



# **Staff Handbook**

## Handbook Introduction

### Welcome to OxLEP

Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP), formally launched by the Business Minister, Mark Prisk MP, in March 2011 is responsible for championing and developing the Oxfordshire economy. OxLEP has made considerable progress in strengthening Oxfordshire's economy by establishing robust and effective relationships between businesses, academia and the public sector.

This strong partnership is reflected within Our Board - a body of Non-Executive Directors who are leaders within education, business and local authorities across Oxfordshire. With their support OxLEP can act as an informed, independent advocate for those driving innovation and growth across the county. In addition, we are also able to priorities the key programmers needed to address priority deficiencies identified in Oxfordshire.

### Using the Staff Handbook

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 your line manager.

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

All managers have a specific responsibility to operate in accordance with the provisions set out in this Staff Handbook, to ensure that all staff understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and to take action when behaviour falls below those requirements

Those working at a management level have a specific responsibility to set an appropriate standard of behaviour, to lead by example and to ensure that those they manage adhere to the policies and procedures and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities.

Everyone should ensure that they take the time to read and understand the content of this handbook and act in accordance with its aims and objectives. All staff must ensure that they are familiar with and comply with and support its policies and procedures.

Questions about the content or application of the handbook should be directed to your line manager.

## Contents

<b>Code of Conduct</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>Sickness Absence</b>	<b>Page 7</b>
<b>Flexitime/Time of in Lieu (TOIL)</b>	<b>Page 14</b>
<b>Compassionate Leave</b>	<b>Page 19</b>
<b>Time off for Dependants</b>	<b>page 21</b>
<b>Grievance</b>	<b>Page 24</b>
<b>Disciplinary Rules and Procedures</b>	<b>Page 29</b>
<b>Anti-Bribery</b>	<b>Page 38</b>
<b>Gifts and Hospitality</b>	<b>Page 41</b>
<b>Anti-Harassment and Bullying</b>	<b>Page 46</b>
<b>Whistle Blowing</b>	<b>Page 50</b>
<b>Equal Opportunities</b>	<b>Page 53</b>

## Pay Reviews

## **Code of Conduct**

### **Contents:**

- 1. Code of Conduct explained**
- 2. Nolan Principles of Public Life**
- 3. Anti-Bribery and Corruption**
- 4. Use of OxLEP facilities**
- 5. Use of confidential and private information**
- 6. Dealings with OxLEP**
- 7. Equality**
- 8. Other employment**
- 9. Conduct outside work**
- 10. Political impartiality**
- 11. Appointments**
- 12. Conflict of Interest**

## 1. Code of Conduct Explained

This code sets out the general standards of conduct which Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) expects of its entire staff.

Our partners, stakeholders and the public have the right to expect the highest standards of integrity on your part. It is not enough to avoid actual impropriety since the employee should, at all times, avoid any occasion for suspicion or the appearance of improper conduct.

It is the employee's responsibility to make sure that what you do complies with this code. Failure to do so may lead to disciplinary action in accordance with company procedures.

The employee will be expected, without fear of recrimination, to bring to the attention of the appropriate level of management any deficiency in standards of conduct, impropriety or breach of procedure.

## 2. Nolan Principles of Public Life

Given the nature of our business, all staff, and members of the Board, are required to comply with the Nolan Principles of public life – a set of principles designed to improve behavior in public life.

The principles are as follows:

### (i) Selflessness

Individuals should act solely in terms of the public interest.

### (ii) Integrity

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

### (iii) Objectivity

Individuals must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

(iv) **Accountability**

Individuals are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this

(v) **Openness**

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

(vi) **Honesty**

Individuals should be truthful.

(vii) **Leadership**

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

### **3. Anti-Bribery and Corruption**

OxLEP expects its staff to comply with its Anti-Bribery and corruption policy in all respects, including in relation to the receipt of gifts and hospitality.

### **4. Use of OXLEP facilities**

The employee should always make sure that any facilities eg stationery provided by OxLEP is used for OxLEP's business and for no other purpose without the prior approval of their manager.

### **4. Use of confidential and private information**

An employee may acquire information that has not been made public and is still confidential. It is a betrayal of trust to breach such confidences. The employee should never disclose or use such confidential information for their personal information or anyone known to them, or to the disadvantage or the discredit of OxLEP or anyone else.

Equally, the employee should always observe the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 and OxLEP's procedures for the release of personal information held about other staff or members of the public.

### **5. Dealings with the OXLEP**

The employee must declare any financial interest, whether direct or indirect, that they or their partner may have in any contract or proposed contract with OxLEP.

## **6. Equality Issues**

The employee must ensure that the Company's policies relating to equality issues are complied with in addition to the requirements of the law. All members of the local community, customers and other staff have the right to be treated with fairness and equity.

## **7. Other employment**

If the employee is not prevented from taking other additional employment in their terms and conditions of employment, then it must not conflict with the interests of OxLEP, weaken public confidence in OxLEP, or impact on their duties and their effectiveness

## **8. Conduct outside work**

Generally, what the employee does outside work is their own concern, but they should avoid doing anything which might adversely affect the reputation of OxLEP. If formally acting on behalf of OxLEP outside of the office/office hour's conduct should reflect professionalism at all times.

## **9. Political Impartiality**

OxLEP staff should as a whole and in carrying out their job be politically neutral. Such neutrality does not preclude their being a member of a political party.

## **10. Appointments**

In order to avoid any possible accusation of bias, the employee should not be involved in an appointment where they are related to an applicant, or have a close personal relationship outside work with him or her.

Similarly, they should not be involved in decisions relating to discipline promotion or pay adjustments for any other staff who is a relative, partner or close friend.

If in doubt, talk to your manager.

## **11. Conflict of Interest**

There may be occasions where other employment or interests may have the potential for conflict with the work the employee does for OxLEP. The onus is on



the employee as a responsible person to bring to the attention of their manager any potential situations where such conflict may arise.

## **Sickness and Absence Policy**

### **Contents:**

- 1. Policy Statement**
- 2. Action required during Sickness Absence**
- 3. Returning to work**
- 4. Sickness following an accident at work**
- 5. Time off the medical appointments**
- 6. Sickness Absence Management**
- 7. Sick Pay**
- 8. Equality Act**

## **1. Policy Statement**

When an employee is absent from work due to sickness, the main concern of the organisation is their well-being. The organisation understands that there may be instances where employees are unable to attend work due to sickness. The organisation aims to manage absence diplomatically, causing minimal disruption to work and unnecessary pressure on colleagues, whilst ensuring that all members of staff are treated fairly and compassionately.

This policy applies to all employees of Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership Ltd (OxLEP) and aims to outline the Company's approach to sickness absence; state the action required during sickness absence and upon return to work; detail how the organisation manages sickness absence; and outline the rights reserved by the organisation in cases of long term or frequent sickness absence.

Abuse of sickness absence, including failing to report absence or falsely claiming sick pay, will be treated as misconduct under our disciplinary procedure.

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment and may be amended at any time.

## **2. Action required during sickness absence**

### **2.1. Reporting the sickness absence**

- a) Employees who are absent from work should report their absence to their Line Manager by 10.00am on the first day of absence by telephone where possible. The Line Manager should then inform the Office Manager for logging. Employees are required to provide an indication as to the reason for absence and how long they are likely to be off work. If they are unable to provide this they, or their representative, should contact the organisation on a daily basis, until they can provide a date when they are likely to return to work. If an employee cannot get to work for some other reason eg parenting problems, they should discuss this with their manager. They will not be able to help unless they know the problem.
- b) If a member of staff becomes ill during working hours and needs to leave work unexpectedly, then they must inform their manager, or another manager in their absence, prior to leaving.

### **2.2. Certifying absence**

If an employee is absent for less than 7 days they must complete a self-certificate form. They can complete this on their return to work. These forms are available from the Office Manager. They will need to produce a certificate form for every absence, even one day.

If the absence is longer than 7 days, the employee must produce a doctor's certificate stating that they are not fit for work and giving the reasons for this...

If the sickness is known to be long term from the start, eg chicken pox, then their doctor will give them a certificate from day one. If absence continues beyond the expiry of a certificate you must obtain further certificates.

The employee's manager may, at their discretion, require an employee to provide a doctor's certificate from the first day of absence.

An employee entering hospital or similar institution must submit a doctor's statement on entry and on discharge.

### **2.3. Longer term illness**

The employee has a responsibility to keep their line manager informed of developments. If their illness extends beyond the period originally advised, they must let their line manager know.

### **2.4. Illness during annual leave**

If an employee is ill whilst on leave, they may be entitled to leave later, so long as they can provide proof of their illness. A Doctor's certificate should be obtained at the time of their illness as appropriate proof.

### **2.5. Annual leave during illness**

- a) Employees can take their annual leave if they are absent due to illness. Requests should be made to their line manager.
- b) When employees are on annual leave they will receive holiday pay and not sick pay. If they are still ill following their annual leave, their sick leave counts as one period of continuous absence and their original sick pay entitlement remains.

### **2.6. Contact with Employees**

An employee of OxLEP may visit any member of staff who is absent for more than seven calendar days (at a convenient time to both parties) to maintain direct contact, offer advice and assistance and provide an update of any developments which may affect them. The absent member of staff may request an earlier visit if they wish.

## **3. Returning to work**

After a period of sick leave an employee should:

- Complete a self-certification form and present it to their line manager.
- Any outstanding doctor's certificates must also be given to their line manager.
- If an employee has been absent for some time, they may need to produce a form from their doctor declaring them fit to return to work.

- The line manager may wish to discuss their return to work with the employee to ensure they are fully fit to return and to bring them up to date on anything they may have missed during their absence.
- Line Manager should notify Admin of their return and forward self-certification to Admin for logging and filing.

#### **4. Sickness following an accident at work**

If an employee is absent through illness connected with an accident at work, they will need to inform their line manager if they have not already done so. The employee must ensure that they complete an accident reporting form as soon as possible so that their accident is properly logged.

#### **5. Time off for medical appointments**

Non urgent doctors and dentists and opticians appointments should be arranged, whenever possible, in the employees own time or at the beginning or end of their work period. Their line manager may ask to see their appointment card.

If the employee has an appointment during the day appropriate time off will normally be given. However if there are frequent appointments they may be asked to contribute some of their own time.

#### **6. Sickness Absence Management**

- a) Should your line manager consider it necessary to implement this policy, then you will be asked to attend an initial review meeting where you will be able to discuss the sickness absence. Should you wish to be accompanied by a friend during this interview then we will use our reasonable endeavours to accommodate such a request. If you or your companion cannot attend at the time specified you should let us know in writing as soon as possible and we will try, within reason, to agree an alternative time.
- b) If you have a disability, we will consider whether reasonable adjustments may need to be made to the sickness absence meetings procedure, or to your role or working arrangements.
- c) We may ask you to consent to a medical examination by a doctor or occupational health professional or other specialist nominated by us (at our expense).
- d) You will be asked to agree that any medical report produced may be disclosed to us and that we may discuss the contents of the report with the specialist and with our advisers. All medical reports will be kept confidential and held in accordance with our Data Protection obligations.

##### **6.1 Initial sickness absence meeting**

- a) The purposes of a sickness absence meeting or meetings will be to discuss the reasons for your absence, how long it is likely to continue, whether it is likely to recur, whether to obtain a medical report, and whether there are any measures that could improve your health and/or attendance.
- b) In cases of long-term absence, we may seek to agree a return-to-work programme, possibly on a phased basis.
- c) In cases of short-term, intermittent absence, we may set a target for improved attendance within a certain timescale.

## **6.2 If Matters do not improve**

If, after a reasonable time, you have not been able to return to work or if your attendance has not improved within the agreed timescale, we will hold a further meeting or meetings. We will seek to establish whether the situation is likely to change, and may consider redeployment opportunities at that stage. If it is considered unlikely that you will return to work or that your attendance will improve within a short time, we may give you a written warning you that you are at risk of dismissal. We may also set a further date for review.

## **6.3 Final Sickness Absence meeting**

Where you have been warned that you are at risk of dismissal, and the situation has not changed significantly, we will hold a meeting to consider the possible termination of your employment. Before we make a decision, we will consider any matters you wish to raise and whether there have been any changes since the last meeting.

## **6.4 Appeals**

You may appeal against the outcome of any stage of this procedure. If you wish to appeal you should set out your appeal in writing to the Chief Executive, stating your grounds of appeal, within one week of the date on which the decision was sent or given to you.

If you are appealing against a decision to dismiss you, we will hold an appeal meeting, normally within two weeks of receiving the appeal. This will be dealt with impartially and, where possible, by a more senior manager who has not previously been involved in the case.

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

The date that any dismissal takes effect will not be delayed pending the outcome of an appeal. However, if the appeal is successful, the decision to dismiss will be revoked with no loss of continuity or pay.

## 7 Sick Pay

Employees are not entitled to receive any company sick pay during their first three months of employment. However, where applicable, the Company will pay Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) to those employees who have a period of sickness absence over four days and up to a maximum of 28 weeks in one period of incapacity, in accordance with Government Guidelines.

When an employee has successfully completed their probation period with the company and their contract of employment states that they will be entitled to benefit from the Company Sick Pay Scheme, the company will allow employees to receive sick pay as follows (“Company Sick Pay”):

<b>Less than one year’s service:</b>	One month’s full pay and one months’ half pay within any 12 month period
<b>One to two years’ service</b>	Three months’ full pay and three months’ half pay within any 12 month period
<b>Two years or more - capped</b>	Three months’ full pay and three months’ half pay within any 12 month period

The period during which Company Sick Pay is payable in respect of any period of absence is determined by deducting from the employee’s entitlement any periods of paid absence during the 12 months immediately preceding the first day of absence.

Company Sick Pay is inclusive of any statutory sick pay that may be due for the same period.

If an employee has been off on sick leave continuously for longer than a year they will not qualify for sick pay again until they have returned to work for a total of 12 weeks.

The rights of the Company to terminate an employee’s employment under the terms of the employee’s contract apply even when such termination would or might cause the employee to forfeit any entitlement to sick pay or other benefits.

## 8 Equality Act

The company's sickness absence procedure takes full account of the requirements of the Equality Act. Any long term absence or on-going health issue will be reviewed in that context, including seeking medical advice.



## **Flexitime/Time off in lieu (TOIL)/Working from Home**

### **Contents:**

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Applicability**
- 3. Core Time**
- 4. Starting and Finishing Times**
- 5. Lunch break**
- 6. Accounting for time worked under Flexitime**
- 7. Medical Appointments**
- 8. Time Recording**
- 9. Working from Home**

## 1. Introduction

The Company is committed to supporting flexible working arrangements and other policies/information/advice to help ensure staff achieve a healthy work/life balance.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that in agreeing amendments to working arrangements, operations requirements are fully considered and customer satisfaction is not compromised.

Fixed hours of working can result in a 'clock-watching' mentality and reduce the flexibility to respond to peaks/troughs. By having a more flexible approach to working it means that individual employees' needs can often be accommodated, say if they choose to stay on a little later to finish a piece of work, or leave early so that they can return to work refreshed to complete the task the next day.

The nature of the work of the company necessitates that employees may need to work outside of standard office hours and in different locations.

It is important to remember that staff are contracted to work a specified number of hours to carry out their job requirements. Where individuals are regularly working sufficient hours in excess of this to build up the maximum allowable flexitime, it should be as a result of work based need rather than personal choice. Managers are encouraged to regularly monitor working patterns to ensure this is the case. The primary function of the flexitime arrangements is to facilitate minor variations to working time and not the creation of additional leave days. For this reason, flexitime should not be booked in advance or without having built up the relevant hours.

Flexitime can help to achieve a number of the Company's objectives. By staggering working times, employees can make a contribution to reducing traffic congestion at peak hours. Flexitime can also help employees to combine their work and personal responsibilities, and can help workflow to be managed more efficiently by being able to respond to urgent, unplanned demands or dealing with sudden variations in workload.

It is not the primary intention of the scheme to enable employees to accumulate large amounts of time off, and managers must ensure that the operation of the scheme does not affect the quality of service provided by the Company.

## 2. Applicability

For part-time staff 'core hours' should be individually agreed between the employee and their manager.

Directors and Managers are responsible for agreeing any areas within their teams where flexitime cannot be applied because it would affect operational requirements and staff working in those areas will not be eligible to work under the provisions of this scheme.

Where flexitime is in operation, managers still have a responsibility to ensure that an appropriate level of operational cover is provided at all time. Managers may, at any time, over-ride the provisions of the flexi-time scheme in the interests of operational efficiency or quality of service and they may wish to seek the advice/support of the CEO should they wish to do so.

Managers must plan cover for operational requirements based on staff's contractual arrangements e.g. where there are a number of part-timers, making sure there is sufficient cover for each day of the week.

Employees who believe that the provisions of the scheme are being unreasonably withheld from them should raise the issue with their line manager.

### **3. Core Time**

Managers are responsible for setting an appropriate core time within their team during which normal hours must be worked. Core time should not start later than 10.00 am and should not finish earlier than 3.30 pm (3.00 pm on a Friday).

All staff should be contactable during their working hours.

When an employee is required to work late they should agree with their manager an appropriate start time for the following day, subject to the demands of the service. On these occasions it will not be necessary to comply with core hours.

### **4. Starting and Finishing Times**

Managers should set appropriate earliest starting times and latest finishing times according to the needs of their teams. Starting times should not be earlier than 7.30 am and finishing times should not be later than 6.30 pm (see also previous paragraph and next four paragraphs).

Work carried out outside the usual hours worked or the full-time 37 hour week may be agreed as TOIL.

Additional work undertaken outside the agreed maximum hours (for example an evening meeting) should be compensated for by time off in lieu and should not form part of flexitime calculations. The employee's manager should agree arrangements for such out-of-office work in advance.

Time off in lieu should be taken as soon as is reasonably practical and shouldn't be carried over to another month with explicit managerial agreement.

### **5. Lunch break**

Generally a lunch break should be taken between 12 noon and 2.00 pm and should not be less than 30 minutes or more than 1½ hours. If a

longer/earlier/late lunch break is needed, then this should be agreed with the manager ensuring there is appropriate cover.

Meetings during lunch breaks should be discouraged. If they have to take place, then employees should take a break immediately before or after the meeting. If employees are travelling back from out-of-office meetings/site visits during this time, then they should also take a break immediately beforehand/afterwards,

## **6. Accounting for time worked under Flexitime**

Flexitime is intended to cater for relatively small fluctuations in daily hours and the balance of hours carried forward should not exceed +10 or -5 any week, unless there are exceptional circumstances and managerial agreement.

Where employees appear to be consistently working in excess of their contractual hours each week, managers should investigate and if necessary review workload, objectives and working methods. An action plan must be developed and review periods agreed if the working time regularly exceeds 48 hours per week.

Where an employee is consistently working fewer than their agreed hours this should also be investigated by their manager and appropriate action taken.

Excess hours accumulated under the scheme should be accounted for by taking flexi-leave in units of half a day or a day. Clearance for taking flexi-leave must be obtained from managers in the same way as for annual leave, i.e. agreed in advance and subject to service delivery requirements. Flexi-leave should not be booked until after the time has been accumulated.

## **7. Medical Appointments**

For employees with disabilities or long standing health issues, time away from work, should be agreed with your line manager.

Where emergency treatment or similar unavoidable appointments become necessary, agreement for employees to take paid time off is discretionary and each case is judged according to its circumstances. Permission to attend appointments during core working time must be sought from and agreed in advance by the appropriate manager. The manager may ask to see a medical appointment card where this is felt to be inappropriate.

Paid time off for ante-natal care is granted, this should be agreed with your manager.

Paid time off is granted for being screened for cancers, this should be agreed with your line manager.

## **8. Time Recording**

A time recording system must be used. A personal weekly record sheet showing times worked and any absences should be completed by all staff in those sections where flexitime is in operation. Managers should check and sign record sheets on a regular basis.

## 9. Working from Home

OxLEP recognises the need to maximise its business performance by supporting teams and individual staff members to find more efficient ways of working, making the best use of people's time and resources.

There may be occasions where it is advantageous for staff to work from home rather than working in the office. These may be

- To better utilise our office space;
- Reduce the cost, time and pollution of travelling;
- Improve health and wellbeing by supporting employees to achieve a better balance between work and personal lives;
- Maintain business continuity during severe weather conditions and travel disruption;
- If attending meetings off site, and it is more time efficient to travel home afterwards and work rather than travelling in to the centre of Oxford.

Any request to work from home must be agreed with your manager to ensure there is sufficient cover in the office to meet business needs. It is worth noting that this is discretionary and would not be agreed where absence would place an unfair burden on colleagues covering day-to-day operational tasks (such as answering phones), left unstaffed through a working from home request.

Where staff work from home they should be available during core working hours as if they were in the office. They should have their OxLEP issued mobile phone to hand while working, or in cases where one has not been provided then an alternative contact number must be provided in case of emergencies. The Lync facility should be used whenever staff are working from home to allow messages to be passed quickly and efficiently and Outlook calendars must be up to date with your location.

Before finishing for the day you should, as a courtesy, inform any team members in the office so they know not to contact you when you are "off-the-clock"

## **Compassionate Leave Policy**

### **Contents:**

- 1. Compassionate leave**
- 2. Entitlement**
- 3. Requesting compassionate leave**

## **1. Compassionate Leave Policy**

Compassionate leave is designed to help you cope with the death of a close relative, deal with necessary arrangements and attend their funeral. It may also be granted where a close relative is seriously or critically ill.

This policy applies to all employees.

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

## **2. Entitlement**

You are entitled to take paid compassionate leave of up to 5 days in any 12-month period in respect of a spouse or partner, child, stepchild, grandchild, parent, step-parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, brother or sister, stepbrother or stepsister, or brother or sister-in-law.

We may exercise our discretion to grant a period of paid compassionate leave in respect of any other relative or close friend, depending on the circumstances of each case.

If you are still unable to return to work following an authorised period of compassionate leave you should contact your line manager. It may be appropriate to take a period of annual leave, subject to your manager's approval, or we may at our discretion grant you further unpaid leave in those circumstances.

## **3. Requesting compassionate leave**

We recognise that it may not always be possible to request compassionate leave in advance. However, where it is possible, you should make a request to your line manager. You should tell them the reasons for your request and the number of days leave you would like to take.

Where it is not possible to request leave in advance you should contact your line manager as soon as possible to tell them the reason for your absence and the number of days you expect to be absent. Someone can do this on your behalf if necessary.

In exceptional circumstances we may have to refuse a request for compassionate leave and will give you a written explanation of the reasons. If you are dissatisfied with this decision you may appeal to Chief Executive in writing within five working days of receiving our written reasons OR make a complaint under our Grievance Procedure.

## **Time Off for Dependants Policy**

### **Contents:**

- 1. About this policy**
- 2. Reasonable unpaid time off**
- 3. Exercising the right to time off**



## 1. About this policy

The law recognises and we respect that there may be occasions when you will need to take time off work to deal with unexpected events involving one of your dependants.

This time off for dependant's policy gives all employees the right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work to deal with certain situations affecting their dependants.

No-one who takes time off in accordance with this policy will be subjected to any detriment.

This policy applies to all employees.

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

## 2. Reasonable unpaid time off

**2.1** You have a right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work when it is necessary to:

- a) Provide assistance when a dependant falls ill, gives birth, is injured or assaulted;
- b) make longer-term care arrangements for a dependant who is ill or injured;
- c) take action required in consequence of the death of a dependant;
- d) deal with the unexpected disruption, termination or breakdown of arrangements for the care of a dependant (such as a child-minder falling ill); and/or
- e) deal with an unexpected incident involving your child while a school or another educational establishment is responsible for them.

**2.2** A **dependant** for the purposes of this policy is:

- a) your spouse, civil partner, parent or child;
- b) a person who lives in the same household as you, but who is not your tenant, lodger, boarder or employee; or
- c) anyone else who reasonably relies on you to provide assistance, make arrangements or take action of the kind referred to in paragraph 2.1

This policy applies to time off to take action which is necessary because of an immediate or unexpected crisis. This policy does not apply where you need to

take planned time off or provide longer-term care for a dependant. If this is the case, you should take advice from your line manager.

Whether action is considered necessary will depend on the circumstances, including nature of the problem, the closeness of the relationship between you and the dependant, and whether anyone else is available to assist. Action is unlikely to be considered necessary if you knew of a problem in advance but did not try to make alternative care arrangements.

Reasonable time off in relation to a particular problem will not normally be more than one or two days. However, we will always consider each set of circumstances on their facts.

### **3. Exercising the right to time off**

You will only be entitled to time off under this policy if, as soon as is reasonably practicable, you tell your line manager:

- a) the reason for your absence; and
- b) how long you expect to be away from work.

If you fail to notify us as set out above, you may be subject to disciplinary proceedings under our Disciplinary Procedure for taking unauthorised time off.

We may in some cases ask you to provide evidence for your reasons for taking the time off, either in advance or on your return to work. Suspected abuse of this policy will be dealt with as a disciplinary issue under our Disciplinary Procedure.

## **Grievance Policy**

### **Contents:**

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Mediation**
- 3. The right to be accompanied**
- 4. Accessibility**
- 5. Conducting the grievance procedure**
- 6. Formal grievance procedure**

## **1. Introduction**

This policy applies to all Company employees. It does not apply to agency workers or self-employed contractors.

The Company believes that all employees should be treated fairly and with respect. If you have any grievances relating to your employment, you should discuss this with your line manager or if appropriate, another senior manager, who will attempt to resolve the situation on an informal basis. Where attempts to resolve the matter informally do not work, it may be appropriate for you to raise a formal grievance under this procedure.

If your complaint relates to bullying or harassment on the part of a colleague, the matter should be dealt with under the bullying and harassment procedure.

Complaints that amount to an allegation of misconduct on the part of another employee will be investigated and dealt with under the disciplinary procedure and you will be informed of the outcome.

Grievances may be concerned with a wide range of issues, including the allocation of work, your working environment or conditions, the opportunities that you have been given for career development or the way in which you have been managed. However, issues that are the subject of collective negotiation or consultation will be dealt with separately and will not be considered under the grievance procedure.

Complaints that you may have about any disciplinary action taken against you should be dealt with as an appeal under the disciplinary procedure.

Grievances raised while you are subject to disciplinary proceedings will usually be heard only when the disciplinary process has been completed. Insofar as a grievance has any bearing on the disciplinary proceedings, it can be raised as a relevant issue in the course of those proceedings.

## **2. Mediation**

It may be appropriate for the matter to be dealt with by way of mediation, depending on the nature of your grievance. This involves the appointment of a third-party mediator, who will discuss the issues raised by your grievance with all of those involved and seek to facilitate a resolution. Mediation will be used at the discretion of the Company and only where all parties involved in the grievance agree.

## **3. The right to be accompanied**

You have the right to be accompanied by a fellow worker or trade union official at any grievance meeting or subsequent appeal meeting. You must tell the person holding the grievance or appeal meeting who your chosen

companion is in good time before the meeting. Please note that individual workers are not obliged to agree to accompany you. Companions will be given appropriate paid time off to allow them to accompany colleagues at a grievance hearing or appeal hearing.

At any hearing or appeal hearing, your chosen companion will be allowed to address the meeting, respond on your behalf to any view expressed in the hearing, and sum up the case on your behalf. However, both the hearing and appeal hearing are essentially meetings between the employer and you, so any questions put directly to you should be dealt with by you and not your companion.

Where the chosen companion is unavailable on the day scheduled for the meeting or appeal, the meeting will be rescheduled, provided that you can propose an alternative time within five working days of the scheduled date. If your chosen companion is not available for more than five working days afterwards we may ask you to choose someone else.

#### **4. Accessibility**

If any aspect of the grievance procedure causes you difficulty on account of any disability that you may have, or if you need assistance because English is not your first language, you should raise this issue with your line manager, who will make appropriate arrangements.

#### **5. Conducting the grievance procedure**

The Company recognises that a formal grievance procedure can be a stressful and upsetting experience for all parties involved. Everyone involved in the process is entitled to be treated calmly and with respect. The Company will not tolerate abusive or insulting behavior from anyone taking part in or conducting grievance procedures and will treat any such behavior as misconduct under the disciplinary procedure.

#### **6. Formal grievance procedure**

##### **6.1 Making the complaint**

The first stage of the grievance procedure is for you to put your complaint in writing. This written statement will form the basis of the subsequent hearing and any investigations, so it is important that you set out clearly the nature of your grievance and indicate the outcome that you are seeking. If your grievance is unclear, you may be asked to clarify your complaint before any meeting takes place.

Your complaint should be headed "Formal grievance" and sent to your line manager. If your complaint relates to the way in which your line manager is treating you, the complaint may be sent to a more senior manager.

Further attempts may be made to resolve the matter informally, depending on the nature of your complaint. However, if you are not satisfied with the outcome, you may insist on the matter proceeding to a full grievance hearing.

Before proceeding to a full grievance hearing, it may be necessary to carry out investigations of any allegations made by you, although the confidentiality of the grievance process will be respected. If any evidence is gathered in the course of these investigations, you will be given a copy long enough in advance of the hearing for you to consider your response. In exceptional circumstances, the evidence given by individuals may have to remain confidential. Where confidentiality is necessary, this will be explained to you and an appropriate summary of the evidence gathered will be given to you. The amount of investigation required will depend upon the nature of the allegations and will vary from case to case. You must cooperate fully and promptly in any investigation.

## **6.2 The grievance hearing**

The hearing will be held as soon as is reasonably practicable and, subject to any need to carry out prior investigations, will normally be held within five working days of the receipt of your written complaint. It will be conducted by your line manager and may also be attended by an HR representative. At the meeting, you will be asked to explain the nature of your complaint and what action you feel should be taken to resolve the matter. Where appropriate, the meeting may be adjourned to allow further investigations to take place.

You should ensure that you attend the meeting at the specified time. If you are unable to attend because of circumstances beyond your control, you should inform your line manager as soon as possible. If you fail to attend without explanation, or if it appears that you have not made sufficient attempts to attend,

While you will be given every opportunity to explain your case fully, you should confine your explanation to matters that are directly relevant to your complaint. Focusing on irrelevant issues or incidents that took place long before the matters in hand is not helpful and can hinder the effective handling of your complaint. The manager conducting the hearing will intervene if he/she thinks that the discussion is straying too far from the key issue. The manager may also intervene to ensure that the meeting can be completed within a reasonable timeframe, depending on the nature and complexity of your complaint.

Following the meeting, you will be informed in writing of the outcome within seven working days and told of any action that the Company proposes to take as a result of your complaint.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may make a formal appeal.

### **6.3 Appeal**

Your appeal should be made in writing to the Chief Executive. You should clearly state the grounds of your appeal, i.e. the basis on which you say that the result of the grievance was wrong or that the action taken as a result was inappropriate. This should be done within five working days of the written notification of the outcome of the grievance. An appeal meeting will be arranged to take place within fourteen days of the submission of your formal appeal.

You should ensure that you attend the meeting at the specified time. If you are unable to attend because of circumstances beyond your control, you should inform your line manager of this as soon as possible. If you fail to attend without explanation, or if it appears that you have not made sufficient attempts to attend, the hearing may take place in your absence.

The appeal hearing will be conducted by your Chief Executive or a senior manager who has not previously been involved where possible, and will consider the grounds that you have put forward and assess whether or not the conclusion

reached in the original grievance hearing was appropriate. Following the appeal meeting, you will be informed of the outcome within seven working days. The outcome of this meeting will be final.

OxLEP reserves the right to amend and review this policy at any time.

## **Disciplinary Rules and Procedures**

### **Contents:**

- 1 Introduction**
- 2 Disciplinary Rules**
- 3 Investigation**
- 4 Procedure**
- 5 Disciplinary Action**
- 6 Appeal**
- 7 Miscellaneous**



## **1. Introduction**

The aim of this policy is to provide a framework within which managers can work with employees to maintain satisfactory standards of conduct and to encourage improvement where necessary.

The following procedure will be applied fairly in all instances where disciplinary action is regarded as necessary by the Company's management save to the extent that an informal minor reprimand is given for any minor act of misconduct committed by an employee.

It is our policy to ensure that any disciplinary matter is dealt with fairly and that steps are taken to establish the facts and to give employees the opportunity to respond before taking any formal action.

The procedure applies to all employees. It does not apply to agency workers or self-employed contractors.

This procedure is used to deal with misconduct. It does not apply to cases involving genuine sickness absence or poor performance. In those cases an alternative appropriate procedure will be followed.

This procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time. The Company may also vary this procedure, including any time limits, as appropriate in any case.

Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership Limited (OXLEP) reserves the right to implement the procedure at any stage as set out below taking into account the alleged misconduct of an employee. Employees will not ordinarily be dismissed for a first disciplinary offence

If any employee has any difficulty at any stage of the procedure because of a disability, they should discuss the situation with their line manager as soon as possible.

## **2. Disciplinary Rules**

### **2.1. Misconduct**

a) Matters that OXLEP normally views as amounting to misconduct include (but are not limited to):

- Minor breaches of contract
- poor timekeeping
- time wasting
- unauthorised absence

- minor damage to or unauthorised use of Company property
- failure to observe Company procedures
- abusive behaviour
- unreasonable refusal to follow an instruction issued by a manager or supervisor
- poor attendance
- [excessive use of our telephones for personal calls]
- [excessive personal e-mail or internet usage]
- [obscene language or other offensive behavior]
- [negligence in the performance of duties]
- smoking in non-designated areas of the Company's premises.

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

## 2.2 Gross Misconduct

- a) Gross misconduct is misconduct of such a serious and fundamental nature that it breaches the contractual relationship between the employee and the Company, and includes misconduct which, in our opinion, is likely to prejudice our business or reputation or irreparably damage our working relationship and the trust between us. In the event that an employee commits an act of gross misconduct, the Company will be entitled to terminate the employee's contract of employment without notice or pay in lieu of notice (summary dismissal).
- b) Matters that the Company will normally view as amounting to gross misconduct include (but are not limited to):
- stealing from the Company, members of staff or the public;
  - other offences of dishonesty;
  - falsification of a qualification or entitlement to work (including immigration status) in order to gain employment or other benefit;
  - falsification of records, reports, accounts, expense claims or self-certification forms, whether or not for personal gain;
  - sexual misconduct at work;
  - fighting with or physical assault on members of staff or the public;
  - bullying;
  - deliberate damage to or misuse of the Company's property;
  - serious damage to the Company's property;
  - serious misuse of our property or name;
  - serious insubordination;
  - drunkenness or being under the influence of illegal drugs while at work;
  - possession, custody or control of illegal drugs on the Company's premises;
  - serious breach of the Company's rules, including, but not restricted to, health and safety rules and rules on computer use;
  - gross negligence;
  - serious breach of confidence;
  - accepting or offering a bribe or otherwise breaching our rules on anti-bribery and corruption;

- conviction of a criminal offence that is relevant to the employee's employment;
- conduct that brings the Company's name into disrepute; and
- unlawful discrimination or harassment related to gender, marital or civil partner status, gender reassignment, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, religion or belief or age.

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

### **3. Investigations**

The purpose of an investigation is for the Company to establish a fair and balanced view of the facts relating to any disciplinary allegations against an employee before deciding whether to proceed with a disciplinary hearing.

An employee's supervisor or manager will promptly and thoroughly investigate any matter that is reasonably suspected or believed to contravene any of the Employer's policies or rules or may otherwise be a disciplinary matter. The employee will be informed as soon as possible as to the fact of an investigation and when it has been concluded. The amount of investigation required will depend on the nature of the allegations and will vary from case to case.

There may be instances where suspension with pay is necessary while investigations are carried out. For example, the Company may need to suspend with pay where there are reasonable grounds for concern that evidence may be tampered with, destroyed or witnesses pressurised before the disciplinary hearing, or if there is a potential risk to the business or other employees or third parties in allowing the employee to remain at work. Suspension will be for no longer than is necessary and the Company will confirm the arrangements in writing. Suspension of this kind is not a disciplinary penalty and does not imply that any decision has already been made about the allegations.

Depending on the circumstances of the case, the employee may be invited to attend an investigatory interview. Such an interview is purely for fact finding purposes and no decision on disciplinary action will be taken until after a disciplinary hearing has been held. If such an interview is held prior to a disciplinary hearing, the employee will be informed at the outset that the interview is an investigatory interview. There is no right for employees to be accompanied at a formal investigatory interview, although we may allow an employee to be accompanied if it helps them to overcome a disability or any difficulty in understanding English. The Company reserves the right to dispense with an investigatory interview and to proceed directly to a formal disciplinary hearing.

Employees must cooperate with any investigation. This will include informing the Company of the names of any relevant witnesses, disclosing any relevant documents, and attending investigative interviews if required.

## 4. Procedure

### 4.1 Notification of a Hearing

Where, upon completion of an investigation, there are reasonable grounds to believe that an employee has committed an act of misconduct, the employee will be invited to attend a disciplinary hearing before the employee's department manager or manager of a similar level to the departmental manager.

a. In the event of a disciplinary hearing taking place the Company will:

- give the employee a minimum of two working days' advance notice of the hearing;
- tell the employee the purpose of the hearing and that it will be held under the Employer's disciplinary procedure;
- explain the employee's right to be accompanied at the hearing by a fellow worker or trade union official;
- give the employee written details of the nature of his/her alleged misconduct; and
- provide to the employee all relevant information (which should include statements taken from any fellow employees or other persons that the Company intends to rely upon against the employee) not less than two working days in advance of the hearing.

The Company will give the employee written notice of the date, time and place of the disciplinary hearing.

Where the employee or their companion is unable to attend a disciplinary hearing the employee must inform the Company immediately and if the employee provides a good reason for failing to attend, the hearing will be adjourned to another day. An employee must make every effort to attend the hearing and a failure to do so without good reason may be treated as misconduct in itself. If an employee fails to attend without good reason, or is persistently unable to do so, the Company may have to take a decision based on the available evidence.

### 4.2 The Right to be Accompanied

The Employee may bring a companion to any disciplinary hearing or appeal hearing under this procedure. The companion may be either a trade union representative or a colleague. The employee must tell their chosen companion is, in good time before the hearing. A companion is allowed reasonable time off from duties without loss of pay but no one is obliged to act as a companion if they do not wish to do so.

Where the chosen companion is unavailable on the day scheduled for the meeting, it will be rescheduled, provided that the employee proposes an alternative time within five working days of the scheduled date. If the

companion is not available for more than five working days the Company may ask the Employee to choose someone else.

The employee's chosen companion has the right to address the hearing to put the employee's case, sum up the case and respond on the employee's behalf to any view expressed at the hearing. The companion may also confer with the employee during the hearing. However, there is no requirement for the employer to permit the companion to answer questions on behalf of the employee, or to address the hearing where the employee indicates that he/she does not wish this.

#### 4.3 The disciplinary hearing

A disciplinary hearing will normally be conducted by the employee's department manager. A representative from HR may also be present to take notes. Where possible any member of management responsible for the investigation of the disciplinary offence(s) shall not conduct the disciplinary hearing, although such managers may present any supporting facts and material to the disciplinary hearing.

The employee will be entitled to be given a full explanation of the case against him/her and be informed of the content of any statements provided by witnesses. The employee will be able to call his/her own witnesses. He/she will be permitted to set out his/her case and answer any allegations. The employee will be given a reasonable opportunity to ask questions, present evidence and call relevant witnesses. He/she will also be given the opportunity to raise points about any information provided by witnesses. Where the Company intends to call relevant witnesses it will give the employee advance notice of this. The employee must also give advance notice if he/she intends to call relevant witnesses.

The Company may adjourn the disciplinary proceedings if it appears necessary or desirable to do so (including for the purpose of gathering further information). The employee will be informed of the period of any adjournment. If further information is gathered, the employee will be allowed a reasonable period of time, together with his/her fellow worker or trade union official, to consider the new information prior to the reconvening of the disciplinary proceedings.

As soon as possible after the conclusion of the disciplinary proceedings, the employee's department manager will convey the decision to the employee and will also inform the employee what disciplinary action, if any, is to be taken. The decision will be confirmed in writing. The employee will be notified of his/her right of appeal under this procedure.

### 5. Disciplinary action

Where, following a disciplinary hearing, the Company establishes that the employee has committed a disciplinary offence, the following disciplinary action may be taken:

- (i) Where a minor or first disciplinary offence has been committed the employee will receive a first written warning. The warning will:

- set out the nature of the offence committed;
- inform the employee that further misconduct is liable to result in further disciplinary action under this procedure;
- specify the period for which the warning will remain "live; and
- state that the employee may appeal against the warning.

(ii) Where a serious disciplinary offence amounting to gross misconduct has been committed, thereby justifying summary dismissal, but the Company decides, after taking into account all appropriate circumstances, that a lesser penalty is appropriate, or, where an employee commits further disciplinary offences after a first written warning has been issued and remains "live", a final (or combined first and final) written warning may be given. Such a warning will:

- set out the nature of the offence committed;
- inform the employee that further misconduct is likely to result in his/her dismissal;
- specify the period for which the warning will remain "live; and
- state that the employee may appeal against the warning.

(iii) where the employee is still within their probation period, or has committed further acts of misconduct (these being acts of misconduct other than gross misconduct) following a final written warning given under (ii). above, the employee may be dismissed with notice or with pay in lieu of notice.

(iv) Where the Company establishes that an employee has committed an act of gross misconduct, the employee may be summarily dismissed regardless of whether there are active warnings on the employee's record.

(v) In some cases the Company may, in its absolute discretion, consider alternatives to dismissal. These will usually be accompanied by a final written warning:

- disciplinary suspension;
- demotion;
- in line with any provision in the contract of employment, stoppage of pay for such period as the Company thinks fit in the circumstances; or
- Loss of overtime;
- Reduction in pay.

(vi) The above sanctions may be imposed in conjunction with other forms of disciplinary action, or as an alternative to dismissal.

A first written warning will usually remain active for six months and a final written warning will usually remain active for twelve months. An employee's conduct may be reviewed at the end of a warning's active period and if it has not improved

sufficiently the Company may decide to extend the active period. After the active period, the warning will remain permanently on the Employee's personnel file but will be disregarded in deciding the outcome of future disciplinary proceedings.

## 6. Appeals

An employee may appeal to the Chief Executive against any disciplinary sanction imposed against him/her, with the exception of an informal oral warning or reprimand. Where possible the appeal will be heard by a senior manager who has not previously been involved in the matter. The senior manager is obliged to consider any representations made by the employee, the employee's fellow employee or trade union official and those of the manager who conducted the investigation and the manager who conducted the disciplinary hearing and imposed the disciplinary sanction. The senior manager hearing the appeal must decide on the basis of both sets of representations, together with any subsequent facts that may have come to light, whether or not to uphold the disciplinary sanction. In the event that the senior manager finds for the employee, the senior manager shall allow the appeal and shall remove all records of the disciplinary sanction from the employee's record. In the event that the senior manager does not accept the representations made by or on behalf of the employee, the senior manager must uphold the disciplinary sanction.

When lodging an appeal, the employee should state:

- the grounds of appeal; and
- whether he/she is appealing against the finding that he/she has committed the alleged act or acts of misconduct, or against the level of disciplinary sanction imposed.
- The employee must provide written notice of the appeal within five working days of being informed of the disciplinary sanction being imposed against him/her.

Appeal hearings will normally take place within 14 days of receipt of the employee's written notice of appeal.

Upon completion of the appeal, the senior manager conducting the hearing will convey his/her decision to the employee. The decision will be confirmed in writing within one week. The Company's decision at the appeal is final. Where an appeal lies against a dismissal, the decision to dismiss will have had immediate effect and, therefore, if the dismissal is by notice, the period of notice will already have commenced on the date that the decision was given. If the decision was to dismiss the employee summarily without notice, the Company will be under no obligation to reinstate or pay the employee for any period between the date of the original dismissal and the appeal decision and the original date of termination will stand. In the event that the decision to dismiss is overturned, the employee will be reinstated with immediate effect and he/she will be paid for any period between the date of the original dismissal and the successful appeal decision. His/her continuous service will not be affected.

## **7. Miscellaneous**

This procedure will be periodically reviewed. Any amendment to it will be notified to employees in writing. This may be by means of the Company's intranet or via use of company notice boards.



## **Anti-Bribery Policy Statement**

### **Contents:**

- 1. About this Policy**
- 2. Who Must Comply?**
- 3. What is Bribery?**
- 4. How to Raise a Concern**

## 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.

## 2. 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.

## 3. 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 your manager or the Chief Executive.

Specifically, you must not:

- i. 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;
- ii. 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;

- iii. 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.

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.

#### **4. 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 your manager as soon as possible.

## **Gifts and Hospitality Policy**

### **Contents:**

**1. Introduction**

**2. Gifts**

**3. Hospitality**

**4. Sponsorship**

**5. Review**

## 1 Introduction

From time to time employees may be offered gifts or hospitality. This raises the difficulty of deciding whether or not to accept them. The guidelines contained in this Policy are intended to protect individual employees as well as OxLEP.

The acceptance of a gift or hospitality potentially creates a risk to the integrity and reputation of OxLEP and of the employee. Employees are strongly advised to be cautious and must consult their Line Manager if they are in any doubt in a particular case. Acceptance of a gift or of hospitality in breach of this Policy could be a disciplinary matter.

Employees should ask themselves how a member of the public, who may be critical or suspicious, might regard a gift or offer of hospitality; certain occasions are particularly sensitive and require avoidance of any opportunity for misunderstandings. These include for example:

- occasions when OxLEP is going through a competitive procurement process;
- funding decisions (i.e. when OxLEP is determining to grant funding to organisation).

**It is a criminal offence to corruptly solicit or accept any gift or consideration as an inducement or reward. If the gift or consideration is from someone holding or seeking a contract with OxLEP, its receipt will be deemed to be corrupt unless the employee proves to the contrary. It is a criminal offence to accept, as employees, any fee or reward other than their proper remuneration. Accepting any gift or consideration in the knowledge or belief that it is intended as an inducement or reward is an offence, whether the employee receiving it is actually influenced or not (Bribery Act 2010).**

An employee must never invite or encourage an offer of a gift or hospitality in connection with their work. It is important to take care to avoid giving any indications that one might be open to such an improper offer.

OxLEP's goal is not merely to avoid committing a criminal offence, but to demonstrate to its stakeholders that the highest standards of ethical behaviours are in place. Even though OxLEP is a company, it manages significant amounts of public funds and many of its staff are seconded from Oxfordshire County Council. OxLEP therefore embraces the National Scheme of conditions of service for Local Government, which states:

“The public is entitled to demand of a Local Government Officer conduct of the highest standard; and public confidence in their integrity would be shaken were the least suspicions, however ill founded, to arise that they could be in any way be influenced by improper motives.”

## 2. Gifts

The acceptance of gifts and hospitality, even on a modest scale is best avoided as it may arouse suspicion and needs to be capable of public justification.

The Head of Corporate Services will maintain a register in which to record any gift, hospitality or sponsorship, offered to an employee of OxLEP, unless it comprises of a small gift or modest offer of hospitality (under £50) Frequent receipt (i.e. more than two in any three month period) of gifts or hospitality of less than £50, must be reported to your Line Manager. The following information will be briefly recorded:

- the person or body making the offer;
- the employee to whom the offer was made;
- the gift, hospitality or sponsorship offered;
- the action taken by the employee/line manager as to whether the offer was accepted or refused;

Every employee who receives or is offered, a gift or hospitality, which these guidelines require to be registered, shall report the circumstances of the offer to their Line Manager so that the facts are recorded in the register. (Where the invitation is to a group of employees, each person must report individually). Every employee is entitled to see what is recorded in the register against their name, and the Chief Executive shall have access to every register maintained.

If there is doubt as to value of the offer this should always be discussed with your Line Manager.

As a general rule gifts should (tactfully) be refused. This includes all such offers from organisations or persons who do, or might provide, works, goods or services to the council, or who need some decision from OxLEP. These rules also apply to discounts offered to an individual employee going beyond those offered to the general public (other than those available to all employees on a corporate basis).

Employees may only accept occasional small gifts as follows:

- small gifts of office equipment or stationery given by way of trade advertisements to a range of employees or for use in the office. Nothing more elaborate than calendars, pens or diaries would fall within this exception.
- **NB:** Employees should take care not to display any such branded items when this might be taken as an indication of favour to a particular supplier or contractor, for example in the course of a procurement exercise.
- small gifts of only token value given on the conclusion of an official courtesy visit, for example, a visiting delegation.
- gifts to an employee or a member of their family where the donor is a personal friend.

- small gifts e.g. a box of chocolates, bottle of wine or flowers of a value less than £50 would only be acceptable if they were given as a genuine show of appreciation of work undertaken but should never be accepted if it may give rise to an appearance of influence or reward.

Other gifts (including any cash) must be handed over to your Line Manager who will ensure the gift is recorded in the register and make a decision as to what should happen to it. If the Line Manager does not approve acceptance of the gift then the Line Manager must decide whether the gift should be returned or passed on to a charity or other organisation benefiting the community. Whatever decision is taken the Line Manager must ensure that the donor is informed of what has happened to the gift and record the action taken in the Register.

### **3. Hospitality**

Offers of hospitality should always be approached with caution and offers of hospitality where any suggestion of improper influence is possible must be refused.

Hospitality should only be accepted on a scale appropriate to the occasion or the circumstances. Acceptance may make it difficult to avoid some obligation to the party offering it, and might later be thought to have affected an employee's impartiality in dealing with official matters.

Some offers of hospitality are unacceptable for example, offers of holidays or holiday accommodation/travel. Hospitality on a lower scale than this may also be unacceptable. Invitations to sporting fixtures or evenings at the theatre are acceptable only when they are required for the conduct of OxLEP business. No absolute dividing-line can be laid down and this underlines the importance of discussing any such offers with your Line Manager.

There is an important difference between, for example, attendance in an official OxLEP capacity at a function organised by a private individual or firm and accepting hospitality from a private individual or firm standing to benefit from goodwill of OxLEP.

However, it will not always be possible or even desirable to reject offers of hospitality on a modest scale. Acceptable hospitality is that not exceeding £50 in value such as official hospitality at a function organised by a public authority; a drink and sandwich following a site visit; or a working lunch of modest standard to enable the parties to continue to discuss business. The decision whether to accept or not must depend on the circumstances in each case but hospitality should never be accepted, if it may give rise to an appearance of influence or reward.

Where it is clearly evident that the work of OxLEP would be facilitated by attending, invitations to all social occasions should be discussed in advance

with your Line Manager (the Chief Executive will seek the approval of the Chair) and the facts are recorded in the register.

In exceptional circumstances where it is not possible to seek prior approval, the facts must be reported to your Line Manager at the earliest opportunity afterwards and recorded in the register.

Invitations involving attendance outside working hours should be dealt with in the same way as any other offer and reported to the Line Manager and recorded in the register.

#### **4. Sponsorship**

Any offers of sponsorship when related with OxLEP work and particularly when it relates to individual sponsorship must be discussed with your Line Manager so that the offer can be registered and a record kept. Some examples of acceptable sponsorship would include sponsoring an individual to:

- do a parachute jump; or
- compete in a marathon.

Group sponsorship could refer to employees who make up a football or cricket team and owing to their being OxLEP employees are allowed to use leisure facilities owned or provided by the sponsor.

All offers of individual or group sponsorship relating to OxLEP employees should be discussed with their Line Manager before a decision is taken and whatever the decision, it must be recorded in the register.

Group sponsorship should not be discouraged, although individual personal sponsorship would not normally be regarded as acceptable.

#### **5. Review**

The Head of Corporate Services will regularly review this Policy to ensure it remains compliant and continues to meet the needs of the organisation.



## **Anti-harassment and bullying policy**

### **Contents:**

- 1. About this Policy**
- 2. What is harassment?**
- 3. What is bullying?**
- 4. What to do if you are affected by bullying**
- 5. Protection and support for those involved**
- 6. Record-keeping**

## **1. About this policy**

OxLEP is 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.

## **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.

## **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.

#### **4. What to do if you are affected by Bullying**

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 your line manager, or a more senior manager, 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.

#### **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.

## **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 Data Protection obligations.

## **Whistle Blowing**

### **Contents:**

- 1. About the policy**
- 2. What is whistleblowing?**
- 3. Confidentiality**
- 4. External disclosures**
- 5. Protection and support for whistleblowers**

## **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.

## **2. What is whistleblowing?**

Whistleblowing is the reporting of suspected wrongdoing or dangers in relation to our activities. This includes bribery, fraud or other criminal activity, miscarriages of justice, health and safety risks, damage to the environment and any breach of legal or professional obligations. It also includes the following matters specific to this workplace: 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 Chief Executive. 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.

## **3. 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.

## **4. 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.

## 5. 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 your line Manager immediately. If the matter is not remedied you should raise it formally using our 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. However, if we conclude that a whistleblower has made false allegations maliciously or with a view to personal gain, the whistleblower may be subject to disciplinary action.

Public Concern at Work operates a confidential helpline. Their contact details are at the end of this policy.

## Contacts

<b>Chief Executive</b>	Nigel Tipple Tele: 07792 907302 Email: Chiefexec@oxfordshirelep.com
<b>Public Concern at Work</b> (Independent whistleblowing charity)	Helpline: (020) 7404 6609 E-mail: whistle@pcaw.co.uk Website: www.pcaw.co.uk

## **Equal Opportunities**

### **Contents:**

- 1. Equal Opportunities Statement**
- 2. About This Policy**
- 3. Discrimination**
- 4. Recruitment And Selection**
- 5. Disabilities**
- 6. Part-Time And Fixed-Term Work**
- 7. Breaches of this Policy**



## 1. Equal opportunities statement

OxLEP is committed to promoting equal opportunities in employment. You and any job applicants will receive equal treatment regardless of 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 (**Protected Characteristics**).

## 2. About this policy

This policy sets out our approach to equal opportunities and the avoidance of discrimination at work. It applies to all aspects of employment with us, including recruitment, pay and conditions, training, appraisals, promotion, conduct at work, disciplinary and grievance procedures, and termination of employment.

Office Manager is responsible for this policy and any necessary training on equal opportunities.

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

## 3. Discrimination

You must not unlawfully discriminate against or harass other people including current and former employees, job applicants, clients, customers, suppliers and visitors. This applies in the workplace, outside the workplace (when dealing with customers, suppliers or other work-related contacts), and on work-related trips or events including social events.

The following forms of discrimination are prohibited under this policy and are unlawful:

- a) **Direct discrimination:** treating someone less favourably because of a Protected Characteristic. For example, rejecting a job applicant because of their religious views or because they might be gay.
- b) **Indirect discrimination:** a provision, criterion or practice that applies to everyone but adversely affects people with a particular Protected Characteristic more than others, and is not justified. For example, requiring a job to be done full-time rather than part-time would adversely affect women because they generally have greater childcare commitments than men. Such a requirement would be discriminatory unless it can be justified.
- c) **Harassment:** this includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which 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 our Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy.

- d) **Victimisation:** retaliation against someone who has complained or has supported someone else's complaint about discrimination or harassment.
- e) **Disability discrimination:** this includes direct and indirect discrimination, any unjustified less favourable treatment because of the effects of a disability, and failure to make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantages caused by a disability.

#### 4. Recruitment and selection

Recruitment, promotion and other selection exercises such as redundancy selection will be conducted on the basis of merit, against objective criteria that avoid discrimination. Shortlisting should be done by more than one person if possible.

Vacancies should generally be advertised to a diverse section of the labour market. Advertisements should avoid stereotyping or using wording that may discourage particular groups from applying.

Job applicants should not be asked questions which might suggest an intention to discriminate on grounds of a Protected Characteristic. For example, applicants should not be asked whether they are pregnant or planning to have children.

Job applicants should not be asked about health or disability before a job offer is made, except in the very limited circumstances allowed by law: for example, to check that the applicant could perform an intrinsic part of the job (taking account of any reasonable adjustments), or to see if any adjustments might be needed at interview because of a disability. Where necessary, job offers can be made conditional on a satisfactory medical check. Health or disability questions may be included in equal opportunities monitoring forms, which must not be used for selection or decision-making purposes.

#### 5. Disabilities

If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can consider what reasonable adjustments or support may be appropriate.

#### 6. Part-time and fixed-term work

Part-time and fixed-term employees should be treated the same as comparable full-time or permanent employees and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

## **7. Breaches of this policy**

We take a strict approach to breaches of this policy, which will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of deliberate discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal.

If you believe that you have suffered discrimination you can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure or Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy. Complaints will be treated in confidence and investigated as appropriate.

You must not be victimised or retaliated against for complaining about discrimination. However, making a false allegation deliberately and in bad faith will be treated as misconduct and dealt with under our Disciplinary Procedure.

## Pay Reviews

Salaries are reviewed annually. There is no obligation to award an increase, and an increase in one year shall not create any obligation to make increases in subsequent years.

In the event that a cost of living increase is considered and awarded (entirely at OxLEP's discretion), the following qualifying requirements will apply:

- a. To qualify for any cost of living salary increase, a staff member must:
  - have been employed by OxLEP for at least 6 months prior to the award effective date;
  - have successfully completed their probationary period.
- b. Unless previously agreed in writing, a staff member **will not qualify** for any cost of living salary increase if, for any reason, they received a salary increase that was effective on or during the 6 months prior to the cost of living award effective date.
- c. A staff member **will not qualify** for any cost of living salary increase if they are:
  - working a notice period because of resignation or dismissal, including dismissal by redundancy;
  - subject to a term contract that is due to terminate within **[2 months]** or less of the award effective date.”

## Sustainability – OCC policies for adaptation by OxLEP

You must be aware of **the Council's** objective to protect the environment and you are required to consider sustainability issues when undertaking your duties, including the procurement of goods and services. In particular you should seek opportunities to improve and promote energy conservation, advocate recycling and waste minimisation, reduce pollution and support positive **Council** initiatives to improve the environment. You should limit travel on **Council** business to that which is unavoidable and walk, cycle or use public transport if possible.

### Printing

(Where the term Printers or printing is used, it also includes facilities for photocopying and scanning).

- a) Printers are to be used for documents that are relevant to the day-to-day conduct of business at **Oxfordshire County Council. Oxfordshire County Council** printers must not be used to print personal documents.
- b) Devices will default to duplex printing and all staff are expected to make efforts to limit paper usage by taking advantage of duplex printing (i.e. double-sided printing) features and other optimization features (e.g. printing six PowerPoint slides per page versus only one per page).
- c) Minimum device requirement is off set stacking i.e. this means no booklet makers, no stapling or collating on any devices.
- d) Staff should refrain from printing emails. Email should not be used as long-term storage. If required, emails should be stored in a business application or records management system, NOT within an email Inbox.
- e) Printing will default to print in black only.
- f) All colour printing will be recharged back to the business area.
- g) Recharges for mono and grayscale will be implemented if volumes exceed the contractual limit.

### Guidance for staff

- 1) Avoid printing large files, as this will lead to longer processing and queuing times.

- 2) **Oxfordshire County Council** has an increased drive towards working electronically and electronic document management. There should be an effort for paper based forms to be replaced by electronic forms wherever possible across the council.
- 3) Confidential documents should only be printed where the documents are going to be stored and disposed of securely. This should be done in conjunction with the **Oxfordshire County Council Information Governance Protocols**.

### **Core energy behaviours for all staff**

#### **Switch off**

1. Switch off your monitor and any local lights when away from your desk for more than 10 minutes.
2. Switch off all lights whenever they are not needed and when you are the last to leave a room, including kitchens and toilets.
3. Switch off your computer, monitor and all lights at the end of the day.

#### **Save energy**

4. Only charge laptops and mobile phones etc which are used for work. Remove the chargers from the mains when they are not in use – some still draw electricity even though they are not in active use
5. Keep external doors and windows closed when the heating is on.
6. Dress for the weather; wear extra clothing rather than relying on space heating alone to keep warm. (The Chartered Institute of Building Services recommends a temperature of 20 degrees in areas where desk work takes place.)

#### **Travel wisely**

7. Follow the travel hierarchy: Avoid travelling; walk, cycle or use public transport; use a pool-car or a shared trip before using your own car. Help others
8. Take action for colleagues if they forget. Be prepared to be challenged and be open to suggestions.
9. Report energy waste and opportunities to save energy to whoever manages your building.

### **Core behaviours for all managers**

In addition to above:

1. Ensure your team adopts the core energy behaviours.
2. Support your building manager in the work they do to reduce energy waste.

### **Building specific behaviours**

These behaviours may not be relevant to all buildings so will need to be agreed locally:

1. If there are different bins for different wastes, take the time to understand what goes where and use the bins correctly.
2. Even if there is a lift, use the stairs if you can.
3. If you use a kettle at work, fill it with only the water you need; no more.
4. If your office has older printers, turn off all printers and scanners when not in use or if you are the last to leave your part of the office. Print double-sided in black and white.
5. Do not use additional electric heaters, unless:
  - you have agreement from the building manager when the temperature in your office has fallen below the acceptable 20 degrees C and you have tried to make yourself warm without the use of a heater.
  - you have permission from your head of service to use a heater for health reasons, or have been recommended to do so by an occupational health specialist.
  - and it has been PAT tested.

### **Role of the building manager**

From an energy perspective, the key role of the building manager is to monitor energy use in the building; to identify any waste and to take action as far as they can or to report it.