



## **PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK POLICY (2019)**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Employees are required to act at all times in accordance with the Staff Code of Conduct which requires staff to comply with the following principles: honesty and integrity, openness and accountability, selflessness, objectivity and leadership, all of which are set out in that Code.

Committee Members are equally required to act at all times with the Code of Conduct for Governing Body Members which requires members to comply with the principles of selflessness, openness, honesty, objectivity, integrity, accountability and leadership.

Through the contents of this Personal Relationship at Work Policy, the intention is to assist the understanding of such relationships and to ensure that such relationships are disclosed and managed effectively in order that they do not have any adverse impact on the Association and its operations.

### **2.0 POLICY AIMS**

- ✓ To be clear on our standards and expectations concerning personal relationships at work.
- ✓ To manage any situations out with the expected standards in accordance with this policy.
- ✓ To manage situations that may arise in a fair, consistent and appropriate way, and comply with all relevant discriminatory legislation.

### **3.0 DEFINITION**

Personal relationships covered by this policy include;

- ✓ family relationships,
- ✓ friendships
- ✓ close personal relationships

Personal relationships which may lead to conflict with the Staff Code of Conduct are those between members of staff, between staff and Committee, between staff and service users, and between staff and contractors and consultants with whom the Association procures, or has the opportunity to procure, goods and services.

Personal relationships which may lead to conflict with the Code of Conduct for Governing Body Members are those between Committee Members, between Committee Members and staff, between Committee Members and service users and between Committee Members and contractors and consultants with whom the Association procures, or has the opportunity to procure, goods and services.

## **4.0 REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS**

Where staff have a personal relationship of the type mentioned above, they must immediately advise their line and departmental manager and formally disclose this information as part of the Declarations of Interests process. The Association will then be in a position to take any necessary action to ensure that the Staff Code of Conduct is not broken, or is not perceived to be broken.

Where Committee Members have a personal relationship of the type mentioned above they must inform the Chairperson (or in the event that the issue involves the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson) and formally disclose this information as part of the Declarations of Interests process

When to advise will be a matter of judgement for the individuals concerned, but it should certainly be before there is a likelihood of them breaching the relevant Code of Conduct. *(Employees can discuss in confidence their own situation with the Associations employee counselling service providers - Time for Talking on 0800 970 3980).*

It will then be a matter of discussion initially between the relative parties and the Chairperson and Chief Executive as to how to manage the situation effectively.

This should also include (and potentially even more importantly) where relationships have broken up, and both parties feel awkward, and working relationships may be adversely affected.

## **5.0 MANAGING RELATIONSHIPS**

### **5.1 Staff**

The management or arrangements required to deal with the relationships between staff will depend on the type of relationship involved but the underlying principle will be that where there is any concern, actual or perceived, that such a personal relationship could affect the outcome of any consideration or decision the matter will be dealt with by another member of staff.

Where this is not possible due to there being supervisory / management responsibilities between two members of staff where a personal relationship exists (or has recently existed), the situation will require to be closely monitored to ensure that any actual or perceived favouritism cannot develop.

Where there is any accusation that such a situation does exist the matter will be immediately investigated in accordance with the Associations Grievance Procedure. Such a situation could result in one of the members of staff having to be redeployed or consider resignation because the difficulties are too great.

### **5.2 Management Committee**

The Association will expect Committee Members who are in a personal relationship with someone who is the subject of consideration by the Management Committee to withdraw from any Committee meetings or decisions concerning the matter.

This would be expected to run for a period of at least 12 months after the relationship stops. It could also result in certain circumstances in the Committee Member having to consider resignation because these difficulties are too great.

## **6.0 EXPECTATIONS**

### **6.1 Employee**

We expect you will:

- ✓ not allow any close personal relationships with a colleague, contractor, client, customer or supplier to influence your conduct, judgement or decisions while at work.
- ✓ declare a close personal relationship with a colleague or any other person connected to your employment to your line manager. If the relationship is between a manager/supervisor, we expect this to be declared to a more senior manager and the Chief Executive.
- ✓ respect your surroundings, your colleagues and our organisation
- ✓ not behave inappropriately during working hours, nor out with working hours with any matters connected or associated with your employment
- ✓ be aware of your behaviour in any social media interaction connected to personal relationships at work
- ✓ follow the highest standards of behaviour at conferences and all other internal or external events where you are there in connection with the Association.

### **6.2 The Association**

You can expect the Association:

- ✓ to treat any information concerning a personal relationship connected to your work in the strictest of confidence. This will also be recorded on the personal files of both employees;
- ✓ to discuss the situation with those involved, this will be done by an appropriate senior manager. We may move one or both employees to another job in another department/section/team or, consider other working arrangements in line with the needs of the organisation. In these circumstances, the organisation will discuss options with both employees and seek to reach an agreement regarding the transfer of one or both employees.
- ✓ If appropriate measures or working arrangements cannot be put in place, the organisation may terminate the employment of one or both as a last resort.
- ✓ to apply similar principles to an employee who is in a close personal relationship with a client, customer, contractor or supplier, in particular where the employee's job has the authority or a close connection with the individual. We expect the relationship to be declared to the employee's line manager. In these

circumstances, the Association may move the employee to another job in another department/section/team or, consider other working arrangements in line with the needs of the organisation or, as a last resort may terminate the contract of employment with the employee.

- ✓ In situations where a close personal relationship with a Governing Body Member or, another volunteer, a client, customer, contractor or supplier, the Governing Body Member/volunteer will be excluded from any discussions connected to the person they have a personal relationship with. If this is not possible or appropriate, the Governing Body member may be required to step down from their position.

## **7.0 TERMINATION**

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

- ✓ the employee will be invited by the employer to put forward suggestions for a suitable alternative working arrangement that meets the needs of our business.
- ✓ the Chief Executive will take all suggestions and consider them.
- ✓ the Chief Executive will produce a comprehensive and succinct report outlining the business reasons why it is not appropriate to continue with the employment relationship
- ✓ the employee will be invited to a formal meeting in writing. Along with the letter, the employee will also receive the Chief Executive's report and any other information the panel will have available to them.
- ✓ At the meeting, they will have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or workplace colleague, and both parties (the employer and employee) will be given the opportunity to put forward their case.
- ✓ the meeting will be conducted by the Executive Committee
- ✓ the panel will deliberate (in private) over the information put before them before making a decision.
- ✓ the decision of the panel will be communicated in writing to the employee within 5 working days of the decision being made; this letter will also provide details of how to appeal.
- ✓ the employee will be paid all accrued annual leave, TOIL and flexi not yet taken to the date of termination. As well as any payment in lieu of notice as set out in their contract of employment if a decision to dismiss is made.

## **8.0 SUMMARY**

In summary, it is essential that Committee and staff recognise:

- ✓ Staff and Committee behaviour should meet the requirements of our policies, and should be such as to avoid allegations of breaching these policies. Non compliance will be dealt with under the Association's disciplinary procedures / Governing Body Code of Conduct;
- ✓ If you are in a personal relationship, you must take the appropriate steps to make your line manager, departmental manager and Chief Executive (or the Chairperson) aware of the situation and jointly agree ways to manage the relationship within the parameters of the relevant Code of Conduct;
- ✓ The highest standards of behaviour are required at work, at conferences and other events where individuals are there as a result of their Committee membership or staff employment with the Association. They will be subject to Governing Body Code of Conduct / disciplinary procedures, if breached;
- ✓ If you have any doubt regarding the application of this policy, you can discuss your situation in confidence with the Chief Executive, line manager, departmental manager or Chairperson.

## **9.0 POLICY REVIEW**

As with all our policies it will be monitored and reviewed to seek improvements in its effectiveness. The review period will be at least every 5 years.

George Tainsh  
Chief Executive

**19<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

### **Policy Review Consultation Process**

Considered by the Management Team on	3 <sup>rd</sup> September 2019
Reviewed by HSEHR Committee	18 <sup>th</sup> September 2019
<b>APPROVED BY THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ON</b>	<b>26<sup>th</sup> September 2019</b>
<b>Date of Next Review</b>	<b>September 2024</b>

## **PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK POLICY (2019)**

### **DECLARATION**

**Signed**..... **Date** .....

I .....(print name) have read and understood the 2019 version of the Personal Relationships at Work Policy and accept the expectations and obligations contained therein.

Clarification and guidance as required, on any aspect of the policy, has been sought and obtained from the Chief Executive.