



Employee Handbook

Keep me safe for future
use, all the advice you
need.

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2021

Speak to your manager if
you have any questions or
need further help.



Welcome to our company, we are delighted you have joined us.

Our staff handbook is designed to give you as much information as possible to support you in your role, however, your manager

will always be available to answer any questions you have or to support you.

Our business has been built on the belief that offering the best customer service, team work and high standards are the key to our success.

Our policy is to communicate regularly with you, our management team are in place to ensure that all that matters are communicated to you.

We use several ways to communicate with you such as;

- Verbal communication, briefings and meetings
- Email, posters and written communication
- Telephone

As part of your induction we will show you where you can get all the information you will need.

It is important to us that you also share your thoughts and ideas with us, if you have any ideas to support the business please share these with us.

It is our firm intent that every employee should have an equal level of advancement, access to opportunity and the training necessary to that end, irrespective of the employee's sex, race, colour, religion, sexual orientation or age.

This handbook describes our general working conditions and the rules of the company.

We very much hope that your career with us will be both enjoyable and rewarding for you.

Joining us.

Probationary period.

On joining the company, you will serve a probationary period. During this time you will be making your own mind up about whether you wish to remain working with this company. Your manager, at the same time, will be assessing your capabilities, attitude and potential.

If you do not reach the standards required by the company your employment may be terminated at any time during the probationary period, or the probationary period may be extended beyond 12 weeks.

Changes in personal circumstances.

To help us to assist you it is essential that all information on your personnel records is complete and correct. Please inform your manager of any changes in your personal circumstances, including a change of:

- address and telephone number
- name
- next of kin.

We are able to assist you at anytime should you have any query or question regarding your employment with us.

Your personal information is classified as confidential and will not be released to outside sources, other than to comply with statutory requirements, without your prior authorisation.

Payment of Wages / Salary.

Your salary will be paid monthly and is paid directly into your bank or building society account. An itemised pay statement [payslip] showing gross earnings, fixed and variable deductions and net wage will be given to you at the time of each wage payment.

Over-time may be available to some employees as the business needs require, all over-time is paid at your normal hourly rate and must be agreed with your line manager prior to the over-time being completed.

Part-time employees.

You are considered a part time employee if you work less than forty hours a week.

Part-time employees will receive the same terms and conditions of employment as their full-time counterparts, but pay and benefits will be scaled down according to the number of hours worked. You will be entitled to overtime payments unless you are a salaried employee.

When taking any breaks, or going outside of the building you must ensure that your manager or supervisor are aware. This ensures full compliance with the fire safety regulations.

Pensions.

The company operates a company pension scheme you will be provided full details of this scheme with your terms and conditions.

If the scheme is operated on behalf of the company, any queries you may have with your pension must be directed to this company.

Hours of work.

Your normal hours are those set out at the time of your engagement in your written statement of your terms and conditions of employment.

Depending on trading conditions, the way in which you work these hours may be changed, and you may be asked to work extra hours on a week to week basis.

The business operates over 7 days each week, therefore your role may be required to work some weekends.

Your break times will be advised by your line manager each day.

If you are going to be absent due to illness you are required to report this to your Manager as soon as it is practicable yourself and by telephone, text messages will not be accepted.

You must ring in prior to the start time of your shift, or as soon as you are aware that you will not be able to attend work.

Training and promotion.

Company training policy.

We are constantly evolving, changing and growing, we recognise that in order to ensure our teams can evolve and grow with the business we need to support your learning and understanding of the business.

Our training policy is in place to ensure we recognise, enhance and develop key skills that will support the company's growth plans.

The aims of our training policy are to:

- help you develop the skills and give you the knowledge necessary to do the jobs for which you have been recruited.
- help you develop the skills and give you the knowledge required in other jobs in the company, so that flexibility may be achieved at all levels in the company
- equip you for promotion, should the possibility arise.

Promotion.

All promotions are made solely on the basis of individual merit, and all suitable candidates will be considered regardless of their sex, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or age.

Your potential for promotion is assessed by considering many aspects of both your current performance and your future capabilities. Length of Service, on its own, does not lead to promotion.

Appraisal.

Your manager will complete a formal annual appraisal which he or she will discuss with you. You will have the opportunity to air your views, record any comments and discuss plans for your development.

These are an important tool for both parties so please ensure you work with your manager on your appraisal, providing as much information and evidence as you can.

Communication and Consultation.

Internal messages may be sent to you through several systems they will be used by managers and staff throughout the business.

Your line manager will guide you through any systems as part of your introduction, you will also be handed a helpful user's guide to support you.

Throughout the business premises, you will find various notice boards, these hold important information such as company insurance details, procedures and guidance information as well as information of staff events, you should ensure that you take time to view notice boards so you do not miss important information.

Communications – the role of your manager

Perhaps the most important means of communications are the informal face-to-face discussions that occur each day – about your job, your company and your benefits.

Your prime source of information about your job or the company is your Department Manager / Supervisor. It is part of their job to inform, answer questions and listen to constructive opinions, comments or suggestions, which will be forwarded to the relevant senior manager or director when necessary.

Holidays and bank holidays.

Statutory holidays.

The days of public and bank holidays in England and Wales are:

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- May Day
- Spring Bank Holiday

- Late Summer Bank Holiday
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day

Depending on your job role, you may be required to work bank holidays, if this is the case you will receive that day as a bookable holiday.

Each employee is entitled to 20 days holiday plus eight statutory days, giving you 28 days per annum.

Booking / requesting holidays.

You will be informed by the company when the annual holiday calendar starts and finishes, and, how you should request time off.

The company will only be able to allow a certain number of employees off at a time, so please ensure your holiday has been authorised before you book anytime off. The company cannot be held responsible for any loss you incur by not following the booking procedures correctly.

Absence and sickness.

Your attendance is important to the business and it is monitored by the team, our absence policy is in place to ensure all employees are treated equally and fairly.

The policy identifies what steps you must take when reporting absent for work and what actions the company may take, depending on the length of absence involved.

In all cases of sickness, your line manager will conduct a return to work interview with you on your first day back, this is to ensure that you are able to brief us on how you are, we are able to identify any work place adaptations that may be required and for both parties to overview the period of absence.

Sick leave.

You are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) when you are absent from work due to sickness.

The main features of the scheme are:

- the first three days of incapacity are unpaid (called 'waiting days')
- further sickness is paid at the current rate of Statutory Sick Pay
- once SSP is exhausted, an employee normally transfers onto benefits paid directly by the Department for Work and Pensions.
- if two periods of sickness are separated by less than eight weeks (56 days) then they are linked and the employee need not serve the waiting days again.

Short-term absence.

Your manager will formally review your absence record if in any three month period there are three separate periods of absence (whether these are certificated or not), or if there is an unacceptable pattern of absence, for example, regular time off on Mondays or Fridays.

Long-term absence.

'Long-term absence' is a period of sickness which lasts longer than two calendar weeks.

The company takes a sympathetic view about genuine ill-health problems and will provide a supportive approach to all employees in such circumstances.

Your Department Manager will monitor your absence and will counsel you through a period of sickness absence. If, after discussion it appears that you are likely to be away from work for more than four weeks your manager will contact you regularly.

These arrangements may be varied by agreement. Home visits may be made to keep in regular contact with you, they may be completed by your line manager.

Ultimately, if absence does reach problematic levels then the company may have no choice but to dismiss you. The point at which this action may be taken will depend on the nature of your work and the difficulty caused to the company by your continued absence. Dismissal will be regarded as a last resort and the company will endeavour to ensure that the following criteria are fulfilled:

- Relevant medical information is sought and considered
- Options for alternative duties or working arrangements are examined
- Your views will be taken into account.

Before any dismissal the company will comply with any applicable statutory dismissal procedure.

Other time off from work.

There are some occasions where you may be granted 'authorised time' off work, this time will not be paid for unless it is taken from your holiday allowance.

Antenatal care.

All pregnant employees are entitled to time off with pay to keep appointments for antenatal care. Antenatal care may include relaxation classes and parent-craft classes made on the advice of a registered medical practitioner, midwife or health visitor. Except for the first appointment, you must show your manager, if requested, a certificate from a registered medical practitioner, midwife or health visitor, confirming the pregnancy together with an appointment card or some other document showing that an appointment has been made.

Maternity

Women are entitled to maternity leave in accordance with current statutory regulations, during which time they are entitled to benefit from all their normal terms and conditions of employment, except for remuneration (monetary wages or salary).

At the end of it, they have the right to return to their original jobs.

Women who have completed 26 weeks' continuous service by the beginning of the 14th week before the expected week of childbirth are entitled to an additional 26 weeks' maternity leave. During this period their contract of employment continues but with limited terms and conditions. This means a woman can be away from her job on maternity leave for 52 weeks or longer.

The service requirement for additional maternity leave is being abolished by the Work and Families Act for women with babies due on or after 1 April 2007.

Maternity pay

A woman is entitled to Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) if she has been employed by the company for a continuous period of at least 26 weeks ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth, and has average weekly earnings at least equal to the lower earnings limit for National Insurance contributions.

SMP can be paid for up to 26 weeks; it is payable by the employer but partly (or, for small firms wholly) reimbursed by the state.

Time off to deal with a family emergency

All employees are entitled to a reasonable time off work without pay, to deal with an emergency involving a dependant. For example, if a dependant falls ill or is injured, if care arrangements break down, or to arrange or attend a close relative's funeral.

Parental leave.

Employees who have completed one year's service with the company are entitled to 13 weeks' unpaid parental leave for each child born or adopted. The leave can start once the child is born or placed for adoption with the employee or as soon as the employee has completed a year's service, whichever is later. It may be taken at any time up to the child's fifth birthday (or until five years after placement in the case of adoption). Parents of disabled children can take 18 weeks up to the child's 18th birthday.

Paternity leave.

Employees can choose to take either one week or two consecutive weeks' paid paternity leave (not odd days) if they:

- have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing
- are the biological father of the child or the mother's husband or partner and
- have worked continuously for the company for 26 weeks ending with the 15th week before the baby is due or the end of the week in which the child's adopter is notified of being matched with the child.

Paternity leave must be completed:

- within 56 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 days after the first day of the week in which the birth was expected.

Employees have the right to return to the same job after paternity leave. Most employees are entitled to Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP) from the company.

If things go wrong.

Whilst everyone tries their best and we recognise hard work and commitment we all know that on occasions things can go wrong.

To ensure a fair and unbiased approach is taken to any complaints, performance issues or grievances we have a detailed policy covering these areas. However, as a brief we have listed here what our procedures are.

Disciplinary procedure.

We shall investigate any conduct or performance issues, you will be invited by the manager conducting the investigation to give your evidence or supporting information, this will be considered fully in a fair manner as set out in the company's disciplinary procedures, the process will be fully explained to you. In all cases, the manager conducting the investigation will be overseen by a senior manager who will be available to support either party.

If the company decide that disciplinary action should be taken, you will be notified in writing of a date for the disciplinary meeting, the outcome of this meeting may not be decided straight away, but in all cases, you will be notified if any action is to follow.

This action may be:

Informal warning.

If an employee fails to meet the standards required by the company, they will initially be given an informal warning by their Department Manager. This will be recorded on their personnel records and held on the file for a period of up to 6 months.

First written warning.

If the employee's conduct or performance fails to improve they will attend a disciplinary hearing at which they may be accompanied by a colleague.

If the outcome of the meeting is a first written warning this will be kept on record for 6 months and disregarded for disciplinary purposes after that period.

The situation will be reviewed regularly and the employee will be offered support, advice and training to support them.

Final written warning.

If the employee's offence is sufficiently serious, or there is a failure to improve performance with advice and help, following a first written warning they will receive a final written warning.

The employee will attend a disciplinary hearing at which they may be accompanied by a colleague. The invitation to attend will be provided in writing where the employees' rights will be clearly shown.

If the outcome of the meeting is a final written warning this will be kept on record for 6 months and disregarded for disciplinary purposes after that period.

Gross misconduct.

If an employee commits an extremely serious disciplinary offence the Company may dismiss them without prior warnings and without notice.

Some examples of offences which constitute gross misconduct are:

- dishonesty, theft or fraud - malicious damage - fighting, assault on another person - serious incapability through alcohol or illegal drugs - actions which endanger employees' safety - falsification or unauthorised removal of company records or property - a serious act of insubordination.

[This list is not exhaustive]

If the employee is alleged to have carried out such an act of gross misconduct the company may suspend them on full pay whilst it carries out an investigation into the alleged offence.

At the disciplinary hearing the employee will be given the opportunity to state their case and be accompanied by a colleague of their choice.

If, after investigation, it is confirmed that an employee has committed an act of gross misconduct the normal consequence will be dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice.

Stage 3

If you wish to appeal against the company's response to your grievance you should contact your Department Manager / Director.

You have the right to be accompanied at this meeting by a colleague. Where reasonably practical the appeal will be dealt with by a more senior Department Manager / Director than the one who attended the first meeting.

Health & Safety.

Company health and safety policy statement.

Adequate provisions for health and safety are essential to working life. The maintenance of healthy and safe working conditions and the prevention of injuries and losses are not only of vital importance to the Group's efficiency and success, but also in the best interests of all our employees and their families.

All managers within the group attend a Health and Safety course during their employment to ensure they are equipped with the right knowledge to ensure all roles undertaken by our employees are safe and the risk of any activity is reduced.

Everyone has the responsibility to ensure everything they do does not pose a risk to a fellow employee, visitor or member of the public.

We therefore aim to:

- ensure that all employees are fully aware of their responsibility for safety and of the safety rules which are relevant to their own jobs provide up to date information about health and safety issues at work.

Employees will be provided, from time to time, tool box talks, training sessions and refresher courses, we also use on-line training aids, all will be relevant to the work you undertake during your employment.

Some roles and responsibilities also require you to undertake specialist training, if this is the case, the training will be provided by the company.

Such types of investigations will be conducted by a senior manager within the business.

Three step statutory discipline and dismissal procedure.

If an employee faces dismissal or action short of dismissal such as loss of pay, demotion or suspension without pay the three-step statutory disciplinary and dismissal procedure will apply. This involves:

- step one: a written notice to the employee setting out the allegation and the basis for it
- step two: a meeting to consider and discuss the allegation
- step three: a right of appeal including an appeal meeting.

The employee will be reminded of their right to be accompanied.

Appeals.

An employee who wishes to appeal against any disciplinary decision must appeal to their Department Manager / Director within five working days. The managing director will hear the appeal and decide the case as impartially as possible.

Grievance procedure.

Stage 1

If you have a grievance about a matter concerned with your employment you should set out your grievance in writing and send the statement or a copy of it to your Department Manager / Director.

Stage 2

A manager will be assigned to investigate your grievance and they will invite you to a meeting to discuss the grievance.

You have the right to be accompanied at this meeting by a colleague.

After the meeting the Department Manager / Director will inform you of the company's response to your grievance.

- Report hazards.

Don't

- Run inside or outside the premises.
- Attempt to operate any machine or equipment without taking proper instructions.
- Interfere with any safety equipment or machine guards.
- Tamper with any electrical wiring or equipment.
- Leave things lying around on benches or in gangways.
- Obstruct fire exits.

First Aid & Accidents

Accidents – first aid.

“An unplanned event that happens unexpectedly, typically resulting in injury or damage”.

We employ first aiders in all premises owned or operated by the company. All first aiders receive refresher training at least every three years.

In each building, you will find a list of first aiders and their locations, you should make yourself aware of these employees as soon as possible in case an accident occurs.

Each premise has at least one main first aid post and one eye wash station, all company operated vehicles have a first aid kit in them, drivers of these vehicles are responsible for ensuring they are fully kitted out at all times.

Any injury requiring treatment should be dealt with by one of the companies trained first-aiders.

Reporting accidents.

You should report any accident, however minor to a First Aider who will help you complete the accident record. In the event of a serious or notifiable accident or dangerous occurrence, it is essential that the Company Secretary is advised as soon as possible, in order that suitable action is taken.

If you are unsure if any accident is reportable you are advised to report it in the normal manner.

Fire Safety.

Your induction.

On your first day, you will be shown around your place of work, during this tour you will be introduced to our fire marshals and also shown the exit points, assembly points and alarm call points. Please ensure you make sure you familiarise yourself with these important locations as soon as possible.

Each week our senior fire marshal completes a walk around the building, ensuring that all safety equipment is in place and operational, however, if you notice something is not quite right please speak to your manager as soon as possible.

Each month the fire alarms are tested, this is normally the first Tuesday of each month throughout the year, we also complete unannounced full alarm evacuation drills, no-one knows when these will take place as it is essential it is treated as if it was an actual emergency.

Whilst our fire marshals oversee the emergency equipment and signage etc, everyone has a responsibility to ensure that nothing is moved, damaged or missing – if you believe something is wrong you have a legal duty to report it.

Security.

Protecting the business.

Due to the very nature of our business we must ensure security is tight and instructions are observed always.

For security of the business and stock, you may be chosen at Random, to have a search. These are carried out as required throughout the business. We expect staff to be helpful when searches are completed.

To ensure our Health and Safety and welfare standards are maintained the company engage with external bodies who assess our procedures and work completed and report back on how we are doing.

As with all reputable employers, all activities are risk assessed and have a method statement of works, both aim to eliminate or reduce any risk to you whilst at work.

Health and Safety is a team effort and all employees are expected to co-operate with all Health and Safety guidance and instructions.

Safety do's and dont's.

The list of safety rules set out below is not exhaustive and is intended for general guidance only. Some rules will be explained to you by your Department Manager or by an experienced employee. If you are unsure about health and safety issues don't be afraid to ask.

Do

- Look where you are going and proceed cautiously and carefully around the premises.
- Avoid running or rushing about – it's better to be safe than sorry.
- Make sure that you really understand what to do before you operate any piece of equipment however simple, on your own.
- Make sure that you use proper methods for lifting and handling: keep your back straight: if a base or tray is too heavy for you to lift on your own, wait until someone can help you.
- Clean up after you: your untidiness or carelessness may cause injury to someone else.
- Special protective clothing, including goggles, ear protectors, gloves or boots as provided by the Company must be worn when advised to do so.
- Take care always for the safety of yourself and others.
- Report any injury, however slight, to your First Aider.

Searches will always be carried out in private, your line manager and one other person, whose is of equal sex, will be present.

We reserve the right to complete searches on a person, bags or vehicles to which you may have access to.

All staff are supplied with a locker, or a secure area, where they can put any personal belongings, we recommend that you only bring to work what you need to. If you do need to bring any personal items in, you should ensure that mobile phones are switched off and everything is put into your lockers or safe areas, the company cannot be held responsible for any loss or damage to any personal items.

You are not permitted onto any company property outside of your working hours, unless you have the authority of your line manager or a senior manager.

Some areas of the buildings we operate are secured areas, only staff who have the authority to be in these areas are issued with an access code.

If, as part of your role, you are issued with a company vehicle you must ensure that it remains secure at all times, keys must remain with you and you must know where they are at all times.

Never leave any company or personal items on display in the vehicle as this could offer an opportunity of theft when the vehicle is not accompanied.

You may be responsible for the cost of any repairs to a vehicle if a theft found to be due to items been left on display.

If you are issued with a company identification badge you must wear this at all times while working or representing the group.

Information, Technology.

If required, to ensure you can complete your job specification, the company will issue you with and I.T equipment or mobile phones as required.

Decisions on what is issued to you will be made and senior manager / director level.

To ensure that our networks are kept secure and we comply with Data protection, you are not authorised to connect any IT equipment, including tablets and mobile phones to our main wireless internet,.

We have a visitors wifi service which may be used with the permission of a senior manager or director, if permission is given you will be provided the access information. You should note that the company maintain the right to monitor 'traffic' through any of our network services, this includes data links and the viewing of email traffic through the network, regardless if it is business or personal in nature.

Under Copy Right legislation in the UK, any work completed in line with the business is property of the company, regardless of what medium or IT systems it is completed on and whether they are owned by the company.

You are not permitted to discuss any of the company's business activities at any time with any third party outside of the business, unless you have the express written permission of a director.

Mobile phones must remain off and in a secure place at all times whilst at work.

Third Party Interests.

We recognise that many people hold interests, such as volunteering, outside of working hours. We do ask that you keep your line manager updated with such activities so that we can ensure they do not interfere or effect the company's business.

If you wish to work at another business and remain with us, we ask that you gain permission from your line manager prior to accepting another position, we will need to ensure that it will not disrupt our operations.

Certain roles such as a retained fire fighter or special constable will require your employer to confirm they are happy with you taking up this role, therefore, if you are thinking of applying to join a public based sector, you should speak to your line manager first.

Each case will be viewed on its own merits, where possible the company will work with you to support you.

Sale of Personal Goods.

You are not permitted to sell any personal items through the business whilst employed with us. You can however advertise internally, through notice boards if you wish to sell an item to other staff.

The sale will be between you and the other party, the company will not become involved in any disputes that arise from such private sales unless it effects the running of the business.

Charitable Collections.

If you wish to carry out collections for charities or for outside organisations you must first get the approval of your Department Manager / Director.

Termination of Employment.

Redundancy.

As far as the nature of our business allows it is our wish to provide regular employment to our staff. However, the flow of work can be uneven and in certain circumstances redundancy cannot be avoided.

Consultation in the event of redundancies.

The company will consult with individual employees as soon as practicable and as fully as possible.

The company will seek to reduce the effect of any redundancy situation by:

- re-appraising its recruitment policy
- reducing or eliminating overtime
- investigating the possibility of re-deployment and natural wastage
- seeking applicants for early retirement
- introducing short-time working or temporary layoffs.

Selection for redundancy.

Where the above measures fail to prevent a redundancy situation the company will use the following selection criteria to determine which employees will be made redundant:

- skills or experience

- standard of work performance or aptitude for work
- attendance or disciplinary record.

Lay offs and short-time working.

Although every effort will always be made to ensure full employment, in the event of a temporary shortage of work the company reserves the right to temporarily lay-off or place on short-time working any employees affected.

Termination of employment.

If you wish to resign you must give the required written notice to your Department Manager / Director.

If the company decide to terminate your employment you will be notified in writing.

Unless your written statement of your main terms and conditions of employment specifies longer periods of notice, the minimum periods of notice are:

Notice to be given by either party is shown in your letter of appointment.

The company may give the equivalent pay in lieu of notice.

If you leave the company, you must return all items of company property in your possession.

Company Telephone Systems.

All Personnel are reminded that the making of private telephone calls via the Company System may only be made with the specific permission of a Manager / Director.

All calls made from or received to the company phone system may be recorded, therefore these may be listened to at any time by senior managers.

Due to the monitoring of our systems we are able to detect all numbers dialled and store numbers calling in, answering times and talk times may also monitored in our efforts to offer a first-class customer service.

We may also use real call recordings for training purposes.

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