



Handbook



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**Your
next
move...**

1. INTRODUCTION

This Staff Handbook sets out the main policies and procedures that you will need to be aware of while working for us. You should familiarise yourself with it and comply with it at all times. Any questions you may have with regard to its contents or what you have to do to comply with it should be referred to the Operations Director who can refer your query to the relevant individual.

The policies and procedures set out in this handbook apply to all employees unless otherwise indicated. They do not form part of the terms of your contract with us, which are provided to you separately.

The Operations Director has overall responsibility for this Staff Handbook and for ensuring that its policies and procedures comply with our legal obligations. The Staff Handbook is reviewed biannually to ensure that its provisions continue to meet our legal obligations and reflect best practice.

In addition to the handbook there may be local policies and procedures which are site specific. You must ensure you familiarise yourself and comply with such policies. In normal circumstances they will be available or provided on induction at the relevant site but if this is not the case please contact the Operations Director.

2. HOLIDAYS

The details relating to your entitlement to holiday and holiday pay are set out in your professional employment contract.

When you wish to take holiday you are required to give 1 week's notice. A holiday request form must be completed and submitted to payroll at quest-pay.co.uk.

3. FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES

We apply statutory rights to staff who meet statutory eligibility requirements for the following:

- Maternity
- Paternity
- Adoption
- Shared parental leave
- Parental leave
- Time off for dependants
- Flexible working.

We ensure that the policies and procedures relating to the above rights are conducted in accordance with the current statutory obligations. Staff who require further information relating to their rights or the applicable procedures may request a copy of the current policy from the Operations Director.

4. DRESS CODE

Different departments may have specific clothing requirements, for example, because their work is customer-facing or raises particular health and safety concerns. It is important that you dress in a manner appropriate to your working environment and the type of work you do.

Footwear must be safe and clean and take account of health and safety considerations. Where safety clothing and equipment, including protective footwear, is provided it should be worn or used as appropriate and directed. You should not wear clothing or jewellery that could present a health and safety risk.

You will be supplied, if required, with an identity badge that must be worn and visible at all times when you are at work.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Our Health and Safety Policy is available on our website and you must familiarise yourself with and adhere to the policy.

If you are working at different sites you may be required to comply with local or client specific health and safety policies and procedures. Such information should be available on site and will usually be provided or explained to you on induction at the relevant site. If this is not the case or if you have any questions relating to the applicable health and safety procedures you are required to raise this as soon as possible with the appropriate person on site or with our Operations Director.

6. DATA PROTECTION

Whenever we process personal data about you in connection with our policies, we will process it in accordance with our Staff Privacy Notice. We will only process your personal data if we have a lawful basis for doing so. We will notify you of the purpose or purposes for which we use it. Please see the Staff Privacy Notice on the intranet for further information.

If you are required to process personal data as part of your role you are required to do so in accordance with the Staff Privacy Notice, the Privacy Policy and any guidance published by us (whether published on the intranet or notified to you personally). Failure to comply may lead to action under the Disciplinary Procedure and could result in dismissal.

7. SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

7.1 About This Policy

This policy is in place to minimise the risks to our business through use of social media.

This policy deals with the use of all forms of social media, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, Wikipedia, Whisper, Instagram, Vine, Tumblr and all other social networking sites, internet postings and blogs. It applies to use of social media for business purposes as well as personal use that may affect our business in any way.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

7.2 Use Of Social Media

Personal use of social media is never permitted during working hours or by means of our computers, networks and other IT resources and communications systems. You must avoid making any social media communications that could damage our business interests or reputation, even indirectly.

You must not use social media to defame or disparage us, our staff or any third party; to harass, bully or unlawfully discriminate against staff or third parties; to make false or misleading statements; or to impersonate colleagues or third parties.

You must not express opinions on our behalf via social media, unless expressly authorised to do so by your manager. You may be required to undergo training in order to obtain such authorisation.

Any misuse of social media should be reported to the Operations Director.

7.3 Breach Of This Policy

Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

You may be required to remove any social media content that we consider to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.

8. DISCIPLINARY AND CAPABILITY PROCEDURE

8.1 About This Procedure

This procedure is intended to help maintain standards of conduct and performance and to ensure fairness and consistency when dealing with allegations of misconduct or poor performance.

Minor conduct or performance issues can usually be resolved informally with your line manager. This procedure

sets out formal steps to be taken if the matter is more serious or cannot be resolved informally.

This procedure applies to all employees regardless of length of service. It does not apply to agency workers or self-employed contractors.

This procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

8.2 Investigations

Before any disciplinary hearing is held, the matter will be investigated. Any meetings and discussions as part of an investigation are solely for the purpose of fact-finding and no disciplinary action will be taken without a disciplinary hearing.

In some cases of alleged misconduct, we may need to suspend you from work while we carry out the investigation or disciplinary procedure (or both). While suspended, you should not visit our premises or contact any of our clients, customers, suppliers, contractors or staff, unless authorised to do so. Suspension is not considered to be disciplinary action.

8.3 The Hearing

We will give you written notice of the hearing, including sufficient information about the alleged misconduct or poor performance and its possible consequences to enable you to prepare. You will normally be given copies of relevant documents and witness statements.

You may be accompanied at the hearing by a trade union representative or a colleague.

You should let us know as early as possible if there are any relevant witnesses you would like to attend the hearing or any documents or other evidence you wish to be considered.

We will inform you in writing of our decision, usually within one week of the hearing.

8.4 Disciplinary Action And Dismissal

The usual penalties for misconduct or poor performance are:

(a) Stage 1: First written warning or improvement note. Where there are no other active written warnings or improvement notes on your disciplinary record, you will usually receive a first written warning or improvement note. It will usually remain active for six months.

(b) Stage 2: Final written warning. In case of further misconduct or failure to improve where there is an active first written warning or improvement note on your record, you will usually receive a final written warning. This may also be used without a first written warning or improvement note for serious cases of misconduct or poor

performance. The warning will usually remain active for 12 months.

(c) Stage 3: Dismissal or other action. You may be dismissed for further misconduct or failure to improve where there is an active final written warning on your record, or for any act of gross misconduct. Examples of gross misconduct are given below. You may also be dismissed without a warning for any act of misconduct or unsatisfactory performance during your probationary period.

We may consider other sanctions short of dismissal, including demotion or redeployment to another role (where permitted by your contract), and/or extension of a final written warning with a further review period.

8.5 Appeals

You may appeal in writing within one week of the date of the written decision.

The appeal hearing will, where possible, be held by someone other than the person who held the original hearing. You may bring a colleague or trade union representative with you to the appeal hearing.

We will inform you in writing of our final decision as soon as possible, usually within one week of the appeal hearing. There is no further right of appeal.

8.6 Gross Misconduct

Gross misconduct will usually result in dismissal without warning, with no notice or payment in lieu of notice (summary dismissal).

The following are examples of matters that are normally regarded as gross misconduct:

- (a) theft or fraud;
- (b) physical violence or bullying;
- (c) deliberate and serious damage to property;
- (d) serious misuse of the organisation's property or name;
- (e) deliberately accessing internet sites containing pornographic, offensive or obscene material;
- (f) serious insubordination;
- (g) unlawful discrimination or harassment;
- (h) bringing the organisation into serious disrepute;
- (i) serious incapability at work brought on by alcohol or illegal drugs;
- (j) causing loss, damage or injury through serious negligence;
- (k) a serious breach of health and safety rules;
- (l) a serious breach of confidence.

This list is intended as a guide and is not exhaustive.

9. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

About This Procedure

Most grievances can be resolved quickly and informally through discussion with your line manager. If this does not resolve the problem you should initiate the formal procedure set out below.

This procedure applies to all employees regardless of length of service.

This procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment. It may be amended at any time and we may depart from it depending on the circumstances of any case.

STEP 1: WRITTEN GRIEVANCE

You should put your grievance in writing and submit it to your line manager. If your grievance concerns your line manager you may submit it to the Operations Director. The written grievance should set out the nature of the complaint, including any relevant facts, dates, and names of individuals involved so that we can investigate it.

STEP 2: MEETING

We will arrange a grievance meeting, normally within one week of receiving your written grievance. You should make every effort to attend.

You may bring a companion to the grievance meeting if you make a reasonable request in advance and tell us the name of your chosen companion. The companion may be either a trade union representative or a colleague.

If you or your companion cannot attend at the time specified you should let us know as soon as possible and we will try, within reason, to agree an alternative time.

We may adjourn the meeting if we need to carry out further investigations, after which the meeting will usually be reconvened.

We will write to you, usually within one week of the last grievance meeting, to confirm our decision and notify you of any further action that we intend to take to resolve the grievance. We will also advise you of your right of appeal.

STEP 3: APPEALS

If the grievance has not been resolved to your satisfaction you may appeal in writing to the Managing Director, stating your full grounds of appeal, within one week of the date on which the decision was sent or given to you.

We will hold an appeal meeting, normally within two weeks of receiving the appeal. This will be dealt with impartially by a manager or Director who has not previously been involved in the case. You will have the same rights to bring a companion as apply to grievance meetings.

We will confirm our final decision in writing, usually within one week of the appeal hearing. There is no further right of appeal.

10. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

10.1 About this Policy

We are an equal opportunities employer and do not discriminate on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, disability or age (the Protected Characteristics).

We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all staff and applicants and aim to create a working environment in which all individuals are able to make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment. The principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity also apply to the way in which staff treat visitors, clients, customers, suppliers and former staff members.

All staff have a duty to act in accordance with this policy, to treat colleagues with dignity at all times, and not to discriminate against or harass other members of staff, regardless of their status. Your attention is drawn to our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy also contained in this Handbook.

10.2 Scope and purpose of the policy

This policy applies to all aspects of our relationship with staff and to relations between staff members at all levels. This includes job advertisements, recruitment and selection, training and development, opportunities for promotion, conditions of service, pay and benefits, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and the termination of employment.

If you have specific needs or requirements relating to a Protected Characteristic please communicate them to your manager and / or HR in order that appropriate steps may be considered to accommodate the needs or requirements.

10.3 Forms of discrimination

Discrimination is generally prohibited unless there is a specific legal exemption. Discrimination may be direct or indirect and it may occur intentionally or unintentionally. Direct discrimination occurs where someone is treated less favourably because of one or more of the Protected Characteristics set out above. For example, rejecting an applicant on the grounds of their race would be direct discrimination.

Indirect discrimination occurs where someone is disadvantaged by an unjustified provision, criterion or practice that also puts other people with the same Protected Characteristic at a particular disadvantage. For example, a requirement to work full time puts women at a particular disadvantage because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement will need to be objectively justified. Harassment related to any of the Protected Characteristics is prohibited. Harassment is unwanted conduct that has

the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment is dealt with further in the Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy.

Victimisation is also prohibited. This is less favourable treatment of someone who has complained or given information about discrimination or harassment, or supported someone else's complaint.

10.4 Recruitment and selection

We aim to ensure that no job applicant suffers discrimination because of any of the Protected Characteristics above. Our recruitment procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that individuals are treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities.

10.5 Training, promotion and conditions of service

Staff training needs will be identified through regular staff appraisals. All staff will be given appropriate access to training to enable them to progress within the organisation and all promotion decisions will be made on the basis of merit.

Our conditions of service, benefits and facilities are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are available to all staff who should have access to them and that there are no unlawful obstacles to accessing them.

10.6 Termination of employment

We will ensure that redundancy criteria and procedures are fair and objective and are not directly or indirectly discriminatory. We will also ensure that disciplinary procedures and penalties are applied without discrimination, whether they result in disciplinary warnings, dismissal or other disciplinary action.

10.7 Disability discrimination

If you are disabled or become disabled, you are encouraged to inform your Manager so that appropriate support may be provided. Sometimes a disability may affect an individual's ability to carry out their role. However, if the circumstances are discussed it may be possible to make reasonable adjustments to help to overcome or minimise the effect on the individual.

Your Manager may wish to consult with you and a medical adviser(s) about the details of the disability and possible adjustments. The information will be considered carefully and, where appropriate reasonable adjustments will be made.

We will monitor the physical features of our premises to consider whether they place disabled workers, job applicants or service users at a substantial disadvantage compared to other staff. Where reasonable, we will take steps to improve access for disabled staff and service users.

10.8 Breaches of the policy

If you believe you have been discriminated against you are encouraged to try to resolve matters informally and directly in the first instance. If this is not successful, or the informal stage is not appropriate, then you may raise a grievance under the Grievance Procedure. If you believe that you may have been subject to harassment you may raise the matter through our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy.

Allegations regarding potential breaches of this policy will be treated in confidence and investigated in accordance with the relevant procedure. Staff who make such allegations in good faith will not be victimised or treated less favourably as a result. False allegations which are found to have been made in bad faith will, however, be dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Any member of staff who is found to have committed an act of discrimination or harassment will be subject to disciplinary action. Such behaviour may constitute gross misconduct and, as such, may result in summary dismissal. We take a strict approach to serious breaches of this policy.

11. ANTI-HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

11.1 About This Policy

We are committed to providing a working environment free from harassment and bullying and ensuring all staff are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect. This policy covers harassment or bullying which occurs at work and out of the workplace, such as on business trips or at work-related events or social functions. It covers bullying and harassment by staff (which may include consultants, contractors and agency workers) and also by third parties such as customers, suppliers or visitors to our premises.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

11.2 What Is Harassment?

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment.

It also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past.

Unlawful harassment may involve conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment), or it may be related to age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories.

Harassment may include, for example:

- (a) unwanted physical conduct or "horseplay", including touching, pinching, pushing and grabbing;
- (b) unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless);
- (c) offensive e-mails, text messages or social media content;
- (d) mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability.

A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended "target". For example, a person may be harassed by racist jokes about a different ethnic group if the jokes create an offensive environment.

11.3 What Is Bullying?

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power that can make a person feel vulnerable, upset, humiliated, undermined or threatened. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority, but can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation.

Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct. Bullying may include, by way of example:

- (a) physical or psychological threats;
- (b) overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision;
- (c) inappropriate derogatory remarks about someone's performance;

Legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of a worker's performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given to workers in the course of their employment, will not amount to bullying on their own.

11.4 If You Are Being Harassed Or Bullied

If you are being harassed or bullied, consider whether you feel able to raise the problem informally with the person responsible. You should explain clearly to them that their behaviour is not welcome or makes you uncomfortable. If this is too difficult or embarrassing, you should speak to the Operations Director, who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue formally or informally.

If informal steps are not appropriate, or have not been successful, you should raise the matter formally under our Grievance Procedure.

We will investigate complaints in a timely and confidential manner. The investigation will be conducted by someone with appropriate experience and no prior involvement in the complaint, where possible. Details of the investigation and the names of the person making the complaint and the person accused must only be disclosed on a "need

to know” basis. We will consider whether any steps are necessary to manage any ongoing relationship between you and the person accused during the investigation.

Once the investigation is complete, we will inform you of our decision. If we consider you have been harassed or bullied by an employee the matter will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure as a case of possible misconduct or gross misconduct. If the harasser or bully is a third party such as a customer or other visitor, we will consider what action would be appropriate to deal with the problem. Whether or not your complaint is upheld, we will consider how best to manage any ongoing working relationship between you and the person concerned.

11.5 Protection And Support For Those Involved
Staff who make complaints or who participate in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

11.6 Record-Keeping
Information about a complaint by or about an employee may be placed on the employee’s personnel file, along with a record of the outcome and of any notes or other documents compiled during the process. These will be processed in accordance with our Staff Privacy Policy.

12.ANTI-CORRUPTION AND BRIBERY POLICY

12.1 About This Policy
It is our policy to conduct all of our business in an honest and ethical manner. We take a zero-tolerance approach to bribery and corruption and are committed to acting professionally, fairly and with integrity in all our business dealings and relationships.

Any employee who breaches this policy will face disciplinary action, which could result in dismissal for gross misconduct. Any non-employee who breaches this policy may have their contract terminated with immediate effect.

This policy does not form part of any employee’s contract of employment and we may amend it at any time. It will be reviewed regularly.

12.3 Who Must Comply With This Policy?
This policy applies to all persons working for us or on our behalf in any capacity, including employees at all levels, directors, officers, agency workers, seconded workers, volunteers, interns, agents, contractors, external consultants, third-party representatives and business partners.

12.4 What Is Bribery?
Bribe means a financial or other inducement or reward

for action which is illegal, unethical, a breach of trust or improper in any way. Bribes can take the form of money, gifts, loans, fees, hospitality, services, discounts, the award of a contract or any other advantage or benefit. Bribery includes offering, promising, giving, accepting or seeking a bribe.

All forms of bribery are strictly prohibited. If you are unsure about whether a particular act constitutes bribery, raise it with the Operations Director.

Specifically, you must not:

- (a) give or offer any payment, gift, hospitality or other benefit in the expectation that a business advantage will be received in return, or to reward any business received;
- (b) accept any offer from a third party that you know or suspect is made with the expectation that we will provide a business advantage for them or anyone else;
- (c) give or offer any payment (sometimes called a facilitation payment) to a government official in any country to facilitate or speed up a routine or necessary procedure;

You must not threaten or retaliate against another person who has refused to offer or accept a bribe or who has raised concerns about possible bribery or corruption.

12.6 Record-Keeping
You must declare and keep a written record of all hospitality or gifts given or received.

All accounts, invoices, and other records relating to dealings with third parties including suppliers and customers should be prepared with strict accuracy and completeness. Accounts must not be kept “off-book” to facilitate or conceal improper payments.

12.7 How To Raise A Concern
If you are offered a bribe, or are asked to make one, or if you suspect that any bribery, corruption or other breach of this policy has occurred or may occur, you must notify the Operations Director as soon as possible.

13.WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

13.1 About This Policy
We are committed to conducting our business with honesty and integrity and we expect all staff to maintain high standards. Any suspected wrongdoing should be reported as soon as possible.

This policy covers all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, casual workers and agency workers. This policy does not form part of any employee’s contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

13.2 What Is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to our activities. This includes bribery, facilitation of tax evasion, fraud or other criminal activity, miscarriages of justice, health and safety risks, damage to the environment and any breach of legal or professional obligations.

13.3 How To Raise A Concern

We hope that in many cases you will be able to raise any concerns with your manager. However, where you prefer not to raise it with your manager for any reason, you should contact the Operations Director or the Manging Director. Contact details are at the end of this policy. We will arrange a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss your concern. You may bring a colleague or union representative to any meetings under this policy. Your companion must respect the confidentiality of your disclosure and any subsequent investigation.

13.4 Confidentiality

We hope that staff will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this policy. Completely anonymous disclosures are difficult to investigate. If you want to raise your concern confidentially, we will make every effort to keep your identity secret and only reveal it where necessary to those involved in investigating your concern.

13.5 External Disclosures

The aim of this policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing in the workplace. In most cases you should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally. The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for you to report your concerns to an external body such as a regulator. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. Public Concern at Work operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

13.6 Protection And Support For Whistleblowers

We aim to encourage openness and will support whistleblowers who raise genuine concerns under this policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken. Whistleblowers must not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of raising a genuine concern. If you believe that you have suffered any such treatment, you should inform the Operations Director immediately. If the matter is not remedied you should raise it formally using the Grievance Procedure.

You must not threaten or retaliate against whistleblowers in any way. If you are involved in such conduct you may be subject to disciplinary action. In some cases the whistleblower could have a right to sue you personally for compensation in an employment tribunal. However, if we conclude that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously, the whistleblower may be subject to disciplinary action.

CONTACTS

Whistleblowing Officers

Mike Findley - Operations Director
email: mike@quest-pay.co.uk

Alex Grant – Manging Director
email: alex@quest-pay.co.uk



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