Staff Handbook

Introduction

Our aim in producing this document is to create a one-stop information point where you would be able to access all the information you are likely to need in relation to your employment with us. The handbook and corresponding policy documents form part of your contract of employment with The Voluntary Network.

The document gives you an overview of the terms and conditions of your employment and outlines what you can expect from us as your employer. In return we ask you for a high degree of commitment, dedication and loyalty to help us achieve the aims and objectives of the Company.

We hope you find this a useful guide during your employment with us. However, if you are unable to find the answer to your question then please contact your manager.

About the Company

The Voluntary Network became a charitable company limited by guarantee in March 2000. Part of the remit of the organisation was also to identify needs in the local community and support the development of projects to fill those needs.

The Voluntary Network operates Community Transport and a Befriending Service.

The Voluntary Network activities are supported by a staff team based in Newmarket. The values and qualities that guide our work are those of integrity, innovation, working together, caring, valuing people and resources together with drive and commitment. You can get more information on our website www.thevoluntarynetwork.org

This Handbook is intended both for permanent members of The Voluntary Network staff and for those staff who are employed on contracts for a specific purpose. It includes conditions forming part of the contact of employment, as well as guidance on a range of employment-related issues.

Supporting Policy Documents are displayed on our Staff Portal.
https://the-voluntary-network.logicdemosite.co.uk/staff-portal/

Starting Employment with The Voluntary Network (TVN)

a. Statement of Employment Terms and Conditions

As an employee of The Voluntary Network you will have received a document setting out specific terms and conditions of service as they relate to your post (if you have not received this, you will do so within 8 weeks of your commencement date). This includes details of:

- the names of the employer and the employee;
- the date when the employment (and the period of continuous employment) began;
- remuneration and the intervals at which it is to be paid;
- hours of work;
- holiday entitlement;
- job title (or a brief job description);
- where it is not permanent, the period for which the employment is expected to continue or, if it is for a fixed term, the date when it is to end.
- either the place of work or, if required to work in more than one location, an indication of this and of the employer's address; and

Further detailed policies and procedures which may not be mentioned as part of this document, but which still form part of your conditions of employment will be detailed in this handbook.

TVN reserves the right to change its terms & conditions and employment policies from time to time. You will be notified at the earliest opportunity of these changes by way of general notice to all employees affected by the change. Where a contractual change in your terms and conditions of employment results in a change to your written statement of particulars of employment, we will give you a written statement of the change at the earliest opportunity.

b. at Work

TVN values good attendance at work and is committed to improving the general wellbeing of its employees to achieve this. Although we aim to secure regular attendance, we do not expect employees to attend when they are unwell.

i) Notification of Absence

Your line manager should be notified as early as possible if absence from work is anticipated for hospitalisation and other medical treatment.

If you are unable to attend work due to sickness or injury, your line manager must be notified by telephone before your normal start time or as soon thereafter as possible on the first day of absence, if possible, indicating a date of return. Notification should be made by you personally unless impossible due to

the nature of the illness where you should arrange for someone else to call on your behalf. During prolonged periods of absence, your manager should be kept informed of progress and an expected date of return.

Any employee who has been absent due to sickness and is found not to have been genuinely ill will be subject to disciplinary action, which could include dismissal.

ii) Sickness Payments

Your entitlement is limited to your rights under the Statutory Sick Pay Scheme.

I you are off work for 7 days or less, you do not need to provide us with a fit note or other proof of sickness from a healthcare professional.
When you return to work, we can ask you to confirm that you have been off sick. This is called 'self-certification', please send details of sick leave by email.

c. Hours of Work

Your normal hours and working pattern will be specified in your Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment.

The full-time contracted hours for all posts within the organisation are 35 hours per week excluding on hours unpaid lunch break.

TVN reserves the right to vary your hours and pattern of working, following consultation and agreement with you.

Persistent poor timekeeping means that colleagues are put under pressure to cover your duties. This is not acceptable and will therefore be treated as a potential disciplinary offence under our disciplinary procedures.

d. Disclosure and Barring Checks

Certain employees of TVN may be required to undergo a criminal records office check. This is only in very special circumstances where your employment with us means you are likely to come into contact with children or vulnerable adults (or certain other particular circumstances). Should this be the case, we will discuss the situation with you prior to confirming your appointment (or relevant change to your job).
DBS Secure Storage Policy, found on Staff Portal

All employees must ensure they are aware of the requirements of our **Policy for Recruitment of Ex-Offenders**, found on Staff Portal

e. Conflict of Interest

You should not, directly or indirectly, engage in, or have any interest, financial or otherwise, in any other business enterprise which interferes or is likely to interfere with your independent exercise of judgement in TVN's best interest.

Generally a conflict of interests exists when an employee is involved in an activity:

- Which provides products or services directly to, or purchase products or services from TVN.
- Which subjects the employee to unreasonable time demands that prevent the employee form devoting proper attention to his or her responsibilities to TVN.
- Which is so operated that the employee's involvement with the outside business activity will reflect adversely on TVN.

Should you be in doubt as to whether an activity involves a conflict, you should discuss the situation with your manager.

f. Standards of Performance and Behaviour at Work

i) Customer Service

Employees are ambassadors for TVN and we expect our staff to conduct them in the appropriate manner at all times. It is particularly important that we provide excellent customer service.

All employees must ensure they are aware of the requirements of our **Customer Care Policy**, to be found on our Staff Portal**.**

ii) Appearance

TVN does not seek to inhibit individual choice in relation to your appearance. However, you are expected to dress appropriately at all times in relation to your role, and to ensure that your personal hygiene and grooming are properly attended to prior to presenting yourself at work.

If we have supplied you with a uniform of other apparel, then you must wear this at all times when required to do so; it is your responsibility to ensure that this is clean and presentable.

If you have any queries about what is appropriate, these should be directed to your line manager.

iii) Company Premises

You must not bring any unauthorised person onto TVN property without prior agreement from your line manager, unless you are authorised to do so as part of your job. In these circumstances you are responsible for ensuring that your visitors are appropriately monitored during their stay, and that they do not access areas or company property inappropriately.

You must not remove TVN property from the organisation's premises unless prior authority from your line manager has been given.

iv) Personal Property

Any personal property such as jewellery, cash, credit cards, clothes, cars, motorbikes or bicycles etc. left on TVN premises is done so entirely at your own risk. You are strongly advised not to leave any valuables unattended, either on our premises, our vehicles or in your own vehicle. TVN does not accept liability for loss or damage to any personal property whatsoever.

v) Telephones & Correspondence

Company telephone / mobile phone or postal facilities must not be used for private purposes without prior permission from your line manager. If, for any reason, personal use is made of these items then arrangements must be made to pay the cost price of all services used. Abuse of these facilities will be considered a potential disciplinary matter.

vi) Smoking and Other Substances at Work

Legislation now exist which makes it illegal to smoke in enclosed public spaces. Smoking (including vaping) is therefore strictly prohibited on all TVN premises (including entrances and exits) and vehicles.

Bringing alcohol or any unlawful drugs to the workplace, and / or imbibing them there is strictly prohibited both during work time or during a period prior to work where the effects carry over to the workplace. Any such instances will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure and may lead to your summary dismissal.

All employees must ensure they are aware of the requirements of our **Drug and Alcohol Policy,** to be found on our Staff Portal.

vii) Confidentiality

It is a condition of your employment that you have a duty of confidentiality with regards to TVN.

During the course of your employment you may find yourself in possession of sensitive information, the disclosure of which could be construed as a breach of confidentiality. It is a condition of your employment that you have a duty of confidentiality to the Company, and you must not discuss any Company sensitive or confidential matter whatsoever with any outside organisation including the media.

Any such breach of confidentiality would be deemed as gross misconduct except as otherwise provided or as permitted by any current legislation (e.g. the UK Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998) and could lead to your dismissal.

All employees must ensure they are aware of the requirements of our **Confidentiality Policy**, please find on our Staff Portal.

viii) Computer, email and Internet use

If you have access to the Company's computers including email and access to the internet as part of your job, you must not abuse this by using these facilities for purposes unrelated to Company business.

Limited personal use of the internet is permitted during your formal breaks. All internet use is monitored and accessing pornographic or other unsuitable material, including auction or certain social networking sites is strictly prohibited and would be considered a serious disciplinary offence which may result in dismissal.

Only software packages properly authorised and installed by the Company may be used on Company equipment, you must therefore not load any unauthorised software onto Company computers.

If you have a Company email address, this is provided for responsible use on Company business and should not be used in any other way whatsoever.

You must not make reference to the Company or its services, or represent yourself on behalf of the Company on social media without formal permission from the Company to do so.

All employees must ensure they are aware of the requirements of our **ICT Policy**, found on our Staff portal.

ix) Receipt of Gifts

TVN recognises that people often feel grateful for the help that they have received and may wish to show their appreciation in a tangible way, through a present of a gift of money. Whilst TVN recognises that people take pleasure in giving presents, to accept such gifts could imply that employees expect payment beyond that given by the organisation through salaries and/or expenses. This would also include gifts or hospitality offered with other outside organisations.

It is forbidden, regardless of the circumstances for an employee to:

- Accept money or gifts of any value
- Encourage a service user to make them a bequest in their will, any such bequest solicited or unsolicited would have to be returned

All employees must ensure they are aware of the requirements of our **Gift Policy**, found on Staff Portal.

x) Bribery and other Corrupt Behaviour

The Company has a strict anti-bribery and corruption policy in line with the Bribery Act (2010). A bribe is defined as: giving someone a financial or other advantage to encourage that person to perform their functions or activities improperly or to reward that person for having already done so.

If you bribe (or attempt to bribe) another person, intending either to obtain or retain business for the company, or to obtain or retain an advantage in the conduct of the company's business this will be considered gross misconduct. Similarly accepting or allowing another person to accept a bribe will be considered gross misconduct. In these circumstances you will be subject to formal investigation under the Company's disciplinary procedures, and disciplinary action up to and including dismissal may be applied.

g. Data Protection and Access to Information

TVN will comply with all statutory requirements of the Data Protection Act by registering all personal data held on its computer and/or related electronic equipment and by taking all reasonable steps to ensure the accuracy and confidentiality of such information.

The Data Protection Act protects individuals' rights concerning information about them held on computer. Anyone processing personal data must comply with the seven principles of good practice. Data must be:

- Fairly, lawfully and openly processed
- Collected and used only for clear, specific and legitimate purposes
- Collected only to the minimum level required
- Maintained accurately with timely updates and errors corrected
- not kept longer than necessary
- kept sage and secure with proper technical and organisational safeguards
- Organisational accountability for data management practices

Employees can request access to the information held on them by the Company. All requests by employees to gain access to their personnel records should be made in writing. There is no charge for this service.

h. Changes in Personal Information for Employment Purposes

It is important that our records are correct, as inaccurate or out of date information may affect your salary or cause difficulties in situations where contact is required for emergencies. You **must** notify your Line Manager immediately of all changes in the following personal information:

- Name
- Home address
- Telephone number
- Bank account details
- Examinations passed/qualifications gained
- Emergency contact
- Driving licence penalties (if you are required to drive on Company business)
- Criminal charge, caution or conviction
- Conflict, or potential conflict of interest

Personal data on employees is held in accordance with the provisions of the Company's Data Protection Policy which will be made available for inspection by you if required.

4. Valuing Diversity and Dignity at Work

a. Valuing Diversity

i) Statement

TVN is committed to valuing diversity and seeks to provide all staff with the opportunity for employment, career and personal development on the basis of ability, qualifications and suitability for the work as well as their potential to be developed into the job.

We believe that people from different backgrounds can bring fresh ideas, thinking and approaches which make the way work is undertaken more effective and efficient.

The Company will not tolerate direct or indirect discrimination against any person on grounds of age, disability, gender / gender reassignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation whether in the field of recruitment, terms and conditions of employment, career progression, training, transfer or dismissal.

It is also the responsibility of all staff in their daily actions, decisions and behaviour to endeavour to promote these concepts, to comply with all relevant legislation and to ensure that they do not discriminate against colleagues, customers, suppliers or any other person associated with the Company.

ii) Key Actions

In adopting these principles TVN:

1. Will not tolerate acts that breach this policy and all such breaches or alleged breaches will be taken seriously, be fully investigated and may be subject to disciplinary action where appropriate.
2. Fully recognises its legal obligations under all relevant legislation and codes of practice.
3. Will allow staff to pursue any matter through the internal procedures which they believe has exposed them to inequitable treatment within the scope of this policy. If you need to access these procedures they can be obtained from your line manager e.g. Grievance Procedure, Dignity at Work Procedure etc.
4. Will ensure that all managers understand and maintain their responsibilities and those of their team under this policy.
5. Will offer opportunities for flexible working patterns, wherever operationally feasible, to help employees to combine a career with their domestic responsibilities.
6. Will provide equal opportunity to all who apply for vacancies through open competition.
7. Will select candidates only on the basis of their ability to carry out the job, using a clear and open process.
8. Will provide all employees with the training and development that they need to carry out their job effectively.
9. Will provide all reasonable assistance to employees who are or who become disabled, making reasonable adjustments wherever possible to provide continued employment. We will ensure an appropriate risk assessment is carried out and that appropriate specialist advice is obtained when necessary.
10. Will distribute and publicise this policy statement throughout the Company

b. Dignity at Work

i) Statement

The Company believes that the working environment should at all times be supportive of the dignity and respect of individuals. If a complaint of harassment is brought to the attention of management, it will be investigated promptly and appropriate action will be taken.

ii) What and How of Harassment

Harassment can be defined as conduct, which is unwanted and offensive and affects the dignity of an individual or group of individuals.

Sexual harassment is defined as "unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, or other conduct based on sex, affecting the dignity of women and men at work". This can include unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct.

People can be subject to harassment on a wide variety of grounds including:

- race, ethnic origin, nationality or skin colour
- sex or sexual orientation
- religious or political convictions
- willingness to challenge harassment, leading to victimisation
- disabilities, sensory impairments or learning difficulties
- status as ex-offenders
- age
- real or suspected infection with a blood borne virus (eg AIDS/HIV)
- membership of a trade union or activities associated with membership

Forms may include (but are not limited to):

- physical contact ranging from touching to serious assault
- verbal and written harassment through jokes, offensive language, gossip and slander, sectarian songs, letters and so on
- visual display of posters, graffiti, obscene gestures, flags and emblems
- isolation or non-cooperation at work, exclusion from social activities
- coercion ranging from pressure for sexual favours to pressure to participate in political/religious groups
- intrusion by pestering, spying, following someone
- bullying

iii) What should I do if subject to Harassment?

If you feel you are being harassed you are strongly encouraged to seek early advice/support from your line manager. If your feel your line manager is harassing you, then you should contact his / her immediate line manager.

You should also keep a written record detailing the incidents of harassment and any requests made to the harasser to stop. This written record should be made as soon as possible after the events giving rise to concern and should include dates, times, places and the circumstances of what happened.

The Company has a formal procedure for dealing with these issues which you can obtain from your line manager.

Please also take note of our **Equal Opportunities Policy**, found on Staff Portal

5. Pay, Benefits & Pensions

a. Salary Arrangements

Your salary will be paid monthly in arrears on the 25th of each month by direct credit transfer to your designated bank account.

Your basic pay was outlined in your letter of appointment / statement of terms and conditions. Any subsequent amendments to your basic pay will be notified to you in writing by the Company.

Part-time employees will be paid on a pro rata basis based on the hours they work. In all other aspects, their salaries will be paid in accordance with the pay arrangements for full-time employees of the Company.

If any queries arise with regard to pay, or if it looks as if a mistake has been made, speak to your line manager immediately so that they can take appropriate action. Unless agreed otherwise, any pay errors, whether of over or underpayment, will be rectified in the next salary payment.

Appropriate deductions will be made from pay including income tax and National Insurance contributions (NICs), which are subject to each employee's earning level, family status and the number of hours worked.

b. Overtime

Overtime is defined as all hours worked in excess of your full time contracted hours, which has the prior explicit approval of your manager.

Overtime is payable to posts which have been specifically designated as qualifying for overtime payment. Overtime rate is the equivalent to your usual pay.

c. Income Tax

If there are any changes in your personal circumstances which will affect your tax status, you should notify the Inland Revenue, who will automatically inform the Company of any changes to your tax code. Addresses of local offices and enquiry centres can be found here:
http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/menus/officesmenu.htm

d. Business Travel

You will be reimbursed for any expenditure necessarily incurred in order to do your job when working away from your normal place of work. Public Transport and accommodation costs will be reimbursed at actual cost – appropriate receipts must accompany all claims. Mileage rates when travelling by your own private transport are 45 pence per mile.

e. Sickness Pay Provision

i) Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

Most employees have a right to statutory sick pay (SSP). Worker will receive either 80% of their normal earnings or statutory SSP rate, whichever is lower.

There is a limit of 28 weeks' SSP in any one period of sickness or linked periods. (Periods of sickness are said to be linked if the second period starts within eight weeks of the end of the first period.)
SSP is paid in the same way as ordinary pay and is liable to tax and National Insurance contributions.

TVN reserves the right to refuse to pay sick pay if it has reasonable cause to think that an employee is not genuinely sick, if it has cause to believe that an employee is abusing the sick pay scheme, if an employee has failed to comply with the notification requirements, or has not supplied the appropriate certification. If the sick pay scheme has been abused, disciplinary action may follow.

Payments of sick pay may be terminated, suspended or reduced if an employee fails to notify the Company of relevant facts, or if their absence or continued absence is due to their taking an unwarranted risk (in or out of work), conducting themselves in a way that prejudices their recovery, abusing alcohol or drugs or other substances, or recklessly endangering the health and safety at work of themselves and others.

f. Pension Scheme

You will be automatically enrolled in the NEST Pension scheme https://www.nestpensions.org.uk/schemeweb/nest.html. You may elect to opt out of the scheme if you so wish. Please note that no member of the Company can advise you on whether you should join or not. If you are unsure, you should seek independent financial advice.

6. Leave Arrangements

a. Annual Leave

Full Time Employees are entitled to 30 days paid annual leave per annum, Part Time Employees will calculated pro rata and stated in your employment contract. The 8 Statutory Bank Holidays form part of the 30 day entitlement,

Holidays must be agreed with your manager as early as possible. The Company will where possible try to accommodate individual preferences for holiday dates but the needs of the business may have to take precedence, particularly where short or inadequate notice is given. Leave is granted on a first come first served basis, please ensure you request annual leave well within the holiday year in order to ensure all dates can be granted.

- The holiday year runs from 1st April to 31st March.
- Leave for employees joining after the start of the leave year accrues at the rate of one twelfth of the annual entitlement for each complete calendar month of service
- Leave for employees who terminate their employment during the leave year is calculated on the same basis. If, however, the annual leave entitlement has been exceeded, a deduction calculated on the same basis will be deducted from the final salary payment.
- Holiday pay in lieu of accrued leave will be paid only on termination of employment and will normally be subject to a maximum of 10 working days.

b. Maternity Leave and Pay Policy

Full maternity benefits are provided in accordance with statutory requirements.

You may not return to work during the two weeks immediately following the birth of your child (four weeks for women who work in factories).

You are free to choose when you would like your maternity leave to start, however, the earliest you can choose to start your maternity leave is during the 11th week before the expected week of your child's birth.

In certain circumstances, your maternity leave may start automatically earlier than the date you chose as the start date for your maternity leave. This applies where you are absent from work wholly or partly because of pregnancy at any time during the four weeks before the expected week of childbirth or if you give birth early.

If you have at least 26 weeks' service by the end of the 15th week before your child is expected to be born, you may be entitled to Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP), provided your average weekly earnings are at or above the Lower Earnings Limit for National Insurance.

SMP is payable for 39 weeks. For the first six weeks, SMP will be paid at 90% of your average weekly earnings. For the remaining 33 weeks, SMP will be paid at the standard rate which is prescribed by regulations and is adjusted from time to time. The Company will inform you of the applicable rate. If your average weekly earnings fall below the standard rate, SMP will be paid at 90% of your average weekly earnings throughout.

SMP will be paid subject to deductions for tax and National Insurance contributions in the normal way.

In order to be eligible for maternity leave and SMP, you are required to notify your line manager in writing by or during the 15th week before the expected week of your child's birth. You must inform your Line Manager of the following:

- you are pregnant
- the week in which your child is due
- the date you intended to start your maternity leave
- the date from which you will be claiming SMP

You should enclose a MAT B1 certificate with your written notification signed by your registered doctor or registered midwife to confirm the expected week of childbirth.

You may change the date you start your maternity leave providing you give at least 28 days' notice in writing of either the new start date or the original start date (whichever is earliest).

Within 28 days of receiving your notice, the Company shall notify you in writing of the date when your maternity leave will end.

Prior to your departure on maternity leave, your line manager will meet with you to discuss your rights and entitlements during maternity leave, the possibility of flexible working on your return to work and the level of contact you would like with the Company during your maternity leave. You should feel free to raise at this meeting any queries or concerns you have.

Your line manager may also offer you up to 10 days work during your maternity leave. It is up to you if you wish to work these days. The rate of pay for the work will be agreed in advance with you. Your right to maternity leave and SMP will not be affected.

During Ordinary Maternity Leave, you will continue to receive your contractual benefits and your normal terms and conditions will continue to apply, except for those terms relating to wages and salary. You will continue to accrue holiday.

During Additional Maternity Leave, the rights and obligations under your contract of employment are reduced, but you must still give notice in accordance with your contract of employment if you want to leave. In addition, you will continue to be bound by your obligations of confidentiality and loyalty. Only statutory holiday will accrue.

If any pregnant employees, or employees who have recently become mothers or who are breastfeeding are employed in positions which have been identified as posing a risk to their health and safety or that of their baby they will be notified immediately and arrangements will be made to eliminate the risks.

If you have concerns about your own health and safety at any time you should consult your Line Manager immediately.

You do not have to notify the Company separately of your return date. It will be assumed that you will come back to work on the date the Company has notified you is the end of your maternity leave period. However, if you wish to return to work before the end of your full maternity leave entitlement, you should give your line manager at least 8 week's notice in writing of your intended return date.

If you return to work immediately after a period of Ordinary Maternity Leave you will return to work in the same job you left before you started your maternity leave.

If you return to work from a period of Additional Maternity Leave, you will return to the same job you were employed to do. If this is not reasonably practicable, you will be offered a similar job on equally favourable terms and conditions.

If you decide not to return to work after maternity leave, you should confirm this in writing and give the notice required by your contract of employment.

On your return from maternity leave, your line manager will arrange a meeting with you to discuss any changes which have taken place during your absence. This will be an opportunity to discuss any issues relating to breastfeeding. You should also feel free to raise at this meeting any queries or concerns you have.

Parallel arrangements are available for the adoption of a child.

c. Paternity Leave and Pay

Statutory Paternity Leave is a maximum of two weeks' leave, following the birth of a child, taken in order to support the mother or care for the new child. You can take the two consecutively weeks together or take them separately in one week blocks. You get the amount of leave even if you have more than one child (for example, twins).

Statutory Paternity Leave must be taken and end within 52 weeks of the birth. If the baby is born earlier than expected, it must be taken within 56 days from the date the baby was due.

To qualify you must have worked for the Company for at least 26 weeks up to the any day in the qualifying week.

Statutory Paternity Pay is paid at a fixed rate per week (determined in legislation) or 90% of average earnings if that is less. It is paid subject to deductions for tax and National Insurance contributions in the normal way.

During Statutory Paternity Leave, you are entitled to all of your normal contractual terms and conditions as if you were not absent, apart from basic wages and salary. You have the right to return to exactly the same job, on the same terms and conditions after Statutory Paternity Leave.

Paternity leave and pay are also available for the adoption of a child.

d. Shared parental leave

This leave entitlement is designed to give parents / adopters more flexibility in how to share the care of their child in the first year following birth or adoption. If you are eligible you can share up to 50 weeks leave and up to 37 weeks of between you.

You need to share the pay and leave in the first year after your childe is born or placed with your family.

You can use SPL to take leave in blocks separated by periods of work, or take it all in one go. You can choose to be off work together or to stagger the leave and pay.

To get SPL, ShPP, you and your partner need to:

- Meet the eligibility criteria, there is different criteria for birth parent and adoptive parents or those using a surrogate
- Give notice to TVN
- Reduce the maternity of adoption leave and pay by the amount you want to take as SPL and ShPP

Please see www.gov.uk for full and latest information.

e. Unpaid Parental Leave

As well as Shared Parental Leave, any eligible employee who has or expects to have responsibility for a child is entitled to take Unpaid Parental Leave to care for that child. This includes the child's registered father or anyone else who has or expects to have formal parental responsibility for the child. To be eligible to take Parental Leave, an employee must have been employed by the Company for at least one year.

Parental Leave consists of 18 weeks' unpaid leave for each child born or adopted, taken at any time up to the child's eighteenth birthday. Up to four weeks' Parental Leave can be taken in respect of each child, each year, in blocks of one week or more. Employees cannot take the leave in blocks of less than one week, unless the child is disabled. You must give your line manager at least 21 days notice of your intention to take Parental Leave.

Although the situation around pregnancy and adoption appears complex, it is normally quite straightforward to work out your entitlement. Therefore as soon as you know you are pregnant or have been matched with a child for adoption, please let your manager know as soon as is practical. We will calculate your entitlement and the relevant dates for you.

f. Time Off For Dependants

You are legally entitled to take a reasonable amount of time off to deal with certain prescribed emergencies involving certain dependants. This leave is called Time Off for Dependants. Time Off for Dependants can be taken, for example, if a dependant falls ill or is injured, if care arrangements break down, or to arrange or attend a dependant's funeral. A dependant is your child (including adopted child), husband, wife or parent. It also includes someone who lives in your household, and someone who reasonably relies on you, such as an elderly relative. Any time taken off must be necessary and reasonable in the particular circumstances. Time Off for Dependants is not paid.

7. Health and Safety

a. Introduction

TVN recognises and accepts its responsibility as an employer to maintain, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety and health of its employees, and of other persons who may affected by its' activities.

It is your duty as an employee not to put at risk either yourself or others by your acts or omissions. You should also ensure that you are familiar with the Company health and safety arrangements. Should you feel concern over any health and safety aspects of your work, this should be brought to the attention of your line manager immediately.

b. Procedure in the event of an accident

An Accident Book is available from your line manager and it is the responsibility of each individual employee to report and record any accident involving personal injury. Any accident or near miss occurrence (i.e. no one was injured but the incident had the potential to injure or kill) at work should be reported immediately to your line manager.

All employees who are absent from work following an accident must complete a self-certification form, which clearly states the nature and cause of the injury.

For any employee who suffers an injury at work which results in them being away from work, or unable to do their normal work, for three days or more (including weekends, rest days or holidays) it is important that your manager is informed.

c. First Aid

The Appointed Person (someone who can take charge in the event of an accident) will be your manager.

d. Fire Safety

Employees should follow these steps to help prevent fires:

- Before you use any electrical appliances carry out a quick check to make sure that the cables, plugs etc are not damaged.
- Do not use any electrical equipment that shows signs of damage, even if you think it is only minor. Report any faults you find to your line manager and find an alternative appliance.
- Ensure that you place your rubbish in the proper waste bins. Do not overfill the bins.

Action to take when the fire alarm goes off:

- Immediately stop what you are doing and walk (do not run) to the nearest available safe fire exit. If your nearest exit/route is obstructed, choose another route. Make sure that you are aware of the fire exits and routes in your area.
- Follow the instructions on the Fire Safety notices.
- Direction signs should indicate the route to your fire exit. These comprise a white arrow on a green background sometimes accompanied by the words 'FIRE EXIT' and also a pictogram of a running man. The arrows indicate the direction of the nearest fire exit.
- Make your way to the appropriate assembly point.
- Once you are at the assembly point you should report to the Manager, so that they can account for the people in their designated area.
- Do not leave the designated assembly point, or attempt to re-enter the building, until you have been instructed to do so.

Action to take if you discover a fire:

- RAISE THE ALARM! This can be achieved by breaking the glass on the call points or by shouting the instruction “Fire – call the fire brigade”.
- Raise the alarm even if your building is fitted with an automatic fire alarm system, which has not yet activated - you must not wait for it to do so of its own accord. The alarm must be raised for every occurrence of a fire, no matter how small it appears to be. This will ensure that people in the building have adequate notice to evacuate should it begin to spread quickly. In addition, modern furnishings may allow the fire to develop unnoticed, so time is of the essence if everyone is to get out safely.

- Call the fire brigade at the earliest available, and safe, opportunity and do not attempt to tackle the fire unless you have been appropriately trained and can safely do so e.g. a small fire in a waste paper basket. Unless you have been trained you could be putting yourself or somebody else at risk.

e. Personal Safety

Generally, you should try to avoid working alone whenever this is possible. However, if you have to work alone, then you need to develop an awareness of the risks and how to minimise them.

Prior to making an appointment with someone you do not know, obtain as much information as possible about the person you are meeting and arrange to meet the person in Company premises. Always ring back the telephone number you have been given to confirm that it is legitimate. If a mobile number is given you should always ask for an alternative fixed line number.

If visiting, let your colleagues know where you are going, with whom and what time you are expecting to return. If you think that you are going to run over your original timescales, let your colleagues know.

If you are at all concerned that you are being placed in a dangerous situation through your employment, you must discuss this with your line manager.

8. Training and Development

a. Training and Development Policy

The Company aims to provide training opportunities which will provide:

- An induction programme which all staff will be required to undertake and will assist staff settling into their new role/job.

- A progressive training and development scheme to enable staff to develop, relevant skills and acquire knowledge to underpin their current role and career aspirations.

9. Leaving The Voluntary Network

a. Notice Periods

Unless your employment is terminated by agreement, or specified otherwise in your principal statement of terms and conditions, you or the Company are required to give a period of notice in writing as follows:

- During the first 13 weeks service the notice period is one week by either party
- Thereafter one month's notice

These periods of notice will apply if you are dismissed on grounds of inefficiency or if your dismissal is the result of disciplinary proceedings in circumstances where summary dismissal is not justified. Your employment may be terminated without notice where dismissal follows disciplinary proceedings.

b. Working Notice

In all cases the Company reserves the right to enforce your full notice period. Your full remaining annual leave entitlement should be taken during your notice period in agreement with your line manager. Exceptionally, if this is not possible, your manager may agree to make a payment in lieu of this. If you leave any day other than the last working day of that month, that month will not count for annual leave purposes.

If you resign and are in possession of Company property (including computer files), you should make your manager aware of these, and arrange how they will be handed back to the Company. You remain bound by the confidentiality arrangements outlined in your contract of employment during this period.

In exceptional circumstances, if deemed appropriate and as an alternative to working your notice, the Company reserves the right either to transfer you to other suitable duties during your notice period or to require you to accept payment in lieu of any entitlement to notice.

c. Other Conditions on Leaving

On leaving, the Company will deduct from any money due to you such sums as you may owe to the Company. These may include, but are not restricted to, any loans, relocation assistance, court orders and payment made for holidays taken in excess of entitlement.

If you leave without giving notice and without the Company's agreement, you are in breach of your contract and you may forfeit some or all of any salary due to you.

Before leaving, you must hand over to your manager all articles belonging to TVN including your ID badge and any documents, equipment and computer software used at home. Documents and software include (but are not limited to) correspondence, diaries, address books, databases, files, reports, plans, records or any other medium for storing information. You should not retain any copies, drafts, reproductions, extracts or summaries of documents and software.

After you have left the Company, you must not:

- Solicit or seek to entice away any Company staff
- Use or divulge to any person or organisation any confidential information relating to the business of TVN.

Should your employment be terminated following disciplinary action it is likely you will receive payment in lieu of notice. However, as there are numerous reasons as to why someone is dismissed, payment in lieu of notice will be reviewed on an individual basis taking into consideration the reasons behind the dismissal.

Should you be dismissed for reasons of gross misconduct, your employment will be terminated immediately without the benefit of notice or payment in lieu of notice.

d. Retirement

In line with current legislation TVN does not have an age where it expects employees to retire. It is however our policy to have regular workplace /appraisal discussions with all our staff where they can discuss performance and any development needs they may have, as well as their future aims and aspirations. Staff and their managers can also use this opportunity to discuss retirement planning should the employee wish to do so.

You should ensure that you inform your line manager at least 6 months before you plan to retire to ensure all appropriate arrangements are made (e.g. sourcing a replacement, mobilising your Company pension etc.).

10. Appendix 1 Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures

The Voluntary Network

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

Scope

We will use this procedure to help and encourage all employees to achieve and maintain standards of conduct, attendance and job performance.

The company rules (as per all Policies and Procedure found on staff portal) and this procedure apply to all employees. The aim is to ensure consistent and fair treatment for all in the organisation.

A disciplinary process can be stressful for everyone involved. Different people might respond differently to stressful situations. We understand the prospect of disciplinary action might cause distress and affect your mental health.

We will support you throughout to help avoid this happening to you. Please talk to your Manager about how we can support your wellbeing.

Principles
We will consider informal action, where appropriate, to resolve problems.
We will not take disciplinary action against you until the case has been fully investigated.

For formal action we will advise you of the nature of the complaint against you and we will give you the opportunity to state your case before any decision is made at a disciplinary meeting.

We will provide you, where appropriate, with written copies of evidence and relevant witness statements before a disciplinary meeting.

You will not be dismissed for a first breach of discipline, except in the case of gross misconduct, when the penalty is dismissal without notice and without payment in lieu of notice.

You have the right to appeal against any disciplinary action.

The procedure may be used at any stage if your alleged misconduct needs this.

Your right to be accompanied
You have a statutory right to be accompanied by a companion where a disciplinary meeting could result in:

· a formal warning
· some other disciplinary action
· confirmation of a formal warning or other disciplinary action (for example, at an appeal hearing)

The right is to be accompanied by:

· someone you work with
· a trade union representative who's certified or trained in acting as a companion
· an official employed by a trade union

You should tell us as soon as possible if you would like a companion and who they will be so we can make arrangements in good time. If you need any reasonable adjustments, for example for a disability, speak to your Manager.

The procedure

First stage of formal procedure

This will normally be either:

● An improvement note for unsatisfactory performance if performance does not meet acceptable standards. This will set out the performance problem, the improvement that is required, the timescale, any help that may be given and the right of appeal. We will advise you that this is the first stage of the formal procedure. We will keep a record of the improvement note for 6 months, but it will then be considered spent – as long as you achieve and maintain satisfactory performance
or
● a first warning for misconduct if conduct does not meet acceptable standards. This will be in writing and set out the nature of the misconduct, the change in behaviour required and the right of appeal. The warning will also tell you that a final written warning may be considered if there is no sustained satisfactory improvement or change. We will keep a record of the warning, but it will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after 6 months.

Final written warning
We might give you a final written warning if:

· the offence is sufficiently serious
· there is further misconduct
· there is failure to improve performance while you're still under a prior warning

This will confirm the full details of the complaint, the improvement re-quired and the timescale. It will also warn that failure to improve may lead to dismissal (or some other action short of dismissal) and will refer to the right of appeal.

Your Manager will keep a copy of this final written warning but it will be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after 12 months, as long as you achieve and maintain satisfactory conduct or performance.

Dismissal or other action
If there is still further misconduct or failure to improve performance the final step in the procedure may result in dismissal or some other action short of dismissal such as demotion or transfer (as allowed in the contract of employment).

Instances of gross misconduct may also result in immediate dismissal without the prior Written Warning.

Dismissal decisions can only be taken by the appropriate senior manager.

In the event of dismissal you will be provided in writing with the:

· reasons for dismissal
· date your employment will end
· confirmation of all final payments you are owed, including holiday pay and notice pay
· right of appeal to a member of the Trustee Board

Gross misconduct
The following list provides some examples of offences which are normally regarded as gross misconduct:

● theft or fraud
● physical violence
● bullying
● deliberate and serious damage to property
● serious misuse of an organisation's property or name
● deliberately accessing internet sites containing pornographic, offensive or obscene material

● serious insubordination
● discrimination, harassment or victimisation
● bringing the organisation into serious disrepute
● causing loss, damage or injury through serious negligence
● a serious breach of health and safety rules
● a serious breach of confidence

We might consider suspending you while carrying out a disciplinary investigation if there's a serious issue or situation. Suspension is when we require you to temporarily stop working. You would be on full pay throughout any suspension period.

We will consider each situation carefully before deciding to suspend you. Suspension will not be needed for most investigations. Suspension is a neutral act and does not automatically mean you have done anything wrong. It will not be used as a disciplinary outcome.

We understand being suspended might be stressful so we will:

· only suspend you if there's no other option
· support you throughout the suspension period, always considering your mental health and wellbeing

Appeals
If you want to appeal against a disciplinary decision you must do so within 5 working days. A Trustee will hear all appeals and their decision is final. At the appeal any disciplinary penalty imposed will be reviewed.

Grievance Procedure

Dealing with grievances informally

If you have a grievance or complaint about your work or someone you work with you should start by speaking with your manager wherever possible. You may be able to agree a solution informally between you.

Formal grievance

If the matter is serious or you wish to raise it formally you should put the grievance in writing to your manager. You should keep to the facts and avoid language that is insulting or abusive.

If your grievance is against your manager and you feel unable to approach them, you should raise it with the Chair of Trustees.

Grievance hearing

Your manager will call you to a meeting, usually within 5 working days, to discuss your grievance. You have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative.

After the meeting your manager will give you a decision in writing, usually within 24 hours.

If the manager needs more information before making a decision, they will inform you of this and the timescale.

Appeal
If you are unhappy with the decision on your grievance you can raise an appeal. You should tell your manager.

You will be invited to an appeal meeting, normally within 5 working days, with a Trustee, you have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative.

After the meeting the manager (or Trustee) will give you a decision, usually within 24 hours. The manager's (or Chairpersons) decision is final.