



Employee's Handbook

**Ensuring a professional team, supporting the
daily needs for loved ones.**

**Incorporating Homekare Agency Services Limited and Homekare Community
Services Limited**

Kind . Simple . Moments

HomeKare Values



1. Introduction

Welcome to HomeKare Services Limited.

The aim in producing this document is to help you access information you are likely to need in relation to your employment with us. The Handbook and corresponding policy documents form part of your terms and conditions of employment with HomeKare Services Limited and is aimed at all levels of HomeKare Services Limited workforce.

The document gives 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 business.

I hope you find this a useful guide during your employment with us. However, if you are unable to find the answer to your question here, please feel free to contact your Manager who will certainly be able to find an answer for you.

Steve & Kirsty
HomeKare Services Ltd



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1. Starting with HomeKare Services Limited.

a. About the Company

HomeKare Services Limited an independent provider of health and social care support in the community, whose head office is based in Blyth, Nottinghamshire. We strive to offer care and support, which is tailored to each individual service user's needs. Our service is built around providing customers with flexible, consistent and reliable personal care and support services. We provide assistance which supports and respects each customer's right to make informed choices about the services they require.

Our aim is to promote quality of life and independence to customers, whilst maintaining their freedom, dignity and privacy in a sensitive and professional manner.

We strive to maintain continuity in relation to the care worker and the service user, therefore building up a relationship of reliability, trust and often friendship.

HomeKare Services Limited was founded in 2023 by Kirsty Derrick with the main objectives being to:

- Promote the physical, social and psychological wellbeing of the service users.
- Protect and maintain customer's privacy and dignity.
- Promote and deliver high standards of care.
- Treat each service user as an individual and show respect for their diversity of culture and values.
- Empower service users to make decisions about their own lives, offering where needed support and information.
- Provide services that promote the health, safety and welfare of service users.
- Develop individual care plans for each service users, which take into consideration the needs and wishes of the customer and their families.

We have grown steadily since then and currently our main services are:

- Long term care
- Palliative care
- Domiciliary care

We currently have a workforce of around 18 staff.

You can get more information on our website at www.homekareservices.co.uk

b. Your Induction

HomeKare Services Limited believes its employees are its greatest asset and recognises its responsibility to ensure they are afforded appropriate development throughout their employment. This development begins at the Induction stage when a new employee joins.

Our aim is to support and develop employees in their role so that they feel confident to undertake the responsibilities placed upon them and ultimately are able to contribute to the success of the business.

Your induction will commence a few days before your employment start date, this will include shadowing other carers visits to service users as to get to know the routine and needs of the individual service users, also a practical based introduction of both the industry and company's care standards, It is important to note that failure to complete your shadowing induction in a timely and satisfactory period will result in withdrawal of the offer of employment.

c. Statement of Employment Terms and Conditions

As an employee of HomeKare Services Limited 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 2 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
- entitlement to sick leave, including any entitlement to sick pay
- the entitlement of employer and employee to notice of termination
- job title (or a brief job description)
- 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
- details of the existence of any relevant collective agreements which directly affect the terms and conditions of your employment (if applicable)

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 with us can be accessed through your manager. This handbook also summarises the main terms of your employment.

HomeKare Services Limited 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.

d. Probation Periods

All new staff are subject to a probationary period of 3 months. Your progress will be monitored during regular supervisions (initial meeting after 4 weeks and again at the end of your probationary period). During this probationary period, you will be given appropriate support and development opportunity to help you reach the required standards.

Extension of the probationary period may be granted to enable the required standards to be achieved, but failure to do so could result in termination of your employment.

e. Your Attendance at Work

HomeKare Services Limited values good attendance at work and is committed to improving the general wellbeing of its employees to achieve this.

i) Notification of Absence

Your manager/office should be notified as early as possible if absence from work is anticipated for hospitalisation and other medical treatment. A copy of your appointment letter is required.

If you are unable to attend work due to sickness or injury, your manager/office must be notified by telephone from 6am on the first day of absence, if possible, indicating a date of return. Notification must 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, the Rota Team should be kept informed daily of progress and an expected date of return, unless a Fit Note is produced from your GP.

Staff with a high degree of sickness/absence will trigger Sickness Monitoring and be expected to meet with a manager to seek resolution and improve attendance.

Any employee who has been absent and is found not to have a genuine reason will be subject to disciplinary action, which could include dismissal.

ii) Sickness Payments

You will be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), subject to meeting the qualifying conditions set by the Government, including average earnings and length of absence. For more details, please see the Handbook Section on Pay and Benefits. Absences in excess of 7 days will require a Fit Note from your GP.

iii) Failure to Maintain Contact During Absence



If you are off sick, or otherwise absent from work, you must call in or make contact with a Manager or the Office each day of your absence, in line with the notification requirements set out above. If HomeKare Limited does not hear from you for a continuous period of 3 days, this will be treated as self-termination of your employment.

f. Hours of Work

Your hours of work and working pattern will, wherever possible, be in line with your expressed availability stated at interview. However, HomeKare Services Limited reserves the right to vary your hours and pattern of working following consultation and agreement with you. Also, if needed to fit with the business needs.

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

g. Flexible Working

HomeKare Services Limited has a policy of trying to assist staff to balance their work and home life and is therefore willing to consider requests from staff to vary their working hours or work pattern. Such requests will be considered considering the impact on the organisation, work colleagues and any other relevant factors and can take up to 3 months to implement. Should you wish to discuss this you should submit your request in writing to the Main Office.

h. Disclosure and Barring Checks

All employees of HomeKare Services Limited will be required to undergo checks with the disclosure and barring service (DBS) (previously known as CRB). A conviction will not necessarily prevent employment but will need to be discussed with management to allow a risk assessment to be completed. Employees must notify management of any caution or conviction received while employed by HomeKare Services Limited, any failure to do so may result in immediate dismissal. Disclosure and barring service checks will be repeated every 3 years to ensure the continued safety of our service users. All details will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

i. 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 HomeKare Services Limited best interest. Generally, a conflict of interests exists when an employee is involved in an activity.

- Which provides services directly to, or purchases services from, HomeKare Services Limited



- Which subjects the employee to unreasonable time demands that prevent the employee from devoting proper attention to his or her responsibilities to HomeKare Services Limited
- Which is so operated that the employee's involvement with the outside business activity will reflect adversely on HomeKare Services Limited.
- HomeKare reserves the right to invoice the ex - employee or client/service user up to £3,000.00 if leaving the company due to coercion or persuasion from any ex-employee or client/service user for the period of 6 month post leaving the company, this includes poaching clients.

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

j. Standards of Performance and Behaviour at Work

i) Appearance

HomeKare Services Limited does not seek to inhibit individual choice in relation to your appearance. However, you are expected to always dress appropriately (i.e. smart casual) in relation to your role, and to ensure that your personal hygiene and grooming are properly attended to prior to presenting yourself at work.

Uniform – Where you have been supplied with a uniform, then you must wear this at all times when required to do so. Your tunic should be worn with smart comfortable attire and sensible, flat comfortable shoes (not Croc's or Ugg boots).

It is your responsibility to ensure that your uniform is clean and presentable. Your work brings you into contact with the general public, you must ensure your dress and grooming standards reflect the values of your employer.

The wearing of acrylic and/or gel nails is permitted but should be at a short length. If you have any queries about what is appropriate, these should be directed to your manager.

ii) Access to Premises

You will be issued with an identity badge which must be worn when accessing service users' property. This remains the property of HomeKare Services Limited, loss/damage of your badge must be reported immediately to your Line Manager.

You may also be given codes to access service users' property, these codes must not be disclosed to any other person. Any accidental disclosure must be immediately reported to your Line Manager.



You must not bring any unauthorised person on to HomeKare Services Limited property without prior agreement from your Manager/Office, 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** bring any unauthorised persons to service user's homes. Any such instances will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure and may lead to your dismissal.

You must not remove HomeKare Services Limited property from the organisation's premises unless prior authority from your Line Manager has been given.

iii) Personal Property

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

iv) Telephones & Correspondence

Company telephone / mobile phone or postal facilities must not be used for private purposes without prior permission from your 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.

v) Smoking and Other Substances at Work

Legislation now exists which makes it illegal to smoke in enclosed public spaces. Smoking is therefore strictly prohibited on all HomeKare Services Limited (including entrances and exits).

Outside areas will be identified for those who wish to smoke during their break-time. Should you wish to avail yourself of these facilities, please speak to your Manager/Office

“...bringing alcohol or any unlawful drugs to the workplace, and / or imbibing them there is strictly prohibited...”

Staff are not permitted to smoke in service user's homes. Staff may smoke during breaks but must leave the premises.

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 dismissal.

vi) Confidentiality

During 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, its' service users and your colleagues, and you must not discuss any Company sensitive or confidential matter whatsoever with anyone including outside organisations or 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.

vii) 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 the Company's 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.

All staff must make themselves familiar with the Company's Communication Systems Policy available from your manager.

viii) Receipt of Gifts

Your working relationships may put you in a position where service users, their friends or their family may offer their appreciation in the form of money and/or gifts. Offers of this kind to you or your family can place you in a difficult position. Therefore, no employee or any member of his or her immediate family should accept from a service user, their family members or other person doing business with HomeKare Services Limited, payments of money under any circumstances, or special considerations, such as discounts or gifts of materials, equipment, services, facilities or anything else of value unless:

"...In every circumstance where a gift is offered, the advice of your line manager must be sought ..."



- They are in each instance of a very minor nature
- They do not improperly interfere with your independence of judgement or action in the performance of your employment

In every circumstance where a gift is offered, the advice of your Manager/Office must be sought.

ix) 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. Any losses to HomeKare Services Limited will be sought after through legal action.

k. Data Protection and Access to Information

HomeKare Services Limited 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 eight principles of good practice. Data must be:

- fairly and lawfully processed
- processed for limited purposes
- adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate
- not kept longer than necessary
- processed in accordance with the data subject's rights
- secure
- not transferred to countries without adequate protection



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.

I. 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 wages or cause difficulties in situations where contact is required for emergencies. You must notify your Manager/Office 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 & Information Governance Policy which is available for inspection by you if required.

4. Valuing Diversity and Dignity at Work

a. Valuing Diversity

i) Statement

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

"HomeKare Services Limited is committed to valuing diversity ..."

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, service users or any other person associated with the Company.

ii) Key Actions

In adopting these principles HomeKare Services Limited:

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 manager e.g. Grievance Procedure, Dignity & Privacy Policy 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 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 is 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:

- 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 manager. If you feel your manager is harassing you, then you should contact his / her immediate Line Manager/Office. 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 manager/office.

5. Pay, Benefits & Pensions

a. Salary/Wages Arrangements

Your wages will be paid monthly for the previous month date from 25th to 24th of the following month, this will be paid on or around 28th of each month by direct credit transfer to your designated bank account.



If any queries arise with regard to pay, or if it looks as if a mistake has been made, speak to the office 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 payment. Appropriate deductions will be made from pay including any agreed loan at an agreed rate.

Income Tax and National Insurance Contributions (NICs) will be deducted automatically from your pay under the PAYE (Pay As You Earn) system, based on your tax code and earnings level. You will receive a payslip showing these deductions each pay period.

b. Overtime

Overtime is defined as all hours worked in excess of your full-time contracted hours, this will be paid at your nominal rate.

Designated Bank Holidays will be paid at double rate, Christmas Day triple rate.

c. Income Tax

If there are any changes in your personal circumstances which will affect your tax status, you should notify HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) immediately, as this may change your tax code. Tax and National Insurance will continue to be deducted through the Company's payroll under PAYE.

Addresses of local offices and enquiry centres can be found here:

www.gov.uk/contact-hmrc

d. Transport/Fuel & Timesheets

You must provide your own transport to and from your place of work and to and from any of the alternative locations at which you may be required to work. You will be required to produce a current driving licence, annual MOT certificate and certificate of insurance allowing for business use. Whenever your insurance policy is changed or renewed you must provide an up-to-date copy of the certificate to the company.

HomeKare Services Limited uses the Nurse Buddy app to manage visits, timesheets and mileage. All wages and mileage allowance are calculated automatically through the app, based on the calls you log. You must log the start and end of every call/visit via the QR code provided on site — calls that are not logged via the QR code cannot be verified and may result in delayed or incorrect payment. Any queries about your logged hours, mileage or pay calculated through the app should be raised with the office promptly.

e. Sickness Pay Provision

i) Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

You will be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), subject to meeting the qualifying conditions set by the Government, including average earnings and length of absence. Absences in excess of 7 days will require a Fit Note from your GP.

f. Pension Scheme

HomeKare Services Limited will automatically enrol you into a workplace pension scheme, subject to meeting the eligibility criteria set out under auto-enrolment legislation (for example, age and earnings thresholds). Pension contributions will start after you have successfully completed your probation period. Both you and the Company will make contributions in line with current pension regulations. You will be notified separately of the scheme provider and contribution rates, and you have the right to opt out if you wish. You should also keep up with your national insurance contributions to benefit from the state pension: since April 2016, the number of qualifying years for the full state pension has been 35 years for both men and women, and you need at least 10 qualifying years of National Insurance contributions (NICs) to get any state pension.

You can also look into enquiring about a private pension to pay into separately.

6. Leave Arrangements

a. Annual Leave

You are entitled to a number of working days holidays per year. A full-time employee working 25+ hours per week would be entitled to 28 days holiday per year, inclusive of Bank Holidays. A part-time employee working less than 15 hours per week would be entitled to 14 days holiday per year, inclusive of Bank Holidays. Staff working between 15-25 hours per week will be on a sliding scale. Holiday pay will be paid at your normal rate of pay for the holiday taken, in line with current holiday pay legislation.

Your holiday year will run from 1st January to 31st December each year, if your employment starts mid-year your holiday entitlement will be calculated pro rata. Pre booked holidays will be honoured if they have been declared at interview, any pre booked holiday will be taken from your annual allowance. You are required to give 2 weeks' notice to a manager of any holiday requirements, unless this is not practicable. The Company, at its discretion, will agree requests for leave. Holidays in excess of 2 weeks will only be considered in special circumstances. This must be discussed and approved by the office. All holiday entitlement must be taken before the end of each holiday year, or it is lost. The 8 statutory Bank Holidays form part of employees 28/14-day annual leave entitlement.

b. Maternity and Adoption Leave Pay Policy

Subject to meeting the qualifying conditions (including length of service and average earnings), you will be entitled to Statutory Maternity Leave of up to 52 weeks and Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) for up to 39 weeks, in line with current Government regulations. Equivalent Statutory Adoption Leave and Pay applies where you are adopting a child. Please speak to the Office as early as possible in your pregnancy or adoption process so that the necessary arrangements and notifications can be made.

c. Paternity Leave and Pay

Subject to meeting the qualifying conditions (including length of service), you will be entitled to Statutory Paternity Leave and Pay of up to 2 weeks following the birth or adoption of a child, in line with current Government regulations. Please notify the Office as early as possible so that the necessary arrangements can be made.

c. Parental Leave

Subject to meeting the qualifying conditions (including one year's length of service), you will be entitled to up to 18 weeks' unpaid Parental Leave per child, up to their 18th birthday, in line with current Government regulations. Requests must be made in writing, giving the required notice, and the Company may postpone leave in certain circumstances where the business would otherwise be unduly disrupted.

d. Time Off For Dependants

You are legally entitled to a reasonable amount of time off to deal with certain prescribed emergencies involving certain dependants. This leave is called Time Off for Dependants. It can be taken, for example, if a dependant falls ill, is injured or assaulted, gives birth, if their care arrangements break down, or to arrange or attend a dependant's funeral. A dependant is your child (including adopted child), husband, wife, civil partner 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 unpaid, in line with the statutory entitlement, unless otherwise agreed with your Manager.

7. Health and Safety

a. Statement

HomeKare Services Limited 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 be affected by its' activities. It is your duty as an employee to not 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 manager immediately.

b. Procedure in the Event of an Accident

An Accident Book is available from the office, 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 the office. 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 7 days or more (including weekends, rest days or holidays) it is important that the office is informed as the Health and Safety Executive also need to be informed by the Company.

c. First Aid

It is not possible to provide access to a first aider for staff who are out in the community, however, all staff are to attend an emergency first aid course which is arranged and delivered by the company.

d. Fire Safety

Employees should follow these steps to help prevent fires whether in the offices or in service users' homes:

- 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 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 or if a fire is suspected/discovered:
Action to take if you discover a fire:**
- 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 of service users PEEP (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan)



- Do not use a lift to leave the building - always use designated stairs
- Make your way to an appropriate assembly point
- Once you are at an assembly point you should report to the manager and inform them of the situation, 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 by the Fire Brigade
- RAISE THE ALARM! This can be achieved by breaking the glass on the call points where available 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 no bigger wastepaper basket. Unless you have been trained you could be putting yourself or somebody else at risk

e. Personal Safety

Due to the nature of the work, it is unavoidable for staff to be working alone. If you have to work alone, then you need to develop an awareness of the risks and how to minimise them.

Prior to attending a call to someone you do not know, obtain as much information as possible about the person you are going to be caring for and any specific risk assessment that may affect your safety.

Your manager/office will know where you are going at what time, however if for any reason you need to deviate from your rota ensure your manager/office knows 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 manager/office 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 manager/office.

Lone workers should carry a mobile phone so that they can summon help quickly, all phones should include an emergency number (Manager/Office mobile number) which will be always attended.

Lone workers should call in at regular intervals to report that they are safe, including at the end of their shift.



Staff should contact the Manager in the event of emergency situations.

Emergency Assistance During a Visit

If an emergency occurs during a visit, phone the on call number: **07575 724929**. On call will promptly assess the situation and, if needed, will attend to relieve you so that you can continue with the remainder of your visits, ensuring the service user is not left without the emergency care they need.

In a situation where a lone worker feels under immediate threat of their physical safety, they should contact the police directly or inform the Manager/office who should contact the police

for them, staff should ensure they take all appropriate information from the lone worker, such as location and telephone number, and to pass this on to the police, after the incident the lone worker should fill in an incident form.

8. Training and Development

a. Training and Development

The Company aims to provide training opportunities which will include:

- All staff will be required to undertake and will assist new 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.

b. Personal Development Planning

i) Introduction

The Company encourages Personal Development.

- To help managers and staff to make effective arrangements to identify and meet learning needs
- To develop the skills, knowledge, values and behaviour that staff need to do their current jobs well

ii) (PDP) The Process

As part of the annual appraisal, a Personal Objectives Plan will be agreed. This will detail the individualised training requirements of the employee and any training requirements associated



with new legislation and minimum standards. This will be kept on file and progress on training will be checked as part of ongoing supervision.

9. Leaving HomeKare Services Limited

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:

- No notice during the probationary period of employment or extension of it.
- 1 weeks after the probationary period or any extension of it.

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.

If you resign and are in possession of Company property, 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, court orders and any other payments made on your behalf and owed to the company. If you leave within the first year of employment, training costs incurred by the company will be deducted from any money due to you. Any training costs incurred at a higher rate will be deducted from any money due to you as a sliding scale, this will be shown in a signed training document that you would of agreed to and signed.

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 wages due to you.



Before leaving, you must hand over to your manager all articles belonging to HomeKare Services Limited, including your Tunic, ID badge and any documents, equipment, work telephone and computer software used at home (if applicable). 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 or service users
- Use or divulge to any person or organisation any confidential information relating to the business of HomeKare Services Limited or its service users.

Should your employment be terminated following disciplinary action it is likely you will be required to work a period of notice, it is also possible that 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 HomeKare Services Limited 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 manager and office at least 6 months before you plan to retire to ensure all appropriate arrangements are made (e.g. sourcing a replacement)

10. Disciplinary Policy & Procedure

Policy Statement

HomeKare Services Limited is committed to creating and maintaining a positive working environment and harmonious employee relations.

The main purpose of the disciplinary procedure is to encourage an employee whose standard of work and/or conduct is unsatisfactory to improve.

Scope

This procedure deals with issues of “conduct” as distinct from “capability.” This distinction must be made in cases where continued substandard performance arises as a result of negligence, inappropriate attitude, breaching protocols, policies and a lack of application or not meeting behavioural expectations; on occasion with malicious intent.

Policy

Those which result from incompetence and the inability to function at the required level or inability to cope with the duties and responsibilities contained within the role are matters for the company Capability Policy.

Failure to properly report sickness absence is misconduct as are sickness absences that appear not to be genuine. Otherwise, and where correctly reported, sickness is regarded as genuine and is managed under the company Sickness Absence Policy. In that Policy employees who have unacceptable levels of absence – albeit taken as genuine - are given the opportunity to improve their attendance levels through a series of counselling meetings, ‘management advice’ and/or ‘notice’ (rather than warnings) and improvement plans.

There are therefore similarities between the Capability Policy and the Sickness Absence Policy where a manager may ‘advise’ or give ‘notice’ to an employee for example where their absence or performance levels are becoming or have become acceptable and where the employee would be cautioned as to the consequences of a failure to improve. It would be inappropriate to ‘warn’ an employee about genuine sickness for which they have little or no control; other than to turn up for work when being unfit to do so.

In this Policy managers may ‘warn’ employees about their conduct and behaviours applying appropriate sanctions. The employee would be in no doubt as to the seriousness of the issue.

Efforts should be made wherever possible to deal with problems both speedily and informally or through discussion with emphasis on issuing support, advice and guidance.

However, the need does exist to have in operation formal disciplinary procedures when informal mechanisms are not considered appropriate and when, for example, discussion has failed.

The Company procedure is based on guidance from the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) with the emphasis on fair and thorough application of the guidance and procedure, the objective being to give staff the opportunity to improve their conduct, which is giving cause for concern. This policy applies to all employees of HomeKare Services Limited, including bank staff.

It is the Manager’s responsibility to ensure that all staff are aware of the existence and content of the disciplinary procedure and provide copies as requested.

Responsibilities of the Manager

Managers are responsible for:

- conduct are conveyed and fully explained to their staff.
- Ensuring that the Company's expectations and standards of performance and Complying with the policies and procedures of the disciplinary process and ensuring that disciplinary decisions are of a consistent standard across the company.
- Ensuring their employees know whom they are accountable to and the extent to which they are authorised to act.
- Ensuring there is a nominated appropriate person authorised to take disciplinary decisions in their absence. Consideration needs to be given to the appropriate experience, expertise and accountability of the nominated person.
- Ensuring there is an accurate written record kept throughout the disciplinary process.
- Ensuring that investigations are carried out quickly, objectively and fairly.
- Requesting and establishing an investigation panel or officer as required by the circumstances of the case.
- Assessing the report or results of any investigation and deciding whether any case should be considered under the disciplinary procedure or whether there is a case to be heard.
- Establishing a disciplinary hearing and the issuing of all letters to the employee and any witnesses requesting attendance at all meetings.

Responsibilities of the Investigating Officer

The Investigating Officer will be responsible for:

- Conducting a fair, impartial and timely investigation in order to determine whether there is a case to answer.
- Providing a report outlining the facts of the case and the evidence produced including copies of witness statements as appropriate.
- Arranging and conducting interviews with any witnesses as appropriate. This will involve obtaining all the evidence as signed and dated factual statements from all those Involved. The person being investigated may choose to make a statement or not once the case for formal disciplinary consideration is established. The Investigating Officer will inform the employee under investigation of their choice in this circumstance.
- Presenting a report to the line manager for consideration and presenting a case to the disciplinary panel if felt appropriate.

Responsibilities of the Employee

The employee is responsible for:

- Reading and observing the protocols and procedures applicable to their particular employment.
- Attending any meetings as requested by the investigating officer and participating fully in the disciplinary process.
- Giving a full account of the circumstances of any case during the investigation and disciplinary hearing.
- Arranging representation if desired by a trade union representative or a colleague at any formal meetings.
- Notifying the employer of any change in circumstance. This is a contractual requirement i.e. contact details. However, during a disciplinary process, good communication is essential, and the employee has the responsibility to ensure that any changes that might affect this process should be notified e.g. any pre booked arrangements or change of address, phone number.

Responsibilities of Office

The Office is responsible for:

- Ensuring consistent application of the disciplinary policy within the company
- Providing advice and guidance to the manager and clarification of this policy as required.
- Providing support and guidance to an investigating officer as part of a larger complex investigation.
- Providing advice and guidance at formal hearings wherever possible. - Maintaining records of outcomes of formal disciplinaries for the purposes of ensuring a consistent approach.
- Providing support to an appeals panel and to the presenting manager in an appeal hearing.

Minor Breaches and Informal Discussions

Feedback and discussion with the emphasis on issuing support, guidance and advice will be used to deal with initial minor breaches of discipline and substandard performance.

This will be with the objective of encouraging and helping the employee to improve and designed to reduce a need to invoke the disciplinary procedure. Such feedback will be treated as counselling and is not part of the formal disciplinary process.



The salient points of the discussion session, outlining expectations regarding improvement and that failure to improve could result in future disciplinary action, should be communicated in

writing to the employee with a copy retained on the employee's personal file. Where an employee's conduct remains unsatisfactory the disciplinary procedure will be invoked.

Principals

No disciplinary action will be taken against an employee until the case has been appropriately investigated to establish the facts. This may or may not require a formal investigation depending on the seriousness and complexity of the issue.

At every stage in the formal procedure the employee will be advised of the nature of the complaint against them and will be given the opportunity to state their case before any decision is made.

At all stages of the formal disciplinary procedure, the employee may exercise the right to be accompanied by a "companion". This might be a representative of their trade union, or work colleague whose presence will not prejudice the hearing and/or who is not acting in a legal capacity.

No employee will be dismissed for a first breach of discipline except in a case of gross misconduct when the penalty will be summary dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice.

Criminal Offences and Police Enquiries

Police enquiries, legal proceedings, convictions, cautions or driving offences relating to a charge shall not be treated as automatic reasons for disciplinary action. Each case must be considered on merit, but employees are under an obligation to inform the office of all criminal proceedings.

The main consideration should be the extent to which the offence, alleged or committed is connected with or is likely to adversely affect, the employee's performance of his/her duties or the company reputation.

The employee's manager need not await the outcome of any police action or prosecution before taking action. Such action must however be fair to the employee and reasonable in the circumstances.

The employee's manager should appoint an Investigating Officer as with any other potential disciplinary issue. The Investigating Officer will investigate the facts as far as it is possible in the circumstances and submit a report to the manager.



The Police cannot be asked to conduct a disciplinary investigation on behalf of HomeKare Services Limited, nor should they be asked to present at an internal investigatory or disciplinary hearing or interview. They may however be asked to provide a statement of fact concerning

the employee's arrest or conviction.

In some cases the nature of the alleged offence may not justify disciplinary action, for example, off duty conduct which has no bearing on employment. If the employee is not available for work because he/she is in custody or on remand, or serving a period of imprisonment or detention a decision should be taken whether in the light of the needs of the company the employee's job can be kept open. In these circumstances the period of absence will be unpaid. If the employee is unable to carry out the full duties within a reasonable timescale, the contract may be deemed frustrated (or severed) according to the doctrine of frustration of contract, or some other substantial reason.

The employee will have the right to appeal by lodging the appeal in writing to the Managing Director within 1 week of confirmation of the decision.

When the conduct of an employee is the subject of police enquiries or criminal charges and the alleged offence may affect, or relates to the employee's work, the appropriate manager may where necessary either: -

Immediately suspend the employee from duty and postpone disciplinary action until the outcome of police enquiries or legal proceedings is known. A distinction should be drawn between the police's need to prove beyond reasonable doubt as against the company's need to establish that a reasonable belief is held that an offence has been committed.

OR -

Initiate an investigation and proceed with disciplinary action if there is substantive evidence of a clear breach of the company's policies or procedures which in itself would justify disciplinary action, and such action does not prejudice the police enquiries or legal proceedings.

Statutory Reporting

The company may notify the specified statutory body, which is responsible for the professional discipline of particular staff groups in all cases of dismissal or resignation connected with adverse findings in civil proceedings or a criminal conviction. The company will also be at liberty to report any other factual information, which in its reasonable opinion it believes ought to be in the possession of the employee's professional body or statutory regulating organisation. Reporting will normally be the responsibility of the office.

Suspension

Suspension from duty is a neutral act and is not regarded as a disciplinary sanction. It is imperative that exclusion from work is not seen as the only course of action and alternative ways of managing risk should be considered e.g. close supervision or restricted duties.

However, there may be occasions when it is considered appropriate to suspend an employee from duty. This will normally be with full pay, unless the circumstances of the case justify otherwise; one of the following criteria must be identified as justification:

- The gravity of the allegations potentially constitute gross misconduct which could result in dismissal
- If the individual remaining at work would hinder the investigation
- If allowing the employee to remain at work would present too great a risk to service users, other employees or themselves.

If suspension is deemed appropriate, the Office and or manager will normally take this decision.

Suspensions should normally take place at a personal interview unless the employee fails or refuses to attend in which case the suspension will be notified in writing.

If the employee becomes ill whilst suspended, they must follow the usual protocols regarding sickness notification, certification although they will remain suspended until informed otherwise.

An employee may not be on annual leave whilst suspended from duty unless formally approved and should be available for immediate recall to duty in accordance with their normal working roster. Employees should be available for interview and discussion during normal working hours as part of any investigation.

All suspensions will be confirmed in writing as soon as is practicable but within 3 working days of the decision being taken. The letter will give the reasons for the suspension and the possible date or timing of return.

In all cases every effort should be made to minimise the period of suspension. Cases will be reviewed weekly by the office and or manager to allow for consideration of any new developments and in order that the employee can be kept informed of progress. The outcome of this review should be communicated to the employee and their representative via pre-booked contact arrangements at the time of the suspension.

During the period of suspension, the employee must not enter the home of any of the company's service users without the permission of their manager.

Once investigations are complete the employee will receive in writing confirmation that they may either return to work or that a disciplinary hearing will be convened.

Health and Safety at Work

The company has responsibilities under legislation to maintain a safe and healthy working environment. In addition, the Health and Safety at Work Act also places onus on employees

(staff) to consistently demonstrate a duty of care whilst undertaking duties. In this context the company expects all Managers and staff to:

- Ensure attendance at all mandatory training sessions respecting recommended frequency.
- Adhere conscientiously to safe working practices based upon training undertaken.
- Report to management any evidence of negligent practice. It is accepted that genuine and unintentional mistakes will occur from time to time. However, it should be noted that negligent or reckless actions, which put at risk either personal health or the health of others would be dealt with under this procedure.

Principals and Investigations

Where a manager or the office receives information that necessitates enquiries being made amongst their staff but which does not clearly indicate that a disciplinary problem is inevitable; these enquiries constitute an informal investigation and as such are part of the normal communication between manager/office and employee and should not normally include union representation at this stage.

Where enquiries or an investigation point to the matter being one of capability rather than conduct, then the matter should be progressed under the company Capability Policy.

Where an informal investigation demonstrates grounds for believing that misconduct has occurred that is more serious than can be dealt with by means of counselling, a full and formal investigation of all the relevant facts must be undertaken.

Those undertaking investigations should ensure they are fully conversant with the operation of the disciplinary procedures. During formal investigatory interviews, the employee will not have the right to be accompanied.

The aims of the investigation are as follows:

- Ascertain the facts
- Assess the facts
- Determine whether a prima facie case for disciplinary action exists
- Recommend whether a disciplinary hearing should be convened
- Make any other recommendations as appropriate such as change to systems, processes etc



The manager leading the investigation shall ensure the facts and recommendations are properly documented and statements are signed by witnesses / interviewees as an accurate record. Copies of these statements shall be made available to interviewees (witnesses should only see their own witness statement not those of other witnesses) and as part of the overall report, to the employee under investigation.

No disciplinary action shall be taken against an employee until the case has been fully investigated as detailed above. Where the outcome of the investigation is the convening of a disciplinary hearing, the employee should be formally notified as detailed below under the Disciplinary Procedure.

Investigations will be carried out without unreasonable delay and in any case the timescales of each individual case should be kept under review by the Manager who authorised the investigation.

Rights of Misrepresentation

HomeKare Services Limited adheres to the Employment Relations Act 1999, follows the principles laid out in the ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance procedures and is mindful of case law developments. It therefore allows employees statutory rights to be accompanied at meetings where a disciplinary meeting could result in a formal warning at Stages of this Policy.

Also, an employee may be accompanied where the company is taking some other disciplinary action; or, confirming a warning or some other disciplinary action including Appeal Hearings.

The chosen “companion” may be a Trade Union Representative or a fellow whose presence would ‘not prejudice’ the meeting / hearing.

The request to be accompanied must be ‘reasonable’ and it would not normally be reasonable for an employee to ask to be represented at informal meetings or where counselling is being undertaken by the Manager.

It would not normally be appropriate for the employee to be represented by someone whose availability is limited and/or who would unduly hold up the process; particularly where someone suitable and willing is available.

The statutory right to be accompanied does not extend to legal representation.

Witnesses

Arrangements for attendance of witnesses are the responsibility of those requiring them to attend. Prior notification of witnesses to be called must be given to their managers.



Witnesses called to attend a hearing, or investigatory interview must be allowed time off and Managers will co-operate in ensuring that members of staff called as witnesses are released from their duties at the required time.

Where witnesses are not required to give evidence, but their signed statements form part of the case (of either side), the statements may be given weight by the panel. However, where the written statement is in dispute, witnesses should be called where possible and if not possible, the hearing should be adjourned until the witness is available to be called.

Use of Disciplinary Sanctions

The full range of disciplinary action outlined in this procedure may not be applicable in every case and will entirely depend upon the circumstances and seriousness of the case. Accordingly, the procedure may be implemented at any stage if the employee's alleged misconduct or performance warrants such action. Also, the company may initiate 're-training' where appropriate as a possible remedy. This could be in addition to or instead of a warning within this Policy.

Retraining might be deemed appropriate, for example, where an employee has made medication recording errors.

An accumulation of warnings issued via the disciplinary process may result in dismissal. An employee committing gross misconduct should expect to be summarily dismissed, without notice, following due process including a thorough investigation.

In certain circumstances alternatives to dismissal may be considered such as downgrading without protection or redeployment. Advice from a manager should be sought prior to taking any of these actions since steps such as these have contractual implications. All of these actions will be invoked as a penalty alternative to dismissal and should be seen in this context. Alternative actions such as these should always be linked to a final written warning.

Record Keeping

It will not be the practice to maintain an audio transcript of any hearing falling within the scope of this policy. Instead, it is expected that full notes of any meeting in which dismissal is a potential outcome should be taken by a Note taker. Where this is not practical the outcome letter will be sufficiently full and comprehensive such as to represent an official recording of the hearing.

A copy of the Disciplinary Outcome letter and the official documents presented to the Disciplinary Hearing will be kept in a relevant filing system for the duration for which the disciplinary warning is live and/or the time limits to which the employee has rights at law e.g. in the case where the employee is dismissed all paperwork will be retained in case of the employee making an application for unfair dismissal to an Employment Tribunal. More information regarding Employment Tribunals can be found here. <https://www.gov.uk/>

Levels of Authority

The authority for taking formal disciplinary action is vested in Managers and Directors of the company.

Grievances

Where an employee raises a grievance during a disciplinary process the disciplinary process may (or may not) be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the grievance. Where the grievance and disciplinary cases are related it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently. In this event it is a matter for the company to decide how this is most fairly executed.

Depending on the nature of the grievance, consideration should be given to bringing in another manager to deal with either the disciplinary or the grievance issue.

The Disciplinary Process

Informal Counselling by Manager

Counselling does not form part of the formal disciplinary procedure. It is used as an initial step to resolve issues of unacceptable conduct i.e. where the employee is failing to meet the required standards; the immediate line manager or supervisor will counsel the employee on an informal basis which will take the form of a one to one meeting. There is no right to representation at this stage.

The purpose of counselling is to explore and establish:

- Areas of concern
- Standards required
- Contributory factors or additional problems facing the employee
- Support and training to achieve the required standards
- A time bound process for review and resolution

An agreed account of any counselling including an indication of the above and the final outcomes should be provided to the employee and the manager should retain a copy until the matter has been resolved.

The employee should be informed that continued failure to meet the standards of conduct or performance might result in formal action being taken under the disciplinary procedure. All of the documentation at the counselling stage may form part of the disciplinary investigation at a later stage.

Arranging and Conducting Formal Disciplinary Hearings

Before the hearing:

The employee will be advised in writing of the allegations to be discussed and given at least 2 working days. Hearings may be arranged with less than 2 days notice with the agreement of all parties. Time scales can be altered if both parties agree (i.e. shortened or extended) All relevant documentation including copies of the investigation report, statements and supplementary evidence being referred to, will be provided to the employee with the letter.

No other documents or statements should be used or referred to at the hearing if they have not been presented to the employee or management beforehand unless agreed by management, the employee and their trade union representative at the hearing. In such circumstances management, the employee and their representative will be given appropriate time to consider any additional documents. Where the employee is not at work or suspended from duty the letter should be sent by recorded delivery, delivered by hand or email confirmation.

The employee will be informed who will be hearing the case and who is / are presenting the case and any witnesses that will be called by management. The letter will state that the hearing may result in disciplinary action and advice will be included regarding the right to be accompanied by a “companion” a trade union official or colleague whose presence would not prejudice the hearing and not acting in a legal capacity and the right to call witnesses. The employee will have to ensure their witnesses attend and should advise the panel of this in advance.

The letter will also contain a statement that at the meeting the employee will have the right to fully state their case. It may also be useful to state that should a disciplinary penalty be given at the disciplinary meeting the employee will have the right to appeal in line with the appeals procedure.

At the Hearing:

The composition of a panel at the disciplinary hearing will always include a senior manager.

The Investigating Officer (IO) will present a summary of the case including findings of any investigation. The IO may choose to bring any witnesses as part of his/her presentation.

The employee will be encouraged to give his/her account/version of the incident with support. The representative can speak i.e. present the case for the employee if desired but not answer questions on behalf of the employee.

The employee can be questioned by either the panel members or the manager presenting the management case during the hearing.



At the disciplinary hearing the IO presenting the management case and the employee and representative, will withdraw at the end of the hearing so leaving the panel hearing the case, to deliberate independently on the outcome.

Witnesses called by either the presenting manager and the employees can be questioned and cross-examined by all concerned at the hearing.

After the Hearing:

A letter confirming or advising the employee of the disciplinary decision will be sent within 5 working days of the hearing. It will include the following:

- Who was present and in what capacity
- A clear statement of the allegations
- Paragraphs covering the main points of the hearing and findings for and against the employee (if applicable)
- The sanction imposed and the reason for this
- Details of any action/improvement required by the employee within a specified timescale
- A statement that failure to improve could result in further action (including dismissal where appropriate)
- Details of the right of appeal when appropriate and how to exercise that right
- Any other points of action to be taken on behalf of the company

Stages of the Formal Disciplinary Procedure

Where any employee refuses to co-operate with the company's disciplinary investigations and proceedings, this should not deter the company from taking action. The employee should be advised in writing that unless reasonable co-operation is afforded then a disciplinary decision will be taken on the basis of information available and could result in dismissal.

The following outlines the stages of the formal procedure and depending on the gravity of any offence would allow Managers to go straight to specific stages of the procedure. Each stage also outlines the right of appeal and the process to follow appropriate to that stage.

First Stage – Formal Verbal Warning

A formal verbal warning may be given to an employee after a formal investigation and disciplinary hearing and where, manager counselling may have failed to achieve the required improvements. The warning should be given formally in writing within 5 working days a comprehensive and detailed outcome letter should be kept on the personal file. Such warnings remain operative for a minimum period of 6 months after which subject to satisfactory conduct, it will be considered spent for the purposes of further disciplinary action.

These are normally issued for first minor offences when discussion has not had the desired effect, e.g. for poor timekeeping, minor breaches of company policy or malpractices of limited consequence. Care should be taken to ensure that the issue is one of conduct and not capability - issues of capability should be dealt with under the capability policy.

The warning letter will also confirm the right of appeal identifying which manager to whom to address the Appeal. The individual should appeal in writing within 5 working days of receipt of the letter confirming the warning.

Appeals will normally be arranged within 4 working weeks subject to the availability of all parties. Both parties may agree a shorter or longer period of time.

Second Stage - Written warning

A second stage written warning may be given to an employee where after a formal disciplinary hearing, conduct has failed to improve after a verbal warning or where the conduct is of a more serious nature, or where a series of line manager counselling's have failed to achieve the required result.

The warning should be given formally in writing by the manager who issued the warning within 5 working days and this should be kept on the personal file. Such warnings remain operative for a minimum period of 12 months after which subject to satisfactory conduct, it will be considered spent for the purposes of further disciplinary action.

The warning will confirm what the issues are, what improvements are required and within what time frame, the duration of the warning and the likelihood of further action under Stage 3 if there is no improvement within the defined period.

The warning letter will also confirm the right of appeal identifying which manager to whom to address the Appeal. The individual should appeal in writing within 5 working days of receipt of the letter confirming the warning. Appeals will normally be arranged within 4 working weeks subject to the availability of all parties. Both parties may agree a shorter or longer period of time.

Third stage - Final Written Warning

A final written warning may be issued for very serious offences or after a repetition of minor and/or serious offences, where conduct has failed to improve. It may also be issued as an alternative to dismissal in a case of gross misconduct where there are mitigating circumstances such as length of service and a previous unblemished record have been taken into account.

The final written warning will detail the complaint, what improvements are required and within what time frame, the duration of the warning and the likelihood of dismissal as at Stage 4 if there is no improvement within the defined period. The final written warning letter will remain on the personal file for a minimum period of 12 months but no more than 24 months.

The warning letter will also confirm the right of appeal identifying which manager to whom to address the Appeal. The individual should appeal in writing within 5 working days of receipt of the letter confirming the warning. Appeals will normally be arranged within 4 working weeks subject to the availability of all parties. Both parties may agree a shorter or longer period of time.

Fourth Stage – Dismissal or Alternative Formal Disciplinary Measure

An employee may be considered for dismissal if conduct continues to be unsatisfactory and the employee fails to reach a satisfactory standard whilst the final written warning is in force; where the employee is found to be guilty of gross misconduct and there are insufficient or no mitigating circumstances to be considered.

On completion of the hearing the employee will be told of the decision to dismiss immediately or if this is not possible, within 24 hours.

The dismissal letter will detail the complaint, the process undergone and the reasoning for the decision of the panel. It will also confirm the right of appeal and will be documented and despatched within 5 working days.

Appeals must be lodged in writing to the Managing Director within 5 working days of receipt of letter confirming the decision to dismiss. Appeals will normally be arranged within 4 working weeks subject to the availability of all parties. Both parties may agree a shorter or longer period of time.

The decision of the appeal panel will be binding, and employees should exhaust all rights of appeal under this policy before proceeding to any statutory right of complaint against unfair dismissal (i.e. to an employment tribunal).

Previous Employment History and Spent Disciplinary Warnings

In accordance with ACAS guidance, an employee's overall employment record should be considered in the light of potential disciplinary action. This would include trends involving previous allegations for similar offences that were investigated at the time they occurred. Although no formal action may have been taken it does not rule out that an offence may or may not have been committed. A trend or previous allegation of the same offence does, in the interest of maintaining a duty of care to service users intensify management's fair and reasonable concerns, especially in cases where care could be compromised as a result of not taking previous allegations into account.

Where a previous warning has expired the employee will not be warned about that offence a second time. Also in respect of the above, the expired warning is not automatically referred to or taken into account during any part of subsequent disciplinary issues except where there is a justifiable need to refer to it.

Misconduct and Gross Misconduct – Examples

The following is a list of examples of misconduct and gross misconduct, which may result in informal action or formal disciplinary action depending upon the circumstances. This list is not exhaustive but is provided to give guidance.

Misconduct

- Unauthorised absence
- Poor attendance (not resulting from underlying medical condition), timekeeping
- Breach of contract, terms and conditions of employment
- Breach of confidentiality – disclosure or misuse of privileged information including either personal information about a service user or an employee. Serious instances of this could be gross misconduct.
- Abuse or misuse of any of the facilities or property of the company.
- Failure to carry out reasonable instructions given by management effectively and in a timely manner.
- Unacceptable conduct contrary to the company guidelines, policies or procedures as communicated from time to time.
- Any conduct or performance likely to bring the company into disrepute.
- Failure to adequately perform duties of the role when there is full capability (see capability policy).
- Inappropriate use, misuse or abuse of the company's IT systems.
- posting or blogging on social networking sites such as 'Face book' and 'Twitter' anything that brings the company's reputation into disrepute, what an employee thinks about a manager's decisions, or something that defames another staff member's character

This list is not exhaustive

Gross Misconduct

Examples of offences, which would normally be regarded as gross misconduct and would be considered serious disciplinary offences, which could result in summary dismissal, are:

All of the above as determined by the seriousness of the offence which could be considered gross misconduct plus:

- Physical violence and assault
- Theft or Embezzlement or Fraud
- Racial or sexual abuse, harassment, bullying or mistreatment of staff or service users
- Gross insubordination
- Discrimination, harassment or bullying of staff or service users on grounds of any of the protected characteristics (see the Equality and Diversity Policy)
-

- Serious breach of confidentiality (this applies to all breaches of confidentiality involving the release of service user and staff information without consent or proper cause)
- Abuse of position or release of information including either personal information about a service user or employee, which could harm the business interests and image of the company. This also includes information gleaned from any source including IT systems and resulting from abuse of privileged position.
- Deliberate malicious damage to company property.
- Gross carelessness or negligence, including any action or inaction, which threatens the Health or safety of a service user, employee or member of the public.
- Deliberate and serious breach of health and safety (rules and procedures) protocols
- Being under the influence of and / or incapacity through alcohol whilst at work or on company premises or acting in an official capacity.
- Being under the influence of, taking, possessing or selling illegal drugs, or any drugs (except over-the-counter remedies) which have not been prescribed to you on medical grounds, whilst at work or on company premises or acting in an official capacity
- Failure to obey clear reasonable instructions as issued by Managers Deliberate falsification of any records
- Deliberately making a false or malicious disclosure or complaint
- Knowingly giving false information or deliberately omitting relevant information on a job

This list is not exhaustive and other offences, if they are considered to be serious enough, may be regarded as gross misconduct.

Review of this Policy

Date: 19th September 2025

Review Date: 18th September 2028

Steps in the discipline procedure

This procedure should be used when there is a problem with an employee's behaviour or conduct.

Step 1: Informal conversation(s)

Your starting point for resolving issues should be to deal with them early and informally. If you have any concerns about an employee, sit down with them and discuss the matter. Use the session to try and engender the behaviour/performance you want.

If, however, you cannot resolve the matter informally, it may be necessary to use the formal discipline procedure.

Step 2: Investigation/suspension

Wherever possible, arrange for another manager/employee to conduct the investigation so that you can conduct the disciplinary hearing with impartiality. In potential misconduct cases, an investigation must be conducted. To make any investigation fair it may be necessary to suspend the employee first. You must conduct the investigation and decide if there are reasonable grounds for disciplinary action. If there are, a disciplinary hearing should be held.

Step 3: Disciplinary hearing

Ensure the hearing is handled with confidentiality. Invite the employee in writing, detailing the allegations, the likely consequences, date, time and location of the hearing, and the right of the employee to be accompanied. Hold the hearing.

Step 4: Decision and sanction

After the hearing, consider the sanction and determine whether the allegations have been proven. If the employee has committed misconduct, consider the appropriate sanction: a verbal warning; a first or final written warning; or alternative sanctions reflecting the severity of the issue. If the allegations are not substantiated, advise the employee accordingly and confirm in writing.

Step 5: Inform employee

Having determined the appropriate sanction communicate the decision, face-to-face as soon as you can. If there will be a delay in communicating the decision advise the employee. The decision must be confirmed in writing and the employee advised of their right to appeal.

Appeal

The employee has the right to lodge an appeal against your decision.

11. Grievance Policy & Procedure

Policy Statement

HomeKare Services Limited realises that there will be occasions when employees may wish to formally raise issues or complaints. On such occasions HomeKare Services Limited will aim to settle the grievance as quickly, fairly and as near to the point of origin as possible.

A grievance may be defined as a situation whereby the effect of action taken or proposed by Management, or by another employee is perceived to be detrimental or unfair to you.

The grievance process is distinct and separate from the disciplinary process however there may be occasions where the two naturally overlap.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of HomeKare Services Limited.

HomeKare Services Limited commitment is to promote and maintain good employee/management relationships and encourage communication between employees and their managers to ensure that questions and problems arising out of their employment can be aired, and where possible resolved quickly, and to the satisfaction of all concerned.

This policy does not provide for appeals against formal disciplinary action. This should be taken up separately under the Company's Disciplinary Appeals Procedure.

It is important to note that HomeKare Services Limited is also fully committed to ensuring a high-performance culture and from time-to-time staff may be subject to associated policies such as the Disciplinary Policy and Capability Policy. Effective performance management is good practice, and it is not expected that such action will automatically be subject to a "counter" grievance if held in accordance with the terms of the respective policy

Policy

Any employee pursuing a grievance should continue to work normally while the grievance is being investigated, unless doing so could result in serious problems for the employee or the Company. The employee has the right to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or a fellow worker whose presence would 'not prejudice' the meeting and not acting in a legal capacity, at stage 2 and 3 of the process. If the grievance is against the immediate manager, the grievance should be raised with the next manager in seniority.



There is no recourse to appeal at the Informal Resolution Stage (stage 1) of the grievance procedure. An appeal will only be heard if all stages of the grievance process have been exhausted.

The handling of all grievances will be conducted by managers. In handling a grievance the manager will take the following actions:

- Ensure that the employee is familiar with the process
- Listen carefully to the points being made by the employee and try to assess whether the grievance may be a symptom of a much larger problem
- Listen to any opposing points of view
- Having considered the evidence try to conclude whether there is an issue to be addressed
- Decide what action to take: be fair to the individual but be mindful of any implications of potentially setting a precedent.
- Notify those concerned of the decision reached and make the individual aware of the appeal processes.

Grievances can occur from time to time for a range of reasons. These reasons may include but are not restricted to:

- Management interpretation and application on Company policy and procedures
- Management decisions or directives considered as potentially unacceptable
- The behaviour of management or colleagues that may be considered potentially unacceptable.

Dependent on the issue in question, consideration will need to be given to the use and application of complementary policies and procedures as an alternative to the Grievance Policy. These may include the Capability Policy, Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, Whistleblowing Policy, etc.

Whilst grievances may not always be resolvable to the full satisfaction of the complainant, the following process allows for full consideration of the issue in question. During the process a number of resolution interventions may be successful in achieving a positive outcome.

Again, these may include but are not restricted to:

- An opportunity to simply 'clear the air'
- The issuing of an apology
- Training, development, education
- A review of any original decision/action that may have initiated the grievance



HomeKare Services Limited Grievance Process

(Stage 1) Informal Resolution Stage

This stage is considered key to an effective and progressive dispute resolution culture. As such, all parties that may become involved at this stage including management and any other employees are required to utilise open discussion, constructive compromise, mutual respect and other principles of 'conflict resolution' in avoiding the need for progression to the more formal stages of the process.

The aim of the informal stage is to resolve concerns at the lowest possible level within the Company. Before a formal grievance can be made, the employee must have therefore, raised their concern with their immediate line manager. Should the employee's grievance concern his/her immediate manager the grievance should be raised with the next most senior manager.

The manager should aim to respond within a maximum of 5 working days of receipt, either with a resolution to the issue or with a timescale within which the issue will be addressed. If the grievance is resolved at this stage the matter ends. If the employee is not satisfied with the outcome, they may submit a formal grievance (stage 1).

The discussion and outcome should be recorded on a complaint form.

Stage Two (Formal Grievance)

An employee with a grievance must raise his/her concerns in writing with his/her manager in the first instance, or in the manager's absence, to the attention of the next most senior manager. If the individual feels it would be inappropriate to raise the grievance with his/her immediate manager as it is related to the behaviour of the immediate line manager, she/he must raise the matter in writing the next most senior manager or with the managing director if the grievance is with the most senior manager.

Once information about the nature of the grievance is clear, the manager will meet with the complainant to discuss his/her concerns and if appropriate, a meeting of both parties will be arranged with the aim of facilitating a discussion and reaching a solution. Following the meeting, the manager considering the grievance will make a written response to the complainant on the issues that were raised in the grievance and will complete a complaint form.

If an acceptable solution cannot be found through Stage 2 of the process, the complainant may consider pursuing Stage 3 (Appeal) of the procedure, but a Stage 3 (Appeal) grievance must only be pursued when the matter has not been satisfactorily resolved through Stage 2. If the grievance is resolved at this stage the matter ends.

Stage 3 (Appeal)

An employee wishing to appeal against the outcome of a grievance hearing should submit notice of appeal to the Managing Director or Director in writing within 5 working days of receipt of the written confirmation of the grievance outcome stating the grounds of appeal.

An appeal hearing is not designed to re-hear the case afresh but to examine the grounds of appeal. The appellant must be specific about the grounds of the appeal; these will effectively form the agenda for the appeal hearing.

Appeals will be raised on one of the following grounds:

The procedure

- a failure to follow procedure had a material effect on the outcome

The decision

- the evidence did not support the conclusion reached

Any proposed action

- was inappropriate given the circumstances of the case

New evidence

- which has genuinely come to light since the first hearing.

Arrangements will be made for appeals against grievance outcomes to be heard as soon as reasonably practicable.

The appellant will be notified as soon as possible of the time, date and place of the appeal hearing. The appellant will be advised that she/he may be accompanied by his/her trade union representative or workplace colleague, not acting in a legal capacity.

The appeal will be heard by the managing director or the director who have not previously been involved in the case.

The result of the appeal will normally be notified to the appellant by the Managing Director or Director, within 3 working days of the Hearing. A comprehensive outcome letter will be completed and a copy given to the complainant and placed on the complainant's personal file.

The decision of the Appeal Panel is final.

Notice in Respect of the Appeal Hearing

The complainant and the person against whom the grievance has been made must be given a minimum of 5 calendar days' notice of the time, date and place of the appeal hearing, unless both parties mutually agree less. The parties will be reminded of the confidential nature of the proceedings and will be asked not to discuss the issue other than with their representative.

All information submitted prior to the hearing must be in writing and shall be provided to all parties involved in the hearing not less than 5 calendar days before the date of the hearing. Written information not provided in advance of the hearing will not usually be admitted.

The Appeal Hearing Process

The panel will ensure equal treatment of the individuals concerned and that all parties have received copies of all relevant papers. The panel will ensure that they consider all aspects of the grievance. The panel may seek further clarification of the written submissions from whomsoever they feel appropriate.

The complainant and person against whom the complaint is made shall attend throughout the hearing and may call witnesses. The names of witnesses shall be identified in writing to the panel no less than 5 calendar days prior to the hearing. The witnesses will be subsequently invited to attend the hearing. It is expected that the complainant and person against whom the complaint is made shall approach witnesses they wish to call prior to the hearing.

The panel shall be empowered to call any person it considers appropriate before it, to clarify evidence.

The Order of the hearing will be as follows:

- The complainant (or his/her representative) shall put the case in the presence of the other parties.
- The person against whom the grievance has been made (or his/her representative) shall have the opportunity to ask questions of the complainant and any witnesses.
- The panel shall have the opportunity to ask questions of the complainant and any witnesses.
- The person against whom the grievance has been made shall respond to the grievance in the presence of the complainant (and her/his representative).
- The complainant (or her/his representative) shall have the opportunity to ask questions of the person against whom the grievance lies and any witnesses called.
- The panel shall have the opportunity to ask questions of the person against whom the grievance has been made and any witnesses.
- The person against whom the grievance has been made (or his/her representative) shall have the opportunity to sum up their cases followed by the complainant (or his/her representative).



The complainant and respondent (and their representatives) shall withdraw, and the panel shall deliberate in private. Upon completion of its deliberations the panel shall record the decision of the grievance using the complaints form and relay this back to the complainant. Following the meeting, a comprehensive written response will be sent to the complainant on the issues that were raised in the meeting and the decisions taken.

Time Limits

The time limits expressed throughout the procedure should be regarded as the normal target maximum limit required at each stage. If a grievance is identified as requiring a longer time limit or due to exceptional circumstances, the time may be extended by mutual agreement between the employee/their representative and the manager responsible for hearing the grievance. Equally, if it is clear that a grievance cannot be resolved at a lower stage, it should by mutual agreement, be referred by the employee to the next stage without undue delay.

Representation

The employee will have the right to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or fellow worker whose presence would 'not prejudice' the meeting at Stage 2 and 3 hearings. There is no right to representation at the Informal Resolution Stage.

Monitoring, Compliance

Implementation, compliance and effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the senior managers as considered necessary from time to time.

This will be achieved through assessment of activity as reported monthly at senior managers meetings.

Review of this Policy

Date: 19th September 2025

Review Date: 18th September 2028

Steps in the grievance procedure

This procedure should be used when an employee has a complaint or problem about any issue relating to their employment.

Step 1: Informal conversation(s)

You should aim to resolve issues informally in the first instance. Discuss the concerns with the employee, treating matters fairly and sensitively, to see if the issue can be resolved.

If, however, you cannot resolve the matter informally, or if the employee wishes to deal with the matter more formally, it may be necessary to begin the grievance procedure.

Step 2: Arrange grievance hearing

The employee must submit their complaint to you in writing. You must arrange a hearing to discuss the employee's concerns within the timescale set out in your grievance procedure. Confirm the details of the hearing in writing (time, date, location) advising that they can be accompanied.

Step 3: Grievance hearing

The aim is to listen to and fully understand the employee's grievance in detail. Seek to understand what action they consider will resolve the matter. Invite the employee's companion to contribute to the hearing in support of the employee, but not to answer questions on behalf of the employee. At the end of the hearing summarise your understanding of the grievance and advise when a decision will be communicated.

Step 4: Further investigation

Having established the employee's grievance at the hearing, you may decide that further investigations are necessary to assist you in making a decision.

Step 5: Make decision

Consider all the evidence and determine whether the employee has grounds for the grievance. If they have, decide what appropriate actions need to be taken to resolve the issues.

Step 6: Inform employee

Advise the employee of your decision in writing, within the timescale set out in your grievance procedure. Give the reasons for the decision and any subsequent investigation actions that have happened/will happen. Confirm the right of appeal.

Appeal

The employee can lodge an appeal against your decision.

12. Whistleblowing Policy

Purpose

This policy sets out how staff and others connected with our domiciliary care service can raise genuine concerns about malpractice, wrongdoing, or unsafe practices in a safe and confidential manner. Our aim is to encourage openness, ensure concerns are properly investigated, and protect individuals who raise concerns in good faith.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, including full-time, part-time, bank staff and volunteers.

Concerns may relate to:

- Abuse or neglect of service users
- Unsafe working practices or conditions
- Breach of professional standards or codes of practice
- Fraud, theft, or financial malpractice
- Breach of confidentiality or data protection laws
- Failure to comply with legal or regulatory obligations
- Attempts to conceal wrongdoing

This policy is not for personal grievances (which should be raised via the Grievance Procedure).

Principles

Duty of Care – All staff have a responsibility to raise concerns if they believe service users are at risk.

Protection – Staff will not suffer detriment, dismissal, or victimisation for raising genuine concerns.

Confidentiality – Concerns will be treated sensitively; identities will be protected where possible.

Fairness – Concerns will be investigated promptly, fairly, and independently.

Procedure for Raising Concerns

Initial Reporting

- Concerns should be raised at the earliest opportunity.
- Report to your manager or Managing Director.

If you cannot raise it with your manager

- Report directly to the **Nominated Individual** or **Responsible Person**.

External Reporting (if internal routes are not appropriate)

- Care Quality Commission (CQC): 03000 616161
- Local Authority Safeguarding Adults Team
- Police (if a crime has been committed)
- Whistleblowing Helpline: 08000 724 725

Reports can be made verbally, in writing, or anonymously (though anonymity may limit the ability to investigate).

Investigation Process

- Acknowledgement of concern within 5 working days.
- Initial assessment to decide next steps.
- Full investigation carried out by a designated manager (not implicated).
- Outcomes shared with the whistleblower where appropriate.
- Records kept securely and confidentially.

Protection from Reprisal

- Retaliation against a whistleblower will be treated as a disciplinary offence.
- Malicious or knowingly false allegations may lead to disciplinary action.

Monitoring & Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if regulations change.

Review of this Policy

Date: 19th September 2025

Review Date: 18th September 2026 – or sooner if required

Remember

 If you see something wrong – speak up.
It helps protect the people we care for and makes our service better.



13. **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Managing Director: Kirsty Derrick

Director/Company Secretary: Stephen Radford

Senior Care Manager: Andrea Marshall

Company Address: Badgers Dell, The Woodlands, Blyth, Nottinghamshire, S81 8HR

Telephone: 07456 018004

E-mail: info@homekareservices.co.uk

14. **OUT OF HOURS /EMERGENCY CONTACT**

The on call phone direct: - 07575 724929

CONTACT PROCEDURE OUT-OF-HOURS

A Manager or Supervisor of HomeKare Services Limited will always be contactable to give advice or assistance to staff and service users. If you are unable to attend work you **MUST** contact a Manager/Office and speak to them directly so that enough time is allowed to enable changes to be made to your work programme. Where possible please give as much notice as possible.

If at all you have any emergency situations such as access problems or safety concerns, please also use the provided numbers.



15. CONFIRMATION OF RECEIPT OF HANDBOOK

HomeKare Services Limited

Name:

Designation:

I confirm I have received a copy of the HomeKare Services Limited Staff Handbook and that I have read this and understood the contents.

I also confirm that I have sought clarification from my manager on any issues outlined in the Handbook which I am not clear about.

Signed: _____

Date: _____