

Relationships at work policy

1. Purpose

We recognise that personal relationships between colleagues are common. This policy provides guidelines to maintain professionalism, fairness, and respect at work while respecting employees' right to privacy. It does not ban such relationships but sets expectations for conduct and management.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, officers, consultants, self-employed contractors, casual workers, agency workers, volunteers and interns.

3. Definition of personal relationship

A "personal relationship" includes any emotional or romantic connection beyond normal professional boundaries, including family ties and informal dating. Staff must use judgment to determine relevance and may consult HR confidentially. This applies regardless of department, team, or location. This definition includes all personal relationships between any member of staff, regardless of whether those involved work in the same team, department, division or office, or at the same site.

4. Purpose of this policy

In many cases a personal relationship between staff will not interfere with work. However, sometimes a personal relationship will be or become problematic because it adversely impacts on other colleagues or negatively affects business efficiency. Issues can arise, especially in the same team or in manager/subordinate roles.

Risks include:

- Conflicts of interest and perceived bias in decisions.
- Confidentiality breaches.
- Discrimination or harassment claims.
- Negative effects on morale, fairness, and team dynamics.
- Operational disruption in case of relationship breakdown.

5. Management guidelines

Management should:

- Treat knowledge of relationships sensitively and confidentially.
- Take action only if risks arise; avoid discrimination based on sex, age, or sexual orientation.
- Escalate harassment or grievance concerns to HR immediately.
- Protect confidentiality in line with data protection laws.

- Consult HR before taking action and keep formal records.

Additionally, management should always be mindful of staff wellbeing, including mental health, throughout.

6. Conduct of those in personal relationships

Any members of staff who are in a personal relationship are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner at work at all times in respect of such relationship. This means

- Maintaining professionalism and discretion; avoid public displays of affection.
- Using company resources for work only.
- Upholding confidentiality.

Relationships involving reporting lines must be disclosed to HR promptly. Manager/subordinate relationships are not permitted. Upon disclosure, HR will assess whether any adjustments are necessary. This may include (but is not limited to):

- Changing reporting lines;
- Adjusting working arrangements or shift patterns;
- Relocating workstations; and
- Reallocating duties.

Any changes will be made with minimal disruption, in consultation with the affected individuals.

7. Undisclosed Relationships

Failure to disclose a relationship that could create a conflict of interest may be treated as a disciplinary matter, up to and including dismissal, particularly if:

- There is evidence of favouritism, bias, or preferential treatment;
- The relationship impacts team morale or productivity; or
- The relationship results in a breach of confidentiality or trust.

8. Discrimination, harassment and other policies

All staff remain subject to equality, harassment, confidentiality, and data protection policies.

No one will be treated unfairly due to a personal relationship. Concerns should be raised with a manager or through the grievance process.

We will not tolerate any form of harassment of our staff and will take any allegations extremely seriously. Staff are reminded to consider their legal obligations towards colleagues. These may be especially pertinent at the beginning or end of a relationship, when professionalism and discretion will be particularly important.