

# Personal Relationships Policy

*We will provide this policy on request at no cost, in large print, in Braille, on tape or in another non written format.*

# Personal Relationships Policy

## POLICY PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY

This policy provides advice and guidance to secondees to Wheatley Solutions on personal relationships.

This policy applies to all secondees to Wheatley Solutions. It does not apply to agency workers or self-employed contractors. This policy does not form part of any secondee's contract of employment. This policy may be amended at any time in consultation with our recognised Trade Unions and covers the following:

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## SECTION A - PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

### *Introduction*

A "personal relationship" is regarded as an intimate relationship between two persons of a different or the same sex. A difficulty in respect of a "personal relationship" will be considered to have arisen when the relationship potentially leads to a breach of one of Wheatley Solutions' policies or when the parties leave themselves vulnerable to such allegations.

Wheatley Solutions expects that secondees and management board and management committee members ensure that they are not in a position where their duties to Wheatley Solutions and their personal interests may conflict.

### *General Guidance*

Everyone involved in Wheatley Solutions needs to achieve and maintain effective working relationships with colleagues, management board and management committee members and external contacts, including Wheatley Solutions' tenants. Secondees should ensure personal integrity and maintain objectivity and professionalism of the highest standards without favouritism.

We recognise that strong personal relationships and friendships start and grow from working relationships, and that many couples meet through their employment and associated networks. While strong personal relationships and friendships will often have no adverse impact on secondee's work, they do have the potential for creating problems with the management of our business.

Close personal relationships could potentially present problems in the following ways:-

- Allegations of favouritism (e.g. in recruitment, internal promotions or decisions on training or conferences); and
  - Allegations of bullying and harassment (e.g. unwanted attention, after the break-up of relationships etc).
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## **Personal Relationships Policy**

### **SECTION B - PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STAFF**

#### ***Prohibition***

Wheatley Solutions does not prohibit personal relationships between staff.

#### ***Declaration/Self-Regulation***

Seconded to Wheatley Solutions and Management Board and Management Committee members are to decide when it is appropriate to declare a relationship to their respective line manager. This situation can then be monitored to ensure that it does not interfere with the relevant individuals' work; that no bias or favouritism is permitted; and, especially where a relationship has broken down, that all relevant policies are complied with.

#### ***Personal Relationships within Reporting Line Structures***

Managers are expected to treat all staff in the same professional manner. This should be expected to continue if they are close friends or in a relationship with one of their staff. If a declaration of a personal relationship is made, a more senior officer may monitor the situation to minimise any instances of favouritism or unfair advantage.

#### ***Married Couples***

Wheatley Solutions does permit married couples to work together as long as no conflicts of interest arise and that this is not prohibited by any relevant legislation.

Where married couples are seconded to Wheatley Solutions, there may be circumstances where conflicts of interest or practical issues arise (such as the application of the disciplinary policy or the scheduling of concurrent annual leave, for example). Seconded are expected to discuss such issues with their line manager to identify and agree how to deal with any concerns.

#### ***Breakdown in Relationships***

There will inevitably be difficulties on the breakdown of a relationship. In such circumstances, the situation will be monitored, normal standards of behaviour will be expected and Wheatley Solutions' Dignity at Work Policy must be complied with.

#### ***Physical Contact***

Wheatley Solutions prohibits inappropriate and excessive physical contact between employees at work to ensure that their colleagues are not made to feel uncomfortable.

#### ***Office Parties / Staff Nights out***

Normal standards of behaviour should be maintained at Office Parties / Staff Nights out and any inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with in line with Wheatley Solutions' Policies.

#### ***Harassment***

Wheatley Solutions' Dignity at Work Policy clearly details the process for dealing with harassment allegations.