

HR Procedures Manual

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Classification: INTERNAL

1. Purpose

This HR Procedures Manual provides operational guidance for managers and HR Business Partners on key people processes. It supplements the Employee Handbook and should be read in conjunction with company policies.

All procedures described herein have been reviewed by the Legal team for compliance with UK employment law, including the Employment Rights Act 1996, the Equality Act 2010, and the Working Time Regulations 1998.

2. Recruitment and Selection

All vacancies must be approved by the department budget holder and HR before advertising. The Recruitment Authorisation Form (HR-001) must be completed and signed.

Job descriptions must be reviewed by HR for compliance with equal opportunities legislation before publication. All roles must specify essential and desirable criteria based on objective, job-related requirements.

Interview panels must include at least two interviewers, one of whom must have completed Unconscious Bias Training within the last 12 months. Panel composition should reflect diversity where possible.

All candidates must undergo right-to-work verification before their start date. Offers of employment are conditional upon satisfactory completion of background checks, reference verification, and, where applicable, DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks.

The standard offer process involves: verbal offer by the Hiring Manager, formal written offer from HR within 2 working days, and a 5-working-day acceptance window.

3. Onboarding

All new starters must receive their onboarding pack at least 3 working days before their start date. The pack includes: contract of employment, IT equipment request form, building access application, and pre-reading materials.

First-day induction is facilitated by HR and includes: company overview, health and safety briefing, IT orientation, security awareness training enrolment, and introductions to key contacts.

New starters must complete mandatory training modules within their first 30 days: Security Awareness, Data Protection (GDPR), Anti-Bribery, Health and Safety, and Equality and Diversity.

Line managers must schedule a structured 90-day onboarding plan, including weekly 1:1 meetings during the first month and fortnightly thereafter. A formal probation review is conducted at 3 months and 6 months.

New employees are assigned a buddy from within their team who serves as an informal point of contact for questions and cultural orientation during the first 3 months.

4. Performance Management

Annual performance reviews are conducted in March each year, covering the previous financial year (April-March). Mid-year reviews are conducted in September.

Performance is assessed against three dimensions: Role Objectives (50% weighting), Competency Behaviours (30% weighting), and Development Goals (20% weighting).

All objectives must be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound). A minimum of 3 and maximum of 5 objectives should be set per review cycle.

Performance ratings use a 5-point scale: 1 (Exceptional), 2 (Exceeds Expectations), 3 (Meets Expectations), 4 (Partially Meets), 5 (Does Not Meet). Rating calibration sessions are held at department level before finalisation.

Employees rated 4 or 5 are placed on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) with clear targets, support measures, and a review period of 60-90 days. Failure to improve may result in further action under the Disciplinary Procedure.

5. Absence Management

All sickness absences must be reported to the line manager by 09:30 on the first day of absence. Self-certification is accepted for absences of up to 7 calendar days. A GP fit note is required from the 8th calendar day.

Absence is monitored using the Bradford Factor. Employees reaching a Bradford Factor score of 200 will receive a formal absence review meeting. A score of 500 triggers a written warning.

Long-term sickness (28+ consecutive calendar days) requires referral to Occupational Health. Return-to-work plans must be agreed between the employee, line manager, HR, and OH, with reasonable adjustments considered under the Equality Act 2010.

Annual leave entitlement is 25 days plus bank holidays. Employees with 5+ years of service receive an additional day per year, up to a maximum of 30 days. Carry-over of up to 5 unused days is permitted with line manager approval.

Requests for unpaid leave, sabbaticals, or career breaks must be submitted to HR at least 3 months in advance. Approval is at the discretion of the department head and HR Director.

6. Disciplinary Procedure

The disciplinary procedure applies to all employees who have completed their probation period. Probationary employees are subject to a separate process as outlined in their contract of employment.

The disciplinary procedure follows ACAS guidelines and consists of: investigation, disciplinary hearing, decision, and right of appeal. Employees have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague at all formal stages.

Disciplinary sanctions may include: Stage 1 -- verbal warning (valid 6 months), Stage 2 -- first written warning (valid 12 months), Stage 3 -- final written warning (valid 18 months), Stage 4 -- dismissal with notice.

Gross misconduct may result in summary dismissal without prior warnings. Examples include: theft, fraud, violent behaviour, deliberate damage to company property, serious breach of security policies, and discrimination or harassment.

All disciplinary records are maintained in the employee's personal file for the duration of the sanction. Expired warnings are retained but not used as active precedents unless there is a pattern of similar behaviour.

7. Grievance Procedure

Employees who wish to raise a formal grievance should submit their complaint in writing to the HR Business Partner for their department. The grievance will be acknowledged within 2 working days.

A grievance hearing will be scheduled within 10 working days of receipt. The hearing will be conducted by a manager who is not involved in the matter being grieved and who has been trained in grievance resolution.

The outcome of the grievance hearing will be communicated in writing within 5 working days. Possible outcomes include: grievance upheld (with specified remedial action), grievance partially upheld, or grievance not upheld.

Employees have the right to appeal the grievance decision within 10 working days. The appeal will be heard by a more senior manager not previously involved. The appeal decision is final.

The company encourages informal resolution of workplace disputes before formal grievance procedures are invoked. Mediation services are available through the HR team.

8. Leaving the Company

Employees resigning from the company must provide notice in writing as specified in their contract. The standard notice period is: 1 month for employees below senior management, 3 months for senior managers and directors.

Exit interviews are conducted by HR for all departing employees. Participation is voluntary but encouraged. Exit interview data is analysed quarterly to identify trends in attrition and areas for improvement.

During the notice period, employees must: return all company property (laptop, badge, phone, documents), complete knowledge transfer activities as directed by their manager, and cooperate with handover plans.

IT access is revoked at 17:00 on the employee's last working day. Building access badges must be returned to reception. Any company data on personal devices must be deleted, and BYOD containers are remotely wiped.

Final salary payments, including accrued holiday and any outstanding expenses, are processed in the next scheduled payroll run following the leaving date.