



# Personal Relationships Policy

This policy applies to all companies within the Relyon Group.

The Company recognises that, from time to time, close personal relationships may develop between members of staff and/or customers/clients/suppliers etc.

Whilst the Company realises that employees have a right to a private life and there does not discourage relationships between employees, such relationships can be troublesome where employees are unable to draw an important distinction between private and professional life.

The aim of this policy is to outline the Company's position on personal relationships between employees in order to ensure the Company's interests are maintained at all times, whilst at the same time balancing the interests of employees.

This policy places certain expectations on employees and their managers to ensure that no blurring of judgement or conflict of interest arises.

The policy seeks to protect the Company and any employees in order to avoid any allegations of improper professional behaviour.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Company's policies on:

- disciplinary procedures
- capability procedures
- grievance procedures
- code of conduct
- equal opportunities

## Definitions

In the context of this policy, a personal relationship is defined as:

- a family connection or
- a romantic/sexual relationship.

This policy applies to all employees of the Organisation. In relation to romantic/sexual partners, it applies to both opposite and same sex relationships.

## Employee's Responsibilities

To ensure potential conflicts of interest are avoided, employees are required to inform their line manager of any relationship which may affect their work or compromise the Company in any way. Any such information will be

treated with the strictest confidence. The Company acknowledges the right of employees to privacy in their personal affairs.

The following points should be observed:

- where the relationship exists between a member of staff and their line manager, it is the responsibility of both to inform a more senior manager
- if an employee who is applying for a role in an area of the business in which an individual works with whom they have a personal relationship, this must be declared during the recruitment process to ensure a fair and impartial recruitment exercise
- professionalism must always be maintained both at the workplace and any work-related events which are attended by employees who have a personal relationship
- consistency of treatment is paramount and no preferential or unfavourable treatment of those in the relationship or any other person is permitted as a result of the relationship.

## **Manager's Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of the manager of a team within which employees are in a personal relationship to take action to ensure the relationship is not the cause of any conflicts of interest. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times if the employees do not wish their relationship to be disclosed.

The manager should:

- consider alternative roles when an employee applies for a role in the same team as their partner and valid concerns are raised regarding the feasibility of this arrangement. This may include consideration of an equivalent role in a different team.
- act where complaints are received from other team members if tensions are caused by the relationship, howsoever they may arise. This could include reorganising working patterns, moving one or both employees to another department or area of the Company. Care should be taken in these circumstances not to decide on who is to be moved based on any discriminatory grounds. The manager should seek advice from the HR department before confirming any moves.
- report suspicions of fraudulent activity to the Finance Director
- take advice from the HR department if a personal relationship breaks down in an attempt to avoid allegations of sexual harassment.
- maintain an appropriate confidential record of personal relationships using Appendix below.

## **Restricted Activities**

It will be the responsibility of a more senior manager for the conduct of operational matters when a personal relationship exists between a line manager and a person for whom the line manager has responsibility. These operational matters may include:

- dealing with any disciplinary or performance concerns, whether routine or caused by specific incidents
- signing off any hours worked above normal working hours
- authorising leave of any kind
- confirming any payment arrangements to be made
- involvement in reorganisation of the area of the business in which the employee work.

## Annual Leave Requests

The Company will deal with annual leave requests from all employees consistently. The authorisation of any requests from partners in personal relationships to take time off at the same time will be made in consideration with the needs of the business at the time, in the same way as requests from other employees.

## Policy Breaches

Any difficulties caused by personal relationships in the workplace will be dealt with by the Company in a sensitive manner. An informal method will always be used in the first instance. Where this does not bring about a satisfactory resolution, recourse to formal procedures may be required.

The Company may deem the following to be disciplinary offences:

- the failure of an employee to declare their relationship in accordance with this policy
- actions of a line manager who is in a personal relationship with an employee which are prohibited by this policy.
- Inappropriate and / or excessive use of the organisation's IT or systems, including email and instant messaging, such as (but not limited to) Microsoft Teams, for personal communication between those involved in personal relationships at work.
- The sharing of inappropriate content using the organisations systems.
- Inappropriate physical interactions whilst working or on works premises or client's sites.
- Harassment of any kind related or unrelated to a personal relationship and including but not limited to sexual harassment.

Employees who are subject to disciplinary action may lodge an appeal to any sanction applied which they may be dissatisfied with.

If an employee feels they have been treated unfairly in connection with a personal relationship may raise a grievance inline with the Company's grievance procedure if initial attempts at an informal resolution have not produced a satisfactory outcome for them.



## Appendix

*Strictly Private and Confidential*

### Declaration of Personal Relationship at Work

*To be completed by the line manager*

Name of employee:	Department:
	Job Title:
Name of other employee in the personal relationship:	Department:
	Job Title:
Name of line manager completing the form:	
Nature of relationship (strike out inapplicable option):  <div> <div>Family Connection</div> <div>Romantic/sexual relationship</div> </div>	

Potential or foreseeable conflicts of interest and actions taken	
Potential or foreseeable conflicts of interest	Actions taken

Employee signature:

Date:

Line manager signature:

Date: