

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 people which goes beyond the normally accepted professional relationship boundaries between colleagues. This will include formal, family relationships (for example, where people are civil partners, spouses or living together). It will also include less formal situations (for example, where the parties consider that they are "seeing each other" or "going out together"). This definition is not intended to be exhaustive. Given the sensitive nature of personal relationships, all staff are required to use common sense in assessing whether or not this policy is relevant to them.

Wheatley Solutions respect the right of all our staff to a private life. We also understand that many people meet their partners at work and that personal relationships between staff are inevitable. For the avoidance of doubt, this policy is not intended to prohibit staff from having a personal relationship with a work colleague. It is intended to set out guidelines for their conduct within the workplace and to provide a framework for managers to deal sensitively, consistently and fairly with personal relationships which may affect the business.

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.

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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);
- Allegations of bullying, discrimination and harassment (e.g. unwanted attention, after the break-up of relationships etc);

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 and Civil Partners

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

Where married couples and civil partners 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.

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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.
