

Staff Handbook

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Staff Handbook

Welcome to Devoted Care Supported Living Ltd

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1. Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to Devoted Care Supported Living Ltd, we are extremely proud of our organisation and the team we have assembled to support it. Between us, we meet the important needs of those who use our services. Where we can, we also try to offer choices to develop their opportunities, promote their independence and support their interests.

We have designed our employment policies and procedures to make sure everyone is treated fairly and consistently. We have developed them to make you aware of what we expect of you and what we offer in return.

Our objective is to match our needs with your job satisfaction whenever possible. We want to motivate all employees to achieve our aims. We seek to provide the highest standards of quality and service in everything we do. We adopt a number of principles in preparing our employment policies to help us achieve this:

- Provide pay and benefits that are fair and competitive for the job
- Reflect sensitivity to the attitudes and views of all our employees
- Promote high standards of occupational health and safety
- Fully promote and utilise knowledge, skills, and experience to maximise the efficient and timely operation of our activities
- Whenever possible, address future needs by offering development opportunities and advancement to employees with ability, ambition, and integrity.

Each of us has an important part to play. And we are all reliant upon each other to generate a harmonious and efficient working environment.

This handbook sets out our policies and procedures. These help us pursue our commitment to develop and maximise potential and maintain lasting and mutually beneficial working relationships.

We sincerely hope that you enjoy a long and rewarding career with us. As an employee of Devoted Care Supported Living Ltd, the company welcomes you. Please read this handbook carefully and let us know if you have any questions.

2. Our Objectives

We operate a high-quality supported accommodation service to safeguard, empower and provide stability to our service users as they transition to supported living while maintaining as much of their independence as possible. Our objectives are:

- Protect the health and well-being of our service users
- Empower our service users to have a voice and take control of their care and support
- Work with our service users and their families, including any other professionals in their support network, to enable them to shape their own care.

3. Starting Your Employment

3.1 Confirmation of Employment

We make an offer of employment with details of your job, start date, pay etc. following the application and interview. Upon your acceptance of the offer, we will issue you with a contract of employment. The contract of employment and the details in this handbook summarise your terms and conditions of employment.

3.2 Criminal Convictions

Our duty of care to our service users is paramount. We are equally committed to the fair treatment of employees and applicants for employment, including ex-offenders. If you have a criminal record this does not automatically prohibit you from working for us. However, we undertake risk assessments of all sensitive roles. This may include making a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

The response from the Disclosure and Barring Service response can be an important indicator of suitability to occupy or retain a particular post. A disclosure can reveal convictions regarded as 'spent' under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. It may identify other information such as police cautions.

We only make referrals where it is relevant and proportionate; for instance, to fulfil a licensing obligation. We always operate in accordance with current DBS eligibility guidance and/or as required by law. DBS provide a customer services function to respond to queries you or we may have about such matters.

Their email address is customerservices@db.s.gsi.gov.uk

The telephone number is 0870 909 0811.

For our service, we will always complete an Enhanced DBS check.

We retain the right to review your continued employment if a disclosure affects your ability to undertake your role. This applies, for instance, where your name is placed on a "barred" list. It also applies where a conviction would potentially bring our reputation into disrepute.

3.3 Job Description

We will issue a job description for your position. Its purpose is to set down duties and responsibilities and to provide you with a good understanding of your role. We may make adjustments from time to time to reflect changing needs within the organisation. We will consult you about these amendments before they are made.

3.4 Misrepresentations

Your employment is subject to the factual accuracy of the information you provide at the recruitment stage. Such information may include:

- Your right to work in the UK
- Your qualifications
- The content of your CV or references
- Your status with the Disclosure and Barring Service or equivalent body
- Your freedom to enter into an employment contract with us without breaching a prior undertaking to someone else.

If we discover you supplied false or misleading information to secure your employment, we will investigate this as a disciplinary matter. Potentially this is gross misconduct. This may lead us to end your employment.

Before you start work, we will verify your entitlement to work in the UK. If the documentation you provide identifies 'limited leave to remain in the UK' we will conduct appropriate checks with you periodically.

If your legal entitlement to work is revoked, you must tell us immediately. We may have no alternative but to end your employment.

3.5 Personnel File and Data Protection

We create a personnel file which contains relevant personal details (such as your application form, letter of engagement etc.). We may add relevant documentation relating to you during the course of your employment.

We retain this personal data in written or computerised form. It will be processed in a fair and lawful manner meeting statutory requirements. You have the right to access your file by giving reasonable notice.

We require you to consent to the use of your personal data to facilitate your ongoing employment. We may need it to contact you, pay you or provide statutory benefits like maternity pay. We may need to make statutory deductions on your behalf such as tax and National Insurance. We may record details of training, the outcome of a grievance matter, a disciplinary hearing, or another valid employment-related matter.

You must also be particularly careful in respect of your use of social networking sites. Making inappropriate remarks on Social Media sites is a serious breach of our rules. This applies to all social networking sites e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn etc. It applies to comments you make, for instance, about this organisation, other employees or those who utilise our services. It does not matter whether you are at work or you make the contribution in your own time. We regard any such breach as a potential act of gross misconduct.

You must not access the records of other employees, those who use our services, suppliers etc. without authority. If you do, this will be treated as gross misconduct and is also potentially a criminal offence.

This summarises important elements of the way in which we deal with data protection issues. However, it cannot be exhaustive. Please ensure that you read the Data protection policy in its entirety.

3.6 Probationary Period

In accordance with standard business practice, the first three months of your employment with us will be regarded as a probationary period, for Managers, this will be 6 months. During this period, we shall review your ongoing performance and suitability. Naturally, we would hope to confirm that you have passed the probation, but it may be necessary to extend the probationary period if any performance issues have been raised. If it is found that your performance does not meet our requirements, or there are serious issues, we will terminate your employment when your probation period ends.

4. During Your Employment

4.1 Conduct at Work

During work times our organisational needs are paramount. You should make sure your efforts and energies are concentrated on achieving work objectives. We expect you to conduct yourself in a reasonable manner towards any person with whom you come into contact on our behalf. We expect you to observe reasonable instructions or requests issued by those who are more senior than yourself.

4.2 Conduct Outside Working Hours

We have no wish to intrude upon your activities or interests outside work. However, we expect you not to engage in any activity outside working hours which:

- Could result in adverse publicity to our organisation
- May cause us to question your integrity
- Prevents you from performing your duties/responsibilities to our satisfaction
- Prevents us from meeting our legal obligations.

4.3 Confidentiality

During your employment, you will come across or use sensitive or confidential information/data. This may be about us or the people in our service, their family members friends.

It is important to recognise this is privileged information. It must not be disclosed to **any** party without specific authority. It does not matter whether you are within or outside of working hours. You must also continue to respect this requirement after you have left our employment. This is both a legal and contractual obligation.

Confidential information/data includes but is not limited to:

- Medical records or information
- Records of employment, care, treatment or support
- Sensitive correspondence between us and any statutory, professional or public body or
- Sensitive information/data about or received from service users including health, care, family relationships or finances
- Unpublished financial accounts or statistical data
- Processes, plans, designs, and products in development or subject to modification.

These provisions apply where you acquire the information/data through your employment with us and where it would not be publicly available other than by your disclosure.

You must not disclose, publish, or misuse such information/data. You must not supply it to any unauthorised person or organisation. This applies irrespective of whether you are doing so for your own purpose or benefit or for any other reason.

Personal or sensitive information about any service user must never be disclosed by telephone. The only exception is where there is specific, recorded approval for this to take place. We may supply a code or password to be used before releasing such information.

In urgent circumstances, where the Manager is unavailable, you must refer the issue to a senior Support Worker for a decision. Except in dire circumstances, e.g., a medical emergency, you must not disclose such information without specific authority.

We view the inappropriate disclosure of such information/data as a serious disciplinary matter. It may, following investigation, lead to disciplinary action. The penalty can include dismissal where the inappropriate disclosure is particularly serious. You must not remove or transmit any of our documents, material, or data. You must not send/store our information/data on your own or any external storage device or medium.

You must return to us when we request, and in any event when your employment ends, all our documents and equipment. This includes information belonging to us that you may have stored on portable or external electronic media locations. Where we request, you must delete, destroy, remove, or erase confidential information contained in documents and electronic storage media/devices.

We expect you to take all appropriate action to maintain the security and sensitivity of confidential material. We also expect you to use your best efforts to prevent the disclosure, publication, or misuse of confidential material by others. Please report any suspected breach to us immediately.

4.4 Dress and Appearance

Your appearance, personal hygiene and what you wear at work are all very important. You must always project an acceptable, professional image which helps achieve our business aims. Thought should be given to footwear, which should be appropriate in the event of physical intervention situations and kitchen safety i.e., flip flops, high heels and open-toed shoes are not advised.

We request that you dress practically and appropriately for the dual role of service representative and practical carer. You should not wear any:

1. Low cut tops
2. Tight fitting clothing
3. Low slung trousers
4. No underwear on display for all genders.

Staff should only wear limited jewellery i.e., a watch, wedding ring and one pair of stud-type earrings (in the ear lobe). No other facial or body piercings are allowed and should be removed before coming to work due to Health and Safety.

We recognise the diversity of culture and religion within our workforce. We are sensitive to the potential impact of culture and religion on dress and appearance. We will look sympathetically at varying or adapting our expectations appropriately. However, our priorities are principally measured by considerations such as Health and Safety, hygiene, and professional reputation.

4.5 Financial Transactions with Service Users - Instructions for Staff

Devoted Care Supported Living Ltd has a responsibility to service users, their families and all staff to ensure that all financial transactions with service users are conducted not only with good intentions but also with total integrity.

As a principle, individual members of staff should not make any financial transactions with or on behalf of service users. Unless otherwise stated in the service user's care plan, you cannot supervise their daily spending, or withdraw or handle money on their behalf.

In addition, the company has the following rules, any breach of which will be regarded as unacceptable behaviour:

- Staff must not hold money for service users, open bank or building society accounts in their names or on their behalf or hold investments for service users
- Staff must not give investment advice to service users
- Staff must not sell financial products to service users nor purchase goods or services for service users where they receive a commission or other benefit
- Staff should not accept monetary gifts from service users.

The underlying need for ethical conduct, openness and honesty is more important than individual rules. Circumstances may arise where staff may be uncertain of their position or of the best way to handle a particular situation. In such cases, staff should consult the Manager before proceeding.

4.6 Communications or Statements to the Media

Only a Director is authorised to make any communication or statement to the media in matters relating to Devoted Care Supported Living Ltd.

4.7 Friends and Relatives Contact

Please ask friends and relatives not to visit you at work except in case of an emergency.

4.8 Fundraising/Collections

You must seek prior approval from the Manager before you make any collection or undertake to fundraise on our premises.

4.9 Gambling/Betting

All forms of gambling/betting are forbidden on our premises, whether during or outside of working hours.

4.10 General Attendance (Absence/Timekeeping)

Please arrive ready to start work at your official starting time. You **must** observe any time recording procedures relating to your job. Lateness and absence will be recorded. Unacceptable levels of timekeeping and attendance will result in disciplinary action. If you need to leave work during the working day you must obtain approval from the Manager.

4.11 Gifts and Hospitality

The Bribery Act 2010 makes it an offence to offer, promise or give a bribe. It is also an offence to request, agree to receive or accept a bribe.

A bribe is “a financial or other advantage offered or requested with the intention of inducing or rewarding improper performance of a relevant function or activity.” It also applies where you “know or believe that acceptance would constitute improper performance of a function or activity.”

It is our policy to conduct our business in an open, honest and transparent way. We do not condone the use of corrupt practices or acts of bribery to obtain an unfair advantage.

You must be alert to attempts to influence you inappropriately or to engage in/facilitate bribery. For instance, you may be offered excessive hospitality or gifts to facilitate business dealings. You must not accept any inducement designed to influence you inappropriately in the performance of your job.

You must not accept money or rewards from service users, suppliers etc contrary to our normal practices. A service user may offer you small gifts as proof of their gratitude to you, please speak to the Manager before accepting such gifts, as refusal may be seen as a sign of rejection to the service user.

Any gift from a service user must be proportionate and reasonable and you must not treat the service user that provides such a gift more favourably than other service users.

This policy does not apply to promotional items such as stationery or pens with a logo or Devoted Care Supported Living Ltd.

4.12 Lost Property

Please hand any lost item you find to the Manager; we will then attempt to locate the owner.

4.13 Parking

If you leave a private vehicle on or around our premises, you do so at your own risk. We accept no liability for any loss or damage caused.

4.14 Personal Details

Please inform us of changes in your personal circumstances e.g, new address, telephone number, next of kin contact details. It is important such information is up to date, so we can contact you. This may include contact outside of normal working hours.

4.15 Personal Mobiles

If you bring your personal mobile into work, you should ensure that it is kept switched off or on silent during working hours and only used during authorised work breaks.

4.16 Personal Property

Please do not bring valuable personal items to work. Do not leave anything unattended or overnight on our premises. We cannot accept liability for loss or damage to personal property you bring onto our premises.

4.17 Selling and/or Buying Goods

You must not buy and/or sell goods of any kind on our premises without authority. This applies during and outside of working hours, whether on your own behalf or for others.

4.18 Property

You must report damage or loss of our property, goods or equipment to the Manager immediately.

We will investigate whether your carelessness, negligence, not following procedures or other wilful acts caused the loss or damage. We may take disciplinary action if we believe it did.

You may also be liable to pay reasonable costs to make good our losses for such items.

We will advise you in advance, in writing, of the amount we will recover from pay or other monies owing.

4.19 Telephones Use

Our telephones are for business use only; prior permission must be obtained before making personal calls. Please inform your family and friends that incoming calls are restricted to urgent/essential matters only.

Mobile telephones that we issue should only be used in the performance of your duties for business purposes. They should not be used for personal calls or sending personal text messages/emails. You are liable for the cost of personal calls or messages.

4.20 Work-Related Activities

If you attend work-related activities outside working hours, please conduct yourself in an appropriate and responsible manner. These include social events of ours or our service users. Do not do anything that may harm this organisation or bring it into disrepute. Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- Drunkenness
- The use of illegal drugs
- Unwelcome familiarity or harassment
- Violence or threats of violence
- Verbal abuse towards another person.

We may consider such behaviour to amount to gross misconduct.

5. Equal Opportunities, Diversity and Human Rights

We promote a working environment in which diversity is recognised, valued and encouraged. We are committed to principles of fairness and mutual respect where everyone accepts the concept of individual responsibility. It is therefore your responsibility to make sure you always observe and adhere to this policy. We view any breach seriously. We will investigate all claims of discrimination and potentially take disciplinary action. Our policy seeks to ensure job applicants and employees are treated fairly and without favour or prejudice.

5.1 Recruitment

The selection methods we use for recruitment are related to the requirements of the job.

1. We do not seek irrelevant qualifications, experience or skills. Applicants for employment are short-listed and selected solely on the basis of their assessed capability for the role.
2. We consider support and reasonable adjustments where potential employees may need such to assist them to carry out the role for which they are applying.
3. We ensure that there is an adequate complement of staff with the right competencies, knowledge, qualifications, skills and experience to meet the needs of those who use our services.

5.2 Protected Characteristics

No applicant or employee will receive less favourable treatment due to any of the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or Belief
- Sexual Orientation.

5.3 The Impact of Human Rights, Equalities and Diversity

We encourage a working atmosphere in which human rights are recognised, this includes:

- Respect for private and family life
- Freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- Freedom of expression
- Freedom of assembly and association
- The prohibition of discrimination.

We strive to balance such considerations sensitively when determining operational arrangements. The following are important indicators of our treatment of equality, diversity and human rights issues:

- We ensure on induction that you are aware and understand equalities, diversity and human rights considerations implicit in your role
- We expect you to ensure that this informs your treatment of other staff and those who use our services
- We recognise that employees thrive when valued as individuals. We encourage all employees to bring forward different experiences and viewpoints appropriate to their work
- Our management team provide leadership in equality, diversity and human rights issues. We offer support to staff facing challenges and ensure services are subject to a process of continuous review and improvement
- We prescribe how to challenge inappropriate activity in the workplace and identify what to do if you discover infringements
- We ensure our premises, equipment and working practices support a safe environment for staff and those who use our services
- We assess risks to minimise the possibility of violence, harassment or bullying. We set out clear procedures to follow in the event of problems
- We operate a structured process of appraisal and development. We seek to ensure that the contributions staff make at work are positive and effective. We also ensure they meet statutory expectations. We aim to maximise potential and help overcome individual difficulties.

5.4 Your Responsibilities

We expect you to contribute positively towards maintaining an environment of equal opportunity throughout Devoted Care Supported Living Ltd. Please make sure you observe this policy at all times. In particular, you have an individual responsibility to adopt the following:

- Do not discriminate against, harass, abuse or intimidate anyone on account of their protected characteristics

- Do not place pressure on any other employee to act in a discriminatory manner.
- Resist pressure to discriminate placed on you by others and report such approaches to an appropriate Manager
- Co-operate when we investigate cases of alleged discrimination, including providing evidence of conduct
- Co-operate with any measures introduced to develop or monitor equality and diversity.

5.5 Where You Encounter Discrimination

If you feel subject to discrimination, make clear to the individual concerned that you find it unacceptable. Person-to-person discussion at an early stage may be enough to resolve it without involving anyone else. Alternatively, speak to the Manager so the matter can be investigated. We assure you that grievances will be dealt with promptly and in a discrete and caring manner.

6. Non-Harassment Policy

6.1 Our Policy

Harassment in the workplace is a discriminatory act that in any form is unacceptable and, in most cases, unlawful. We are committed to providing a working environment which is harmonious to all. We extend this principle to the people in our care.

6.2 What Is Harassment?

Harassment is 'unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which violates an individual's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual'. Harassment is not only unacceptable language or behaviour which causes the recipient to be embarrassed, offended or threatened. Someone may complain about a particular behaviour that they find offensive even though it was not directed at them.

6.3 Your Responsibilities

It is your duty to treat people with respect, appreciating their feelings and considering their well-being in what you say or do. Harassment takes many forms and can range from relatively mild banter to actual physical violence. It can be delivered in many ways and this policy applies to all forms of communication including text messages, emails and comments posted on social networking sites.

The following are examples of behaviour which we constitute harassment:

- Coarse or insensitive jokes and pranks
- Coarse or insensitive comments about appearance or character
- Display or distribution of offensive material whether written or pictorial
- Deliberate exclusion or isolation from conversation or activities
- Unwelcome familiarity or body contact
- Abusive, insulting, or threatening language
- Demands or threats to intimidate or obtain favours
- Threatened or actual violence.

6.4 Where You Encounter Harassment

If you feel you are being harassed, the first step is to make clear you want it to stop. Tell the person harassing you that you find such behaviour unacceptable. Also, make the matter known to the Manager.

If the behaviour continues, or you consider an instance to be particularly serious, please raise the issue to the Manager as a grievance. We assure you that grievances will be dealt with promptly and in a discrete and caring manner.

7. Supervision and Performance Review

All staff will receive formal supervision meetings once a month. The purpose of supervision is to help staff develop to their full potential and ensure good practice. Areas for discussion will include training needs, the setting of aims and objectives, issues regarding service users and any issues regarding staff progress and development. Supervision meetings will offer support and encouragement to staff and discuss any issues of concern for the supervisor or supervisee.

If needed, the management of sickness will also be discussed. Time will always be available to discuss any personal issues if the member of staff chooses to.

Once a year you will attend an appraisal meeting. This is an opportunity for you to set goals and objectives for the coming year and review the ones you set previously, to check if you attained them. This will also be an opportunity to discuss your career prospects, and how they can be achieved. You will be informed of your appraisal one month before the date, to give you an opportunity to complete the appraisal preparation form.

8. Training and Development

8.1 Development Training

We expect you to participate in training, professional development and refresher activity from time to time. We will discuss and agree on your participation in internal and external training activities in advance. We will meet the agreed costs incurred in such training.

Once employed for at least 26 weeks, you may formally request time off to complete or attend training which is a part of a qualification. However, you will be asked to sign a training agreement to state that you cannot depart from the company in an allotted amount of time. This time is dependent on factors such as course duration and staffing levels required in the unit.

8.2 Induction Training

You will be taken on a tour of the premises when you start work, to familiarise you with the layout and facilities and introduce you to your colleagues. We will help and encourage you to get to know our service users.

We also provide a program of induction training in the early stages of employment. We expect you to complete this in the allotted time.

8.3 Performance Review

We monitor performance on an ongoing basis in the belief that minor issues can be identified at an early stage and rectified by retraining or informal counselling. In this way, we can create a positive approach to problem-solving and improve efficiency.

8.4 Compulsory Training

All employees are required to attend mandatory training as part of their role in order to continue their professional development or to meet the needs of the business. Such training may fall on a day when you are on shift however it may well fall on a day that you are off. It is a condition of your employment that you participate in such training.

9. Pay and Other Benefits

9.1 Business Expenses

We will reimburse you for authorised and legitimate expenditures you reasonably incur. For example, travel, accommodation and other agreed out-of-pocket expenses. You must get approval in advance, fill in an expense claim form and submit valid receipts as appropriate. The expense claim must be submitted within 30 days of the expense being incurred.

9.2 Deductions from Salary

We can require you to repay us, by deduction from pay or any other method acceptable to us:

- Reasonable losses sustained in relation to our property or monies; that of any other employee, our service users, customers or visitors. This applies when the damage or loss is due to your carelessness, negligence, recklessness, breach of procedures/rules or dishonesty/commission of an unlawful act
- Insurance excesses imposed by our insurers as a direct result of your act or omission or a penalty imposed upon you
- Remuneration, expenses or other payments made in error or by your inappropriate claim
- Holiday pay already paid which exceeds your accrued holiday entitlement at the date of leaving our employment
- The reasonable cost of replacing equipment and/or property entrusted to you during employment. This applies if you fail to maintain it properly or do not return it before leaving
- Attachment of earnings orders and any other statutory deductions orders issued to us
- Costs resulting from any training agreement you have signed, should you leave our employment before it expires
- Any other sums you owe including, but not limited to, outstanding loans, advances and relocation expenses.

9.3 Deduction Procedure

We will tell you in advance in writing about the amounts we intend to recover from you. We may also pursue civil recovery as appropriate in the individual circumstances we encounter.

9.4 Overtime Payments

Your contract identifies whether you qualify for overtime/paid time in lieu. Where overtime rates apply, this is only when you work the equivalent of a full-time working week first.

9.5 P11D

We may have to fill in form P11D to declare to HMRC any taxable benefits you receive. We issue form P11D as a legal provision. We cannot provide duplicate copies. Please make sure you keep this document in a safe place.

9.6 Pension Provisions

We will enrol you onto an auto-enrolment workplace pension scheme, based on HMRC rules, if your salary reaches the thresholds for the financial year. We will contribute 5% of your earnings to your pension. This amount may change, due to Government legislation. You may opt out of the auto-enrolment workplace pension scheme.

9.7 Salary

Your contract states your rate of pay. It identifies whether or not you are entitled to overtime pay and/or paid time in lieu of extra hours worked. It sets out the frequency and method by which we pay you. You will receive pay statements which show your pay and any deductions we have made e.g., pension and National Insurance.

9.8 Tax Year Details

The tax year changes in the first week of April each year. Following the end of the tax year, we will issue you a P60. This indicates your total pay and relevant deductions made.

9.9 Working Extra Hours

We may occasionally require you to work additional hours over and above normal weekly hours. If you are a full-time employee, this will require you to sign a form stating that you are opting out of the Working Time Directive. You are able to opt-in whenever it is suitable for you.

10. Annual, Bank and Public Holidays

10.1 Annual Holiday Entitlement

Your contract specifies your annual holiday entitlement. We base your holiday entitlement around your 'working week'. A working week may vary from employee to employee. Part-time staff receive an entitlement which is strictly pro-rata to full-time staff.

10.2 Calculation of Entitlement

We normally calculate your holiday entitlement as a set number of working days or hours. Special arrangements may apply if you work for us irregularly. Where you start or leave our employment during the leave year, we calculate your holidays on a pro-rata basis.

10.3 Carrying Forward Annual Leave

You must normally use all your holiday entitlement during the current holiday year. If you don't, you could forfeit what is left. Under exceptional circumstances you could carry over a maximum of 5 days, you will need to discuss this with the Manager.

10.4 Holiday Pay

We calculate holiday pay using normal contractual hours at your basic rate of pay and hours contracted to work. Please see your contract for further detail.

10.5 Holiday Requests

We are as accommodating as possible when granting time off for holidays. We reserve the right to vary requests to meet the needs of the organisation and maintain adequate staffing levels. You may not normally change your holiday dates once confirmed.

Please make sure you submit any holiday requests a minimum of 4 weeks before the date/s you request to be off. You must not book holidays without receiving prior authorisation. If you take holidays without authorisation, you will be subject to disciplinary action.

You will not normally be permitted to take annual holidays in excess of 14 consecutive working days. Exceptions may be made; however, consideration will be given first to the needs of the business and staffing levels.

10.6 Leaving During the Holiday Year

If any leave taken exceeds the amount available when your employment ends, we will deduct an equivalent sum from your final pay. We will notify you of the detail in writing, in advance.

10.7 Bank Holidays

Bank Holidays are considered normal working days as we are a 365-day-a-year organisation. You may be required to work on some of these days in accordance with the staff duty rota unless you have booked the time off as

holiday.

Any Employee who works on a Bank Holiday will be paid at the normal basic rate of pay.

If you are scheduled to work on one or more of the above days and fail to attend work, due to sickness or injury, the absence will be treated in accordance with our sickness policy.

10.8 Sickness During Authorised Holidays

Should you fall ill during a period of approved annual leave, you may convert such days to sick leave. A corresponding period of annual leave may be taken at a later date.

If you cannot return to work when originally due back from holiday, you must keep us notified of progress. You must also provide consecutive medical certificates to cover the total period.

11. Health and Safety

11.1 Alcohol and Drugs

We require you to attend work in a fit and appropriate state. Impairment from the effects of drugs or other substances (whether illegal or supplied on prescription) or alcohol is unacceptable. If you are unfit for work due to drug or alcohol consumption this is a serious disciplinary matter.

11.2 Prescription Drugs

The effects or side effects of prescription drugs or patent medicines can potentially jeopardise your normal work. It is your responsibility to ascertain whether your prescription medication has caused any side effects. If this happens during work, or before you are meant to be at work, you must inform the Manager or a senior member of staff.

11.3 Other Colleagues

If you suspect or know that a colleague has an alcohol and/or drug problem or is under the influence of alcohol or drugs during work, please encourage them to talk to us. Alternatively, please advise the Manager in confidence.

11.4 Health and Safety at Work

We attach significant importance to providing employees with a safe working environment. We accept our legal responsibilities to provide a safe place and system of work. We provide suitable equipment for employees to do their jobs safely. During induction, you will be informed of our Health and Safety policy and any specific rules relating to your job. We regard serious breaches of Health and Safety as gross misconduct.

If you have an accident at work, however minor, you must record it in our accident book. If you are working off-site, please document it at the site where you are working and notify us subsequently. You must provide:

- Details of the nature of the accident or injury
- Any first aid or other treatment received
- The names of any witnesses with contact details if possible.
- The date, time and place the accident occurred.

Smoking is prohibited, inside or outside the house, this also includes the use of electronic cigarettes.

12. Sickness/Injury, Absence Payments and Conditions

12.1 Absence - Notification

You must notify the Manager by telephone, at the earliest opportunity on the first day of your sickness absence. When you are not able to inform the manager, this can be done by a relative, friend or neighbour. It is essential that you comply with the above so that we can make arrangements to cover your duties and responsibilities thus minimising the disruption to the support we provide to our service users.

You will be required to provide the following information when you notify us of your absence:

- The reason for your absence
- How long you expect to be absent from work.

If you are away from work for seven days or more, a doctor must provide you with a statement of fitness to work.

Failure to observe and comply with this procedure may result in your absence being considered to be unauthorised.

12.2 Holidays and Long-Term Sickness

Statutory holiday entitlement will continue to accrue during a period of sickness. If your sickness extends for some time, we reserve the right to substitute a period of statutory holiday. This is particularly relevant when the end of the holiday year is approaching. You would potentially forfeit your remaining holidays otherwise.

If your employment ends because of long-term sickness, we will pay any untaken statutory holiday entitlement with the final salary.

12.3 Independent Medical Examination

We reserve the right to ask you to undergo an independent medical examination at our expense where we consider it necessary.

12.4 Infectious Conditions

You must not report for work without medical clearance if you have an infectious condition. Your doctor must confirm that it is appropriate for you to return to work. You must not report for work until they do so.

12.5 Light/Alternative Duties

Your doctor may suggest you can undertake reasonable alternatives if you are certified unfit to perform normal duties. This could mean e.g., you undertake alternative/light duties or work shorter hours for a period of time. We will consider the nature of your sickness/injury and any guidance on your statement of fitness to work. Where your doctor suggests amendments we cannot accommodate, we will continue to treat the situation as though you remain unfit.

12.6 Medical Report

We may seek access to a written medical report supplied by your doctor or specialist where necessary. This provides us with details of your health and fitness to return to undertake normal or alternative duties. We will seek your written consent on every occasion.

12.7 Repeated or Continued Absence

You must keep us notified at frequent intervals where absence is likely to extend for some time. You must keep us supplied with consecutive medical certificates to cover the entire period.

We may review your overall absence where it is repeated. This applies even where absence is certificated. We will take account of your doctor or specialist's professional judgement. We may also obtain an occupational health advisor's opinion. We will consult you about available options and carefully consider your views.

A medical opinion may suggest that no improvement is likely within a reasonable timescale. Equally, we may explore options to manage a permanent incapacity or disability but if we cannot reasonably make these adjustments. In such circumstances, we may have to consider dismissal on the grounds of capability.

12.8 Return to Work

You must notify the Manager by telephone no later than midday on the working day before the day you intend to return to work. This allows us to stand down temporary cover and plan for you to resume your duties and responsibilities.

12.9 Return to Work Interview

We require you to attend a return-to-work interview following an absence for sickness/injury. We will discuss the reasons for your absence and fitness to return to your normal role. We also consider compliance with notification procedures and your general attendance record.

13. Special Leave

13.1 Attendance at Court as a Witness

You may be required by the Crown Prosecution Service to attend court as a witness. You should tell the Manager at the earliest possible opportunity if you are. You will be able to claim an allowance for loss of earnings. When you attend court, you will be issued the appropriate claim form. You need to pass this on to us. It is your responsibility to make sure you are reimbursed correctly by the court. We cannot correct this through your wages.

13.2 Jury Service

You should tell the Manager at the earliest possible opportunity if summoned for jury service. The court provides you with a Certificate of Loss of Earnings or Benefit when first appointed.

We need to certify this before you return it to the court. You must claim the relevant daily allowance and tell us the number of days you served. It is your responsibility to make sure you are reimbursed correctly by the court.

Absence for jury service is without pay other than the loss of earnings allowance you receive from the court.

13.3 Time Off for Other Reasons

There may be occasions when you request time off to attend appointments or cover other issues, for example with your doctor or dentist. Requests for such time off are granted at the Manager's discretion. We will indicate whether payment is to be made. We may also consider short-notice annual leave. The Manager may also allow short periods of time to be made up on another shift, if possible. Please arrange appointments outside normal working hours wherever possible.

14. Leaving the Company

14.1 Notice Period

We require you to inform us in writing that you wish to end your employment. We will require you to work for the duration of the 4-week notice period. The Manager will inform you of your last working day. If you have any available holiday days to take, you must seek prior approval from the Manager if you wish to use them during your notice period.

14.2 Leaving Without Working Notice

If you fail to work your full contractual notice period without an agreement, we may deduct the reasonable extra costs of covering your role from any final monies due to you.

14.3 References

The Manager will complete a reference for you if you request it, however only standard references will be given.

14.4 Retirement

If you wish to retire, please notify us of your planned retirement date in writing at the earliest opportunity. This will help us in our succession planning. We will also consider requests to work flexibly before your chosen retirement date. If you wish to explore this option, please discuss the matter with the Manager in the first instance.

14.5 Return of our Equipment/Property

You must return any property we have issued to you before you leave. Property includes, for example, keys and mobile phones.

In the case of summary dismissal, you must surrender our property immediately after we indicate the outcome of a disciplinary hearing.

If you fail to return our property or equipment, you are liable for its cost. The same applies if you return it in an unsatisfactory condition. However, we will take into account deterioration caused by normal wear and tear. We will advise you in advance, in writing, of any amount we intend to recover from payment. We may pursue civil recovery measures, at our entire discretion.

15. Alterations and Modifications

We reserve the right to make reasonable alterations to this handbook.

We will only implement significant alterations following consultation with those affected, and these are subject to the outcome of any written concerns we receive.