



CentralNic
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EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

The success of any organisation and that of its employees depends very largely on the employees themselves, and so we look to you to play your part as we shall continue to play ours.

We provide equal opportunities and are committed to the principle of equality regardless of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religious belief, political opinion or affiliation, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age or disability. We will apply employment policies that are fair, equitable and consistent with the skills and abilities of our employees and the needs of the business. We look to your support in implementing these policies to ensure that all employees are accorded equal opportunity for recruitment, training and promotion and, in all jobs of like work, on equal terms and conditions of employment.

We will not condone any discriminatory act or attitude in the conduct of our business with the public or our employees. Acts of harassment or discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religious belief, political opinion or affiliation, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age or disability are disciplinary offences.

We welcome you and express our sincere hope that you will be happy here in our team. We ask that you study carefully the contents of this Employee Handbook as, in addition to setting out our rules and regulations, it also contains a great deal of helpful information.

JOINING OUR ORGANISATION

A) PROBATIONARY PERIOD

You join us on an initial probationary period of three months. During this period your work performance and general suitability will be assessed and, if it is satisfactory, your employment will continue. However, if your work performance is not up to the required standard, or you are considered to be generally unsuitable, we may either take remedial action (which may include the extension of your probationary period) or terminate your employment at any time.

We reserve the right not to apply our full contractual capability and disciplinary procedures during your probationary period.

B) EMPLOYEE TRAINING

At the commencement of your employment you will receive on-the-job training for your specific job, and as your employment progresses your skills may be extended to encompass new job activities within the business.

C) PERFORMANCE AND REVIEW

Our policy is to monitor your work performance on a continuous basis so that we can maximise your strengths, and help you overcome any possible weaknesses.

D) JOB FLEXIBILITY

It is an express condition of employment that you are prepared, whenever necessary, to transfer to alternative departments or duties within our business. During holiday periods, etc. it may be necessary for you to take over some duties normally performed by colleagues. This flexibility is essential as the type and volume of work is always subject to change, and it allows us to operate efficiently and gain maximum potential.

E) MOBILITY

Although you are usually employed to work from one particular site, it is a condition of your employment that you are prepared, whenever applicable, to travel as required by the needs of our business. This mobility is essential to the smooth running of our business.

SALARIES, ETC.

A) ADMINISTRATION

1. Payment

- a. For all staff the pay month is the calendar month. Basic salaries are paid by the 20th day of the current month.
- b. You will receive a payslip showing how the total amount of your pay has been calculated. It will also show the deductions that have been made and the reasons for

them, e.g. Income Tax, National Insurance, etc.

c. Any pay queries that you may have should be raised with the Chief Executive.

2. Overpayments

If you are overpaid for any reason, the total amount of the overpayment will normally be deducted from your next payment but if this would cause hardship, arrangements may be made for the overpayment to be recovered over a longer period.

3. Income Tax and National Insurance

At the end of each tax year you will be given a form P60 showing the total pay you have received from us during that year and the amount of deductions for Income Tax and National Insurance. You may also be given a form P11D showing non-salary benefits. You should keep these documents in a safe place as you may need to produce them in your dealings with H.M. Revenue & Customs and other government departments, or if completing a self-assessment form.

B) LATENESS/ABSENTEEISM

1. You must attend for work punctually at the specified time(s).
2. All absences must be notified in accordance with the sickness reporting procedures laid down in this Employee Handbook.
3. Lateness or absence may result in disciplinary action and/or loss of appropriate payment.

C) MATERNITY/PATERNITY/ ADOPTION LEAVE AND PAY

You may be entitled to maternity/paternity/ adoption leave and pay in accordance with the current statutory provisions. If you (or your partner) become pregnant or if you are adopting, you should notify the Registrar Support Manager at an early stage so that your entitlements and obligations can be explained to you.

D) PARENTAL LEAVE

If you are entitled to take parental leave in respect of the current statutory provisions, you should discuss your needs with the Registrar Support Manager, who will identify your entitlements and look at the proposed leave periods dependent upon your child's/children's particular circumstances and the operational aspects of the business.

E) TIME OFF FOR DEPENDANTS

You may be entitled to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off during working hours to take action that is necessary to provide help to your dependants. Should this be necessary you should discuss your situation with the Registrar Support Manager, who, if appropriate, will agree the necessary time off.

F) STAKEHOLDER PENSIONS

We operate a stakeholder pension scheme that enables you to save for your retirement using your own money, together with tax relief and investment returns. You can build up a pension fund which you may use to buy an annuity when you are older or retire. The scheme

is operated separately to any other pension provision and it is at your discretion and risk whether or not you contribute. Details from our stakeholder pensions are available from the Registrar Support Manager.

HOLIDAY ENTITLEMENT AND CONDITIONS

A) ANNUAL HOLIDAYS

1. Your annual holiday entitlement is shown in your individual Statement of Main Terms of Employment (Form SMT).
2. It is our policy to encourage you to take all of your holiday entitlement in the current holiday year. We do not permit holidays to be carried forward.
3. You should have all holiday requests confirmed by the Chief Technology Officer and the Chief Executive before making any firm holiday arrangements. Holiday requests will only be considered with this confirmation, and we will allocate agreed holiday dates on a "first come - first served" basis whilst ensuring that operational efficiency and appropriate staffing levels are maintained throughout the year.
4. You should give at least one month's notice of your intention to take holidays and one week's notice is required for odd single days.
5. Your holiday pay will be at your normal basic pay unless shown otherwise on your Statement of Main Terms.
6. You may be required to reserve up to four days of your annual entitlement to take during the Christmas/New Year period. You will be notified in due course of such requirement. If you have not accrued sufficient holiday entitlement to cover this period you will be given unpaid leave of absence.

B) PUBLIC/BANK HOLIDAYS

Your entitlement to public/bank holidays is shown in your individual Statement of Main Terms of Employment.

SICKNESS/INJURY PAYMENTS AND CONDITIONS

A) NOTIFICATION OF INCAPACITY FOR WORK

1. You must notify us by telephone on the first day of incapacity and at the earliest possible opportunity and no later than by 09:30am. Notification should be made personally (or if you are unable to do so, then by a relative, neighbour or friend), to the Registrar Support Manager. You should try to give some indication of your expected return date and notify us as soon as possible if this date changes.
2. If your incapacity extends to more than seven days you are required to notify us of your continued incapacity once a week thereafter, unless otherwise agreed.

B) EVIDENCE OF INCAPACITY

1. Doctors' certificates are not issued for short-term incapacity. In these cases of incapacity (up to seven calendar days) you must sign a self-certification absence form on your return to work.
2. If your sickness has been (or you know that it will be) for longer than seven days (whether or not they are working days) you should see your doctor and make sure he/she gives you a medical certificate and forward this to us without delay. Subsequently you must supply us with consecutive doctors' medical certificates to cover the whole of your absence.

C) PAYMENTS

1. You are entitled to statutory sick pay (SSP) if you are absent because of sickness or injury provided you meet the criteria in the current SSP regulations. When you are absent for four or more consecutive days you will be paid SSP by us if you are eligible. This is treated like wages and is subject to normal deductions.
2. Qualifying days are the only days for which you are entitled to SSP. These days are normally your working days unless otherwise notified to you. The first three qualifying days of absence are waiting days for which SSP is not payable. Where a second or subsequent period of incapacity (of four days or more) occurs within 56 days of a previous period of incapacity, waiting days are not served again.
3. Any days of discretionary sickness/injury payments which qualify for SSP will be offset against SSP on a day-to-day basis. A deduction will be made for any other state benefits received if you are excluded or transferred from SSP.
4. Where the circumstances of your incapacity are such that you receive or are awarded any sum by way of compensation or damages in respect of the incapacity from a third party, then any payments which we may have made to you because of the absence (including SSP) shall be repaid by you to us up to an amount not exceeding the amount of the compensation or damages paid by the third party and up to, but not exceeding, any amount paid by us.

D) RETURN TO WORK

1. You should notify the Registrar Support Manager, as soon as you know on which day you will be returning to work, if this differs from a date of return previously notified.
2. If you have been suffering from an infectious or contagious disease or illness such as rubella or hepatitis you must not report for work without clearance from your own doctor. Separate rules relating to infectious diseases and food handlers are to be found later in this handbook and you, if you are a food handler, must familiarise yourself with them.
3. On return to work after any period of sickness/injury absence (including absence covered by a medical certificate), you are also required to complete a self-certification absence form and hand this to the Registrar Support Manager.
4. Upon returning to work you may be interviewed by the Chief Executive, the Chief Technology Officer or the Registrar Support Manager for the purposes of ascertaining your well-being.

E) GENERAL

1. Submission of a medical certificate or sickness self-certification absence form, although giving

us the reason for your absence, may not always be regarded by us as sufficient justification for accepting your absence. Sickness is just one of a number of reasons for absence and although it is understandable that if you are sick you may need time off, continual or repeated absence through sickness may not be acceptable to us.

2. In deciding whether your absence is acceptable or not we will take into account the reasons and extent of all your absences, including any absence caused by sickness. We cannot operate with an excessive level of absence as all absence, for whatever reason, reduces our efficiency.
3. We will take a serious view if you take sickness/injury leave which is not genuine, and it will result in disciplinary action being taken.
4. If we consider it necessary, we may ask your permission to contact your doctor or for you to be independently medically examined.

SAFEGUARDS

A) RIGHTS OF SEARCH

1. Although we do not have the contractual right to carry out searches of employees and their property (including vehicles) whilst they are on our premises, we would ask all employees to assist us in this matter should we feel that such a search is necessary. These searches are random and do not imply suspicion in relation to any individual concerned.
2. If you should be required to submit to a search, if practicable you will be entitled to be accompanied by a third party to be selected from only someone who is on the premises at the time a search is taking place. This right also applies at the time that any further questioning takes place.
3. We reserve the right to call in the police at any stage.

B) CONFIDENTIALITY

1. All information that:-
 - a. is or has been acquired by you during, or in the course of your employment, or has otherwise been acquired by you in confidence;
 - b. relates particularly to our business, or that of other persons or bodies with whom we have dealings of any sort; and
 - c. has not been made public by, or with our authority;

shall be confidential, and (save in the course of our business or as required by law) you shall not at any time, whether before or after the termination of your employment, disclose such information to any person without our prior written consent.

2. You are to exercise reasonable care to keep safe all documentary or other material containing confidential information, and shall at the time of termination of your employment with us, or at any other time upon demand, return to us any such material in your possession.

C) COPYRIGHT

All written material, whether held on paper, electronically or magnetically which was made or acquired by you during the course of your employment with us, is our property and our copyright. At the time of termination of your employment with us, or at any other time upon demand, you shall return to us any such material in your possession.

D) STATEMENTS TO THE MEDIA

Any statements to reporters from newspapers, radio, television, etc. in relation to our business will be given only by the Chief Executive.

E) INVENTIONS/DISCOVERIES

An invention or discovery made by you will normally belong to you. However, an invention or discovery made by you will become our property if it was made:-

- a. in the course of your normal duties under such circumstances that an invention might reasonably be expected to result from those duties;
- b. outside the course of your normal duties, but during duties specifically assigned to you, when an invention might reasonably be expected to result from these; and
- c. during the course of any of your duties, and at the time you had a special obligation to further our interests arising from the nature of those duties, and your particular responsibilities.

F) VIRUS PROTECTION PROCEDURES

In order to prevent the introduction of virus contamination into the software system the following must be observed:-

- a. unauthorised software including public domain software, magazine cover disks/CDs or Internet/World Wide Web downloads must not be used; and
- b. all software must be virus checked using standard testing procedures before being used.

G) USE OF COMPUTER EQUIPMENT

In order to control the use of the Company's computer equipment and reduce the risk of contamination the following will apply:-

- a. The introduction of new software must first of all be checked and authorised by the Chief Technology Officer before general use will be permitted.
- b. Only authorised software may be used on any of the Company's computer equipment.
- c. Only software that is used for business applications may be used.
- d. No software may be brought onto or taken from the Company's premises without prior authorisation.
- e. Unauthorised access to the computer facility will result in disciplinary action.
- f. Unauthorised copying and/or removal of computer equipment/software will result in

disciplinary action, such actions could lead to dismissal.

H) E-MAIL AND INTERNET POLICY

1. Introduction

The purpose of the Internet and E-mail policy is to provide a framework to ensure that there is continuity of procedures in the usage of Internet and E-mail within the Company. The Internet and E-mail system have established themselves as an important communications facility within the Company and have provided us with contact with professional and academic sources throughout the world. Therefore, to ensure that we are able to utilise the system to its optimum we have devised a policy that provides maximum use of the facility whilst ensuring compliance with the legislation throughout.

2. Internet

You are encouraged to make use of the Internet as part of your official and professional activities. Attention must be paid to ensuring that published information has relevance to normal professional activities before material is released in the Company name. Where personal views are expressed a disclaimer stating that this is the case should be clearly added to all correspondence. The intellectual property right and copyright must not be compromised when publishing on the Internet. The availability and variety of information on the Internet has meant that it can be used to obtain material reasonably considered to be offensive. The use of the Internet to access and/or distribute any kind of offensive material leaves an individual liable to disciplinary action which could lead to dismissal.

3. E-mail

The use of the E-mail system is encouraged as its appropriate use facilitates efficiency. Used correctly it is a facility that is of assistance to employees. Inappropriate use however causes many problems including distractions, time wasting and legal claims. The procedure sets out the Company's position on the correct use of the E-mail system.

4. Procedures - Authorised Use

- a. Unauthorised or inappropriate use of the E-mail system may result in disciplinary action which could include summary dismissal.
- b. The E-mail system is available for communication and matters directly concerned with the legitimate business of the Company. Employees using the E-mail system should give particular attention to the following points:-
 - i) all comply with Company communication standards;
 - ii) E-mail messages and copies should only be sent to those for whom they are particularly relevant;
 - iii) E-mail should not be used as a substitute for face-to-face communication or telephone contact. Flame mails (i.e. E-mails that are abusive) must not be sent. Hasty messages sent without proper consideration can cause upset, concern or misunderstanding;
 - iv) if E-mail is confidential the user must ensure that the necessary steps are

taken to protect confidentiality. The Company will be liable for infringing copyright or any defamatory information that is circulated either within the Company or to external users of the system; and

- v) offers or contracts transmitted by E-mail are as legally binding on the Company as those sent on paper.
- c. The Company will not tolerate the use of the E-mail system for unofficial or inappropriate purposes, including:-
- i) any messages that could constitute bullying, harassment or other detriment;
 - ii) excessive personal use which interferes with your ability to work
 - iii) on-line gambling;
 - iv) accessing or transmitting pornography;
 - v) transmitting copyright information and/or any software available to the user;
or
 - vi) posting confidential information about other employees, the Company or its customers or suppliers.

We reserve the right to monitor all E-mail/internet activity by you for the purposes of ensuring compliance with our policies and procedures and of ensuring compliance with relevant regulatory requirements and you hereby consent to such monitoring. Information acquired through such monitoring may be used as evidence in disciplinary proceedings.

STANDARDS

A) WASTAGE

1. We maintain a policy of "minimum waste" which is essential to the cost-effective and efficient running of all our operations.
2. You are able to promote this policy by taking extra care during your normal duties by avoiding unnecessary or extravagant use of services, time, energy, etc. The following points are illustrations of this:-
 - a. handle equipment and stock with care;
 - b. turn off any unnecessary lighting and heating. Keep doors closed whenever possible;
 - c. ask for other work if your job has come to a standstill; and
 - d. start with the minimum of delay after arriving for work and after breaks.
3. The following provision is an express written term of your contract of employment:-
 - a. any damage to stock or property (including non-statutory safety equipment) that is

the result of your carelessness, negligence or deliberate vandalism will render you liable to pay the full or part of the cost of repair or replacement; and

b. any loss to us that is the result of your failure to observe rules, procedures or instruction, or is as a result of your negligent behaviour or your unsatisfactory standards of work will render you liable to re-imburse to us the full or part of the cost of the loss.

4. In the event of failure to pay, we have the contractual right to deduct such costs from your pay.

B) STANDARDS OF DRESS

As you are liable to come into contact with customers and members of the public, it is important that you present a smart/casual image with regard to appearance and standards of dress. Please remember that you should wear clothes appropriate to your job responsibilities, and they should be kept clean and tidy at all times.

HEALTH, SAFETY, WELFARE AND HYGIENE

A) SAFETY

1. You should make yourself familiar with our Health and Safety Policy and your own health and safety duties and responsibilities, as shown separately.
2. You must not take any action that could threaten the health or safety of yourself, other employees, customers or members of the public.
3. Protective clothing and other equipment which may be issued for your protection because of the nature of your job must be worn and used at all appropriate times. Failure to do so could be a contravention of your health and safety responsibilities. Once issued, this protective wear/equipment is your responsibility.
4. You should report all accidents and injuries at work, no matter how minor, in the accident book that can be obtained from the Registrar Support Manager.

B) REFRESHMENT MAKING FACILITIES

We provide refreshment making facilities for your use, which must be kept clean and tidy at all times.

C) SMOKING POLICY

We operate a no smoking policy within our premises.

D) ALCOHOL & DRUGS POLICY

Under legislation we, as your employer, have a duty to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety and welfare at work of all our employees and similarly you have a responsibility to yourself and your colleagues. The use of alcohol and drugs may impair the safe and efficient running of the business and/or the health and safety of our

employees.

The effects of alcohol and drugs can be numerous:-

(These are examples only and not an exhaustive list).

- a. absenteeism (e.g. unauthorised absence, lateness, excessive levels of sickness, etc.);
- b. higher accident levels (e.g. at work, elsewhere, driving to and from work); and
- c. work performance (e.g. difficulty in concentrating, tasks taking more time, making mistakes, etc.).

If your performance or attendance at work is affected as a result of alcohol or drugs, or we believe you have been involved in any drug related action/offence, you may be subject to disciplinary action and, dependent on the circumstances, this may lead to your dismissal.

If you arrive for work and, in our opinion, you are not fit to work, we reserve the right to exercise our duty of care if we believe that you may not be able to undertake your duties in a safe manner or may pose a safety risk to others, and send you away for the remainder of the day with or without pay and, dependent on the circumstances, you may be liable to disciplinary action.

E) HYGIENE

1. Any exposed cut or burn must be covered with a first-aid dressing.
2. If you are suffering from an infectious or contagious disease or illness such as rubella or hepatitis you must not report for work without clearance from your own doctor.
3. Contact with any person suffering from an infectious or contagious disease must be reported before commencing work.

GENERAL TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT, INFORMATION AND PROCEDURES

A) CHANGES IN PERSONAL DETAILS

You must notify us of any change of name, address, telephone number, etc., so that we can maintain accurate information on our records and make contact with you in an emergency, if necessary, outside normal working hours (Form CPD).

B) OTHER EMPLOYMENT

If you propose taking up employment with an employer or pursuing separate business interests or any similar venture, you must discuss the proposal with the Chief Executive in order to establish the likely impact of these activities on both yourself and the Company. You will be asked to give full details of the proposal and consideration will be given to:

- Working hours
- Competition, reputation and credibility

- Health, safety and welfare

You will be notified in writing of the Company's decision. The Company may refuse to consent to your request. If you work without consent this could result in the termination of your employment.

If you are unhappy with the decision you may appeal using our Grievance Procedure.

C) TIME OFF

Circumstances may arise where you need time off for medical/dental appointments, or for other reasons. Where possible, such appointments should be made outside normal working hours. If this is not possible, time off required for these purposes may be granted at the discretion of the Chief Executive and will normally be with pay.

D) BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Individuals' reactions to bereavement vary greatly and the setting of fixed rules for time off is therefore inappropriate. You should discuss your circumstances with the Chief Executive and agree appropriate time off, which will normally be with pay.

E) TRAVEL EXPENSES

We will reimburse you for any **authorised** and reasonable expenses incurred whilst travelling on our business. You must provide receipts for any expenditure.

F) COMMUNICATIONS

We will try to keep you informed about items of interest by means of E-mails. You should use these, if you wish (with permission), to promote any particular item of interest to other employees.

G) EMPLOYEES' PROPERTY

We do not accept liability for any loss of, or damage to, property that you bring onto the premises. You are requested not to bring personal items of value onto the premises and, in particular, not to leave any items overnight.

H) LOST PROPERTY

Articles of lost property should be handed to the Registrar Support Manager, who will retain them whilst attempts are made to discover the owner.

I) PARKING

No liability is accepted for damage to private vehicles, however it may be caused.

J) MAIL

All mail (including E-Mails), received by us will be opened, including that addressed to employees. Private mail, therefore, should not be sent care of our address. No private mail may be posted at our expense except in those cases where a formal re-charge arrangement has been made.

K) TELEPHONE CALLS/ MOBILE PHONES

Telephones are essential for our business therefore personal telephone calls should not interfere with your ability to carry out your work.

L) BUYING OR SELLING OF GOODS

You are not allowed to buy or sell goods on your own behalf on our premises or during your working hours.

M) COLLECTIONS FROM EMPLOYEES

Unless specific authorisation is given by the Chief Executive, no collections of any kind are allowed on our premises.

N) FRIENDS AND RELATIVES CONTACT

You should discourage your friends and relatives from either calling on you in person or by telephone except in an emergency.

MAKING DISCLOSURE	A	PROTECTED
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A) INTRODUCTION

1. Under certain circumstances, employees have legal protection if they make disclosures about organisations for whom they work. These employees are commonly referred to as 'whistle blowers' and their activities have often received wide publicity in the media.
2. An employee who believed, for example, that organisations were disposing of toxic waste illegally may have 'blown the whistle' directly to the press or television, perhaps because of concern for the environment, a belief that the organisation would attempt a 'cover-up' if asked to stop, or for financial gain.
3. Employees, who blew the whistle on organisations, were often treated detrimentally by them or their engagements were terminated. This discouraged employees from whistle blowing even where such action would be for the good of the public. The legislation is designed to protect employees from suffering any detriment or termination of engagement for whistle blowing.

B) QUALIFYING DISCLOSURES

1. Certain disclosures are prescribed by law as 'qualifying disclosures'. Disclosures are qualifying disclosures where it can be shown that the Company commits a 'relevant failure' by:-
 - a. committing a criminal offence;
 - b. failing to comply with a legal obligation;
 - c. a miscarriage of justice;
 - d. endangering the health and safety of an individual;
 - e. environmental damage; or

f. concealing any information relating to the above.

2. These acts can be in the past, present or future, so that, for example, a disclosure qualifies if it relates to environmental damage that has happened, is happening, or is likely to happen.

C) THE PROCEDURE

1. If you so wish you should in the first instance report any concerns you may have to the Chief Executive who will treat the matter with complete confidence. If you are not satisfied with the explanation or reason given to you, you should raise the matter with the appropriate organisation or body, e.g. the Police, the Environment Agency, Health and Safety Executive or Social Services Department.
2. If you do not report your concerns to the Chief Executive you may take them direct to the appropriate organisation or body.

D) GENERAL NOTES

1. The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 prevents you from suffering a detriment or having your contract terminated for 'whistle blowing' and we take very seriously any concerns which you may raise under this legislation.
2. We encourage you to use the procedure if you are concerned about any wrong doing at work. However, if the procedure has not been invoked in good faith (e.g. for malicious reasons or in pursuit of a personal grudge), then it will make you liable to immediate termination of engagement or such lesser disciplinary sanction as may be appropriate in the circumstances.

CAPABILITY AND CAPABILITY DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

A) INTRODUCTION

We recognise that during your employment with us your capability to carry out your 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 you fail to keep pace with the changes, or you change (most commonly because of health reasons) and you can no longer cope with the work.

B) JOB CHANGES

1. If the nature of your job changes we will make every effort to ensure that you understand the level of performance expected of you and that you receive adequate training and supervision. If we have concerns regarding your capability these will be discussed in an informal manner and you will be given time to improve.
2. If your standard of performance is still not adequate you will be warned in writing that a failure to improve and to maintain the performance required could lead to your dismissal. We will also consider the possibility of a transfer to more suitable work if possible.
3. If there is still no improvement after a reasonable time and we cannot transfer you to more suitable work, you will be issued with a final warning that you will be dismissed unless the required standard of performance is achieved and maintained.

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

C) PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

1. Personal circumstances may arise which do not prevent you from attending for work but which prevent you from carrying out your normal duties (e.g. a lack of dexterity or general ill health). If such a situation arises, we will normally need to have details of your medical diagnosis and prognosis so that we have the benefit of expert advice. Under normal circumstances this can be most easily obtained by asking your own doctor for a medical report. Your permission is needed before we can obtain such a report and we will expect you to co-operate in this matter should the need arise. When we have obtained as much information as possible regarding your condition and after consultation with you, a decision will be made about your future employment with us in your current role or, where circumstances permit, in a more suitable role.
2. There may also be personal circumstances which prevent you from attending work, either for a prolonged period(s) or for frequent short absences. Under these circumstances we will need to know when we can expect your attendance record to reach an acceptable level. This may again mean asking your own doctor for a medical report or by making whatever investigations are appropriate in the circumstances. When we have obtained as much information as possible regarding your condition, and after consultation with you, a decision will be made about your future employment with us in your current role or, where circumstances permit, in a more suitable role.

D) SHORT SERVICE STAFF

We retain discretion in respect of the capability procedures to take account of your length of service and to vary the procedures accordingly. If you have a short amount of service, you may not be in receipt of any warnings before dismissal but you will retain the right to a hearing and you will have the right to appeal.

DISCIPLINARY AND DISCIPLINARY DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

A) INTRODUCTION

1. It is necessary to have a minimum number of rules in the interests of the whole organisation.
2. The rules set standards of performance and behaviour whilst the procedures are designed to help promote fairness and order in the treatment of individuals. It is our aim that the rules and procedures should emphasise and encourage improvement in the conduct of individuals, where they are failing to meet the required standards, and not be seen as a means of punishment.
3. Every effort will be made to ensure that any action taken under this procedure is fair, with you being given the opportunity to state your case and appeal against any decision that you consider to be unjust.
4. The following rules and procedures should ensure that:-
 - a. the correct procedure is used when inviting you to a disciplinary hearing;

- b. you are fully aware of the standards of performance, action and behaviour required of you;
- c. disciplinary action, where necessary, is taken speedily and in a fair, uniform and consistent manner;
- d. you will only be disciplined after careful investigation of the facts and the opportunity to present your side of the case. On some occasions temporary suspension on full pay may be necessary in order that an uninterrupted investigation can take place. This must not be regarded as disciplinary action or a penalty of any kind;
- e. other than for an "off the record" informal reprimand, you have the right to be accompanied by a fellow employee, who may act as a witness or speak on your behalf, at all stages of the formal disciplinary process;
- f. you will not normally be dismissed for a first breach of discipline, except in the case of gross misconduct; and
- g. if you are disciplined, you will receive an explanation of the penalty imposed and you will have the right to appeal against the finding and the penalty.

B) DISCIPLINARY RULES

It is not practicable to specify all disciplinary rules or offences that may result in disciplinary action, as they may vary depending on the nature of the work. In addition to the specific examples of unsatisfactory conduct, misconduct and gross misconduct shown in this handbook, a breach of other conditions, procedures, rules etc. within this handbook will also result in the disciplinary procedure being used to deal with such matters.

C) RULES COVERING UNSATISFACTORY CONDUCT AND MISCONDUCT

(These are examples only and not an exhaustive list.)

You will be liable to disciplinary action if you are found to have acted in any of the following ways:-

- a. failure to abide by the general health and safety rules and procedures;
- b. smoking in designated non smoking areas;
- c. consumption of alcohol on the premises;
- d. persistent absenteeism and/or lateness;
- e. unsatisfactory standards or output of work;
- f. rudeness towards customers, members of the public or other employees, objectionable or insulting behaviour, harassment, bullying or bad language;
- g. failure to devote the whole of your time, attention and abilities to our business and its affairs during your normal working hours;
- h. unauthorised use of E-mail and Internet;

- i. failure to carry out all reasonable instructions or follow our rules and procedures;
- j. unauthorised use or negligent damage or loss of our property; and
- k. failure to report immediately any damage to property or premises caused by you.

D) SERIOUS MISCONDUCT

1. Where one of the unsatisfactory conduct or misconduct rules has been broken and if, upon investigation, it is shown to be due to your extreme carelessness or has a serious or substantial effect upon our operation or reputation, you may be issued with a final written warning in the first instance.
2. You may receive a final written warning as the first course of action, if, in an alleged gross misconduct disciplinary matter, upon investigation, there is shown to be some level of mitigation resulting in it being treated as an offence just short of dismissal.

E) RULES COVERING GROSS MISCONDUCT

Occurrences of gross misconduct are very rare because the penalty is dismissal without notice and without any previous warning being issued. It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of examples of gross misconduct. However, any behaviour or negligence resulting in a fundamental breach of contractual terms that irrevocably destroys the trust and confidence necessary to continue the employment relationship will constitute gross misconduct. Examples of offences that will normally be deemed as gross misconduct include serious instances of:-

- a. theft or fraud;
- b. physical violence or bullying;
- c. deliberate damage to property;
- d. deliberate acts of unlawful discrimination or harassment;
- e. possession, or being under the influence, of illegal drugs at work;
- f. breach of health and safety rules that endangers the lives of, or may cause serious injury to, employees or any other person.

(The above examples are illustrative and do not form an exhaustive list.)

F) DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

1. Disciplinary action taken against you will be based on the following procedure:-

OFFENCE	FIRST OCCASION	SECOND OCCASION	THIRD OCCASION	FOURTH OCCASION
UNSATISFACTORY CONDUCT	Formal verbal warning	Written warning	Final written warning	Dismissal
MISCONDUCT	Written warning	Final written warning	Dismissal	

SERIOUS MISCONDUCT	Final written warning	Dismissal
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GROSS MISCONDUCT	Dismissal	
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2. We retain discretion in respect of the disciplinary procedures to take account of your length of service and to vary the procedures accordingly. If you have a short amount of service you may not be in receipt of any warnings before dismissal but you will retain the right to a disciplinary hearing and you will have the right of appeal.
3. If a disciplinary penalty is imposed it will be in line with the procedure outlined above, which may encompass a formal verbal warning, written warning, final written warning, or dismissal, and full details will be given to you.
4. In all cases warnings will be issued for misconduct, irrespective of the precise matters concerned, and any further breach of the rules in relation to similar or entirely independent matters of misconduct will be treated as further disciplinary matters and allow the continuation of the disciplinary process through to dismissal if the warnings are not heeded.

G) DISCIPLINARY AUTHORITY

The operation of the disciplinary procedure contained, in the previous section, is based on the following authority for the various levels of disciplinary action. However, the list does not prevent a higher or lower level of seniority, in the event of the appropriate level not being available, or suitable, progressing any action at whatever stage of the disciplinary process.

Formal verbal warning	the Chief Executive / Chief Technology Officer
Written warning	the Chief Executive / Chief Technology Officer
Final written warning	the Chief Executive / Chief Technology Officer
Dismissal	the Chief Executive / Chief Technology Officer

H) PERIOD OF WARNINGS

1. Formal verbal warning
A formal verbal warning will normally be disregarded after a three month period.
2. Written warning
A written warning will normally be disregarded after a six month period.
3. Final written warning
A final written warning will normally be disregarded after a 12 month period.

I) GENERAL NOTES

1. If you are in a supervisory or managerial position then demotion to a lower status at the

appropriate rate may be considered as an alternative to dismissal except in cases of gross misconduct.

2. In exceptional circumstances, suspension from work without pay for up to five days as an alternative to dismissal (except dismissal for gross misconduct) may be considered by the person authorised to dismiss.
3. Gross misconduct offences will result in dismissal without notice.
4. You have the right to appeal against any disciplinary action.

CAPABILITY/DISCIPLINARY APPEAL PROCEDURE

1. You have the right to lodge an appeal in respect of any capability/disciplinary action taken against you.
2. If you wish to exercise this right you should apply either verbally or in writing to the person indicated in your individual Statement of Main Terms of Employment.
3. It may be necessary, because of the size of our organisation, for the appeal to be heard by the person who took the original action and it is therefore important that your appeal gives details of why the penalty imposed is either too severe, inappropriate or unfair in the circumstances.
4. If you are appealing on the grounds that you have not committed the offence, it may be necessary for the person conducting the appeal to have a complete re-hearing so that there can be a reappraisal of all matters before a decision is made to grant or refuse the appeal.
5. You may be accompanied at the appeal hearing by a fellow employee of your choice, who may act as a witness or speak on your behalf, and the result of the appeal will be made known to you in writing within five working days after the hearing. This is the final stage of the appeal process.

GENERAL DISMISSAL AND APPEAL PROCEDURES

This section of the Employee Handbook does not form part of your Contract of Employment but the procedures set out below may apply, where legally required, in the specific circumstances described in your individual Statement of Main Terms of Employment.

Step 1: Statement of grounds for action and invitation to meeting.

- Your alleged conduct or characteristics, or other circumstances, which lead us to contemplate dismissing or taking disciplinary action against you, will be set out in writing.
- This statement, or a copy of it, will be sent to you and you will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the matter.

Step 2: Meeting.

- The meeting will take place before action is taken, except in the case where disciplinary action consists of suspension.

- The meeting will not take place unless:
 - (a) you have been informed what the basis was for including in the statement, under Step 1, the ground or grounds in it; and
 - (b) you have had a reasonable opportunity to consider your response to that information.
- You must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.
- After the meeting, you will be informed of the decision and notified of the right to appeal against the decision if you are not satisfied with it.

Step 3: Appeal.

- If you wish to appeal, you must inform us.
- If you inform us of your wish to appeal, you will be invited to attend a further meeting.
- You must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.
- The appeal meeting need not take place before the dismissal or disciplinary action takes effect.
- After the appeal meeting you will be informed of the final decision.

General Requirements:

The following requirements will be adhered to in respect of the above procedures (so far as applicable):

- Each step and action under the procedure will be taken without unreasonable delay.
- Timing and location of meetings will be reasonable.
- Meetings will be conducted in a manner that enables both parties to explain their cases.
- In the case of appeal meetings, which are not the first meeting, we will, so far as is reasonably practicable, be represented by a more senior manager than attended the first meeting (unless the most senior manager attended that meeting).

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

1. It is important that if you feel dissatisfied with any matter relating to your employment you should have an effective means by which such a grievance can be aired and, where appropriate, resolved.
2. Nothing in this procedure is intended to prevent you from informally raising any matter you may wish to mention. Informal discussion can frequently solve problems without the need for a written record. However, if you wish to raise a formal grievance you should normally do so in writing from the outset. Whilst we will give the same consideration to any grievance that you raise verbally, provided that you make it clear that you wish it to be treated formally, you should be aware that, in most circumstances, the law requires you to provide us with written details of your grievance before taking certain types of legal action.

3. You have the right to be accompanied at any stage of the procedure by a fellow employee who may act as a witness or speak on your behalf to explain the situation more clearly.
4. If you feel aggrieved at any matter relating to your work (except personal harassment, for which there is a separate procedure following this section), you should first raise the matter with the person specified in your Statement of Main Terms of Employment, explaining fully the nature and extent of your grievance. You will then be invited to a meeting at a reasonable time and location at which your grievance will be investigated fully. You must take all reasonable steps to attend this meeting. You will be notified of the decision, in writing, normally within ten working days of the meeting, including your right of appeal.
5. If you wish to appeal you must inform a Director (as far as reasonably practicable, who has not previously been involved in the procedure), within five working days. You will then be invited to a further meeting, which you must take all reasonable steps to attend. As far as reasonably practicable, the Company will be represented by a more senior manager than attended the first meeting (unless the most senior manager attended that meeting).
6. Following the appeal meeting you will be informed of the final decision, normally within ten working days, which will be confirmed in writing.

PERSONAL HARASSMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

A) INTRODUCTION

1. Many people in our society are victimised and harassed as a result of their race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religious belief, political opinion or affiliation, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age or disability.
2. Personal harassment takes many forms ranging from tasteless jokes and abusive remarks to pestering for sexual favours, threatening behaviour and actual physical abuse. Whatever form it takes, personal harassment is always taken seriously and is totally unacceptable.
3. We recognise that personal harassment can exist in the workplace, as well as outside, and that this can seriously affect employees' working lives by interfering with their job performance or by creating a stressful, intimidating and unpleasant working environment.

B) POLICY

1. We deplore all forms of personal harassment and seek to ensure that the working environment is sympathetic to all our employees.
2. We have published these procedures to inform employees of the type of behaviour that is unacceptable and provide employees who are the victims of personal harassment with a means of redress.
3. We recognise that we have a duty to implement this policy and all employees are expected to comply with it.

C) EXAMPLES OF PERSONAL HARASSMENT

Personal harassment takes many forms and employees may not always realise that their

behaviour constitutes harassment. Personal harassment is unwanted behaviour by one employee towards another and examples of harassment include:

- a. insensitive jokes and pranks;
- b. lewd or abusive comments about appearance;
- c. deliberate exclusion from conversations;
- d. displaying abusive or offensive writing or material;
- e. unwelcome touching; and
- f. abusive, threatening or insulting words or behaviour.

These examples are not exhaustive and disciplinary action at the appropriate level will be taken against employees committing any form of personal harassment.

D) COMPLAINING ABOUT PERSONAL HARASSMENT

1. Informal complaint

We recognise that complaints of personal harassment, and particularly of sexual harassment, can sometimes be of a sensitive or intimate nature and that it may not be appropriate for you to raise the issue through our normal grievance procedure. In these circumstances you are encouraged to raise such issues with a senior colleague of your choice (whether or not that person has a direct supervisory responsibility for you) as a confidential helper. This person cannot be **CLIENT TO ADVISE**, who will be responsible for investigating the matter if it becomes a formal complaint.

If you are the victim of minor harassment you should make it clear to the harasser on an informal basis that their behaviour is unwelcome and ask the harasser to stop. If you feel unable to do this verbally then you should hand a written request to the harasser, and your confidential helper can assist you in this.

2. Formal complaint

Where the informal approach fails or if the harassment is more serious, you should bring the matter to the attention of **CLIENT TO ADVISE** as a formal written complaint and again your confidential helper can assist you in this. If possible, you should keep notes of the harassment so that the written complaint can include:-

- a. the name of the alleged harasser;
- b. the nature of the alleged harassment;
- c. the dates and times when the alleged harassment occurred;
- d. the names of any witnesses; and
- e. any action already taken by you to stop the alleged harassment.

On receipt of a formal complaint we will take action to separate you 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 you to attend a meeting, at a reasonable time and location, to discuss the matter and carry out a thorough investigation. You have the right to be accompanied at such a meeting by your confidential helper or another work colleague of your choice and you must take all reasonable steps to attend. Those involved in the investigation will be expected to act in confidence and any breach of confidence will be a disciplinary matter.

On conclusion of the investigation which will normally be within ten working days of the meeting with you, a draft report of the findings and of the investigator's proposed decision will be sent, in writing, to you and to the alleged harasser.

If you 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 you and to the alleged harasser. You have the right to appeal against the findings of the investigator in accordance with the appeal provisions of the grievance procedure.

E) GENERAL NOTES

1. If the report concludes that the allegation is well founded, the harasser will be liable to disciplinary action in accordance with our disciplinary and disciplinary dismissal procedure. An employee who receives a formal warning or who is dismissed for harassment may appeal by using our capability/disciplinary appeal procedure.
2. If you bring a complaint of harassment you 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 against you.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

A) STATEMENT OF POLICY

1. We recognise that discrimination is unacceptable and although equality of opportunity has been a long standing feature of our employment practices and procedure, we have made the decision to adopt a formal equal opportunities policy. Breaches of the policy will lead to disciplinary proceedings and, if appropriate, disciplinary action.
2. The aim of the policy is to ensure no job applicant, employee or worker is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religious belief, political opinion or affiliation, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age or disability.
3. We will ensure that the policy is circulated to any agencies responsible for our recruitment and a copy of the policy will be made available for all employees and made known to all applicants for employment.
4. The policy will be communicated to all private contractors reminding them of their responsibilities towards the equality of opportunity.
5. The policy will be implemented in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements and

full account will be taken of all available guidance and in particular any relevant Codes of Practice.

6. We will maintain a neutral working environment in which no employee or worker feels under threat or intimidated.

B) RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

1. The recruitment and selection process is crucially important to any equal opportunities policy. We will endeavour through appropriate training to ensure that employees making selection and recruitment decisions will not discriminate, whether consciously or unconsciously, in making these decisions.
2. Promotion and advancement will be made on merit and all decisions relating to this will be made within the overall framework and principles of this policy.
3. Job descriptions, where used, will be revised to ensure that they are in line with our equal opportunities policy. Job requirements will be reflected accurately in any personnel specifications.
4. We will adopt a consistent, non-discriminatory approach to the advertising of vacancies.
5. We will not confine our recruitment to areas or media sources which provide only, or mainly, applicants of a particular group.
6. All applicants who apply for jobs with us will receive fair treatment and will be considered solely on their ability to do the job.
7. All employees involved in the recruitment process will periodically review their selection criteria to ensure that they are related to the job requirements and do not unlawfully discriminate.
8. Short listing and interviewing will be carried out by more than one person where possible.
9. Interview questions will be related to the requirements of the job and will not be of a discriminatory nature.
10. We will not disqualify any applicant because he/she is unable to complete an application form unassisted unless personal completion of the form is a valid test of the standard of English required for the safe and effective performance of the job.
11. Selection decisions will not be influenced by any perceived prejudices of other staff.

C) TRAINING AND PROMOTION

1. Senior staff will receive training in the application of this policy to ensure that they are aware of its contents and provisions.
2. All promotion will be in line with this policy.

D) MONITORING

1. We will maintain and review the employment records of all employees in order to monitor the progress of this policy.

2. Monitoring may involve:-
 - a. the collection and classification of information regarding the race in terms of ethnic/national origin and sex of all applicants and current employees;
 - b. the examination by ethnic/national origin and sex of the distribution of employees and the success rate of the applicants; and
 - c. recording recruitment, training and promotional records of all employees, the decisions reached and the reason for those decisions.
3. The results of any monitoring procedure will be reviewed at regular intervals to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of this policy. Consideration will be given, if necessary, to adjusting this policy to afford greater equality of opportunities to all applicants and staff.

TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

A) RETIREMENT

The normal age for retirement is 65, and it is our policy for employees to retire at the end of the week in which their 65th birthday falls.

B) TERMINATING EMPLOYMENT WITHOUT GIVING NOTICE

If you terminate your employment without giving or working the required period of notice, as indicated in your individual statement of main terms of employment, you will have an amount equal to any additional cost of covering your duties during the notice period not worked deducted from any termination pay due to you. This is an express written term of your contract of employment. You will also forfeit any contractual accrued holiday pay due to you over and above your statutory holiday pay, if you fail to give or work the required period of notice.

C) RETURN OF OUR PROPERTY

On the termination of your employment you must return all our property which is in your possession or for which you have responsibility. Failure to return such items will result in the cost of the items being deducted from any monies outstanding to you. This is an express written term of your contract of employment.

D) GARDEN LEAVE

If either you or the Company serves notice on the other to terminate your employment the Company may require you to take "garden leave" for all or part of the remaining period of your employment.

If you are asked to take garden leave you:

- i) must not attend your place of work or any other premises of the Company or any associated Company; unless otherwise requested by the Company;
- ii) may be asked to relinquish immediately any offices you hold in the Company or any associated Company;
- iii) may not be required to carry out your normal duties during the remaining period of your employment; however you will still be available for answering queries;

- iv) must return to the Company all documents, software, equipment, Company property and other materials (including copies) belonging to the Company or associated Company containing confidential information; and
- v) must not, without the prior written permission of the Company, contact or attempt to contact any client, customer, supplier, agent, professional adviser, broker, or banker of the Company or any associated Company or any employee of the Company or any associated Company.

NB.

During any period of garden leave you will continue to receive your full salary and any other contractual benefits.

SICKNESS SELF-CERTIFICATION ABSENCE

Form SCA

This form should be completed on your return to work following any period of sickness.

If you are returning to work after a period of sickness of more than 7 calendar days a medical certificate or certificates should already have been provided to cover the period of absence in excess of these first seven days.

NAME:		
Dates of sickness (Including non-working days)		
FROM		TO
_____ am/pm		_____ am/pm
_____ day		_____ day
_____ date		_____ date
Dates of absence		
FROM		TO
_____ am/pm		_____ am/pm
_____ day		_____ day
_____ date		_____ date
Details of sickness or injury		
<p>Did you consult a Doctor? YES/NO. If YES please give details of: Doctor's name, address, date of visit, treatment received and any current treatment. If NO please state why not.</p>		
Declaration		
<p>I certify that I was incapable of work because of my sickness/injury on the dates shown above and that this information is true and accurate.</p> <p>I acknowledge that false information will result in disciplinary action.</p> <p>I hereby give my employer permission to verify the above information.</p>		
Signed _____ (employee)		Acknowledged _____ (for employer)
Date _____		