

[COMPANY NAME]

Human Resources Policy

Employment Standards, Employee Relations and People Management

CONFIDENTIAL — INTERNAL USE ONLY

Version 1.0 — 18 February 2026

Policy Owner: HR Director / Head of People

Next Review: [Date]

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This Human Resources Policy establishes the standards, principles, and procedures that govern the employment relationship between [Company Name] (the “Company”) and its employees. It provides a consistent framework for managing people fairly, lawfully, and in alignment with the Company’s values and strategic objectives.

This policy is designed to complement individual contracts of employment and role-specific procedures. Where there is any conflict between this policy and an employee’s contract, the contract shall take precedence.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all directors, officers, employees (permanent, fixed-term, and temporary), interns, and workers of the Company across all locations and business functions. Certain sections may also apply to contractors and agency workers where indicated.

1.3 Legal Framework

This policy is informed by and complies with applicable UK employment legislation, including but not limited to:

- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Employment Relations Act 1999
- Working Time Regulations 1998
- National Minimum Wage Act 1998
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Maternity and Parental Leave Regulations 1999 (as amended)
- ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures

1.4 Our People Principles

Everything we do in managing our people is guided by five core principles:

Fairness: All employment decisions are made objectively, consistently, and without unlawful discrimination.

Transparency: Policies, processes, and decisions are communicated clearly and openly.

Respect: Every individual is treated with dignity, courtesy, and professionalism.

Accountability: Managers and employees share responsibility for maintaining a positive and productive working environment.

Development: We invest in our people’s growth and create opportunities for everyone to fulfil their potential.

2. Recruitment and Selection

2.1 Principles

The Company is committed to attracting, selecting, and appointing the best candidates for every role through fair, transparent, and merit-based recruitment processes. All recruitment activity shall comply with the Equality Act 2010, and no applicant shall be treated less favourably on the basis of any protected characteristic.

2.2 Recruitment Process

- All vacancies shall be approved by the relevant Head of Department and HR before advertising
- Job descriptions and person specifications shall be reviewed for accuracy and inclusivity before each recruitment round
- Vacancies shall be advertised internally and externally unless a business case for internal-only recruitment is approved by HR
- A structured interview process with standardised scoring criteria shall be used for all roles
- A minimum of two interviewers shall participate in final-stage interviews
- All offers of employment are conditional upon satisfactory completion of pre-employment checks

2.3 Pre-Employment Checks

The following checks are conducted for all new starters prior to or on commencement of employment:

- Verification of right to work in the UK (Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006)
- Identity verification (photographic ID and proof of address)
- Employment references covering the most recent two years of employment
- Qualification verification (where relevant to the role)
- Basic or Enhanced DBS check (where required by the nature of the role)
- Credit check (for roles involving financial responsibility, where lawful and proportionate)
- Professional registration verification (for regulated roles)

2.4 Onboarding

All new employees shall receive a structured onboarding programme covering company orientation, role-specific training, IT setup, health and safety induction, and introduction to key policies and procedures. The onboarding period is supported by regular check-ins with the line manager and HR (see Probation, section 3).

3. Probation

All new employees are subject to a six-month probationary period, during which performance, conduct, attendance, and cultural fit will be assessed. The probation period allows both the Company and the employee to determine whether the role is a good fit.

3.1 Probation Reviews

Line managers are expected to conduct formal probation reviews at the following milestones: end of week one, end of month one, three months, and six months. The HR team will support the process and attend the mid-probation and final reviews.

3.2 Probation Outcomes

- Pass: The employee is confirmed in post and the full terms of the contract apply
- Extend: Probation may be extended by up to three months where improvement is required, with a clear action plan
- Terminate: Employment may be terminated during or at the end of probation with one week's notice

3.3 Notice During Probation

During the probationary period, either party may terminate the employment by giving one week's written notice. The Company reserves the right to make a payment in lieu of notice.

4. Working Arrangements

4.1 Standard Working Hours

The standard working week is 37.5 hours, typically Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:30pm with a one-hour unpaid lunch break. The Company complies with the Working Time Regulations 1998, including the 48-hour weekly limit, rest break entitlements, and annual leave provisions. Employees may opt out of the 48-hour limit in writing, but this opt-out may be withdrawn at any time with reasonable notice.

4.2 Flexible Working Arrangements

The Company supports a range of flexible working arrangements to help employees balance work and personal commitments:

Arrangement	Description	Approval
Hybrid Working	Minimum 2 office days per week; remaining days from home or approved location	Line manager
Flexitime	Core hours 10:00–16:00; flex start 07:30–10:00, flex end 16:00–19:00	Line manager
Compressed Hours	Full weekly hours across fewer days (e.g. 4 x 9.5-hour days)	Line manager + HR
Part-Time	Reduced hours with pro-rata salary and benefits	Line manager + HR
Job Share	Two employees share the responsibilities, hours, and pay of one full-time role	HR + Head of Department
Fully Remote	No regular office attendance; considered case-by-case based on role requirements	HR + Director

All employees have the statutory right to request flexible working from day one of employment (Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023). Requests should be submitted in writing to the HR team. The Company will consider each request on its merits and respond within two months.

4.3 Overtime

Overtime may be required from time to time to meet business needs. For non-exempt roles, overtime beyond contracted hours shall be compensated in accordance with the employee's contract — either through additional pay or time off in lieu, as agreed with the line manager. No employee shall be required to work in excess of the Working Time Regulations limits.

5. Compensation and Benefits

5.1 Pay

Salaries are paid monthly on the 25th of each month (or the preceding working day if the 25th falls on a weekend or bank holiday) by BACS transfer. The Company conducts an annual salary review process, typically effective from April each year. Salary adjustments are determined by individual performance, internal equity, market benchmarking, and business affordability.

5.2 Benefits

The Company provides a comprehensive benefits package to support the health, wellbeing, and financial security of employees and their families:

Benefit	Details	Eligibility
Workplace Pension	5% employer + 3% employee (minimum)	Auto-enrolment from day one
Private Medical Insurance	Comprehensive cover with [Provider]	After probation
Life Assurance	4x annual salary (death in service)	From start date
Income Protection	75% of salary after 26 weeks' absence	After probation
Employee Assistance Programme	24/7 confidential counselling, legal, and financial advice	All employees and household members
Learning & Development	£1,500 annual personal development budget	After probation; pre-approval required
Cycle to Work Scheme	Salary sacrifice up to £2,000	After probation
Tech Scheme	Salary sacrifice for personal technology	After probation
Enhanced Eye Care	Free eye tests + £100 towards corrective lenses for DSE users	All DSE users

Full details of all benefits, including terms, conditions, and how to enrol, are available on the HR intranet or from the HR team.

6. Leave and Absence

6.1 Leave Entitlements

Leave Type	Entitlement	Eligibility	Notes
Annual Leave	25 days + 8 bank holidays	All employees from day one	Pro-rata for part-time; increases to 28 days after 5 years' service
Sick Leave	SSP + up to 10 days company sick pay per year	All employees (company sick pay after probation)	Self-cert up to 7 days; fit note after 7 days
Maternity Leave	52 weeks (39 weeks paid)	All pregnant employees	Enhanced: 16 weeks full pay + 23 weeks SMP after 1 year
Paternity Leave	2 weeks statutory + 2 weeks enhanced	26 weeks' service by EWC	Must give 15 weeks' notice
Shared Parental Leave	Up to 50 weeks (37 paid)	26 weeks' service; partner must be eligible	8 weeks' notice per block
Adoption Leave	52 weeks (39 paid)	Primary adopter; 26 weeks' service	Same enhancement as maternity leave
Parental Leave	18 weeks unpaid per child	1 year's service; child under 18	Max 4 weeks per year per child
Compassionate Leave	Up to 5 days paid	All employees	Death or serious illness of close relative
Time Off for Dependents	Reasonable unpaid time	All employees (day one right)	Emergency situations only
Jury Service / Public Duties	As required by law	All employees	Full pay maintained; submit court documentation
Study Leave	Up to 5 days paid per year	Approved course; after probation	Pre-approval required from line manager and HR

6.2 Requesting Annual Leave

Annual leave must be requested through the HR system and approved by the line manager. Employees should give notice of at least twice the duration of the leave requested (e.g. two weeks' notice for one week's leave). The Company may refuse requests where team coverage is insufficient, and may require employees to take leave during shutdown periods (e.g. between Christmas and New Year).

6.3 Carry-Over

Employees may carry over a maximum of 5 days of unused annual leave into the following leave year, subject to line manager approval. Carried-over leave must be taken by 31 March. Leave not taken by this date will be forfeited unless there are exceptional circumstances approved by HR. Statutory carry-over rights apply where leave could not be taken due to sickness or family leave.

6.4 Sickness Absence Management

The Company manages sickness absence supportively but proactively. The following procedures apply:

- Notify your line manager as early as possible on the first day of absence, ideally before your normal start time
- Maintain daily contact with your manager during short-term absence unless otherwise agreed
- Provide a GP fit note for any absence exceeding 7 consecutive calendar days
- Attend return-to-work meetings with your manager following every period of absence

Where absence reaches trigger points (3 or more occasions in a rolling 12-month period, or 10 or more cumulative days), a formal absence review meeting will be arranged to explore the reasons and identify any support needed. The Company may also request an occupational health assessment where appropriate.

6.5 Long-Term Sickness

For absences exceeding four consecutive weeks, the Company will engage in a structured welfare and return-to-work process, which may include occupational health referral, workplace adjustments, phased return arrangements, and ongoing welfare check-ins. The Company will make all reasonable adjustments before considering ill-health capability proceedings.

7. Performance Management

7.1 Performance Framework

The Company operates a continuous performance management framework designed to support employee development, recognise achievement, and address underperformance constructively:

Review Cycle	Timing	Focus	Participants
Weekly 1:1	Weekly (30 mins)	Priorities, blockers, wellbeing check-in	Employee + line manager
Quarterly Check-in	Every 3 months	Objectives progress, development goals, feedback	Employee + line manager
Mid-Year Review	June / July	Formal progress assessment, recalibrate objectives	Employee + manager (+ HR if needed)
Annual Review	December / January	Full performance evaluation, career development, compensation review input	Employee + manager + HR

7.2 Objective Setting

Objectives are set collaboratively between the employee and line manager at the beginning of each performance year and reviewed quarterly. Objectives should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) and aligned to both team and company goals.

7.3 Managing Underperformance

Where an employee's performance falls below the expected standard, the Company will follow a supportive improvement process:

- Initial coaching conversation with the line manager to identify the performance gap and provide support
- If insufficient improvement, a formal Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) lasting 4–8 weeks, with clear objectives, support measures, and review points
- If the PIP is not met, the matter may be referred to the capability procedure, which may ultimately result in dismissal with notice

The Company recognises that underperformance may have underlying causes (such as health issues, personal circumstances, or inadequate training) and will seek to identify and address these before escalating to formal procedures.

8. Disciplinary Policy

8.1 Purpose

The Company's disciplinary procedure is designed to ensure that all employees are treated fairly and consistently when conduct or behaviour falls below the expected standard. The procedure follows the principles of the ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures.

8.2 Scope

This procedure applies to all employees. It does not apply to cases of underperformance, which are managed through the capability procedure (section 7.3). Separate procedures apply during the probationary period (section 3).

8.3 Disciplinary Stages

Stage	Description	Duration	Right of Appeal
Informal	Private conversation to address minor concerns or performance gaps early	N/A	N/A
Stage 1: First Written Warning	Formal written warning for misconduct or continued underperformance following investigation	6 months	Yes — 5 working days
Stage 2: Final Written Warning	Issued for repeated misconduct, failure to improve, or a single act of serious misconduct	12 months	Yes — 5 working days
Stage 3: Dismissal	Termination with notice for persistent issues, or summary dismissal for gross misconduct	Permanent	Yes — 5 working days

8.4 Gross Misconduct

Gross misconduct is behaviour so serious that it fundamentally undermines the employment relationship and may justify summary dismissal (dismissal without notice). Examples include but are not limited to:

- Theft, fraud, dishonesty, or deliberate falsification of records or expenses
- Physical violence, threats of violence, or intimidation
- Harassment, bullying, or discrimination of any kind
- Serious breach of health and safety rules endangering self or others
- Deliberate damage to or misuse of company property or data
- Serious breach of confidentiality, data protection, or information security obligations
- Being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs during working hours
- Serious insubordination or refusal to carry out reasonable management instructions
- Bringing the Company into serious disrepute
- Criminal offences that materially affect the employment relationship or the Company's reputation

8.5 Investigation

Before any formal disciplinary action is taken, the Company will conduct a reasonable and proportionate investigation. The employee may be suspended on full pay during the investigation where necessary. Suspension is not a disciplinary sanction and does not imply guilt.

8.6 Right to Be Accompanied

At all formal disciplinary hearings, employees have the statutory right to be accompanied by a work colleague or a trade union representative. The companion may address the hearing and confer with the employee but may not answer questions on the employee's behalf.

9. Grievance Procedure

9.1 Purpose

The grievance procedure provides a fair and structured process for employees to raise concerns, complaints, or problems about their employment. The Company is committed to resolving grievances promptly, impartially, and as close to source as possible.

9.2 Grievance Process

Step	Action	Led By	Timeframe
1. Informal	Raise the issue directly with your line manager (or another manager if the issue involves your manager)	Employee	As soon as possible
2. Formal Submission	Submit a written grievance to the HR department setting out the nature of the complaint	Employee	If informal resolution unsuccessful
3. Investigation	HR appoints an investigating officer to gather evidence, interview witnesses, and review documents	HR / Investigating Officer	Within 10 working days
4. Grievance Hearing	Formal hearing to discuss the grievance. Employee may be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative	Hearing Chair (senior manager)	Within 5 days of investigation
5. Outcome	Written outcome provided with findings, decision, and any actions to be taken	Hearing Chair	Within 5 working days of hearing
6. Appeal	Employee may appeal in writing if dissatisfied with the outcome. Appeal heard by a more senior manager not previously involved	Appeal Chair	Within 5 working days of outcome

9.3 Mediation

At any stage, the Company may offer mediation as an alternative or supplement to the formal grievance process. Mediation is voluntary and involves an impartial third party facilitating a constructive conversation between the parties. Mediation can be particularly effective for relationship breakdowns and interpersonal disputes.

10. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

10.1 Commitment

The Company is committed to being an equal opportunities employer and to creating an inclusive workplace where everyone can thrive. We will not tolerate unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation on the grounds of any protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

10.2 Scope of Commitment

Our commitment to equality applies to every aspect of the employment relationship, including:

- Recruitment, selection, and onboarding
- Terms and conditions of employment, including pay and benefits
- Training, development, and promotion opportunities
- Transfer, secondment, and deployment decisions
- Disciplinary and grievance processes
- Redundancy selection criteria and procedures
- Termination of employment

10.3 Reasonable Adjustments

The Company will make reasonable adjustments to working practices, premises, and equipment to ensure that disabled employees and applicants are not placed at a substantial disadvantage. Employees who require adjustments should discuss their needs with their line manager or the HR team in confidence.

10.4 Anti-Harassment and Bullying

The Company has a zero-tolerance approach to harassment, bullying, and victimisation. Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment. Any employee found to have committed harassment or bullying will face disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

10.5 Reporting

Employees who experience or witness discrimination, harassment, or bullying should report it to their line manager, to the HR team, or through the Company's whistleblowing channel. All reports will be treated seriously, investigated promptly, and handled with appropriate confidentiality. Employees will not be penalised for raising a complaint in good faith.

11. Health, Safety and Wellbeing

11.1 Health and Safety

The Company will provide a safe and healthy working environment for all employees, contractors, and visitors in compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and all other applicable health and safety legislation. A separate Health and Safety Policy is maintained and made available to all employees.

All employees have a legal duty to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others, cooperate with safety measures, report hazards, and not interfere with or misuse safety provisions.

11.2 Wellbeing

The Company recognises the importance of employee wellbeing and is committed to supporting both physical and mental health through:

- The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), providing 24/7 confidential counselling, legal, and financial advice
- Trained Mental Health First Aiders in the workplace
- Annual wellbeing initiatives and awareness campaigns
- Occupational health referrals where appropriate
- Flexible working arrangements to support work-life balance
- A supportive approach to sickness absence management

11.3 Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

Employees who regularly use display screen equipment are entitled to a workstation assessment (in the office and at home), regular breaks from screen work, and funded eye tests and corrective lenses required specifically for DSE use.

11.4 Workplace Accidents and Incidents

All workplace accidents, incidents, near misses, and occupational illnesses must be reported immediately to the line manager and recorded in the accident book. Serious incidents will be reported to the HSE under RIDDOR where required. The Company will investigate all incidents and implement corrective actions to prevent recurrence.

12. Data Protection and Confidentiality

12.1 Employee Data

The Company processes employee personal data in accordance with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Employee data is collected and processed for the purposes of administering the employment relationship, complying with legal obligations, and supporting legitimate business interests. Full details are set out in the Employee Privacy Notice, available from the HR team and on the intranet.

12.2 Employee Responsibilities

All employees are responsible for protecting the personal data they access or handle in the course of their work. This includes:

- Only accessing personal data that is necessary for your role
- Keeping personal data secure and confidential
- Not sharing personal data with unauthorised individuals, internally or externally
- Reporting any data breaches or suspected breaches to the Data Protection Officer immediately
- Completing mandatory data protection training

12.3 Confidentiality

Employees must maintain the confidentiality of all proprietary, commercial, and personal information they access during their employment. This obligation applies during and after employment and is set out in the individual contract of employment. Breach of confidentiality may constitute gross misconduct.

13. Notice Periods and Termination

13.1 Notice Periods

Length of Service	Employee Notice	Company Notice
Probation period	1 week	1 week
Up to 2 years	1 month	1 month
2 – 5 years	2 months	2 months
5 – 12 years	3 months	1 week per year of service
12+ years	3 months	12 weeks (statutory max)

The Company may, at its discretion, make a payment in lieu of notice (PILON) or place an employee on garden leave during the notice period.

13.2 Resignation

Employees wishing to resign should submit their resignation in writing to their line manager, with a copy to the HR team. The contractual notice period set out above will apply.

13.3 Exit Process

During the notice period, employees are expected to:

- Complete a thorough handover of work and responsibilities
- Return all Company property, including laptop, access cards, keys, and documents
- Cooperate with knowledge transfer and documentation requests
- Attend an exit interview with the HR team

13.4 Redundancy

Where redundancy is necessary, the Company will follow a fair and transparent consultation process in accordance with the Employment Rights Act 1996 and, where applicable, the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992. Selection criteria will be objective and non-discriminatory. Employees affected by redundancy will be given access to support, including reasonable time off for job searching and, where available, outplacement services.

13.5 References

The Company provides factual employment references confirming job title, dates of employment, and salary. Detailed or personal references are not provided on behalf of the Company.

14. Whistleblowing

The Company encourages all employees to report concerns about wrongdoing, malpractice, or dangers in the workplace. The whistleblowing procedure provides a safe, confidential mechanism for raising such concerns without fear of retaliation.

Qualifying disclosures are protected under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. The Company will not tolerate any detrimental treatment, victimisation, or dismissal of an employee for making a protected disclosure in good faith.

Reports may be made to your line manager, the HR Director, the Company Secretary, or through the anonymous reporting line. Where an employee reasonably believes that internal reporting would be futile or would result in retaliation, they may make a disclosure to an appropriate external body (such as a relevant regulator).

15. Social Media and Communications

The Company respects employees' right to use social media in their personal time. However, employees must ensure that their personal social media activity does not:

- Disclose confidential company information
- Bring the Company into disrepute
- Constitute harassment, bullying, or discrimination against colleagues, clients, or partners
- Breach the Company's data protection obligations

Employees are reminded that social media posts, even on private accounts, may be discoverable and may have consequences for the employment relationship. When in doubt, do not post.

Official company social media accounts and external communications may only be managed by employees authorised by the Marketing or Communications team.

16. Policy Review and Governance

This policy is owned by the HR Director and shall be reviewed at least annually, or sooner in response to changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, best practice, or the Company's business requirements. Proposed amendments shall be reviewed by the HR team and approved by the CEO or Board before publication.

All employees will be notified of material changes to this policy. Updated versions will be published on the HR intranet and distributed to line managers.

17. Document Control

Version	Date	Author	Approved By	Changes
1.0	18 February 2026	[HR Director]	[CEO / Board]	Initial policy

Policy Approval

Role	Name	Signature / Date
HR Director	[Name]	
Chief Executive Officer	[Name]	
Board Chair	[Name]	