOUR WEEKS OR MORE)

For long-term absence (four weeks or more), the employee should contact their manager regularly to provide an update on how they are progressing, and when they expect to return to work. The manager should agree with the employee how they would like this to happen (for example through home visits, phone calls, emails), and how often. In these conversations, the manager will see if there is anything they or the company can do to help the employee's recovery and keep them up to date with news from work.

ADVISING MANAGERS ABOUT THE RETURN TO WORK

Employees should ideally tell their manager at least two working days before they return to work, so that the manager can prepare for their return.

STATEMENT OF FITNESS TO WORK

(FIT NOTE)

For absences of eight consecutive calendar days or more, the employee needs to provide a Statement of Fitness for Work (Fit Note) from their doctor. This should be provided as soon as possible to the line manager or HR representative in order to protect any Statutory Sick Payments which may be due. If the employee is off sick for any more days than covered by the Fit Note, the employee needs to provide an additional Fit Note to cover the further period of absence.

A Fit Note enables a doctor to advise if and when an employee is unfit for work or fit for work.

If unfit for work, the doctor will confirm on the Fit Note how long the employee should stay off work.

Alternatively, the doctor may confirm that the individual may be fit for work with support from their manager. The doctor may also suggest ways to help the employee back to work including;

- a phased return to work;
- working fewer, or different hours;
- amended duties; or
- workplace adjustments.

This list is not exhaustive.

Both the employee and the line manager should discuss the doctor's advice and if a return to work is possible, they should agree any reasonable temporary changes or support needed without

unnecessary delay. Where the line manager considers occupational health support is required, this should be discussed with HR.

The company will not normally request that an employee provides a Fit Note for sickness absence of less than seven calendar days, but there may be exceptional circumstances where this is considered necessary, if for example an unacceptable pattern has been identified, such as repeated sickness absence immediately before or after bank holidays, weekends or annual leave, or on social events.

If this is the case, and where the Doctor confirms the legitimacy of the absence the company will repay the employee for any costs of arranging the Fit Note.

RETURNING TO WORK

On the employee's first day back at work their manager or an alternative manager, will arrange a return to work meeting to:

- check that the employee is fit to return to work;
- discuss the cause of the absence and general attendance record;
- ascertain whether there are any underlying circumstances affecting attendance, for example personal problems, where the line manager might be able to provide support;
- bring the employee up to date with any important business developments whilst they have been away from work; and
- enable the employee to complete the Self-Certification Form, if the absence has been seven days or less.

Sometimes the employee may recover faster than expected, or reasonable adjustments may enable an early return to work. If this is the case, in some cases before the employee returns they should ask their doctor for a new Fit Note with the new return date on it, confirming that they are fit to work.

If, following advice from the doctor and/or occupational health provider, the employee and the manager agree that a phased return is needed to enable the employee to recover fully before returning to full duties, they will receive pay on a pro rata basis (such as half pay if they are working half time, increasing to full pay when they return full-time), unless in certain circumstances other arrangements have been agreed. Managers should contact a HR representative for guidance, particularly for phased return periods of more than four weeks.

PART DAY SICKNESS ABSENCE

The Group recognises that employees sometimes become ill whilst at work. In these events whilst dealing with the situation on the day, the company may ensure that a return to work interview takes place as it would after any absence irrespective of duration.

For the purpose of recording absence, as a guide:

- any period of the working day when an employee is unable to work due to sickness should be recorded as it will facilitate a return to work discussion;
- if an employee leaves work due to sickness after completing half or less of their scheduled working hours this will normally be counted as a half day of sickness absence; or

- if an employee has worked more than half of their scheduled working hours, this will not normally be counted as sickness absence (therefore a return to work meeting will not be required).

The above applies for both full and part-time workers.

The above statements are intended as a guide only and there may be variations where shift arrangements apply.

SICKNESS DURING ANNUAL LEAVE OR PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

If an employee unfortunately becomes ill whilst on holiday, they can ask for the days they were ill to be reclassified as sickness absence rather than annual leave, and the leave would then be added back to the amount of holiday they have left. To do this the employee needs to have notified their manager of their illness at the time it occurs, just as they would if they were at work. On their first day back at work the employee will need to complete a Self-Certification Form for periods of up to seven calendar days, or a Fit Note, or medical evidence if abroad, for eight calendar days or more.

In cases of long-term ill health, employees should ask their manager to have holiday leave carried over to the next leave year if they cannot take it during the current leave year. Financial payment instead of annual leave would not normally be paid.

EMPLOYEES WHO ARE SENT HOME FOR HEALTH REASONS

A manager may send an employee home for health reasons if, for example, the employee poses a risk of spreading infection. Employees that are sent home during the working day, at manager's discretion, may be paid the full salary and allowances they would have received had they been at work. The absence would not normally be counted towards the sickness trigger points outlined in section E.

MEDICAL REPORTS

An employee can be referred to occupational health at any time if it is believed that the employee could benefit from this support. Employees can request a self-referral by discussing this with their manager or HR representative.

Sometimes a manager may need to seek professional guidance about an employee's health. If the employee is asked by the company to attend an appointment with a medical practitioner, they should co-operate with the examination and authorise the doctor to share the resulting medical report with the Group so that the company can provide appropriate support. If they refuse to do this, the company may have to take decisions about their employment on the basis of the information available. If the employee does not attend an appointment and has no valid reason, they may be charged cancellation fees.

ABSENCE FOR COSMETIC SURGERY

Sickness absence taken for cosmetic surgery will be paid subject to company and Statutory Sick Pay eligibility if the surgery has been medically advised by the employee's doctor. If the employee has chosen to have cosmetic surgery for non-medical reasons, they should take annual leave instead of sickness absence. They would not be eligible for sick pay while they are off for the surgery or for any expected recovery period. If an employee is unfortunately off sick as a result of the surgery for longer than the expected recovery period, for example due to complications, then sick pay will be provided.

ACCIDENTS AT WORK

If an employee is off work due to illness or injured due to an accident which happened at work, the absence will be recorded as sickness. It will be at the discretion of the line manager and/or HR representative as to whether the absence will be counted towards the sickness triggers outlined in Section E.

ELIGIBILITY FOR PAID SICK LEAVE

The provision of Company Sick Pay/Occupational Sick Pay is to support eligible employees who are off work due to illness or injury.

To be eligible, an employee needs to:

- have worked for the company continuously for more than one year;
- have Company Sick Pay/OSP included in their contract of employment;
- have followed the correct process to notify the company of their absence;
- have provided the correct documents (Self-Certification Form or Fit Note), and any other relevant documents;
- co-operate with any reasonable requests the company makes under this policy, such as keeping in touch while off sick, and attending any medical examinations; and
- not be working within their notice period.

Employees who meet the above requirements will be entitled to four days paid sick leave. Any further occurrences of sick leave will be unpaid.

All employees on sick leave remain subject to their normal terms and conditions of employment, which include the company's right to terminate employment by giving contractual notice at any time and subject to any related legislative requirements.

WITHHOLDING COMPANY SICK PAY

The company may withhold Company Sick Pay/Occupational Sick Pay, but not Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), in circumstances such as those listed below. The manager should always discuss this in advance with HR representative.

- If the employee refuses to undergo a medical examination by occupational health and/or any independent doctor nominated by the company;

- if the employee is in paid employment elsewhere during any period of sickness absence and this impacts on a return to work;
- if medical evidence shows the employee is fit to return to work but they do not do so; or
- if the company believes, after investigation, that there are no good reasons to support a period of sickness absence.
- if the employee goes off sick in the middle of a disciplinary investigation or process.

This list is not exhaustive.

In some circumstances, as well as withholding sick pay, it may be appropriate for the company to take disciplinary action.

STATUTORY SICK PAY

Eligible employees are entitled to receive Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) as determined by the government from time to time. This can be paid for up to 28 weeks.

An employee may not be entitled to SSP if, for example, they have already used their 28-week entitlement or if they have recently received other state benefits. If this happens, the employee can request a form from the HR department to apply for state benefits from their local benefits agency office.

For more information on Statutory Sick Pay please refer to the HMRC website.

MONITORING AND MANAGING SICKNESS ABSENCE

The Group applies the Bradford Factor calculation to monitor and manage unplanned absences. With the exception of family leave and pregnancy, most absence is recorded following the Bradford Factor Scoring System. The Bradford Factor system is a point scoring calculation which is based on both the frequency of absences and the time spent absent. The system is formula based and objective and protects employees who are absent on long-term sickness. Please note that it is at the line manager and/or HR's discretion whether absences relating to accidents at work accrue points although they do form part of an employee's overall attendance record which is reviewed periodically.

Each period of absence is considered on an individual basis, and in considering each occasion of short-term absence the company will take into account the pattern of absence, as well as the total amount. Three consecutive occasions of absence on a Monday, for example, may be enough to warrant earlier management intervention, even though the Bradford Factor score would be relatively low.

The trigger point agreed by the Group is 125 points. Points are calculated over a 12-month rolling period.

The company uses the following formula to calculate an employee's Bradford Factor score:

Number of episodes x the number of episodes x the total days absent.

For example:

- One absence of totalling five days in a rolling 12-month period – Bradford Factor 5 (1x1x5)
- Three absences totalling five days in a rolling 12-month period – Bradford Factor 45 (3x3x5)
- Four absences totalling eight days in a rolling 12-month period – Bradford Factor 128 (4x4x8)

- Five absences totalling 15 days in a 12-month rolling period – Bradford Factor 375 (5x5x15)

The table below summarises the Group scoring system:

BRADFORD FACTOR SCORE	ACTION	POTENTIAL OUTCOME
0 –124	Employee is formally counselled	Record kept on file
125+	Written warning	Written warning or dismissal

INFORMAL STAGE – BRADFORD FACTOR SCORE OF 0-125 POINTS

An employee whose record is below 125 points may be invited to attend an informal absence meeting with their line manager where absence levels are giving cause for concern (this might be due to an unacceptable level or pattern of absence). The employee will be provided with details of their absence record and advised that the current level of attendance is unacceptable and is a cause for concern.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the reasons for the absence and to determine what support the company can provide in order to help the employee improve their attendance. The employee will receive written confirmation of the main points covered in the meeting, along with any specific measures or support that has been agreed and an indication that their attendance will be kept under review.

Employees will also be kept updated with their Bradford Factor score at each return to work meeting undertaken after each period of absence.

FORMAL STAGE – BRADFORD FACTOR SCORE OF 126 POINTS PLUS OR FIVE ABSENCES PLUS IN A 12-MONTH PERIOD

It is essential that when formal action is taken, it should be applied as consistently as possible across the business.

MEETINGS

Employees should take all reasonable steps to attend formal meetings, which will be held during their normal working hours, unless agreed otherwise. If an employee or their companion (a fellow employee or union representative) cannot attend they should tell their manager as soon as possible within a reasonable time period so that it can be rescheduled. If the employee then does not attend a rescheduled formal meeting, a decision could be made in their absence. If the employee does not have a valid reason for not attending, the meeting may be treated as misconduct.

At times the Group may need medical advice to enable decisions about an employee's employment. If this advice cannot be obtained because an employee refuses to co-operate with a reasonable request, decisions may need to be based on the information available.

FORMAL ACTION PROCESS

When a manager decides to take formal action, the process is as follows:

STAGE ONE

- The manager will send the employee a written invitation to a meeting to discuss their level and pattern of attendance, giving at least 48 hours' notice. The invitation letter will set out the absences that give cause for concern, and include relevant supporting documents such as medical reports;
- a medical report may be sought from an employee's GP or specialist requesting details of their current state of health and their fitness to continue to undertake their duties and responsibilities;
- the employee can bring a work colleague or trade union representative to the meeting;
- at the meeting, the manager will explain the Sickness Absence Policy, review the employee's level and pattern of attendance and explain why it has caused concern. The employee will be invited to explain the reasons for the sickness absence. Previous discussions and support provided will also be reviewed;
- the manager and employee will then agree what reasonable steps they will both take to help the employee improve their level and pattern of attendance;
- if there seems to be an underlying medical cause for the absences, the manager may refer the employee to occupational health and may postpone the meeting until the report is received. An occupational health report would be discussed, and the employee will be consulted about any reasonable adjustments to help reduce the level and pattern of absence;
- the meeting could end in a number of ways:
 - a) the employee may be referred to occupational health; or
 - b) it could be agreed that no further action is needed; or
 - c) the employee may receive a written warning confirming what they need to do to improve, by when and how the manager will support them;
- if this happens, they will be warned that if their attendance does not improve as agreed, and is sustained, they will move to the next stage of the formal process. In circumstances where a written warning is issued, two or more further episodes of sickness during the 12-month period which follows the stage one meeting will trigger stage two of the process (see below);
- the decision will be confirmed in writing within five working days or as soon as is reasonably practicable. The warning will be placed on the employee's file but will be discounted after a period of twelve months from the date of the meeting; and
- the employee has the right to appeal against this decision (see appeals below).

STAGE TWO

If the employee is absent on two more occasions or reaches a 340 Bradford Factor score, within the 12-month period following issue of the written warning outlined in stage one, the procedure is as follows:

- the manager will send the employee a written invitation to a meeting to discuss their level and pattern of attendance during the review period, giving at least 48 hours' notice. The invitation

letter will set out the absences that give cause for concern, before and during the review period. It will include relevant documents such as medical reports;

- the employee can bring a colleague or trade union representative to the meeting;
- if a medical report has shown an underlying medical cause for the absences, the manager may refer the employee to occupational health for an opinion on how far they may be expected to improve and what further steps could be taken. This will usually be done before the meeting, with an occupational health physician;
- at the meeting the manager will explain this policy, review the employee's level and pattern of attendance and explain why it has caused concern. The employee will be invited to explain the reasons for the sickness absence. Previous discussions, medical reports and support provided will also be reviewed. The manager and employee will then agree what reasonable steps they will both take to help the employee improve their level and pattern of attendance;
- the meeting could lead to a range of actions:
 - a) the employee could be referred to occupational health; or
 - b) it could be agreed that no further action is needed; or
 - c) the employee may receive a final written warning confirming what they need to do to improve, by when, and how the manager will support them. If this happens, they will be warned that if their attendance does not improve as agreed, they will move to the next stage of the formal process. In circumstances where a final written warning is issued, two or more further episodes of sickness during the 12-month period which follows the stage two meeting will trigger stage three of the process (see below);
- the decision will be confirmed in writing within five working days or as soon as is reasonably practicable. The warning will be placed on the employee's file but will be discounted after a period of twelve months from the date of the meeting; and
- the employee has the right to appeal against this decision (see appeals below).

STAGE THREE

If the employee is absent on two more occasions or reaches a 700 Bradford Factor Score, within the 12-month period following issue of the final written warning outlined in stage two, the procedure is as follows:

- The manager will send the employee a written invitation to a further meeting, giving at least 48 hours' notice. The invitation letter will set out the absence record that gives cause for concern, before and during the review period. It will include relevant documents such as medical reports;
- the employee can bring a colleague or trade union representative to the meeting;
- if a medical report has shown an underlying medical cause for the absences, the manager may consider the need for another referral to occupational health, possibly for an additional opinion;
- at the meeting the manager will explain this policy, review the employee's level and pattern of attendance and actions taken and explain why this continues to give cause for concern. The employee will be invited to explain the reasons for the sickness absence. Previous discussions, medical reports and support provided will also be reviewed;
- the manager and employee may discuss what final reasonable steps can be taken to help the employee improve their level and pattern of attendance should the manager consider this appropriate;

- alternatively, the manager may consider that the level and pattern of absence is not good enough despite assistance provided or adjustments made for the employee's employment to continue. The employee will then be dismissed with notice. This decision would be confirmed in writing within five working days or as soon as reasonably practicable; and
- the employee has the right to appeal against this decision (see appeals below).

Dismissal is not a decision taken lightly and will occur only where the Group considers the policy has been appropriately followed, that information and advice has been sought from a medical professional and where available such medical evidence has been considered. The company also expect that alternatives, short of dismissal (such as redeployment) have been reasonably considered.

APPEALS

Every employee has the right to appeal against the outcome of a disciplinary hearing. The basis of an appeal should normally relate to one of the following areas:

- that the company's procedure has not be followed correctly;
- that the resulting disciplinary action was inappropriate;
- that the need for disciplinary action was not warranted; or
- that new information regarding disciplinary action has arisen.

When the employee receives written confirmation of any decision under any stage of this procedure, they can appeal to the person named in the disciplinary outcome letter received. The appeals procedure is as follows:

- the employee must appeal in writing within five working days of receiving the written confirmation, outlining their reasons for appealing;
- the employee will then be invited to a hearing with at least 48 hours' notice. The hearing may be with a more senior manager than the one who made the original decision. The hearing should take place within 10 working days of the company receiving the employee's request, but it may be held at a later date if both parties agree;
- the employee can bring a colleague or trade union representative to the hearing;

The senior manager's role is to decide:

- whether or not the manager's decision was reasonable given the evidence available at the time.
- whether or not there is any new evidence that may materially change the decision. If so, the senior manager may make a decision based on the new evidence.
- whether or not the attendance management procedure has been fairly followed and, if not, whether this materially affects the decision that was reached;
- the appeal manager's decision on the appeal will be communicated in writing within five working days, or as soon as reasonably practicable. The appeal manager's decision is final.

A summary note will be taken at each formal stage of the process.

MANAGING LONG-TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE

INCAPACITY PROCEDURE

The Group's goal is to support employees and, where reasonably possible, to help them back to work in their existing role. The company also has to balance this with the impact of long-term absence or incapacity on the business. Long-term absence is considered to be any longer than four weeks.

It is essential that a manager keeps in touch regularly with any employee off long-term with sickness absence to understand how they are, provide support and plan cover or their return to work. The line manager should agree with the employee how they would like this to happen (through home visits, telephone calls or emails for example), and how often. Home visits should be approached with sensitivity, and the employee can have a family member, colleague or trade union representative present if they wish.

For reference, the manager should keep a note of all meetings and correspondence, including the date and what was discussed.

In exceptional circumstances, where medical advice suggests there is no reasonable prospect of a return to contracted duties within a reasonable timescale, termination of employment may be considered. This matter should always be referred to HR.

The following procedure will be followed for employees who are long-term sick or who cannot carry out their role because of ill health or incapacity, and should be implemented in consultation with HR.

- A meeting will be arranged with the employee to understand if it is likely that they could return to work and, if so, when. This discussion will usually be with the immediate line manager. The employee can bring a colleague or trade union representative and will take place at the closest workplace. If this is not possible due to ill health, then the meeting may take place at their home or at an agreed neutral place. If the employee refuses to attend the meeting, this could lead to any company Sick Pay/Occupational Sick Pay being withheld.
- at the meeting, the manager will seek to provide assistance, and will explain how the employee's absence affects the business. Alternatively, or in addition to this the company may seek the employee's authorisation to obtain a report from their GP or specialist requesting details of their current state of health and their fitness to continue to undertake their duties and responsibilities. A written consent will be sought together with their consent under the *Access to Medical Reports Act 1988* for the report to be disclosed to the company.
- In addition, or as an alternative to contacting the employee's GP or specialist, they may be referred to an occupational health provider so that a medical assessment can be carried out. A consent form will be required together with the employee's consent under the *Access to Medical Reports Act 1988* for the report to be disclosed to the company.
- If the employee refuses to sign either consent forms as detailed above, their Company Sick Pay/Occupational Sick Pay may be withheld.
- The employee will then be invited to a further meeting to discuss options given their condition at that time, the medical evidence and the impact of the absence on the business. The options may include:
 - a) returning to their job in an acceptable timeframe.

- b) returning to their job with reasonable adjustments in an acceptable timeframe, usually with regular checks that the adjustments remain reasonable, in view of how they are coping and the impact on the business.
- c) if the employee cannot return to their job in an acceptable timeframe or with reasonable adjustments, then the company will consider whether they can return to other suitable work, if it is available.
- d) if the employee cannot return to their job within a reasonable timeframe or to suitable available alternative work, or if the adjustments that have been made are having such an impact on the business that they cannot be continued, and no further adjustment can reasonably be made, then the individual may be dismissed with notice.

After the meeting the employee will be notified of the decision in writing. If dismissal occurs, the employee has the right of appeal against the decision made (as outlined in the appeals section).

CHRONIC ILL HEALTH

Where it is clear that an employee is suffering from chronic ill health or injury and will not be able to return to work, for instance, due to terminal illness, the company will review this on a case by case basis and seek to take actions appropriate in the circumstances.

Managers will work closely with HR and employee representatives in these circumstances to provide support to the employee and their family member.

MATERNITY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out the arrangements within the Group for maternity leave and maternity pay. In reading this, it is useful to consider entitlement to maternity leave and maternity pay separately. Maternity leave is the period of absence from work immediately before and after the birth of a child. Maternity pay is the entitlement to pay whilst absent.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of the Group (full-time and part-time) including those employed on fixed term contracts.

This policy does not apply to individuals employed by agencies or other contractors. Issues relating to maternity leave and pay for these individuals should be referred to the appropriate employer.

Managers must respect the confidentiality of the employee at all times and not disclose any information to a third party, with the exception of where advice is being sought from their line manager or a HR representative.

MATERNITY LEAVE

NOTIFICATION

Employees are asked to inform their manager as soon as possible that they are pregnant. This is important as there may be health and safety considerations. Furthermore, early notification will allow us to consider plans for cover during the leave period.

An employee is required to complete the maternity notification form no later than the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (this is known as the qualifying week), unless this is not reasonably practicable. This form should then be submitted to HR.

A MAT B1 certificate will also be required. This is issued by a medical practitioner after the 20th week of pregnancy.

An employee may change their mind about when they wish to start their maternity leave provided they advise their manager/HR representative at least 28 days in advance (unless this is not reasonably practicable).

ENTITLEMENT

Any employee who is expecting a baby is entitled to maternity leave, provided that they:

- Continue to be employed until immediately before the beginning of the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth, commencing on the Sunday of the week in which the baby is due;
- Notifies either their line manager or a member of the HR department, in writing, by the 15th week before their expected week of childbirth, unless this is not reasonably practicable, that they are pregnant and intend to take maternity leave; and
- Submit a certificate (MAT B1) from a registered medical practitioner or practising midwife not less than 21 days before the commencement of maternity leave, indicating the expected date of confinement.

AMOUNT OF LEAVE

All employees are entitled to one year's maternity leave made up of 26 weeks of Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML) and 26 weeks of Additional Maternity Leave (AML), therefore 52 weeks in total. This applies irrespective of length of service or the number of hours worked each week, provided they comply with certain notification requirements (see below).

Employees must take at least two weeks' leave immediately following the birth of their baby. This is known as compulsory leave, and it is a criminal offence for an employer to allow any employee to work during this period.

STARTING LEAVE

The maternity leave period may begin at any time, once the employee has reached the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth. Should the employee wish to continue to work beyond the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth, they may be asked to seek advice from their GP. However, the final decision as to when maternity leave shall commence rests with the employee.

Employees can:

- postpone their intended start date by informing the company in writing at least 28 days before the original date or, if that is not possible, as soon as they can; or
- bring forward their intended start date by informing the company in writing at least 28 days before the new start date or, if that is not possible, as soon as they can.

If an employee is absent from work because of a pregnancy related illness at any time during the four weeks before their expected week of childbirth they are legally required to begin maternity leave immediately. Any sickness during maternity leave will be treated as maternity leave and not sickness leave.

Only one period of leave is available, irrespective of whether more than one child is born as a result of the pregnancy.

PAY

ELIGIBILITY FOR COMPANY AND STATUTORY MATERNITY PAY

To qualify for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) employees must:

- have been in employment continuously for at least 26 weeks before the qualifying week;
- earn on average an amount which at least equals the lower earnings to trigger national insurance contributions, which applies on the Saturday at the end of the qualifying week; and
- have provided a MAT B1 certificate. Statutory Maternity Pay cannot be paid without this certificate.

To qualify for Company Maternity Pay (CMP) employees must:

- have met the above requirements for SMP; and
- have two or more years continuous service with the company.

AMOUNT OF PAY

For employees under two years' service:

- payment for employees on Maternity leave who meet the above criteria for SMP shall be paid at the rate of 90% of average gross weekly earnings (Earning-related SMP) for the first 6 weeks followed by;
- 33 weeks at the lower of either the standard rate SMP (determined by the Government and normally reviewed annually), or 90% of an employee's average gross weekly earnings.
- The remainder of the Maternity leave is unpaid.

For employees with two to four years continuous service:

- payment for employees on Maternity leave who meet the above criteria for CMP shall be paid at their full weekly rate of pay, subject to tax and national insurance, first 6 weeks followed by;
- 33 weeks at the lower of either the standard rate SMP (determined by the Government and normally reviewed annually), or 90% of an employee's average gross weekly earnings.
- The remainder of the Maternity leave is unpaid.

For employees with five to nine years continuous service:

- payment for employees on Maternity leave who meet the above criteria for CMP shall be paid at their full monthly rate of pay, subject to tax and national insurance, for the first 3 months of leave followed by;
- the remainder of their leave up to 39 weeks paid at the lower of either the standard rate SMP (determined by the Government and normally reviewed annually), or 90% of an employee's average gross weekly earnings.
- The remainder of the Maternity leave is unpaid.

For employees with ten or more years continuous service:

- payment for employees on Maternity leave who meet the above criteria for CMP shall be paid at their full monthly rate of pay, subject to tax and national insurance, for the first 6 months of leave followed by;

- the remainder of their leave up to 39 weeks paid at the lower of either the standard rate SMP (determined by the Government and normally reviewed annually), or 90% of an employee's average gross weekly earnings.
- The remainder of the Maternity leave is unpaid.

Should an employee wish to take less than 39 weeks of maternity leave, their Statutory Maternity Pay (should this be payable) will be reduced on a pro rata basis. In the case where the employee wishes to take less than 39 weeks of maternity leave, they should in their own interest seek medical advice from their GP. In any event they must not return for a minimum of two weeks after childbirth (and up to four weeks, depending on job role).

ENTITLEMENT TO MATERNITY ALLOWANCE

If an employee is not entitled to receive Statutory Maternity Pay, they may be entitled to receive Maternity Allowance. The employee should contact their local Jobcentre Plus for details of this.

CONFIRMING MATERNITY LEAVE AND PAY

Following discussion with the employee, the HR department will confirm in writing the employee's:

- paid and unpaid maternity leave entitlements in accordance with the Group Maternity Policy;
- expected return date based on the individual's maternity leave entitlement;
- annual leave entitlement accrued during their maternity leave period and when it will be taken; and
- requirement to give at least eight weeks' notice if the employee wishes to return to work before the expected return date.

ANTENATAL CARE

An employee who is pregnant is entitled to take reasonable time off with pay to attend authorised antenatal care appointments, and the Group encourage employees to attend these. Antenatal care includes appointments with a doctor, midwife, health visitor, hospital, clinic and parent-craft relaxation classes (provided that they are recommended by a doctor or midwife or other medical specialist). Apart from the first appointment, managers may ask pregnant employees to provide appointment cards detailing such visits. Appointments should be made whenever possible at the start or end of the working day and employees should provide as much advance notice as possible to their line manager or HR representative.

There will be no deduction from salary for attendance at authorised appointments, including any time spent travelling to and waiting for the appointment. The company will allow reasonable time off to attend appointments, however any time taken in excess of this employees may be required to work this time back following a discussion with the line manager.

HEALTH AND SAFETY DURING PREGNANCY

The health and safety representative will arrange to carry out a work risk assessment once the company is informed the employee is pregnant. A further risk assessment will take place when the employee is 26 weeks into their pregnancy. It is important that arrangements are made to ensure that neither the employee nor the unborn baby are put at risk.

If risks are identified which prevent a new or expectant mother* from carrying out all or part of her normal duties, or if an employee has been advised by a registered medical practitioner to that effect, the company may take the following action:

- temporarily adjust working conditions or hours of the pregnant employee; and/or
- provide suitable alternative work for which the employee would receive their normal rate of pay, even if the work would normally attract a lower rate of pay.

If an employee unreasonably refuses to accept suitable alternative employment, they will forfeit their entitlement to pay until their maternity leave is due to commence.

(*The term 'new and expectant mother' applies to an employee who is pregnant or breastfeeding, or has given birth within the previous six months).

ABSENCE DUE TO A PREGNANCY RELATED ILLNESS

Any pregnancy related sickness absence should be reported via the normal procedure. The normal Sickness Absence Policy applies during the period prior to starting maternity leave.

Many employees now choose to continue working until just a few weeks before their baby is due. However, it is important that all pregnant employees are aware that if they are absent from work because of a pregnancy related illness at any time during the four weeks before their expected week of childbirth, they are legally required to begin maternity leave immediately.

PREMATURE BIRTH

If a baby is born prematurely and before an employee has started maternity leave this will automatically trigger the start of leave, even if this is more than 11 weeks before their baby is due.

STILLBIRTH

If an employee suffers a miscarriage or undergoes a termination before 24 weeks of pregnancy they will not be entitled to maternity leave or Statutory Maternity Pay, although they will be entitled to paid sick leave in line with the sickness absence procedure.

If an employee's baby is stillborn or does not survive after being born, then provided that this is after the 24th week of pregnancy, they are still eligible for maternity leave and Statutory Maternity Pay, and to return to work.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

All the terms and conditions of employment remain in force during ordinary and additional maternity leave, except for the terms relating to pay, in particular:

- benefits in kind such as life insurance, health insurance and use of a company vehicle, if applicable shall continue;
- annual leave entitlement shall continue to accrue; and
- pension benefits shall continue (unless otherwise advised).

If annual salary reviews occur during a period of absence, employees will be notified of any reviewed salary. Employees will receive their reviewed salary upon their return to work.

During maternity leave, employees will remain on circulation lists for internal emails and other documents, and will be included in invitations to work-related social events.

All attempts will be made to ensure that maternity leave does not cause any long-term disadvantage in relation to employees training needs and/or self-development.

It may be mutually beneficial to both the manager and employee to agree that the annual leave be taken before and/or after the paid/unpaid maternity leave period.

Maternity leave will count as service for entitlement to additional annual leave based on service.

WORKING DURING THE MATERNITY LEAVE PERIOD

An employee may return to work for up to ten days during their maternity leave without losing their right to maternity leave or Statutory Maternity Pay. These working days are known as keeping in touch days (KIT). The Group is not obligated to offer this, and the employee is not obliged to accept. In this instance 'work' refers to training or any activity undertaken for the purposes of keeping in touch with the workplace. The employee will be paid at their basic rate for the hours worked, less the appropriate maternity payment, for KIT days worked.

The KIT day should reflect the individuals 'normal' working day as mutually agreed between the individual and their manager.

The KIT days may be taken as individual days or as a single block.

Any KIT days worked will not extend the maternity leave period.

KEEPING IN CONTACT

Prior to going on maternity leave, the manager and employee should discuss and agree any voluntary arrangements for contact during the employee's leave.

This may include inviting employees to attend departmental meetings or sending relevant documents, such as newsletters to them. By the same token, it will be the responsibility of the employee to keep their line manager up-to-date with any developments that may affect their intended date of return. This includes any change of address and contact details.

RETURNING TO WORK

RETURNING ON THE DATE NOTIFIED

Where an employee returns on the date previously notified, there is no requirement to give the company notice of the intention to return. Employees will be expected back at work on the first working day following this period.

RETURNING EARLY

It is a legal requirement that employees take at least two weeks of maternity leave following the birth of their child. In some cases this may be four weeks, depending on job role.

If the employee intends to return either earlier or later than planned they must give their line manager or HR at least eight week's notice in writing unless an earlier date is agreed.

If an employee fails to give this notice, the company reserves the right to delay the return by up to eight weeks (but not beyond the end of the originally notified maternity leave period).

RETURNING LATE

If an employee wishes to return later than the expected return date, they should either request unpaid parental leave in accordance with the Group Parental Leave Policy or request paid annual leave in accordance with their contract, which will be at the Group's discretion.

If an employee is unable to return to work due to sickness or injury, this will be treated as sickness absence and the Group Sickness Absence Policy will apply.

In any other instances, late return will be treated as unauthorised absence.

RIGHTS ON RETURN

If an employee returns after Ordinary Maternity Leave, they have the right to return to the job they occupied before their maternity leave. If for health and safety reasons they were undertaking a different job from their usual one while pregnant, they may be required to return to that different job for a short time if they are still at risk when returning to work.

If they have taken AML, they have the right to return to their original job unless it is not reasonably practicable, in which case they have the right to be offered suitable alternative employment on no less favourable terms and conditions. However, this may not necessarily be the same job.

If at the end of maternity leave the employee wishes to return to work on flexible working arrangements, they should make an application in accordance with the Group Flexible Working Policy. This application should be discussed in advance of their return to work date.

If an employee chooses not to return to work, their employment will cease at the end of their maternity leave period unless they commence employment elsewhere before that time, in which case their employment will cease the day before they take up their new post. In this situation, the individual must write to their manager, giving notice in accordance with their contract of employment, stating

their intention to resign from employment with the company. HR will then write to the individual confirming acceptance of the resignation.

SHARING LEAVE

If an employee wishes to share leave with their partner, please refer to the Shared Parental Leave Policy for further information.

PATERNITY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

Every effort is made to support those employees taking paternity leave.

This policy sets out the arrangements within the Group for paternity leave.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of the Group (full-time and part-time) including those employed on a fixed term contract.

This policy does not apply to individuals employed by agencies or other contractors. Issues relating to paternity leave for these individuals should be referred to the appropriate employer.

Managers must respect the confidentiality of the employee at all times and not disclose any information to a third party, with the exception of where advice is being sought from their line manager or the HR department.

ELIGIBILITY

Employees will be eligible for paternity leave and pay if employees:

- are the father of the child or the husband or partner of the mother (including same-sex partner(s));
- have worked for the employer for a minimum of 26 weeks by the 'notification week' (for instance the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth) or, for adoption paternity leave, by the end of the week in which the child's adopter is notified of matching;
- have or expect to have responsibility for the upbringing of the child if the employee is the father;
- expect to have the main responsibility for the upbringing of the child if the employee is the mother's husband or partner but not the child's father; or
- have given the correct notice and produce any compliance and evidence.

LENGTH OF PATERNITY LEAVE

Employees can choose to take either one week, two separate blocks of one week or two consecutive weeks' paternity leave commencing:

- from the date of the child's birth (whether this is earlier or later than expected);
- on a chosen day after the date of the child's birth (whether this is earlier or later than expected); or
- from a chosen date which is later than the first day of the expected week of childbirth.

- If the child is born before the expected week of childbirth, paternity leave must be taken:
- within 52 weeks of that date;
- Only one period of leave will be available to employees even if more than one child is born as the result of the same pregnancy.

ANTENATAL CARE

An employee who has a 'qualifying relationship' with a pregnant woman is entitled to take unpaid time off work to attend two antenatal appointments.

The employee has a 'qualifying relationship' with the pregnant woman if the employee is:

- the baby's father;
- the pregnant woman's husband, civil partner or partner; or
- an intended parent of a child in surrogacy arrangement, if they intend to apply for a parental order in respect of that child.

If an employee requires extra time off, their employee should use the annual holiday entitlement by following the usual process as outlined in eligibility.

PAY

During paternity leave eligible employees will be entitled to:

- Under 2 years' continuous service- Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP);
- Over 2 years' continuous service- Full Weekly Salary

NOTICE

Employees are required to inform the company of any intention to take paternity leave 28 days before the expected week of childbirth, unless this is not reasonably practicable. Employees will need to inform their manager and/or HR in writing of:

- the week the baby is expected;
- whether employees wish to take one or two weeks' leave; and
- when employees want the leave to start.

As soon as is reasonably practicable after the child's birth, employees must inform the company in writing of the date on which the child was born.

Employees may be required to provide a signed declaration if they wish to take paternity leave to care for a child or support the child's mother, to confirm that they satisfy the eligibility criteria as set out at the beginning of this policy.

CONTRACTUAL BENEFITS

Employees are entitled to their normal terms and conditions of employment, except for terms relating to wages or salary (unless the contract of employment provides otherwise) throughout the paternity leave. Employees may however be entitled to SPP for this period.

Employees will continue to remain bound by any obligations arising under their contract of employment.

RETURN TO WORK AFTER PATERNITY LEAVE

Employees are entitled to return to the same job following no more than two weeks' paternity leave.

If, however, employees take two or more consecutive periods of statutory leave (which could include additional adoption leave or parental leave of more than four weeks), they will be entitled to return to the job in which they were employed before their absence. If that is not reasonably practicable for the company, then staff are entitled to return to another job which is both suitable and appropriate in the circumstances.

Employees have the right to return:

- with seniority, pension rights and similar rights
- on terms and conditions no less favourable than those which would have applied if they had not been absent.

Employees will not be subject to any detriment by the company because they took or sought to take paternity leave.

ADOPTION PATERNITY LEAVE

ELIGIBILITY

Employees will be eligible for paternity leave and pay on the adoption of a child if they:

- have or expect to have the main responsibility for the child's upbringing;
- are either married to or are the partner of the child's adopter;
- have worked continuously for the company for 26 weeks ending with the week in which the child's adopter is notified of having been matched with the child; and
- have given the correct notice and complied with any requirements to produce evidence.

LENGTH OF PATERNITY LEAVE

Employees can choose to take either one week, two separate blocks of one week or two consecutive weeks' leave (not occasional day) within, 52 weeks beginning with the date on which the child is placed with the adopter. Employees can choose to start the leave:

- from the date on which the child is placed with the adopter;
- on a chosen date falling a specified number of days after the date on which the child is placed with the adopter; or
- on a predetermined date that is later than the date on which the child is expected to be placed with the adopter.

PAY

During paternity leave eligible employees will be entitled to:

- Under 2 years' continuous service- Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP);
- Over 2 years' continuous service- Full Weekly Salary

NOTICE

Employees must inform the company of their intention to take paternity leave no more than seven days after the date on which the adopter is notified of having been matched with the child. If that is not reasonably practicable, staff must notify the company as soon as possible. Employees will need to specify:

- the date on which the adopter was notified of having been matched with the child;
- the date on which the child is expected to be placed with the adopter;
- whether employees wish to take one or two weeks' leave; and
- when employees want the leave to start.

CONTRACTUAL BENEFITS

Employees are entitled to their normal terms and conditions of employment, except for terms relating to wages or salary (unless the contract of employment provides otherwise) throughout their paternity leave.

Employees will remain bound by any obligations arising under their contract of employment.

RETURN TO WORK AFTER PATERNITY LEAVE

Employees have the right to return:

- with their seniority, pension rights and similar rights; and
- on terms and conditions no less favourable than those which would have applied if they had not been absent.

Employees will not be subject to any detriment by the company because they took or sought to take paternity leave.

SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE

For employees that have just given birth, the father or partner that will be responsible for the child's wellbeing and adopting parents are entitled to the statutory right of shared parental leave.

For further information surrounding shared parental leave and pay, please refer to the Shared Parental Leave Policy.

ADOPTION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out the arrangements within the Group for adoption leave and also when returning to work.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of the Group (full-time and part-time) including those employed on fixed term contracts.

This policy does not apply to individuals employed by agencies or other contractors. Issues relating to adoption leave and pay for these individuals should be referred to the appropriate employer.

Managers must respect the confidentiality of the employee at all times and not disclose any information to a third party, with the exception of where advice is being sought from their line manager or the HR department.

NOTIFICATION

Employees should complete an Adoption Leave Notification Form which is available from HR. This should be completed and forwarded to HR. The form should be submitted within seven days of the employee being notified by the adoption agency that they have been matched with a child for adoption (unless this is not reasonably practicable). Employees will be required to submit a Matching Certificate from the adoption agency and to advise of the intended start date. Employees must provide at least 28 days' notice in writing of the intended start date.

If the employee is adopting a child from overseas, they must have received notification that the adoption has been approved by the relevant UK authority and must give the Group notice of the date the employee received official notification and the date the child is expected to arrive in Great Britain. Employees must give the Group at least 28 days' notice in writing of the date on which they would like to start their adoption leave. This can be the date the child arrives in Great Britain or a predetermined date no more than 28 days after the child's arrival in Great Britain. Employees must also notify the Group of the date the child arrives in Great Britain within 28 days of that date, and the company may also ask for a copy of the official notification and evidence of the date the child arrived in Great Britain.

HR will review the request and ensure that a Matching Certificate is provided by the employee. Within 28 days the employee will receive notification of the date that adoption leave will end, based on their intended start date.

Adoption leave, and pay are only available where the employee is the elected 'primary' carer of the child and where a child is newly placed.

Adoption leave, and pay are not available for stepfamily adoptions or adoptions by a child's existing foster carers.

AMOUNT OF LEAVE

All employees are entitled to one year's adoption leave made up of 26 weeks of ordinary adoption leave and 26 weeks of additional adoption leave (therefore 52 weeks in total). This applies irrespective of length of service or the number of hours worked each week, provided the employee complies with certain notification requirements (see below).

STARTING LEAVE

Adoption leave may start on a predetermined date no more than 14 days before the expected placement date, or on the date of placement itself, but no later. Employees must notify the company of an intended start date.

Employees can:

- postpone their intended start date by informing the company in writing at least 28 days before the original date or, if that is not possible, as soon as they can; and
- bring forward their intended start date by informing the company in writing at least 28 days before the new start date or, if that is not possible, as soon as they can.

Adoption leave and pay are only available up to the child's 18th birthday, so if an employee is adopting a 17 year old they must be made aware that both adoption leave and pay will end at the end of the week in which the child becomes 18.

Only one period of leave is available, irrespective of whether more than one child is placed for adoption as part of the same arrangement.

ELIGIBILITY FOR STATUTORY ADOPTION PAY

To qualify for Statutory Adoption Pay employees must:

- have been in employment continuously for at least 26 weeks up to and including the week the adoption agency confirms that they have been matched with a child for adoption;
- earn on average an amount which at least equals the lower earnings limit to trigger national insurance contributions, which applies on the Saturday at the end of the qualifying week; and
- have been matched with a child for adoption by an adoption agency and have provided a matching certificate. Statutory Adoption Pay cannot be paid without this certificate.

AMOUNT OF PAY

For employees under two years' service:

- payment for employees on adoption leave who meet the above criteria for SMP shall be paid at the rate of 90% of average gross weekly earnings (Earning-related SMP) for the first 6 weeks followed by;

- 33 weeks at the lower of either the standard rate SMP (determined by the Government and normally reviewed annually), or 90% of an employee's average gross weekly earnings.
- The remainder of the adoption leave is unpaid.

For employees with two to four years continuous service:

- payment for employees on adoption leave who meet the above criteria for CMP shall be paid at their full weekly rate of pay, subject to tax and national insurance, first 6 weeks followed by;
- 33 weeks at the lower of either the standard rate SMP (determined by the Government and normally reviewed annually), or 90% of an employee's average gross weekly earnings.
- The remainder of the adoption leave is unpaid.

For employees with five to nine years continuous service:

- payment for employees on adoption leave who meet the above criteria for CMP shall be paid at their full monthly rate of pay, subject to tax and national insurance, for the first 3 months of leave followed by;
- the remainder of their leave up to 39 weeks paid at the lower of either the standard rate SMP (determined by the Government and normally reviewed annually), or 90% of an employee's average gross weekly earnings.
- The remainder of the adoption leave is unpaid.

For employees with ten or more years continuous service:

- payment for employees on adoption leave who meet the above criteria for CMP shall be paid at their full monthly rate of pay, subject to tax and national insurance, for the first 6 months of leave followed by;
- the remainder of their leave up to 39 weeks paid at the lower of either the standard rate SMP (determined by the Government and normally reviewed annually), or 90% of an employee's average gross weekly earnings.
- The remainder of the adoption leave is unpaid.

Should an employee wish to take less than 39 weeks of adoption leave, their Statutory Adoption Pay (should this be payable) will be reduced on a pro rata basis. In the case where the employee wishes to take less than 39 weeks of adoption leave, they should in their own interest seek medical advice from their GP. In any event they must not return for a minimum of two weeks after childbirth (and up to four weeks, depending on job role).

SHARING LEAVE

If an employee wishes to share leave with their partner during the time, they are off after becoming a parent, please refer to the Shared Parental Leave Policy for further information.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Except for the terms regarding pay, all other terms and conditions remain in force during adoption leave, in particular:

- benefits in kind such as life insurance, health insurance and use of a company vehicle if applicable shall continue;
- annual leave entitlement shall continue to accrue; and
- pension benefits shall continue (unless otherwise advised).

If annual salary reviews occur during a period of absence, employees will be notified of their reviewed salary at this time. Employees will receive their reviewed salary upon their return to work.

During adoption leave, employees will remain on circulation lists for internal emails and other documents, and will be included in invitations to work-related social events.

All attempts will be made to ensure that adoption leave does not cause any long-term disadvantage in relation to employee training needs and/or self-development.

ADOPTION PRE-PLACEMENT SUPPORT

When an employee is adopting a child, they are entitled to take ten days paid leave in order to attend any relevant court hearings and meeting with social services, for example.

DISRUPTED ADOPTION

Adoption leave is disrupted if it has started but:

- the employee is notified that the placement will not take place;
- the child is returned to the adoption agency after placement; or
- the child dies after placement.

In the case of any disruption, entitlement to adoption leave and pay (if applicable) will continue for a further eight weeks from the end of the week in which disruption occurred, unless the entitlement to adoption leave and/or pay would have ended earlier in the normal course of events.

WORKING DURING THE ADOPTION LEAVE PERIOD

An employee may return to work for up to ten days during their adoption leave without losing their right to adoption leave or Statutory Adoption Pay. These working days are known as Keeping In Touch days (KIT). The company is not obligated to offer this, and the employee is not obliged to accept. In this instance 'work' refers to training or any activity undertaken for the purposes of keeping in touch with the workplace.

The employee will be paid at their basic rate for the hours worked, less the appropriate adoption payment, for keeping in touch days worked.

The KIT days should reflect the individuals 'normal' working days as mutually agreed between the individual and their manager.

The KIT days may be taken as individual days or as a single block.

Any KIT days worked will not extend the adoption leave period.

KEEPING IN CONTACT

Prior to going on leave, the manager and employee should discuss and agree any voluntary arrangements for contact during the employee's adoption leave.

This may include inviting employees to attend departmental meetings or sending relevant documents to them. By the same token, it will be the responsibility of the employee to keep the manager up-to-date with any developments that may affect their intended date of return. This includes any change of address and contact details.

RETURNING TO WORK

RETURNING ON THE DATE NOTIFIED

Where an employee returns on the date previously notified, there is no requirement to give the company notice of the intention to return. Employees will be expected back at work on the first working day following this period.

RETURNING EARLY

If the employee intends to return either earlier or later than planned, they must give their manager/HR at least eight week's notice in writing.

If an employee fails to give this notice, the company reserves the right to delay the return by up to eight weeks (but not beyond the end of the originally notified adoption leave period).

RETURNING LATE

If an employee wishes to return later than the expected return date, they should either request unpaid parental leave in accordance with the Group Parental Leave Policy or request paid annual leave in accordance with their contract, which will be decided at the company's discretion.

If an employee is unable to return to work due to sickness or injury, this will be treated as sickness absence and the Group Sickness Absence Policy will apply.

In any other instances, late return will be treated as unauthorised absence.

RIGHTS ON RETURN

If an employee returns after ordinary adoption leave, they have the right to return to the job they occupied before their adoption leave.

If they have taken additional adoption leave, they have the right to return to their original job unless it is not reasonably practicable, in which case they have the right to be offered suitable alternative employment on no less favourable terms and conditions. However, this may not necessarily be the same job.

If at the end of adoption leave the employee wishes to return to work on flexible working arrangements, they should make an application in accordance with the Group Flexible Working Policy. This application must be made prior to their return.

If an employee chooses not to return to work, their employment will cease at the end of their adoption leave period, unless they commence employment elsewhere before that time, in which case their employment will cease the day before they take up their new post. In this situation the individual must write to their line manager or HR, giving notice in accordance with their contract of employment of their intention to resign from employment with the Group. HR will then write to the individual confirming acceptance of the resignation.

PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

Parental Leave is a statutory right available to employees to take unpaid parental leave to look after their child's welfare.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of the Group (full-time and part-time) including those employed on fixed-term contracts.

This policy does not apply to individuals employed by agencies or other contractors. Issues relating to Parental Leave for these individuals should be referred to the appropriate employer.

ELIGIBILITY

- 1 years continuous service
- Be a relevant parent. This means you are either a parent, an adoptive parent, or a person acting in 'loco parentis' (acting as a parent to the child)
- Take the leave before your child's 18th birthday

NOTIFICATION

At least 21 days' notice must be provided and leave may be postponed apart from leave taken immediately after the birth or adoption, depending on the needs of the Company.

The above information is given for guidance purposes only and confers no extra rights to you beyond those provided by statute.

ENTITLEMENT

Parental leave is unpaid. You're entitled to 18 weeks' leave for each child and adopted child, up to their 18th birthday.

The limit on how much parental leave each parent can take in a year is 4 weeks for each child (unless the employer agrees otherwise).

You must take parental leave as whole weeks (eg 1 week or 2 weeks) rather than individual days, unless your employer agrees otherwise or if your child is disabled. You don't have to take all the leave at once.

A 'week' equals the length of time an employee normally works over 7 days.

LENGTH OF CARER LEAVE

Leave must be taken in a minimum of 1 week blocks (except for where a child is disabled, then leave may be taken as single days or multiples of 1 day) and is limited to a maximum of 4 weeks in any year for each child.

You are entitled to take up to 18 weeks unpaid ordinary parental leave for the purpose of caring for a child, up to the child's 18th birthday.

The Group cannot refuse or completely cancel parental leave. Your leave can be postponed for up to 6 months after the date asked for it if it's going to cause problems at work, for example if there's an important deadline.

SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

Shared Parental Leave (SPL) is a statutory right available to employees who have a new baby or a newly adopted child on or after 5th April 2015. It gives them the option of sharing up to 50 weeks of leave and 39 weeks of pay if they meet the necessary eligibility criteria. The parents can decide to be off work at the same time and/or take turns to have periods of leave to look after the child.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of the Group (full-time and part-time) including those employed on fixed-term contracts.

This policy does not apply to individuals employed by agencies or other contractors. Issues relating to Shared Parental Leave for these individuals should be referred to the appropriate employer.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for shared parental leave, you (or your partner) must be entitled to maternity/adoption leave, or Statutory Maternity/Statutory Adoption Pay (or maternity allowance from the government), and you must share the main responsibility for caring for the child with your partner. In addition, you and your partner will also be required to follow a two-step process to establish eligibility as follows:

Step 1 - Continuity test: if you are seeking to take shared parental leave, one parent/adopter must have worked for the same employer for at least 26 weeks at the end of the 15th week before the week in which the child is due (or at the week in which an adopter was notified of having been matched with a child for adoption) and they should still be employed in the first week that shared parental leave is to be taken.

The other parent/adopter has to have worked for 26 weeks out of the 66 weeks leading up to the due date and have earned above the maternity allowance threshold in 13 of those 66 weeks.

Step 2 - Individual eligibility for pay: To qualify for shared parental pay the parent/main adopter must, as well as passing the continuity test, also have earned an average salary of the national insurance lower earnings limit or more for the eight weeks prior to the 15th week before the expected birth/adoption.

If you and your partner meet the eligibility criteria:

- You can effectively 'convert' a period of maternity/adoption leave and pay into shared parental leave and pay that can be taken by either parent;
- Your partner can take shared parental leave concurrently with you when you are on maternity leave or shared parental leave;

- Shared parental leave does not have to be taken in a single continuous block; it can be taken in chunks of as little as a week with the company's agreement;
- When on shared parental leave you will be entitled to the same terms and conditions that would have applied had you been at work, with the exception of pay; and
- You can take Shared Parental Leave at any time within the period which begins on the date the child is born or date of the adoption placement and ends 52 weeks after that date.

PROCEDURE FOR REQUESTING SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE AND PAY

The mother/main adopter must bring their period of maternity/adoption leave to an end by letting their employer know at least eight weeks before the date they intend to curtail the leave. (Maternity leave cannot be brought to an end before the end of the two weeks compulsory maternity leave period.) The balance of maternity leave at that point becomes available for the partner to share as shared parental leave. While this notice of curtailment of maternity/adoption leave can be given before or after the birth placement, if it is given afterwards the notice is binding. However, if notice is given before, there is a six-week window after the child's birth/adoption during which a mother/primary adopter who has previously stated she intends to share her leave can change her mind and decide to remain on leave.

Both the employee and employee's partner should let their respective employers know in writing that they are eligible for and intend to take shared parental leave. Employees should also give an indication of how much shared parental leave and pay each parent intends to take, and when. If you wish to apply for shared parental leave, please use the Shared Parental Leave Form.

If requested within 14 days of letting the company know about the employee's intention to take shared parental leave, employees should provide the company with a copy of the child's birth certificate, or if this is not yet available, confirmation from the employee's midwife or GP of the date of the child's birth. In the case of adoption employees should provide details of the adoption agency, the date the employee (or employee's partner) were informed of the adoption match, and the expected date that the child will be placed. It is the employee's responsibility to provide the information requested within 14 days.

The information about how and when the employee and employee's partner are intending to take shared parental leave is non-binding – employees are free to change their minds about how leave and pay are to be allocated between them and their partner by letting both employers know of the variation in writing. To do this, please complete the Notice to Take or Vary a Period of Shared Parental Leave Form. The company will need at least eight weeks' notice of each period of leave. Employees can submit a total of three requests, meaning an employee can take up to three periods of shared parental leave.

If an employee submits a request for a single continuous period of shared parental leave (for instance, a single block of 12 weeks) this will be granted automatically.

If an employee submits a request for discontinuous leave (for example six weeks shared parental leave

followed by two weeks at work followed by another six weeks of shared parental leave) the company may need to discuss this in order to determine whether the business can support such a work pattern. If this is not possible the company will try to agree an alternative arrangement with the employee. If this is not possible the company may need to refuse the request.

The company may ask the employee to stay in touch with work during shared parental leave. This could be for training purposes, meetings or just to keep generally up to date with the business. Employees can agree to up to 20 Shared Parental Leave In Touch (SPLIT) days without bringing their period of shared parental leave to an end. Any days worked do not extend leave periods. When employees work, they will receive their normal rate of pay inclusive of any shared parental pay. Employees are under no obligation to undertake any work during their shared parental leave period, and the company are under no obligation to offer you any work. These 20 SPLIT days are in addition to the 10 Keeping In Touch (KIT) days available during maternity or adoption leave.

While on shared parental leave employees will continue to accrue their normal holiday entitlement. The company may ask the employee to take some or all outstanding holidays prior to commencing shared parental leave. The company may also ask the employee to take some or all of the holidays they have accrued on shared parental leave at the end of the leave period, and prior to returning to work.

RETURNING TO WORK FROM SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE

If an employee wishes to alter their return date from shared parental leave, they must ensure that they give the appropriate notice as follows using the Notice to Take or Vary a Period of Shared Parental Leave Form.

- If the employee wishes to extend their SPL, at least eight weeks' notice from the originally agreed return date.
- If the employee wishes to shorten their SPL, at least eight weeks' notice from the new return date.

If the employee returns to work after a period of shared parental leave (including any maternity/adoption leave) which was 26 weeks or less, then they are entitled to return to the same job that they left with terms and conditions no less favourable than would have applied had they not been on leave.

If the employee returns to work from a period of shared parental leave (including any maternity/adoption leave) which was greater than 26 weeks the company will try to allow the employee to return to the same job they left. If it is not practicable for the employee to return to the original job, then they will be offered a suitable alternative on terms and conditions no less favourable than would have applied had they not been on leave.

If an employee is considering taking shared parental leave, they should contact a member of the HR department in the first instance to receive guidance and advice on the shared parental leave procedure.

CARER LEAVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

Carer Leave is a statutory right available to employees who have caring responsibilities. It gives employees the support and flexibility to care for dependents, such as children, elderly relatives, or individuals with disabilities.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of the Group (full-time and part-time) including those employed on fixed-term contracts.

This policy does not apply to individuals employed by agencies or other contractors.

ELIGIBILITY

Employees will be eligible for Carer Leave if they:

- have a dependent with a long-term care need and want to be absent from work to provide or arrange care for that dependent.
- a physical or mental illness or injury that means they're expected to need care for more than 3 months, a disability (as defined in the Equality Act 2010), care needs because of their old age.

LENGTH OF CARER LEAVE

- Employees can apply for up to one week of unpaid carer's leave in any 12-month period.
- Requests can be in consecutive or non-consecutive half-days or full days.
- If an employee needs to care for more than one person, they cannot take a week of carer's leave for each dependant. They can only take one week every 12 months. They can use the week of leave on more than one dependant.

NOTICE

- Employees must give notice in writing of their intention to take carer's leave. They must confirm their entitlement to take it and give whichever is the longer of at least twice the amount of notice than the period of leave requested or three days' notice.

- The request does not have to be in writing.
- Employees do not need to give evidence of their dependant's care needs.
- If you need to look after someone in an emergency, you can take time off for this without giving a notice period.

DELAYING REQUEST

- Employers can postpone a request if the operation of the business would be unduly disrupted. In these circumstances, the employer must give notice of the postponement before the leave was due to begin — and explain why it's necessary. The employer must then allow the leave to be taken within one month of the start date of the leave originally requested. The employer should consult the employee about rescheduling the leave.
- Employees are protected from detriment and dismissal because they take or seek to take carer's leave or the employer believes they are likely to do so.

FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

The Group recognises the importance of domestic or out-of-work commitments and acknowledges that, at certain times in an employee's working life, circumstances may arise where it is appropriate to adopt flexible working arrangements. This policy sets out the arrangements within the Group to enable all employees to request flexible working arrangements to balance out their working life with non-work related commitments, providing they meet the eligibility criteria. It does not provide an automatic right for employees to work flexibly but will ensure that proper consideration is given to any request.

This policy aims to ensure that the Group is able to meet service needs, whilst at the same time providing flexibility for staff in line with employment legislation and the principle of improving working lives.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff employed by the Group, including those on fixed-term contracts, who meet the eligibility requirements.

In implementing this policy, managers must ensure that all staff are treated fairly and consistently. All requests will be dealt with in a timely manner. The law requires the consideration process must be completed within two months of the Group receiving the request, including any appeal. If for any reason this timescale cannot be met then the company can extend this time limit, provided the employee agrees to the extension.

ELIGIBILITY

In order to be eligible to request flexible working employees must:

- have not submitted more than two requests within the last 12-month period.

CONTENTS OF THE REQUEST

Employees may request a variation of their employment contract in respect of, for example:

- the hours they are required to work;
- the times when they are required to work;
- changes to hours of work;
- part-time working;
- job sharing;

- working term time only;
- working shifts; or
- where they are required to work.

All employees have the right to have the request considered seriously, in accordance with the statutory procedure, but this does not give the employee a right to a contract variation.

PROCEDURE

A Flexible Working Request Form must be submitted to the employee's line manager in writing, and include the following information:

- the date of the employee's application, the change to working conditions they are seeking and when they would like the change to come into effect;
- a statement that this is a statutory request; and
- if and when they have made a previous application for flexible working.

Once a written request is received it will be considered, and the line manager and/or HR will either

- agree to all the changes and notify the employee accordingly in writing; or
- arrange a meeting with the employee to discuss the application and how it might best be accommodated, or to consider alternative options.

MEETING

Where a meeting is required, a meeting invitation letter will be sent, explaining to the employee that they have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative.

This letter will provide a minimum of 48 hours' notice of the meeting in writing.

The meeting will provide an opportunity for the request to be explored, and for the company to identify exactly what changes the employee is seeking and how these might be accommodated.

A summary note of the meeting will be taken.

AGREEMENT

Where the company's decision is to agree to the application, a letter will be sent out as soon as possible confirming the contractual variation agreed and the date on which the variation is to take effect.

Once the company has agreed to the change requested in the employee's application, a permanent variation of the contract would result, unless their manager agrees otherwise. However, the company reserves the right to allow the variation to take place on a temporary/trial basis and to revert back to the original arrangement if operational difficulties are identified. In such cases a further meeting will take place to discuss this.

Employees may make further applications for variations (whether their first application was successful or not) provided they are made at least 12 months after the previous application and that the employees still meet the eligibility conditions.

REFUSAL

If the employee's manager refuses the variation, the employee will be advised in writing of the decision and the permitted grounds (listed below) on which the application was refused. The letter will also provide an explanation as to why those grounds apply, and set out the appeal procedure.

The application may be refused on the basis of one or more of several business reasons. These are:

- the burden of any additional costs is unacceptable to the organisation;
- inability to reorganise work amongst existing staff;
- inability to recruit additional staff;
- detrimental impact on quality and/or performance;
- detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand;
- insufficient work for the periods the employee proposes to work; and/or
- incompatibility with a planned structural change.

In deciding whether the above grounds are met, a wide range of criteria will be taken into account, including (by way of example only) the following:

- the Group's business needs;
- the suitability of the job for the flexible arrangements proposed, for example the nature of the work, the hours required and the need for continuity and consistency;
- the current balance of full-time and part-time and other flexibly working employees within the department or team;
- the feasibility of covering the remaining hours; and
- the nature of the vacancy should the employee leave.

WITHDRAWAL OF APPLICATION

The company can treat an application as withdrawn under the statutory provisions where employees have:

- notified their manager, orally or in writing, that the application is withdrawn;
- without reasonable cause, failed more than once to attend a meeting or appeal meeting; or
- without reasonable cause, refused to provide a manager with information required in order to assess whether the contract variation should be agreed to.

The manager will confirm the withdrawal of the application to the employee in writing, unless they have already written a notice of withdrawal.

APPEAL

Employees are entitled to appeal against the Company's decision to refuse an application. The appeal will be dealt with impartially and wherever possible by a manager who has not previously been involved with the case.

The appeal should be placed in writing and follow the instructions provided in the outcome letter. The letter should contain the grounds for appeal and should be lodged within 14 days of receipt of the letter declining the flexible working request.

An appeal meeting invite letter will be sent within 14 days of receiving the appeal letter unless within that time period, the manager notifies the employee that the original decision has been overturned and specifies the variation which has now been agreed and the date on which it will take effect.

Employees have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative at the appeal meeting.

Within 14 days after the date of the appeal meeting employees will receive written notice of the decision of the appeal. Where the company upholds the appeal, the notice must specify the contract variation agreed to and state the date on which it is to take effect. Where the company dismisses the appeal, the notice will state the grounds for the decision and contain a sufficient explanation as to why those grounds apply.

A summary note of the meeting will be taken.

The decision of the appeal is final. No further applications will be accepted within the following 12 month period following the date of the original application.

WORKING FROM HOME POLICY AND PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

The Group recognises the benefits and productivity for some individuals to work from home but also acknowledge that not all departments will be able to facilitate it. However, the Group will try to accommodate requests wherever possible. This policy sets out how to request working from home. It does not provide an automatic right for employees to work from home, but all requests will be considered, and a decision given.

This policy aims to ensure that the Group is able to meet service needs, whilst at the same time providing flexibility for staff.

This policy is applied on a discretionary basis and does not provide a temporary or permanent change to an employee's contract of employment with the Group. If you would like to request a temporary or permanent variation to your contract of employment, please refer to the flexible working request policy.

The Group reserves the right to remove this policy at any time.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees within the Group, irrespective of status or length of service and who meet the below requirements.

In implementing this policy, managers must ensure that all employees are treated fairly and consistently. Managers are responsible for ensuring that their desk is adequately covered during periods when employees are working from home. They are also required to demonstrate how they are monitoring employees' performance whilst at home to ensure productivity and business performance is not affected.

Employees who work from home are subject to the same rules, procedures and expected standard of conduct and performance as all other employees. Contractual obligations, duties and responsibilities remain in place, as do our workplace policies.

ELIGIBILITY

Employees are eligible to request working from home in the following circumstances:

- the employee must have completed their probationary period,
- no aspect of the employee's recent performance review was marked as unsatisfactory,
- the employee's disciplinary record is clean.

To work from home will only be granted where the line manager is satisfied that the needs of the business can continue to be met while the employee works from home.

Working from home must be cost-effective and ensure that there is no significant increase in workload on colleagues. The work done by the employee must be capable of being done from home.

The line manager may liaise with the HR Department in relation to working from home.

TO REQUEST/RECORD WORKING FROM HOME

Employees that wish to work from home will be required to request/record their working from home days on their peopleHR calendar giving 84 hours' notice. Failure to request/record your working from home days may result in you no longer being able to work from home and the day is marked as holiday.

To record working from home you must:

- Log into your peopleHR account
- Select planner on the 'me' section
- Click on the date under the other events section
- Select working from home from the drop-down list

As long as they meet the eligibility criteria, employees may work up to one day per week from home. This will be pro-rated depending on how many days per week you work.

Working from home must be carried out at the employee's residential address and it is the employee's responsibility to ensure they have adequate internet access during those times. If not suitable, you may not be able to work from home.

REQUEST DECISIONS

The Group aims to respond to working from home requests in a timely manner. Any request made must be requested and approved by your line manager before being taken. It is your responsibility to ensure that your line manager is aware and has agreed to when you would like to work from home. All working from home requests must be inputted into peopleHR before being taken. Failure to do so may result in you not being able to work from home.

If your line manager is unable to accommodate the day you would like to work from home a reason will be provided and your request will be rejected/ deleted in peopleHR.

Employees will be unable to work from home on days where there are events in the office i.e. Employee of the Quarter. This is to ensure that all employees (who are not on annual leave) are present in the office and participating in company events. These dates will be placed in all employee's outlook calendars. If employees are found to be requesting working from home on the days of company events, after they are notified of a company event, this may result in employees not being able to work from home. Days that have already been requested, before an event is announced, may be cancelled and the employee notified.

Any days which the company is unable to accommodate will not be owed to the employee in lieu.

WORKING FROM HOME AGREEMENT

The Company will supply employees who are working from home with the necessary equipment relevant to their job role. Any equipment issued remains the Company's property. Employees will be required to request equipment from the IT team, via the company's ticketing system, and will need to sign out, and back in, any equipment issued. You must give IT adequate time, normally more than 48 hours notice, to prepare this equipment before you work from home. If the equipment you require is not available the IT department will inform you. Any employee who does not have the adequate equipment to work from home will be unable to do so.

Employees should take reasonable care of Company equipment and only use it for Company business. IT and telephone equipment may only be used in accordance with the Company's IT, telephone, data protection and monitoring policies.

Personal equipment that an employee uses for work purposes remains their responsibility and the Company is not liable for any loss, damage, repair or replacement of any personal equipment.

The costs of electricity, water, heating, telephone, broadband and other utilities will not be covered by the Company. These costs will remain the employee's responsibility.

Employees must always keep Company data and Company materials safe and secure, ensuring reasonable precautions are being taken to maintain confidentiality in accordance with the Company's Data Protection policy.

Employees should refrain from revealing to candidates/clients that they work from home. Employees must not provide their personal address or personal contact details to candidates/clients, or third parties associated with the Company. Meetings between candidates/clients and employees at home are prohibited.

HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR WORKING FROM HOME

The Company's health and safety policies apply to those employees who are working from home. Employees should refer to the separate health and safety policies for more details.

Whilst working from home, even on a temporary basis, the company requires its employees to have an adequate desk set up to fulfil their work. There is useful information and guidance on the Health and Safety Executive's website on how to set up your workspace whilst at home. Alternatively, contact the HR team who will be able to provide you with further information on how to set up your workspace whilst at home.

WORKING HOURS

Employees are responsible for ensuring they complete their working hours as defined in their contracts of employment.

If an employee is found to not be working whilst working from home this will be considered a form of gross misconduct and will be handled in line with the company's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

WORKING TIME

Employees are responsible for ensuring they take their rest breaks as defined in their contracts of employment. Working time should be monitored and rest breaks of at least 20 minutes for every six hours of working should be taken.

FIRST AID

Employees are covered under the Company's accident insurance policy in their homes. Accidents must be reported immediately to the nominated person set out in the Company Health and Safety Policy.

CLEAR DESK POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the intention of this Policy to assist in the establishment of a culture of security and trust for all employees. An effective clear desk effort, involving the participation and support of all employees, can significantly protect paper documents that contain sensitive information about our clients, customers and vendors as well as maintain a clean and tidy office environment.

SCOPE

The scope of this Policy applies to all Day Webster Limited employees, including permanent and temporary employees as well as consultants. All are obliged to adhere to this and any other Information Security Policy. Failure to comply with this policy may result in a Lets Chat or be regarded as a disciplinary matter and will be dealt with in line with the Organisation's disciplinary policy with possible sanctions up to and including summary dismissal (or termination of contract for temporary workers).

The geographical scope includes all locations where Day Webster Limited paper or electronic information is in use, including (but not limited to):

Day Webster Limited premises

The employee's home.

OBJECTIVES

To ensure Day Webster Limited permanent and temporary employees, consultants and contractors are aware of their responsibilities in:

The physical and electronic protection of Day Webster Limited information, stored both on paper and electronic media

The protection of Day Webster Limited reputation

Reducing the risk of a security breach, fraud, theft, loss or corruption of information caused by paper and electronic documents being left unattended.

Maintaining a clean and tidy office environment to promote productivity and health and safety.

PRINCIPLES

A clear desk:

Produces a positive image when clients visit the office

Reduces the threat of a security incident

Reduces the loss of information as a result of theft, fire or flood damage

Is designed to help reduce the amount of paper that is printed

Reduces the risk of helping start a fire or making a small fire bigger

Reduces the number of accidents and spills in the workplace.

Promotes a hygienic and clutter-free work environment.

A clear screen ensures that confidential information is not viewed on your PC or laptop by unauthorised persons while you are away from your desk.

USAGE

At known extended periods away from your desk (e.g. lunch break, attending meetings), sensitive documents are expected to be placed in locked drawers.

At the end of the working day, employees are expected to tidy their desk, lock their pedestal and storage cabinets.

Maintain cleanliness to promote a tidy and safe environment. Desks should be free of food remnants and clutter that may contribute to a poor work environment. Plates, cutlery and mugs should be washed up daily.

Tidy Friday – Ensure that desk is completely clear of all paperwork and personal belongings before you leave so that all desks can be thoroughly cleaned over the weekend. Place any paperwork and belongings in draws or on chairs rather than on desks.

Client files should be returned to the filing system at close of business every Friday in order that other employees seeking client information stand a reasonable chance of finding the files.

As we do not have vast amounts of storage cabinets, please archive files where possible. These files can be returned to you the same day or next day if required.

Employees are expected to keep their surrounding desk area tidy; i.e. no files/boxes/clutter lying on floor or passageways.

Allocate time in your calendar to clear away your paperwork.

Use the recycling bins for all paper no longer needed.

Do not print off e-mails to read them. This generates increased amounts of clutter.

Consider scanning paper items and filing them electronically.

Whenever you leave your desk, clear and lock the screen. This can most easily be achieved by pressing the Windows key and L at the same time.

Ensure that you have a passworded screensaver in place which operates after no longer than 10 minutes. If this is not working, please contact the IT Help Desk.

USER AWARENESS

This Policy will be drawn to the attention of all Day Webster Limited staff.

ELECTRIC CAR SALARY SACRIFICE SCHEME

INTRODUCTION

The Electric Car Salary Sacrifice Scheme enables employees to lease an electric car using an HMRC-compliant and tax-efficient way. Day Webster (*the Company*) has partnered with We Are Electric (trading as WeVee, *the Supplier*) to offer this scheme to employees who meet the eligibility criteria.

Employees of Day Webster will be able to lease a car for a minimum period of 12 months and a maximum period of 36 months. At the end of the lease period, the employee can either return the car to the Supplier and lease a new car (under a new agreement) or return the car and terminate the agreement entirely. Employees will not own the car and will not have the option to buy the car at the end of the lease period.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of a management level in the Company or above who have been employed by the company for a minimum of 2 years.

SALARY SACRIFICE

Salary Sacrifice enables an employee to exchange part of their pre-taxed salary for a non-cash benefit from their employer, for example, an electric car.

HOW DO SALARY SACRIFICE SCHEMES WORK?

An employee agrees with their employer to give up a certain amount of their pre-taxed salary per annum for a certain benefit in return. The amount you sacrifice, in relation to the Electric Car Scheme, can vary depending on what vehicle you agree to lease from the Supplier.

At the end of your lease agreement, you can decide to opt out of the salary sacrifice scheme however you will not be able to do this during your lease period.

LEASING A CAR FROM THE SUPPLIER (WEVEE)

To begin your car lease process, the employee will need to have a look at the Supplier's website (<https://wevee.uk/>) and find the car you would like to lease. Before obtaining a quote from WeVee the employee will be required to notify and gain approval from the Company. To do this you will need to fill in a request form which is accessible on the intranet.

If the Company approves the employee's request, the employee will then be required to liaise with the Supplier directly to obtain a quote. Once the employee is happy with the quote, the Supplier will

send the employee's car agreement along with the quote and car specification to the Company for approval.

As the car agreement is between the Supplier and the Company, the employee will be required to sign and enter into an agreement with the Company before the car agreement with the Supplier can be signed. The agreement will outline the terms and conditions the employee will be required to abide by when leasing the car. Some of these terms and conditions are within this policy however if the employee would like a full copy before proceeding, please contact the HR department.

If the employee decides to enter into the agreement, a copy of the signed agreement should be returned to the HR Manager. If the employee decides not to enter into the agreement, the employee will be required to contact the supplier directly to cancel the order. Once the HR Manager receives the employee's signed agreement, a member of the Executive Team, on behalf of the Company, will sign and return the agreement to the Supplier. The employee's car will be ordered and delivered on or around the date provided by the Supplier.

ADD ONS

As a part of the employee's lease agreement with the Company, you must purchase Early Termination (ET) insurance which is provided by the Supplier.

There are other additional services, provided by the Supplier, that the employee may choose to add along with leasing the car. In addition to leasing the car the employee may be able to add:

- Car Insurance
- Tyres
- Servicing

The cost of each of these factors will vary depending on the car the employee decides to lease. For more information regarding the above add-ons, please contact the Supplier directly.

If the employee chooses not to include these as a part of their agreement they will be responsible for obtaining insurance for the car and any additional costs required i.e. tyres, servicing.

LEASE LENGTH

The minimum term the employee can lease a car from the Supplier is 12 months. The longest lease period is for 36 months (3 years). If an employee requires their lease period to be longer than this, they will be required to put a request to the HR department stating the reason why they need a longer lease period. This will be reviewed, and a response will be provided in writing.

EXCESS MILEAGE

As a part of the quote obtained, the employee will be required to inform the supplier of their estimated/expected mileage per annum. This figure can affect the quote that is provided to the employee by the supplier. If an employee goes over the figure agreed, they will be liable to pay an excess mileage fee which will be applied by the supplier.

The additional cost per mile will be outlined to the employee at the time of obtaining the quote and contained within the agreement with the Company.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Even though the Company is leasing the car on the employee's behalf, the employee is responsible and liable for the vehicle for the duration of the agreement. This is inclusive, but not limited to, the following:

- Any damage or wear and tear that occurs to the car during the lease period
- The maintenance of the car
- Insurance (if not a part of the agreement)
- Servicing (if not a part of the agreement)
- Any fines incurred during the lease period

Any additional costs incurred by the employee inclusive but limited to the list above, the employee will be required to pay the Company any monies owed immediately.

AT THE END OF THE AGREEMENT

At the end of the Lease Agreement, the employee may either lease another car through the Supplier (subject to them meeting any eligibility requirements that may apply at the time) or choose to not renew the agreement.

The employee will never own the car and at the end of the Lease Agreement, the employee will not be able to purchase the car.

LEAVERS PROVISIONS

To participate in the scheme you are required to add the ET insurance to the lease. This insurance is subject to a six-month 'cooling off period.' In the event that your employment is terminated, after the initial period, the insurance will cover any early termination charge which is incurred from the Supplier.

In the event that your employment with the company is terminated, by either the employee or the company, for any other reason than redundancy, with the six-month initial period the following will apply:

- the Company where it is reasonably practicable to do so will attempt to reallocate the car to another employee, who is eligible to participate in the scheme, for the remainder of the lease period before your last day of employment;
- If the Company is unsuccessful in reallocation the car, then an early termination charge equal to 50% of the total remaining lease payments ('ET Charge') will be applied by the Supplier.

If the company is unable to reallocate the employee's car, the employee will be liable in full for any ET Charge that is applied to the car upon the termination of employment. The Company will provide the employee with a letter setting out the ET Charge that applies and how this is calculated. Payment of the ET Charge shall be payable by the employee to the Company immediately.

For the avoidance of doubt, if the Company terminates an employee's employment by reason of redundancy they will not be liable to pay the ET Charge and the employee liability for the car will cease on the return of the car or the termination of your employment (whichever is later).

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

Day Webster is fully committed to ensuring the health, safety, and wellbeing of all our staff members and those parties that may be affected by our activities and operations. We will strive to provide information, instruction, training, and supervision to all members of staff in relation to health and safety within the workplace.

Day Webster requires all members of staff to ensure they carry out their duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and all other relevant legislation. All Members of staff must also cooperate with Day Webster to carry out their health and safety responsibilities. Neglecting these responsibilities would be seen as a direct infringement of Day Webster's health and safety policy and will be dealt with under the company's disciplinary procedure and could lead ultimately to dismissal.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of staff within the group irrespective of status or length of service.

EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

The Office Manager is the designated person responsible for ensuring our compliance with health and safety legislation they will ensure that:

1. Our Health and Safety policy documentation Health and Safety Management System are implemented, monitored, developed, communicated, reviewed, and amended as required.
2. A health and safety plan of continuous improvement is created, and progress monitored.
3. Staff understand the allocated responsibilities for health and safety defined in this policy.
4. Suitable and sufficient funds, people, materials, and equipment are provided to meet all health and safety requirements.
5. Adequate insurance cover is provided and renewed.
6. Competent persons are appointed to provide health and safety assistance and advice.
7. An adequate system of maintenance exists and operates to keep premises, plant, and work equipment in a safe condition.
8. Communicate and consult with staff on health and safety issues.
9. An effective training programme is established to ensure staff are competent to carry out their work in a safe manner.
10. Effective contingency plans are in place with a designated competent person in charge of the planning and control measures for situations involving imminent danger.
11. Ensure there is an adequate number of trained fire marshals and first aiders based on the staff count.
12. Keep track of health and safety training.
13. Statutory examinations are planned, completed, and recorded.

MANGEMENT/TEAM LEADER RESPONSIBILITIES

Managers will ensure that in their areas of control:

1. They actively lead the implementation of our health and safety policy.
2. They supervise their staff to ensure that they work safely, providing increased supervision for new and young workers.
3. Safe systems of work are developed and implemented.
4. Adequate resources are allocated to implement the safety policy and meet all safety requirements.
5. Accidents, ill health and 'near miss' incidents at work are investigated, recorded, and reported.
6. They communicate and consult with staff on health and safety issues.
7. They encourage staff to report hazards and raise health and safety concerns.
8. Issues concerning safety raised by anyone are thoroughly investigated and when necessary, further effective controls are implemented and communicated to staff.

MEMBERS OF STAFF

All members of staff are responsible for acting safely whilst at work. By understanding their responsibilities and following our safety rules, they will help the company comply with their legal duties and contribute to the safe running of the workplace.

ALL MEMBERS OF STAFF HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO:

1. Take reasonable care of your own safety.
2. Take reasonable care of the safety of others.
3. Not to interfere with or misuse, intentionally or recklessly, anything provided in the interest of safety.
4. Set a good personal example in relation to H&S.
5. Be responsible for ensuring that his/her actions do not cause danger to themselves or others.
6. Not tamper with equipment
 - a. Members of staff should not carry out any alterations to equipment which might compromise health and safety. Members of staff who do tamper with equipment are likely to face disciplinary action.
7. Use equipment appropriately.

FIRST AID PERSONNEL HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO:

1. Administer first aid in accordance with current legislation and approved code of practice.
2. Record all accidents that are reported to them in the form of an incident log.
3. Re-stock first aid boxes when necessary.

Fire Marshals have the responsibility to carry out the duties for which they are trained when an emergency evacuation must take place.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

The office manager & HR personnel are responsible for the health and safety of this organisation. However, everyone in the organisation has responsibility in relation to health and safety, as set out in this policy.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE EMPLOYER

The employer is responsible for ensuring that the members of staff's health and safety are protected in all activities at work. In particular, the employer is responsible for the following:

1. Safe premises and place of work
 - a. The employer will ensure that the premises are safe, and all hazards are removed where possible. If not possible to remove a hazard, clear signage will be displayed advising members of staff and any other visitors to the premises on the nature of the hazard and the precautions that should be taken.
2. Competent and safe fellow members of staff
 - a. The employer will ensure that all members of staff receive the appropriate training so that they are competent in all their work duties. If any member of staff acts in a manner that is likely to put others in danger to put others in danger appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.
3. A safe system of work
 - a. The employer will ensure that all processes of work are safe. If there are any hazards the employer will endeavour to move them. If that is not possible, appropriate signage will be displayed advising members of staff and any other visitors to the premises of the nature of the hazard and the precautions that should be taken.

RISK ASSESSMENTS

1. The H&S Officer is required to carry out regular risk assessments. These risk assessments should be carried out annually at least, and some risk assessments will require more regular completion.
2. Risk assessments should be recorded in writing, with an agreed target date for any actions that have been identified.
3. If there are any risks that cannot be eliminated all members of staff working in that area must be made aware.

ACCIDENTS

1. Although every effort will be made to ensure a safe environment it is accepted that accidents can occur. If an accident does occur this must be reported immediately to the office manager. It must also be recorded in the accident book.
2. If any of the following occur, they must be reported to the health and safety executive under the RIDDOR procedures:
 - a. Fatal accidents

- b. Major injuries
 - c. Accidents resulting in a period of absence of more than 7 days.
 - d. Injuries to the public where they must be taken to hospital.
- 3. In addition, some work-related diseases and dangerous occurrences must be reported to the health and safety executive.
- 4. Following an accident, the situation will be investigated to determine whether changes need to be made to equipment, training or systems to work so that a similar situation can be prevented in the future.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

(CLOCKING IN AND OUT)

INTRODUCTION

Timely and regular attendance is an expectation of performance for all staff members of the Group. To ensure adequate staffing, positive morale, and to meet expected productivity standards throughout the organisation, staff will be held accountable for adhering to their required working hours.

Day Webster Group uses an electronic time tracking system, called UNIS, which captures and records all staff time records. UNIS collects actual time entered by the member of staff using their finger print or fob. The data is later then uploaded into the Group's HR system, where the staff member and line manager can monitor and keep track of their time records, also enabling the organisation to efficiently process staff work time for health and safety purposes.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of staff within the Group irrespective of status or length of service.

CLOCK LOCATIONS

Time clocks are located at the four entrances and exits to the Day Webster's offices. All members of staff can use the time clock machines at each location.

USE OF TIME CLOCKS

All members of staff must report time and attendance using the time clock system. This data will be reviewed by the HR department on a monthly basis. All members of staff must report the same total of hours which is outlined within their contract of Employment including any time working off site i.e. client meeting. If a member of staff has missing hours, equating to half a day or more, an email will be sent to their line manager to make any adjustments to their HR records before being re-reviewed by the HR department.

FOBS

If you have a medical condition, you will be assigned a fob. All members of staff who require a fob, will need to give a £5 deposit which can be deducted from your monthly salary. If you would like a fob you will need to speak to the HR department who will issue you with a fob. Once the fob is returned to the HR department, you will be reimbursed your deposit.

If you lose your fob, you must inform the IT department immediately.

CLOCK IN/ OUT REQUIREMENTS

All members of staff are required to clock in and clock out:

- at the start of their shift;
- at the end of their shift;
- if they leave site i.e. client meeting; and
- when they return to site.

Any falsification or misrepresentation of time and attendance information, including fob sharing, may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

FAILURE TO CLOCK IN/OUT

All members of staff are required to follow the guideline set out within this policy regarding clocking in and out. Missed clocking in and outs is a violation of this policy and includes:

- Failure to clock in and out at the beginning/or end of their shift;
- Failure to clock in/out if they leave site and when they return
- Failure to accurately report time worked;
- Clocking in late or out early of their shifts without prior approval.

Under certain conditions, such as a training course, off-site or a client visit, when a member of staff cannot clock in at work, the member of staff should input this data onto their planner on the Group's HR system for approval by their line manager.

Line managers should monitor their staff member's attendance on a regular basis and address unsatisfactory attendance in a timely and consistent manner. If a line manager is notified by HR that a member within their team has not clocked in/out correctly, it will be the line managers responsibility to conduct a meeting with the staff member to address this.

All members of staff will receive a Lets Chat which will be noted on their HR file, for their first failure to clock in and out correctly. Any further occurrences, where the member of staff fails to clock in and out correctly, will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and will be unpaid. If the member of staff continues to fail to clock in/out correctly then the below stages, in line with the Group's Disciplinary Policy, will apply:

OCCURRENCES	DISCIPLINE STEP AND ACTION
5 Occurrences	Step 1: Lets Chat
10 Occurrences	Step 2: Written Warning
15 Occurrences	Step 3: Final Written Warning
20 Occurrences	Sep 4: Termination

The above will be monitored and applied to the number of occurrences within a rolling 12-month period.

DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY AND PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

Unfortunately, some people in our society are harassed as a result of a protected characteristic such as race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religious belief, political opinion or affiliation, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age or disability. This policy also includes issues that fall outside of the protected characteristics.

The company is committed to providing a safe and respectful work environment for all staff and customers. No one should have to tolerate harassment at work for any reason, at any time. No one has the right to harass anyone else, at work or in any other employment. If a member of staff is suffering from bullying or harassment in the workplace, they should raise it in the first instance with their line manager (or another manager if the complaint involves the other staff member's manager) or a HR representative.

The company recognises that bullying, and harassment can exist in the workplace, as well as outside, and that it can seriously effect on staff members working lives by interfering with their job performance or by creating a stressful, intimidating and unpleasant working environment.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of staff within the Group, irrespective of status or length of service.

POLICY

Bullying may be characterised as;

- offensive,
- intimidating,
- malicious or insulting behaviour,
- an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

Harassment is against the law. It occurs when a person engages in unwanted conduct or language which has the purpose or effect of violating another's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for him. It may be related to age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion, nationality or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident. The key is that the actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient. Remember that one person's joke is another person's harassment which can also be hidden in questions or remarks that seem positive.

Examples of what may constitute bullying or harassment:

- inappropriate and/or degrading words or pictures (like graffiti, photos, or posters);
- inappropriate physical contact;
- sexual demands;
- spoken or written putdowns;
- gestures;
- jokes;
- nicknames;
- insults;
- overbearing or abusive behaviour towards staff with disabilities;
- spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone (particularly on the grounds of race, sex, sexual orientation and religion or belief). This includes positive discrimination;
- copying memos that are critical about someone to others who do not need to know;
- ridiculing or demeaning someone. For example, picking on them or setting them up to fail;
- exclusion or victimisation;
- unfair treatment;
- overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position;
- unwelcome sexual advances. For example, touching, standing too close, display of offensive materials;
- making threats or comments about job security without foundation;
- deliberately undermining a competent staff member by overloading and constant criticism; and
- preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities.

The company will not tolerate any form of harassment and bullying and seeks to ensure that the working environment is sympathetic to all staff. This policy will therefore apply to all work-related events, even if they occur away from the normal workplace.

Managers have a right to manage and it is not bullying or harassment for them to ask staff to do their jobs according to the required standards.

The company has published these procedures to inform staff of the type of behaviour that is unacceptable and provide members of staff who are the victims of personal harassment with a means of redress.

The company recognises that it has a duty to implement this policy, and all member of staff are expected to comply with it.

STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of staff have the responsibility to treat each other with respect, and to speak up if they or someone else is being harassed.

Staff should take the following actions if they consider that bullying or harassment has taken, or is taking place:

- use appropriate behaviour and language in the workplace and not perpetrate or perpetuate acts or language which may be harassment; and

- report harassment to managers or to a HR representative.

Staff should respect the confidentiality of anyone involved in a harassment complaint. Allegations of harassment which are not made in good faith will be treated as gross misconduct.

Managers must set an example for appropriate workplace behaviour and must deal with situations of harassment immediately on becoming aware of them, whether or not there has been a complaint.

Managers should:

- challenge behaviour at the earliest stage where it could be a breach of this policy;
- treat complaints seriously;
- investigate each complaint;
- support the parties; and
- take action to resolve the matter, based on the outcome of the investigation.

Disciplinary action will be taken where the company considers it appropriate to do so.

The company views all incidents of harassment very seriously. All complaints will be investigated, and action taken to ensure that they are resolved quickly, confidentially, and fairly. Anyone who has harassed a person or group of people or who retaliates in any way against anyone who has complained of harassment, given evidence in harassment investigations, or been found guilty of harassment will be taken through the disciplinary process and may be summarily dismissed for gross misconduct.

COMPLAINING ABOUT BULLYING OR HARASSMENT

INFORMAL COMPLAINT

The company recognises that complaints of harassment, and particularly of sexual harassment, can sometimes be of a sensitive or intimate nature and that it may not be appropriate for staff to raise the issue through our normal grievance procedure. In these circumstances staff are encouraged to raise such issues with another colleague, supervisor or member of the HR team.

If a member of staff becomes a victim of minor harassment they should make it clear to the harasser on an informal basis that their behaviour is unwelcome and ask the harasser to stop. If the member of staff feels unable to do this verbally then they should hand a written request to the harasser, and a confidential helper can assist on this. The member of staff should sign and date any such letter and ensure that a copy is kept for any possible future complaint. It is also advisable that the member of staff keep an 'incident diary' of any offending behaviour.

FORMAL COMPLAINT

Where the informal approach fails or if the harassment is more serious, members of staff should deal with the issue through formal procedures, regardless of whether informal steps have been taken or not. If members of staff wish to deal with any issue of harassment formally, they should do so according to the company's Grievance Procedure. If the member of staff has been keeping notes of

the harassment, the written complaint should include:

- the name of the alleged harasser;
- the nature of the alleged harassment;
- the dates and times when the alleged harassment occurred;
- the names of any witnesses; and
- any action already taken by the member of staff to stop the alleged harassment.

On receipt of a formal complaint the company will take action to separate staff members from the alleged harasser to enable an uninterrupted investigation to take place. This may involve a temporary transfer of the alleged harasser to another work area or suspension with pay until the matter has been resolved.

The person dealing with the complaint will invite the member of staff to attend a meeting, at a reasonable time and location, to discuss the matter and carry out a thorough investigation. Staff members have the right to be accompanied at such a meeting by a confidential helper or another work colleague of their choice and must take all reasonable steps to attend. Those involved in the investigation will be expected to act in confidence as accusations of harassment are potentially defamatory and could provide grounds for possible legal action.

On conclusion of the investigation, which will normally be within ten working days of the meeting, a summary of the findings and of the investigator's proposed decision will be sent in writing to the relevant parties.

If a member of staff or the alleged harasser are dissatisfied with the draft report or with the proposed decision, this should be raised with the investigator within five working days of receiving the draft. Any points of concern will be considered by the investigator before a final report is sent in writing to the member of staff and to the alleged harasser. Staff have the right to appeal against the findings of the investigation in accordance with the appeal provisions of the grievance procedure.

GENERAL NOTES

If the report concludes that the allegation is well-founded, the harasser will be liable to disciplinary action in accordance with our disciplinary procedure. The company on review of the report will make the decision on how to proceed and what sanction if any to impose. Members of staff should also bear in mind that harassment or bullying may also constitute a criminal offence, punishable by a fine or imprisonment.

A member of staff who receives a formal warning or who is dismissed for harassment may appeal through our disciplinary appeal procedure.

There may be occasions where mediation is considered the best method to enable the parties involved to work together again. This will involve a neutral third party, either an in-house or external mediator, working with the individuals involved. Mediation is a voluntary process, but individuals will be encouraged to participate if it is felt that this might be the best outcome.

Members of staff should bring any incident of third party harassment to the attention of their line manager or HR representative as soon as is reasonably practicable. The company will be unable to intervene to protect members of staff from further harassment if it is unaware of the offending behaviour.

If a staff member brings a complaint of harassment they will not be victimised for having brought the complaint. However, if the report concludes that the complaint is both untrue and has been brought with malicious intent, disciplinary action will be taken.

Managers have a right and a duty to manage staff to help ensure that members of staff meet the company's reasonable requirements. For the avoidance of doubt, where managers provide guidance to staff members about conduct or performance, it does not constitute bullying or harassment, provided that it is carried out in reasonable way.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The company operates a social media policy to govern the use of this media within the Company. The policy covers profile pages and other resources maintained by members of staff on networking sites including, but not limited to, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, as well as blogs, forums, message boards, review sites and online polls.

Social media can be a distracting technology which causes a negative effect on the productivity of members of staff working for the Company, however, it can also be an engaging platform that enables the Company to build relationships with new and existing customers.

This policy sets out how members of staff must behave when using the Company's social media platforms and governs how members of staff should refer to and promote the Company on their own personal accounts.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of staff within the Group irrespective of status or length of service.

AIM OF THE POLICY

It is important that members of staff using social media in the workplace use it in a way which does not adversely affect the Company's reputation.

Social media can involve communication between job applicants and members of staff and is an avenue for the Company to promote and control its reputation. Social media may blur the boundaries between what is home and work. Access is often public, even amongst a limited group of connected accounts, and comments are often permanent.

Members of staff should be honest and respectful when using social media. Everything posted on social media may be tracked back to the source so members of staff must ensure content posted on social media accounts, both in a work and personal capacity, fits with the Company ethos, CSR and marketing brands.

TERM OF USE

You must not contact or have any dealings with any customer, client, candidate or other work contact on social media (including without limitation Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and all other social networking sites, internet postings and blogs) unless:

- this is carried out through an account set up solely for the purposes of you undertaking work for the Company; and
- you have the prior written approval of the Company to use social media for work.

Social media use for work purposes is controlled by the Marketing Manager. The Marketing Manager has absolute discretion as to whether to approve the use of social media for the purposes of work and approval will only be given where this is required for your job role.

Upon setting up a social media account to be used for work you must provide the Marketing Manager with all your login and password details. These must not be changed without prior authorisation from the marketing manager. Any email address that is used to set up a social media account or to receive notifications must be your Company email address and not a personal email address.

The Company reserves the right to monitor the use you make of any social media account in accordance with the Company's IT Policies.

Social media usage for personal reasons, outside of work hours, does not need approval by the Company. However, when posting on social media, either in a personal or work capacity, it must not:

- Compromise the Company, disclose confidential data or disclose sensitive data
- Damage the Company's reputation or brand
- Breach copyright or data protection
- Contain libellous or defamatory content
- Engage in bullying or harassment of any kind
- Be of illegal, sexual or offensive content
- Interfere with your work commitments
- Use the name of the Company to promote products or political opinions.

Upon the termination of your employment, you shall ensure the Marketing Manager has access to any social media account you have set up for work purposes and hand over control of the account to the Company. The Company reserves the right to withhold your pay (or any other sums which may be owing to you) in the event of you not cooperating with the Company to enable it to have control of your account.

Failure to comply with the terms of this policy shall be viewed seriously by the Company and may result in disciplinary action being taken against you, including dismissal.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND RECRUITMENT

Recruitment processes are increasingly utilising social media as a method of engaging job-seekers. Due to the increasing amount of content posted online, viewing candidate's social media profiles is a quick and effective way of checking details contained in a CV or getting an idea of the personality of the candidate.

Where appropriate the company may permit reviewing the social media profiles of candidates for recruitment purposes. The review must be carried out in accordance with the Company's policy and code of conduct.

Accessing of the candidate's profile page may be disclosed to the candidate during the recruitment process. Where information is discovered that makes the candidates unsuitable for the position, the candidate will be notified, and they will be entitled to make representations about the information and their unsuitability.

BUSINESS CONTACTS

Details of business contacts obtained during the course of a staff member's engagement are considered confidential information and remain the property of the Company. Business contact details include the contact records in computer software installed on a staff member's computer as well as maintained on third-party websites including social media.

Business contacts may not be added to personal social media accounts during the course of your engagement with the company. If any are, these must be removed upon termination of a staff members engagement with the company.

Business contacts may be added to corporate social media accounts. A separate record of business contacts on social media should be maintained within the Company, updated as and when the contacts are added.

POLICY ENFORCEMENT

Using social media to refer to or notify business or personal contacts of a members of staff new employer will be seen as an attempt to solicit customers or poach staff and may result in civil proceedings being brought against the individual.

Using social media in a way which breaches this policy will result in such content being removed from corporate accounts and the members of staff authorisation to use corporate social media accounts on behalf of the Company being suspended and removed. Such content may be damaging to the Company or members of staff and may lead to disciplinary action under the Company's disciplinary policy, which may be serious or gross misconduct.

ALCOHOL POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The company takes its obligations to members of staff very seriously. This policy helps the company to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all staff members and complies with their legal duties.

Staff members who develop alcohol-related problems, cause harm to themselves, to others and impair their performance.

The *Health and Safety at Work Etc. Act 1974*, section 2 places a duty on companies to provide a safe and healthy working environment, and to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of their members of as well as any visitors or contractors on the premises.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of staff within the Group irrespective of status or length of service.

AIMS OF THE POLICY

This policy aims to:

- promote awareness of alcohol-related problems and addiction;
- encourage a sensible approach to drinking alcohol;
- ensure that the company complies with its legal obligations;
- indicate restrictions on drinking alcohol at work;
- protect staff members from the dangers of alcohol abuse; and
- support staff members with an alcohol-related problem.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

In a social environment, the consumption of alcohol in moderation is commonly an accepted part of life. In the workplace, however, it can impair performance, result in inappropriate behaviour, and can place both the individual and those around them in danger, as well as affect their health.

In the workplace alcohol abuse can take two different forms;

- occasional inappropriate drinking; and
- consistent inappropriate drinking.

Problems arising from the first category are more likely to be cases of misconduct, whilst the second will be more likely to involve long-term health and performance issues. In either case the health of the individual member of staff will be affected, and quite possibly the health and safety of those around them.

While it will be clear if an individual is drunk at work, the symptoms of larger scale systematic alcohol abuse may be less obvious. Symptoms of alcohol abuse may include:

- frequent absences on Mondays and Fridays;
- unusually high rates of absenteeism;
- unkempt appearance/lack of hygiene;
- irregular work patterns and lower productivity;
- poor relations with others;
- strong odour of alcohol; or
- lack of coordination.

RESTRICTIONS ON DRINKING ALCOHOL AT WORK

Alcohol must not be consumed in any situation where as a consequence the safety of the individual, colleagues or visitors is put at risk.

Alcohol must not be consumed in excess or in sufficient quantities to impinge on the exercise of any individual's duties when on company business outside normal working hours, for example when involved in functions or in providing hospitality.

Members of staff are not obliged to work with anyone they consider to be incapable through the consumption of alcohol, and should immediately report the matter to their line manager or HR.

Members of staff who are incapable of working through the consumption of alcohol should be immediately removed from duty and the matter reported to HR.

Members of staff will be held to be negligent in the event that whilst on company business they cause an accident or damages to anyone or anything due to their consumption of alcohol.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Members of staff who are unfit or otherwise incapable for work through the consumption of alcohol will be liable for disciplinary action. They may be found guilty of gross misconduct and may face summary dismissal.

Members of staff with any problems are encouraged to liaise with their line manager or HR confidentially at the earliest opportunity. A failure to declare any issue until a disciplinary matter is underway may result in the company electing not to treat excessive alcohol consumption as a health issue.

PROCEDURE

In the event that a member of staff is diagnosed with an alcohol-related problem the company will treat this as a health matter. However, this does not excuse the staff member from any of the disciplinary matters that may fall within the scope of the company Disciplinary Procedure.

All alcohol-related issues will be dealt with in a constructive and sympathetic manner.

All requests for help or advice will be treated in the strictest confidence and all information gathered as a result will be held in accordance with the *Data Protection Act 1998*.

After receiving any appropriate medical reports, the company will provide support to any affected members of staff. Where a member of staff agrees to follow a suitable course of action or treatment any disciplinary action may be suspended.

The company reserves the right to give affected members of staff lighter duties at the same rate of pay or require them to take paid leave if it is deemed appropriate.

Following effective treatment and in the absence of any disciplinary action, the company will endeavour to return an affected staff member to the same role previously fulfilled by the member of staff, or where this is not possible to a suitable alternative.

In the event that following successful treatment for an alcohol-related problem a staff member suffers a relapse, the company is under no obligation to make provision for any further treatment, and the staff member in question may face summary dismissal.

If it is considered that the working environment or culture is the cause or a contributing factor to an alcohol-related problem, the company will take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure a reduction of such problems.

AGENCIES AND SUPPORT MECHANISMS:

Alcoholics Anonymous – the largest self-help group for people who acknowledge they cannot handle alcohol and want a new way of life without it. The service is free.

National helpline number - 0845 769 7555

Website – www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Email – help@alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Alcohol Concern – for people worried about their alcohol consumption. The website enables people to assess their alcohol consumption, and provides recommended courses of action, such as contacting treatment centres or online interventions.

Website – www.alcoholconcern.org.uk

Drinkline – is a government-funded free service. They can provide advice to the drinker or anybody concerned about the drinker. There is also a database of local support and treatment services.

Telephone – 0300 123 1110

Website – www.drinkaware.co.uk

Samaritans – always support anyone in distress, around the clock, through 201 branches across the UK and Republic of Ireland.

Telephone – 08457 90 90 90

Website – www.samaritans.org

Email – jo@Samaritans.org

DRUGS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The company takes its obligations to members of staff very seriously. This policy helps the company to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all staff members and complies with their legal duties.

The use of non-prescribed drugs is not only dangerous but also illegal under criminal law. The *Health and Safety at Work Etc. Act 1974* places a duty on companies to provide a safe and healthy working environment.

It is an offence to supply, produce, or offer to supply or produce controlled drugs. The *Misuse of Drugs Act 1971* makes it an offence for the occupier of premises to permit knowingly the production or supply of any controlled drugs or allow the smoking or use of any controlled drugs on those premises.

It is also an offence to aid or abet any of these offences.

Any reference in this policy to a non-prescription drug refers only to controlled or illegal substances, and does not refer to medicines, supplements and similar substances that are legally and commercially available in the United Kingdom.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all members of staff within the Group irrespective of status or length of service.

This policy covers the use and misuse of intoxicating substances, which include solvents, legal and illegal drugs, prescription and over-the-counter medicines and other substances that could adversely affect work performance and/or health and safety.

AIMS OF THE POLICY

This policy aims to:

- ensure that the company complies with its legal obligations;
- raise awareness of the dangers and penalties associated with the use of controlled drugs;
- guarantee the right of all staff to work in an environment unaffected by controlled drugs; and
- provide support to staff whose lives are or have been affected by the misuse of controlled drugs.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Controlled substances often possess side effects that could not only adversely affect a member of staff's health but that of their colleagues, as well as their performance. Members of staff should be aware that anyone under the influence of controlled drugs is a risk to everyone around them, and that they should be alert to possible signs of drugs abuse.

Such indicators commonly include:

- sudden changes in behaviour;
- confusion;
- irritability;
- fluctuations in mood and energy;
- impairment of performance; and
- increase in short term sickness absence.

Members of staff should report any concerns they may have about a colleague displaying any or all of these symptoms to the line manager or HR but should not under any circumstances approach the person displaying the symptoms or discuss their concerns with any other colleagues.

PROHIBITION

No non-prescription drugs are allowed to be consumed in or brought onto company premises, land or vehicles at any time by any person, irrespective of their status in, or business with, the company.

The prohibition of non-prescription drugs extends to all activities carried out by staff whilst they are at work. These activities include, but are not restricted to, driving on company business, whilst on call or standby duties, or when on trips for company business, training or social events.

Please note that any over the counter drugs available from a pharmacist would not be covered by this.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

A breach of these rules will be defined as gross misconduct, and it is likely that the staff member in question will face summary dismissal.

PRINCIPLES

If a member of staff is diagnosed as having a drug related problem the company will treat it as a health matter. This does not however excuse the member of staff from any of the disciplinary matters that may fall within the scope of the company disciplinary policy and procedure.

All drug-related issues will be dealt with in a constructive and sympathetic manner, and the company will also provide any interested staff with the details of where to seek further information and help.

All requests for help will be treated in the strictest confidence and all information gathered as a result will be held in accordance with the *General Data Protection Regulation 2016*.

After receiving appropriate medical reports, the company will provide support to any affected members of staff. Where a staff member agrees to follow a suitable course of action or treatment any disciplinary action may be suspended.

The company reserves the right to give affected members of staff lighter duties at the same rate of pay or require them to take paid leave if it is deemed appropriate.

Following effective treatment and in the absence of any disciplinary action the company will endeavour to return an affected staff member to the same role previously fulfilled by the member of staff, and where this is not possible to a suitable alternative.

In the event that a member of staff following successful treatment for a drug-related problem suffers a relapse the company is under no obligation to make provision for any further treatment, and the staff member in question may face summary dismissal.

If it is considered that the working environment or culture is the cause or a contributor to a drug-related problem, the company will take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure a reduction of such problems.

AGENCIES AND SUPPORT MECHANISMS:

Talk to Frank – a confidential, anonymous, discreet and well-informed service, ready to offer advice, information and support on drug issues.

Telephone – 0300 123 6600

Website – www.talktofrank.com

E-mail – frank@talktofrank.com

Text FRANK on 82111

Narcotics Anonymous – the largest self-help group for people who want to stop using drugs. Services are free.

Website – ukna.org

[Telephone – 0300 999 1212](tel:03009991212)

Cocaine Anonymous – a national self-help group specifically for cocaine users.

Website – www.cauk.org.uk

[Telephone – 0800 612 0225](tel:08006120225)

Adfam National – the largest non-statutory organisation that works with and on behalf of families affected by drug and alcohol problems. Helpful for the family of the alcohol or drug user.

Website – www.adfam.org.uk

Samaritans – always support anyone in distress, around the clock, through 201 branches across the UK and Republic of Ireland.

Telephone – 08457 90 90 90

Website – www.samaritans.org

Email – jo@Samaritans.org