



Better lives for our children and young people

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK



THE ADOLESCENT & CHILDREN'S TRUST
V.32 Updated 30/03/2021

INTRODUCTION

The Adolescent and Children's Trust was registered as a limited company in January 1993. It became a registered charity in March 1993. It is now the largest fostering charity in the country. We look after over 600 children operating across England, Wales and Scotland.

TACT is governed by a Board of Trustees who give their time and professional expertise voluntarily to the Trust and do not receive any payment for this. They come from different areas of public life, social work, the health service and business. The Trustees bring a valuable perspective and overview of our work.

As a charity we invest all our resources into delivering the highest quality services for our children and young people and working to improve their future life chances. This sets us apart from the many other fostering agencies that are profit-making businesses with private investors.

We have written standards and policy guidelines for our foster carers, support workers and social workers. These are underpinned by our Equal Opportunities Policy, Safeguarding Policy and procedures and our procedures relating to complaints and representations. Our aim is to work in partnership with Local Authority workers who are, in law, responsible for all TACT's operational activities and its financial affairs, children and families and to offer the very best services in child care.

All TACT employees must work strictly in accordance with the Equal Opportunities Policy and its strict confidentiality rules.

Please read all TACT policies and procedures carefully and raise any queries you may have with your Line Manager or HR (hr@tactcare.org.uk)

EMPLOYEE CHARTER

TACT Pledges To You

TACT pledges to treat all employees fairly, to listen and to give due consideration to your views and the views of anyone speaking or acting on your behalf.

TACT strives to become an outstanding employer, adopting best practice approaches in the recruitment, development and treatment of employees by making reasonable adjustments where necessary and offering equal opportunities to all (see Mindful Employer Charter).

Our Employees Can Expect:

- ❖ To operate in a safe working environment.
- ❖ Regular, open and honest communication across the business.
- ❖ Encouragement and support to realise their full potential.
- ❖ The provision of opportunities and development that will result in continuous learning.
- ❖ Fairness, inclusion, ensuring that merit, competence and potential are the basis for all decisions regarding recruitment and development (see Two Tick Disability Charter).
- ❖ That their contribution is recognised and rewarded accordingly.
- ❖ Trust, respect, fairness, equity and empowerment
- ❖ Encouragement in involving our employees in the planning and direction of the business.
- ❖ Commitment to the equal treatment of all employees.

TACT Expects Its People To:

















- ❖ Conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times and act an ambassador for TACT.
- ❖ Take pride in working for TACT.
- ❖ Demonstrate respect and concern for fellow employees.
- ❖ Be customer focussed.
- ❖ Be a team player.
- ❖ Be eager to learn and develop.
- ❖ Be trustworthy and dependable.
- ❖ Be motivational.
- ❖ Be results focussed.
- ❖ Respect colleagues and value each individual as unique.
- ❖ Take responsibility for the quality of their work, personal development and career advancement.
- ❖ Have an understanding of and commitment to the aims of TACT and its mission, vision and values.
- ❖ Work in harmony with each other and with those to whom they report.



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ANNUAL HOLIDAYS

What this policy covers

This policy sets out the rules and procedures in relation to taking annual holidays. It applies to all employees and workers.

Your entitlements and responsibilities

The holiday year runs from 1st January to 31st December.

Full time employee's holiday entitlement in any holiday year is 31 days excluding all public holiday entitlement. Part time employees are entitled to a pro-rata entitlement

Details of the holiday year and your annual holiday entitlement can be found in your Contract of Employment.

Accrual of holidays

Annual holiday entitlement during your first year of employment accrues at the rate of one-twelfth of the full annual holiday entitlement, on the first day of each month, in advance.

Part-time employees annual holiday entitlement accrues on a pro-rata basis.

Employees will be paid at their basic rate of pay in respect of periods of annual holiday.

Public Holidays

Full time employees are entitled to eight public holidays each year and will be advised of the relevant dates as early as possible. The public holidays which are recognised are as follows:

The public holidays which are recognised in **England and Wales** are as follows:

New Year's Day	Good Friday	Easter Monday
May Day	Spring Bank Holiday	August Bank Holiday
Christmas Day	Boxing Day	

The public holidays which are recognised in **Scotland** are as follows:

New Year's Day	Second New Year's Holiday	Good Friday
Easter Monday	May Day	Spring Bank Holiday
Christmas Day	Boxing Day	

Employees should note that these public holidays are in addition to their annual holiday entitlement.



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Employees who work part-time are entitled to public holidays on a pro rata basis. Where the Company closes on a public holiday and the employee has exhausted their pro-rata public holiday entitlement, the employee will not be paid for this day. If the employee wishes to be paid for this day, the employee should take this time from his or her annual holiday entitlement, or arrange to work on an alternative day, in accordance with the needs of the business.

Employees may be required to work during recognised public holidays, depending on the needs of the business. Employees will be given as much notice as possible of such a requirement.

An employee who has been required to work on a public holiday, but who has failed to do so because of sickness, will not be entitled to pay in respect of that day unless he or she submits a fit note completed by a medical practitioner.

Employees who are required to work on a recognised public holiday will be entitled to receive their normal hourly rate of pay and the equivalent time off in lieu for the hours worked.

Where employees are entitled to receive time off in lieu for working on a public holiday, this must be agreed in advance with management, and taken at a time convenient to the business.

Timing and length of holidays

You are not normally permitted to take more than three weeks' holiday at any one time, except at the sole discretion of the Company.

The Company may require you to reserve a specified amount of annual holiday entitlement to be taken at a time set by the Company, depending on the needs of the business. The Company reserves the right not to provide you with advance notice of this requirement.

Carrying over unused holidays

Only in exceptional circumstances, and at the sole discretion of the Company, accrued annual holiday entitlement up to 5 days may be carried over from one holiday year to the next. You must obtain permission from your manager to carry over holiday to the next holiday year and all carried over holiday must be used before the end of February in the new leave year.

Holidays during maternity leave

You will continue to accrue your full contractual holiday entitlement during maternity leave.

If you are unable to take annual holiday due to maternity leave, you will be permitted to carry over your unused annual holiday from one holiday year to the next.

You should discuss holiday arrangements around your maternity leave with your manager.



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Holiday during long-term absences

You will continue to accrue your full statutory holiday entitlement during sickness absence.

You are permitted to take annual holiday during periods of sickness and this must be requested via the normal procedure.

If you have been unable to take annual holiday due to long-term sickness you may be permitted to carry over part of your unused annual holiday from one holiday year to the next.

Termination of employment

The Organisation may require you to take all or part of any outstanding holiday entitlement during a period of notice to terminate employment or garden leave. The Organisation reserves the right not to provide you with advance notice of this requirement.

Upon the termination of your employment, for whatever reason, you will be entitled to be paid for holiday accrued but not taken in the current holiday year, at the date of termination of employment.

If upon the termination of your employment you have taken more annual holiday than you have accrued in the current holiday year, an appropriate deduction will be made from your final payment.

If you are dismissed for gross misconduct or if you fail to give the required notice on resignation, you are not entitled to be recompensed for unused holidays in excess of the minimum statutory entitlement.

Unauthorised holidays

If you are absent from work on a date on which a holiday request has been refused, the Organisation will investigate the reason for your absence. If the Organisation considers that you do not have a reasonable explanation for your non-attendance, you may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal without notice.

Sickness and holidays

If you are taken ill or sustain an injury during a period of authorised holiday, you may be permitted to take the holiday at a later time subject to receipt of medical certification and following absence reporting procedures

If you are absent from work due to sickness immediately prior to a period of authorised holiday and your incapacity extends into the authorised holiday period, you may be permitted to delay the period of holiday until a later time. You should submit a written request to postpone the planned holiday, together with a fit note completed by a medical practitioner. Employees taking advantage of this facility are required to delete from CipHR the annual leave not taken and to request their new period of leave.

If you receive more than the statutory minimum annual holiday entitlement and you are absent without authorisation on the day before or the day after a public holiday, the Company reserves the right to withhold holiday pay in respect of that public holiday.



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Extra Leave for Long Service

For every 5 years continuous service (5 full holiday years need to be completed - January to December), full-time staff will receive 1 day's extra leave per annum (pro rata for part-time employees), providing that the maximum will be 35 days leave in total, irrespective of length of service.

Procedure

Procedure for requesting holidays

All periods of annual holiday must be authorised in advance by your manager. You must not make firm holiday arrangements before receiving confirmation from your manager that your request has been authorised.

Employees are required to request annual leave using CipHR Net. Each request for annual leave will generate an email to the line manager advising him/her that an annual leave request is awaiting their verification. Once a leave request has been verified, the employee's 'Time Off' record on CipHR will be automatically updated with the dates of the annual leave that has just been approved. Employees can access their running record of annual leave at any time by logging onto CipHR Net.

You are required to submit company holiday requests to your manager as early as possible.

Requests for annual holiday will normally be granted on a 'first come, first served' basis. Owing to the needs of the business, the Organisation reserves the right to limit the number of employees who are permitted to take holiday at the same time. The granting of all holiday requests will be subject to adequate cover being available and the overall needs of the Organisation.



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BENEFITS FOR STAFF

TACT recognises that a good employee wellbeing plan will enhance engagement, performance and retention of staff. It is more than simply aiming to reduce absenteeism, it is valuing our people to ensure the best standards of service. TACT offers employees a well-balanced set of terms and conditions, including generous holidays, flexible working, family friendly policies and a range of other wellbeing led benefits which are outlined here. Our aim is to ensure our employees are able to maintain good work life balance and fulfil their potential, leading happy, healthy and successful lives, this in turn leads to us ensuring that our carers, and the children in our care, are fully enabled and supported to do the same.

We work with our staff to develop our employment practices, benefits and rewards. As part of our drive to make TACT a great place to work, we are pleased to offer you a range of benefits.

Holidays

We enjoy generous holidays at TACT. All staff receive 31 days annual leave each year and also the eight recognised public holidays (in England) [pro-rata if part-time]. For every five years continuous service (five full holiday years need to be completed – January to December), staff will receive one day's extra leave per annum, providing that the maximum will be 35 days leave in total, irrespective of length of service.

Stakeholder Pension Scheme

From the date you start working for TACT, you are automatically enrolled, via a salary sacrifice scheme, into the TACT stakeholder pension scheme, currently through Scottish Widows. The percentage will be the government recommended minimum amount. You may opt-out of the scheme. TACT will contribute up to five percent of your annual salary on a matched basis whilst you are in the scheme. You can, of course, pay higher than five percent to secure yourself a better pension. London Weighting and other allowances are not counted as part of your salary in relation to pensions. You are able to contribute to your pension via salary sacrifice if you wish.

Death in Service Scheme

Death in Service cover is provided at a flat rate of £137,500. Further information is available from HR.

Sick Pay

TACT has a generous company sick pay scheme for staff who are unable to attend work due to unavoidable sickness absence and who follow the set down notification and certification procedure. We also have access to Occupational Health Advisers who provide expert medical opinions.



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Loyalty Award

TACT values the commitment, experience and loyalty of those that have worked and made their career within the organisation. In recognition of this, a one- off payment of £500 will be paid to an employee on completion of ten years continuous service and, thereafter, £500 for every five years continuous service completed.

Group Income Protection Scheme

This is available to all permanent full-time and part-time employees aged 18 or above who join the company prior to their 63rd birthday once they have completed two years service, subject to satisfying the terms and conditions of the policy. Group Income protection insurance is a benefit which provides an income after 13 weeks continuous absence from work due to accident or illness, subject to acceptance of a claim. The income is up to 75% of basic salary (including London Weighting where applicable) less an amount equal to State Invalidity Benefit. The income during a qualifying claim will be paid for a maximum of 24 monthly payments or until the employee is able to return to work, until they reach retirement age of 65 or until death – whichever occurs first.

Dental Scheme

After successfully completing the six month probationary period, you will be entitled to join the dental scheme. If you wish to join this scheme, you will have to pay the full cost for yourself and partners/ dependants.

Eye Care

TACT will contribute £20 to the cost of an eye test for the use of display screen equipment and up to £55 towards the cost of spectacles upon receipt of confirmation that they are required for display screen use

Out of Hours Duty

All social work staff will be required to work on the out of hours duty rota and an allowance is paid in recognition of this

Season Ticket Loan

To help members of staff pay for their travel to work, they can apply for an interest-free loan. Employees on contracts of employment of one year or more will be eligible, subject to passing TACT's six months probationary period, to apply for an interest-free loan.

Sabbaticals

12-week sabbaticals will be offered to staff with ten years or more continuous service. The timing of the sabbatical will be mutually agreed between the line manager and the employee.

Notice of intention to take a sabbatical should be requested in writing at least six months before the intended start of the sabbatical.

An employee will be required to take five days of their annual leave entitlement (pro-rata if part-time) at the start of their sabbatical leave period. TACT will pay half salary for the remaining 11 weeks of the absence.

Employee Assistance Programme

TACT offers a non-contributory employee assistance programme. You can speak to a qualified adviser on any topic that's bothering you; work, family crises, personal life, illness, managing money, retirement issues and personal crises. You have access to friendly, unbiased, confidential advice whenever you need it. The service is completely free, independent and available to you and members of your immediate family 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Working from Home

We do have a working from home policy and there is the flexibility for our social work staff to work from home from time to time and with agreement from their line manager.

Compressed Hours

To provide flexibility around working hours, it is possible for some admin staff to work compressed hours, in agreement with their line manager. This is achieved by working the extra seven hours into the nine working days. Staff are not encouraged to work through their lunch break in order to build up time. This arrangement is not available until staff have completed their probationary period. It is available for staff that work 21 hours or more per week.

Business Travelling

If part of your job requires you to travel, you will be able to claim a mileage allowance, subject to certain limits or public transport costs. You will also be able to claim an allowance per mile if you use your bike for business travel.

Learning Development Opportunities

One of the things we're proudest of as an employer is that many of our employees stay with us for the long- term and that we are able to fill many of our senior positions from within the charity.

TACT has an enviable record of delivering excellence in learning and development which includes:

- A strong culture of internal development and promotion.
- A wide range of internal and external courses.
- A structure of appraisals and reviews to enable
- personal development.
- Membership of Research in Practice with opportunities
- to attend their learning events and other benefits.
- Sponsorship towards a professional qualification,
- including day release.
- Paid subscription to a professional body.

Family Friendly Policies

TACT provides a number of generous family-friendly policies that provide benefits that exceed the statutory requirements. These include:

- Maternity leave
- Parental leave
- Paternity leave
- Time-off for dependants

Disability Confident Committed Employer

TACT is registered with the Disability Confident Employer scheme and is constantly reviewing all policies and procedures to support inclusivity equality.

TACT is currently committed to:

- Ensuring our recruitment process is inclusive and accessible.
- Communicating and promoting vacancies.
- Offering an interview to disabled people.
- Anticipating and providing reasonable adjustments as required.
- Supporting any existing employee who acquires a disability or long term health condition, enabling them to stay in work.
- Undertaking at least one activity annually that will make a difference for disabled people.

Equal Opportunities

Our equal opportunities policy covers both employment and service provision. We aim to have a workforce that reflects the communities in which we work.

Before applying for a job with TACT, it's natural that you would want to have a really clear idea of what it is like to work for TACT. So, as well as telling you about our generous employment benefits package we've included some first hand comments from people who already work for us.

Employee Benefits Discount Scheme

All employees are able to access a wide range of discounts provided by over 400 retail outlets and service providers. As well as an on-going account with access to long term discounts on everyday items, extra special offers and freebies are also made available from time to time.

Wellbeing Days

TACT provides a cash contribution to a wellbeing team event for one day per year. Previous team activities have included ten pin bowling, pottery workshops and river cruises.

Volunteering

TACT's volunteering policy allows our employees to give back and support local communities as well as enriching the lives of those employees. Following successful completion of the probationary period, employees may be permitted to take up to three paid days leave per year to volunteer in local schools, community organisations etc.

Further information regarding staff benefits and what is available to you can be found [here](#).

SICK PAY ENTITLEMENT

What this policy covers

This policy sets out your entitlement to sick pay and outlines the basic rules and qualifying criteria that apply to sick pay. The payment of sick pay is dependent on your adherence to the Company's Absence Procedures, which can be found in this Employee Handbook.

Your entitlements

Statutory Sick Pay

Regardless of your length of service, if you are absent from work because of sickness or injury, you will normally be entitled to receive Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) from the Company at the prevailing rate. The payment of SSP is conditional upon you satisfying the following qualifying conditions:

- your period of absence consists of at least four consecutive work days
- you earn at least the 'Lower Earnings Limit' for National Insurance Contributions (NIC), which is reviewed on an annual basis

The first three days of sickness absence are classed as waiting days, and SSP will not normally be paid.

Once you have met the necessary qualifying conditions and provided the required medical evidence that you are unfit for work, SSP will be paid for each subsequent work day that you remain absent due to sickness or injury. You will only be paid for those days on which you would normally work or are scheduled to work.

SSP is normally payable for a maximum of 28 weeks.

If your absence is as a result of an injury or illness caused by a third party, any Statutory Sick Pay paid is required to be repaid if any compensation for loss of earnings is recovered from the third party.

The provisions relating to SSP are extremely complex. If you have any questions about this policy, you should discuss these with the HR Department.

Contractual sick pay

The Company operates a Contractual Sick Pay Scheme. This is done on a rolling year basis. This means that the calculation of Company Sick Pay will take into account any previous payments of Company Sick Pay made in the 365 days immediately before the first day of the current sickness absence.

The following provisions set out employees' Company Sick Pay entitlement. Employees should clearly understand, however, that when payment of Company Sick Pay is made this is inclusive of any SSP entitlement i.e. employees are not entitled to both.

Entitlements to Company Sick Pay are calculated on a pro-rata basis for part-time employees.



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Employees' entitlement to Company Sick Pay is set out in the following table.

LENGTH OF SERVICE	ENTITLEMENT
Less than six months	5 days full pay
Six months to one year	10 days' full pay,
One year to three years	20 days' full pay, & then 20 days half pay
Three years to six years	40 days' full pay, & then 40 days half pay
Six years and over	60 days full pay & then 60 days half pay

The length of the employee's qualifying service will be calculated from the employee's first day of absence.

The following section sets out the rules which apply to the Contractual Sick Pay Scheme.

There is no entitlement to Contractual Sick Pay in the following circumstances:

- if you are involved in disciplinary proceedings under the Company's disciplinary rules and procedures
- if your injury or illness is self induced, or where you act or behave in a manner which prejudices your recovery
- if you are serving a period of notice to terminate your employment, whether that notice is issued by the Company or you
- if you fail to fully comply with the absence notification rules and procedures, as set out from time to time within this Employee Handbook

The Company reserves the right to make discretionary Contractual Sick Pay payments to employees who are excluded under the above conditions.

You should note that this is not an entitlement to additional holiday or paid time off for any reason other than genuine incapacity through illness or injury.

If TACT considers there is a potential case to answer in relation to the misuse of this sick pay policy, then such cases would be dealt with under TACT's Disciplinary Procedures.

The rules of the Contractual Sick Pay Scheme do not imply that termination of your employment may not take place before the payment of Contractual Sick Pay has been exhausted.

It is expected that you claim any Social Security sickness benefits to which you may be entitled. You must notify the Company of all such payments, which the Company will deduct from any amounts of Contractual Sick Pay otherwise payable.



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During a period of sickness or injury, TACT would not expect any member of staff to engage in sports, hobbies or social activities inconsistent with the alleged illness or injury or which could aggravate it and delay recovery.

The Company reserves the right to request you, at your sole cost and expense, to produce a fit note at any stage in relation to your injury or illness. The Company may withhold any Contractual Sick Pay otherwise due in the event that you fail to produce a valid fit note in relation to any period of absence due to sickness or injury.

Medical Examination

An employee may be required to submit to a medical examination by an independent medical consultant (nominated by TACT and at TACT's expense) if more than 20 days sickness absence has occurred in any one year period from date of last period of sickness. Such employees will give their written consent to TACT for the nominated medical adviser to carry out such a medical examination. This permission by the employee will also extend to the employee's own G.P. being written to for a report on their fitness for work. That report will be sent to TACT's HR Director who will disclose to the line manager any relevant details regarding their fitness for work. All medical information concerning any employee will be kept confidential and will only be divulged to individuals who need to know. Such individuals will include the Human Resources Manager, Line Manager and Chief Executive only if the medical advisor is advising that the worker is unfit for work.

Procedure

You must comply with the Company's Absence Procedure, which is outlined in this Employee Handbook.

Please see the Absence Form [HERE](#).

GROUP INCOME PROTECTION SCHEME

Who is eligible to join?

TACT's Group Income Protection Scheme is available to all full-time and part-time employees aged 16 or above who join the company 13 weeks prior to their State Pension Age, once they have completed two years service and subject to satisfying the terms and conditions of the policy.

What is Group Income Protection Insurance?

It is a benefit which provides you with an income after 13 weeks' continued absence from work due to illness or injury, subject to acceptance of your claim. This income will be equivalent to 75% of basic salary (including London Weighting where applicable) less a flat amount of £5,300, subject to a maximum benefit of £350,000 per annum.

The above is in line with your contractual entitlement to Statutory Sick Pay

The scheme is currently insured with UNUM.

How do employees join?

Generally, you will be entered into the Scheme automatically on completing two years service, provided you have satisfied the eligibility criteria and Scheme Rules.

However, please note that a 'Free Cover Limit' applies to the Scheme (currently £120,000). If your benefit exceeds this limit (or a lower limit if previously agreed) you will need to complete an application form and, possibly, undergo a medical examination before benefits in excess of the Free Cover Limit can be considered. You will be advised if this applies to you.

How are claims treated?

Benefits would be paid to your Employer and passed to you via the Employer's payroll system. Therefore, benefits are subject to tax and National Insurance deductions in the normal manner. Payments will be made monthly in arrears.

The payment of benefit is subject to the insurer accepting the claim. Income Protection claims are not accepted automatically. If you need to make a claim, the insurer will request medical information to support your claim or may require you to undertake an independent medical examination or functional capacity assessment before deciding whether to accept your claim.

If you do not satisfy the contract's definition of disability, your claim could be declined. If your claim is accepted, it will be reviewed on a regular basis by the insurer.

For how long will a claim be paid?

The income during a qualifying claim will be paid for a maximum of 24 monthly payments or until you are able to return to work, until you chose to retire or until your death - whichever occurs first.

What happens if an employee returns to work on a reduced salary?

In the event of your partial recovery and return to work on a gradual basis, which may involve reduced hours, consideration will be given by the insurer to continuing payments at a reduced level.

Are pension contributions covered by the Scheme?

Yes, subject to your claim being accepted.

For members of TACT's Scottish Widows Group Stakeholder Plan, Employer and Employee pension contributions are both covered for the period of a claim, based on the level of pension payments being made as at the April prior to the claim (limited to 10% of salary).

If you do not resume pension contributions after the limited payment period ceases, following a qualifying claim, this will almost certainly result in lower pension benefits at retirement.

Does the benefit received by a claimant increase each year?

No. Any qualifying benefit will not increase during a claim.

What are the tax implications?

The Scheme benefits are subject to Income Tax and National Insurance which will be deducted at source by your Employer. You are not liable for tax on the insurance premiums paid on your behalf by your Employer.

When does cover cease?

Cover ceases when you:

- leave TACT's employment
- reach State Pension Age
- no longer meet the eligibility conditions
- die
- do not return to active employment following a period of temporary absence (that is not due to illness or injury)
- carry out any work without the insurers prior agreement while incapacitated



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- reach the end of the limited benefit payment period (if you later return to work, you will be eligible for cover once you have been actively at work for at least 4 weeks) .

Cover would also cease if your Employer decides to change their Group Income Protection Scheme provider and the new provider is not prepared to offer equivalent terms, or if the scheme is withdrawn.

Additional information

- “ All benefits are subject to the maximum insurable benefit as defined in the Scheme’s Terms and Conditions, which will prevail in all instances.
- “ Any benefit received from income protection policies which you may have in your own name (sometimes called ‘Permanent Health Insurance’) will be taken into account if you make a successful claim.



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MATERNITY AND ADOPTION LEAVE

What this policy covers

This policy outlines your statutory rights and responsibilities when you are pregnant, give birth or adopt a child. It also outlines the arrangements and notification requirements before, during and after a period of Maternity or Adoption Leave, your statutory entitlements to pay during your leave and your right to return to work following Maternity or Adoption Leave.

This policy also covers associated issues such as holidays.

Entitlements and procedures that apply to Shared Parental Leave are contained in a separate policy in this Handbook.

Your entitlements

Time off for antenatal care

If you are pregnant, you have the right to take reasonable time off work, with pay, during your working hours to receive antenatal care, regardless of your length of service. This includes relaxation and/or parent craft classes, when this has been recommended on medical grounds by your registered medical practitioner or registered midwife. Written evidence of this will be required.

The Company requires you to give reasonable notice when making a request to take time off for scheduled antenatal appointments. Prior to time off being authorised, you will also be required to provide a copy of your appointment card and/or medical certificate confirming your pregnancy, with the exception of your first appointment.

Time off for adoption appointments

If you intend to adopt a child, you are entitled to time off to attend adoption appointments. Adoption appointments refer to those which take place after you are notified that a child is to be placed with you for adoption or for a fostering for adoption placement and before the placement occurs.

The amount of time off (and any entitlement to pay) depends on whether you have elected to be the main adopter or are the partner of the main adopter. No request for time off will be unreasonably refused.

If you are the main adopter, you are entitled to time off to attend adoption appointments on up to five occasions. The maximum time off which can be taken on each occasion is six and a half hours. Time off will be paid at your normal rate of pay.

If you are the partner of the main adopter, you are entitled to time off to attend up to two adoption appointments. The maximum time off which can be taken on each occasion is six and a half hours. Time off is unpaid.



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Different types of leave available

If you are pregnant or you have recently given birth, you are entitled to Maternity Leave.

If you adopt a child, either you or your partner will be entitled to Adoption Leave. Adoption leave can be taken by either partner adopting a child jointly, regardless of your gender. To obtain the benefit of these rights, you must comply with the qualifying conditions that are outlined below.

Where you meet the eligibility criteria, you are entitled to 52 weeks' Maternity or Adoption Leave, in order to care for a new baby or a newly adopted child who is up to 18 years of age.

Maternity and Adoption Leave is made up of 26 weeks' Ordinary Leave, followed by 26 weeks' Additional Leave. Additional Maternity Leave (AML) or Additional Adoption Leave (AAL) follows immediately after the end of your Ordinary Leave. There can be no gap between the two types of leave.

New mothers and adoptive parents have the right to transfer all, or part, of their AML or AAL entitlement to the other parent or to share Parental Leave. Further details can be found in the Paternity Leave and Shared Parental Leave policies (outlined elsewhere in the Employee Handbook).

Compulsory Maternity Leave

When you give birth, you are legally compelled to take a minimum of two weeks' Maternity Leave immediately after giving birth. For health and safety reasons, new mothers who work in a factory have a longer minimum period of four weeks.

Benefits during Maternity or Adoption Leave

During Maternity or Adoption Leave, you are entitled to receive all your normal contractual benefits, including annual holiday entitlement, with the exception of your normal pay.

Statutory Maternity and Adoption Pay (SMP/SAP)

SMP and SAP are payable for up to 39 weeks.

The first six weeks are payable at the higher rate, which is the equivalent of 90% of your normal earnings. For SMP your normal earnings are calculated based on the eight-week period before the Qualifying Week, i.e. the 15th week before your expected week of childbirth. For SAP your normal earnings are calculated over the eight-week period ending with the week in which you are notified of having been matched with the child for adoption. The remaining 33 weeks are payable at a standard rate for the relevant tax year and can change each year.

If your earnings are below the standard rate set by the Government, you will be paid at the equivalent of 90% of your average earnings in the eight-week period before the Qualifying Week or the date the child is matched.



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If you do not qualify for SMP or SAP, you may be entitled to claim for an allowance of financial support by contacting your local benefits office.

Qualifying for SMP and SAP

To qualify for SMP or SAP you must:

- have average weekly earnings equal to or above the Lower Earnings Limit for National Insurance purposes during the eight-week period up to and including the Qualifying Week or the date you are matched with a child
- have been continuously employed for at least 26 weeks, ending with the 15th week before your expected week of childbirth (the 'Qualifying Week') or the date you are informed by the approved adoption agency, or the central authority, that you have been matched with a child
- (if you are pregnant) still be pregnant at the 11th week before your expected week of childbirth or have had the child by that time
- give the Company at least 28 days' notice (or, if that is not possible, as much notice as is reasonably practicable) of the day you would like your SMP or SAP to start
- provide the Company with the appropriate medical certification of your expected week of childbirth, normally using the medical certificate MAT B1, or provide a written declaration that you have chosen to receive SAP rather than Statutory Maternity Pay.



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Company Maternity and Adoption Pay

- Employees who have been continuously employed for one year ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (the “Qualifying Week”), or the date they are informed by the approved adoption agency, or the central authority, that they have been matched with a child and who satisfy the conditions required for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) or Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) will receive:

90% of average normal weekly pay for the first eight weeks then eight weeks at half pay and thereafter 23 weeks at the statutory standard rate.

- Employees who have been continuously employed for two years ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (the “Qualifying Week”), or the date they are informed by the approved adoption agency, or the central authority, that they have been matched with a child and who satisfy the conditions required for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) or Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) will receive:

100% of average weekly pay for the first eight weeks then 31 weeks at half pay.

- Employees who have been continuously employed for three years ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (the “Qualifying Week”), or the date they are informed by the approved adoption agency, or the central authority, that they have been matched with a child and who satisfy the conditions required for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) or Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) will receive:

100% of average weekly pay for the first 16 weeks and then 23 weeks at half pay.

Returning to work after Maternity or Adoption Leave

You do not need to give notice of your return to work if you simply return at the end of your Maternity or Adoption Leave period.

If you wish to return to work before the full entitlement of your Maternity or Adoption Leave has ended, or change your mind about the intended date of return to work, you must give the Company a minimum of eight weeks' notice of the intended date of your return.

In the event that you fail to give the required eight weeks' notice of an earlier date of return, the Company may postpone your return until the end of the eight weeks' notice you should have given, or until the end of the Maternity or Adoption Leave period, whichever is earlier.

You are entitled to return to your original job at the end of Ordinary Maternity or Adoption Leave. Where you take Additional Maternity or Adoption Leave, you are also entitled to return to your original job at the end of the Additional Leave. However, if this is not reasonably practicable, you will be offered a similar role on no less favourable terms and conditions.



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You will not lose the right to return to work if you do not follow the correct notification procedures. However, the Company may take appropriate disciplinary action if you fail to return to work at the end of the Maternity or Adoption Leave period.

In the event that you are unable to return to work at the end of the Maternity or Adoption Leave due to ill health, the Company's normal sickness absence rules, procedures and payments will apply.

Holiday entitlement and Maternity or Adoption Leave

Annual holiday entitlement will continue to accrue during the whole of your Maternity or Adoption Leave. You must discuss and agree with the Company, in advance, when your accrued holiday entitlement can be taken.

Holiday entitlement cannot be taken simultaneously with Maternity or Adoption Leave. Accrued holiday can only be taken either before the beginning of the Leave or after the end of the Leave. Authorisation must be obtained from the Company in the normal way prior to your accrued holiday being taken.

Contact during Maternity or Adoption Leave

The Company may make reasonable contact with you during your Maternity or Adoption Leave. In addition, you may attend work during your Maternity or Adoption Leave, for a limited period, without affecting your Maternity or Adoption Leave. These days are referred to as Keeping in Touch days (see below).

Keeping in Touch (KIT) days

During your Maternity or Adoption Leave, you may work up to 10 days for the Company, during your Leave, without losing your right to your Maternity or Adoption Leave pay.

Any days worked will be paid at your normal rate of pay, and any SMP or SAP will be taken into account for these purposes.

Neither you nor the Company is under any obligation to agree to work or provide work for KIT days.

Procedures

Notification procedures for Maternity Leave

If you are pregnant and give birth to a child, you are entitled to take Maternity Leave. To be eligible, you must comply with the rules and procedures set out below:

- no later than the end of the 15th week before the week your child is due, you must give the Company notice of:
 - the fact that you are pregnant and the date on which you intend to start your Maternity Leave
 - the expected week of childbirth, which must be confirmed by providing the medical certificate MAT B1
- within 28 calendar days of you giving notice, the Company will respond in writing, to confirm the date on which your Maternity Leave will end. This will normally be 52 weeks from the start of your Maternity Leave
- the earliest you may start your Maternity Leave is 11 weeks before your expected week of childbirth.

However, Maternity Leave will start automatically if you give birth before this date

Your Maternity Leave will automatically start if you are absent from work for a pregnancy-related illness during the four weeks before your expected week of childbirth.

Changing the start of your Maternity Leave

You may change your mind about when you want to start your Maternity Leave, as long as you notify the Company, in writing, of your new start date. You must give the Company the relevant notice by whichever date is the earlier of the following notice periods:

- 28 days before the date on which you originally intended to start your leave

Or

- 28 days before the new date on which you want to start your leave

Notification procedures for Adoption Leave

If you adopt a child, you are entitled to Adoption Leave. This right applies to both men and women.

The partner of an individual who adopts, or the other partner of a couple adopting a child jointly, may also be entitled to Paternity Leave and Statutory Paternity Pay.

If you are part of a couple that adopts a child, you can choose which partner will take Adoption Leave and which will take Paternity Leave. Either partner can choose the type of leave that applies to them.



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To qualify for Adoption Leave, you must:

- be newly matched with a child for adoption by an approved adoption agency (this includes placement of a child with local authority foster parents who are prospective adopters under the fostering for adoption scheme)
- have notified the agency that you agree that the child should be placed with you and have agreed the date of placement
- notify the Company of when you want to take Adoption Leave no more than seven calendar days after being notified that you have been matched with a child
- in the case of surrogacy adoption leave, be in receipt of, or in the process of applying for, a parental order.

You should also give the Company the matching certificate from the approved adoption agency as evidence of your entitlement to Adoption Leave. Only one period of Adoption Leave will be available, irrespective of whether you have more than one child placed with you for adoption as part of the same arrangement.

Within 28 calendar days of you giving notice, the Company will respond in writing to you, confirming the date when your Adoption Leave will end. This will normally be 52 weeks from the start of the Adoption Leave.

You may choose to start your Adoption Leave either from;

- the date of the child's placement

Or

- a fixed date, which can be up to 14 calendar days before the expected date of the child's placement

Changing the start of your Adoption Leave

You may change your mind about when you want to start Adoption Leave, as long as you notify the Company, in writing, of your new start date. You must give the Company the relevant notice by whichever date is the earlier of the following notice periods;

- 28 days before the date you originally intended to start your leave or
- 28 days before the new date you want to start your leave

Overseas adoption

If you are adopting a child from overseas, you must have received official notification that the adoption has been approved by the central authority and give the Company notice, in writing, at each of the three notification stages.

The Company will require copies of official notification as evidence of the child arriving in the UK and to support your request to take Adoption Leave.

The procedures for overseas adoption are determined by the central authority and are thorough. In the first instance, you should discuss your intention to take Adoption Leave within 28 days of the date on which you received the official notification.



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PARENTAL BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

What this policy covers

This policy applies to employees. However, Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay may be available to both employees and workers.

This policy outlines your statutory right to Parental Bereavement Leave and the qualifying conditions for Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay and the procedure that you need to follow when requesting Parental Bereavement Leave. It also provides information relating to your contractual rights and your right to return to work following Parental Bereavement Leave.

The following sections provide only a general guide; further guidance and clarification must be sought from Management.

Your entitlements and responsibilities

You can take up to two weeks' Parental Bereavement Leave in the 56 weeks following the death of a child aged under 18 of which you are a parent or partner of a parent.

Leave may be taken as a single unit of two weeks, or as two units of one week each.

Qualifying conditions for Parental Bereavement Leave

In order to qualify for Parental Bereavement Leave you must:

- be a "parent" of the child or be the partner of such a person. "Parent" is defined widely and includes adoptive parents and kinship carers.
- confirm the requested leave is parental bereavement leave.

If you are eligible you are entitled to take up to two weeks' paid parental bereavement leave.

Parental bereavement leave must be taken in units of either one whole week or two consecutive whole weeks. Leave may start on any day of the week, on or following the child's death, but must be completed within 56 weeks of the date of death of the child.

Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave Pay

Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave Pay is paid at a statutory rate, or 90% of weekly earnings, whichever is the lower amount.

In order to qualify for Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave Pay you must:

- have worked continuously for the Company for 26 weeks up to the end of the week prior to the child's death (the "relevant week")
- have average weekly earnings equal to or above the Lower Earnings Limit for National Insurance purposes over the eight week period leading up to the end of the relevant week.

Contractual benefits during your Parental Bereavement Leave

You are entitled to your normal terms and conditions of employment, with the exception of pay, whilst on Parental Bereavement Leave.

Right to return to work following Parental Bereavement Leave

You are normally entitled to return to the same job following your Parental Bereavement Leave.

If your Parental Bereavement Leave immediately follows a period of Additional Maternity Leave, Shared Parental Leave or Parental Leave of more than four consecutive weeks you are also entitled to return to your original job at the end of the Parental Bereavement Leave. However, if this is not reasonably practicable, you will be offered a similar role on no less favourable terms and conditions.

Contact during Parental Bereavement Leave

The Company may make reasonable contact with you during your Parental Bereavement Leave.

Procedure

Requesting Parental Bereavement Leave

The Company understands that, due to the nature of the circumstances giving rise to Parental Bereavement Leave, it will not always be possible to give the Company advance notice of any leave, but you should let the Company know as soon as you can.

You must give the Company notice of your intention to take Parental Bereavement Leave, stating:

- the date of the child's death
- the date on which the leave is to begin
- whether you intend to take one or two weeks' leave

You do not have to do this in writing, but you will need to give the Company sufficient information for us to understand that your time off falls under the Parental Bereavement Leave provision. We would suggest following other absence guidance in contacting your line manager in the first instance. If they are not available then you can contact HR.

If notice to take Parental Bereavement Leave is being given within the first 56 days after your child's death, this should be given before your scheduled start time on the first day of absence or, if this is not reasonably practicable, notice should be given as soon as reasonably practicable.



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If you wish to take Parental Bereavement Leave later than 56 days after your child's death, you must give at least one week's notice.

Taking Parental Bereavement Leave

Leave may start on any day of the week on or following the child's death. Your leave must be completed within 56 weeks of the date of death of the child.

Claiming Parental Bereavement Leave Pay

Although you do not need to give notice in writing to request Parental Bereavement Leave, if you wish to claim Parental Bereavement Leave Pay (subject to the qualifying conditions), you must provide the Company with the following information in writing:

- the date of your child's death;
- a declaration that you meet the qualifying conditions (i.e. that you are the parent of the child).

Returning to work after your Parental Bereavement Leave

You are normally entitled to return to work following Parental Bereavement Leave to the same position you held before commencing your leave. Your terms of employment will continue to be the same as they would have been had you not been on Parental Bereavement Leave.

If your Parental Bereavement Leave has been combined with a period of Additional Maternity Leave or Shared Parental Leave totalling more than 26 weeks or a period of Parental Leave of more than four consecutive weeks, and it is not reasonably practicable for you to return to the job you held before commencing leave, the Company will offer you a suitable and appropriate alternative position.

Breach of this policy

If you take a period of Parental Bereavement Leave fraudulently, you may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

PATERNITY LEAVE AND PATERNITY PAY

What this policy covers

This policy outlines the different types of Paternity Leave, the qualifying conditions and the procedures that you need to follow when requesting Paternity Leave. It also provides information relating to your contractual rights and your right to return to work following Paternity Leave.

The following sections provide only a general guide; further guidance and clarification must be sought from Management.

Your entitlements and responsibilities

Paternity Leave

You can take Paternity Leave in relation to the birth or adoption of a child. If you are the partner of an individual who adopts, or you are the other member of a couple who is adopting jointly, you may be entitled to Paternity Leave.

If you have adopted the child, you can choose who will take the Adoption Leave and who will take the Paternity Leave. Only one period of Maternity or Adoption Leave and one period of Paternity Leave may be taken between the couple even if your partner works for a different company.

Further details of Adoption Leave entitlement are set out in the Maternity and Adoption Policy (outlined elsewhere in the Employee Handbook).

Different types of Paternity Leave available

If you meet the qualifying conditions detailed above, you will be entitled to Ordinary Paternity Leave (OPL) and may also be entitled to Additional Paternity Leave (APL).

Ordinary Paternity Leave

In order to qualify for Ordinary Paternity Leave (OPL) you must:

- have worked continuously for the Company for 26 weeks leading into the 15th week before the child is due; or by the week in which an approved adoption agency matches you with the child (the notification week)
- be the biological father of the child or the mother's husband or partner (male or female) or have, or expect to have, responsibility for the child's upbringing
- confirm the requested leave is intended for the purpose of caring for the child, or to support the child's mother or adoptive parent in caring for the child.



Employers may ask an employee to provide a self certificate as evidence that he or she meets these conditions. The self-certificate must provide the information required above and include a declaration that the employee meets the necessary conditions. You can refer to the HMRC form SC3 "Ordinary Statutory Paternity Pay/Ordinary Paternity Leave – becoming a parent

Eligible employees are entitled to take up to two weeks' paid OPL. OPL must be taken in units of either one whole week or two consecutive whole weeks. Leave may start on any day of the week, on or following the child's birth, but must be completed:

- within 56 calendar days of the actual date of birth of the child; or
- if the child is born early, within the period from the actual date of birth up to 56 calendar days after the expected week of birth.

You may change your mind about the starting date for OPL, providing you tell the Company at least 28 calendar days in advance of the changed start date (or as soon as is reasonably practicable, if not in a position to do so within the prescribed period).

Additional Paternity Leave

If you meet the OPL qualifying conditions above, you are entitled to 26 weeks' Paternity Leave in order to care for the new baby or a newly adopted child who is under 18 years of age providing the following qualification criteria are also met:

- you remain employed by the Company until the week before the first week of your APL
- the child's mother has been entitled to Statutory Maternity Leave, pay or Maternity Allowance in respect of the pregnancy, or your co-adopter has been entitled to one or both of Statutory Adoption Leave or pay in respect of the child's adoption and
- the child's mother, or your co-adopter, has returned to work

Right to accompany a pregnant woman to antenatal appointments

You have the right to take unpaid time off during working hours to accompany a pregnant woman to antenatal appointments where you:

- are the pregnant woman's husband or civil partner, or
- live with the woman in an enduring family relationship (whether heterosexual or same-sex relationship) and are not a relative of the woman, or
- are the expected child's father, or
- are one of a same-sex couple who is to be treated as the child's other parent under the assisted reproduction provisions, or
- are the potential applicant for a parental order under surrogacy laws.

This time off is limited to:



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- no more than two occasions
- each lasting no more than six and a half hours

Ordinary Statutory Paternity Pay

Eligible employees are entitled to be paid during their OPL following the birth or placement of their child in order to care for the child or support its mother or adoptive parent.

During OPL, most employees will be entitled to Ordinary Statutory Paternity Pay (OSPP), which will be the same as the standard rate of Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP). In order to qualify for OSPP you must:

- meet the OPL qualifying conditions mentioned above and
- have average weekly earnings equal to or above the Lower Earnings Limit for National Insurance purposes over the eight week period leading up to and including, the 15th week before the child is due or, in adoption cases, the Notification Week

In addition to meeting the conditions detailed above, the Company may request you to provide a self certificate as evidence that the mother or adoptive parent meets these conditions. The self certificate must also provide the information required above and include a declaration that you meet the necessary conditions.

Additional Statutory Paternity Pay

If you are eligible for APL you may also be entitled to be paid Additional Statutory Paternity Pay (ASPP).

The rate of ASPP is either the standard rate set by the Government or 90% of your average weekly earnings, where this is lower.

To qualify for ASPP you must meet the OSPP qualifying conditions mentioned above. In addition, the child's mother or adopter must have returned to work, with at least two weeks of their Statutory Maternity Pay, Maternity Allowance or Statutory Adoption Pay remaining.

At least 20 weeks must also have elapsed since the birth or adoption of the child.

ASPP will only be paid for any period of APL taken during the maternity pay period of the mother or adoption pay period of the adopter. Once this pay period ends, any remaining period of APL will be unpaid.

In addition to meeting the conditions detailed above, in order to qualify for ASPP, the Company may request you to provide a self certificate as evidence that the mother or adoptive parent meets these conditions. The self certificate must also provide the information required above and include a declaration that you meet the necessary conditions.



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Company Paternity Pay

Employees must have one year's continuous service to qualify for Company Paternity Pay.

Company Paternity pay is:

100% of the employees average weekly pay for the first week and then 50% of average weekly pay for the second week. Where the employee has chosen to exercise his right to take both Ordinary and Additional Paternity leave, the employee will only receive Company Paternity pay for one period of leave, normally Ordinary Paternity leave unless formally requested otherwise to the HR department.

Contractual benefits during your Paternity Leave

You are entitled to enjoy your normal terms and conditions of employment, with the exception of pay, whilst on Paternity Leave. You are also entitled to return to the same job following your leave.

If the Company provides you with an enhanced contractual right to Paternity Leave or Paternity Pay you should clearly understand, that when payment of contractual paternity pay is made this is inclusive of any SPP or ASPP entitlement i.e. you are not entitled to both.

Contact during Paternity Leave

The Company may make reasonable contact with you during your Paternity Leave. In addition you may attend work during your APL, for a limited period, without affecting your Paternity Leave and paternity pay. These days are referred to as Keeping in Touch days.

Keeping in Touch days

You may work up to 10 days for the Company, during your Paternity Leave, without losing your right to your paternity pay. Any days worked will be paid at your normal rate of pay, and any SPP or ASPP will be taken into account for these purposes.

Neither you nor the Company are under any obligation to agree to work or provide work for Keeping in Touch days.

Procedure

Requesting Ordinary or Additional Paternity Leave

If you wish to take OPL you must notify the Company by the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth, stating the week the child is due, or the date of being matched with a child, whether you wish to take one week's or two weeks' continuous leave; and the date you want the leave to start.

If you wish to take APL, you must give the Company a minimum of eight weeks' notice prior to the intended start date of your leave.

The Company will consider all requests for Paternity Leave. However, you must be aware that Ordinary Paternity Leave can only be authorised to be taken immediately after the birth or the placement of the child or if later at a time to suit the needs of the business.



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Providing proof of entitlement

Where the mother or adopter of the child satisfies the conditions for Maternity or Adoption Leave, you will need to provide the following documentation:

- Mother or adopter declaration -
 - the mother or adopter must provide a written declaration stating their name and address, the date they intend to return to work after their maternity or Adoption Leave, their National Insurance number, confirmation that you are the only person exercising the entitlement to take APL in respect of the child and that they consent to the Company processing the information contained in the declaration.
- Employee declaration -
 - you must provide the Company with a written request to take Paternity Leave. You must specify the expected week of child birth, or the date of the child's birth or the date the child was matched. The request must also specify the start and end date of the intended leave and state that the purpose of the leave is to care for the child.

You will also be required to provide a copy of the child's birth certificate or the relevant documents issued by the approved adoption agency, the name and address of the adoption agency and the name and address of the mother's employer.

Taking ordinary Paternity Leave

You are permitted to take OPL in units of either one whole week or two consecutive whole weeks.

Leave may start on any day of the week on or following the child's birth or the date of matching. Your leave must be completed within 56 calendar days of the actual date of birth of the child, or the date the child was matched.

If the child is born early, leave must be taken within the period from the actual date of birth up to 56 calendar days after the expected week of birth.

Taking additional Paternity Leave

APL must be taken during the period between 20 weeks after the child's birth or placement and must end no later than 12 months after the date of birth or placement. The leave must be taken as a minimum of two weeks and up to a maximum of 26 weeks. It can only be taken in multiples of complete weeks and must be taken as one continuous period.

Changing the start of your Ordinary Paternity Leave

Where you are to take OPL in respect of a child's birth or to coincide with the day a child is placed with you, you can give written notice to vary the start date of your leave from that which you originally specified.



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At least 28 days before the Expected Week of Childbirth or the Expected Placement Date, notice should be given where you wish to:

- vary your leave to start on the day of the child's birth
- vary your leave to start a specified number of days after the child's birth or after the placement date of the child (minus the specified number of days)
- vary your leave to start on a specific date (or a different date from that you originally specified).

Changing the start or finish date of your additional Paternity Leave

Where you are eligible to take APL, you may give written notice to cancel or vary the start and/or finish dates that you previously notified to the Company.

Where you wish to change the start of your APL, you must provide at least six weeks' notice before the original start date of your APL or if you now wish to start your APL earlier, the notice you provide must be at least six weeks before the new date on which you want your APL to start.

If you are unable to give six weeks' notice, you should give the Company written notice of your request as soon as reasonably practicable. However, in these circumstances, if your request cannot be accommodated the Company may require you to take a period of APL of up to six weeks starting on either your original or revised start date.

Returning to work after your Paternity Leave

You are normally entitled to return to work following Ordinary Paternity Leave to the same position you held before commencing your leave. Your terms of employment will continue to be the same as they would have been had you not been on Paternity Leave.

If your OPL has been combined with a period of APL or a period of Parental Leave of more than four consecutive weeks, and it is not reasonably practicable for you to return to the job you held before commencing leave, the Company will offer you a suitable and appropriate alternative position.

If you are unable to return to work following a period of Paternity Leave due to sickness or injury, this will be treated as sickness absence and the normal reporting procedures will apply.

You should be aware if you do not return to work for any other reason, the Company will treat a late return as an unauthorised absence, which may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal without notice.

Breach of this policy

If you take a period of Paternity Leave under this policy for any purpose other than to care for the child, you may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

PARENTAL LEAVE

What this policy covers

The Company recognises that working parents may need to take additional unpaid leave from work to care for their children. This policy outlines the qualifying conditions and the procedure to request Parental Leave. It also sets out how and when the leave can be taken, provides information on your contractual rights and your right to return to work following Parental Leave.

If you meet the qualifying conditions set out below, you are entitled to take the relevant Statutory Parental Leave for each child. The Company will consider all requests for Parental Leave, however, you must be aware that Parental Leave can only be authorised to be taken at a time to suit the needs of the business.

Your entitlements

Qualifying conditions

In order to qualify for Parental Leave, you must have been employed by the Company for a continuous period of one year or more. You must also have responsibility for the child and you must be one of the following:

- the biological mother or father of the child
- the child's adoptive parent (male or female)
- have legal responsibility for the child, such as the child's legal guardian

You must confirm that the requested leave is intended for the purpose of spending time with or caring for the child.

Taking Parental Leave

If you meet the qualifying conditions, you are entitled to:

- a maximum of 18 weeks' unpaid Parental Leave for each of your children under the age of 18; the leave must be taken before the child's 18th birthday

You should be aware that there is a maximum of four weeks' Parental Leave that can be taken in any one year.

Parental Leave can only be taken in blocks of one complete week or more, except in the case of children with a disability, when you may take Parental Leave one day at a time.

Contractual benefits during Parental Leave

You are entitled to enjoy your normal terms and conditions of employment, with the exception of pay, while on Parental Leave.

Procedure

If you meet the qualifying conditions detailed above, you are required to give the Company a minimum of 21 calendar days' notice, in writing, of your request to take Parental Leave. The request must specify the start and end date of the intended leave and state that the purpose of the leave is to spend time with or to take care of the child.

You must confirm if you have previously taken Parental Leave, in relation to the same child, during any previous or other employment with another employer.

You are also required to provide evidence of your responsibility to the child: either a copy of the child's date of birth or adoption placement.

If you intend to take a period of Parental Leave immediately after a period of Paternity Leave, you must give the Company a minimum of 21 days' notice from the beginning of the expected week of confinement or placement.

The right to postpone Parental Leave

The Company has the right to postpone your Parental Leave for up to six months if the timing of your absence will unduly disrupt the business. However, any Parental Leave requested to take place immediately after the birth of your child, or the date of placement, will not be postponed provided that you have given 21 calendar days' notice of your intention to take Parental Leave at this time.

Returning to work after Parental Leave

You are normally entitled to return to work following Parental Leave to the same position you held before commencing your leave. Your terms of employment will remain unchanged upon your return from a period of Parental Leave.

If your Parental Leave has been combined with a period of Maternity, Adoption, Shared Parental or Paternity Leave of more than four consecutive weeks, and it is not reasonably practicable for you to return to the same position you held before commencing leave, the Company will offer you a suitable and appropriate alternative position.

Breach of this policy

If you take a period of Parental Leave under this policy for any purpose other than to spend time with or otherwise care for your child, you may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE

What this policy covers

This policy outlines the statutory right to take Shared Parental Leave (SPL) to care for a child due to be born or placed for adoption on or after 5th April 2015. It also outlines notification requirements before a period of SPL and entitlement to pay during SPL.

SPL gives employees with caring responsibilities for babies or newly adopted children the opportunity to share up to 52 weeks' leave should they wish to do so. Parents taking SPL can take leave in separate blocks, returning to work in between blocks, and both parents can be on leave at the same time. Eligible employees are entitled to submit up to three 'period of leave' notices and are entitled to take SPL on those dates if a continuous period of leave is requested.

Your entitlements

Qualifying for Shared Parental Leave

To be entitled to SPL you must:

- be the mother, father, or main adopter of the child, or the partner of the mother or main adopter (each will be referred to in this policy as a parent)
- have (or share with the other parent) the main responsibility for the care of the child
- have at least 26 weeks' continuous service at the 15th week before the expected week of birth or at the week in which the main adopter was notified of having been matched for adoption with the child (known as the 'relevant week')
- still be in continuous employment until the week before any SPL is taken.

In addition, the other parent must:

- have at least 26 weeks' employment (employed or self-employed) out of the 66 weeks prior to the relevant week
- have average weekly earnings of at least £30 during at least 13 of the 66 weeks prior to the relevant week

If the other parent meets those conditions, but does not qualify for SPL, you may be entitled to the whole SPL period.

You must also follow the statutory notification and information requirements detailed in this policy.

Amount and timing of Shared Parental Leave

SPL must be taken in weekly blocks and within a one year period beginning with the date of the baby's birth or the child's placement for adoption.

The maximum of 52 weeks' SPL will be reduced by the number of weeks' maternity or adoption leave that has already been taken by the mother or main adopter (or the number of weeks' Statutory Maternity/Adoption Pay or maternity allowance already taken if the mother or main adopter is not entitled to Statutory Maternity/Adoption Leave).



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After the birth of a child it is compulsory for the mother to take two weeks' maternity leave (four weeks for new mothers who work in a factory), so in the majority of cases working parents will have the opportunity to split 50 weeks of SPL.

SPL is in addition to the statutory right to two weeks' paternity leave for fathers and partners. If you wish to take paternity leave you must do so before you take any SPL.

Benefits during Shared Parental Leave

During SPL, you are entitled to receive all your normal contractual benefits, including annual holiday entitlement, with the exception of your normal pay.

Shared Parental Pay

In addition to the requirements regarding entitlement to leave outlined above, if you wish to claim Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) you must have average weekly earnings equal to or above the Lower Earnings Limit over the eight week period ending with the relevant week.

A maximum of 39 weeks' ShPP is payable, and this will be reduced by the number of weeks' Statutory Maternity/Adoption Pay or maternity allowance already taken by the mother or main adopter. ShPP is a standard weekly rate (or 90% of your normal weekly earnings if this is lower) which is set by government each tax year.

You must follow the statutory notification and information requirements detailed below.

Holiday entitlement and Shared Parental Leave

Annual holiday entitlement will continue to accrue during the whole of your SPL. You must discuss and agree with the Company, in advance, when your accrued holiday entitlement can be taken.

Holiday entitlement cannot be taken simultaneously with SPL. Accrued holiday can only be taken either before the beginning of the leave, after the end of the leave or in between blocks of leave. Authorisation must be obtained from the Company in the normal way prior to your accrued holiday being taken.

Contact during Shared Parental Leave

The Company may make reasonable contact with you during your SPL. In addition, you may work for up to 20 days without bringing the SPL to an end, but work during SPL will not have the effect of extending your SPL period. These days are referred to as Shared Parental Leave In Touch (SPLIT) days. If you do work, you will be paid your normal rate of pay inclusive of any ShPP entitlement. You are under no obligation to work during SPL, and the Company is under no obligation to offer work.

The 20 SPLIT days available during SPL are in addition to the 10 "Keeping in touch" days available during Maternity and Adoption Leave.

Procedure

Employees and managers should where possible have an informal discussion prior to employees giving formal notification of intention to take SPL so that statutory entitlements to other types of leave and pay can be discussed, and to ensure that plans for any discontinuous periods of leave can be considered as early as possible.

Notice of entitlement and intention to take SPL and ShPP

You must notify the Company in writing at least eight weeks before the start date of the first period of SPL. The written notice must contain the following information:

- your name and the other parent's name
- the start and end dates of the mother's or main adopter's maternity/adoption leave (or the start and end dates of the statutory maternity/adoption pay or maternity allowance period if the mother/main adopter is not entitled to statutory leave)
- the expected date of birth/placement and the actual date of birth/placement if the written notice is given after the birth/placement
- the amount of SPL and ShPP available and an indication of how much each parent intends to take (this may be varied by a subsequent written notice signed by both parents)
- an indication of the start and end dates of the periods of SPL and ShPP that you intend to take. This indication is not binding and can be amended at a later date
- a signed declaration that you meet the conditions for entitlement to SPL, that the information provided is accurate and that you will notify the Company immediately if you cease to meet the conditions for entitlement
- a signed declaration from the other parent containing:
 - their name, address and National Insurance number
 - confirmation that they meet the employment and earnings conditions
 - confirmation that, at the time of the birth, they will share the main responsibility for the care of the child
 - their consent to the amount of leave the employee intends to take
 - confirmation that they will immediately inform you if they cease to satisfy the employment and earnings conditions



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Notice of curtailment of Statutory Maternity/Adoption Leave and payments

At the same time that a notice of entitlement and intention to take SPL is submitted, the mother/main adopter must give the Company a leave and pay curtailment notice giving 8 weeks' notice of the date on which Maternity/Adoption Leave and Pay is to end (or the date on which Maternity/Adoption Pay is to end if they are not entitled to Maternity/Adoption Leave). If the mother is only entitled to maternity allowance (and not Maternity Leave) her notice of curtailment must be submitted to Jobcentre Plus. Her maternity allowance cannot be reinstated, so she is in effect giving consent for her partner to take the whole of any ShPP entitlement.

A notice of curtailment is usually binding, but may be revoked in the following circumstances:

- if it becomes apparent that neither parent is entitled to SPL or ShPP; or
- if the curtailment notice was given before the birth and is revoked up to six weeks following the birth (in this case another curtailment notice can be submitted); or
- if the other parent dies.

Notice to take a specific period of SPL and ShPP

The first period of SPL may be identified in the initial notice of entitlement and intention to take SPL. You are entitled to submit a maximum of three formal period of leave notices.

Each period of leave notice must be given at least eight weeks before the start of a period of leave, stating the dates of the leave and the dates on which ShPP will be claimed, if applicable.

If the first period of leave notice is given prior to the birth of a child, the notice may express the start date in relation to the date of birth, for example 'starting two weeks after the baby is born for a period of four weeks'.

Confirmation of SPL & ShPP

If a continuous period of leave is requested in each period of leave notice, you will be entitled to take that period of leave and this will be confirmed in writing.

If more than one period of leave is requested in a period of leave notice, the Company will seek to accommodate the request but this cannot be guaranteed. Your manager will discuss the request with you to determine if it can be accommodated. If it cannot be accommodated, there may be an alternative pattern of leave which can be agreed, or the request may be refused. The Company's decision will be confirmed in writing.

If no agreement is reached within 14 calendar days of the period of leave notice being submitted you can:



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- take the discontinuous periods of leave requested in one continuous block, beginning on the original start date; or
- withdraw the request within 15 calendar days of the request being submitted. If the request is withdrawn in these circumstances it will not count as one of your three requests; or
- take the continuous block starting on a new date, as long as the new date is later than the original start date, and you notify the Company of the new date within 19 calendar days.

Varying a period of leave

If you wish to vary your period of SPL, you are entitled to submit a request to:

- vary the start date as long as the variation is requested at least eight weeks before the original start date and the new start date; or
- vary or cancel the amount of leave requested at least eight weeks before the original start date; or
- request that a single period of leave becomes a discontinuous period of leave, or vice versa

A variation will count as one of your three periods of leave notices unless:

- it is made as a result of the child being born earlier or later than the expected week of childbirth
- the Company has requested the variation
- the Company has agreed to accept more than three period of leave notices

The usual eight week notice requirement may be modified if your child is born early and the new start date for the period of leave is the same length of time following the birth as in the original notice. In this case notice to vary the start date should be given as soon as reasonably practicable after the birth of the child.

Evidence requirements

The Company may request a copy of the child's birth certificate and the name and address of the other parent's employer.

In the case of adoption, the Company may request the name and address of the other parent's employer, along with evidence confirming the following:

- the name and address of the adoption agency
- the date that the main adopter was notified of having been matched for adoption with the child
- the date on which the adoption agency expects to place the child

Any such request will be made by the Company within 14 days of receiving your notice of entitlement and intention to take SPL and ShPP. You must respond to the request for evidence within 14 days (or within 14 days of the birth of the child if our request was made before the child was born).

If a birth certificate has not yet been issued, you must sign a declaration stating that fact along with the date and location of the child's birth. If the other parent has no employer, this must also be declared.

Returning from Shared Parental Leave

If you wish to return early from SPL, or extend the period of your SPL, you must notify the Company at least 8 weeks before both the original end date and the new end date.

If you return to work immediately after a period of SPL which (together with any Statutory Maternity/Adoption Leave you may have taken to care for the same child) was 26 weeks or less, you will return to work in the same job that you left.

If you return to work from a period of SPL which (together with any Maternity/ Adoption Leave you may have taken to care for the same child) was more than 26 weeks you will normally be entitled to return to the job in which you were employed before your absence. If that is not reasonably practicable, you will be offered a similar role on no less favourable terms and conditions.

You will not lose the right to return to work if you do not follow the correct notification procedures. However, the Company may take appropriate disciplinary action if you fail to return to work at the end of the SPL period.

In the event that you are unable to return to work at the end of the SPL due to ill health, the Company's normal sickness absence rules, procedures and payments will apply.

TIME OFF FOR DEPENDANTS

What this policy covers

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that employees who are genuinely in need of time off in order to deal with an emergency are treated fairly and consistently while minimising the impact on the business.

You are entitled to take three days (pro rata if part time) paid time off during working hours to deal with particular situations affecting your dependants. After this employees are entitled to take unpaid time off.

This policy explains what is meant by dependant and in which circumstances paid time off can be granted and sets out the notification procedures.

There is no minimum service period for an employee to qualify for this right.

Your entitlements and responsibilities

Definition of dependant

A dependant is:

- a spouse
- a civil partner
- a child
- a parent
- a person who lives in the same household as you other than as your tenant, lodger, boarder or employee
- any person who would reasonably rely on you for assistance or who would rely on you to make arrangements for the provision of care in the event of illness or injury
- any other person who may rely on you for the provision of care or arrangements for the provision of care

What counts as time off

Reasonable time off will be granted in the following circumstances:

- to provide assistance when a dependant falls ill, gives birth or is injured or assaulted
- to make arrangements for the care of a sick or injured dependant or to make arrangements to deal with an unexpected disruption to their care provision

- in consequence of the death of a dependant
- to deal with an unexpected incident involving your child during school hours or those of another educational establishment

The right is only to deal with emergencies and to put care arrangements in place - for example, arranging to employ a temporary carer or arranging for the dependant to stay with relatives. You would not be entitled to time off under this policy for the ongoing care of the dependant.

Procedure

You must inform the Company as soon as practicable of your unavailability for work, the reason for it and how long you expect to be away from work.

You do not have to do this in writing, but you will need to give the Company sufficient information for it to be determined that your time off falls under the Time Off for Dependants provision.

You may be required to provide evidence to the Company of your need to take time off under this provision.

If you fail to inform the Company as soon as is reasonably practicable that you need time off, or if you abuse the rights under this provision, you may be subject to disciplinary proceedings, up to and including dismissal without notice.

FLEXIBLE WORKING

What this policy covers

The Company recognises that employees may be interested in reducing working hours, working from home or changing working patterns.

This policy outlines who is eligible to make a formal flexible working request, the procedure that should be followed and the issues that will be taken into account when deciding whether to agree to the request.

The Company will make every effort to accommodate requests for flexible working, provided that an employee's duties can still be carried out effectively.

Your entitlements

Eligibility for flexible working

To be eligible to make a request for flexible working, you must:

- have been employed by the Company for at least 26 weeks before the request is made
- not have made a formal request to work flexibly during the past 12 months

Procedure

Any employee considering making an application to the Company in terms of this policy has a responsibility to think carefully about their desired working pattern before making an application.

Making an application

You are only permitted to make one formal application per year; each year runs from the date when the application was made.

Applications must be made in writing and submitted to your manager. An application will be considered to have been made on the day that it was received by the Company.

For an application to be considered by the Company, you must:

- set out the date of the application, the change to working conditions that you are seeking and when you would like the change to come into effect
- explain what effect, if any, you think the proposed change would have on the Company and how any such effect might be dealt with
- state that this is a statutory request and whether a previous application has been made to the Company and, if so, when it was made

To help the Company consider the request please also provide details of the reasons for your application.



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If you fail to provide all the required information, the Company reserves the right to ask you to re-submit the application. An application may not be considered unless it is completed and submitted in full.

How your application will be considered

Unless your Manager intends to approve the request straight away, they will arrange to meet with you. The proposed changes will be considered in light of the impact on the Company financially, from a service viewpoint and in terms of the impact upon colleagues, as well as other practical considerations.

The meeting provides an opportunity to explore the desired work pattern in depth and to discuss how best it might be accommodated. It will also provide an opportunity to consider other alternative working patterns, should there be difficulties in accommodating the desired work pattern outlined in your application. You can be accompanied by a work colleague at this meeting.

If the application for flexible working is granted, it will mean a permanent change to your own terms and conditions of employment. Accordingly, it will be important that, before making an application, you give careful consideration to:

- any financial implications it might have on you in cases where the desired working pattern will involve a drop in salary
- any effects it will have on the Company and how these might be addressed.

The Company's response

Following the meeting your manager will write to you to either:

- agree to a new work pattern and confirm the date from which the contract variation shall take effect

Or

- provide clear business grounds as to why the application cannot be accepted and setting out your right to appeal.

Business reasons for which the Company may reject your request are:

- the burden of additional costs
- detrimental effect on its ability to meet customer demand
- inability to reorganise work among existing employees
- inability to recruit additional employees
- detrimental impact on quality
- detrimental impact on performance
- insufficiency of work during the periods that you propose to work
- planned changes



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There may also be occasions on which the Company will need further time to consider an application or to put in place other arrangements before notifying you of the final decision. Accordingly, all time periods can be extended by agreement.

Appealing if your application is refused

If you wish to appeal against a decision, you must submit your request in writing to the individual identified in the letter confirming the outcome, no later than the end of the fifth working day after you have been notified in writing of the decision.

You will be informed of the date and time of the subsequent appeal. If you cannot attend on this day, you must contact the person named on the invitation letter to inform them of this fact. You can be accompanied by a work colleague.

After the appeal meeting, the Company shall write to you notifying you of the decision reached. This decision will be final and you will not be permitted to make another formal application until 12 months after the date of your original application.

The law requires that all requests, including any appeals, must be considered and decided on within a period of three months from first receipt.

Please see Flexible Working Application form [HERE](#)

LOYALTY AWARDS

TACT values the commitment, experience and loyalty from those that have worked and made their career within the organisation.

In recognition of this and to encourage employee loyalty, TACT will provide an employee with the following award dependent on their length of continuous service.

The awards will be allocated as follows:

10 years	£500
15 years	£500
20 years	£500
25 years	£500
30 years	£500 and thereafter £500 for every 5 years service

The above amounts will be paid regardless of whether an employee is full or part time.

It will be the responsibility of the HR department to generate a letter on behalf of the organisation 6 weeks before the employee is due to receive their award and the award will be paid via the payroll subject to Tax and National Insurance deductions.



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PUBLIC TRANSPORT SEASON TICKET LOAN POLICY

To help members of staff pay for their travel to work, they can apply for an interest-free loan. Employees on contracts of employment of one year or more will be eligible, subject to passing TACT's six months probationary period, to apply for a season ticket loan.

All loans are advanced for the specific purpose of purchasing an annual season ticket for travel to work and back. A loan will only be granted if the duration of the ticket does not exceed the amount of time the applicant has left in TACT's employment. The loan may also cover the cost of purchasing a season ticket for bridge, tunnel and road tolls.

How to make an application

The member of staff seeking the loan should request a Season Ticket Loan Application Form from the Human Resources Department. The applicant should then obtain their line manager's approval to the loan by asking them to sign the form.

The total cost of the ticket required should be sought before an application is made and stated clearly in the space provided on the application form. Applicants should ask at the office where the ticket is purchased to whom the cheque should be made payable so that an acceptable cheque may be written.

Once authorised, the completed form should be sent to the Human Resources Department for processing.

Timescale for applications

Employees wishing to apply for a season ticket loan must make their application at least 28 days before the loan is required to ensure it is processed in time. Re-payments will start in the month following that in which the cheque was issued.

How the application is processed

The Human Resources Department will requisition a cheque from the Finance Department.

The applicant will then receive a cheque for the requested amount from TACT to pay for their ticket.

Liability

Once the ticket has been purchased, the normal conditions that transport authorities attach to season tickets will then apply. TACT does not accept any liability for any loss of tickets or restriction of use owing to sickness or transportation strikes. Any refunds should be sought from the station at which the ticket was purchased and will be dependant on the issuing organisation's policy.

Repayment of the loan

Repayment of the loan will be made over the period for which the ticket exists (e.g. annual season ticket loans will be paid off by the applicant in 11 equal monthly amounts).



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Repayment of outstanding balance

If a borrower under this scheme resigns or their employment is terminated during the duration of the loan, the outstanding balance falls due immediately and, if not recovered from any other source, will be deducted from the final salary due to the borrower.



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EYECARE

The Health & Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 state that users of VDUs are entitled to regular eye examinations paid for by their employer.

TACT will reimburse you for an eye test to ensure you receive your legal entitlement.

Eye Examination

TACT will reimburse staff, via the Concur expenses system, up to the value of £20 for an eye test.

Recommendation

The optician will record the results of your eye examination. The results determine whether you require and are eligible for a pair of basic lens spectacles specifically for VDU use. If you do need spectacles for VDU use, proof of this will be required.

Spectacles

Once you receive confirmation by way of letter/compliment slip from the optician that you need your spectacles for VDU use, please upload this confirmation as a receipt to Concur (TACT internal expenses system) and claim £55.00 which is paid by TACT as a contribution towards your spectacles.

The legislation does not cover tinted lenses or other extras. You can make your own contribution and purchase frames and lenses of your choice.

Any questions regarding the Eyecare Scheme should be directed to the HR Department.

CHILDCARE VOUCHER SCHEME

This policy is only applicable to employees who joined the scheme prior to October 2018. For new employees please refer to the government tax free childcare scheme - <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/tax-free-childcare>

1. Policy Statement

TACT is committed to helping employees achieve an effective work-life balance. TACT supports Childcare Vouchers as an effective way of helping working parents to pay for childcare.

2. Who does this procedure apply to?

The procedure applies to all TACT employees.

A qualifying child is defined as:

- a child or stepchild of the employee who is maintained (wholly or partly) at the employee's expense; or
- resident with the employee, or a person in respect of whom the employee has parental responsibility (with regard to all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority that by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and the property of the child)

Information required from employees:

To make sure employees qualify for the Childcare Voucher Scheme they must provide evidence of the following to TACT:

- the relationship to the child
- the child's date of birth
- the child's disability status (if applicable)
- the childcarer's registration or approval number
- the date the childcare approval is due to expire

Employees must ensure that they notify the Company of any changes in the registration or approval status of their childcarer.

3. What are the principles?

TACT will offer employees the opportunity to purchase Childcare Vouchers using a salary sacrifice scheme. Salary sacrifice means that an employee formally agrees to a reduction in their salary and instead receives that amount of salary in childcare vouchers.



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4. What is the law?

Childcare Vouchers are regulated by the Inland Revenue. The arrangements for the scheme will vary in accordance with changes to Inland Revenue regulations.

5. How can Childcare Vouchers be used?

The employee can use Vouchers to pay for the type of childcare they choose for their child. However, the childcare selected must be legally registered or approved form of childcare. This includes:

- Nurseries;
- Nannies/Nanny share;
- Crèche;
- Playgroups;
- Registered Childminders;
- Out of School Schemes;
- After School Clubs;
- Holiday Play Schemes.

To benefit from the Tax and National Insurance exemption a chosen child care provider must hold either a current registration certificate with a URN reference number or an approval certificate with an expiry date and reference number.

The Voucher cannot be used to pay a spouse, partner or relative to care for the child. Employees who are grandparents, for example, cannot apply for Vouchers to pay for their grandchildren.

Vouchers can be used to pay for childcare up until the child's 15th birthday. For children with disabilities it is up until their 16th birthday.

The carer used by the employee can accept Childcare Vouchers if they are registered with one of the following bodies:

- Ofsted in England
- The Care Commission in Scotland
- Care and Social Services Inspectorate in Wales
- The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) in England

Computershare Voucher Services will need to see a photocopy of an employee's carer's registration certificate in order to let them redeem Childcare Vouchers with Computershare Voucher Services.

6. How do Childcare Vouchers work?

TACT operates the Childcare Vouchers Scheme through a Voucher management company

called Computershare Voucher Services.

The scheme is a Salary Sacrifice scheme which means an amount equivalent to the Childcare Vouchers will be deducted from the employees' salary on a monthly basis. Employees must therefore decide on the amount of vouchers that they will need each month. Employees will make a saving on childcare costs as the first £55 per week, or £243 of vouchers each month, will be free from both Tax and National Insurance contributions.

Savings will vary depending on employees' earnings, costs of childcare and the type of NICs paid. For further information and to calculate how much can be saved by electing to receive vouchers visit www.computersharevoucherservices.com or call their Customer Services Team on 0845 002 1111.

The amount will remain the same for one year, unless varied in accordance with the arrangements below.

If the employee has children in part time care, for example school holiday care, s/he will need to budget over the course of the year so that they have saved enough Vouchers to pay for holiday care by the time holidays arrive.

Employees can purchase Vouchers for more than one child, and more than one childcare provider as long as the amount purchased does not exceed the maximum level.

7. Can the amount of Vouchers received be varied?

Employees can change the amount of Vouchers received once per year on the anniversary of their application. It will not be possible to alter Voucher requirements on a monthly basis other than in circumstances detailed below at TACT's discretion.

It is therefore important for the employee to think about how much they would need when they apply.

TACT will allow employees to change their requirements if they experience a major lifestyle change. Examples include: if a parent becomes pregnant, is absent from work on a long-term basis or a partner is made redundant, or if an employee moves to part time hours. The employee should the contact the HR Department in these circumstances to discuss whether they are able to change requirements.

If the employee overestimates how much they will need and have Vouchers that they will not use, they can claim a refund once a year on the anniversary of their application or if they leave TACT's employment. To do this they should contact the HR Department. However, they will have to pay the National Insurance saving and the tax saving back. Employees can leave the scheme at any time by notifying the HR Department.

8. Salary Sacrifice Scheme – key considerations

Tax Credits

Entitlement to the childcare element of Working Tax Credit, which provides specific support related to childcare costs, will in most cases be affected. Employees in this situation should explore possible entitlement to tax credits first before considering Vouchers as it is possible that there is a greater benefit in tax credits than in Voucher saving. It is possible to claim tax credits in addition to Vouchers but with the important consideration that any childcare costs met by Childcare Vouchers are not eligible for tax credits. For more information on Tax Credits go to www.taxcredits.inlandrevenue.gov.uk or call 0845 3003900.

Student Loan repayment

Salary sacrifice may have an effect on student loan repayments. These are only activated above a set amount of earnings and if the earnings are lowered the repayment may not need to be made. For more information go to www.slc.co.uk or call 0845 300 50 90.

Pension

Employees' pensionable pay will not be reduced by receiving Childcare Vouchers as it will be calculated using the employee's 'notional' salary (this is the full salary value before deduction for Childcare Vouchers).

Occupational and Statutory Benefits

Childcare Vouchers can have an impact on occupational and statutory benefits such as maternity, sickness and redundancy.

Where these benefits are paid by TACT, such as Company and Statutory Maternity Pay, Sick Pay and Redundancy Pay, the entitlement to the payment will be calculated using the employee's 'notional' salary (this is the full salary value before deduction for Childcare Vouchers). Employees can therefore continue to take Childcare Vouchers, only opting out of the Scheme when their pay falls to a level where there is no financial advantage in taking Vouchers.

However, where benefit is not paid by TACT, such as Maternity Allowance or Sickness Benefit, these benefits could be adversely affected.

9. How much of salary can be taken in Vouchers?

An employee may take up to £55 per week (£243 per month) of their salary in Vouchers. However, it is a requirement that they are still earning the National Minimum Wage in cash after they have taken their Vouchers. The amount requested cannot exceed 35% of your salary.

10. How does an employee apply for Childcare Vouchers?

To apply for Childcare Vouchers, an employee will need to register on line with Computershare Voucher Services www.computersharevoucherservices.com

In order for a Childcare Voucher Scheme to be effective, an employee's contractual right to cash remuneration must be reduced. An employee's contract of employment must be effectively varied to reflect that an employee is sacrificing some of their pay and receiving a non-cash benefit. An employee will, therefore, be required to sign a Salary Sacrifice Agreement to acknowledge the variation to their contract of employment.

11. How does an employee initiate payments to their chosen carer?

When registering online with Computershare Voucher Services, the default method to pay a carer will be e-vouchers. An alternative method of payment is by Standing Carer Payment.

12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Human Resources Department when the Inland Revenue regulations change and/or every 3 years whichever is the sooner.

COMPRESSED HOURS POLICY

Background

TACT is committed to offering flexible, modern employment practices which recognise that staff require a sensible balance between their home and work life. As part of its commitment to improving the working lives of its staff we recognise the need to support flexible working wherever they can be reasonably accommodated, understanding that these can benefit both the organisation and its staff in a range of ways.

The aim of this policy is to provide clear and consistent guidance on the working of 9 day fortnight as one option for flexible working.

This procedure should be read in conjunction with other flexible working policies.

Staff members working compressed hours are required to follow the rules set out in this document. Staff should understand that the abuse of the policy is seen as a very serious matter. In such circumstances the disciplinary procedure may be invoked which may result in the ending of this working arrangement and/or disciplinary action.

Managers of staff who work compressed hours must give a copy of this procedure to the individual at the start of the agreement to this working pattern.

Before a member of staff commences working compressed hours, they are required to sign a Compressed Hours Application (Appendix 1 attached). A copy of this form, once signed by the employee and their manager, must be sent to the HR Department for the employee's personal file.

Introduction

Compressed Hours is a working pattern where an employee works their full time hours in a 2 week reference period over 9 working days instead of over 10. Therefore, instead of working a 35 hour week over 5 days for 2 weeks (70 hours) they would work the same total number of hours (70) over nine days, taking a day off as a non working day (NWD) in that 2 weeks. This equates to the same hours worked as other full-time colleagues but with a different work pattern.

To make up the hours taken off on the NWD, the hours worked in a day are increased from 7 hours to 7.8 hours (7 hours and 47 minutes) exclusive of any meal breaks. However, to allow flexibility, the actual number of hours worked each day may vary to

meet business and personal needs as long as the total hours worked equals 70 hours in each 2 week reference period.

Eligibility

A request for Compressed Hours working will not be considered until a member of staff has successfully completed their probationary period or any extensions to it.

Approval will be subject to the needs of the service.

The Compressed Hours arrangement is only available to admin staff who work 21 hours or more per week.

Social work staff are not eligible to work Compressed Hours. Additional time which has been worked by Social Workers and approved in advance by the line manager should be accrued and recorded in accordance with the Time Off In Lieu (TOIL) policy. *(Social Work staff currently working compressed hours can continue but must follow policy guidelines. New requests from social work staff will not be accepted).*

Managers have the right to approve (or not) requests for compressed hours working, depending upon the needs of the service. Managers should consider approving compressed hours working on a rota basis so that everyone wishing to work compressed hours has the chance to do so for a specific period.

Compressed Hours working will be subject to review between line manager and member of staff at six monthly intervals. Staff returning from maternity leave will need to re-apply to work this arrangement.

Principles and Practical Arrangements

Staff working compressed hours will be allowed to accrue up to 30 minutes a day by working the equivalent amount of time during their normal lunch break. Time may also be accrued by working additional time before and after normal daily contracted working hours.

Staff working compressed hours must record their weeks in two weekly reference periods (see Appendix 2 - Working Hours Log) starting on the week they begin this working pattern, recording the first week as a Week One (W1), the second week as a week two (W2) and repeating this for all weeks thereafter.

In all W1s, the individual must work 5 days, taking the NWD off in all W2s.

The NWD does not have to be the last day of the W2 and this can be any day in a W2, therefore the time off may be given slightly in advance (up to 4 days) of the hours being accrued.

The NWD should normally be on the same day every W2, so that the service can accommodate this arrangement. However this should remain flexible and the NWD should be planned out on an annual basis, where possible, and noted clearly in electronic diaries for planning purposes, including periods of annual leave.

NWDs cannot be accrued. They are in place to facilitate a flexible working pattern on a regular basis.

Annual leave can be taken in either a W1 or a W2.

Absence (Sickness, Compassionate Leave and Dependent Care Leave).

Any sickness absence is to be recorded in line with the Sickness Absence Policy.

If an employee is absent on a scheduled work day for medical/health reasons this is counted as sick leave. If they have a scheduled NWD after a day of sickness and report that they are no longer sick on that day, then this will not be counted as a sickness day.

If the employee is sick on a NWD, this is not recorded as a sick day and the NWD cannot be taken at a later date.

Annual Leave including Bank Holidays

Annual leave and public holidays should be calculated in hours for all part-time staff and for all staff working compressed hours.

The annual leave entitlement and the 8 days Public Holiday at 7 hours a day (pro rata for part-time staff) must be added together to give a total of leave on an annual basis,

When booking leave (annual leave and public holidays), the number of daily working hours must be requested, i.e. 7.8 hours and not 7 hours.

The compressed hours application form can be found [HERE](#)

CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code of Conduct set out below is designed to cover the main areas of the required standards of behaviour and performance. The code includes Company Rules, which all employees are required to comply with, and examples of misconduct which the Company normally regards as Gross Misconduct. A breach of the Company Rules will render an employee liable to disciplinary action in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure. An instance of Gross Misconduct will render an employee liable to dismissal without notice.

The Company Rules and the examples of misconduct are not exhaustive. Employees are under a duty to comply with the standards of behaviour and performance required by the Company, and to behave in a reasonable manner, at all times.

Company Rules

Attendance and Absence

Employees are required to comply with the rules relating to notification of absence which are set out in the Company's Absence Policy and Procedure.

Employees are required to arrive at work promptly, ready to start work at their contracted starting times, and are required to remain at work until their contracted finishing times.

Employees must obtain management authorisation if for any reason they wish to arrive later or leave earlier than their normal start and finish times.

The Company reserves the right not to pay employees in respect of working time lost because of poor timekeeping.

Persistent poor timekeeping will result in disciplinary action.

Standards and Conduct

Employees are required to maintain satisfactory standards of performance at work, a high level of quality, accuracy and diligence.

Employees are required to co-operate fully with their colleagues and with management, and to ensure the maintenance of acceptable standards of politeness.

Employees are required to take all necessary steps required to safeguard the Company's public image and preserve positive relationships with its customers, clients or members of the public.

Employees are required to ensure that they do not behave in a discriminatory manner.

Employees are required to comply with all reasonable management instructions.

Employees are required to comply with the Company's Operating Policies and Procedures.

Only employees who are specifically authorised by management to do so may handle cash or receive payments from customers on behalf of the Company.

Employees are not permitted to make use of the Company's or its customers' telephone, fax, or postal facilities and services without management permission.

Personal mobile telephones must be switched off at all times during normal working hours.

Flexibility

Employees may be required to work additional hours at short notice, as the needs of the business require.

Employees may be required from time to time to undertake duties outside their normal job remit.

Employees may be required from time to time to work at locations other than their normal place of work.

Confidentiality

Employees are required to keep confidential, both during their employment and at any time after its termination, all information gained in the course of their employment about the Company's business, and that of the Company's customers, except in circumstances in which they are required to disclose information by law or in the course of the performance of their duties with the Company.

Employees are not permitted to engage in any activity outside their employment with the Company which could reasonably be interpreted as competing with the Company.

Employees are required to seek permission from management prior to taking on any other employment while employed by the Company to ensure there are no conflicting demands.

Any queries received from the media must be referred immediately to management. Employees must not attempt to deal with queries themselves.

Work Clothing

Employees are required to dress in a manner appropriate to the function in which they are engaged.

Health and Safety

Employees are required to gain an understanding of the Company's health and safety

procedures, observe them, and ensure that safety equipment and clothing is always used.

All accidents, however small, must be reported to the Health & Safety Representative as soon as possible, and an entry made in the Company's Accident Book.

Company Property and Personal Searches

Company property and equipment must not be taken from the Company's premises unless for use on authorised Company business.

Where an employee damages equipment belonging to the Company, either through misuse or carelessness, the Company reserve the right to make a deduction from the employee's wage in respect of the cost incurred from the damaged equipment.

All Company property, such as keys, laptops, mobile telephones, documents or any other items belonging to the Company must be returned on termination of employment. Employees should note that this list is not exhaustive.

The Company may request to search employees' clothing, personal baggage and vehicles. Any such search must be conducted by an authorised member of management in the presence of an independent witness. Should an employee refuse such a request, the appropriate authorities will be requested to conduct the search on behalf of the Company. Failure to co-operate with the Company in this respect may be treated as gross misconduct.

Employees are solely responsible for the safety of their personal possessions while in the Company's premises. Employees must ensure that their possessions are at all times kept in a safe place.

Employees who find an item of personal property on the premises are required to inform management immediately.

Expenses

The Company will normally reimburse employees in respect of any expenses wholly and necessarily incurred in the course of their work through petty cash, against receipts. The Company reserves the right to refuse to pay an expense claim where the expenditure is unreasonable or unnecessary. Further information is available in the Expenses Policy.

Environment

In order to provide a cost-effective service, employees are requested to use the Company's equipment, materials and services wisely. Employees should try to reduce wastage and the subsequent impact on the environment by ensuring windows are closed, unnecessary lighting and heating is not used, taps are not left running, equipment is not left switched on when no longer in use and that materials are handled with care.

In order to provide a working environment which is pleasant and healthy, smoking is not permitted anywhere on the premises.

Changes in Personal Details

Employees must notify the Company of any change in personal details, including change of name, address, telephone number or next of kin. This will ensure the Company maintains accurate personal details in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and is able to contact you or another designated person in case of an emergency.



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DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE AND ACTION

What this policy covers

This policy is designed to ensure that all disciplinary matters are dealt with promptly, fairly and consistently and to encourage an improvement in individual conduct and/or performance. It outlines the procedures that the Company will follow should there be a need to take disciplinary action and your right to appeal.

The Company reserves the right to discipline or dismiss you without following the Disciplinary Procedure if you have less than 24 months' continuous service.

Your entitlements and responsibilities

The Company aims to deal with disciplinary matters promptly and fairly.

You have the right to appeal against a decision the Company makes at a disciplinary meeting. In these cases, the Company will make every effort for the appeal to be dealt with by a different manager to the person who dealt with the matter initially.

The Company's decision at the appeal stage is final and there is no further right of appeal.

You have a responsibility to assist the Company, if required, to investigate the matters raised at disciplinary meetings and comply with the disciplinary procedures.

Disciplinary sanctions

The level of the disciplinary sanction, if any, will be determined by the severity of the offence. The Company will normally select one of the following:

Written warning

A Written Warning will usually be applied as the first step of corrective action following unsatisfactory performance or conduct offences.

The Company will define the unacceptable acts and explain the conduct or standards required in the future. You will be advised in writing that a failure to improve the standard of conduct or performance may result in further disciplinary action. The written warning will remain on the employee's file for 6 months.

Final written warning

A Final Written Warning is usually applied after a Written Warning has been given and performance or conduct has not improved but may be applied after a more serious first or a second offence.

You will be advised in writing that a failure to improve the standard of conduct or performance may result in dismissal. The final written warning will remain on the employee's file for 12 months.



Dismissal

Dismissal occurs when your employment is terminated either with or without notice. Dismissal without notice is also referred to as 'summary dismissal' and is restricted to cases of gross misconduct.

The Company reserves the right, at its complete discretion, to impose a sanction short of dismissal if it is deemed appropriate. This may include demotion, transfer to a different post or another appropriate sanction. Any such decision will be confirmed to you in writing once you have been informed of the outcome.

A list of examples of misconduct, serious misconduct and gross misconduct are outline below. These lists are not exhaustive.

Some examples of Misconduct are:

- Persistent lateness;
- Absenteeism;
- Frequent short-term absence due to minor ailments;
- Minor breach of TACT's working practices or rules.
- (The above examples of misconduct are not exhaustive).

Some examples of serious misconduct are:

- Failure to comply with a specific instruction;
- Breach of confidentiality;
- Continued failure to remedy misconduct;
- Abusive behaviour;
- Breach of any terms of your contract;
- Unsatisfactory sickness record.
- (The above examples of serious misconduct are not exhaustive).

Some examples of Gross Misconduct are:

- Repetition of serious misconduct;
- Theft or unauthorised of property belonging to TACT or property belonging to another staff member;
- Wilful disregard of duties or refusal to carry out reasonable instructions;
- Assault;
- Conduct violating common decency (including sexual or racial harassment);
- Wilful damage to company property;
- Falsification of reports/records, accounts or expense/mileage claims;
- Non-disclosure of criminal charges brought;
- Drunkenness or possession of illegal drugs;
- Violent, dangerous or intimidatory conduct;
- Sexual, racial or other harassment of a fellow employee;
- Wilful breach of safety regulations;
- Failure to report abuse or suspicion of abuse regarding any child you come into contact with in relation to your work.
- Through an act of omission or commission place a child at risk.
- Breach of Professional Boundaries – please see professional boundaries policy
- (The above examples of gross misconduct are not exhaustive).



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Disciplinary procedure

Suspension from work

If the Company believes it is appropriate, it may decide to suspend you from your work pending further investigation or disciplinary action. Suspension itself is not a disciplinary sanction.

If a decision to suspend is made, you will be informed verbally and this will usually be followed up in writing. While you are suspended, you should not attend work or make contact with anyone connected to the Company unless otherwise instructed by the Company. If you need to contact anyone connected to the Company while you are suspended, you must notify your manager. Any reasonable request will not be refused. Breach of the terms of your suspension may result in additional disciplinary action up to and including dismissal without notice.

The Company will endeavour to keep any suspension as brief as possible. Any period of suspension will be on full pay. However, should you fail to co-operate at any time with the investigatory process, for example by failing to attend any meeting, without good reason then the Company reserves the right to treat this as unauthorised absence and this may result in pay being withheld until such time as you attend any rearranged meeting.

Investigation Meetings

Depending on the circumstances, you may be required to attend Investigation Meetings before a decision is taken to invoke the disciplinary procedure. An Investigation Meeting is an informal meeting and so you are not permitted to be accompanied unless you are under the age of 18 (when a parent or guardian will be permitted).

Depending on the outcome of the investigation, the Company will decide whether or not to proceed with a Disciplinary Meeting.

If it is decided that there is no case to answer then you will be informed of this fact either verbally or in writing. If suspended, you will be expected to return to work at the agreed date and time. This will end the process.

Invitation to a Disciplinary Meeting

If you are required to attend a Disciplinary Meeting, the Company will inform you of this in writing.

In the letter, the Company will set out the issues that are to be considered, how seriously these are being viewed and the potential consequences. The letter will also inform you of the date and time of the meeting to allow you sufficient time to prepare your case.

As this is a formal meeting, the letter will also detail your right to be accompanied.

Your right to be accompanied at a Disciplinary Meeting

You are entitled to be accompanied at a Disciplinary Meeting by a fellow employee or a Trade Union official. With the exception of those under the age of 18, when a parent or guardian will be permitted, no other person will be permitted to attend.



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Should you wish to be accompanied, you must notify the Company of the name and position of your chosen companion as soon as possible.

The Company may require you to choose someone else in circumstances where it believes the chosen companion may have a conflict of interest, or may prejudice the meeting or it would be unreasonable to allow your chosen companion to attend.

Your companion is permitted to put forward and summarise your case, respond on your behalf to views expressed in the meeting, ask questions and confer with you, but will not be entitled to answer questions directly on your behalf.

Action if you cannot attend the meeting on the proposed date

If you feel that you have a legitimate reason as to why you cannot attend the meeting on the proposed date, you must contact the person named on the invitation letter to advise them of this fact immediately. The meeting may then be delayed to facilitate your attendance, if this is considered reasonable.

Attending the disciplinary meeting

You must attend the meeting at the proposed time. Failure to participate in the process or attend arranged meetings without good reason may result in additional disciplinary action or a decision being made in your absence.

Prior to the meeting, you should ensure that you are fully prepared to answer questions relating to the incident/circumstances in question. At the meeting you will be given every opportunity to state your case, present any evidence and call relevant witnesses before any decision is made.

After the Disciplinary Meeting

At the end of the meeting there will normally be an adjournment to allow for consideration of the facts. You will be informed of the outcome and any sanction will be confirmed in writing to you as soon as possible.

In some circumstances there may be a need to adjourn and reconvene a meeting at a later date, to allow further investigation. In this case you will be advised accordingly.

Notification of the decision and disciplinary sanction

Following the Disciplinary Meeting, the Company will notify you of its decision and the disciplinary sanction it will apply. This letter will also explain your right to appeal against any decision taken and sanction applied.

Your right of appeal against disciplinary action

If you wish to appeal against a decision you must submit your request in writing, stating the reasons for the appeal, to the individual identified in the letter confirming the sanction. This should be submitted within five working days of receiving notification.



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The Appeal Meeting

You will be informed of the date and time of the Appeal Meeting. If you feel that you have a legitimate reason as to why you cannot attend the meeting on the proposed date, you must contact the person named on the invitation letter to inform them of this fact immediately. The meeting may then be delayed to facilitate your attendance, if this is considered reasonable. You will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee or a Trade Union official.

At the Appeal Meeting you will be given an opportunity to state your case. Your companion is permitted to put forward and summarise your case, respond on your behalf to views expressed in the meeting, ask questions and confer with you, but will not be entitled to answer questions directly on your behalf.

The meeting will then be adjourned to allow the Company to consider the facts and the decision will be confirmed in writing. The outcome will be communicated as soon as possible, taking into account the complexity of the issues raised in the appeal. The decision at this stage will be final.



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GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

What this policy covers

A grievance is any concern, problem or complaint that you have in relation to your employment.

Where possible, you should try to settle any grievance informally with your manager at the earliest opportunity. Where the grievance is in relation to your line manager, you should try to settle this informally with the assistance of the line manager's manager. Where any grievance is unable to be resolved informally, this policy sets out the Company's Grievance Procedure.

Your responsibilities

You have a responsibility to raise any grievances promptly and reasonably, assist the Company, if required, in any investigation of the matters raised in your grievance, follow the grievance procedure and attend all meetings arranged under it.

You may raise grievances either informally or formally. If you raise a grievance informally first, you may still raise the grievance formally subsequently if it is not resolved to your satisfaction.

The Company aims to deal with all grievances promptly and impartially, and to make all reasonable efforts to achieve a satisfactory outcome.

You have the right to appeal against a decision the Company makes in respect of a grievance raised by you. In these cases, the Company will make every effort for the grievance to be dealt with by a different manager to the person who dealt with the grievance initially.

The Company's decision at the appeal stage is final and there is no further right of appeal.

Procedure

Dealing with grievances informally

If you have any grievance, you should discuss this with your manager in the first instance, who will then attempt to resolve the situation on an informal basis.

If you feel unable to approach your manager directly, you should approach another manager or a more senior member of the Company, who will discuss with you ways of dealing with the matter.

If attempts to resolve the matter informally do not work, it may be appropriate for you to raise a formal grievance under the following formal procedure.

Your right to be accompanied at Grievance Meetings

At all formal stages of this procedure, you are entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee or by a trade union official. If you are under 18, your parent or guardian will be allowed to accompany you.



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Should you wish to be accompanied, you must notify the Company of the name and position of your chosen companion as soon as possible.

Formal procedure

The Company will make all reasonable efforts to deal with formal grievances in a fair and consistent manner. While the Company will make every effort to settle any grievance within the time limits detailed in this procedure, this may not be possible on some occasions.

You must set out the full particulars of the grievance by completing the Employee Complaint Form as provided on the following pages. The written grievance should be submitted to your manager in the first instance. If your grievance is against your manager, you should submit it to another manager or a more senior member of the Company.

If the grievance is in relation to a senior manager (CEO or Executive Director), then an independent person will be appointed by TACT, who will undertake the investigation in conjunction with a nominated TACT trustee. In this instance, the employee must set out the grievance and the basis for it in writing and submit it to the HR Director who will appoint an independent person, along with a nominated trustee and invite the employee to a meeting to discuss the grievance.

Attending the Grievance Meeting

You will be invited to a meeting to discuss the grievance, as soon as possible after the Company has received your grievance. You must take all reasonable steps to attend this meeting.

Prior to the meeting, you should ensure that you are fully prepared to present your grievance, share any supporting evidence and answer any questions relating to the incident/circumstances in question.

Notification of the outcome

After the Grievance Meeting, an appropriate period of time may be taken to allow for any further investigation and/or the consideration of all the facts before a decision is reached. The Company will then, normally, inform you in writing of its decision regarding the raised grievance without unreasonable delay. The letter will also explain your right to appeal against any decision taken.

Appeals against grievance outcomes

If you are dissatisfied with a decision made regarding a grievance you have raised, you have the right of appeal. Whenever possible, the appeal will be dealt with by a different manager to the person who dealt with the grievance. The employee should submit the written appeal to a member of the Executive Management Team (EMT). In the event that a member of the EMT is the person who wishes to appeal, they should submit their appeal to the HR department to enable an independent person to be appointed to hear the appeal.

Your appeal must be made in writing, stating the reasons for the appeal, to the individual identified in the decision letter. This should be submitted no later than the end of the fifth working day after you received written notification.

The Appeal Meeting

The Company will arrange and hold an Appeal Meeting as quickly as possible, normally within five days. You will be entitled to attend the Appeal Meeting and will be given an opportunity to state your case.

You must take all reasonable steps to attend this meeting. If you feel that you have a legitimate reason as to why you cannot attend the meeting on the proposed date, you must contact the person named on the invitation letter to inform them of this fact immediately. The meeting may then be delayed to facilitate your attendance, if this is considered reasonable.

Please find the Grievance Employee Complaint Form [HERE](#).

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

General

The Company operates a performance management procedure which works in parallel with the disciplinary procedure. Clearly it is not always appropriate to label incapability and poor performance as misconduct warranting disciplinary action, though it may be so sometimes. However, the Company does need to be able to address performance inadequacy and deal with it effectively.

The Company reserves the right not to follow these procedures where the employee has less than 24 months continuous service.

Informal Procedure

All employees receive supervision meetings with their line managers on a regular basis. One of the purposes of these supervision meetings is to give line managers an opportunity to address any performance issues that have arisen or continue to arise with an employee.

The line manager will document any performance related discussions as part of the supervision process. However, if the line manager feels that there has been no improvement to the employees' performance despite raising this with the employee on past occasions or the performance issue is of a serious nature then the line manager will notify HR, HR will then write to the employee setting out that the employees performance is unacceptable and that an improvement is required.

In any event, the employee's line manager will always investigate the cause of the employee's poor performance. Causes could include, for example, lack of skills, inadequate training, lack of support, tools or other resources, lack of communication or problematic working relationships. The manager carrying out this initial counselling will provide the employee factual examples of their unsatisfactory performance and the employee will be asked for their explanation, which will subsequently be followed up and checked where appropriate.

Where the reason for unsatisfactory performance is lack of the required skills, the employee will, where practicable, be assisted through training and be given reasonable time to reach the required standard of performance. If it is a question of lack of support employees, tools or other resources or facilities, attention should be paid to this and assistance provided if appropriate.

In circumstances where the HR Department considers that an employee's performance is particularly unacceptable and has had or could have serious consequences, the employee may be invited to attend an investigation meeting with their line manager and a HR representative, to try to establish the reasons this poor performance. This meeting could then result in formal disciplinary action being invoked if there is no reasonable



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explanation provided by the employee.

Where the HR department have written to the employee setting out the areas where improvement is required, the letter will clearly state how improvement can be made, the support or steps that are being taken by the Company to assist the employee and the timescales in which improvement must be demonstrated.

Where there is no improvement this will then result in an investigation meeting with the employee, their line manager and an HR representative to establish why the employee has not been able to maintain a sustained improvement. The employee will be given the opportunity to respond to the complaints or concerns about their performance. If the employee's response is not satisfactory, it could result in formal disciplinary action.

Formal Performance Management Procedure

The Company will take steps to deal with the matter by way of formal performance or disciplinary warnings where:

- it is clear that the employee's performance does not arise from any of the reasons stated above; or
- the Company has taken appropriate steps to assist the employee to improve their poor performance and they have not improved to the required standard within the specified timescale.

The employee will be informed in writing of the concerns about their poor performance and will be invited to attend a formal disciplinary meeting to discuss this with the manager responsible for reviewing their performance. The manager will seek to identify the cause(s) of the poor performance and determine what, if any, remedial action can be taken. The employee will be given the opportunity to respond to the concerns and / or complaints.

The employee must make all reasonable efforts to attend any meeting. If they fail to attend, the Company will invite the employee to attend another formal disciplinary meeting, this invitation will set out clearly that should the employee fail to attend this second meeting, without good cause, then, the Company may proceed with the meeting in their absence. The employee will have the right to be accompanied to this meeting as detailed below, and must be given reasonable notice (at least 48 hours) of this meeting.

If at the conclusion of the disciplinary meeting the manager believes that there is a shortfall in the employee's performance which requires further attention from them, then the employee will be issued with a formal disciplinary warning.

Formal performance warnings will usually set out:

- the nature of the poor performance;

- the level of improvement required;
- the time limit for achieving the required improvement;
- any interim review meeting to be held during the currency of the performance warning;
- what will happen if the employee fails to achieve or maintain the required standard of improvement; and
- how long the warning will remain active on their file. This will normally be 12 months, but the period is at the discretion of the manager who takes the disciplinary action.

Formal Warnings

Stage One - First Written Warning

If there has been no improvement since identifying the issues through the informal discussions or if improvement is not maintained for the period stated in the informal proceedings, the employee will be given a First Written Warning setting out the reasons for the warning and the expectations of the employee in the future.

Stage Two - Final Written warning

If there is no improvement or insufficient improvement after a Written Warning, or if improvement is not maintained for the period stated in the Written Warning, the employee will be given a Final Written Warning setting out the details as outlined above in the oral warning. The Final Written Warning will include a statement that a failure to improve to the required standard is likely to result in dismissal.

Stage Three - Dismissal

If there is still no improvement or insufficient improvement after a Final Written Warning, or if improvement has not been maintained for the period stated above, the employee will normally be dismissed with notice or pay in lieu. Alternatively, at the Company's entire discretion, alternative work elsewhere in the organisation may be offered to the employee if any suitable posts are available.

Right to be Accompanied

Employees have the right to be accompanied at each meeting by a work colleague or trade union representative. Further detail is provided in the Right to be Accompanied.

Appeals

Employees have same rights of appeal at each stage of the procedure as detailed in the

Disciplinary and Dismissal Appeals Procedure.

The Company reserves the right to implement the procedure at any stage should the outcome of the initial review meeting suggest the performance failing warrants it.



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ABSENCE PROCEDURE AND RULES

What this policy covers

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that employees who are genuinely unwell are treated fairly and consistently, while minimising the impact of sickness absence on the Company.

The policy sets out procedures for reporting sickness absence and for the Company's management of short-term and long-term absence. Any absences that are disability-related will be managed in accordance with relevant legislation and related Codes of Practice.

This policy also contains information on your entitlements in relation to paid and unpaid time off work for reasons other than sickness.

Your responsibilities

Breach of absence procedures

Breach of any of the absence reporting procedures detailed below, including those relating to the notification of absence or provision of a fit note, 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.

Frequent short-term absence

Persistent absenteeism has a detrimental impact on your colleagues and on the Company as a whole. If it is considered that your absence level is a cause for concern, the Company may meet with you to investigate the situation fully. The Company may require you to undergo an Occupational Health assessment.

The Company cannot sustain frequent short-term absences, even if the reasons for the absences are genuine. Therefore, unacceptable levels of absence will be subject to disciplinary proceedings. The Company will take into account the reasons, frequency and pattern of your non-attendance in determining an appropriate course of action.

If you are issued with a formal disciplinary warning, you will be advised as to the level of attendance which the Company expects of you. If you fail to achieve this level of attendance further disciplinary action may be taken.

Medical report

It may be necessary for the Company to obtain a medical report during the course of your employment in order to gather further information about your medical condition, its probable effect on your future attendance at work, your ability to do your job and whether there are any reasonable adjustments to be made, if appropriate.

Although you have the statutory right to withhold your consent to the Company to approach your GP or consultant for a medical report, if you do choose to withhold your consent to our application, the Company may need to assess your state of health and its impact on your continued employment without the benefit of professional medical advice.



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The Company reserves the right to refer you to the Fit for Work scheme for an assessment and/or return to work plan.

You may also be required to undergo a medical examination by a doctor nominated by the Company. The Company will be entitled to receive any report produced in connection with any such examination, and the Company may discuss the contents of the report with the doctor in question.

If you refuse to undergo a medical examination without good reason, this may be viewed as a failure to follow a reasonable management instruction and could result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal without notice.

Medical suspension

If the Company becomes concerned about your health and safety at work, or that the health and safety of others is being affected by your physical and/or mental health, you may be suspended on medical grounds pending further investigation to establish that you are fit to work. You will receive full pay during the period of your suspension.

Your entitlements

Medical and dental appointments

Where possible, you are required to arrange any medical or dental appointments outside working hours or, if this is not possible, at the start or end of the day to minimise disruption to the Company. You must obtain permission from management before taking any time off. If the time taken off work to attend a medical or dental appointment is less than 3½ hours, this will not be recorded against your sick leave/pay entitlement. If, however, the absence exceeds 3½ hours, the total number of hours that you are absent will be recorded as sick leave. **For time off for antenatal appointments, please see TACT's maternity policy.**

Jury service .

Please see TACT's policy on Jury Service further on in the handbook for more information

Time off for religious observance

You should make any requests for time off for religious observance to your manager as early as possible. Although you have no legal or contractual right to religious leave or time off to pray, the Company will consider all such requests.

Time off for religious observance must be taken from your rest periods or annual holiday entitlement. Alternatively, at the Company's discretion, you may work additional hours in lieu of the time taken off.

If you wish to take the time off as annual holiday, you should make the request in accordance with the Company's annual holiday procedures. For the avoidance of doubt, the Company's rules relating to annual holiday will apply.

Bereavement leave

The Company provides a Bereavement Leave entitlement whereby employees may have leave with pay following the death of an immediate relative, close relative or close dependant. Employees will be permitted five days leave on a rolling year basis (pro rata if part time)

Adverse weather and other exceptional circumstances

If you are unable to attend work due to adverse weather conditions or other exceptional circumstances, you will not be paid for any periods of non-attendance. You may request to take paid holidays or work additional hours at an alternative time to make up for the time you have been absent. The Company reserves the right to refuse such requests depending on the needs of the business.

If the Company cannot operate due to these exceptional circumstances, it reserves the right to require you to take holidays during this time or impose a period of lay-off, when appropriate. The Company also reserves the right not to provide you with advance notice of this requirement.

Other types of leave

The Company will adhere to statutory requirements in providing time off when you have commitments relating to public office or role, trade union duties and activities and the Territorial Army. You should discuss such requests for time off with your manager at the earliest opportunity in order to work out the necessary arrangements, allow planning time and work with your manager to minimise any potential disruption to the Company.

Disabilities

If you have a disability that impacts on your attendance at work, the Company will give consideration to whether there are any reasonable adjustments that could be made to your job or other aspects of your working arrangements to minimise absenteeism or assist your return to work.

Absence-reporting procedures

Sickness absence reporting

You are required to notify the Company of your sickness absence. You should do this personally, by telephone, to your Line Manager by no later than one hour before your scheduled start time on the first day of absence.

If the employee's line manager is unavailable, the employee should contact TACT's HR Department (020 8695 8146) and notify them by 10.00 a.m. on their first day of absence. Any appointments that need to be cancelled must be notified to the Admin Department in the employee's area.

It is essential that employees keep the Company updated on the circumstances of the absence and of its estimated duration.



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Where the absence lasts for more than seven calendar days a 'Fit Note' completed by a medical practitioner must be forwarded to the employee's line manager to cover the absence. The 'Fit Note' must either be sent separately to the employee's line manager where possible, or where the duration of the absence is short i.e. between 7 and 12 days, the 'Fit Note' should be attached to the completed absence form when the employee returns to work.

A sickness/compassionate/dependent care leave form must be completed by the employee and given to their line manager to authorise on his or her first day back at work. This form is available to download from the T drive under Information and Forms > HR > Employee Handbook and Leave Forms. Electronic signatures will be accepted (not printed names).

Each employee's attendance at work will be monitored so that any unacceptable levels of absenteeism can be examined by management.

Where an employee's absence has lasted more than 4 weeks or the employee's absence account for more than 10 days in the last 365 days, the line manager must carry out a return to work interview. The return to work interview format is available on the T drive under Information and Forms > HR.

Medical certification

If your absence lasts for seven calendar days or fewer, you must complete an absence form immediately upon your return to work.

However, if you are entitled to contractual sick pay (please see your contract of employment for details) you may also be required to provide the appropriate medical certification for absences of fewer than seven days.

If your absence lasts more than seven calendar days, you must forward a Fit Note completed by a medical practitioner, to management in order to cover the absence.

The Fit Note must be submitted as soon as possible. If you unreasonably delay in providing a Fit Note your absence will be classed as unauthorised.

If, on a sick note, your doctor recommends any adjustments to your duties, hours or working conditions, the Company will discuss these with you and implement the recommendations, if these are reasonably practicable.

Failure to comply with the arrangements to assist your return to work without good reason may be treated as misconduct and may result in disciplinary action.

It is essential that you keep the Company updated on the reasons for your continued absence and its estimated duration. You should contact the Company daily during periods of absence unless you are instructed otherwise by your manager. You should also contact the Company before the expiry of your Fit Note if you continue to be unwell. In addition, a further Fit Note should be submitted immediately on expiry of the previous Fit Note. Failure to contact the Company or submit a Fit Note at this time may result in the interim absence being classed as unauthorised.



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Procedure for return to work

You should contact your manager as soon as you become aware of your intended return date. If this date changes, you should update the Company immediately.

Return to work meeting

Your manager will interview you on your return to work following a period of absence. The reasons for your absence will be discussed and your manager will decide whether the absence should be authorised. The onus is on you to satisfy management that there was a genuine medical reason for the absence.

After 'extended' sickness absence (4 weeks) you will be requested to attend 'a return to work' informal interview with your Manager. If a Director of Country has taken extended sickness absence, the Executive Director of Children's Services or Chief Executive or will conduct the informal 'return to work' interview. TACT may also require a 'return to work' interview after any period of sickness which amounts to more than 10 working days in the previous year from the last day of sickness.

Long-term absence

Welfare meetings

During a period of long-term absence, you are required to attend any scheduled welfare meetings with the Company. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss your current state of health, how long you expect to be absent from work and what steps, if any, the Company can take to facilitate your return to work.

If you are medically incapable of attending your place of work, a representative of the Company will come out to visit you. If the time scheduled for the meeting is not suitable, you should contact the Company immediately so that an alternative time can be agreed. You are also required to respond to any correspondence from the Company and any requests for information about your health.

Medical certification

You should continue to provide Fit Notes completed by your medical practitioner, even if you have exhausted your entitlement to sick pay.

Failure to co-operate

The Company will always be sensitive to your physical and mental wellbeing during periods of long-term absence. However, where there is a failure, without good reason, to co-operate with the Company in relation to attending meetings, communicating effectively, attending occupational-health assessments and providing necessary information, this may be treated as misconduct and the Company may take disciplinary action.

Termination of employment

The Company is committed to supporting you during your absence and assisting your return to work. However, a prolonged period of absence cannot be sustained indefinitely, and the Company may need to review your continued employment periodically. Before any decision is made in relation to termination of your employment on the grounds of capability, the Company will consult fully with you and obtain up-to-date medical advice.



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ADDITIONAL PAID TRAINING/OPEN EVENING WORK

TACT staff may undertake additional work in relation to running training courses and open evenings outside of normal working hours.

Where staff provide foster carer/adoption training or open evenings outside of normal hours, this should be managed via TACT's TOIL system by the line manager. However, if agreed with your line manager **in advance** of the training/open evening which takes place outside of normal working hours, this can be paid at a per session rate as follows:

A session is half a day and a session will be paid at £75 subject to tax and national insurance deductions.

Any claim for working outside of normal working hours must be made on Concur.



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ADDITIONAL PAID FORM F WORK OUTSIDE WORKING HOURS FOR SOCIAL WORK STAFF

TACT staff may undertake additional Form Fs outside normal working hours with the following conditions;

1. Any additional work undertaken must be discussed in supervision and agreed by the line manager.
2. The staff member's work must be up to date.
3. The staff member should not be under undue stress.
4. The staff member must already be undertaking Form F work as part of their normal workload.
5. A claim form must be submitted to the Finance department in order to claim for payment, which must be signed off by your line manager.
6. Timescales will be as per TACT's sessional Form F assessors' schedule of work.
7. Payment will be through the payroll with tax and National Insurance deducted.
8. The piece of work must be kept separate from normal workload and duties.
9. Annual Leave and TOIL may not be taken on a **regular** weekly basis to allow the staff member to undertake the additional work.
10. Staff must comply with the maximum working week, under the Working Time Regulations 1998, which is the number of working hours worked, including overtime, must not exceed an average of 48 hour per week over a 17-week reference period.
11. £2,000.00 per completed Form F (fostering) will be paid which will be subject to Tax and NI deductions. Where an assessment is not completed, an hourly rate of £35 per hour can be claimed, subject to tax and NI deductions.

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Consumption of Alcohol on the Premises

Unless authorised by management, employees are expressly forbidden to consume alcohol when at work, or bring it onto Company premises under any circumstances. Any breach of this rule will be treated as gross misconduct and is likely to result in summary dismissal.

Drug Misuse or Abuse on the Premises

Employees who take drugs which have not been prescribed on medical grounds during working hours or on Company premises will be committing an act of gross misconduct and will thus render themselves likely to be summarily dismissed, as will any employee believed to be in possession of, or buying or selling non-prescription drugs, during working hours or on Company premises.

Intoxicated Employees

If an employee is intoxicated by alcohol or drugs during working hours or on Company premises except where authorised, arrangements will be made for the employee to be escorted from the premises immediately. Disciplinary action will take place when the employee has had time to become sober or recover from the effects of drugs. This kind of behaviour will normally be treated as gross misconduct and result in summary dismissal.

General

All employees are encouraged not to cover up for employees with a drink or drug problem but to recognise that collusion represents a false sense of loyalty and will in the longer term damage those employees.

Employees who recognise that they have a drink or drug problem, or that they are at risk of developing one, are encouraged to come forward for confidential help. They should speak in confidence with their manager, or secure the help of a colleague in this respect.

BURSARIES FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS AND SECONDMENT FOR STAFF

TACT recognises the value of student social workers and the importance of encouraging their learning and development.

On this basis, TACT offers a bursary scheme to final year students on social work courses. TACT also offers social work secondment opportunities to existing employees subject to the business plan for the local area.

The selection process for social work bursaries and staff secondments is by competitive interview and written exercise. All bursaries will be advertised locally in the appropriate media (including colleges). An offer of a bursary does not guarantee employment but TACT however, would endeavour to look for employment subject to business needs.

Package offered in the bursary scheme for final year students:-

£1000 bursary will be paid as a lump sum. Following qualification and commencement of employment with TACT, if the employee leaves within the following periods the employee will agree to pay back the following percentages based on the £1000 bursary.

- 6 months of employment, the employee will pay back 100% of bursary.
- 9 months of employment, the employee will pay back 75% of bursary.
- 12 months of employment, the employee will pay back 50 % of bursary.
- 18 months of employment, the employee will pay back 25 % of bursary.

If the student fails to complete the course, the student will have to pay back 100% of the bursary to TACT. If a post is offered to the student, subject to business needs and the student declines the post offered, the student must pay back 100% (£1000) of the bursary.

Work for Student Social Workers during holiday periods

TACT, subject to local business planning needs, will offer social work student placements during holiday periods. Student social work placements will be financed by local budgets and a 'job requisition form' must be completed and authorised by the Head of Social work, as per TACT's Recruitment Procedure for Staff. Students can either work on a fixed term contract or on an occasional irregular hours basis.

The salary per annum (pro rata) offered to the social work students is based on the following spinal column bracket depending on the student's experience and point of study. For occasional irregular hour students, the hourly rate will also be based on the following spinal column brackets depending on the student's experience and point of study. A London weighting allowance is payable per annum for students working in the London office. Student social worker salary brackets and spinal points are available from the HR Director.



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BUSINESS GIFTS

As a general policy the Company does not believe that giving and receiving gifts is appropriate to the efficient conduct of its business. There are, however, limited exceptions to this policy.

Receipt of gifts

Any employee who is given a gift of any sort by a business contact (e.g. customer, supplier etc. actual or potential) must disclose the fact of the gift and its nature to his or her immediate manager.

If the Company decides that the gift might constitute a bribe or other inducement, the employee will be required to give the gift to his or her manager, who will return it to the donor with a suitable covering letter.

In other instances, the employee will be required to return the gift to the donor with a polite note explaining the Company policy.

In exceptional cases, for example, where the Company decides that the gift was made as a token of the donor's gratitude for a service carried out to very high standards, the recipient will be allowed to retain the gift.

Promotional gifts such as stationery, which are not of significant value, are exempt from this policy and need not be disclosed. However, employees are reminded that, since such gifts are sent only to a limited number of employees, they should be distributed to other employees where appropriate.

Failure to disclose gifts will constitute a disciplinary offence which will be handled in accordance with the Company's formal disciplinary procedure. If the gift in question was of significant value and, for example, the recipient is in a position to influence business dealings with the donor, the offence will be treated as gross misconduct.

Giving Gifts

While it is not Company policy to offer gifts to suppliers, customers etc., the Company recognises that, on occasions this may be necessary - for example, when someone carries out work on a voluntary basis or for a nominal fee.

Equally, it may be decided that a gift would be appropriate if a service has been carried out in an exceptional manner.

In such a case, employees should put a request in writing to their manager stating:

- who the gift is for

- why it should be given
- the nature of the gift
- its approximate value

Employees who send gifts which have not been approved in accordance with this procedure will not be reimbursed for the cost of the gift. Further, such action may, depending on the circumstances, be treated as a disciplinary offence which will be dealt with under the formal disciplinary procedure.

CAPABILITY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

What this policy covers

This policy is designed to ensure that all instances of repeated short term absence are dealt with fairly and consistently and to encourage an improvement in individual attendance at work. It outlines the procedures that the Company will follow should there be a need to take action in respect of repeated short term absence and your right to appeal.

The Company reserves the right not to follow this procedure if you have less than 24 months' continuous service.

Your entitlements and responsibilities

The Company aims to deal with instances of repeated short term absence fairly and consistently.

You have the right to appeal against a decision the Company makes at a formal meeting related to your repeated short term absences from work. In these cases, the Company will make every effort for the appeal to be dealt with by a different manager to the person who dealt with the matter initially.

The Company's decision at the appeal stage is final and there is no further right of appeal.

You have a responsibility to assist the Company, if required, to investigate the matters raised at meetings relating to your repeated short term absences and to comply with the capability procedure.

Disabilities

At each stage of the procedure consideration will be given to whether your unsatisfactory attendance is arising from a disability and if so whether there are any reasonable adjustments that could be made to support you. Where appropriate the Company may also consider making reasonable adjustments to this procedure.

Levels of Capability sanctions

Where possible, the Company will seek to deal with instances of repeated short term absence informally. Where informal steps are not enough to improve your level of attendance or where the absences become more persistent, formal action will be taken as described below. Other than in exceptional circumstances you will not normally be dismissed for a first instance of unacceptable short term absence.

Written Improvement Notice

A Written Improvement Notice will usually be applied as the first step of corrective action in case of repeated short term absences.



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The Written Improvement Notice will:

- Provide an explanation of the reasons for the improvement notice.
- Set out the improvement in attendance required.
- Set out any support the Company can offer you.
- Set out a Review Period during which your attendance will be monitored.
- Set out the consequences of your failure to meet the required improvement in attendance.
- Confirm your right of appeal against the decision to issue you with an improvement notice.

At the end of the Review Period the Company will inform whether you have achieved the improvement in attendance required in which case no further action will be taken

If you have not achieved the improvement in attendance required the Review Period may be extended or further action may be taken.

Final Written Warning

If you have not achieved the improvement in attendance required as set out in the Written Improvement Notice a Final Written Warning may be issued to you. The Final Written Warning will:

- Provide an explanation of the reasons for the Final Written Warning.
- Set out the improvement in attendance required.
- Set out any support the Company can offer you.
- Set out a Review Period during which your attendance will be monitored.
- Set out the consequences of your failure to meet the required improvement in attendance and that this could include your dismissal.
- Confirm your right of appeal against the decision to issue you with a Final Written Warning.

At the end of the Review Period the Company will inform you whether you have achieved the improvement in attendance required in which case no further action will be taken

If you have not achieved the improvement in attendance required the Review Period may be extended or further action may be taken.

Dismissal

If you have not achieved the improvement in attendance required as set out in the Final Written Warning the outcome may be your dismissal.

You will be provided with confirmation of your dismissal in writing. This will

- Set out the reasons for your dismissal.
- Confirm the date your employment has terminated or will terminate.
- Confirm your right to appeal the decision to dismiss you.

The Company reserves the right, at its complete discretion, to impose a sanction short of dismissal if it is deemed appropriate. This may include demotion, transfer to a different post or another appropriate sanction. Any such decision will be confirmed to you in writing once you have been informed of the outcome.

Procedure

In the first instance, absence issues should normally be dealt with informally between you and your line manager as part of day-to-day management. The formal procedure should be used in any case where an earlier informal discussion has not resulted in a satisfactory improvement.

Invitation to a Capability meeting

If you are required to attend a formal Capability meeting, the Company will inform you of this in writing.

In the letter, the Company will set out the issues that are to be considered, the potential consequences and, since this is a formal meeting, your right to be accompanied by a companion.

Where appropriate, we will also enclose copies of relevant documents for example your absence records, any medical report obtained and any relevant policies. The letter will also inform you of the date and time of the meeting to allow you sufficient time to prepare your case.

Your right to be accompanied at a Capability meeting

You are entitled to be accompanied at a Capability Meeting by a fellow worker or a trade union official. With the exception of those under the age of 18, when a parent or guardian will be permitted, no other person will normally be permitted to attend.

We may, at our sole discretion, allow you to bring a companion who is not a colleague or union representative where reasonable adjustments are necessary to help you overcome a particular difficulty caused by a disability.

Should you wish to be accompanied, you must notify the Company of the name and position of your chosen companion as soon as possible.

Your companion is permitted to put forward and summarise your case, respond on your behalf to views expressed in the meeting, ask questions and confer with you, but will not be entitled to answer questions directly on your behalf.



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Action if you cannot attend the meeting on the proposed date

If you feel that you have a legitimate reason as to why you cannot attend the meeting on the proposed date, you must contact the person named on the invitation letter to advise them of this fact immediately. The meeting may then be delayed to facilitate your attendance, if this is considered reasonable.

Attending the Capability meeting

You must attend the meeting at the proposed time. Failure to participate in the process or attend arranged meetings without good reason may result in a decision being made in your absence.

Prior to the meeting, you should ensure that you are fully prepared to answer questions relating to the circumstances in question. At the meeting you will be given every opportunity to state your case and present any evidence before any decision is made.

After the Capability meeting

At the end of the meeting there will normally be an adjournment to allow for consideration of the facts. You will be informed of the outcome and any sanction will be confirmed in writing to you as soon as possible.

In some circumstances there may be a need to adjourn and reconvene a meeting at a later date if we need to gather any further information or give consideration to matters discussed at the meeting. In this case you will be advised accordingly.

Notification of the decision

Following the Capability meeting, the Company will notify you of its decision and the Capability sanction it will apply. This letter will also explain your right to appeal against any decision taken and sanction applied.

Your right of appeal against a Capability sanction

If you wish to appeal against a decision you must submit your request in writing, stating the reasons for the appeal, to the individual identified in the letter confirming the sanction. This should be submitted within five working days of receiving notification.

The Appeal meeting

You will be informed of the date and time of the Appeal Meeting. If you feel that you have a legitimate reason as to why you cannot attend the meeting on the proposed date, you must contact the person named on the invitation letter to inform them of this fact immediately. The meeting may then be delayed to facilitate your attendance, if this is considered reasonable. You will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow worker or a Trade Union official.

At the Appeal Meeting you will be given an opportunity to state your case. Your companion is permitted to put forward and summarise your case, respond on your behalf to views expressed in the meeting, ask questions and confer with you, but will not be entitled to answer questions directly on your behalf.



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The meeting will then be adjourned to allow the Company to consider the facts and the decision will be confirmed in writing. The outcome will be communicated as soon as possible, taking into account the complexity of the issues raised in the appeal. The decision at this stage will be final.



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COMPANY MOBILE TELEPHONES

Where employees are provided with Company mobile telephones, the Company will meet rental and standard call costs in respect of business calls.

Text messages sent using mobile telephones are to be written in accordance with the standards of any other form of written communication and the content and language used in the message must be consistent with best Company practice. Messages should be concise and directed to those individuals with a need to know.

Misuse of the text messaging facility in breach of this policy statement will be considered to be misconduct and employees will be subject to disciplinary action. In serious cases, be that an individual incident or a number of incidents of misuse, this may result in dismissal.

Misuse of the text messaging facility by transmission of any material which appears to fall into any of the following categories will constitute gross misconduct and may result in summary dismissal:

- defamatory;
- offensive or obscene;
- untrue or malicious;
- of a political nature;
- in breach of copyright.

If employees receive inappropriate text messages, these must be notified to management immediately. TACT's preferred method of communication is by telephone or email rather than to text where possible.

Employees must ensure personal mobile telephones are switched off at all times during working hours.

Employees must not use mobile telephones whilst driving a vehicle, or in any other hazardous situation.

All international, roaming calls and data is barred from your company mobile phone. In rare circumstances these bars can be removed but employees must fully reimburse TACT for this usage. Please be aware these costs may be extremely high especially in the case of roaming data.

Employees should also undertake to reimburse TACT for the following types of mobile phone usage:

- Texts to premium numbers, this includes 6 digit numbers (e.g., voting for TV programmes – X Factor, Britain’s Got Talent, etc.).
- Texts to overseas numbers.
- MMS (multi media messaging services) to all numbers – e.g., sending photos/ videos/music files – unless employees can provide a work related reason.

Employees are permitted to dial Directory Enquiries on: 800 118 3733. But not permitted to phone Directory Enquiries on six digit numbers – i.e., 118 118 or 118 500 – as the cost of these calls are extremely high.

Calls to 0845 and 0870 numbers are not included in the bundled contract minutes and therefore should be used sparingly as they can also incur high charges.



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COMPUTERS

To maximise the benefits of our computer resources and minimise potential liability, employees are only permitted to use the Company's computer systems in accordance with the Company's Data Protection and Monitoring policies as well as adhering to the following guidelines.

General Rules

The Company's computer systems, software and their contents belong to the Company, and they are intended for business purposes. Employees are permitted to use the systems to assist in performing their jobs.

The Company has the right to monitor and access all aspects of its systems, including data which is stored on the Company's computer systems in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Employees must receive prior approval from management before using any part of the computer systems for personal use.

All emails are governed by data protection therefore, wherever a child or foster carer is named within an email, staff must ensure copies are printed and filed for records accordingly

Security

Employees are required to log on to the Company's computer systems using their own password (where provided) which employees are required to keep secret. Employees should select a password that is not easily broken (e.g., not his or her surname).

Employees are not permitted to use another employee's password to log on to the computer system, with or without that employee's permission. If an employee logs on to the computer using another employee's password, that employee will be liable to disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal for gross misconduct.

Any employee who discloses his or her password to another employee will be liable to disciplinary action.

To safeguard the Company's computer systems from viruses, employees are not permitted to load or run unauthorised games or software, or to open documents or communications from unknown origins. Where the computer has Internet or electronic mail (Email) facilities installed, employees are not permitted to download or open files from the Internet. Email attachments received must be forwarded to the IT department, or designated IT person, for virus-checking prior to opening.

On leaving the Company's employment, and at any other time at management request,



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employees are required to hand in all Company information and data held in computer-useable format.

Use of the Internet and Email

The Company's computer systems contain an email facility which is intended to promote effective communication within the Company on matters relating to its business.

The email system should therefore be used only for that purpose. The Company encourages employees to make direct contact with individuals in preference to communicating via email.

Messages sent using the email system should be written in accordance with the standards of any other form of written communication, and the content and language used in the message must be consistent with best Company practice. Messages should be concise and directed to relevant individuals on a need to know basis.

Messages sent over the email system can give rise to legal action against the Company. Claims of defamation, breach of confidentiality or breach of contract could arise from the misuse of the system. It is therefore vital for email messages to be treated like any other form of correspondence. You are also reminded that these email messages may be disclosed to the individual and any legal action could be commenced against the Company relevant to the issues set out in the email. Therefore, care must always be taken when referring to individuals.

Monitoring

Monitoring will not take place unless it is carried out in accordance with the Company's Monitoring policy. Please therefore refer to the Company's Monitoring Policy for further details where applicable.

Inappropriate Use

Misuse of the Company's computer systems may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Examples of misuse include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Sending, receiving, downloading, displaying or disseminating material that insults, causes offence or harasses others
- Accessing pornographic, racist or other inappropriate or unlawful materials
- Engaging in on-line chat rooms or gambling
- Forwarding electronic chain letters or similar material
- Downloading or disseminating copyright materials
- Transmitting confidential information about the Company or its clients
- Downloading or playing computer games
- Copying or downloading Software



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CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

Introduction

A confidentiality policy is necessary to protect our customers, staff, volunteers and other's associated with TACT from the possibility of information about them being passed on to individuals or organisations who have no right to that information.

It is also important to provide guidance to all concerned on the extent to which confidentiality is to be preserved, circumstances in which it may be breached, and measures to be taken in either eventuality.

General confidentiality statement

All TACT staff, adoption and foster panel members, foster carers and adopters are expected to respect the rights of children, young people and their birth families as well as each other to privacy and confidentiality within the constraints of legal requirements and the safety of other people.

Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed and this should always be made clear to customers where this is the case, for example in matters involving safeguarding children from harm.

This policy covers not only information given deliberately by the person concerned or by other people about the person, but also information acquired accidentally or through observation.

Where it is thought necessary to pass on information to another individual or organisation this will be on a strictly 'need to know' basis. The consent of that person about whom the information is to be passed on should be sought if possible and that person should be informed that information has been passed on and to whom it has been passed. This could for example involve a foster carer informing a child / young person placed with them, that he / she had spoken to their social worker and passed on information about how they were doing at school.

Day to Day Practice

In ensuring compliance with this policy, confidentiality needs to be an issue that is taken seriously on a day to day basis in all our interactions with customers.

This should include as examples –

- Safe storage of written customer information and operating a clear desk policy so confidential material is not left accessible.
- Safe storage of electronic information so this is safeguarded through use of passwords and limiting access to those members of staff that need to see the



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material.

- Ensure office discipline is maintained in not inviting people into the office without checking their identity and who they are here to see.
- Not providing confidential information over the phone or by e mail without ensuring you know the identity of the person you are talking to or communicating with. Unless you are clear on the identity of the person you are talking with, always telephone them back. There may be instances for example where birth parents are seeking to trace the placement of their adopted child and may use subterfuge to try and gain that information.
- Ensuring that existing policies about working at home and storage of confidential information on computers are followed.
- In day to day interactions with customers such as through interviews and phone calls being sure to clarify when required, how information about them will be used and stored and also to ensure that professional boundaries are maintained so inappropriate sharing of personal information and experiences does not take place.

Specific Conduct for TACT Employees

All TACT employees sign as part of their conditions of employment, a confidentiality agreement which also applies to other staff such as adoption and foster panel members.

Employees are required to keep confidential, both during their employment and at any time after its termination, all information gained in the course of their employment about the Company's business and that of the Company's customers, except in circumstances in which they are required to disclose information by law or in the course of their duties.

Employees are not permitted to engage in any activity outside their employment with the Company which could reasonably be interpreted as competing with the Company.

Employees are required to seek permission from a manager prior to taking on any other employment while working for TACT to ensure there are no conflicting demands.

Any queries received from the media must be referred immediately to your line manager. Employees must not attempt to deal with queries themselves.

Specific Conduct for Foster Carers

The following extract is from the foster care agreement that all foster carers have to sign. Specific parts of this e.g storage of records need to be checked on a regular basis through supervising social work visits and in the annual review.

'The carer agrees to confidential information on computer and other records held by TACT

under data protection legislation, including foster carer assessments, reviews, reference and checks, being divulged to responsible local authorities in order for those authorities to make decisions on suitable placements.'

'The carer agrees to ensure that the information given to them in connection with any child placed with them (or other TACT carer) is kept strictly confidential and not disclosed to any person without the consent of the responsible local authority or TACT during this agreement and after termination of this agreement.'

'The carer agrees to ensure that all written records concerning the child placed, are kept securely in a locked cabinet.'

'The carer agrees to give an undertaking not to discuss TACT's business, or matters concerning any child cared for or previously cared for by TACT with any member of the press or media, and to refer any approach to the appropriate area manager.'

Circumstances in which confidentiality may be breached.

TACT has a 'duty of care' to the users of its services and its own employees. It may be therefore be necessary to breach confidentiality to ensure this 'duty' is carried out. If a situation arises when this may occur you must discuss with your line manager who can assist in the decision making and involve HR and Mentor for additional advice if needed. Examples of this could include;

There may be situations involving bullying and harassment of staff that come to HR's attention where Health and Safety requirements mean that action need to be taken or where an offence may have been committed.

In relation to Safeguarding children and young people, specific procedures apply where promises of confidentiality cannot be made to young people, carers etc where offences may have been committed and where referral and investigation by the police and relevant care authority take precedence over individual's rights to confidentiality and privacy.

Other Relevant Policies and Procedures

The issue of confidentiality is also covered in a number of other policies and procedures. These include –

'The Code of Conduct' in the staff handbook, pages 41 to 43

'The Data Protection Policy' in the staff handbook.

'The Retention of Personal Data Policy' in the Policies and Procedure folder

'The recording and access to information' in the Foster Care and Supervising Social Worker Standards and Practice Handbook' pages 79 to 89

'Safeguarding Children' in the Policies and Procedure folder

'Whistle blowing Procedures' in the staff handbook.

DATA PROTECTION POLICY

Introduction

The Data Protection Act 1998 protects employees against the misuse of personal data, and now covers records held both manually and electronically.

It requires that any information held should be:

- Processed fairly and lawfully;
- Obtained and processed only for specified and lawful purposes;
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive;
- Accurate and kept up-to-date;
- Held securely and not held for longer than is necessary;
- Not transferred to a country outside the European Economic Area unless there is an adequate level of data protection.

The Act also gives employees certain rights. For employment purposes, the most important right is the right to access the personal data held about the employee.

Purposes for which data is held

Personal data relating to employees is collected primarily for the purposes of:

- Recruitment, promotion, training, redeployment and/or career development;
- Administration and payment of wages;
- Calculation of certain benefits including pensions;
- Disciplinary purposes arising from an employee's conduct or inability to perform his/her duties;
- Performance review;
- Recording of communication with employees and their representatives;
- Compliance with policy and/or legislation with regard to health and safety or other employment legislation;
- Provision of references to financial institutions, to facilitate entry onto educational courses and/or to assist future potential employers;
- Staffing levels and career planning.

The Company considers the following data relevant:

- Personal details including name, address, age, status and qualifications. Where specific monitoring systems are in place, ethnic origin and nationality will also be deemed as relevant;
- References and CVs;
- Emergency contact details;
- Notes on discussions between Management/Line Manager and the employee;



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- Appraisals and documents relating to grievance, discipline, promotion, demotion or termination of employment;
- Supervision notes
- Training records;
- Salary, benefits and bank/building society details;
- Absence and sickness information.

Employees or potential employees will be advised by the Company of the personal data which has been obtained or retained, its source, and the purposes for which the data may be used or to whom the data will be disclosed.

The Company will review the nature of the information being collected and held, on an annual basis, to ensure there is a sound business reason requiring the information to be retained.

Sensitive Personal Data

Sensitive personal data includes information relating to the following matters:

- the employee's racial or ethnic origin;
- his/her political opinions;
- his/her religious or similar beliefs;
- his/her trade union membership;
- his/her physical or mental health or condition;
- his/her sex life; or
- the commission or alleged commission of any offence by the employee.

The employee's **explicit written consent** must be sought at the point at which sensitive personal data is collected.

Responsibility for the Processing of Personal Data

The Company will appoint a Data Controller as the named individual responsible for ensuring all personal data is controlled in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Employees who have access to personal data must comply with this Policy and adhere to the procedures laid down by the Data Controller. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will result in disciplinary action being taken up to and including summary dismissal.

Use of Personal Data

To ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and in the interests of privacy, employee confidence and good employee relations, the disclosure and usage of information held by the Company is governed by the following conditions:

- It must be used only for one or more of the purposes specified in this policy;

- Company documents may only be used in accordance with the statement within each document stating its intended use;
- Provided that the identification of individual employees is not disclosed, aggregate or statistical information may be used to respond to any legitimate internal or external requests for data (e.g. surveys, staffing level figures);

Personal data must not be disclosed, either within or outside the Company to any unauthorised recipient.

Data Held for Equal Opportunities Monitoring Purposes

Where data obtained about applicants is to be held for the purpose of equal opportunities monitoring all data must be anonymised.

Disclosure of Personal Data

Personal Data may only be disclosed outside the Company in the following circumstances with the employee's written consent, where disclosure is required by law or where there is immediate danger to the employee's health.

Accuracy of Personal Data

The Company will review personal data regularly to ensure that it is accurate, relevant and up to date.

In order to ensure the Company's files are accurate and up to date, and so that the Company is able to contact the employee, or another designated person in case of an emergency, employees must notify the Company as soon as possible following any change in their personal details (e.g. change of name, address, telephone number, marital status; loss of driving licence where relevant, next of kin details etc).

Standard printouts of personal records will be issued to all employees on an annual basis for the purposes of ensuring the data is up to date and accurate. Employees will be entitled to amend any incorrect details and these corrections will be made to all files held on the Company's information systems. In some cases, documentary evidence, i.e. qualification certificates will be requested prior to changes being made.

Once completed, the above forms will be stored in the employee's personnel file.

Access to Personal Data

Employees have the right to access personal data held about them. The Company will arrange for the employee to see/hear all personal data held about them, within 40 days of receipt of a written request. For employees who have left the Company a £10.00 administration fee is payable.

Please see additional guidance on Data Protection on the TACT Hub under HR – Data Protection

DISABILITY

Introduction

The law prevents discrimination against disabled people at work. TACT have set out its policy on disability for your guidance and to ensure that we comply with our legal responsibilities to disabled people.

Any employee who believes that he or she has been unfairly discriminated against because of a disability or for reasons related to their having a disability can use the grievance procedure.

Disciplinary action will be taken against any employee who is found to have committed an act of discrimination against someone who has a disability. This includes treating them less favourably because of their disability or for a reason related to it such as harassment or victimisation or failing to make reasonable adjustments to prevent a disabled person being placed at a substantial disadvantage at work.

Serious breaches of policy will be taken as gross misconduct.

Recruitment

Recruitment is carried out on the sole basis of the applicant's abilities and suitability for the job. A disability will not of itself justify the non-recruitment of an applicant. Reasonable adjustments to the application procedures will be made as required to ensure that applicants are not disadvantaged because of disability.

No applicant will be considered unsuitable for appointment or less suitable than another applicant unless full consideration has been given as to whether a reasonable adjustment can be made to overcome any effect of their disability upon suitability for the post.

Induction

When a disabled employee commences employment we will, in consultation with the disabled employee, ensure that such reasonable adjustments are made as required to enable him or her to work safely and effectively and to secure equal access to the benefits of employment.

Training and Career Development

We recognise that all employees have equal rights to training, promotion and other aspects of career development based purely on their abilities. Promotion and training will be made accessible to disabled employees by such adjustments as are reasonable.



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Benefits

Disabled employees have equal access to all benefits and facilities and reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary.

Harassment

Harassment of disabled employees will be a disciplinary offence and may constitute gross misconduct. Any unwanted conduct that violates a disabled person's dignity or creates an intimidating hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for him or her is illegal.

Retention

As part of our commitment to equal opportunities for disabled people we will ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to retain disabled employees in employment.

We will make such adjustments as are reasonable to enable a disabled employee to carry out their duties. This will include but is not limited to consideration of the provision of specialist equipment, job re-design, re-training, flexible hours, remote working and/or re-deployment.

Adjustment

The prime responsibility for arranging the appropriate adjustment will lie with the Senior Management Team who will at all times consult with the employee concerned whose agreement will be sought. The expertise of the disabled people concerning their own disability will be recognised.

Where we do not have the relevant expertise to resolve the problem we will where required consult an outside specialist.

Once an adjustment has been made it may need to be reviewed at agreed intervals to assess its continuing effectiveness.

DISCLOSURES & DISCLOSURE INFORMATION

What this policy covers

The Company uses a Disclosure service to assess the suitability of individuals for employment in positions of trust. As recipients of Disclosure Information, the Company must comply fully with the relevant Code of Practice.

This policy outlines the Company obligations in respect of the handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure Information. It also sets out your obligations regarding disclosing information and the implications of an unsatisfactory disclosure being received.

The Company's responsibilities

General principles

Where a Disclosure is deemed both proportionate and relevant to the position concerned, all application forms, job advertisements and recruitment briefs will contain a statement that a Disclosure will be conducted in the event of the candidate being offered the position.

The Company also complies fully with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosure Information.

Use of disclosure information

Disclosure Information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which your full consent has been given.

In the event of a Disclosure showing information held by the police, the Company will arrange to meet with you to discuss this issue and reserves the right to withdraw any employment offer or terminate your employment. A risk assessment will be completed by the manager in respect of this information.

Storage and access

Disclosure Information is held separately from your personnel file and stored securely, in lockable, non-portable, storage containers with access strictly controlled and limited to those who are entitled to see it as part of their duties.

Handling

In accordance with relevant legislation, Disclosure Information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. The Company maintains a record of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure Information has been revealed and recognises that it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

Retention

The Company will not retain your Disclosure Information for any longer than is absolutely necessary. This is generally for a period of up to six months, to allow for the consideration and resolution of any dispute or complaint and for consideration by the relevant care body inspectorate.

If, in exceptional circumstances, it is considered necessary to keep Disclosure Information for longer than six months, the Company will consult the relevant statutory bodies and will give full consideration to your rights under the Data Protection Act 1998. Throughout this time the usual conditions regarding safe storage and strictly controlled access will prevail.

Retention of Disclosure Records for Scotland

Disclosure records will be retained following recruitment of staff and other workers until the next annual inspection by The Scottish Care Commission.

Disposal

Once the retention period has elapsed, the Company will ensure your Disclosure Information is immediately destroyed by secure means. While awaiting destruction, Disclosure Information will not be stored in any unsecured receptacle (e.g. waste bin).

The Company will not keep any photocopy or other image of the Disclosure Information or any copy or representation of the contents of a Disclosure. However, the Company will keep a record of the date of issue of a Disclosure, the name of the subject, the type of Disclosure requested, the position in relation to which the Disclosure was requested, the unique reference number of the Disclosure and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

The risk assessment will, however, be kept for the duration of the individual's employment.

Your responsibilities

You are required to inform the Company immediately if at any time during your employment you are questioned in connection with, charged with or convicted of any criminal offence or if you are in receipt of any notice of prosecution or police caution. Failure to notify the Company may result in disciplinary action against you, up to and including dismissal without notice for gross misconduct.

Disclosures will be undertaken every 3 years and if you refuse to undertake a disclosure or if the Disclosure & Barring Service/PVG is unable to register you, the Company will investigate whether you can continue to be employed with the Company in activities that are not regulated work, but the Company reserves the right to dismiss you.

DIVERSITY

Policy Statement

TACT actively encourages diversity to maximise achievement, creativity and good practice and bring benefit to individuals and communities.

TACT encourages all people it works with and for to contribute to an environment in which people feel comfortable expressing how they feel and what they need, knowing they will be treated with respect and that their contribution will be valued.

The way we work, train and learn within TACT reflects both the mission and objectives of TACT and the spirit and intentions of legislation that outlaws discrimination and promotes equality and diversity.

TACT makes reasonable adjustments to working practices, equipment and premises and offers, where appropriate, additional support to trustees and employees to ensure they are able to take a full and active part in TACT's work.

TACT also recognises that its ability to meet these diverse needs is enhanced by having a diverse workforce which generally reflects local populations in the area that it services and which has the skill, knowledge and understanding to achieve the service objectives. It commits itself to valuing diversity in its workforce and to developing and training employees to improve their ability to meet TACT's goals within an overall framework of equality.

TACT is committed to be an organisation that:

- Has a workforce generally reflecting the population it serves.
- Accepts that all have a right to their distinctive and diverse identities.
- Understands how valuing diversity can improve TACT's ability to deliver better services to children and young people and so reduce disadvantages.
- Actively consults with staff, foster carers, young people and other stakeholders to ensure that the services, which are provided, are responsive and reflect the diversity of need.
- Provides a supportive, conducive environment where all employees have the opportunity to reach their full potential.
- Allows employees to challenge behaviour that de-values diversity and equality in a safe and constructive manner

TACT believes that employees have an important part to play in making this happen and it requires every employee to recognise and discharge their own responsibility. It undertakes to listen to its foster carers, young people and customers and to involve them in the development of services, which recognise and value their diversity.

TACT uses its best endeavours to deliver services in a manner that genuinely recognises the role and benefits of an inclusive society that brings opportunities and access, not barriers, to individuals.



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DRESS AND APPEARANCE GUIDELINES

In order to present a professional and welcoming image the Company requires its employees to abide by the following standards of dress.

- No slogans or writing on garments should be displayed which may cause offence to other employees or customers.
- Clothes must be clean, ironed and free from rips and tears.



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TACT's Employee Pay Framework – (Updated 16th April 2019)

Purpose: This policy describes TACT's approach to pay for its employees. TACT is committed to ensuring this policy is applied fairly and consistently across the whole organisation.

Scope: This policy applies to all employees but does not relate to occasional irregular hours or self-employed workers.

TACT values its employees and believes they should receive appropriate recognition and remuneration for their work and contribution. TACT recognises that the attainment of equitable pay requires a pay system that is transparent and based on objective criteria.

This policy seeks to ensure that the pay and grading of jobs is fair and non-discriminatory and complies with equal pay legislation and associated codes of practice. TACT's aim is to offer pay and benefits which allow it to compete effectively with other employers in the sector and local areas in order to attract and retain the highest quality people.

Pay Structure – Job Evaluation

TACT have introduced a Job Evaluation scheme which was designed by Reward Connected (RC), a specialist pay consultant working in the charity sector. Each unique role within the organisation was evaluated by RC, based on the information collated in the Job Evaluation System (JESS) job questionnaires. The outcome of these job evaluations resulted in a grade structure, with the grades being labelled Exec to I. Grades with (P) in brackets are benchmarked with the commercial and private sector salary data.

JESS is a 7 factor, paper based, analytical job evaluation system designed to evaluate all jobs within an organisation. The system can be used in any sector and has a clear link to pay - as RC maintains a database which covers all possible job scores, with each relating to extensive market data. Perhaps most importantly, it is simple and easy to use and produces robust results in a clear and transparent way.

Each of the 7 JESS factors contain a number of pre-determined levels from which a trained analyst has to select (based on a completed job questionnaire and sometimes an interview) the one which best represents the role.

Each factor has an individual matrix attached to it where the analyst can read off scores for each of the chosen levels. This provides numeric scores for each factor, which are then added together to give the total 'job score/weight.

The 7 factors contained within JESS, each with up to three sub-dimensions, are:

1. Skills
2. Intellectual Demands
3. Judgement
4. Use of Resources
5. Communications
6. Physical Demands & Co-ordination
7. Working Conditions and Emotional Demands

Any future Job Evaluations (whether new roles or roles where the content has substantially changed) will be undertaken by a trained consultant from Reward Connected. The consultant will use the JESS system to undertake that task. This will ensure the independence of the process and the consistency of application right across the organisation.

Pay Range Design

Each Grade contains a single pay range that is 22% in length (measured from top to bottom) which draws on a wide range of market pay data to cover all jobs that sit within it. The benefit of this is that it includes more market data, covering a range of functions and skill sets, and so provides much greater robustness. This overcomes the problem of using smaller data sets, where drilling down to specific and limited data can produce skewed and irreversible outcomes [e.g. short-term spikes in the market caused by skills shortages or the introduction of new skill sets]. The market rates which RC use have been derived by taking median data from a range of published surveys and RC's pay database. Having established the median market rates – (now referred to in this policy as the 'Target Rates') RC created the pay ranges around these.

Salary Scales (2019/20)

The salary grades and pay bands for Posts 2019/20 are shown below:-

GRADE	MINIMUM ENTRY POINT £	TARGET RATE £	MAXIMUM RECRUITMENT RATE £	APPLICABLE POSTS
Exec	70,200	78,000	85,800	Executive Directors, HR Director, Director of Fostering Services
A (P)	64,800	72,000	79,200	
B (P)	49,500	55,000	60,500	Area Managers, Head of Education
C (P)	44,100	49,000	53,900	Finance Business Partner, Finance Manager
C	40,500	45,000	49,500	Deputy Area Managers, Enquiries Manager (Fostering Service), Fostering Regional Recruitment Lead.
D (P)	39,600	44,000	48,400	Performance Support Director
D	38,700	43,000	47,300	Lead Pracs and Specialist Social Workers
E (P)	35,100	39,000	42,900	Marketing and Recruitment Manager, Communications Manager and Business Support Manager, Corporate Services and Facilities Manager, Digital Activity Manager, Senior HR Advisor
E	33,561	37,290	41,019	Snr Supervising Social Workers
F (P)	31,500	35,000	38,500	Snr HR Officer, Finance and Customer Support Manager, Credit Controller, Payroll Officer
F	29,700	33,000	36,300	Supervising Soc Worker, NQSW's, Play Therapist, Duty Soc Worker, Policy & Research Advisor
G (P)	26,100	29,000	31,900	Finance and Customer Support Officer, Admin Managers, HR Officers, PA's to Executive Directors, Marketing Officer, Graphic Designer
G	24,300	27,000	29,700	Placement Officers, Child Resource Workers, Enquiry Officers,
H (P)	19,800	22,000	24,200	Finance Assistant, Senior Admin Officers, Senior Admin Officer (BDU), Fundraising and Comms Assistant, Marketing Assistant, HR Administrator, Business Support Officer
I (P)	18,000	20,000	22,000	Admin Officers



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Recruitment Policy and Process

New recruits are expected to start on a pay level that reflects their assessed competence and their experience of TACT on appointment. This pay level will typically be between the minimum entry point (MEP) and the target rate. The starting point for pay will be subject to a discussion between HR (taking the lead on this) and the relevant TACT Recruiting Manager. The target rate is for a fully competent individual and, generally, it is highly unlikely that any individual will have the relevant TACT experience and role and organisational knowledge on appointment.

TACT is committed to paying the Living Wage.

Supplements

Although the majority of rates of pay for all roles at TACT will have been captured in the salary scales (as these are based on broad market data) there may be some exceptional circumstances. As the market moves so quickly, it is important that TACT has ways of capturing and reflecting this – thus the need for supplements.

Largely, supplements are there to assist the recruitment of those with “skill sets” which command a premium in the work place. The level of supplement to be paid also differs by grade.

Even though a supplement is identified for certain skills it is not essential to pay it – so TACT should only do so where there is a need. It’s not a must, it’s more of a “where necessary” to help with recruitment and retention.

Supplements are calculated as a percentage of the individual’s pay range, but it is not expected to exceed the maximum recruitment rate (MRR). Supplements are pensionable and will be used in the calculation of all statutory entitlements e.g. sickness, holiday.

Red Circled Salaries

There are some circumstances, where an individual’s rate of pay is higher than the target rate for their job. In such a case, the individual’s salary will be “red circled” – that is to say “fixed at the existing pay level” until such time that the target exceeds their existing salary.

Allowances

1. Acting-up allowances and Honorariums

Those individuals that act up (an upward move from one grade to another) for over a continuous period of 4 weeks (pro rata if part time), will start on a pay level that reflects their assessed competence/experience on appointment and this will typically be between the entry point and the target rate. If the individual’s salary is higher than the entry rate of the grade they are moving into, then they will move to the entry rate or 5% increase on salary, whichever is the greater. The target rate however will act as a ceiling i.e. the target rate is the maximum salary that could be achieved on acting up. Exactly where



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they start is a discussion between HR (taking the lead on this) and the line manager. Once the acting up period has finished, the employee will automatically revert back to their previous basic salary.

Where an employee takes on responsibilities and tasks over and above their current duties, the CEO will have the discretion to recommend an honorarium payment, which may have to be approved by the Trustees. This will be on a case by case basis and only in exceptional circumstances.

2. London Weighting

The London Weighting allowance for 2019 is £3613.00 pa and this will be paid in addition to the salary grades for any roles based in London. This allowance is non pensionable and will be reviewed on an annual basis in line with the NJC Inner London Weighting. Home Workers are not entitled to the London Weighting Allowance unless they live within a London Borough.

3. Out of hours Allowance

All staff on an OOH rota will be paid a standard allowance of £1500 per annum (pro rata for part time staff that cover the rota on a pro rata basis). For Supervising Social Workers working in a 'small team' this rises to £2000. A 'small team' is defined as one which has 4 or fewer social work staff on the rota. Staff are entitled to claim TOIL for time spent on the telephone and any relevant follow up work e.g. recording. If an out of hours visit is required then TOIL can be taken or an hourly payment rate can be claimed in line with their existing job role.

Social Work staff who are on OOH during a Bank Holiday can claim an additional £75 per Bank Holiday. This Bank Holiday allowance applies to all Social Workers, including managers.

4. The next pay review

The next annual pay review date will be 1st September 2021. There will be no automatic annual pay uplifts/increases. However, TACT's trustees will consider the issues of pay uplifts/increases in August/September of every year, and they will have the power to award pay increases **subject to organisational affordability** (which will be expressed in percentage terms). The trustees can determine variable pay awards for each grade. The trustees will be committed to bringing those that are paid below target rate up to the target rate as soon as practically possible.

For employees to be eligible for a pay uplift/increase, they must have been in post 6 months prior to the 1st September. To ensure transparency, statistics will be circulated in October every year so that staff can understand what grades get a percentage increase (if any are given) and the basis for any conclusions reached.

For employees who are above their target rate, the Trustees can decide whether to award a one of payment or not each year.

The job evaluation scheme and pay ranges shall be reviewed every 1 to 5 years.

Individual job roles may be put forward for re-evaluation in January and July every year to capture when changes occur such as restructures or jobs being merged together. Only one re-evaluation request from an individual can be considered in any 12-month period. A job evaluation questionnaire must be completed by the individual and be sent to the line manager and HR for re-evaluation.

EMPLOYMENT REFERENCES

TACT is happy to provide employment references for current and ex-employees.

All references will be dealt with by the HR Department. Reference requests received by managers should, therefore, be forwarded immediately to the HR Department so that an appropriate and prompt response may be prepared.

It is TACT's policy not to complete reference request forms.

The procedure for dealing with references is as follows:

1. The HR Department will respond to requests for references confirming, by letter, the following information:
 - i) the dates during which the employee or ex-employee was employed by TACT.
 - ii) the employee or ex-employee's job title.
 - iii) a brief description of the duties undertaken (by reference to the current job description).
2. HR will send a draft of the letter to the appropriate line manager, requesting that they add an additional statement commenting on the employee's key strengths in relation to how they performed in the role and if there were any concerns about their performance.
3. The line manager will promptly return the re-drafted letter to the HR Department who will add a statement confirming whether or not the employee or ex-employee was subject to any disciplinary action during the period of employment.
4. A final copy of the reference will be prepared, signed and posted by a member of the HR Department

It should be noted that it is not permitted for any employee to write a personal reference on TACT headed paper.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

TACT believes that businesses are responsible for achieving good environmental practice and operating in a sustainable manner.

We are therefore committed to reducing our environmental impact and continually improving our environmental performance as an integral part of our business strategy and operating methods.

It is our priority to encourage our customers, suppliers and all business associates to do the same. Not only is this sound commercial sense for all; it is also a matter of delivering on our duty of care towards future generations.

This policy applies to all TACT staff, principally those based and working from an office setting. The content may also be useful to those staff who are home based and receive a home working allowance from TACT.

TACT is committed to protecting and enhancing local and global environments and will ensure that activities are carried out in a sustainable way. It may be that from time to time; environmentally friendly products or services are more expensive than other materials or services. In these cases, a decision to use a non – environmentally friendly products or services will need to consider the difference in cost and consequent implications for TACT's budgets and the expected environmental benefit to the product or service.

We will wholly support and comply with or exceed the requirements of current environmental legislation and codes of practice.

Minimise our waste and then reuse or recycle as much of it as possible.

Minimise energy and water usage in our buildings, vehicles and processes in order to conserve supplies and minimise our consumption of natural resources, especially where they are non – renewable.

Operate and maintain vehicles with due regard to environmental issues as far as reasonably practical and encourage the use of alternative means of transport and car sharing as appropriate.

Apply the principles of continuous improvement in respect of air, water, noise and light pollution from our premises and reduce any impacts from our operations on the environment and local community.

As far as possible purchase products and services that do the least damage to the environment and encourage others to do the same.

Assess the environmental impact of any new processes or products we intend to introduce in advance.

In order to turn the above policy into practical action in each office the following will be required. It is the responsibility of the Area Manager [or a clearly nominated individual] to ensure that the following is implemented.

Paper

We will minimise the use of paper in the office by ensuring that all photocopying undertaken is double sided. Where possible, ensure that written communication is sent electronically to avoid the unnecessary use of paper. Printer settings should be on the default double sided printing setting.

- We will reduce the use of packaging as much as possible.
- We will seek to buy recycled and recyclable paper products.
- We will reuse and recycle all paper where possible. All offices will have dedicated paper recyclable bins beside desks and printer / copiers and recycled toilet and hand towels will be ordered.

Energy and Water

- We will seek to reduce the amount of energy used as much as possible.
- Lights and electrical equipment will be switched off when not in use and appropriate advice indicated on office walls, by switches, on monitors etc. To ensure that at the end of the day that all lights, computers, phone chargers, photocopiers etc. are switched off at the wall plug if possible.
- Heating will be adjusted with energy consumption in mind and office temperature set at under 20 degrees.
- The energy consumption and efficiency of new products will be taken into account when purchasing as well as in the management of facilities, purchase and rental of new offices.
- Where possible long life light bulbs to be used.
- Dripping taps to be switched off and active replacement of more efficient flushing systems of toilets where possible.

Office Supplies

- We will evaluate if the need identified can be met in another way.
- We will evaluate if renting / sharing a more appropriate option than purchasing equipment.
- We will evaluate the environmental impact of any new purchases we intend to purchase.
- We will favour more environmentally friendly and efficient products wherever possible. This will include buying refillable pens and long-life markers and avoiding the use of unnecessary chemicals.



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Transportation

- We will reduce the need to travel as far as practicable, reviewing office and staff location to ensure this meets business requirements and reduces transport costs.
- We will promote the use of travel alternatives such as e mail, video / phone conferencing and use of Skype.
- We will accommodate the needs of those using public transport or bicycles; this includes paying employees a cycle mileage rate equivalent to its car mileage rate for employees that use a cycle for business journeys.
- We will ensure shared transport arrangements are in place as far as practicable.

Maintenance and Cleaning

- Cleaning materials used will be as environmentally friendly as possible and this will be discussed with relevant cleaning contractors.
- Materials used in office refurbishment will be as environmentally friendly as possible e.g. purchase of new furniture.
- We will only use licensed and appropriate organisations to dispose of waste.

Community

- We will ensure that our office buildings are maintained appropriately and the associated environment e.g. gardens are maintained to a high standard.
- We will use local labour and materials where available to reduce CO2 emissions and to help the local community.
- We will comply with local expectations of recycling waste by using appropriate recycling bids that are in place for each specific office location.

Monitoring and Improvement

- We will comply with and exceed all relevant regulatory requirements.
- We will continually improve and monitor environmental performance.
- We will continually improve and reduce environmental impacts.
- We will incorporate environmental factors into business decisions and this will be added into the format for all trustee reports.
- We will increase employee awareness through training.
- We will review this policy and any related business issues at the quarterly administrative managers meetings.



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Culture

- We will involve staff in the implementation of this policy to ensure greater commitment and improved performance.
- We will update this policy at least annually in consultation with staff and other stakeholders where necessary.
- We will provide staff with relevant environmental training.
- We will work with suppliers, contractors and sub contractors to improve their environmental performance.

Every TACT office will produce an annual action plan in line with the content of this policy and procedure to set out how this will be implemented locally. This will be reviewed and updated each year.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Policy Statement

TACT is fully committed to providing a harmonious working environment in which employees are able to maximise their full potential and to contribute to business success, irrespective of their age, gender, ethnic origin, race, disability, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or marital status.

TACT is committed to identifying and eliminating discriminatory practices, procedures and attitudes throughout the organisation. TACT believes that all employees are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect while at work and to treat others with dignity and respect also when representing the business in any capacity outside of the usual working environment. TACT expects employees to support this commitment and to assist in all possible ways.

The aim of this policy is to prevent discrimination, provide guidance to resolve any problem should it occur and prevent recurrence.

Preventing Discrimination in Employment

TACT endeavours to ensure that no employee or job applicant is subject to unlawful discrimination, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of gender, gender reassignment, race (including colour, nationality, caste and ethnic origin), disability, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy or maternity, part-time status, age, religion or belief, political belief or affiliation or trade union membership. This commitment applies to all the aspects of employment outlined below:

- Recruitment and selection, including advertisements, job descriptions, interview and selection procedures.
- Training for all staff involved in the recruitment of staff.
- Training for all staff to ensure employees are aware of the policy and practice.
- All training in which staff participate will actively take account of equal opportunities issues and address any discriminatory remarks of behaviour.
- Promotion and career development opportunities.
- Terms and conditions of employment, and access to employment-related benefits and facilities.
- Grievance handling and the application of disciplinary procedures.
- Selection for redundancy.



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Implementation

TACT will establish an ongoing monitoring and reviewing system to assess the impact of our policies and their related activities, inform on progress and take necessary action to encourage good practice and tackle any negative impact. This is set out in this policy under 'Monitoring'.

The lead responsibility for the Equal Opportunities policy rests with Daniella Black, the HR Director for TACT. As part of her role and function within the organisation she is responsible for leading on recruitment, staff monitoring, development and production of relevant HR standards and review and implementation of this policy within TACT.

Equal Opportunities Awareness

All employees will be informed of the Company's expected standards of conduct in respect of equality of opportunity at the induction stage of employment. This will outline the need for equality in the workplace, the impact that discrimination may have on fellow employees and what the consequences of derogatory conduct or remarks may include. It will also include discussion on issues of difference that the line manager and employee need to take account of in their supervisory relationship.

Where necessary, the Company will take additional steps to ensure there is an appropriate awareness amongst employees of the effects of discriminatory behaviour. Training our employees to implement this policy is undertaken.

Harassment

Harassment is physical, verbal or non verbal behaviour which is unwanted and personally offensive to the recipient, and which causes the recipient to feel threatened, humiliated, intimidated, patronised, denigrated, bullied, distressed or harassed.

The way in which Complaints of Unlawful Discrimination and Harassment will be handled

Discrimination and harassment are often complex matters, and there is no single way of dealing with every suspected or alleged instance. In some cases employees may be able to deal satisfactorily with an issue by raising it with their immediate manager.

If an employee wishes to make a formal complaint he or she should use the Company's Grievance Procedure which is set out in the Employee Handbook.

The Company will treat seriously all allegations of unlawful discrimination or harassment.

If an Employee is Accused of Unlawful Discrimination or Harassment

If an employee is accused of unlawful discrimination or harassment, the Company will investigate the matter fully.

In the course of the investigation the employee will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegation and provide an explanation of his or her actions.

If the Company concludes that no unlawful discrimination or harassment has occurred, this will be the end of the matter.

If the Company concludes that the claim is false or malicious the complainant may be subject to disciplinary action.

If on the other hand the Company concludes that the employee's actions amount to unlawful discrimination or harassment he or she may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including summary dismissal for gross misconduct.

Sexual Harassment

Any claim or litigation directed against an individual employed by TACT whether a Consultant or otherwise, should not be assumed to create any legal responsibility on TACT's part to assist any individual or any financial liability for TACT on behalf of such an individual. Claims for sexual harassment are specifically excluded from TACT's insurance policies and claims of other kinds may not necessarily be met by these insurance policies. In such cases as sexual harassment claims, the individual concerned facing a claim should assume neither TACT nor TACT's insurance policies will assist them.

All allegations of sexual harassment against any employee will be dealt with rigorously under the Disciplinary and Grievance procedure.

Victimisation

It is unlawful to victimise any individual who has pursued a case, complaint or allegation of racial discrimination by ; disciplining them, dismissing them, transferring them [unless this is requested by the victim[s]], subjecting them to any other detriment [e.g. moving them into a lower paid / status job]

All allegations of victimisation against any employee will be dealt with rigorously under TACT's disciplinary and Grievance procedure.

Employees' Responsibilities

All employees have the right to work in an environment which is free from any form of harassment. All employees have a responsibility to help ensure a working environment in which the dignity of employees is respected; employees must ensure their behaviour to colleagues, clients or and customers does not cause offence and could not in any way be considered to be harassment or victimisation. The Company fully recognises employees' right to complain about harassment or victimisation should it occur and recommends the following procedure:

Informal Complaint

Where an employee does not view the harassment as serious or where it is not repeated and the employee simply wants the behaviour to stop, they should approach the alleged harasser directly, making it clear to the person(s) harassing them that the behaviour is offensive, is not welcome and that it should be stopped.

Where the employee finds this difficult or embarrassing, they may request a member of the management team to approach the alleged harasser informally on your behalf.

Formal Complaint

The formal complaints procedure is appropriate if the employee views any harassment or victimisation to which they have been subjected as serious, if they prefer this method or if the harassment or victimisation continues after the informal procedure has been used. All formal complaints will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially under the Company's Grievance Procedure.

Formal complaints should be made in accordance with the Company's Grievance Procedure. An investigation will be conducted to clarify and formally record the nature of the complaint and the events surrounding the complaint, and will include meetings with anyone who can assist with the investigation. During this time, every effort will be made to distance the associated parties from each other.

If an Employee is Accused of Discrimination or Harassment or Victimisation

If an employee is accused of acting in a discriminatory manner towards a fellow employee or a job applicant, or if they are accused of harassment or victimisation, they will be given a proper opportunity to rebut the allegation as part of the investigation, and provide an explanation of their actions.

If it is concluded that there was no discrimination or harassment or victimisation, this will be the end of the matter. If it is concluded that a false claim has been maliciously made against the employee, the person or persons responsible may be subject to disciplinary action.

If it is concluded that they have acted in a discriminatory manner, or have harassed or victimised another employee, their manager will consider what action to take. This may range from counselling to formal disciplinary action, including dismissal in serious cases.

Equal Pay

Men and women are entitled to be paid equally without any bias on the grounds of sex and that this right is set out in the Treaty of Rome and is enforceable under UK Law.

All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that male and female staff receives equal pay for the same work and for work rated as equivalent and for work of equal value

Training

We will train, develop and promote on the basis of merit and ability and encourage employees and applicants from all races.

Recruitment

TACT's Equal Opportunities policy is implemented within the separate procedures relating to recruitment of staff within the organisation. As part of TACT's commitment to Equal Opportunities recruitment practices will include a range of open recruitment methods such as the use of job centres, careers offices as well as press advertisements.

In advertisements and publicity literature reference will be made to TACT being an Equal opportunity employer and make reference to other achieved standards such as Investors in People and the 2 tick disability symbol.

Management Responsibilities

Managers are the guardians of equality of opportunity within their areas of responsibility. Equal Opportunities are part of the larger management responsibility of ensuring that the employment environment provides employees with motivation to do a good job. This will be impossible to achieve if individuals feel that they are being treated unfairly.

Where problems or complaints arise, managers must take these seriously and make sure they are fully investigated and that any necessary follow-up action is taken. This may include initiating disciplinary action against employees who have committed acts of discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

Monitoring

Equality of opportunity is about good and effective employment practice, and about creating an environment in which everybody can be assured that their contribution is valued. TACT will not tolerate harassment or victimisation of any kind in the working environment and will take positive action to prevent its occurrence. In this connection the Company will monitor its policies and will implement changes in order to improve them as social attitudes and legislation change. This commitment applies to all the Company's employment policies and procedures, not just those specifically concerned with equal opportunities.

Equal opportunities will be monitored at every stage including:

- All elements of the recruitment and selection process; job applicants and existing employees;
- Promotion and transfer
- Terms and conditions of employment
- Work life balance and sexual harassment policies
- Grievance and disciplinary procedures
- Resignations, redundancies and dismissals

EXPENSES

The Company will normally reimburse employees in respect of any expenses wholly and necessarily incurred in the course of their work. The Company reserves the right to refuse to pay an expense claim where the expenditure is unreasonable, unnecessary or which are submitted more than 3 months late.

Claims for business mileage must be supported by a completed business mileage record on Concur giving full details of the journeys involved. All business mileage can be claimed for and staff are not expected to deduct their normal commute mileage from home to their place of work.

Any special ad hoc arrangements made to suit particular circumstances will not be considered to set any form of precedent.

Claims will be reimbursed provided:

- They are reasonable.
- They are backed up with receipts.
- The appropriate documentation has been completed.

Cars

- Mileage at the rate notified and in force.
- All necessary parking costs.
- All congestion and toll charges.

TACT will not pay for any parking or congestion **fin**es incurred whilst on TACT business.

Employees are required to use the most cost-effective transport methods and routes in conducting business.

NB. Employees are responsible for any fines or penalties that he or she incurs.

Trains Standard class fares. First Class Rail Fares may be purchased where it has been agreed by the line manager in advance.

Flights Where necessary while on authorised business.

Meals If an employee is travelling for business purposes early in the morning (leaving home before 7am), then they are able to claim up to £6 for breakfast. No other drinks, snacks, lunches may be claimed for during working hours unless it has been authorised in advance by your line manager



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Overnight Accommodation for all employees

On occasions employees may require staying away from home in order to attend meetings or training and in such circumstances TACT will:

- Pay for overnight accommodation, including breakfast as agreed with your line manager up to £100 per night. However, TACT request that employees are mindful by keeping costs to a minimum and seek discounts from Hotels where possible.
- TACT will pay staff £60 per night for staying away from home on TACT business.
- TACT will reimburse all meal expenses up to £10 for lunch and up to £28 per evening meal on receipt of a valid receipt.
- If you are arriving home after 8.00 pm from a location other than your normal place of work, you are entitled to claim up to £15.00 for an evening meal, subject to receiving prior agreement from your line manager. A receipt must be provided.
- TACT will pay an additional allowance of £5 per night (in line with tax regulations) to cover other out of pocket expenses. No receipts will be required for this allowance.

RESIDENTIAL BREAKS / CHILDREN'S EVENTS

After 5pm when on a residential break with young people, an allowance of £75 per day can be claimed Monday to Friday and £150 for Saturday and £150 for Sunday (Weekends consist of two sessions – am and pm £75 per session). All of these rates for employees are subject to tax and NI. In addition, TACT's overnight disturbance allowance of £60 may be claimed for residential breaks requiring an overnight stay. Please note that the overnight disturbance and waking night allowance cannot both be claimed – only one can be claimed per night.

When an employee is on a residential break (big and little weekends), they may claim 7 hours TOIL (maximum) which must be taken on the employee's first working day back to work. This must be recorded on CIPHR Net. This will enable and support employees to have an adequate rest and recovery period before returning to work.

WAKING NIGHT ALLOWANCE

A “Waking Night Allowance” of £90 per night will be paid to each staff member who is required to undertake this duty.

The £90 Waking Night Allowance is instead of, not additional to, the Overnight Allowance and must be agreed with the line manager in advance of the trip.

CLAIMS SHOULD BE MADE ON CONCUR BY THE 5TH OF THE MONTH FOLLOWING THAT TO WHICH THE EXPENSES RELATE BUT IN ANY EVENT SHOULD NOT BE SUBMITTED LATER THAN THREE MONTHS THEREAFTER.

HARRASSMENT AND BULLYING

What this policy covers

As part of the Company's overall commitment to equality of opportunity, it is fully committed to promoting a fair and harmonious working environment in which everyone is treated with respect and dignity and in which no individual feels bullied, threatened or intimidated. The aim of this policy is to prevent harassment and bullying in the workplace which includes harassment and bullying by other workers or by third parties you encounter while doing your job.

Harassment or bullying at work in any form is unacceptable behaviour and will not be permitted or condoned and will be viewed as a gross misconduct offence which may result in dismissal without notice.

What is harassment and bullying?

Harassment and bullying detract from a productive working environment and can impact on the health, confidence, morale and performance of those affected by it, including anyone who witnesses or has knowledge of the unwanted or unacceptable behaviour.

Definition of harassment

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct based on sex, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, religion or belief, age, race or disability which affects the dignity of anyone at work or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

A single incident of unwanted or offensive behaviour can amount to harassment. Some examples are given below, but many forms of behaviour can constitute harassment.

These examples are:

- Physical contact, ranging from touching, pushing or grabbing to punching or serious assault
- Verbal or written harassment through jokes, offensive language, defamatory remarks, gossip, threats or letters
- Unwelcome sexual behaviour, including unwanted suggestions, propositions or advances
- The sending or displaying of material that is pornographic or obscene, including emails, text messages, video clips, photographs, posters, emblems or any other offensive material
- Inappropriate posts or comments on or via social media commonly known as "cyber bullying"
- Isolation, non-cooperation at work or exclusion from social activities



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- Coercion, including pressure for sexual favours
- Inappropriate personal contact, including intrusion by pestering or spying

It should be noted that it is the impact of the behaviour that is relevant and not solely the motive or intent behind it.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating or insulting behaviour, which, through the abuse of power, makes the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable.

Bullying can be a form of harassment and can undermine an individual's self-confidence and self-esteem and cause them to suffer stress.

Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. As with harassment, there are many examples of bullying, which can include:

- shouting at or humiliating others
- high-handed or oppressive levels of supervision
- unjustified, offensive and/or insulting remarks about performance
- excluding employees from meetings, events or communications without good cause
- physical or emotional threats

Bullying can occur in the workplace and outside of the workplace at events connected to the workplace, such as social functions or business trips.

Your rights and responsibilities

Your rights

You have the right to work in an environment which is free from any form of harassment or bullying. The Company recognises your right to complain about harassment or bullying should it occur. All complaints will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially.

Every effort will be made to ensure that, when you make a complaint, you will be protected from further acts of bullying and harassment. If others also give evidence or information in connection with the complaint, they equally will be protected. Perpetrators of these acts will be subject to disciplinary action which may warrant dismissal.

Your responsibilities

You have a responsibility to help ensure a working environment in which the dignity of everyone is respected. You must comply with this policy and you should ensure that your behaviour to colleagues and anyone connected to the Company, does not cause offence and could not in any way be considered to be harassment or bullying.

You should discourage harassment and bullying by making it clear that you find such behaviour unacceptable. You should also support colleagues who suffer such treatment and are considering making a complaint. You must alert a manager or supervisor immediately to any incident of harassment or bullying to enable the Company to deal with the matter promptly and effectively.

The Company's responsibilities

This policy and procedure will be communicated effectively to all employees, and TACT will ensure that all employees and all managers and supervisors are aware of their responsibilities. Appropriate training will be provided particularly for those undertaking advisory and investigation roles.

In resolving a complaint of harassment this policy consists of informal and formal stages. It is in the interests of TACT and individuals concerned that any complaints of harassment and bullying are dealt with internally and as quickly as possible. Where employees feel confident and comfortable that an informal approach may be sufficient to stop the harassment or bullying from happening then this should be tried in the first instance. Attempting to ensure a resolution at informal stage is recommended before using the formal procedure. However, the decision on whether to complain under the formal or informal process rests with the complaint alone.

TACT recognises that it is the right of employees to determine for themselves whether the behaviour of another is unacceptable to them and to bring a complaint in respect of harassment. The determination of whether a complaint of harassment is justified and if so, what disciplinary action should apply shall be for management to decide.

Resolutions

Informal Resolution

The main aim of informal resolution is to tell the harasser that their behaviour is unacceptable and that it must stop. In some cases the harasser may not be aware that their behaviour is causing offence. The individual may choose to speak to the harasser face to face, on the telephone or to write a letter.

In some situations the individual may not feel confident enough to do this, particularly if their complaint is against a superior. In this case, they should ask a colleague or representative to speak to the harasser on their behalf. Alternatively employees can speak to their Manager or if they wish a senior manager whom they trust. This Manager should ideally be within their own department, but, if necessary, can be in another department, or employees can approach a member of Human Resources to try and resolve the matter. Details of any meetings should be kept.

Where an employee raises an allegation of bullying with a manager in another department this manager must report the allegation to Human Resources to take appropriate action. Employees may also wish to seek support from the Employee Support Helpline National Support Centre on 0800 068 6895 or Minicom 0800 731 0302.



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Mediation

Where a complaint is made and the employee just wants the behaviour to stop, then mediation is another option open to the parties concerned to reach a resolution. Successful mediation requires genuine co-operation of both complainant and the employee whose behaviour is the subject of the complaint. Without this it is unlikely to succeed in repairing working relationships. Complainants will not be encouraged to participate in mediation or any other meeting with those whose conduct they have complained about against their wishes.

In effect the mediation will manage the process of bringing two parties together to reach mutual agreement. The mediator should be someone who is impartial and trusted by all concerned, should ideally be distanced from the work station and be trained in conflict resolution. In some cases a mediator may be sought from an external organisation. A meeting must be arranged within 14 days after the initial request and the person being complained about must be informed within that timescale.

Ideally the mediator should meet separately with each party and then bring them together in a neutral location to reach a positive solution acceptable to both parties. However, the format of the meetings will depend on the situation and personalities involved. Sometimes several mediation sessions may be required.

Meetings should be non-threatening and allow each party to discuss their perception of events and have their say. The ultimate aim of the meeting should be to develop an action plan to make clear required behaviours for future relationships.

Procedure

In order to raise a complaint of harassment or bullying, please refer to the Company Grievance Procedure (outlined elsewhere in this Employee Handbook).

HOMEWORKING POLICY AND AGREEMENT (updated 2/12/2020)

Introduction

TACT is a home working organisation and regards the mutual trust between employer and employee as important to making this work effectively.

- TACT will pay a Home Working allowance of £750 per year per employee

Contractual Home working

Your normal place of employment is your home when you work for TACT. It is therefore important that the following conditions are met: -

- TACT will supply IT hardware (a laptop, monitor, keyboard, mobile phone)
- Wanstor recommend a Broadband speed of 50Mbps download speed with a minimum speed of 20Mbps so please ensure this.
- TACT will not be providing printers except in cases where there is a clear business need or where there is a need for a reasonable adjustment. Where there is a business case or reasonable adjustment, TACT will stand the cost of consumables from local printing budgets. If you choose to have a printer in other circumstances, then all cost will be borne by the employee.
- TACT will not provide furniture to new employees joining TACT. Should an employee need to purchase a chair and desk to work at home, we will provide a loan of up to £500. Any outstanding balance on leaving TACT will be deducted from final salary.
- On leaving TACT, all IT equipment (laptop, mobile phone etc.) must be returned to TACT. Failure to return equipment before the employee's last working day, will result in a deduction being made from the final salary.
- If you are linking your own electrical equipment with that of TACT's, you are responsible for its upkeep and consumables.

The following also applies:

Contractual pay and place of work

- ** Home Workers are not entitled to the London Weighting Allowance unless they live within a London Borough (see TACT's Pay Framework Policy).
- The employee will receive an annual home-working allowance of £750 per annum (pro rata) for part-time workers and subject to tax and NI deductions). This allowance will cover TACT's entire contribution to all non-IT office equipment, broadband, heating, utilities etc and no staff will be able to claim separately for Broadband or for any other home working-based expenses



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- This will be payable in the employee's monthly salary. If an employee is on maternity/adoption leave, they will receive the Homeworking Allowance for the duration of their ordinary maternity/adoption leave but will not be paid the allowance whilst on additional maternity/adoption leave.
- There will be a £500 interest free loan available for all staff who need to buy any non-IT equipment (e.g. furniture) that will be re-payable at £50 a month for 10 months.
- The home will be recorded as the place of work in the employment contract. The employee will also be required to sign an additional home-working agreement, as part of their overall employment contract (see attached).
- **Front Line Facing Workers supporting carers and young people only** should seek permission from your line manager ahead of any decision should you wish to relocate from your current address farther than a 35 mile radius. This is required, as you are in a front line facing worker supporting carers and young people and this will enable TACT to assess the cost and business implications in relation to your role and location should you decide to move in the future.

Health and Safety Issues

We are legally obliged to ensure the health and safety of homeworkers in the same way as office-based staff. We are therefore required to ensure that:

- all equipment is safe;
- an assessment of your workstation is conducted;
- information and training on the safe use of equipment, including display screen equipment, is provided; and
- relevant risk assessments are carried out.

All employees who work from home have a duty to ensure, insofar as is reasonably practicable, that they work in a safe manner and that they follow all health and safety instructions issued by TACT from time to time.

Requirements to Work from Home

- TACT will need to be satisfied that the home workplace is safe and this will be a condition of the provisional offer of employment. A risk assessment on the home working base will be undertaken before a final offer of employment is made/or before the contractual home working arrangement commences for existing employees. TACT's equipment will be PAT tested by Wanstor and this will involve employees bringing laptops, mobile phone chargers etc. to an agreed location when required. Employees need to ensure that



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cables etc. are neatly stored, and that lighting and ventilation are adequate within their working environment. This will involve health and safety site visits every 6 months. TACT reminds employees that they also have a legal responsibility to ensure their own (and other people's) health and safety in the home workplace. TACT will ensure that each contracted home-worker is supplied with information on home-working from the Health and Safety Executive. Please see the H&S Manager for further information.

- The organisation, as an employer reserves the right to visit the home workplace for the purposes of inspection, after at least 24 hours' notice, giving the time and date of inspection.
- TACT will insure its own equipment. It is the responsibility of the individual workers to insure their own property.
- TACT will need to be satisfied that the equipment being used (including desk and tables) is ergonomically satisfactory. This will be assessed by the employee completing a DSE assessment.
- The recommended broadband connection speed is 50Mbps with a minimum of 20Mbps. TACT require all staff to make sure they meet this minimum requirement
- It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that by working from home, they are not negating the conditions of their home insurance or breaching conditions imposed on them by landlords or mortgage lenders.
- It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that their home environment is such that they can work undisturbed. Childcare must not be combined with work, and if young children will be at home, appropriate arrangements for someone else to look after them during work time must be made.
- Where the employment contract gives the home as the place work, employees may claim travel expenses at the usual agreed rate for work journeys away from their home.
- The normal working hours of work for home-based workers will be set out in the contract of employment.
- Home workers will be required to check their email at least twice on a working day (unless they are working away from home on work trips).

- Home workers must also comply with company policy to record movements on the Outlook calendar system. This is essential to ensure that home workers movements are recorded for health and safety reasons. Home workers also need to comply with TACT's lone working policy when travelling to and from visits, meetings etc.
- Home workers must not allow members of your family or third parties to access or use TACT's equipment. Employees who work from home are responsible for keeping all documents and information associated with our business secure at all times.
- Where paper documents are held (which should be in exceptional circumstances as most information should always be stored electronically) it should be kept secured when not being used.
- Home workers must have a desktop shredder, where required, which will be provided by TACT, to dispose of confidential paperwork.
- Home workers must also comply with TACT's Remote Working IT policy when working at home.

Avoiding Isolation

- TACT, as an employer, is aware that home working can mean that employees feel isolated, or out of touch with developments. TACT will undertake to ensure that:
 - All employee communications are sent promptly.
 - Home workers will be treated equally in terms of access to training and career development.
 - Supervision sessions and appraisals offer an opportunity for home workers to identify any problems of isolation which may be occurring.

Home-workers will be expected to attend employee away days and employee team meetings at agreed locations.

Rest breaks

The employee must ensure they take adequate rest breaks, as set out by the Working Time Regulations 1998:

- take a break of at least 20 minutes;
- ensure the time period between stopping work one day and beginning the next is not less than 11 hours; and
- have at least one complete day each week when no work is done.

Using Shared Office/Communal Spaces in the Community to work

It is possible, in exceptional circumstances, that an employee may choose to work from a 'shared office' for part of the working week, and at home for remainder of the week. If alternating homework of this kind applies, the conditions set out above will apply for the home-based element of the work. TACT will not pay for costs associated with working in a 'shared office' and travel between a 'shared office' and home, when the worker is contractually home based.

Working Abroad

- You are not permitted to work from another Country whilst contracted to work for TACT, unless you have the written permission from a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

HOMEWORKING AGREEMENT

- This agreement supplements the employment contract between you (the employee) and TACT, The Courtyard, 303 Hither Green Lane, London SE13 6TJ.
- You are contractually based for work purposes in your own home.
- The Organisation will undertake a Home workers Risk Assessment and DSE Assessment.
- The organisation reserves the right to visit the home workplace and will give you at least 24 hours' notice of any such visit, giving time and date of inspection.
- IT Equipment and telephone equipment supplied by TACT for your use at work remains the property of the organisation. The organisation is responsible for insuring its own property. You remain responsible for insuring your own property.
- You are responsible for ensuring that, by working from home, you do not breach any conditions imposed on you by your insurer, landlord or mortgage lender. You are responsible for ensuring that the use of your home for work purposes does not require planning consent.
- You are responsible for ensuring that all work files, documents and information are kept safe and confidential and are not accessed by others.
- You are required to inform the organisation immediately if for any reason you plan to move to a new house or if there are changes at home, which could impinge on your ability to work satisfactorily from home.
- You will receive an annual home-working allowance of £750 per annum subject to tax and NI deductions (pro rata for part-time workers) towards heating, lighting and broadband costs. This will be payable in your monthly salary.
- You must ensure you have a minimum of 20Mbps download speed for a Broadband connection. The recommended speed is 50Mbps.
- ** You are not entitled to the London Weighting Allowance unless you live within a London Borough.



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- If you are on maternity/adoption leave, you will receive the Homeworking Allowance for the duration of your ordinary maternity/adoption leave but you will not be paid the allowance whilst on additional maternity/adoption leave.
- You will be required before leaving the organisation to return all IT equipment provided by TACT. Failure to do this will result in a deduction being made from your final salary.
- If an interest free loan of up to £500 is supplied by TACT for assistance in buying furniture i.e. desk, chair etc. and the loan remains outstanding on you leaving TACT, the remaining balance will be deducted from your final salary.

Signed:
(TACT)

Date:

Signed:
(Employee)

Print Name:
(Employee)

Date:

**** London Weighting Allowance will continue to be paid to employees who were based from South London and East London Offices prior to Homeworking Contracts – January 2021**

JURY SERVICE

You are entitled to time off work for jury service. You should notify management immediately on receipt of the jury summons, giving full details.

You will not normally be paid for this time off, and you are advised to claim the expenses to which you are entitled from the Court. These will typically include compensation for loss of earnings.



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LONE WORKING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Policy

A consistent standard for the safety and protection of all staff is maintained during and outside normal working hours when staff are 'at work' on behalf of TACT away from their usual work base.

Managers of lone workers carry out risk assessments and appropriate support is provided to them.

Guidance for Managers

Generic risk assessments must be carried out by the Area Manager for each group of lone workers who carry out the same task/job. The generic risk assessments must be tailored to specific circumstances i.e. initial visits, supervised contact, visits to foster carers etc. Staff must be informed about controls and provided with any appropriate support (e.g. when two workers are necessary, availability by phone, agreeing times for telephoning etc.)

General Guidance to Lone Working Staff

- Always ensure that you have left details of your visits in the office (in the diary system).
- If you are away from your base and have made changes to your itinerary, you must ring the office and let others know.
- Find out as much as you can about the clients you are visiting. If there is any possibility of a confrontation of any sort, an assessment must be made as to whether the visit should take place, whether it may be more suitable for two members of staff to visit, or whether the client should be invited to the office as an alternative.
- Be prepared, know your routes and ensure that your vehicle is properly serviced, maintained and has sufficient fuel.
- On arrival at a client's property, consider how you will leave. It may be desirable to turn the car around now.
- Be prepared to leave at any time if your instincts or professional judgement tell you that matters are getting out of control.



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Practical considerations for lone working staff and managers

- Staff whose job involves working alone will nominate a partner, relative, friend or buddy to act as their non-work contact. However, where a member of staff is unwilling or unable for whatever reason to nominate somebody, they must inform their line manager who will make alternative arrangements, for example, nominating a colleague.
- It is the responsibility of each TACT Area Manager to provide a list of designated contacts to members of staff who work alone.
- It is the responsibility of staff given these designated contacts to pass them on to their chosen partner, buddy, relative or friend. This will allow that person to follow up their concern in the event of an unusually late non-return.
- The designated contact will establish the likely whereabouts of the staff member and attempt to confirm the location and well being of the member of staff.
- Failure at this stage, to establish the safety of the member of staff will necessitate the involvement of Police. The TACT 'designated contract' will contact the Police, either by dialling 999 or going to the nearest local Police station.

MEDIA POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Media Policy

Any communication with the media is carried out in a professional and polite manner giving an appropriate response in line with the agreed guidance set out in this document.

Practice Guidance

This guidance is designed to help anyone dealing with the media, including in a negative situation. The points below outline the appropriate response and line of action TACT expects staff and foster carers to take. In a negative situation this can help to limit damage caused by unforeseen events, or avert a crisis developing.

It is important to understand that whoever answers a call from a member of the media is on the front line and is therefore in a good position to immediately reassure the caller that our organisation is always professional and helpful.

Maintaining a good reputation is vital to our credibility with the public and with all those who are involved in working with us professionally.

These are the steps to follow:

Taking a call from the media

Be helpful, state that you would like to help and that you will either:

- Put the caller through to a SMT member who is qualified to advise/investigate further.
- That you will ask the appropriate person (SMT member) to call back if they are not available.

Do not make comments personally – and don't get drawn in!

However if it seems to be a negative story try to avoid saying 'no comment'. Be helpful and reassure that you will find the best person to speak to the caller.

Take a note of:

- The name and title of the caller
- Their telephone number
- How did they hear about the query?
- The name of the TV/radio show, or newspaper/magazine column or section.
- Ask what their schedule is, or deadline.
- A media enquiry needs prompt attention
- If it's for a positive story, we don't want to lose the opportunity for good publicity.
- If it's a negative story, we need to show we are approachable, honest and



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professional. A quick response from the appropriate person with all the facts can often stop a possible negative story from proceeding.

If you are concerned about the call or its subject and the Director of Country is not available, contact a member of the Senior Management Team.

Spokesperson's checklist for interview briefing

Before agreeing to interview, discover as much as possible about the circumstances, such as the name of interviewer, programme, general purpose, scope of enquiry, whether live or recorded, scope for restricting/controlling questions, length of item to be used and likely use of data etc.

As comprehensive and complete brief as possible must be prepared on the subject matter and supporting items – organisation data, performance, products, problems, plans etc.

If the topic is likely to be controversial or embarrassing to the person or organisation, appropriate responses and statements should be prepared, ideally trying to limit the 'damage' that could be caused or to develop news which mitigates the effect.

The spokesperson needs to have total control of the brief, of all facts and of prepared responses and to be able to speak knowledgeably concerning the subject matter. Any hesitation, lack of confidence or inadequate knowledge will be communicated to the listener or viewer and create doubt and or undermine veracity. In this respect, it may be better to admit 'I don't know' rather than trying to flannel through an answer. At least saying 'I don't know' (although it should only be used once or twice in any one interview) does have the ring of truth about it and can indicate honesty and straightforwardness.

Three or four simple messages, or arguments that the organisation wishes to promote must be developed, possibly with 'changes of direction' sentences, so that if the interviewer leads off in one direction, the spokesperson may be able to direct it to the organisation's preferred message. This approach needs to be controlled since a constant refusal to answer the actual questions put may lead to a more inquisitive or confrontational interview.

There should be no assumption that the interviewer will not have full knowledge of all the facts; assume that everything is known and then prepare answers accordingly.

The spokesperson must be ready for the 'off the cuff' and unrehearsed question deliberately introduced and designed to catch him unaware leading to the making of an unprepared or unwise comment or answer.

Above all the spokesperson must be able to keep calm.

Under pressure and/or goading, to be able to think quickly and laterally in order to fend off or turn aggression and criticism, to retain control, and never lose their temper.



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The spokesperson must recognise that most live media interviews last a minute or less and thus it will be possible only to put across two or three authoritative comments. They need to be calm, alert and interested and serious – a spokesperson should never try to be humorous, flustered, or flippant. To a large extent, particularly on television, the manner a message is delivered can be more effective than the content.

They should take time to think about the questions, asking for them to be repeated if necessary – but do not take too long.

False statements should not be allowed to pass unchecked. The record should be corrected, tactfully but firmly.

Be positive not defensive. It may be better to ‘own up’ to a bad performance or event with a ‘promise to improve’ or rectify, rather than trying to defend an untenable situation.

MENOPAUSE AT WORK

Recent research has shown that six out of ten women experiencing menopause symptoms report a negative impact on their work. Many employees suffer in silence and are too embarrassed to confide in colleagues at work due to age and gender related stigma around menopause and the belief that their competency will be judged in light of disclosing their condition. However, many small relatively low-cost adjustments can be made to ensure employees continue to be successful and are able to work effectively during this time.

Menopause is a natural process experienced by most women that marks the end of the reproductive life, most typically occurring between age 45 and 55. A range of physical and psychological symptoms may be experienced with fluctuating severity. Women aged over 50 are a significant and growing employee group within the UK workforce whose experience, skills and talent drive organisational strategy.

TACT is committed to having an inclusive culture and supportive working environment for all employees experiencing the menopause.

Purpose

Employers have a responsibility to look after the health and wellbeing of all their employees. This document sets out guidelines for all staff on how best to support individuals dealing with menopausal symptoms at work with the aim of:

- Ensuring everyone understands what menopause is
- Encouraging open, comfortable discussions about menopause
- Ensuring that all staff are clear about TACT's relevant policies and procedures on menopause
- Ensuring that all staff understand where they can seek and obtain support from if they are experiencing menopausal symptoms
- Ensuring employees experiencing menopause symptoms are confident in discussing the challenges that menopause brings and request reasonable adjustments if required
- Minimise absenteeism and ensure retention of staff experiencing menopausal symptoms

What is Menopause and it's Symptoms?

Menopause is defined as a biological stage in a woman's life that occurs when she stops menstruating and reaches the end of her natural reproductive life. Usually, it is defined as having occurred when a woman has not had a period for twelve consecutive months (for women reaching menopause naturally). The average age for a woman to reach menopause is 51, however, it can be earlier or later than this due to surgery, illness or other reasons.



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Peri-menopause is the time leading up to menopause when a woman may experience changes, such as irregular periods or other menopausal symptoms. These symptoms can start to occur years before menopause.

Post-menopause is the time after menopause has occurred, starting when a woman has not had a period for twelve consecutive months.

The menopause is different for every woman. 75% of women experience some symptoms and 25% could be classed as severe. The combination of symptoms can cause enormous physical and emotional stress for the individual and affecting relationships at home and work.

Symptoms can include:

- Mental ill health including low mood, anxiety, depression, panic attacks, loss of focus, loss of confidence, becoming inexplicably emotional
- Hot Flushes and Night Sweats – with an outward appearance ranging from “blushing” to “post marathon sweat”
- Sleep disruption – leading to irritability and fatigue
- Palpitations – racing heart, shortness of breath
- Irregular menstruation – heavier or lighter bleeding, breakdown of regular cycle
- Joint and Muscle aches and stiffness
- Slower than usual recovery from minor ailments
- Repeated urinary tract infections
- Headaches
- Weight Gain
- Changes to skin, hair, body odour, saliva
- Changes to libido

Roles and Responsibilities

In the UK many workers do not disclose their symptoms at work for reasons such as worrying about job security, their competency being questioned, embarrassment about the personal nature of the symptoms, not knowing their line manager well enough or not wanting to talk to a male colleague. It is therefore important to recognise that there are several sources for support at TACT and that issues may be raised with line managers, or HR, MFHAs or Wellbeing Reps. While any disclosure by an employee is dealt with on a confidential basis, on occasion it may be necessary to share information in order to agree reasonable adjustments and/or ongoing support. In such circumstances, information should only be shared on a need to know basis with the minimum number of colleagues necessary after discussion with the employee concerned.

Line Managers - are responsible for:

- Being familiar with the TACT Menopause at Work Guidance and related legislative requirements addressed by the guidance
- Undertaking appropriate training and development on the topic
- Being receptive to open, sensitive and professional discussion about menopause
- Seeking HR advice on how to handle dips in performance and make reasonable adjustments
- Undertake risk assessments to avoid exacerbating an employees symptoms
- Ensuring employees are clear on how they can be supported, including referral to the employee assistance programme, ongoing dialogue and review meetings

Employees - are responsible for:

- Looking after their own physical and mental health
- Being open and honest with managers / HR and other parties providing workplace support
e.g. OH, Mental Health First Aider (MFHA)
- Contacting HR, a wellbeing rep, an MFHA or the employee assistance scheme (see useful resources for details) should they not wish to approach their line manager
- Contributing to a respectful, supportive and productive working environment for those experiencing menopause symptoms

Human Resources – are responsible for:

- Raising awareness of menopause in the workplace
- Maintaining the menopause related material in the Wellbeing Resources Files on SharePoint
- Advising line managers, MFHAs, Wellbeing Reps and employees on reasonable adjustments
- Maintaining awareness and making recommendations within the parameters of TACT's policies, best practice (eg ACAS Guidance) and related legislation
- Referring employees and line managers to the Employee Assistance Programme
- Advising on the need for risk assessments, Wellness At Work Plans (WAPS), escalation to occupational health as appropriate
- Developing manager briefings and a “Menopause Café” with the aim of sharing best practice and experiences
- Monitor absence levels to improve and develop support and ensure uniform application of policies



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TACT Employment Policies

The following policies may be useful in considering support mechanisms for employees experiencing menopause, available from the Staff Handbook on SharePoint:

- Flexible Working
- Dress and Appearance Guidelines
- Sabbatical
- Stress Policy

Employee Assistance Programme

The employee assistance scheme will also provide help and support 24 hours a day at unumuk.lifeworks.com or 0800 048 2702 (Username: unum and Password: lifeworks)

Other Resources -

[NHS Website](#) (overview of symptoms and treatments)

[British Menopause Society](#) (provides 'education, information and guidance to healthcare professionals specialising in all aspects of post reproductive health')

[Women's Health Concern](#) (the patient arm of the British Menopause Society)

[Daisy Network](#) (support for premature menopause or premature ovarian insufficiency) [Faculty of Occupational Medicine](#) (provides guidance on the menopause at work)

[The Menopause Exchange](#) (provides independent advice about the menopause, midlife and post-menopausal health)

[Menopause Matters](#) (an independent website providing up-to-date, accurate information about the menopause, menopausal symptoms and treatment options)

[Meg's Menopause](#) (an open source of information and advice dedicated to empowering women through an honest and frank discussion of all things menopause)

[My Menopause Doctor](#) (Dr Louise Newson provides information, medical evidence and resources)

[Happy Hormones for Life](#) (Nutritional advice for hormonal balance)

MONITORING POLICY

Employee monitoring covers ongoing monitoring of employees' use of telephones, fax, emails, internet use and recording of images of employees by video. Monitoring may include the following (where appropriate):

- Monitoring lateness by video cameras;
- Checking emails to ensure the system is not abused;
- Checking websites visited by employees using Company systems;
- Recording telephone calls;

Monitoring Without Employees' Knowledge

The Company will not monitor employees without their knowledge, unless the Company has reason to believe criminal activity is taking place.

In such instances, any monitoring will take place under the guidance of the Police and will be carried out in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Monitoring With Employees' Knowledge

The Company reserves the right to introduce monitoring from time to time. Prior to doing so, the Company will:

- Identify the purpose for which the monitoring is to be introduced;
- Ensure that the type and extent of monitoring is limited to what is necessary to achieve that purpose;
- Consult with affected employees in advance of introducing the monitoring;
- Weigh up the benefits the monitoring is expected to achieve against the impact on employees;

The Company will ensure employees are aware of when, why and how monitoring is to take place, and the standards they are expected to achieve.

If disciplinary action results from information gathered through monitoring, the employee will be given the opportunity to see/hear the information in advance of the disciplinary hearing and make representations about it.

The Company will ensure data collected through monitoring is kept secure, and access is limited to authorised individuals.

Telephones

Where monitoring of telephones takes place, the company will make employees aware of this. The company will make available upon request a telephone in a private area, not subject to monitoring, for employees to make limited personal calls in urgent situations.



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OUT OF HOURS POLICY

This policy and accompanying procedures bring together, into one document, a number of existing guidance documents regarding all aspects of providing an out of hours (OOH) support service to foster carers.

Legal Framework

Providing a specialist out of hours support service is a legal requirement. In England this is set out in Regulation 17 of The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011. In Wales it is in Regulation 17 of the Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003. In Scotland, providing an OOH service for foster carers is a legal duty only for Local Authorities and does not apply to IFA's.

Policy

All TACT foster carers will be able to access support and advice 24 hours a day, every day of the year without exception. To enable this, all TACT offices will provide a foster carer out of hours support service. This will be available to all foster carers during those hours when TACT offices are closed.

Procedure

Staffing of OOH service

Each TACT office will manage a rota of staff to undertake OOH support. This should be completed at least 3 months in advance. Each OOH service must have enough staff on its rota to be able to cover annual leave and sickness. A rota of less than 4 staff would be deemed non-viable. To this end, offices can provide OOH support in conjunction with another office. Decisions regarding the size of an OOH service can be made by the Area Manager in consultation with the relevant Executive Director of Children's Services (ECDS).

All Social Work qualified staff are expected to take part on an OOH rota. New Social Work staff must be made aware at interview of the requirement to be on an OOH rota. Exclusion from the rota can only be agreed in consultation with HR and this would normally be due to assessed health needs that exclude the worker from OOH work. It may be possible for staff members to temporarily come off the rota for personal and wellbeing issues, but again this can only be agreed in consultation with HR and only if compatible with the business needs of the service. Any such decision would not be a permanent arrangement and would be subject to regular review. Refusal to take part in an OOH service for reasons that do not fall into either of the previous two categories would be deemed as potential Gross Misconduct.

Out of hours rotas for Area Managers and Senior Managers will be stored in a Duty Folder that will be held in the SharePoint directory. It would be useful for local offices to add additional information as required e.g. local EDT and Police numbers.

All staff undertaking foster care out of hours support must be available to answer the call as soon as possible. This would usually be immediately but it is recognised that staff will be undertaking normal social activities outside work and situations may arise where a call is not made immediately but is a response to a voicemail message, or a delayed call back until the staff member is able to make the call in an appropriate situation. This return call should be made within 15 minutes as most foster carer calls are likely to be in an emergency and a prompt response is essential. Any failure to respond to an OOH call may result in disciplinary action.

OOH Social Worker will always be able to access support and advice from an Area Manager who is on call out of hours – known as the Senior Out of Hours Manager (SOOH). The decision as to when to call the SOOH has to be the professional judgement of the OOH Social Worker. The OOH Social Worker should always err on the side of caution and not be deterred from ringing the SOOH for any advice or support that they need. However, the SOOH must always be called if there are lone working issues (see section 4.4) or if the OOH worker becomes suddenly unavailable – i.e. If they become very unwell to the extent that they cannot work, are involved in an accident or have a bereavement whilst on call.

The SOOH is able to contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team who is on call – known as the DOOH -should they need to. This would normally be in circumstances that are quite serious such as the death of a child, an arrest of a foster carer or a very serious allegation, or where a child has gone missing and their immediate welfare is at serious risk. Again, this would be down to the professional judgement of the SOOH.

TOIL and Payments available for OOH staff

All staff on an OOH rota will be paid a standard allowance of £1500 per annum (pro rata for part time staff that cover the rota on a pro rata basis). For Supervising Social Workers working in a 'small team' this rises to £2000. A 'small team' is defined as one which has 4 or fewer social work staff on the rota. Staff are entitled to claim TOIL for time spent on the telephone and any relevant follow up work e.g. recording. If an out of hours visit is required, then TOIL can be taken, or an hourly payment rate can be claimed in line with their existing job role.

Social Work staff who are on OOH during a Bank Holiday can claim an additional £75 per Bank Holiday. This Bank Holiday allowance applies to all Social Workers, including managers.

The purpose of an OOH service

This service will predominantly be a telephone-based service but can be supplemented by Skype contact or in exceptional circumstances a home visit.

It is accepted that in some geographical areas a home visit cannot be made and appropriate discussions will need to take place with the relevant EDT team or in extreme circumstances the police.

Undertaking an OOH support visit

There may be occasions when the OOH Supervising Social Worker decides that a visit to a foster carer is required. It is expected that such situations would be rare and would only be undertaken when all other options such as a visit from the Local Authority EDT worker or the police have been exhausted. Making the decision to visit will be a professional judgement by the OOH Supervising Social Worker, but the Senior Out of Hours Manager (SOOH) must always be consulted before the visit is undertaken.

When a visit is made, lone working practice must be adhered to. The OOH Supervising Social Worker must first discuss the need for a visit with the SOOH. This discussion should include consideration of any other options available instead of a visit, the possible risks to the worker of visiting and the purpose of the visit must be agreed.

The SOOH must make a note of the address that the OOH worker is attending and agree a timescale by which the OOH worker will phone the SOOH. If that call is not received, then the SOOH must contact the OOH worker to establish that they are safe and well.

If the SOOH has any concerns at any time about the safety of the OOH worker, they must make a judgement as to whether to phone the police. This judgement can be made in consultation with the OOH Director (DOOH) but there should be no delay in phoning the police should the SOOH believe that the OOH workers wellbeing is at immediate risk.

It will often be the case that the greatest risk to the OOH worker will be from driving late at night, particularly in unlit rural areas. Therefore, the OOH worker must call the SOOH when they have returned home. Again, if the SOOH has any concerns regarding the welfare of the OOH worker then the process in point 4.4.4 must be followed.

Recording OOH activity and Notifications

Recordings of any activity should be made as soon as it is possible after the OOH event, and no later than 24 hours after the event. They must be made on CHARMS, with any e-mails saved or incident / notification forms signed and uploaded. The Supervising Social Worker for the foster carer must be made aware by the morning of the next working day of the event and that recordings have been made on CHARMS.

In England it is a statutory requirement to submit notifications to Ofsted within 24 hours of the notifiable event. In Wales and Scotland this is not the case, but it should be considered as good practice. Therefore, **TACT policy is that all notifications must be submitted to the country specific inspection agency within 24 hours** of the event. In England this is done via the Ofsted online portal, in Wales and Scotland it is via e-mail to the relevant inspection agency's e-mail address.

For a notifiable event that occurs Out of Hours during the week (Mon-Thurs) the OOH Social Worker must inform the relevant Area Manager the following morning and ensure that any recordings made are available to the Area Manager. The relevant Area Manager is then responsible for ensuring that the notification is made to the inspection agency within 24 hours of the event.

For notifiable events that occur over the weekend, it is the OOH Social Worker dealing with the incident that writes the notification via the Ofsted online portal (for incidents in England) or using the relevant form for Wales and Scotland. The OOH Social Worker is responsible for ensuring it is sent to the relevant inspection agency with 24 hours of the event. Prior to this they must make the SOOH Manager aware and confirm with that manager that the matter does require a notification. Any issues arising must be discussed, such as ongoing support needs and risk management over the weekend.

The OOH Social Worker must make the relevant Area Manager aware of the notification, actions taken and any plans agreed, by the following Monday morning.

Notification process for the OOH service that is shared by Wales and England regions.

Events that occur in England must be made via the Ofsted portal with 24 hours, and events that occur in Wales must be notified by e-mail to the Wales inspector within 24 hours. This is regardless of where the OOH Social Worker is based. The process on making notifications provided in section 4.5 of this policy still applies.

The relevant regulation schedules for notifications, that set out what situations require a notification, are very similar between the two countries. However, the relevant schedules must be available to the OOH workers on the Share Point duty folders for each region, so that they can be consulted prior to a notification being made.

The Area Manager for each region must ensure that their staff know both how to access the Ofsted portal and complete notifications on the Ofsted portal, and how to complete the Welsh notification form. The e-mail address for the Wales inspector must be available to English based OOH staff.

Notification process for the OOH in Scotland

Though the Inspectorate require immediate notification, it is accepted practice for fostering agencies to make the notification the next working day. The OOH Social Worker should immediately inform the SOOH by telephone of any significant events and inform the Area Manager as soon as possible on the next working day, or a Deputy Manager in their absence. The Area Manager or Depute, will complete the notification to the Scottish Care Inspectorate.

Providing an OOH Placements Service

There is limited evidence available to suggest that providing an OOH placement service is 'profitable', needed or the operational challenges in providing this are in line with staff members wellbeing. However, should an Area Manager want to implement an OOH placement service for their Area then the following applies:

If an office either individually, or in partnership with another wishes to provide an OOH placement service they will be allowed to do so. This will require HR advice, the agreement of staff who are being requested to undertake this, evidence of local business need and awareness of the consequences on day time operational work. An additional payment of £500 (pro rata if on the rota part time) will be given to those staff who undertake this. This would be in addition to the £500 for those staff working in a 'small team'.

There will be local flexibility for the Area Manager to set hours for the placement element of the service and the extent of cover provided. OOH placements would be made to foster carers without existing children in placement. There would also need to be an audit of carers who were willing to provide the service.

If staff take part in providing a placement service alongside the foster care support requirements then working obligations for the next working day need to be considered e.g. keeping the diary empty to allow some recovery time if there has been a busy out of hours duty. It is preferable for staff undertaking a combined placement / foster care support service to sign a working time directive waiver.

There are existing practice models within TACT that can be shared if Area Managers wish to provide this service. These include the OOH services that have been provided in the West Midlands and in Wales.

If an office does not want to provide an OOH placement service but still does receive OOH placement calls as part of a contractual service obligation, then the relevant local authority making the call should be informed if required that there is an out of hours service provided by TACT but there are no current carer vacancies available. It is not acceptable to indicate that we do not provide a service. The local office must provide an appropriate contact number that can be provided as part of contractual requirements to local authorities.

Review of the OOH service

The OOH service will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the service remains accessible to foster carers and provides appropriate support and guidance. This will also continue to look at responding to the ongoing views of staff and managers on the service as they arise.

PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

Professional Boundaries serve to protect the health, safety and welfare of carers and children, some of whom may be vulnerable.

However, they are also necessary to:

- To protect staff from undue pressure or allegations that might be made against them.
- To enable staff to better undertake their role by finding the right balance between compassion and professionalism.
- To ensure the welfare of children is safeguarded.
- To enable staff to deliver a fair service to all carers and children without accusations of favouritism or inequality.
- To provide consistency across all activities.
- To provide a framework to assist staff in managing both short- and long-term supervisory relationships with carers and children.

Legal Framework

This policy applies to all staff (full time, part time, temporary, fixed term, office holders and sessional and zero hours workers).

There are a number of existing HR procedures included in the TACT Employee Handbook relating to conduct, gifts and whistleblowing etc. which need to be read alongside these. Where appropriate, these have been inserted into this policy.

Specific professional codes of practice relate to registered social workers and these are set out by the Social Work England, The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and The Care Council for Wales (CCW). TACT staff who are registered social workers must be aware that a breach(es) of these professional codes of practice will lead to separate regulatory action by the relevant body independent to any action that TACT might take as the employer. Relevant guidance can be found on the relevant professional registration websites. These are set out at the end.

General guidance

In order to maintain professional working relationships, you must adhere to the following guidelines. You must:

- Never ask carers or children for personal information unrelated to your work.
- Never disclose inappropriate personal information about yourself e.g. your own personal problems; your home address etc. In some circumstances keeping your home address confidential may be impossible e.g. if you are a home worker and you live close to a foster carer. There may also be situations where you need to use your home phone number e.g. due to poor local telephone reception. In these



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circumstances you must make your line manager aware of this, so this can be considered in terms of appropriate allocation decisions etc.

- Never take carers or children to your own home.
- Never disclose personal information about carers or children to third parties.
- Never be complicit in, or engage in, illegal activities nor encourage carers or children to do so. In some situations, young people may for example be involved in 'risky behaviour' e.g. drug taking. Concerns of this nature must always be shared with the relevant local authority and the appropriate Safeguarding/ Child Protection Procedures followed.

As an example of the kinds of conduct required by the relevant social work bodies for England, Scotland and Wales, you must:

- Being honest and trustworthy;
- Communicate in an appropriate, open, accurate and straightforward way;
- Respect confidential information and clearly explain agency policies about confidentiality to service users and carers;
- Being reliable and dependable;
- Honour work commitments, agreements and arrangements and when it is not possible to do so. Explaining why to service users and carers;
- Declare issues that might create conflicts of interest and making sure that they do not influence your judgement or practice and;
- Adhere to policies and procedures about accepting gifts and money from service users and carers

As a social care worker, you must uphold public trust and confidence in social care services. You must not:

- Abuse, neglect or harm service users, carers or colleagues;
- Exploit service users, carers or colleagues in any way;
- Abuse the trust of service users and carers or the access you have to personal information about them or their property, home or workplace;
- Form inappropriate relationships with service users;
- Discriminate unlawfully or unjustifiably against service users, carers or colleagues;
- Condone any unlawful or unjustifiable discrimination by service users, carers or colleagues.
- Put yourself or other people at unnecessary risk; or
- Behave in such a way, in work or outside work, which would call into question your suitability to work in social care services.

Financial Boundaries and Gifts - Receipt of Gifts

Any employee/worker who is given a gift of any sort by a business contact (e.g. customer, supplier etc. actual or potential) must disclose the fact of the gift and its nature to his or her immediate manager.



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If the Company decides that the gift might constitute a bribe or other inducement, the employee will be required to give the gift to his or her manager, who will return it to the donor with a suitable covering letter.

In other instances, the employee will be required to return the gift to the donor with a polite note explaining the Company policy.

In exceptional cases, for example, where the Company decides that the gift was made as a token of the donor's gratitude for a service carried out to very high standards, the recipient will be allowed to retain the gift. This will also apply where gifts may be made to celebrate a particular personal event e.g. a foster carer providing a gift for a staff member to celebrate the birth of a child etc.

Promotional gifts such as stationery, which are not of significant value, are exempt from this policy and need not be disclosed. However, employees are reminded that, since such gifts are sent only to a limited number of employees, they should be distributed to other employees where appropriate.

Failure to disclose gifts may constitute a disciplinary offence which will be handled in accordance with the Company's formal disciplinary procedure. If the gift in question was of significant value and, for example, the recipient is able to influence business dealings with the donor, the offence will be treated as gross misconduct.

There is a separate Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption Policy which sets out TACT's expectations of personal and professional conduct in line with statutory legislation.

Giving Gifts

While it is not Company policy to offer gifts to suppliers, customers etc., the Company recognises that, on occasions this may be necessary - for example, when someone carries out work on a voluntary basis or for a nominal fee.

Equally, it may be decided that a gift would be appropriate if a service has been carried out in an exceptional manner.

In such a case, employees should put a request in writing to their manager stating:

- Who the gift is for
- Why it should be given
- The nature of the gift
- Its approximate value

Employees who send gifts which have not been approved in accordance with this procedure will not be reimbursed for the cost of the gift. Further, such action may, depending on the circumstances, be treated as a disciplinary offence which will be dealt with under the formal disciplinary procedure.

Never buy items from carers or children or sell items to them unless this is on behalf of TACT, or sell items on behalf of carers or children.

Never make personal gifts or donations to carers or children unless they are on behalf of TACT e.g. cards / flowers etc.

Cash gifts from carers or children must never be accepted. Where carers or children propose to make other types of gift these should normally be politely declined. It is acceptable for staff to accept donations other than those which are provided as personal

gifts i.e. as charitable donations to support the work of TACT. Such donations should be recorded on the file and the relevant line manager informed.

Verbal Boundaries

Staff must always treat carers and children fairly, courteously and with respect in line with TACT's values and policies. Language which is discriminatory, demeaning, sexually suggestive or insulting must never be used and will lead to an investigation and potential disciplinary action if such is found to have taken place.

In order to avoid the risk of blurring the professional relationship between staff and carer / child, staff should be careful not to use overly familiar language, endearments, or nicknames with carers and children nor must they encourage carers and service users to address them or other colleagues using such language. It is accepted that appropriate professional judgement needs to be made in this area, e.g. where a young person may prefer to be addressed in a specific way related to their previous family history.

Physical Boundaries

Offering someone physical support through touch, such as a hug, is often seen as a humane or sympathetic way of dealing with someone's joy or distress. However, staff need to be aware that allegations could be made in the event of inappropriate or misconstrued physical contact. Therefore it is recommended that:-

- They avoid someone's personal space if this could be misunderstood by the staff member, carer or child.
- Physical contact should only be used as part of appropriate engagement with the child or carer or staff member e.g. in an activity with the child, or directed play, or a response to a bereavement, distress or joy etc.
- In any situation where staff experience difficulty in following the guidelines or they feel a situation is developing with a carer or child which could lead to a professional boundary issue they must discuss their concerns with their line manager as soon as possible.

- Where a staff member feels they have breached these guidelines they must report the matter to their line manager or HR immediately.

Sexual Relationships at Work Policy

The Company respects that interpersonal relationships are a matter of privacy and will be respected. However, intimate personal relationships between employees which cause disruption to the business, adversely affect client care or fellow employees, or which may bring the Company into disrepute, will not be tolerated by management and are liable to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

The Company also reserves the right, following full, fair and even-handed investigation, to move one or both employees involved in such relationships to other premises of the Company on a temporary or permanent basis should this become necessary.

Other Sexual Relationships

Staff should never respond to, or engage in, flirting with carers or service users – whether innocent or otherwise.

Staff must never knowingly enter into intimate relationships with service users, whether the staff member works with them directly or not.

Outside Work

Off duty staff should, wherever practicable avoid situations where their responsibilities to TACT and its carers and children conflict with their private interests.

Staff should not arrange to meet carers and service users ‘off duty’ or take them home. If this should happen or is unavoidable, please inform your line manager or HR.

For those staff who are registered social workers inappropriate conduct outside the workplace; e.g. committing an offence can lead to a referral to the relevant Social Work Body, or it is equivalent, with serious consequence to their registration status and thereby their continuing employment with TACT.

Breaching Boundaries

Failure to follow this policy may result in disciplinary procedures being instituted. In serious cases, staff could be found guilty of gross misconduct and could be liable for dismissal.

SOCIAL WORK PROFESSIONAL BODY LINKS

<https://www.sssc.uk.com/>

<https://socialcare.wales/>

<https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/>



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PROTECTING VULNERABLE GROUPS (SCOTLAND)

What this policy covers

The Company is committed to protecting children against all forms of abuse. You have a responsibility towards children to ensure that they are protected from abuse.

This policy sets out the Company's obligations on handling recruitment into job roles that involve working with vulnerable people and on monitoring and reporting information about you received during the course of your employment in those roles.

It also sets out your responsibilities for reporting abuse of children and the procedure for doing so.

Your entitlements and responsibilities

What is "abuse"?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human or civil rights by another person and may consist of a single act or multiple acts that cause harm. As well as physical and psychological abuse, acts of neglect or an omission to act may amount to abuse. Abuse may also occur when a child or vulnerable adult is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented or cannot consent.

Recruitment

The Company will make it clear when advertising jobs whether the work will involve "regulated work" as defined by the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007.

The Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme legally obliges the Company to check an applicant's PVG Scheme Membership before an applicant can be employed by the Company in regulated work. This may involve the applicant applying to become a PVG Scheme member for the first time.

The Company will always seek an applicant's consent before checking their PVG Scheme Membership status.

Activities that become regulated work

If the activities you undertake become regulated work or where you are asked to perform activities that are classed as regulated work, the Company may require you to become a PVG Scheme member. In such cases, the Company will pay the cost of registration.

If you refuse to become a PVG Scheme member, or if Disclosure Scotland is unable to register you, the Company will investigate whether you can continue to be employed with the Company in activities that are not regulated work, but the Company reserves the right to dismiss you.



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If your PVG Scheme membership status changes

The PVG Scheme requires that if your PVG Scheme Membership status changes during your current employment, the Company will be legally obliged not to allow you to continue to engage in regulated work. This may mean that the Company cannot continue to employ you.

When the online-Register is operational and the Company receives notification of a change in your PVG Scheme Membership status, the Company will investigate whether you can continue to be employed in activities that are not regulated work, but the Company reserves the right to dismiss you without notice.

How the Company will handle PVG Scheme data

For employment administration and evidential purposes, the Company will retain a copy of your PVG Scheme Record or Scheme Record Update on your file during the course of your employment and for a period after termination of your employment.

Termination of employment

You should notify Disclosure Scotland on termination of employment to let them know you no longer work for the Company. On receipt of your notification, Disclosure Scotland will seek confirmation from the Company that you are no longer employed. There is no requirement for you to do this, but if you fail to do so the Company will be notified of any consideration for listing, or of any listing decisions in relation to you, even after termination of employment.

The Company's duty to refer information

By law, the Company has a duty to refer certain information to Disclosure Scotland.

Legislation places a duty on the Company to make a referral in circumstances when an individual doing regulated work has done something to harm a child or protected adult and the impact is so serious that the Company has (or would) permanently remove the individual from regulated work.

The harmful or inappropriate behaviour must correspond with the type of regulated work the individual does, e.g. a school teacher (doing regulated work with children) who harms a protected adult does not meet the referral grounds. It should be noted the harmful or inappropriate behaviour does not have to have taken place in the workplace, or be connected with that person's work in any way.

Procedure

You must remain vigilant at all times of the risk to children of abusive behaviour from different sources including members of their family, other children and employees.

If you believe that any children have been subjected to abuse, you should refer the circumstances to your manager (or another manager if appropriate) for full investigation.

If the alleged perpetrator of abuse is another employee, the circumstances will be investigated fully under the Company's Disciplinary Procedure.



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If necessary, the Company will refer details of the circumstances to Disclosure Scotland.

If, following full investigation of the circumstances, the Company determines that the perpetrator should be dismissed, the perpetrator's details will be referred to Disclosure Scotland.



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PAYMENTS FOR ARTICLES, SPEECHES & PRESENTATIONS

TACT is committed to improving the practice of all those involved in the fostering and adoption tasks and believe its staff have a valuable role to play in sharing our knowledge, skills and experience. In order to encourage staff we have developed an additional payment for staff engaged in writing articles for trade magazines, giving presentations or speeches and conferences. Given that this is expected of SMT, they will be excluded from any additional payments.

Payments will range from up to £25 for a book review to up to £300 for an article in a recognised trade journal, up to £300 for a speech and up to £200 for running a workshop. Staff should write an outline of the article, speech or workshop and send it to your EDCS/Senior Manager for approval and agreement for payment.



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PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE ('Whistleblowing')

What this policy covers

The Company constantly strives to safeguard and act in the interest of the public and its employees. It is important to the Company that any fraud, misconduct or wrongdoing, by employees or other agents, is reported and properly addressed.

This policy applies to all employees and all other agents of the Company, who are encouraged to raise concerns in a responsible manner. The Company prefers that a concern is raised and dealt with properly, rather than kept quiet.

Your responsibilities

You are encouraged to bring to the attention of the Company any practice or action of the Company, its employees or other agents that you reasonably believe is against the public interest, in that the practice or action is:

- a criminal offence
- a failure to comply with any legal obligation
- a miscarriage of justice
- a danger to the health and safety of any individual
- that the environment is being, or is likely to be, damaged
- an attempt to conceal information on any of the above

The raising of a concern will be covered by this policy provided you have a reasonable belief that it is in the public interest to do so.

Any individual raising legitimate concerns under this policy will not be subject to any detriment, either during or after employment. The Company will also endeavour to ensure that the individual is protected from any intimidation or harassment by any other parties.

This policy should not be used for complaints relating to your own personal circumstances, such as the way you have been treated at work, which should be raised under the Company's Grievance Procedure.

You must in no way victimise or otherwise subject to any detriment another employee on the grounds that they have made a disclosure under this policy. Any employee who does so may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal for gross misconduct.

Procedure

In the first instance, you should raise any concerns you have with your manager. If you believe your manager to be involved, or if, for any reason, you do not wish to approach your manager, then you should raise it with a more senior person in the Company.



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Any matter raised under this policy will be investigated promptly and confidentially. The outcome of the investigation, as well as any necessary remedial action to be taken, will be confirmed to you. If no action is to be taken, the reason for this will be explained to you.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated thoroughly. If you raise any concerns under this policy, the Company is committed to ensuring that you are protected from victimisation, harassment or less favourable treatment. Any such incidents will be dealt with under the Company's Disciplinary Procedures.

Escalating your concern

If you are dissatisfied with this response, you should raise your concerns in writing directly with a more senior person in the Company.

If, after escalating your concerns, you believe that the appropriate remedial action has not been taken, you should then report the matter to the proper authority. These authorities include:

- HM Revenue & Customs
- the Financial Conduct Authority
- the Prudential Regulation Authority
- the Health and Safety Executive
- the Environment Agency or Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
- the Information Commissioner
- the Care Quality Commission
- the Care Inspectorate
- Healthcare Inspectorate Wales
- Ofsted

This list is not intended to be exhaustive, and you must take care to ensure you contact the proper authority in relation to the particular concerns you have.

If you are unsure as to the appropriate authority advice can be sought from Public Concern at Work which is an independent Whistleblowing Charity. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

If you raise a false allegation and you are found to be culpable, or in any way involved in the wrongdoing, or if you raise a concern maliciously or in a manner not prescribed in this policy, then you may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal without notice for gross misconduct.

You should not disclose to a non-relevant third party any details of any concern raised in accordance with this policy, and you must not, in any circumstances, publicise your concerns in any way.



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Independent advice

Independent advice and support can be obtained from Public Concern at Work (Independent Whistleblowing Charity):

Email address	whistle@pcaw.co.uk
Tel	Tel:020 7404 6609
Website	www.pcaw.co.uk



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REDUNDANCY, SHORT TIME WORKING AND LAY OFF

It is the Company's intention to develop and expand its business and to provide security of employment for its employees. However, circumstances may arise when changes in the market, technology, organisational requirements, and similar developments, will lead to the need for reductions in employees.

Where a redundancy situation arises, the Company will give consideration to alternative options, which may include:

- imposing a restriction on recruitment;
- restricting the use of temporary and casual employees;
- reducing the amount of overtime working;
- implementing a period of temporary lay off or short time working where this is appropriate; or
- considering applications for voluntary redundancy.

Where, after consideration of these and any other alternatives, management considers that the need for redundancies still remains, consultation will normally take place.

Selection for redundancy will be based on criteria drawn up at the time and may include, but may not necessarily be limited to, some or all of the following:

- suitability for remaining work;
- experience/qualifications;
- conduct; and
- attendance.

These criteria may be weighted differently depending on the circumstances, but will be assessed in an objective manner.

The above criteria are subject to the Company's requirement to retain specific knowledge, skills and a balanced workforce at all times.

The Company reserves the right to introduce short time working or a period of temporary lay off without pay (with the exception of any statutory entitlements) where this is necessary to avoid redundancies or where there is a shortage of work.

Compensation

Redundancy compensation will be calculated in accordance with the statutory framework in force at the time.

REIMBURSEMENT OF SUBSCRIPTIONS

TACT will reimburse employees subscriptions as per the following:

As a student:

Where a regular subscription is a mandatory requirement of the course provider (i.e. the course/training can only be pursued if the subscription is paid), then TACT will reimburse the employee that cost, providing that the course to which the subscription relates is being financially supported by TACT as part of a learning agreement.

As a member:

Where membership of a professional body is required to enable the employee to fulfil their role in TACT, this will be paid for by the organisation.

NB

Employees must submit a claim for the repayment of a subscription/membership renewal that they have paid themselves at the time the renewal is made.

RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK POLICY

The Company respects that interpersonal relationships are a matter of privacy and will be respected.

However, intimate personal relationships between employees which cause disruption to the business, adversely affect client care or fellow employees, or which may bring the Company into disrepute, will not be tolerated by management and are liable to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

The Company also reserves the right, following full, fair and even-handed investigation, to move one or both employees involved in such relationships to other premises of the Company on a temporary or permanent basis should this become necessary.



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RELOCATION ALLOWANCE AND EXPENSES POLICY

Policy

This policy forms part of the organisation's recruitment and selection strategy. It is intended to support the needs of the organisation to attract and appoint individuals because of their specialist or expertise in their particular discipline or professional field.

The organisation, will provide financial assistance to newly appointed employees and existing employees who are requested to relocate to take up an appointment and where their existing home is not within reasonable daily travelling distance (of 100 miles) of their new place of work. Employees, who relocate, must relocate within 30 miles of their office base.

Employees on a fixed term contract of not less than 2 years will also be entitled to receive payments within this scheme on the same basis as permanent employees.

Expenses

Removal Expenses – Up to a maximum of £500

Removal expenses will be paid in full based up to £500 on the lower of two tenders for the removal of household possessions. An employee may accept other than the lowest tender but they would have to bear the additional costs involved. Removal Expenses will only be paid once.

Cost arising from the storage of furniture will not be reimbursed.

If an employee is setting up home for the first time, removal expenses will be paid.

Disturbance Allowance – Up to a maximum of £1,000 (£500 maximum for selling and £500 maximum for purchasing a property).

This is a maximum total payment to cover both the:

- a) Expense of selling a property previously occupied by the employee – the legal, house agency and mortgage redemption fees necessarily incurred in the purchase.
- b) Expenses of purchasing a property – the legal, mortgage and survey fees necessarily incurred in the purchase.

If an employee is setting up home for the first time, a maximum of £500 will be paid for expenses of purchasing a property.

Settling in Allowance – Up to a maximum of £500

This will be paid towards meeting incidental expenses arising from moving home such as alterations or replacement of curtains, fixtures and fittings, re-laying floor coverings etc.

If an employee is setting up home for the first time, a settling in allowance will be paid.

If an employee chooses to travel daily between the original home and new place of work whilst actively seeking accommodation, the employee may be paid an allowance not exceeding £80 per week, based on the actual cost of bus fares or second class rail fares up to a period of 10 weeks.

Tax

Under current Inland Revenue regulations any payments under any part of this scheme, which go beyond an overall maximum of £8,000 will be taxable.

Repayment of Allowances and Expenses

A permanent employee, who voluntarily leaves the organisation's employment before the end of a three year period after the date of taking up an appointment, will be required to reimburse an appropriate proportion of the cost of any assistance received under the Relocation Allowance and Expenses Scheme, in connection with that appointment. This will be repayable as follows:

Leaving with 1 year	-	Pay 100% back
Leaving within 2 years	-	Pay 66% back
Leaving within 3 years	-	Pay 33% back
Leaving After 4 years	-	Pay 0% back.

RELOCATION TO NEW OFFICE PREMISES

If existing employees are required to relocate to new office premises, employees will be consulted with prior to any move.

TACT will pay employees additional travel expenses such as mileage or public transport costs incurred when any TACT office relocates over 10 miles from the old office premises and for a period of 12 months. After this period, employees will be responsible for their own transport costs incurred in travelling to and from work.



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SABBATICALS

Employees with 10 years or more continuous service will be eligible to apply for a twelve week sabbatical. The timing of the sabbatical will be mutually agreed between the line manager and the employee.

The period of absence may not start before completion of 10 years continuous service.

Requests to take a sabbatical should be made in writing at least 6 months before the intended start date. If the employee wishes to return before the end of the 12-week sabbatical, at least 4 weeks notice must be given in writing expressing a wish to return before the end date.

An employee will be required to take 5 days of their annual leave entitlement (pro-rata if part time) at the start of their sabbatical leave period. TACT will pay half salary for the remaining 11 weeks of the absence (regardless of full-time or part-time hours).

In the event that an employee fails to return to work at the end of their sabbatical leave or their employment with the Company is terminated for any reason other than redundancy within 1 month of the date of their return to work then 100 per cent of the pay received while on sabbatical will be repaid in full by the employee.

In the event that an employee leaves or their employment with the Company is terminated for any reason other than redundancy after one month of the date of their return to work, then the amount they are required to pay back immediately upon the termination of their employment will reduce on a sliding scale of 1/12th for each month that elapses.

SAFEGUARDING

What this policy covers

The Company is committed to protecting children against all forms of abuse. You have a responsibility towards children to ensure that they are protected from abuse.

This policy sets out the Company's obligations on handling recruitment into job roles that involve working with vulnerable people and on monitoring and reporting information about you received during the course of your employment in those roles.

It also sets out your responsibilities for reporting abuse to any children and the procedure for doing so.

Your entitlements and responsibilities

What is "abuse"?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human or civil rights by another person and may consist of a single act or multiple acts. As well as physical and psychological abuse, acts of neglect or an omission to act may amount to abuse. Abuse may also occur when a child or vulnerable adult is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented or cannot consent.

Recruitment

The Company will make it clear when advertising jobs whether the work will involve "regulated activity" as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

Before an applicant can be employed in a regulated activity, the Company will require you to provide a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure with a barred list check from the Disclosure and Barring Service to confirm your suitability to carry out regulated activity.

Work that becomes a regulated activity

If your work either becomes a regulated activity or where you are asked to perform work that is a regulated activity, the Company will require you to provide a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure with a barred list check from the Disclosure and Barring Service to confirm your suitability to carry out regulated activity.

If you refuse to undertake this check, or if you appear on the barred list, the Company will investigate whether you can continue to be employed in activities that are not regulated activities, but the Company reserves the right to dismiss you.

If you are added to a barred list during the course of your employment

If you are added to a barred list during your current employment, the Company will be legally obliged not to allow you to continue to engage in regulated activity. This may mean that the Company cannot continue to employ you.

If the Company receives notification that you have been barred, the Company will investigate whether you can continue to be employed in activities that are not regulated activities, but in these circumstances the Company reserves the right to dismiss you without notice.

The Company's duty to refer information

By law, the Company has a duty to refer certain information to the Disclosure and Barring Service. This includes:

- if the Company has dismissed an individual because he or she has harmed, or may harm, a vulnerable adult or child
- if an individual has resigned from employment with the Company in circumstances where there is a suspicion that he or she has harmed, or may harm, a vulnerable adult or child (this will apply where an allegation has been made and the employee resigns before the Company can take disciplinary action)
- if the Company has suspended an individual and has reason to think the employee has engaged in "relevant conduct" or has harmed, or may harm, a vulnerable adult or child, or has received a caution or a conviction for, a relevant offence

Procedure

You must remain vigilant at all times of the risk to children of abusive behaviour from different sources including members of their family, other children and employees.

If you believe that any children have been subjected to abuse, you should refer the circumstances to your manager (or another manager if appropriate) for full investigation.

If the alleged perpetrator of abuse is another employee, the circumstances will be investigated fully under the Company's Disciplinary Procedure.

If necessary, the Company will refer details of the circumstances to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

If, following full investigation of the circumstances, the Company determines that the perpetrator should be dismissed, the perpetrator's details will be referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AND BLOGS

Definition of Social Media

For the purpose of this policy, social media refers to a broad range of websites and services that allow individuals to connect with others online, or to consume a stream of information.

Social networking sites and blogs offer a useful means of keeping in touch with friends and colleagues, and they can be used to exchange views and thoughts on shared interests, both personal and work-related.

What this policy covers

This policy sets out the Company's position on employees' use of social networking sites and blogs, whether conducted on Company media and in work time or your own private media in your own time.

Social Media – Personal Use

The Company does not object to you setting up personal accounts on social networking sites or blogs on the internet, in your own time and using your own computer systems. However, you must not do so on Company media or in work time.

TACT email addresses must not be used for personal social media activity.

Individuals are strongly advised to set their profiles to private to control who has access to their detailed information.

The TACT name in any form or abbreviation, logos or other TACT branding may not be used online, on your social networking profiles or in any postings you make (unless it is to describe your place of work i.e. on a Linked In profile or to promote externally available communications).

Your profile and any content you publish should always be consistent with the professional image you present to clients and colleagues.

You should always be conscious of your duty as an employee to act in good faith and in the best interests of the Company under UK law. The Company will not tolerate criticisms posted in messages in the public domain or on blogs about the Company or any other person connected to the Company.

When using social media for personal use, you must ensure:

- You do not conduct yourself in a way that is or could be seen as bringing TACT into disrepute
- You do not publish any Company secrets, breach copyright, defame the Company or its clients, suppliers, customers or employees, or disclose personal data or information that could breach the Data Protection Act 1998.
- You do not post any comments about TACT, its employees, suppliers, Company contacts, clients or customers.



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- You do not post any comments about sensitive business-related topics, such as the Company's performance, or do anything to jeopardise trade secrets, confidential information and intellectual property.
- You do not publish content that is insulting or abusive to employees, suppliers, Company contacts, clients or customers.

Any misuse of social networking sites or blogs as mentioned above may be regarded as a disciplinary offence and may result in dismissal without notice.

You should be aware that any information contained in social networking sites may be used in evidence, if relevant, to any disciplinary proceedings.

Social Media – Business Use

If your job duties require you to speak on behalf of the Company in an online social media environment, you must still seek approval for such communication from your manager, who may require you to have training before you are permitted to participate in social media on behalf of the Company.

Similarly, if you are invited to comment about the Company for publication anywhere, including in any social media outlet, you should inform your manager and you must not respond without prior written approval.

If you disclose your affiliation with the Company on your business profile or in any social media postings, you must state that your views do not represent those of your employer, unless you are authorised to speak on our behalf. You should also ensure that your profile and any content you post are consistent with the professional image you present to clients and colleagues.

The following points must be adhered to at all times when engaging in social media activity for business purposes, whether using TACT systems or not:

- Social media for business purposes should be used to support you in your job responsibilities but should not interfere with your primary job purpose and overall working time
- You must remember at all times that you are an ambassador for TACT and should ensure that any contributions they make are professional and uphold the Company's reputation.
- You do not publish any Company secrets, breach copyright, defame the Company or its clients, suppliers, customers or employees, or disclose personal data or information that could breach the Data Protection Act 1998.
- Business social media activity must not be used for the promotion of personal interests or personal ventures.



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- The TACT name in any form or abbreviation, logos or other TACT branding may not be used online (unless it is to describe your place of work i.e. on a Linked In profile or to promote externally available communications).
- You must not create any site, online social environment or group in the name or associated with TACT; this includes sub group sites of approved locations.

Third parties

You must not disclose any information that is confidential or proprietary to the Company or to any third party that has disclosed information to the Company.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Company's policies on Computers and Electronic Communications and Monitoring.

Confidential Information and Intellectual Property

The obligations and responsibilities relating to preserving confidential information continue to be strictly in force when undertaking social media activity, whether for personal or business use.

You must not post comments about sensitive business-related topics, such as the Company's performance, or do anything to jeopardise trade secrets, confidential information and intellectual property. You must not include the Company's branding, logos or other trademarks in any social media posting or in your profile on any social media platform.

You are not permitted to add business contacts made during the course of your employment to personal social networking accounts.

Details of business contacts made during the course of your employment are regarded as Company confidential information, and are the property of the Company. This includes information contained in databases such as address lists contained in Outlook, or business and contacts lists created and held on any electronic or social media format, including but not limited to LinkedIn and Facebook.

On termination of employment you must provide the Company with a copy of all such information, surrender or delete all such information from your personal social networking accounts, and destroy any further copies of such information that you may have.

Updating your LinkedIn profile to refer to your new employer and setting up your account to ensure that your contacts receive notification of this will be regarded as an act of unlawful solicitation and/or an unlawful attempt to deal with customers, employees, and

business contacts of the Company and may result in civil proceedings being brought against you.

General Policy

Business and private use of social media sites should be kept separate by, for example, creating separate profiles.

Regardless of whether social media activity is being undertaken for personal or business purposes, it is the individual's responsibility to ensure they have read, understand and comply with the Terms of Service of the site(s) they use at all times.

It is possible that the use of social media may well create a public and permanent record of your options / conversations therefore you should ensure that all communications are caveated to show that they are your personal opinion and not advice.

Social media activities, whether personal or business related, must not interfere with primary job responsibilities.

Monitoring

The Company reserves the right to monitor, intercept and review, without further notice, staff activities using our IT resources and communications systems, including but not limited to social media postings and activities, to ensure that our rules are being complied with and for legitimate business purposes and you consent to such monitoring by your use of such resources and systems.

Procedure

Breaches of this policy will be dealt with under the Company's Disciplinary Procedure. You should be aware that the Company regards breach of any part of this policy as gross misconduct that may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal without notice.

If you become aware of information relating to the Company posted on the internet, you should bring this to the attention of your manager.

Procedure for Social Work Registration - England, Wales and Scotland

Statement

It is a legal requirement for all social work staff to be registered with the relevant social care council for the Country they are working in (England/Wales/Scotland). The Protection of title and registration will ensure that those working in social care meet rigorous registration requirements and will hold them to account for their conduct by codes of practice. The codes of conduct for social workers are available from the following Social Care Council websites:

England – <https://www.socialworkengland.org.uk/media/1577/coc01-board-code-of-conduct.pdf>

Wales – https://socialcare.wales/cms_assets/file-uploads/Code-of-Professional-Practice-for-Social-Care-web-version.pdf

Scotland - <https://www.sssc.uk.com/the-scottish-social-services-council/sssc-codes-of-practice/>

This procedure applies to employment applicants, employees and sessional/self-employed social workers.

Procedure

Social Work Applicants (All types of employment)

All social workers, at the interview stage will be asked to provide an evidence of registration with the relevant Social Care Council body. In case a satisfactory evidence is not provided, the HR Department will chase it as a mandatory check at the pre-employment checks stage for the successful applicant.

If a social work applicant fails to provide satisfactory evidence of their registration, the offer of employment will be withdrawn by TACT.

Existing Social Work (Employees)

For existing social workers, it is a requirement that they keep their registration up to date and renew this every three years. The HR Department keeps an up to date record of when social workers registrations expire.

In order to renew a Social Care Council registration, it is a requirement of the Social Care Council for England, Wales and Scotland, that all social workers keep a record of their continued professional development (CPD). The employee's line manager will need to verify that the social work employee has undertaken the CPD stated and sign this off on the Social Care Council's registration renewal form. All Social Care Councils have guidance information about the CPD on their websites.



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It is a TACT requirement for all social work employees to provide evidence of the new renewal date before the expiry date of the previous one.

If an employee fails to provide evidence of the new renewal date, they will not be able to undertake their duties or use the title of social worker. The matter will be dealt with under TACT's Disciplinary Procedures.

Existing Social Work (Sessional/Self-Employed Social Workers)

For self-employed social workers that undertake work for TACT, it is also a requirement that they keep their registration up to date and renew this every three years. The HR Department keeps an up to date record of when self employed social workers registrations expire and will request, in writing/via email from the self-employed social worker, evidence of the new renewal expiry date.

If a self-employed social worker fails to provide that evidence, they will be immediately suspended and will not be able to undertake any further work for TACT. Their Self-Employed Agreement might be terminated if after a given deadline, they fail to regularize their registration and send the HR Department evidence of the new expiry date.

In order to safeguard children, every time a TACT sessional worker is allocated a piece of work by a TACT Manager; the Manager allocating the work must make a check on the relevant Social Care Council (for England/Wales/Scotland's) website. This should be recorded on the sessional worker's schedule of work and a copy of the current social work status should be printed off and attached to the schedule of work.

England – www.socialworkengland.org.uk

Wales – www.ccwales.org.uk

Scotland - www.sssc.uk.com

STRESS POLICY

Introduction

We are committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees and recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors.

This policy will apply to everyone in the company and managers are responsible for implementation. The company is responsible for providing the necessary resources.

Definition of stress

The Health and Safety Executive define stress as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”. This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress, which can be detrimental to health.

Policy

- ❖ The company will identify all workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to eliminate stress or control the risks from stress. These risk assessments will be regularly reviewed.
- ❖ The company will provide training for all managers and supervisory staff in good management practices associated with stress reduction.
- ❖ The company will provide adequate resources to enable managers to implement the company's agreed stress management strategy.

Responsibilities:

Managers

- ❖ Conduct and implement recommendations of risks assessments within their jurisdiction.
- ❖ Ensure good communication between management and staff, particularly where there are organisational and procedural changes.
- ❖ Ensure staff are fully trained to discharge their duties.
- ❖ Ensure staff are provided with meaningful developmental opportunities.
- ❖ Monitor workloads to ensure that people are not overloaded.
- ❖ Monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that staff are not overworking.
- ❖ Monitor holidays to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement.
- ❖ Attend training as requested in good management practice and health and safety.
- ❖ Ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated within their jurisdiction.
- ❖ Be vigilant and offer additional support to a member of staff who is experiencing stress outside work e.g. bereavement or separation.

Human Resources

- ❖ Provide specialist advice and awareness training on stress.
- ❖ Train and support managers in implementing stress risk assessments.



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- ❖ Support individuals who have been off sick with stress and advise them and their management on a planned return to work.
- ❖ Refer staff to counsellors or specialist agencies as required.
- ❖ Monitor and review the effectiveness of measures to reduce stress.
- ❖ Inform the employer and the health and safety committee of any changes and developments in the field of stress at work.
- ❖ Give guidance to managers on the stress policy.
- ❖ Assist in monitoring the effectiveness of measures to address stress by collating sickness absence statistics.
- ❖ Advise managers and individuals on training requirements.
- ❖ Provide continuing support to managers and individuals in a changing environment and encourage referral to counsellors where appropriate.

Employees

- ❖ Raise issues of stress/workload with your health and safety representative, line manager or lead management team.
- ❖ Accept opportunities for counselling when recommended.

Function of Health and Safety Reps

Health and Safety Representatives should:

- ❖ Be meaningfully consulted on any changes to work practices or work design that could precipitate stress.
- ❖ Be able to consult with members on the issue of stress including conducting any workplace surveys.
- ❖ Be meaningfully involved in the risk assessment process.
- ❖ Be allowed access to collective and anonymous data from HR.
- ❖ Conduct joint inspections of the workplace at least every 3 months to ensure that environmental stressors are properly controlled.

Role of the Health & Safety Committee

The Health & Safety Committee will:

- ❖ Perform a pivotal role in ensuring that this policy is implemented.
- ❖ Oversee monitoring of the efficacy of the policy and other measures to reduce stress and promote workplace health and safety.



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TOIL – (TIME OFF IN LIEU)

It is acknowledged that during carrying out their duties, employees may be required to work more than their contracted hours of 7 hours per day or 35 hours per week to maintain effective services to Local Authorities and foster carers alike.

For the purposes of this policy. TOIL is defined as ‘unavoidable extra time worked which has been approved in advance by management or which is approved as soon as possible after it has been worked. Additional hours worked at the discretion of the employee may only be taken as TOIL if the hours are subsequently approved by management. Any additional hours worked at the discretion of the employee will not be paid for.

TACT is committed to its wellbeing of employees and strives through its HR policies to be a consistently fair and caring employer. TACT does not encourage a culture of long hours and believes that it is important to ensure that all request for time off are dealt with equitably.

Enabling employees to work realistic hours must be linked to supervision and effective workload management which should ensure that employees are not persistently required to complete tasks/meet deadlines which cannot be reasonably achieved within the normal contracted hours.

TOIL may NOT be claimed by any employee in any region for their journey from home to their TACT office base, except where a worker is home based.

The following rules on TOIL will apply to all TACT employees:

- ❖ TOIL will apply to all levels of employees who carry out work outside of TACT’s normal business hours, which is before or after the individual’s contracted working hours, Monday through to Friday.
- ❖ For each hour worked outside of TACT’s business hours Monday through to Friday, each extra hour worked will accrue TOIL at the same rate as if it were normal business hours.
- ❖ Additional hours under this policy may be hours worked outside of an employee’s normal contracted hours i.e. evening visits, evening or weekend training, meetings, travelling or needing to complete work to a deadline (such as placements, reports etc.).
- ❖ For employees who have approval to accrue TOIL, it may **only** be claimed for any excess of time beyond how long it normally takes the person to travel from home to work and back. An example of this, is as follows: X works 9am to 5pm and s/he lives 30 minutes away from the office which is his/her normal commute time to work each day. X needs to attend a meeting in Birmingham for the day and must leave home at 6.30am. X can therefore claim TOIL from 6.30am to 8.30am.



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8.30am is his/her normal commute time that s/he leaves for work which cannot be claimed at TOIL.

- ❖ Where agreed in advance, each extra hour worked on a Saturday, TOIL will accumulate at one hour and a half hour and for each hour worked on a Sunday, this will accumulate at two hours TOIL for each hour worked.
- ❖ TACT must work within regulatory health and safety guidelines and for this reason, a minimum of a 20-minute lunch break must be taken by each employee for every 6 hours worked. It is not acceptable for any employee to routinely work through their lunch hour in order to claim TOIL. Where at all possible, employees are encouraged to take their full lunch break.
- ❖ To ensure fairness to all employees and to ensure that TACT's service delivery is not compromised, Managers must have the means to check hours worked and subsequent TOIL claimed. TOIL must therefore be requested by employees on CIPHR Net as and when it is accrued or taken in order that their Line Manager may verify the requests and the employee's TOIL balance may be updated accordingly.
- ❖ No employee should accumulate more than 21 hours TOIL owing to them at any one time without the express consent of their Line Manager. This equates to approximately three working days and will apply pro rata for those working part time. It is vital that managers are fully aware of all additional hours which are being worked over the contracted hours, as depending on the circumstances, they may need to authorise them in advance.
- ❖ Consideration should always be given to the issues around lone working and the health and safety of employees should not be compromised.
- ❖ TOIL should be taken in agreement with your Line Manager but no more than 2 days (14 hours) TOIL can be taken at any one time.
- ❖ Employees will not receive payment as salary for accumulated TOIL leave. The authorisation of payment will only apply in the following circumstances: -
 - If the employee has taken the minimum holiday requirement defined in the working time regulations.
 - There will be a very serious gap in service provision.
- ❖ The issue of TOIL owed/taken should be discussed and recorded at each supervision meeting.

TOIL FAQ's

How is TOIL recorded?

TOIL is recorded on CIPHR Net under the **My Details** 'time off' page to record **TOIL accrued and TOIL taken** (Annual leave is also recorded in the place) and can be assessed by clicking on the **Time Off** button under **My Details**.

To request TOIL, proceed to the **Time Off** page and click on the **Insert New Record** button and a Time Off wizard will appear. Here you should enter the start date and end date of the leave you are requesting. You are required to confirm whether the absence contains partial days – Select **Yes** if you are accruing TOIL.

When entering the TOIL accrued you wish to request, please ensure you state what the TOIL was accrued for in the **Absence Notes** box. Click Continue and it will take you to the page where you can enter the start and finish times that you accrued the TOIL. The number of hours will be automatically calculated. **Please remember at this point that TOIL may only be claimed for any excess of time beyond how long it normally takes the person to travel from home to work and back.**

When requesting to take TOIL, you do not need to complete the **Absence Notes** box. At the foot of this summary box there is a Who's Off button. By clicking on this box, you will be able to see who else in your team is off during the period you have entered.

Is TOIL treated in the same way as annual leave?

TOIL does not have the same status as annual leave. Managers would almost never cancel an employee's annual leave. However, planned TOIL may be cancelled in order to ensure the service is delivered to an acceptable level. Employees who require time off for special occasions would therefore be wise to book this as annual leave.

Can I be paid for TOIL owing when I leave?

In normal circumstances, TACT is keen that all employees take accrued TOIL as time off as this is important for employee wellbeing. However, in exceptional circumstances and where there is **no** opportunity for the time accrued to be taken as time off, then payment will be considered, but will be capped at the 21 hours that can be held at any one time (pro rata if part time) and where an employee has also taken the minimum holiday requirement defined in the Working Time Regulations.

What happens if I am sick on days I had booked off as TOIL?

If the days are claimed as sick days the employee **MUST** ensure they follow the absence reporting procedures for being sick. If the absence reporting procedures are followed, then TOIL hours will not be affected.



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Can I build up my TOIL hours to give me a long period of annual leave?

The TOIL policy is not in place to allow employees to build up periods of time off. It is there simply to recompense those employees who find themselves with **no option** other than to work additional hours. TOIL should be taken off as soon as possible (ideally within 4 weeks) after it is worked to avoid any build-up of excessive hours.

Can I claim TOIL AND the additional hours payment when delivering training at weekends and in the evenings?

No. You can claim either the £75 (subject to tax and NI) half day session allowance or claim TOIL. Either claim must be approved in advance by your line manager. You are not permitted to claim TOIL and the 'additional paid work allowance'.

Can I claim TOIL when covering the OOH's duty rota?

Social work staff on the Out of Hours rota are entitled to claim TOIL for time spent on the telephone and any relevant follow up work e.g. recording. If an out of hours visit is required then TOIL can be claimed at the employee's hourly rate.

What is TOIL not for?

It is not to be used for working a shorter lunch hour to build up TOIL unless you have a compressed working hours agreement in place.

It is not to be used to complete work that ordinarily can be done in normal working hours.

It is not to be used to routinely come in before and work after your normal contracted hours unless agreed by your line manager due to workload/needs of the service etc.

Training

What this policy covers

The Company recognises that it is its people who play a crucial role in ensuring the success of the business and is therefore committed to providing training and development to improve your skills and competence.

The Company will provide you with appropriate training to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for you to perform your duties effectively. Wherever possible, the Company will ensure you have every opportunity for career development.

This policy covers the different types of training and development you might expect and how the Company may recover the costs of training from you in particular cases.

Your entitlements

The types of training that the Company provides falls into four broad categories: induction, occupational, internal and external.

Induction training

As a new starter, you will be given a comprehensive introduction to the workplace, your colleagues, duties, health and safety and other procedures.

Your line manager will assess your training requirements and arrange for that training to be provided. As far as possible, the Company will meet your training needs by a combination of occupational, internal and external training.

Occupational training

Throughout your time with the Company, there may be a need to acquire new skills and these can be gained through occupational training delivered by colleagues.

Internal training

Occasionally, the Company may arrange for external training providers to deliver training courses in the workplace. This form of training might be triggered by the introduction of new equipment or working methods and will be arranged when the Company feels the training cannot adequately be provided in-house.

External training

External training may be provided in a variety of forms, ranging from short courses of a few hours' duration through to lengthy courses leading to the award of qualifications.

Where necessary, the Company will arrange for you to undertake external training if this cannot be provided internally.



Procedure

Paying back your training costs

When you undertake external training courses with significant cost implications, you will be required, prior to commencing the course, to sign an agreement to repay all or a proportion of the costs of the course if you leave the Company's employment within a certain time period. Full details will be set out in your training cost agreement.



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VEHICLES AND DRIVING

Employees who drive their own vehicles at any time in order to carry out their duties at work, are required to read, understand and follow these rules, which form part of their contracts of employment.

Documentation

If an employee uses their own vehicles for work purposes, he or she is required to ensure that they hold the current MOT for his or her vehicle which must also be properly taxed and insured for use on Company business and an employee will be required to provide evidence of this on an annual basis to the HR Department. Employees will also be required to submit a paper copy of their driving licence to the HR Department on an annual basis

Driving Licences and Driving Offences

If an employee is charged or convicted of driving offences, or has his or her driving licence endorsed, the employee must report this fact to their line manager at the earliest opportunity and in any event within 24 hours. The line manager will in turn notify the HR department to enable the updating of staff records.

Employees are required to inform their insurance company and their regulatory body of any driving convictions, offences or endorsements they may incur.

Driving-related fines are the responsibility of the employee who incurs them, whether or not incurred in the course of Company business, and must be paid immediately by the employee.

If an employee is disqualified from driving, and the employee is required to drive for all or a significant proportion of his or her job, the Company reserves the right to terminate that employee's employment.

Mobile Telephones and Driving

It is a criminal offence to drive a motor vehicle while using a 'hand held' mobile telephone.

For the purposes of the legislation, 'driving' will include sitting in a stationary vehicle with the engine running and a 'hand held' mobile telephone will include any 'hands free' mobile telephone if it is held at any point during the call. Using a 'hands free' mobile phone while it is in its holder will not be an offence.

Passengers in vehicles are not prohibited from using hand held mobile telephones; however, they must not hold it for the driver to use in a moving vehicle.



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Rest Breaks

If an employee works more than six hours per day, he or she will be entitled to a daily 20 minutes unpaid meal break.

Hand Held Mobile Telephones

Employees must:

- never use a hand held phone while driving;
- only use the phone once the vehicle has been parked in a safe place and the engine has been switched off.

Hands Free Mobile Telephones

Even a hands free phone can cause distraction and it should not be used for making calls while driving. Employees who wish to make a call while driving should only use the telephone once the vehicle has been parked in a safe place and the engine has been switched off.

It is also preferable not to use a hands free telephone for taking calls if at all possible. In circumstances where employees must take a call they should say they are driving and end the call quickly.

Where a hands free telephone is used to take a call whilst driving the telephone must remain in its holder at all times and must not be 'held' at any point during a call.

General

Employees should:

- use voicemail or call divert so that messages can be left while driving;
- use breaks from driving to take calls – this also reduces tiredness;
- never stop on hard shoulders except in an emergency; and
- never require any other employee to breach the terms of this policy

Breach of any of the terms of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal.

Use of Vehicles on Company Business

Employees are required to drive in a safe, lawful and efficient manner, in all weather and traffic conditions, observing the recommendations of the Highway Code.

Employees must not take a vehicle onto the road if they know or suspect that it has a serious defect.

Employees are required to use the most direct routes when carrying out Company business.

Employees are required to advise management of any problems or delays which could affect the scheduling for that day.

Employees are not permitted to leave any Company possessions or confidential information unattended in your vehicle.

TACT's VOLUNTEERING POLICY

Purpose

TACT wishes to encourage its staff to offer their time and professional skills in a voluntary capacity and recognises that a programme to support these types of activities enhance and serves communities which we live and work.

The intention is in particular giving back and supporting the community and allowing TACT employees to share in that effort. At the same time, TACT recognises that participating in these sorts of activities, enriches the lives of its employees and those of their community.

Amount of time and eligibility

TACT will therefore offer all permanent employees, who have successfully completed their 6 month probationary period, the following:

- Up to 3 working days/21 hours personal volunteering time (pro rata for part time staff) in any 365 days in which to volunteer for locals schools, community organisations etc.
- Up to 1 day per annum (which can be used out of the 3 working days mentioned above) for group volunteer/team effort activities which will be identified by the local Manager (such as cleaning up a local park, painting a community hall etc.)

This time will be considered paid time off. The rate of pay will be the employee's current basic salary plus all annual allowances on the day the time is taken. Usage of this time, will not affect an employee's annual leave or sickness entitlement.

This does not apply to employees on a fixed term or temporary contract of one year or less.

Approval process

All employees must fill out a 'volunteer request form' and submit it to their line manager at least 6 weeks before the requested time off. The Manager should then respond to the employee's request and notify HR as well. The approval is at the discretion of the employee's manager and HR Director.

Examples of appropriate uses of volunteer days are:

- Decorating a local community centre
- Cleaning up the beach, park, local community
- Coaching a football team for disadvantaged young people
- Assisting reading in schools
- Helping in your local hospital or care home.



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- Helping at a social club for people with physical disabilities
- Unpaid Trustee

Inappropriate examples are:

- Attending your child's PTA meeting
- Coaching your child's football/netball team
- Taking your elderly neighbour shopping
- Any activity where it is solely for your own personal and/or personal interest and enjoyment.

Links to volunteering websites:

www.do-it.org.uk

Do it was launched in 2001 with the first (and still the only) national database of volunteering opportunities in the UK

www.timebank.org.uk

TimeBank is a national campaign raising the awareness of giving time through voluntary work, inspiring a new generation of volunteers.

www.volunteering.org.uk

Volunteering England promotes excellence in volunteering in England by offering a range of services designed to support volunteer managers and organisations that involve volunteers. The centre aims to raise awareness of volunteering, provides information, promotes best practice and innovation and works to lobby the government to promote opportunities for, and remove institutional barriers to, volunteering.

www.wcva.wales

Promotes volunteering in Wales.

www.volunteerscotland.org.uk

Volunteering opportunities in Scotland

A Personal Volunteer Request Form can be found [HERE](#)

Wellbeing

What this policy covers

The Company has developed a wellbeing policy to manage its obligations to maintain the mental health and wellbeing of all staff. It covers the Company's commitment to employee and worker health, the responsibilities of managers and others for maintaining psychological health, health promotion initiatives, communicating and training on health issues, the range of support available for the maintenance of mental health, and organisational commitment to handling individual issues.

Objectives

The aim of this policy is to describe the Company's commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of staff in its broadest, holistic sense, setting out how the organisation fulfils its legal obligations, the responsibilities of different functions and specialists and the range of services available to help staff maintain health and wellbeing. The Company recognises that wellbeing and performance are linked. Improving staff's ability to handle pressure and to balance work and home life will ultimately lead to improved individual and organisational performance.

Organisational commitment

The Company has legal obligations under health and safety legislation to manage risks to the health and safety of its staff. In addition to reducing safety risks, this means operating the business in a way that minimises harm to its staff's mental health, for example by ensuring that the demands of jobs are not unacceptable and having policies and procedures in place to support individuals experiencing mental ill health at work.

The Company will put in place measures to prevent and manage risks to staff wellbeing, together with appropriate training and individual support. It will also seek to foster a mentally healthy culture by incorporating these principles into line manager training and running regular initiatives to raise awareness of mental health issues at work.

Responsibilities

Organisation

The Company has a legal duty of care to employees and workers to ensure health at work, as set out in the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. The organisation will ensure that its policies and practices reflect this duty and review the operation of these documents at regular intervals.



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Line managers

Line managers will put in place measures to minimise the risks to staff wellbeing, particularly from negative pressure at work. Managers must familiarise themselves with the Health and Safety Executive's stress management standards and use these to mitigate psychological risks in their teams. For example, managers should ensure that staff understand their role within the team and receive the necessary information and support from managers and team members to do their job. Managers must also familiarise themselves with the Company's policies on diversity and tackling inappropriate behaviour in order to support staff, for example on bullying and harassment issues.

In particular, line managers must ensure that they take steps to reduce the risks to staff health and wellbeing by:

- ensuring that the right people are recruited to the right jobs and that a good match is obtained between individuals recruited and job descriptions/specifications
- keeping the team up to date with developments at work and how these might affect their job and workload
- ensuring that staff know who to approach with problems concerning their role and how to pursue issues with senior management
- making sure jobs are designed fairly and that work is allocated appropriately between teams and
- ensuring that workstations are regularly assessed to ensure that they are appropriate and fit for purpose.

Human Resources

The HR department will develop Company-wide policies and procedures to protect the wellbeing of staff, assist line managers in supporting individuals, and liaise as appropriate with occupational health and other medical professionals, with the object of helping employees and workers to maintain good psychological health.

Occupational health

Occupational health professionals will provide a comprehensive service designed to help staff to stay in work, or to return to work, after experiencing mental health problems. This will include preparing medical assessments of individuals' fitness for work following referrals from line managers and the HR department, liaising with GPs and working with individuals to help them to retain employment.

Occupational health professionals will play a critical part in developing rehabilitation plans for employees returning to work after absences related to mental ill health, and work with GPs and line managers on designing jobs and working environments to ensure that rehabilitation is successful. Occupational health professionals will also design and implement health promotion and lifestyle behaviour management programmes, including initiatives on managing pressure and ongoing health conditions at work.



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Employee Assistance Provider

The provider of external employee assistance services will alert the Company's management to clusters or "hotspots" of psychological risk in the organisation, drawing on anonymised data provided by calls to its 24-hour helpline and information from face-to-face counselling with employees and workers.

Employees

You must take responsibility for your own health and wellbeing, by adopting good health behaviours (for example in relation to diet, alcohol consumption and smoking) and informing the Company if you believe work or the work environment poses a risk to your health. Any health-related information disclosed by you during discussions with managers, the HR department or the occupational health service is treated in confidence.

Health promotion initiatives

The Company will develop and run a range of health promotion initiatives designed to raise awareness of health and lifestyle issues affecting mental health and wellbeing. Occupational health professionals and the HR department will have primary responsibility for leading these programmes, but line managers and staff will be expected to participate. These programmes will be evaluated to determine their effectiveness. The programmes will cover:

- stress management
- disability awareness
- bullying and harassment
- handling violence and traumatic incidents at work
- lifestyle behaviours, with voluntary screening (for example in relation to alcohol, drugs and smoking) and
- physical activity and fitness.

Staff will also be encouraged to establish clubs and groups designed to foster wellbeing, for example lunchtime walking or dancing clubs.

Training and communication

Line managers and staff will regularly discuss individual training needs to ensure that staff have the necessary skills to adapt to ever-changing job demands. An examination of training needs will be particularly important prior to, and during, periods of organisational change.

Managers and staff are encouraged to participate in communication/feedback exercises, including stress audits and staff surveys. You are expected to be aware of the importance of effective communication and to use the media most appropriate to the message, for example team meetings, one-to-one meetings, electronic communications and organisation-wide methods. The Company will ensure that structures exist to give employees and workers regular feedback on their performance, and for them to raise concerns.

The Company will consider special communication media during periods of organisational change.

Workplace wellbeing services provided by the occupational health team include:

- workstation assessments
- pre-employment screening
- fitness-for-work assessments
- eye tests for users of visual display screen equipment
- in-work screening for health risks, including for coronary heart disease
- vaccination service
- post-incident support
- designing and advising on health promotion initiatives
- health and safety training.

If you believe that your work, or some aspect of it, is putting your wellbeing at risk you should, in the first instance, speak to your line manager or the HR department. The discussion should cover workload and other aspects of job demands and raise issues such as identified training needs.

A referral to the occupational health team will be made if this is considered appropriate after your initial discussion with your manager or the HR department. Discussions between you and the occupational health professionals are confidential, although the occupational health team will provide a report on your fitness to work, and any recommended adaptations to the working environment, to the HR department.

Other measures available to support employees and workers in maintaining health and wellbeing include [delete as appropriate and insert more details on specific programmes and policies]:

- an employee assistance programme
- procedures for reporting and handling inappropriate behaviour (for example bullying and harassment)
- subsidised gym/sports facilities
- a lifestyle management programme
- a stress management/handling pressure programme
- special leave arrangements
- opportunities for flexible working
- support for workers with disabilities and
- the Company's grievance policy.

Relationship with other policies

This Wellbeing Policy should be read in conjunction with other policies and procedures covering attendance and health, including any policies on Flexible Working, Absence, Sick Pay, Harassment & Bullying, Time off for Dependents, Parental Leave, Violence at work, Equality & Diversity and Training.

Further Information

Please see further information regarding Wellbeing please click [here](#).

Appendix

Flexible Working Application Form

1. Personal Details

Name:

Employee Number:

Manager:

National Insurance No:

To the employer

I would like to apply to work a flexible working pattern that is different to my current working pattern.

- I have worked continuously as an employee of the company for the last 26 weeks.
- I have not made a request to work flexibly under this right during the past 12 months.

2a. Describe your current working pattern (days/hours/times worked):

2b. Describe the change to working conditions that you are seeking (days/hours/times worked):

3. The reasons for my application are:

4. I would like the proposed change to commence from:

Date:

5. Impact of the new working pattern

I think the proposed change will affect the Company and my colleagues as follows:

6. Accommodating the new working pattern

I think the effect of the proposed change on my employer and colleagues might be dealt with as follows:

7. This is a statutory request. I have*/have not* previously made a flexible working application to the Company.

* Please delete as appropriate

If you have previously made a flexible working request, please state when it was made.

Name:

Date:

NOW PLEASE PASS THIS APPLICATION TO YOUR LINE MANAGER AND SEND A COPY TO THE HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

GRIEVANCE - EMPLOYEE COMPLAINT FORM

Employee Details	
Employee name	
Job title	
Line manager	

Details of Complaint	
<p>It is important that you provide us with as much information as possible, to enable us to manage your complaint quickly and effectively.</p> <p>It would be helpful if you could provide specific details and consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Date, time and specific location of incident(s)• Names of any witnesses to the incident(s)• Description of behaviour (eg language, tone, body language)• How this behaviour made you feel• Why you think the person behaved in this way• Examples of any similar behaviour before by this person, either towards you or a colleague• If you spoke to this person afterwards or told anyone else about the incident	
Please provide the name and job title of the person you wish to complain about	
Employee name	
Job title	
<p>Please provide details of your complaint (<i>continue on a separate sheet of paper if necessary</i>)</p>	

Background of Complaint

Have you tried to address your concerns with the person you are complaining about?	Yes		No	
Please provide details of any steps you have taken to try to resolve your complaint informally.				
If you have been unable to talk to this person about your concerns, please explain why.				

Witnesses

Please provide details of any witnesses and explain why you consider them to be relevant to your complaint.

Any other information

If you have any other information or documentary evidence that you believe supports your complaint, please include this.
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HOMEWORKING AGREEMENT

- This agreement supplements the employment contract between **TACT**, The Courtyard, 303 Hither Green Lane, London SE13 6TJ and the employee
- You are contractually based for work purposes in your own home.
- The Organisation will undertake a Home-workers Risk Assessment and DSE Assessment
- The organisation reserves the right to visit the home workplace, and will be you at 24 hours' notice of any such visit, giving time and date of inspection.
- Equipment and furniture supplied by TACT for your use at work remains the property of the organisation. The organisation is responsible for insuring its own property. You remain responsible for insuring your own property.
- You are responsible for ensuring that, by working from home, you do not breach any conditions imposed on you by your insurer, landlord or mortgage lender. You are responsible for ensuring that the use of your home for work purposes does not require planning consent.
- You are responsible for ensuring that all work files, documents and information are kept safe and confidential and are not accessed by others.
- You are required to inform the organisation immediately if for any reason you plan to move house or if there are changes at home, which could impinge on your ability to work satisfactorily from home.
- You have the right to request (giving at least one calendar months' notice) to move your place of work to an existing office of the organisation.
- You will receive an annual home-working allowance of £750 per year subject to tax and NI deductions (pro rata for part-time workers) towards heating and lighting costs. This will be payable in your monthly salary.
- You are not entitled to the London Weighting Allowance unless you live within a London Borough.
- If you are on maternity/adoption leave, you will receive the Homeworking Allowance for the duration of your ordinary maternity/adoption leave but you will not be paid the allowance whilst on additional maternity/adoption leave.
- You will be required on leaving the organisation or moving to an office base, return all equipment provided, purchased by TACT unless agreed by the organisation that such equipment can be kept by you.

Signed:
(for The Organisation)

Signed:
(Employee)Date:

**** London Weighting Allowance will continue to be paid to employees who were based from South London and East London Offices prior to Homeworking Contracts – January 2021**

Personal Volunteer Request Form

Date of request:

To Line Manager:

From Employee:

Proposed volunteering and time involved. Please give details of the activity, location, date and time involved etc.

Approved by Line Manager: YES/NO (delete as appropriate)

If no, please state reason:

Signed:

(Employee)

(Line Manager)

**PLEASE ENSURE A COPY OF THIS FORM IS SENT TO THE HR DEPARTMENT
SO THE VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITY CAN BE RECORDED CENTRALLY**

THE ADOLESCENT & CHILDREN'S TRUST

COMPRESSED HOURS WORKING – APPLICATION

Name:

Location:

Date of Joining TACT:

Commencement date of
compressed hours working:

I hereby request a compressed hours pattern of working. If authorised I propose that my pattern of work will be as shown below.

Week One

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Start:	Start:	Start:	Start:	Start:
Lunch: from: to:	Lunch: from: to:	Lunch: from: to:	Lunch: from: to:	Lunch: from: to:
Finish:	Finish:	Finish:	Finish:	Finish:
Accrued: hrs	Accrued: hrs	Accrued: hrs	Accrued: hrs	Accrued: hrs

Week Two

Mon*	Tues*	Wed*	Thurs*	Fri*
Start:	Start:	Start:	Start:	Start:
Lunch: from: to:	Lunch: from: to:	Lunch: from: to:	Lunch: from: to:	Lunch: from: to:
Finish:	Finish:	Finish:	Finish:	Finish:
Accrued: hrs	Accrued: hrs	Accrued: hrs	Accrued: hrs	Accrued: hrs

*Please indicate which day in Week Two will be the NWD

I have read the Compressed Hours policy, the terms and conditions of which I understand and accept. I also understand that the abuse of this policy is a very serious matter and that in such circumstances the disciplinary procedure may be invoked which may result in the ending of this working arrangement and/or disciplinary action.

Signed.....

Date:

Application Approved by Line Manager :

Date

COMPRESSED HOURS WORKING LOG

Location:

[illegible]

Date.....

Date.....

SICKNESS ABSENCE / BEREAVEMENT LEAVE / DEPENDENT CARE LEAVE FORM

Full Name:		Area:	
First Day of Absence:	Click to select a date.	Last Day of Absence:	Click to select a date.
Absence type:	Sickness <input type="checkbox"/>	Bereavement <input type="checkbox"/>	Dependent Care <input type="checkbox"/>

Date of Return to Work:	Click to select a date.	Total Time Absent	Total Number of Days:	If the absence includes a partial day/s specify start and finish time/s:
When did you notify the Company of your absence, and who did you contact?	When: Click to select a date.	Total Number of Hours:	Start Time:	Finish Time:
	Who:			

If your absence was due to Sickness, you must complete the following section:	
Please choose a sickness type that most closely matches your sickness absence:	Click to Select Absence Type
Did you consult your doctor?	No
If YES please state date of appointment:	Click to select a date.
If YES did you obtain a GP Fit Note?	Please select
(NOTE : GP Fit Notes should be sent to HR as soon as received – if you have not already done so, please submit the certificate with this form).	
Have you been prescribed medicine? If YES , have you been advised of any side effects, which could affect your work or be a safety hazard? Please provide brief details.	

DECLARATION - I declare that all the information I have given in this form is true and that I have not withheld any material fact. I understand these details will be held in confidence by the Company and may be used for the following purposes in compliance with GDPR: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring the health, safety and welfare at work of myself and other workers; The avoidance of discrimination on the grounds of disability; Maintaining SSP and SMP records; Supplying information on accidents where industrial injury benefits may be payable; Ensuring the Company is able to monitor and deal fairly with attendance and absence issues. 	
SIGNATURE OF EMPLOYEE:	<div></div>
DATE:	Click to select a date.

NOTE FOR LINE MANAGER - Please note that by forwarding a completed form to HR you are authorising the absence, and in doing so, confirm that you are satisfied that the employee had a valid reason for being absent and that the employee has fully complied with the absence procedures and policy.
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