



Staff Handbook

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About your handbook

This Staff Handbook is your guide to working at Courage Consultants Uk Limited. It will tell you what you need to know about your terms and conditions of employment and forms part of your employment contract. Once you start working for us you'll receive a Welcome Pack – keep this in your pack so that you can refer back to it when you need to.

Parts of the handbook will be updated from time to time and it is your responsibility to insert any updates sent to you.

If you are a staff who has been transferred in from another organisation and protected by Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment Regulations (TUPE) then your terms and conditions may be slightly different, however, the principles will be similar – for clarification please ask your line manager or a personnel adviser.

If you have any further questions regarding any aspect of your employment please speak to your line manager in the first instance.

A Welcome from O C OGBEWE, Centre Manager

Dear Colleague,

Welcome to Courage Consultants UK Limited!

I know that you have lots to take in as you start your new job, so I will try not to give you too much

more to remember. Just two really important things stand out:

‘Courage Consultants Uk Limited will support people to have new opportunities and experiences that lead to change’.

Our Mission Statement is especially important because it tells us why we are here and what we do!

Never be afraid to ask ‘WHY?’

Why do we do things like this? Why are we saying these things? By asking why, it will help us change the way we work and behave so that we get better at supporting people to achieve their goals and dreams!

To help you make a difference, to make people’s dreams become real, we will support you and offer training and development opportunities.

Enjoy your work and be proud of what you do!

O C OGBEWE
Centre Manager

Our history

Courage Consultants UK Limited was set up in Feb 2019.

Courage Consultants UK Limited is an innovative, quality skills provider; we ensure learners are fully supported to achieve a quality training and skills which will be useful at their workplace and in further academic pursuit.

Information for your Day-to-Day Employment

Remuneration, Sick Pay and Other Allowances

Payment of Salary

Your annual salary is divided into 12 equal payments and paid into a Bank or Building Society nominated by you, no later than 31th of the month. Any deductions or additional payments are made a month in arrears e.g. any additional payments or deductions for the month of March will not be shown in your pay until April.

December salaries pay date will vary and you will be notified of the date closer to the time.

If you change your bank account you must notify payroll immediately and keep your old bank account open until your first salary payment has been made into your new account.

Overpayments

We have the right to recover any overpayment made to your salary in any given month or months by deducting amounts from your future pay. If you have left our employment, we can arrange a repayment schedule. If you suspect that you have been overpaid for any reason you must notify payroll and your line manager immediately.

Salary Review

Salaries are reviewed annually in April for cost-of-living increases. We often have to wait for agreements with our funders before we know how much we can afford to pay.

You will be notified of any increases or changes to your salary when they are agreed which may not actually be until October or November.

Bank Holiday Allowance

Please refer to your contract of employment for any enhancements payable when you are required to work on a bank/public holiday.

Overtime for Support Staff

Overtime can only be worked with the prior approval of your line manager. Overtimes rates will be paid in accordance with the provisions set out on your contract of employment.

***Note:** Bank staffs are not entitled to overtime pay as there are no contracted hours. All hours worked are paid at basic rate.*

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

If you are absent because of sickness or injury at any time during your employment, and you fulfil the eligibility requirements, you will receive SSP in accordance with the regulations in force at the time. SSP is not payable for the first three days of sickness. Those days are known as 'qualifying' or 'waiting' days.

Absence due to a third party

If you are absent from work due to an injury because of a third party, for example as the result of a road traffic accident, you will be expected to recover appropriate compensation for loss of earnings and reimburse the organisation accordingly for any sick pay received.

Attendance at work

We expect you to be at your place of work and ready to start work at the time agreed with your line manager. You must also act responsibly to make sure that you complete a proper handover if you need to.

If you can't get to work due to sickness or other justifiable reasons (or are unexpectedly going to be late), you must let your manager know as soon as possible. If you do not comply with the procedure set out below you may not receive any sickness payments you would have otherwise been entitled to and disciplinary action may be taken against you.

The following procedures outline what to do if you are prevented from attending work for reasons relating to sickness:

Notification of Sickness

On your first day of absence you must notify your line manager (or their designated deputy). This should be done as soon as possible but no later than one hour before your start time so that steps may be taken to cover your absence if necessary.

You should give your line manager the following information:

- The nature of your illness or reason for absence.
- Whether or not you will be seeking medical attention.
- An indication of your expected length of absence.
- Your intended day of return.
- When you will next make contact.

If you are unable to advise your line manager personally, please ask someone to make contact on your behalf. A text message is not an acceptable way of contacting your manager.

During your Absence

In the case of prolonged sickness/absence you should contact your line manager regularly in order to keep them informed of your progress. If you are absent for more than seven days you **must** send a doctor's medical certificate (**form MED3**) to your line manager to cover you from the eighth day of absence (including non-working days).

On your Return

On your return to work, your line manager will discuss your absence in a 'return to work' discussion, where you will be asked to complete a Self-Certification Form. There may be occasions when you are asked to submit a doctor's certificate for an absence of less than eight days, for example, when sickness occurs on or immediately before a public holiday, or during and after holiday leave. If a cost is incurred the company will reimburse you.

Sickness Record

The number of days that we will record for your absence will include any rest days, not just the days you are on the rota to work e.g. if you are on the rota to work Monday, Tuesday and Friday and are then sick from Monday to Saturday (returning on Sunday) your absence will be recorded as 6 days.

Prolonged or Persistent Absence

We regard the following as examples of unacceptable sickness absence:

- Frequent absences over a short-period of time, e.g. six separate absences in a 12 month period.
- Recurrent absences every two to three weeks.
- Noticeable absence patterns, such as before or after a weekend.

We will be sympathetic if you are unable to work for medical reasons. If the illness results in prolonged or persistent absence, we may need an additional medical opinion to assess your capability to continue your employment or particular job. In these circumstances you will be asked to give your consent to be referred to an occupational health practitioner (see section on 'Occupational Support and Health Guidance').

In addition, you may be asked to attend a medical examination with an occupational health Doctor. The process of dealing with prolonged or persistent absence where there is an underlying medical cause is outlined in our 'Managing Attendance' policy.

This policy aims to help you to achieve satisfactory attendance during your employment. If satisfactory attendance cannot be maintained then the organisation may need to terminate your employment by using the Capability Policy.

If there is no underlying medical cause to your absence from work then the Disciplinary Policy and procedure will be used.

Unauthorised Absence

If you do not give us an acceptable explanation for an unauthorised absence, or if you are unable to produce a medical certificate, you may be liable for disciplinary action. Disciplinary action may result in us terminating your employment.

Attendance Records

To make sure that we pay you promptly and correctly we have a system of attendance records. These record your attendance, overtime, leave, sick leave and duty away from work premises.

If you are an office member of staff working regular hours, your line manager will ask you to complete an Attendance Record for each pay period. All attendance records are then forwarded to Payroll by no later than 25th of the month following the month worked. If you work shifts, you must complete timesheets each month, and make sure they are approved in accordance with the procedure detailed on the reverse of the sheet. Fully completed and approved sheets must be forwarded to the Payroll Office by the date specified each month to make sure you are paid correctly and on time.

Occupational Support and Health Guidance

Occupational Support

We understand and recognise the importance of support and guidance for our staffs to help you to fulfil your employment contract. If you experience any problems with your work or home life you should speak to your manager at the earliest opportunity.

We provide access to a confidential **Staff Assistance Programme (SAP)** which can be used to obtain information and advice on a wide variety of topics, including family and marital issues, emotional problems, work, legal rights, financial issues, addictions, consumer advice and much more. If you wish to access the service directly you can do so on **freephone 0800 289 316**.

If you need individual counselling (for which a fee is normally charged) we may, at our discretion, fund the cost of this. No information relating to any individual matter will be relayed by SAP to your manager or the company without your express consent.

Occupational Health

We recognise that from time to time you may suffer from illness or injury. To make sure that appropriate advice and guidance is available to you and your manager during this time we may decide that it is necessary to refer you to the occupational health service that we currently use.

The occupational health service is an independent service and you will be required to co-operate with them in the investigation of any health concerns which relate to your employment with us.

Stress

If you believe that stress, from whatever source, is inhibiting or limiting your ability to undertake your duties and/or responsibilities you are advised to discuss the matter as soon as possible with your line manager. In addition, you should consider accessing the Staff Assistance Programme.

Health and Safety

Staff Health and Safety Responsibilities

It is your duty as a staff, permanent or temporary, while at work to:

1. Take reasonable care of your own health and safety, and the health and safety of other people (including members of the public) who might be affected by what you do or fail to do while at work.
2. Co-operate with line managers and others in meeting statutory and other health and safety requirements.
3. Not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided by us in the interests of health, safety or welfare.
4. Not use machinery, equipment, dangerous substances, transport equipment or safety devices except in accordance with your training or any instructions provided by us.
5. Inform your line manager or the next appropriate person of any dangerous work situations or shortcomings in health and safety arrangements.

In addition, we also expect you and your colleagues, as staffs, to:

1. Make yourself aware of the safety rules, procedures and systems of work applicable to your employment, and to participate actively in any training or instruction provided in connection with health and safety matters.
2. Seek clarification from your line manager or the next appropriate person if you are in any doubt.
3. Report all accidents, incidents, dangerous occurrences, assaults and potential hazards in the workplace in accordance with the procedures and guidance issued by, or on behalf of the company.

Accidents and Incidents

During your employment there may be the unfortunate occasion when you are involved in or witness to an accident or incident. When an accident occurs:

- Reassure the person(s) involved.
- Administer such medical treatment as you are able to, if required and appropriate, making them comfortable.
- Summon assistance from another staff if possible.
- Call the emergency services/GP, if necessary, or arrange for this to be done.
- Reassure any other people present, before removing them from the situation as appropriate.
- Notify your line manager or, if they are not contactable, another senior member of staff.

You will need to carefully record the details of the accident on the Accident/Incident Form, completing this as fully and accurately as possible, but only record facts and not assumptions.

Major incidents

Due to the nature of our work, there may be an occasion when a more serious incident occurs. These will need to be reported immediately by telephone to your line manager or other senior member of staff, who in turn will contact the Head of Health and Safety and Risk.

A major incident may include:

- Death of a visitor or staff on duty.
- Hospitalisation of a visitor or staff on duty.
- Major injury (e.g. broken limb, loss of sight, unconsciousness), sustained on or off work premises by an staff or visitor to our premises.
- Major health and safety hazard e.g. electric shock from an appliance.
- Fire.

***Note:** this list is not exhaustive, if you are in any doubt then notify your line manager or other senior member of staff.*

This will need to be followed up by completing an Accident/Incident Report Form and forwarding this to your line manager within 24 hours of the incident occurring.

Other incidents

These will require the Accident/Incident Report Form to be completed and returned to the line manager within 24 hours of the incident occurring, but not an immediate phone call.

Informing others

In the event of a serious incident affecting a visitor or an staff, a senior member of the company will inform the next of kin or close relative of what has happened and also contact the Head of Health and Safety and Risk.

Annual Leave, Public Holidays and Other Time Off

Note: all leave is pro-rata for part-time staff.

Annual Leave

Annual leave is designed to give you a paid break from work and therefore you are encouraged to spread your annual leave entitlement throughout the year to ensure regular rests.

The annual leave year runs from 1st April to 31st March and your annual leave entitlement must be taken within that period. Your entitlement is accrued per completed calendar month's service - for this purpose a completed calendar month starts on the first day of the month and ends on the last day of the month, i.e. 1st January – 31st January. If you join us part way through a leave year you will receive pro-rata entitlement for the remainder of that leave year.

You will not receive payment for any untaken annual leave at the end of a leave year. However, if unavoidable work reasons prevent you from taking all your annual leave within the leave year you may, subject to your line manager's written approval, carry a maximum of 5 days into the next leave year. You must take this carried over annual leave within the first two months of the new leave year.

Requesting Annual Leave

Your line manager must approve all annual leave before you take it. You must make your request for annual leave to your line manager in writing at the earliest reasonable opportunity using your leave form.

Your manager will endeavour to ensure that workload does not prevent you from taking annual leave. However, service needs will be taken into consideration when granting approval for leave to be taken.

If your request is granted your line manager will inform you by signing your leave form. Once approval has been given it will not be withdrawn without consulting you.

If you feel that your request for annual leave has been unreasonably refused you may use the Grievance Procedure to have the decision reviewed.

Your Entitlement

Your entitlement to leave is set out in your contract of employment. Depending on your contract your entitlement may increase with your length of service; the details of this increase are also stated in your contract of employment.

Sickness During Annual Leave

If you are sick during your annual leave you must follow the appropriate reporting requirements and submit a medical certificate from your GP covering the period of your sickness. You will be credited with the equivalent number of day's annual leave to be taken at a later date. A self-certificate is not acceptable for this purpose.

Public and Bank Holidays

There is time off given for 8 public and bank holidays per annual leave year in addition to your annual leave entitlement (excluding Bank/relief workers):

Good Friday	Easter Monday	May Day	Late May
August Bank Holiday	Christmas Day	Boxing Day	New Years Day

Occasionally, the government will authorise additional public holidays for special occasions. Office workers will generally be required to take their leave when the bank holiday occurs and should make sure they retain enough of their leave for this purpose.

Other Paid Leave

We recognise that paid leave may be required for other reasons; therefore, depending on your terms and conditions, you may be entitled to additional paid leave if you require time off for:

- Compassionate Leave.
- Dependency Leave.
- Public Duty Leave.
- Study Leave.

To check your entitlements to any of this leave please check the Leave Policy and Procedure.

Time off in lieu (TOIL)

All our staffs, excluding the Director/Centre Manager and Directors, are entitled to accrue any additional time worked over their contracted hours as time off in lieu. You must have the prior agreement of your line manager to do this.

In order to take time off in lieu there must be an accurate written record of the hours you have earned. At any point in time you cannot accrue more than one week of TOIL. Time off in lieu should always be taken within three months of the date accrued.

Unpaid leave

In exceptional circumstances managers have the discretion to grant unpaid leave. In considering requests for unpaid leave, managers will take full account of individual circumstances.

Learning and Development

We recognise that our staffs are our greatest asset and our continued success depends on the organisation having a highly skilled, adaptable and competent workforce. In order for us to achieve this we attach great importance to ensuring that our staff are trained to meet the requirements of their job role. Significant resources are made available to ensure that the job-related learning and development requirements of every staff are met.

Whilst it is primarily the responsibility of your manager to arrange training you are also encouraged to share the responsibility for your own continuous development and career pathway.

Induction

In the first twelve weeks of your employment with us we will provide you with a comprehensive induction and training programme to ensure that you have the appropriate knowledge skills and understanding to start your career with us.

Mandatory and Service Specific Training

We ensure that you are initially trained in any mandatory off the job and service specific training that all our support people are required to do. This is to ensure that the people you are supporting are getting the best possible service.

After Your Probationary Period

Once you have successfully completed your probationary period there is the opportunity to work towards a formal qualification using the Qualification Credit Framework. This opportunity will be provided at a level that matches your job role.

Annual review

Each year you will receive a yearly review of your work. The Performance Framework will be used to help inform this meeting together with information from service plans, regional plans and feedback from the people that you support. This is an opportunity for you and your line manager to reflect on the year to date and look towards the next year so that you can plan what changes may need to be considered and how you will go about implementing these. Additional learning and development needs may be

identified as part of this procedure. This will help us to inform your regional plans and our training programme.

Learning and development, like any part of the organisation, works within the constraints of a budget. The department ensures that the organisation has access to a range of learning tools and techniques to ensure that your training needs are met.

Up to date details of learning and development personnel, training programmes and other useful information can be found within Courage Consultants UK Limited education and training brochure.

Hours of Work and Working Time Regulations

Your normal hours of work are stated in your contract of employment. If you work shifts these will vary from week to week and you may be asked to work in excess of your normal hours of work on occasions as this is the nature of our business. We will make every effort to give you notice of your future rota well in advance and work with you to balance our requirements as an employer with your needs as an individual.

The Working Time Regulations (WTR) state that the maximum an individual can work over a 7 day week is 48 hours, averaged out over 17 weeks. This restriction is in place to prevent employers putting staffs (and others) health and safety at risk by not allowing them sufficient rest time. You can work more than 48 hours per week but you must sign a WTR opt-out agreement first. To be sure that we are not breaking any law we ask all staffs to sign an opt out agreement.

Rest periods

In addition, the WTR set out the rest periods staffs are entitled to. Due to the type of work we do we are exempt from many of the rest breaks being provided at certain times as dictated in the Regulations. This does not mean that you are not entitled to these breaks but that we can give them to you at another time, this is called 'compensatory rest'.

To ensure that you receive the rest you are entitled to in a week you should work no more than 67 hours a week (including sleep-ins). If because of unusual circumstances you do work any hours over 67 in a week they should be added to your next week's rest period.

Other Employment

You are required to notify your manager in writing of any job that you have with another employer, including your hours of work with the other employer.

Place of work

It may be necessary to vary your place of work from time to time. This could happen for a number of reasons such as:

- A person we support does not want you to support them anymore.
- Your capabilities are better matched to another place of work.
- As a result of disciplinary action taken against you, formal or informal.
- As part of a re-allocation of work in your region.

We will always discuss proposed changes through with you first and listen to what you have to say.

Expenses and Insurance For Staff

Travel and Subsistence Allowance

You may be required to travel, for example, for training purposes or for business meetings at other locations. In these circumstances a mileage and/or subsistence allowance will be payable according to the current rates set out in the policy. All rates are subject to regular review and will change from time to time.

Payment will only be made when the finance department receives an authorised expense form with all appropriate receipts and descriptions attached. If submitted in time payment is made on the 31th of the following month or the nearest working day after if it falls on a weekend. The payment will be made into a bank or building society of your choice.

Any staff who presents a falsified expense claim for payment will be subject to the disciplinary procedure and may be dismissed.

Use of Private Motor Vehicles When Travelling on Behalf of the Company

The use of private motor vehicles on organisational business is permitted on authorisation from the Risk Manager (via the Insurance Administrator). Permission is given on proof of the required information including current motor insurance, a valid MOT certificate (if applicable) and a valid driving licence being held by the staff concerned.

While driving on organisational business staffs should practice due care and attention and act within the law. The use of mobile phones while driving is strictly prohibited.

The company is not responsible for maintaining staff/s private vehicles (i.e. servicing/MOT etc).

Insurance Cover for Staff

We maintain public and employer's liability insurance in accordance with relevant legislation for all its activities. Any queries relating to insurance cover should be addressed to the Centre Manager.

Personal Details

Any change of address, telephone number or other personal details (including your emergency contact details) should be notified to your line manager as soon as possible so that our records can be accurately maintained.

Any notice sent from us to you, shall be deemed to be delivered if sent to the last home address that you have provided.

Pensions and Retirement

Joining the Scheme

Courage Consultants UK Limited offer access to a “money purchase” pension scheme, sometimes called a defined contribution pension scheme, arranged through Standard Life. You may only join during your first year of employment – that is from day one of your employment up to and including the day immediately prior to the first anniversary of you starting work with us.

Courage Consultants UK Limited also offer access to a stakeholder pension scheme which you can join at any time during your employment with us.

Retirement

Courage Consultants UK Limited does not operate a compulsory retirement age for its staffs

Courage Consultants UK Limited is committed to equal opportunities for all its staffs. We recognise the contributions of a diverse workforce, including the skills and experience of older staffs. We believe that staffs should, wherever possible, be permitted to continue working for as long as they wish to do so. We operate a flexible retirement policy and staffs may voluntarily retire at a time of their choosing.

Leaving Us

If you decide to leave your employment with Courage Consultants UK Limited please inform your line manager in writing as soon as possible. You must give the minimum notice as stated in your terms and conditions.

Return of Company Property on Leaving

All items provided to assist you in the performance of your job remain the property of the organisation and must be returned when you leave. These include keys, ID badges, mobile phones, training materials or other items.

Final Salary

Any loans, advance of pay, overpayments and other monies owing must be repaid on leaving us and may be taken out of your final salary.

When leaving, your annual leave entitlement is re-calculated at your leaving date (taking into account the amount of the holiday year remaining). If you have taken:

- Less than your entitlement, the balance remaining is paid to you via your salary.
- More than your entitlement, the balance is deducted from your salary.

Exit Process

All staffs leaving us will be interviewed or asked to complete a questionnaire before they leave. A more senior manager or a Personnel Adviser may conduct this interview.

Policies

We have included summaries of some of our most important policies in the following section that you need to be aware of. However, there are more policies all of which are available to read across the organisation.

Bullying and harassment

The organisation expects staff to treat all people they come into contact with during the course of their employment with respect and dignity. The harassment or bullying of other staffs, the people we support, or other customers, for whatever reason is considered a very serious matter and may be regarded as gross misconduct.

You should take care not to display materials in the workplace that other people might find offensive, or use language which work colleagues, the people we support or customers might find offensive.

If you feel that you are being bullied and/or harassed you should inform your line-manager immediately.

Whistle-blowing

All staffs have a duty to report to their line manager (or a more senior manager or board member where appropriate):

- Any breaches of the code of conduct.
- Any actions which might question the integrity of the organisation.
- Any potential fraud or misuse of company or other people's/organisations assets.

If you think that something should be brought directly to the attention of board members, you are encouraged to contact the Director/Centre Manager. You can do this by addressing your letter 'For the attention of the Centre Manager - **COURAGE CONSULTANTS UK LIMITED, UNIT 122, Riverpark Business Center, Riverpark Road, Manchester, M40 2XP**. Please mark your envelope Private and Confidential.

All allegations made under this policy will be treated in confidence. No action will be taken against a person making allegations under this policy if they subsequently transpire to be unfounded, provided they were made in good faith.

Please refer to the whistle-blowing policy which provides more details on how you can raise your concerns and, if necessary, how you can bring serious matters of public interest to the attention of people outside the company.

Disclosure and Barring Service

Legally we are required to obtain a criminal record disclosure for staffs who work with vulnerable people. The purpose of the disclosure is to ensure that we do not recruit anyone who may be a risk to the people we support. We are exempt from The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 meaning that all convictions, cautions, warnings and bind-overs, both spent and unspent, will be disclosed and can be taken into account when recruiting.

Staffs are required to notify their line manager if they are charged with or convicted of a criminal offence during employment. When this occurs the line manager should discuss the case with the Director/Centre Manager. Consideration will be given to the individual circumstances of the case, preceding practice and case law. Each case will be considered on its individual merits.

Data Protection

The Data Protection Act 1998 is based on eight principles that govern the processing of personal data, both computerised and manual.

These 8 principles state that data must be:

1. Processed fairly and lawfully.
2. Processed for limited purposes and not in any manner incompatible with those purposes.
3. Adequate, relevant and not excessive.
4. Accurate.
5. Not kept for longer than is necessary for the purpose for which it was originally processed.
6. Processed in line with data subjects' rights.
7. Secure.
8. Not transferred to countries that don't protect data adequately.

This Act relates to all data we produce.

The confidentiality of information on your employment file is respected and it is only disclosed in limited circumstances. You have the right to see what is held about you in your personal file and a charge may be made for this.

Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

Courage Consultants UK Limited has a disciplinary policy and procedure which is intended to be corrective, rather than punitive, and is a way to inform staffs when their conduct or performance falls below the standard that we expect. All disciplinary allegations will be fully investigated and an staff may appeal against any sanction given relating to a disciplinary hearing.

It may be appropriate to suspend an staff whilst an investigation is taking place. Suspension is on average pay and does not in itself constitute a disciplinary measure; it is a management decision to facilitate the disciplinary investigation.

Some offences are considered so serious they effectively breach the contract of employment. These offences are referred to as gross misconduct and can justify summary dismissal (without notice). The following list shows examples of offences normally regarded as gross misconduct:

- Fighting/assault on another person or threats of violence.
- Theft, misappropriation of property, financial mismanagement or deliberate falsification
- Offensive behaviour of a serious nature, including racial or sexual harassment.
- Deliberate damage to property belonging to the company.
- Misconduct or damage resulting from serious abuse of alcohol and/or contravention of the company's regulations relating to consumption of alcohol at work.
- Possession of illegal drugs or substances or misconduct or damage resulting from the use of illegal drugs or substances.
- Any act or omission that puts the people we support at risk. This includes failure to follow risk management guidelines for the people we support.
- Refusal to undertake duties in accordance with the contract of employment.
- Wilful disobedience of a reasonable instruction.
- Serious breach of confidentiality or trust.
- Deliberate disregard of a safety regulation or requirement.
- Sleeping on duty unless expressly permitted.
- Improper use of the staff's position for his/her or another's private advantage, or an attempt to do so.

- Behaviour likely to seriously damage the image and/or reputation of the company and bring it into disrepute.
- Behaviour that seriously damages the employer's trust and confidence.
- Reasonable belief, sustained by investigation, of criminal offence or activity outside work where, in the opinion of management, such conduct is incompatible with the individual's employment (e.g. allegations of financial impropriety against officers responsible for company finances or allegations of indecency or violence against officers responsible for persons in the company's care).

Note: This list is not exhaustive and the circumstances in which misconduct occurs may affect the degree of seriousness with which it is viewed.

The Care Standards Regulation requires that the Care Quality Commission be notified of any allegation of misconduct. Should any staff leave the organisation before a case is fully investigated, or before a hearing can be held, then we will hold a disciplinary review to decide, on the information available, if the allegation is founded. The result of the review will be kept on the staffs file.

Equal Opportunities and Diversity

We seek to employ a workforce who reflects the diverse community at large as we value the individual contribution of people, irrespective of sex, age, marital status, disability, sexuality, race, colour, religion, ethnic origin, national origin or trade union membership.

We will treat all staffs with dignity and respect and we wish to provide a working environment free from unlawful discrimination, victimisation or harassment on any basis.

Diversity is about recognising the value and creativity that differentiates the group of individuals.

The above principles will underpin the application of all policies and procedures including recruitment and selection, training and development, promotion, dismissal, transfers and all other benefits and terms and conditions of employment.

All staffs have a responsibility to abide by this policy and we will not tolerate acts which breach this policy. All instances of such behaviour, will be taken seriously, be fully investigated and may be subject to disciplinary action.

Grievance Policy and Procedure

A grievance is a concern, problem or complaint that you have with your employer. In the majority of cases your line manager will be able to deal with grievance issues on an informal basis and you should discuss issues with them first. However, where you state in writing that you wish to raise a formal grievance, then the grievance procedure will be followed. The formal grievance procedure exists to ensure fair and consistent handling of all grievances.

- **What the policy does not cover**

The grievance procedure can only be used for matters that the company has in its control. The procedure is available to a group of staffs sharing a grievance.

The procedure does not apply to grievances related directly to matters being dealt with under Disciplinary or Capability Procedures. Grievances raised which relate directly to an allegation of misconduct or capability shall be considered as part of the disciplinary or capability investigation.

Instances of dangerous behaviour, malpractice, fraud, poor care practice and negligent behaviour of colleagues and managers should be dealt with through the whistle-blowing policy.

- **Procedure**

Where the grievance involves your line manager(s) in some way, or cannot properly be discussed with that person, you will be entitled to raise the grievance with a more senior manager in writing. In the event that the grievance involves the Centre Manager personally, the matter may be referred directly to the Awarding Body.

When raising your grievance you should state:

- Detail about the issue and who is involved.
- How long the issue has existed.
- What action you have taken to resolve the issue.

If you are not satisfied with the way your grievance has been handled, you will be entitled to pursue the grievance by appealing against the decision.

Maternity/Paternity Arrangements

It is very important that you notify your line manager as soon as you are aware that you are pregnant to ensure that neither you nor your unborn baby is placed at any risk. Full details of your entitlements to maternity pay and maternity leave will then be sent to you.

The main features of maternity leave and pay are detailed below:

Antenatal Care

You are entitled to take reasonable time off work with pay to receive antenatal care. You need to provide your line manager with an appointment card along with a certificate confirming that you are pregnant ([MATB1](#))

Maternity Leave

You will be entitled to 26 weeks of ordinary maternity leave and 26 weeks of additional maternity leave. If you choose to take additional leave it will begin immediately after the original leave ends. Maternity leave can start on any day of the week.

Maternity Pay

Maternity pay will depend on your length of service and how much National Insurance you have paid. Your entitlements will be clarified once you have confirmed to us the expected date of childbirth.

Keeping in Touch (KIT) Days

During your maternity leave you can work up to 10 days without interrupting your maternity pay. These days can be used to enable you to attend team meetings or provide a phased return to work. You must agree these days with your manager before or during your maternity leave.

Paternity Leave

You may, depending on your length of service, be entitled to up to 2 weeks ordinary paternity leave within 8 weeks after your baby is born or adopted.

Paternity Pay

You will receive pay at your normal rate for two weeks.

Parental Leave

Parental leave is unpaid and applies to all staffs who have reached 1 years' service.
Your entitlement is as follows:

- 13 weeks unpaid leave during the period up to their child's 5th Birthday.
- For adopted children, the entitlement can be taken up to the 5th anniversary of the adoption or the child's 18th birthday whichever comes first.
- For a disabled child, the leave can be taken up to their 18th birthday and the entitlement is up to 18 weeks.
- No more than 4 weeks can be taken in 1 year.

Adoption Arrangements

To qualify you must have your newly matched child from an approved adoption agency and have worked continuously for Courage Consultants Uk Limited for 26 weeks leading into the week in which you are notified of being matched with a child for adoption.

Adoption Leave

You will be entitled to 26 weeks ordinary adoption leave followed immediately by an optional additional leave of up to 26 weeks – a total of up to 52 weeks.

Adoptive Pay

You will be entitled to be paid ordinary adoption leave pay at the rate of the current Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP), this rate is available from the Payroll Department.

If you are expected to be responsible for a child's upbringing you may be entitled to this leave depending on your length of service.

Redundancy

We wish to provide a secure and stable working environment for our staffs. However, the organisation must also ensure that it can respond appropriately to market forces which may require changes to staffing levels. Such changes could ultimately lead to redundancies.

We will work within the following principles:

- Redundancy situations will be minimised by considering:
 - Placing recruitment activities on hold.
 - Minimising overtime.
 - Reducing temporary staffing.
 - Redeploying staff with trial periods.
 - Inviting early retirements/voluntary redundancy.
 - Changing working patterns and reducing hours.

- Where, after due consideration, we consider that the need for redundancies still remains we will give staffs (and/or their representatives) written details of their proposals and a full and meaningful consultation will take place in-line with legal requirements.

- We will ensure that individuals are informed of any entitlements they may lead to redundancy compensation in accordance with the statutory redundancy payments scheme.

- We will ensure that staff are able to take reasonable paid time off to find alternative employment if they are being made redundant.

Appendix 1 - Code of Conduct for Staffs

Introduction

The organisation wishes to be regarded as an open, fair, professional organisation with high standards of integrity and commitment to customer service. However, and to a great extent, this is dependent upon the conduct and behaviour of our staff at all levels.

This Code has been developed to set out the standards of behaviour expected from the staff of Courage Consultants UK Limited.

This Code forms part of the contract of employment of staff and they are required to abide by it at all times.

Line managers are responsible for ensuring that the staffs who report to them are aware of this Code and to any others that are relevant to their duties and responsibilities.

Breaches of the Code could lead to disciplinary action being taken against the person(s) concerned including the termination of their employment.

The People We Support

Although this section applies mainly to the operational staff our expectations of them should be understood and appreciated by those who are employed in support or corporate roles.

The organisation exists to provide high quality, cost effective services which meet the needs of the individual people we support. In order to achieve this, staff should not, either through their action or inaction, do anything which will conflict with the adherence to this Code of Conduct.

The overall aim of social care work is to maintain and improve the quality of life of the people we support. To demonstrate full respect for them, staff must:

- Treat each person as an individual.
- Ensure that the support provided allows the person the highest possible degree of control over their lives.

- Take steps to safeguard the rights of the people we support who lack the capacity to make their own decisions.
- Respect at all times the differences that arise from gender, ethnicity, language, religion, ability and sexual orientation.
- Be flexible in respecting the support needs of each person.
- Be reliable.
- Keep to the support plans that have been agreed with each person.
- Keep personal information obtained in the course of their duties confidential, and disclose it only with consent or when legally required to do so.
- Recognise the need to work alongside other staff in the interests of the people we support.
- Check that their behaviour meets the standards laid down in this Code of Conduct on a regular basis.

Staff must ensure that the people we support and their relatives are always treated with openness by:

- Working in an honest way with people.
- Ensuring that people have the information they need to make appropriate judgements.
- Not promising anything that they know or believe cannot be delivered.

It is of the utmost importance to protect the people we support against abuse. Staff must ensure that they:

- Avoid any form of abuse of their position, or of the access that their work allows to people and their property
- Report any instance of abuse to their manager
- Ensure that, if their manager takes no action in response to a report of abuse, they use the appropriate whistle-blowing policy (see section 22) to tell an appropriate person or authority about the abuse.

Customer Care

All staff are expected to treat the people with whom they come into contact, whether by phone, direct contact, by e-mail or through correspondence, with courtesy and respect at all times.

From time to time, staff will have to deal with difficult customers or situations. In such circumstances the high standards of professionalism and fairness must be maintained. Rudeness is not acceptable in any circumstances.

The general actions, behaviour and demeanour of staff while at work should be such as to present the company as a professional and effective organisation. Staff should avoid doing things which might imply an unprofessional, uninterested, sloppy, uncaring or other negative attitude

Confidentiality

Courage Consultants UK Limited' values make a commitment to the open conduct of our business. However, there will often be times when high levels of confidentiality must be maintained:

- Staff should abide by procedures designed to protect the confidentiality of information
- Staff should not disclose information about the people we support or colleagues to third parties unless authorised to do so. This must be with the consent of the person concerned.
- Confidential business information should not be disclosed to external parties unless it is appropriate to do so. This will include matters relating to our finances, future development programmes, discussions with potential partners and/or contract proposals. Some information may already be in the public domain but staff who have any doubts should seek clarification from the Director/Centre Manager, before disclosing any information which might be commercially sensitive.
- Staff should exercise care in disclosing information which falls within the scope of the Data Protection Act.

Diversity and Equality of Opportunities

Staff are required to comply with the spirit and letter of our Diversity and Equal Opportunities Policies and related procedures at all times.

Harassment or Bullying

The harassment or bullying of other members of staff, the people we support or other customers, for whatever reason is considered to be a serious breach of the Code of Conduct and may be regarded as gross misconduct.

Staff should not display materials in the workplace which other people could find offensive, or use language which work colleagues or customers could find offensive.

Policies, Procedures and Other Regulations

Staff should ensure that current policies, procedures, financial standing orders and other regulations are followed at all times. If it is considered that policies or procedures could be improved, then this should be raised with the appropriate line manager or the Director/Centre Manager.

Health and Safety

Staffs should abide by our health and safety policy and procedures at all times.

Staff have a responsibility to ensure that their conduct does not endanger the health or safety of themselves or other staffs, visitors, the people we support or other customers of the organisation.

Staff should bring immediately to the attention of their line managers any circumstances which might have health and safety implications for themselves or others.

Organisational Property and Assets

Staff are expected at all times to take reasonable measures to protect our property and assets from theft, damage or misuse.

Computer Systems and Software

Staff should not do anything which would risk the integrity of our Information and Communications Technology systems. This would include the use of unauthorised or unlicensed software on the system or on a 'stand alone' computer.

All software or disks incorporated into our system must be virus checked and approved. Staff must not copy software products licensed to the organisation or subsidiaries.

Procurement of Goods and Services

Staff involved in buying goods or services on behalf of the organisation must ensure that:

- Decisions provide the best value for money.
- Decisions are taken objectively and without favour to one supplier or contractor.
- Competition between contractors/suppliers is fair and open.
- Appropriate procedures (for example our Financial Regulations) are followed, e.g. using the approved suppliers' lists or following tendering procedures.

Staff should avoid using the organisation’s contractors and suppliers for private purposes. Where this is unavoidable you should not get a favourable service as a result of your employment with us. Consent should be sought from your Director/Centre Manager before using the supplier or contractor. A written declaration should be made to the Director/Centre Manager.

Alcohol, Illegal Drugs and Substance Abuse at Work

Alcohol, drugs or substance abuse impairs judgement. Staff can put themselves, the people we support, their work colleagues and members of the public at risk if they undertake their duties whilst under the influence of drink, drugs or other dangerous substances. Use of any such substance whilst at work, or if affecting a member of staff’s work, will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.

No Smoking Policy

There is a No Smoking Policy in all offices and/or buildings. It is the organisation’s policy to actively discourage staff from smoking for both health and social reasons. Members of staff are not permitted to smoke in the workplace although local arrangements, which should be confirmed with the line manager, may exist. These will be restricted, for service or operational reasons, to a short smoking break(s) away from the immediate workplace. If visiting the home of a person we support, or the premises or services of another part of the organisation, then staff should either refrain from smoking or comply with any local No Smoking Policy at all times.

Corruption and Fraud

Staff must be aware that it is a serious criminal and disciplinary offence to corruptly receive any gift, loan, fee, reward or other advantage in return for doing (or not doing) anything or showing favours to any person or organisation.

Staff should only use organisational monies and assets for their intended and lawful purpose.

If a member of staff becomes aware of potentially corrupt or fraudulent activities of another staff(s) then they have a duty to report this to the Director/Centre Manager.

It is our policy to report all cases of fraud, or suspected fraud, to the police.

Dress Code

Members of staff are expected to attend work dressed in a manner appropriate to their duties.

Whilst at work the dress and general appearance of staff should be clean, tidy and consistent with the professional image that the organisation seeks to project.

Relationships With The Press and Media

Members of staff must not, without permission, pass or distribute to the press or media any information or materials relating to the organisation, its services, the people we support or other members of staff.

Similarly, staff must not write letters to the press or write media articles about the organisation and its activities, or write letters or articles in their capacity as a staff without prior permission.

Members of staff must not make comments or statements to the press. If approached by the media, staff should take details about the enquiry and pass it on to the Director/Centre Manager.

In carrying out their duties, staff should not copy any item (whether by photocopy, fax or electronically) in such a way as to infringe the copyright of the owner. Items must only be copied once appropriate permission has been given.

Gifts and Hospitality

Attention is drawn to the Hospitality Policy which sets out standards of conduct for Board members and the staff of the organisation.

Members of staff who receive gifts and/or hospitality should not place themselves under an obligation that might influence or be perceived to influence their future decisions or conduct. Staff should be cautious when accepting hospitality, ensuring that it is appropriate and not too lavish. Staff should be careful that the receipt of hospitality could not be construed as a way of exerting improper influence over them or the organisation. As a general rule staff should not accept hospitality which the organisation would not reciprocate in similar circumstances.

Offers of hospitality should be recorded in the 'Conflict of Interest' Register. Hospitality given on behalf of the organisation should also be recorded in the Register.

If a member of staff has any doubt about hospitality offered, either decline the offer or seek advice from the Director/Centre Manager before acceptance.

When declining hospitality staff should be courteous, but draw the attention of the person making the offer to the existence of this Code.

At no time should gifts or favours be solicited from the people we support or their families. Should a gift be offered by or received from a person we support or from a member of their family then it is of absolute importance that this be disclosed to a line manager or the Director/Centre Manager as quickly as possible. It is always the staff's responsibility to disclose.

Interests and Conduct Outside Work

The organisation has no desire to place restrictions on, or interfere with, an staff's private life. However, there may be circumstances when an staff's external interests or conduct may affect their employment with the organisation.

Members of staff must inform the Centre Manager before taking outside paid or voluntary employment. If approved, such employment must not interfere in any way with the existing and should not conflict with the interests of the organisation.

Staff should also obtain written permission before undertaking voluntary activities if those activities or organisations are in some way related to the activities of the organisation. This could cover the membership of the Committee of a local voluntary agency with which the organisation has a contract, or of the Committee/Board of another housing or social care organisation. It is our policy that you should not be involved with any organisation which might be in competition with our organisation.

This Code refers chiefly to work-related conduct. However, there may be circumstances in which conduct outside work, while not directly related to employment, might adversely affect the reputation and perceived integrity of the organisation. There may be circumstances when conduct outside work, for example a conviction for a criminal offence, may result in disciplinary action being taken against you.

Political Activity

It is important that the organisation is seen to be politically neutral. It must not be linked, directly or indirectly to any political organisation. Members of staff are free to join political groups and work and campaign on their behalf. However, such political activity must not compromise the organisations neutrality or values.

Staffs should discuss with their manager any intentions to stand for political office. There may be circumstances in which holding office on a local authority may conflict with organisational interests.

Declaration of Interests

Staff will be required to make regular written disclosure indicating any connections which they may have with external organisations, contractors/suppliers and outside employment. Staff are responsible for updating such a Register of Interests when changes occur. In declaring such interest staff must consider any connections of their family or close friends which might conflict with the interests of the organisation.

Staff should declare any conflict of interests as and when they arise during the course of the organisations business or other activities. This would include connections or interests relating to the housing of a person we support, letting of contracts, employment of staff, the sale or acquisition of property, etc.

Staff should declare to the Centre Manager if they are a member of any organisation not open to the public or which has secrecy about its rules, membership or conduct. A full definition of such an organisation is included in Appendix 3 of the National Housing Federation Model Code of Conduct.

Schedule 1 Housing Act 1996

Members of staff should be aware of the requirements of Schedule 1 of the Housing Act 1996 and the restrictions which this places on the organisation, its staffs and Board Members.

Schedule 1 (formerly section 15 of Housing Associations Act 1985) prohibits the organisation from making payments or providing benefits to staffs other than those to which they are contractually entitled.

The restrictions extend to Board Members and to the close relatives of staffs and Board Members. Benefits include the granting of tenancies, leases and contracts of employment.

If there is any doubt as to whether an action may contravene Schedule 1, i.e. when dealing with the potential allocation of a property to an staff's relative, you should seek the advice of the line manager or Director/Centre Manager.

Whistle-blowing

All staff have a duty to report to their line manager (or a more senior manager where appropriate):

- Any breaches of the Code of Conduct or associated codes.
- Any actions which might question the integrity of the organisation.
- Any potential fraud or misuse of the organisations assets.

If there are any suspicions about dishonest or unethical behaviour, the staff should first bring them to the attention of their line manager. If you feel that this is inappropriate then you should raise these with the Director/Centre Manager.

If it is thought that something should be brought to the attention of Board Members, you are encouraged to contact the Chair of the Board.

No action will be taken against a person making allegations of dishonesty or fraud if they subsequently transpire to be unfounded, provided they were made in good faith.

The organisation has adopted a policy on whistle-blowing which provides more details on how you can raise your concerns and, if necessary, how you can bring serious matters of public interest to the attention of people outside the organisation.