



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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1 ABOUT THE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Welcome to Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership Ltd (“the Company”). We hope that your career with us will be successful and rewarding.

This Handbook has been created to provide information about all our policies and procedures, which you must read carefully so that you understand what is expected of you and what you can expect of us. It should be read in conjunction with your Contract of Employment, together with any other notices that the Company may issue from time to time. If there is any difference between the terms and conditions in your Contract of Employment and this Handbook, your Contract takes precedence.

The Company reserves the right to amend, remove or introduce new policies at any time after giving reasonable notice.

This version of the handbook supersedes any previous documentation issued in this respect.

The Office Manager has overall responsibility for Human Resources who you should contact if you have any queries about this Handbook or any other terms and conditions of your employment.

2 ABOUT THE COMPANY

Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) is one of 38 LEPs operating across England. We are responsible for championing and developing the Oxfordshire economy. Now in our sixth year of operation, OxLEP has made considerable progress in strengthening Oxfordshire's economy by establishing robust and effective relationships between businesses, academia and the public sector.

3 EMPLOYMENT POLICY

We seek to recruit and appoint the best available person for the job and to encourage the development of all employees to their full potential. We promote equality of opportunity and will take action to ensure that no individual suffers discrimination, directly or indirectly, on the grounds of a protected characteristic.

We aim to treat all of our employees in a fair and consistent manner, promoting good working relationships, encouraging high standards of conduct and work performance and providing fair rewards. We also aim to provide a healthy workplace, free from risk with due regard for the health, safety and welfare of all employees.

In return, we expect you to maintain high standards of conduct, reliability, competence and efficiency and ask that you conduct yourself in a manner that upholds our interests and reputation.

You must read, and abide by, the Equal Opportunities Policy, which sets out both yours and the Company's responsibilities. This can be found in Appendix A1

4 GENERAL WORKING PRACTICES

4.1 PAY AND REVIEW

The methods of pay and payment intervals are set out in your Contract of Employment. An itemised pay slip will be issued to you at the time of each payment and if you have any queries, you should raise them with your line manager.

4.2 PROBATIONARY PERIOD

All new employees are subject to a probationary period when they join the Company. This provides time for both you and the Company, to establish whether the role is the right choice for you. If you have not met the required standard, this will be discussed with you and the Company may choose to extend the probationary period or terminate the employment.

4.3 PERSONAL DETAILS

It is your responsibility to notify the Company, by updating Bamboo HR, of any changes to your personal details, such as your address, bank account details, next of kin and telephone number, and must do so as soon as you can.

4.4 WORKING HOURS AND TIMEKEEPING

Working Hours

Your standard working hours are set out in your Contract of Employment and any variation must be by formal agreement with your line manager.

A variable lunch period is encouraged, to allow all departments to be manned during normal working hours and such arrangements will be made between you and your line manager.

Time Keeping

You must keep to the hours of work set out in your Contract of Employment. Any late arrival/login must be reported to your line manager and you must get your line manager's permission if you need to leave early for any reason. Persistent poor timekeeping may result in disciplinary action and/or deductions from pay.

Calendar

You must ensure that your Outlook calendar is always kept up to date and that it is made visible to all. This is to ensure adequate cover and that management can monitor workload and employee welfare.

4.5 EXPENSES

You will be reimbursed for all reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of your duties in accordance with the Company's expenses policy in force at that time. Failure to comply with the terms of the policy may result in the non-payment of expenses incurred. Misuse of the Expenses Policy may result in disciplinary action.

If you need to use your own car on the Company's business, you should only do so with the prior approval of your line manager. You should ensure that the vehicle is specifically insured for you to drive for business, taxed and where applicable has a valid MOT. You must hold a current, valid driving licence. Copies of your certificates, proof of insurance and your license should be provided to The Office Manager.

Your safety when driving, and the safety of other road users, is our prime concern. You should therefore obey the Highway Code, pay due care and attention to other road users and not drive whilst tired or unfit to drive, for example through the consumption of alcohol or any other drugs. Always wear your seat belt and make sure your passengers do the same.

The Company will accept no responsibility for any fines or convictions you may incur whilst driving on Company business and you must inform your line manager immediately if you receive a conviction for drink driving or lose your license. Any breach of these rules will constitute a disciplinary offence.

The use of mobile phones, or any other electronic device whilst driving is illegal and you must abide by the current legislation.

Whilst using your car for business reasons in order to comply with current legislation, you are not permitted to smoke or to allow anyone travelling with you to smoke in the car.

4.6 ACTING IN THE INTERESTS OF THE COMPANY

You are expected to act wholeheartedly in the interests of the Company at all times. Any conduct that is detrimental to its interests or its interests or relations with any third party or is damaging to its public image will be considered a disciplinary offence.

All employees must comply with our Financial Regulations found [here](#), including our Scheme of Delegation found [here](#)

An employee who fails to comply may be subject to disciplinary action.

You are expected to achieve and maintain a good standard of work and to show a conscientious approach to your job, or the detail of the job, to a standard that may be reasonably expected.

You are also expected to show the skill or aptitude required for the job, especially where such skills are claimed or implied at the time your employment commenced.

As an employee of OxLEP you are expected to adhere to the Government's Nolan Principles as detailed below.

The Seven Principles of Public Life

The Seven Principles of Public Life (also known as the Nolan Principles) apply to anyone who works as a public office-holder. This includes all those who are elected or appointed to public office, nationally and locally, and all people appointed to work in the Civil Service, local government, the police, courts and probation services, non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs), and in the health, education, social and care services. All public office-holders are both servants of the public and stewards of public resources. The principles also apply to all those in other sectors delivering public services.

1 Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2 Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3 Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4 Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5 Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6 Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7 Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

4.7 SMOKING (INCLUDING E-CIGARETTES)

The Company operates a no smoking policy which reflects the current legislation. It applies to employees and visitors and, for the avoidance of doubt, smoking is not permitted in any public areas, private or open-plan offices, Company vehicles, toilets or meeting rooms. Failure to comply with this instruction may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

The rules relating to the smoking of e-cigarettes mirror those relating to the smoking of conventional cigarettes.

Employees can leave the workplace/their desks to smoke during their recognised break periods only.

When working on clients' sites, or indeed any other place of work, you are expected to respect any smoking restrictions as per their policy or current legislation and comply with them accordingly.

4.8 ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

The Company recognises that for a range of reasons individuals can and do misuse drugs and alcohol, and that this represents a problem for the individual and for the business. Please see Appendix A19 for the full Alcohol and Drugs Policy.

4.9 HOME WORKERS

All employees have their home address as their primary location of work, with a small office environment available on a bookable, ad hoc basis, when needed.

It is an employee's responsibility to ensure that they have a suitable environment for working from home and that their equipment is appropriate for their working

responsibilities. The Company can provide basic equipment for employee use and further information on this can be found in Appendix A18.

Should employees use their own personal equipment then the Company are not responsible for its maintenance, replacement, or repair in the event of loss or damage caused by the employee when working.

4.10 COMMITMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENT

The Company recognises the importance of managing our impact on the environment. Our employees can play a key part in this and we would ask that you act responsibly both when working from home and within our office.

Simple measures can have a big impact therefore we ask that our employees are mindful of their printing and of their use of resources (like water, energy etc.) where this can be done. Whenever possible, all employees should seek to recycle relevant materials.

4.11 DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

Any calls, emails or written correspondence from newspapers or general media enquiries should be channelled through The Communications Manager. The Communications Manager is responsible for fielding media enquiries, issuing news releases and the final approval on any editing to the Website and Social Networking sites.

If the media enquiry involves a matter of a serious nature, the query should be referred immediately to the CEO.

The Company requires all employees to comply with the guidance on dealing with the media and failure to do so may be regarded as serious misconduct and will be dealt with in accordance with the Company's disciplinary policy and procedure.

4.12 PREMISES

The Company should present itself in a professional manner at all times.

Our office premises should only be used when needed and therefore we ask all employees to ensure that the available desks are kept neat and tidy at all times. No personal items or equipment should be left overnight on the desks. This is applicable even if you have the office space booked for consecutive days.

If you do need to book a desk then please use the booking system Skedda - a link to this can be found on Bamboo HR. Please request a log in from the Corporate Operations and Compliance Manager..

4.13 SECURITY

Security is of critical importance and you are expected to do all that you can to keep the Company's premises and possessions secure.

When working in an office, you should:

- ensure that you clear the desk prior to leaving
- abide by any security instructions in issue at our office or at a client's premises;
- not leave any sensitive or personal information out on any of the desks (or anywhere) where it can be accessed by others;
- report anything that arouses suspicion;

When working from home you should:

- keep your workspace secure,
- ensure that all confidential or sensitive paperwork is stored securely and disposed of appropriately either by shredding (if your shredder complies to the requirements as detailed within the Homeworking Policy A18) or by bringing it into the office and using the confidential waste bins,
- ensure that you are the only individual within your household to use your Company issued laptop/computer,
- not share your login information with anyone,
- ensure that your computer/laptop is secured at all times (it should not be left in a vehicle unattended at any time).

4.14 USE OF COMPANY PROPERTY AND FACILITIES

You must not remove any documents or other property belonging to the Company or its clients unless you have been given prior written permission to do so, or unless the removal is in the ordinary course of your duties.

It is important that you take care of any Company property that is entrusted to you. Any misuse, damage or loss of any equipment may be considered as misconduct or gross misconduct, which could lead to your dismissal.

The Company will provide you with all the necessary equipment to enable you to carry out your duties, such as stationery, writing equipment, books, publications, instruments and machines. These remain the property of the Company at all times. You must take all reasonable steps to keep them in good order and prevent them from being lost, stolen or damaged.

4.15 DRESS CODE AND PERSONAL HYGIENE

You are expected to dress in a manner that upholds the standards of the business and reflects our professionalism. The Company retains absolute discretion as to what is acceptable in terms of dress wear.

When attending client meetings (including video calls), it is expected that all employees will dress smartly however, when at home, the Company permits smart casual clothing (as a guide jeans with a smart top are permitted).

Wherever possible, employees will be allowed to wear religious dress. However, health and safety and the efficient performance of work duties is the priority. If dress interferes with this then employees will be informed, and a solution will be sought. This could include moving the employee to another job role.

You are also expected to maintain a high standard of personal hygiene and have proper consideration for your fellow workers in this respect.

4.16 ANTI BRIBERY RULES - GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

The Company actively discourages the acceptance of any gifts by employees, whether in cash or kind, from any customer, supplier or any person connected with the business.

Bribery is the accepting of gifts, money, hospitality or other favours in return for providing something of value to the briber. The purpose of this policy is to set out the rules that must be followed in this Company to ensure that no bribery occurs.

Unacceptable behaviour

The following behaviour is unacceptable, and must not occur in this Company:

- accepting any financial or other reward from any person in return for providing some favour
- requesting a financial or other reward from any person in return for providing some favour
- offering any financial or other reward from any person in return for providing some favour.

From time to time, customers, suppliers or other persons might offer a gift to you. This could be a small item, or something of considerable value. All gifts, however small, must be reported to the head of department and recorded. No gifts which have more than a nominal value, typically less than £10, may be accepted. If a gift is offered above this value it should be politely refused at the time and this must be reported to your line manager.

From time to time, customers, suppliers or other persons might invite you to a hospitality event. All such invitations must be reported to your line manager. Permission must be given by a director before you accept any invitation.

Your line manager must authorise all expense claims from their employees and will check and sign all expense claims from their employees against receipts.

Any items of expenditure that give rise to concern will be fully investigated.

If you are concerned you are potentially being bribed, you should report this matter to Director of Corporate Services immediately.

OxLEP staff nominate a charity each to support. This process is managed by the Social Committee. Throughout the year we carry out various activities to raise funds for the nominated charity.

No donations should be made to charities, political parties or other organisations with the intention of gaining a business advantage.

Any employee found to have offered or accepted a bribe will face disciplinary action which could include dismissal for gross misconduct.

If you are concerned that acts of bribery are occurring in the Company you should inform The Director of Corporate Services in the first instance. If this course of action is inappropriate, you should inform another senior manager.

4.17 OTHER GENERAL RULES

- You are expected to be punctual, and lateness may result in disciplinary action.
- You must not make collections on the Company's or Clients' premises without the prior permission of the Office Manager
- You are not allowed to gamble, bet or run sweepstakes etc, unless you have the prior permission of the Office Manager
- You must not place advertisements, notices or promotions on the Company's or Clients' notice boards, or computers, without the prior permission of the Office Manager In addition, you should not distribute pamphlets or propaganda material and you should not undertake the unauthorised sale of goods.

5 HOLIDAYS

5.1 ENTITLEMENT

Your entitlement to paid holiday is set out in your Contract of Employment.

If your employment commences part way through the holiday year, the amount of holiday you are entitled to during your first year shall be calculated on a pro-rata basis, rounded to the nearest whole day.

In addition to the Company holiday entitlement, you are also entitled to the following recognised Bank Holidays in England. These are:

New Year's Day
Good Friday
Easter Day
Early May Bank Holiday
Spring Bank Holiday (late May)
Summer Bank Holiday (late August)
Christmas Day
Boxing Day

5.2 HOLIDAY YEAR AND ACCRUAL OF HOLIDAY

The Company's holiday year runs from 1st April to 31st March.

Payment of holiday will be at your normal rate of pay and will exclude any non-guaranteed payments or benefits, such as overtime.

5.3 REQUESTING HOLIDAY

Any request for holiday must be made on the Bamboo HR system and authorised by your line manager as far in advance as possible. You should obtain authorisation before booking any holidays or paying any non-refundable deposit and the Company will accept no responsibility for monies lost as a consequence of failing to comply with this procedure.

The Company reserves the right to refuse the holiday request where the needs of the business make it necessary.

A maximum of 5 days holiday (which is in addition to the statutory entitlement) may only be carried forward into the next holiday year with your line manager's express permission, and then only in exceptional circumstances.

5.4 TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

During your notice period, the Company reserves the right to require you to take any outstanding holiday entitlement on dates that it chooses.

If it has been agreed with your line manager that this is not possible, you shall be entitled to be paid in lieu of any accrued but untaken holiday on a pro rata basis, up to and including your termination date. In the event of you having taken a greater amount of holiday than your entitlement, you agree that the Company may deduct the balance from any salary or other payments due to you.

Where termination of your employment is due to summary dismissal, or if you do not work the full length of your contractual notice, unused holiday pay will not be paid to you, except where the Company is required to do so to meet its statutory obligations.

5.5 OTHER RULES SURROUNDING TAKING HOLIDAY

- No more than two working weeks' holiday may be taken at any one time except in exceptional circumstances.
- You are not entitled to be paid in lieu of any holiday entitlement except on termination or some cases of long-term absence.
- Should you fall ill or be injured prior to and/or during pre-booked holiday, the Company will allow you to re-schedule the holiday at a later date, subject to you complying with the Sickness reporting procedures. We reserve the right to ask for medical evidence of your incapacity.
- The Company reserves the right to require you to take any accrued but untaken holiday during your notice period.
- Employees on Adoption, Maternity, Shared Parental or Paternity Leave continue to accrue holiday.

6 SICKNESS AND INJURY

6.1 NOTIFICATION

Any absence due to sickness or injury must be notified to your line manager as early as possible on the first day of absence and certainly by your normal start time. If possible, you must indicate the likely duration of illness.

If you are unable to report it yourself, you must arrange for someone else to call. You should contact your line manager as soon as you are able.

Where the absence is longer term, you and your line manager must agree on the intervals at which you will continue to report in sick, which will be on a daily basis unless your line manager states otherwise.

If you are suffering from, or have symptoms of, an infectious disease e.g. mumps, measles, chicken pox or food poisoning, you must notify your line manager prior to entering the workplace or having contact with colleagues.

6.2 EVIDENCE OF SICKNESS/INJURY

You must give the Company evidence of the reason you are unable to attend work as follows:

a) Self-Certification

On returning to work after an absence of 7 or less calendar days (including weekends and public holidays), you will be required to complete a self- certification form.

b) Statement of Fitness for Work

Where the absence extends beyond 7 continuous calendar days (including weekends and public holidays) you must obtain a certificate from your Doctor/GP, which you must give to your line manager. If you do not return to work following the expiration of your doctor's certificate you must provide a further Statement of Fitness for Work to your line manager, which should run concurrently. If you are a hospital in-patient, it will be sufficient for medical certificates to be provided to cover the dates of admission and discharge from hospital.

The Company will take full consideration of the advice provided on the Statement of Fitness for Work, particularly where a partial return to work, or a return dependent on conditions, is advised.

6.3 RETURN TO WORK

If it is in any doubt, the Company may require you to submit a doctor's certificate confirming that you have recovered sufficiently before it allows you to resume work after a period of sickness.

6.4 SICK PAY

Your Contract of Employment will state whether you have any entitlement to Company Sick Pay over and above your entitlement to Statutory Sick Pay.

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) is payable for sickness of 4 or more qualifying days. Your qualifying days are your normal working days. The Company will continue to pay SSP up to the 28th week of absence at the rates allowed by law from time to time. Should you be entitled to Company Sick Pay in excess of SSP, this will include any Statutory Sick Pay that may be due to you.

You will only qualify for Company Sick Pay and/or SSP (where you are entitled) if you adhere strictly to the sickness notification procedure above and comply with the medical examination requirements. Any serious breach, such as the falsification of claims, may result in disciplinary action, which could lead to your dismissal or pay being withheld.

The Company also reserves the right to withhold Company Sick Pay where you might otherwise be paid this in circumstances where:

- There is a pattern of persistent short-term absence.
- You fail to co-operate or comply with reasonable requests to determine your medical condition.
- We have reasonable grounds to believe that you were not genuinely sick or injured.
- The injury or illness is self-inflicted, such as drug or alcohol abuse.
- The injury resulted from the individual putting themselves in a position of unnecessary risk
- The actions that caused the absence are considered inadvisable or incompatible with your illness.
- The injury was caused by other paid work.

This list is not exhaustive.

For further information regarding sickness absence, see appendix A4. Please note that this policy only applies to employees who have satisfactorily completed their probationary period. Issues arising during the probationary period will be dealt with separately.

6.5 MEDICAL EXAMINATION

If requested, you agree to be examined (at the Company's expense) by a registered medical practitioner of the Company's choosing and will authorise them to disclose the results of the examination to an appropriate person in the Company, subject to the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988. This is to allow the Company to determine whether there are any matters that might hinder or prevent you from returning to work after a period of absence through sickness or injury or, in other circumstances, from properly performing any of your duties.

Any such request will be dealt with sensitively, and only when the Company considers it absolutely necessary. If you decline to be examined, the Company is entitled to draw its own conclusions as to your state of health and ability to carry out your duties.

6.6 ABSENCE AS THE RESULT OF A THIRD PARTY'S NEGLIGENCE

If your absence is as a result of a third party's negligence you must immediately notify the Office Manager of the fact and of any damages or compensation recovered by you as a result. If required, you will also refund to the Company the cost of any such damages or compensation relating to your loss of earnings for the period of your incapacity as the Company may reasonably determine, provided that the amount to be refunded shall not exceed the total remuneration paid to you by way of salary in respect of the period of your incapacity.

6.7 ABSENCE FOR MEDICAL AND DENTAL APPOINTMENTS

Where possible you are requested to arrange any medical or dental appointments outside working hours. If this is not possible you must obtain permission from management before taking any time off and appointments should be arranged at the beginning or end of your working day to minimise any disruption to the Company.

Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action. Any periods of absence that are unauthorised may be treated as gross misconduct and could lead to your dismissal without notice from the Company. Unauthorised absence will not be subject to pay.

Unless otherwise agreed, you will not be paid for any time off as a result of medical or dental appointments, with the exception of antenatal appointments.

You should notify your line manager immediately as soon as possible, giving full details of the date and time of the appointment.

6.8 ABUSE OF THE RULES SURROUNDING SICKNESS AND INJURY

If you have been absent due to sickness or injury and have been found not to have been genuinely ill or injured, you will be subject to disciplinary action.

The rights of the Company to terminate your employment apply even when such termination would or might cause you to forfeit any entitlement to sick pay other benefits.

7 STATUTORY LEAVE AND FLEXIBLE WORKING

As an employee, you have important legal rights to time off, which we have summarised below. Full details can be found in the Appendices to this Handbook. If you have any queries, you should contact the Office Manager.

7.1 MATERNITY LEAVE

If you are pregnant, you have the right to Statutory Maternity Leave and, depending upon your length of service, Statutory Maternity Pay. We have produced a guide in Appendix A10 to this Handbook to help you.

7.2 PATERNITY LEAVE

If you have, or expect to have, responsibility for a child's upbringing, you may be entitled to Ordinary Paternity Leave and Statutory Paternity Pay. However, to be eligible, there are certain conditions that you must meet, which are set out in detail in Appendix A11.

7.3 ADOPTION LEAVE

You are eligible for Adoption Leave if you adopt a child or are one partner of a couple who adopt jointly. Some surrogate parents will become eligible for adoption leave. To be eligible, there are certain conditions that you must meet, and these are set out in Appendix A12.

7.4 PARENTAL LEAVE

If you are a mother, father or have responsibility for a child, you may be eligible for up to 18 weeks' unpaid Parental Leave to care for your child up to the age of 18. Full details are set out in Appendix A13.

7.5 SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE

Shared Parental Leave can be taken for babies expected to be born or children placed for adoption on or after 5 April 2015. Eligible parents can choose how to share the care of the child during the first year of birth or adoption. To be eligible, there are certain conditions that you must meet, and these are set out in Appendix A14. Shared Parental Leave replaces the former Additional Paternity Leave.

7.6 TIME OFF FOR DEPENDANTS

You are entitled to take reasonable unpaid time off work to care for your dependants and full details of what you are entitled to take are set out in Appendix A15.

7.7 RIGHT TO REQUEST FLEXIBLE WORKING

If you have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with the Company at the date the application is submitted, you have the right to make an application to work flexibly. Full details of the entitlement and policy are available in the Flexible Working Policy in Appendix A16.

8 OTHER LEAVE OF ABSENCE

8.1 ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS AND TRAVEL DIFFICULTIES

If you are required to attend the office for training or meetings and are unable to travel due to bad weather or travel difficulties, then you are required to inform your line manager as soon as is possible. This should be in line with the sickness absence reporting procedures, or as soon as possible.

You should then carry out your work from home as standard.

8.2 JURY SERVICE

The Company recognises that in certain circumstances it is necessary for you to be absent from work for jury service.

Your entitlements

You are entitled to time off work for jury service.

The Company will pay basic pay to employees who are doing jury service [**less any amounts you can claim from the court**] for up to 10 working days. Payment for time over and above 10 working days will be at the discretion of the Company.

Procedure

You should notify your line manager immediately on receipt of the jury summons, giving full details.

The Company may request that you apply to be excused from or defer your jury service where the business needs dictate.

Your responsibilities

Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action. Any periods of absence that are unauthorised may be treated as gross misconduct and could lead to your dismissal without notice from the Company. Unauthorised absence will not be subject to pay.

Where practicable, you are expected to return to work if not required to serve on any given day or part of a day.

8.3 OTHER PUBLIC DUTIES

The Company will give full and proper consideration to requests for public duties leave, such as being in the Army Reserves. You should inform your line manager as soon as you are aware of the need.

8.4 COMPASSIONATE LEAVE AND PARENTAL BEREAVEMENT LEAVE POLICY

The Company recognises that employees do face difficult personal situations where they might need support from the Company.

Death of a child

If you are an adult with “parental responsibility” (parent, adopter, foster parent, guardian) and have been employed for a continuous period of at least 26 weeks prior to the loss of a child under the age of 18, you will be entitled to two weeks’ paid leave at the statutory rate.

If you are a parent that suffers a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy and have been employed for a continuous period of at least 26 weeks prior to the loss, you will also be entitled to two weeks’ paid leave at the statutory rate.

The two weeks’ leave can be taken within 56 weeks of the date of the child’s death and can be taken either in one block or two blocks of one week each.

All employees with less than 26 weeks continuous service will be entitled to two weeks’ unpaid parental bereavement leave.

Death of close family member

In the event of the death of a partner, parent, child, grandparent, sibling or stepchild/parent, you will be entitled to take five days’ compassionate leave on full pay. There is no qualifying period of service required to be entitled to take compassionate leave.

Other compassionate leave

Compassionate leave relating to a situation other than the death of a close family member will be at the discretion of your line manager. Compassionate leave of more than five days, following the death of a close family member, will also be at the discretion of the line manager

There is no automatic right to extend compassionate leave by taking unpaid leave.

Requesting compassionate leave

The Company recognises that, in many situations, you will not be aware that compassionate leave is going to be required. As soon as reasonably practicable you should contact your line manager to explain what has happened, and to request compassionate leave. Your line manager will confirm how much leave is to be given, and whether or not it is paid. Your line manager will then inform the payroll department of their decision.

Unpaid leave

The Employment Rights Act 1996 allows employees to take unpaid leave in the event of an emergency related to a dependent. The right to take this leave is not affected by this policy.

Appeals

If you are refused the opportunity to take compassionate leave and wish to appeal against this decision, the appeal should be made in writing to The Director of Corporate Services. All appeals will be addressed quickly, and within a maximum of five working days.

Making unfounded requests

If any employee abuses the policy by making false or inaccurate requests for compassionate leave this will be a disciplinary offence, and disciplinary action is likely to be taken.

8.5 UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

The Company will not pay salary or any other benefits to you if you do not attend work and the absence is unauthorised. This includes absence which is not covered by an authorised holiday request form, or absence due to sickness that is not covered by a doctor's certificate, self-certification form and/or which has not been properly notified to your line manager. The Company reserves the right to deduct payment for the period of absence directly from your salary.

9 CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The performance of our employees is of critical importance to us and we aim to support the personal development of all of our employees through both on the job experience and training.

9.1 APPRAISALS

The Company is committed to doing all it reasonably can to provide a career development plan for employees. To this end, we have put in place an Appraisal programme from which training and development needs will be identified.

9.2 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Company is committed to ensuring all employees are provided with all the necessary training and support to fulfil their role and responsibilities. All training opportunities and/or needs are to be discussed between the employee and their Line Manager. Any external training needs to be authorised by your line manager prior to commencement of the course.

The provision of training may be conditional upon being able to recover the costs of the training. You will be informed when this applies and you will be required to sign an agreement to repay all or part of the cost incurred if you leave the Company within a period of time set by the Company of receiving or completing the training.

10 GRIEVANCE, CAPABILITY AND DISCIPLINE

There may be times when difficulties and issues arise, whether between employees themselves or between employees and the Company. In order to address them in a legal and ordered way, we have set out comprehensive Grievance and Disciplinary policies in Appendices A3, A4 and A5. Please note that these are not contractual.

Amendments to the Handbook

Date	Section	Details
Jan 2015	7	Introduction of Shared Parental Leave
Apr 2015	7.3 and 7.4	Update adoption to include surrogates and increase in age for parental leave.
Jun 2016	Throughout	Updated comments and added wording to some sections
June 2018	Throughout	Updated formatting
May 2019	Home Working	Update to GDPR Act Year
June 2020	Throughout	Updates in line with new legislation and finalisation of the handbook.
May 2021	Throughout	Updates in line with home working following the contractual changes.