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 **Staff Handbook**

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**Section One**
**Introductory Information**
We would like to take this opportunity to warmly welcome you to Integrated Contact Solutions Limited (ICS). Our ongoing success could not have been achieved without all of our valued employees – we are absolutely delighted that you are joining our team!

This handbook provides every employee with general information regarding employment matters at the Company including all of the Company’s employment policies and working arrangements that are in place across the business. It is your responsibility as an employee to ensure that you regularly read the employee handbook. The handbook however does not include specific local working arrangements that may only apply at one location, for example it does not include the shift patterns on specific campaigns. It is important to note that the handbook is non-contractual and should be read in conjunction with your contract of employment.

**1.1 Purpose of the Handbook**
The purpose of this handbook is to provide every employee with general information regarding employment matters at The Company. The handbook is non-contractual and should be read in conjunction with your terms and conditions of employment. If you have a query regarding any of the information contained in this handbook please contact Human Resources or speak to your manager.

**1.2 Introduction to ICS.**

ICS was founded in January 2016 as Julie Bond & Mike Bestington incorporated a new company called Integrated Contact Solutions Ltd and brought combined business knowledge and experience of over 50 years of all facets of debt collection activity to Integrated Contact Solutions Ltd.

We currently adhere to all requirements and standards of any authorised debt collection firm as these are our established business standards.

We are members of the Credit Services Association and are PCI Compliant and working towards ISO9001/27001

**1.3 Company Mission**
Our Mission
“At ICS we deliver the best possible service and customer journey at every single opportunity to all our customers.”

**1.4 Company Values**

Our company values are at the H.E.A.R.T of our business

* **Honesty** – know your customer, earn their trust be it customers/clients/colleagues
* **Excellence** – strive to be/deliver the best in every situation. Celebrate success. Have fun, but get the job done.
* **Accountability** – dedication and commitment lead to infinite potential. You can make it happen. If it’s to be, it’s up to me
* **Respect** – for yourself and everyone around you. Value relationships with your customer/clients /colleagues
* **Teamwork** – positive team who make a difference by sharing/showing kindness and compassion. We want to help.

**1.5 Company Services**
Our core range of services is closely aligned to help our clients optimise the value of their customer relationships at every stage of the customer lifecycle. We offer a broad range of services spanning a number of industry verticals as follows:
•Customer Care
•Debt Collection
•Back Office Processing

**Section Two - Employment Matters**
**2.1 Statement of Main Terms and Conditions of Employment**
When you join The Company you will be given a Contract of Employment incorporating Terms and Particulars of Employment, which includes, for example, details of your hours of work, length of probationary period, and details of the provisions regarding notice in the event of termination of your employment. Conditions of your employment include the receipt of satisfactory employment references, satisfactory checks where applicable (including credit checks and DBS checks and confirmation of your ongoing eligibility to work in the UK. As part of the immigration terms, ICS have the right to terminate employment immediately if an employee does not have the right to work in the UK or cannot provide evidence of the right to work. This is on the basis that their employment is conditional on having a right to work in the UK, rather than that they have committed misconduct. In this circumstance ICS also have the right to suspend the individual without pay if evidence is not provided or forthcoming.
**2.2 Induction**
In order to support you in your role in the organisation and help you become familiar with our procedures and practices, you will undertake a carefully prepared period of induction training including an introduction to the Company, your department and your role.
**2.3 Job Descriptions**
Job descriptions for the role you have been appointed to can be provided upon request. Amendments may be made to your job description from time to time in relation to changing business needs. During holiday periods, etc. it may be necessary for you to take over some duties normally performed by other colleagues.
**2.4 Probationary Period**
You join us on an initial probationary period and during this period your performance will be assessed to ensure you are suited to the role. This does not prejudice our right to dismiss in accordance with the notice provisions contained in your individual statement of main terms of employment, or without notice for reasons of gross misconduct, should this be necessary. During your probation period your work performance and general suitability will be assessed and, if it is satisfactory, you will be confirmed in post at the end of your probationary period. However, if you have not reached the required standard, we may either extend the probationary period in order that remedial action can be taken, or terminate your employment. The Company reserves the right to curtail the capability/disciplinary process during the probation period.
**2.5 Recruitment Policy**
It is the intention of the Company to ensure that its recruitment processes and procedures result in the attraction and hire of suitably capable candidates with the appropriate attitude and behaviours. The overall aim is to ensure candidates will represent the Company well, demonstrate our corporate values, and provide exceptional levels of customer service to our clients’ customers. Employees will be selected on the basis of the above, and will not be discriminated against on any other grounds.
See Recruitment Policy in ISO.

***Table 1. Regulatory Checks***
**ALL** candidates must provide ICS with the following **ORIGINAL** documentation prior to any offer of
employment being made. signed and dated by yourselves as true copy.
**ONE** from **Section A ONE** from **Section B As applicable** from **Section C ONE** from **Section D**
**UK candidates EU candidates Non EU candidates**
**Section A** (Identification and Photographic Identity)
(1) Valid passport
(2) Birth Certificate and Photographic driving license
(1) Valid passport
(2) National identity card
(1) Valid passport which MUST include a valid working visa/work permit

**Section B** (HMRC Contributions)
(1) National Insurance [NI] number – this can be an official NI card, a pay slip, a P45, other forms of
official letter/documentation e.g.from tax office, Job Centre Plus

**Section C** (Change of name)
(1) Marriage certificate
(2) Enrolled deed poll
(3) Adoption order/certificate

**Section D** (Proof of address)
(1) Must be on letter headed paper from the relevant company and dated within the last 3 months.
(2) (1) Bank Letter or Statement
(3) (2) Utility Bill
(4) (3) HMRC letters/ DWP letters / JCP letters
(5) (4) Mortgage/Rental Agreements
(6) (5) Council letters
(7) (6) DVLA letters

**2.6 Training Policy**
At the commencement of your employment you will receive training for your specific job and responsibilities, and as your employment continues you will be encouraged to participate in training provided by the organisation in order that your skills and competence may be extended to encompass new job activities within the business. We are fully committed to staff training and development, recognising that affording employees the opportunity to undertake study or training will benefit both the employee and Company.

**2.7 Performance Review**
The company operates a performance management system, which gives you the opportunity to develop your own experience and skills and competencies. Our policy is to monitor your work performance on a continuous basis so that we can support you to maximise your strengths and to overcome any possible weaknesses. Employee appraisals/formal reviews take place a minimum of once per year.
**2.8 Quality**
You are required to perform tasks assigned to you in a responsible and reliable manner. Because quality of customer service is very important to us and our clients, you must be sure that you meet the standards of work laid down to you. Do not cut corners, ignore defects or use inferior materials to those specified.
**2.9 Job Flexibility**
It is an express condition of employment that you are prepared, whenever necessary, to transfer to alternative departments or duties within our business which match your skills and experience. This flexibility is essential as the type and volume of work is always subject to change, and it allows us to operate efficiently and gain maximum potential from our work force.
**2.10 Mobility\***
Although you are usually employed at one particular site it is a condition of your employment that you are prepared, whenever applicable, to work at any other of our sites within reasonable travelling distance. This mobility is essential to the smooth running of our business. The Company reserves the right to move your normal place of work to another location anywhere within a reasonable distance of your current place of work either on a temporary or permanent basis. If you are permanently transferred to another site it will be on terms subject to discussion and agreement.
In addition, for certain roles, regular travel inside the UK and internationally may be required.
**2.11 Company property**
You must not at any time misappropriate files, documents or software of any kind belonging to the Company or its Clients, or make copies, duplicates or take extracts from these for private or any other purposes unrelated to your employment.
**2.12 Representation**
Our reputation as a business is constantly dependent on the manner in which we represent ourselves to those we deal with. When people deal with us they must feel confident they are dealing with an honest company – one that is run in a business like fashion whilst remaining sensitive to their needs. You must ensure that any representation of the Company or its clients is not in any way detrimental to their reputation or public image. This representation includes, but is not limited to, any personal profile or postings on any internet discussion forums or social networking websites. You may not refer to any of our clients by name on any social networking, internet or other forums.
Any breaches of this policy may, after investigation, lead to disciplinary action that may include dismissal without notice.
**2.13 Personal Details**
You must notify your Manager of any change of name, address, telephone number etc., so that we can maintain accurate information on our records and make contact with you in an emergency, if necessary, outside normal working hours. All employees have a legal right to see their personal file; however employees will be required to give at least forty days’ notice and may be charged for this in accordance with the statutory provisions. If you wish to access your personal file you are required to put your request in writing to Human Resources. At some locations employees may be able to access an electronic version of their file.
**The eight principles in relation to personal data protection are:**
1. Data shall be processed fairly and lawfully.
2. Data shall be obtained only for specified and lawful purposes, and will not be processed in any manner
incompatible with those purposes.
3. Data shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose for which it is processed.
4. Data should be accurate and where necessary kept up to date.
5. Data should be kept for no longer than is necessary for the purpose for which it is processed.
6. Data shall be processed in accordance with the legal rights of data subjects.
7. Data shall be subject to appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect against
unauthorised or unlawful processing, accidental loss, destruction or damage.
8. Data shall not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area (EEA) unless the country or territory ensures an adequate level of data protection.
**2.14 Other Employment**
If you already have any other employment or are considering any additional employment you should notify us so that we can discuss any implications arising from the current working time legislation.
You should obtain the approval of your Manager or Director before accepting any additional employment. This approval will not be unreasonably withheld unless the other employment has or is likely to have, an adverse effect on your capability to satisfactorily fulfil your duties with this Company. Approval may reasonably be withheld in the case of an employee working for a competitor or working excessive hours. You must devote your time at work to carrying out your duties for the Company. You may not undertake any other work or activity during your working hours.
**2.15 Access Fobs**
Upon joining, all employees are issued with an access fob that allow them access to the building. It is the employee's responsibility to swipe in / out when entering and exiting the building. A charge may be made for the replacement of lost fobs. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action.
**2.16 Travel policy & Expenses**
All expenses forms need to be approved by your line manager and Executive Team member before passing to finance for processing. If receipts or approvals are missing this can lead to a delay in re-imbursement. Expenses will only be paid where hard copies of associated receipts are enclosed with the claim form. Expenses are processed by the Purchase Ledger If not booked
Keep all shop receipts, ask Shop/Café assistant for VAT receipt (or ask customer services)/ Keep Itemised invoice from
Hotel Stay.

**Staff Incentives**
This **cannot** be paid in cash, and cannot be reimbursed via petty cash. Vouchers no longer to be given and WOW points will be allocated to employees. This will be paid as WOW points.

**Client Entertaining** N/A Must be directly related to the transaction of the company business, the ratio of employee to nonemployee should be reasonable. Keep all shop/restaurant receipts, ask assistant for VAT receipts.
**Supplier Hospitality** N/A supplier hospitality are reclaimable. No costs incurred in accepting N/A

**2.17 Communications**
We will keep you informed about items of interest by means of Company notice boards, team briefings, meetings, newsletters and intranet updates.

**2.18 Employee’s Property**
We do not accept liability for any loss of, or damage to, property that you bring onto the premises. You are requested not to bring personal items of value onto the premises and, in particular, not to leave any items overnight. All personal items should be stored in designated areas and in lockers where provided.
**2.19 Lost Property**
Articles of lost property should be handed to your Manager who will retain them whilst attempts are made to discover the owner.
**2.20 Mail**
All mail received by us will be opened, including that addressed to employees. Private mail, therefore, should not be sent care of our address. No private mail may be posted at our expense.
**2.21 Telephone Calls**
Telephone, e-Mail and fax facilities are essential for our business. Personal telephone calls, e-Mail and fax facilities are allowed only in the case of emergency or with the prior permission of your Manager.
**2.22 Buying or Selling of Goods**
Buying and selling of goods is only permissible via designated notice boards or intranet locations.
**2.23 Collections for Charities**
Collections for registered charities will be permitted in line with management authorisation.
**2.24 Friends and Relatives Contact**
You are expected to discourage your friends and relatives from either calling on you in person or by telephone except in an emergency. Non-work related e-mails should be discouraged.
**2.25 Visitors**
Visitors should report to the reception area where they will be required to sign in.
The receptionists will be advised in advance of all expected visitors and will direct the visitor's attention to the safety notices in the reception area. Visitors will be advised to retain coats, handbags and other valuables with them at their meeting points and not to leave them unattended. When leaving the premises, please ensure that they sign out. Visitors must be accompanied with at all times.
**2.26 Prize Draws**
Prize draws and competitions run by clients are not open to employees of The Company or Agency staff working for The Company and it's subsidiary companies, their immediate families and relatives living in an employee's household.
**2.27 Relationships at Work Policy**
We recognise we may employ several members of one family within each site. There is often no better selection tool than the recommendation of an existing and trusted member of staff. However, the positive contribution made by personal recommendations, can sometimes be blighted by acts of nepotism (favouritism shown to relatives or close friends by those with positions of authority, power and/or influence.) ICS does not tolerate or condone nepotism, and endeavours to ensure that any decision regarding the terms and conditions of employment of any member of staff, is taken without bias or prejudice. Anyone who considers they have been
**2.28 Termination of Employment**
**2.28.1 What if I do decide to leave the Company?**
Your resignation should be put in writing and be given to your Manager. Your letter of resignation should contain the amount of notice you are giving and confirm your last working day with the company. You should ensure at this stage, you are giving the appropriate notice period as indicated in your contract of employment as this is a contractual obligation on your part.
**2.28.2 What happens if I fail to inform the Company of my intention to leave?**
If we are unaware of your desire to leave and you have been absent from work, then initially we will attempt to contact you to establish your reasons for absence. This follows a strict process and time scales, but ultimately failure to respond to requests for information will lead to us to considering your ongoing absence as unauthorised and this could mean termination of your employment
according to our policies and procedures.
**2.28.3 What happens to my final pay and P45 upon leaving?**
You final pay will be paid in the normal way, via your bank account and according to the normal pay cycles, i.e. weekly or monthly. Your P45 will be sent to your home address shortly after your final pay has been actioned. Further details will be given to you upon receiving your letter of resignation. You will also be required to complete an exit interview online and/or requested to attend an exit interview prior to leaving. This provides an opportunity to established individual reasons for leaving and assists with future resource planning.
**2.28.4 What happens to my pension if I leave the Company?**
The pension scheme provider will contact you directly to explain your options. Please be aware that it may be some weeks after leaving when you are contacted in relation to this.
**2.28.5 Retirement**
The Company does not operate a default retirement age. If you wish to retire please discuss this with your Line Manager and HR.
**2.28.6 Return of Vehicles**
On termination of your employment you must return any company vehicle in your possession to our premises. Failure to return the vehicle will result in the cost of its recovery being deducted from any monies outstanding to you.

**2.29 Breaks**
Your entitlement to breaks depends on which area of the business you work in and your terms and conditions of employment. See your contract or ask your manager for further information. Breaks are obligatory and depend on the length of your shift. Taking breaks is in your best interest, as sitting in the same position for long periods without relief can cause muscular and joint problems. The nature of our business requires us to be flexible and responsible in our approach to breaks. For example in the Contact Centre if there are calls waiting do not take your break until call volume has reduced. Always wait until other members of your team have returned from their break before you log off/go for your break. Taking your breaks at the scheduled times is important as it can impact on our service to clients if we don't have the right numbers of people available to take calls. Failure to adhere to your scheduled breaks may therefore result in disciplinary action being taken.

**2.30 Employee Forums**
The company will consult with its employees about all significant change within the business. The Company also recognises that having employee forums facilitates feedback from, and involvement with its employees. Any Employee Forum representative who breaches confidentiality will be removed from the Employee Forum and may be subject to disciplinary action.
**2.31 Whistleblowing**
If you are concerned about possible wrong doing at work, the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) provides guidance for dealing with these and other whistleblowing issues in a safe and constructive way. It encourages you to raise concerns internally in the first instance.
Internal - contacts for whistleblowing
We hope that you will feel able to raise any such concern internally, confident that it will be dealt with properly and that all reasonable steps will be taken to protect you from victimisation. If you don't feel able to raise or resolve a concern with your line manager, please contact the Human Resources or Compliance team.
PIDA states that individuals who make qualifying disclosures of information in the public interest have the right not to suffer detriment by any act or omission of their employer because of the disclosure. A qualifying disclosure is one which, in the reasonable belief of the worker, suggests that one or more of the following has been, is being, or is likely to be committed:
•A criminal offence
•A failure to comply with any legal obligation
•A miscarriage of justice
•The putting of the health and safety of any individual in danger
•Damage to the environment
•Deliberate concealment relating to any of the above
PIDA protects you in making a disclosure to your employer where the disclosure meets the requirements set out above and is made in good faith.
Advice
If you want free, confidential advice on what is protected by PIDA and how best to raise your concern, you can contact Public Concern at Work on 020 7404 6609 or www.pcaw.co.uk (England & Wales) or on 0141 550 7272 or www.scotland@pcaw.co.uk
**2.32 Bribery Act**
In line with the Bribery Act ICS has a no bribes policy that applies to all employees in the UK and its
subsidiaries. Under legislation the following are a criminal offence:
•Offering a bribe to another person
•Agreeing to receive a bribe
•Bribing a foreign public official
•Corporate offence of failing to prevent bribery
If a bribe occurs it does not have to take place in the UK, the connection to the UK entity is key.
**2.33 Hospitality and Gifts**
Genuine hospitality can be used to strengthen existing relationships with clients and helps forge partnerships with new clients to enable the company to grow and better meet its clients, suppliers and stakeholder’s needs. ICS view is that corporate hospitality that is reasonable and proportionate is necessary to grow the company and create links within the industry we operate.
**2.33.1 Hospitality**
We hold a number of events each year both to promote the company and to extend our links within the outsourcing business. Corporate Hospitality therefore, is a valuable part of doing business.
To ensure compliance with the Bribery act, events must meet the business needs and reflect our company’s aims and objectives. Hospitality has within our company sign off levels to ensure that only employees with the correct authority are able to be authorised either to attend a hospitality event or for one to be planned. For more information on
these, please contact Finance or Marketing.
**2.33.2 Gifts Policy -** **Gifts Book**
•All gifts whose value is deemed to be worth over **£100** in monetary value are recorded in the Gifts book.

•This is to ensure that for audit purposes the employee and company is transparent in its dealings.

**Section Three**
**Benefits of Employment**
**3.1 When will I be paid?**
All employees paid by ICS will be paid monthly on the last working day of the month. Where the
last working day of the month falls on a weekend, payday will be brought forward to the nearest working day. Salaried employees receive 1/12th of their monthly pay every month. In addition to this, any adjustments to the pay (ie unpaid hours, Overtime etc) are deducted/paid within an adjustment period. Please see below.

We reserve the right to change the day on
which you are paid by giving reasonable notice, in accordance with the needs of the business.
All payments are made directly into your bank account.
If you have any queries with your pay please raise them with your Manager in the first instance.
Payslips
All employees paid by ICS will be issued with an itemised payslip on a monthly basis.

**3.2 What if I am paid incorrectly?**
**3.2.1 Overpayment**
If you are overpaid for any reason you must inform your Manager immediately. The total amount of the overpayment will be deducted from your salary and your manager will discuss this with you. In the event of you leaving the organisation without the full amount being recovered you are expected to pay back the balance in your final pay.

**3.2.2 Underpayment**
If you are underpaid for any reason please inform your Manager immediately. Your Manager will then check the amount due to you with Payroll and any adjustment will normally be actioned the next time that you are paid. In exceptional circumstances it may be possible to advance the amount underpaid.
**3.3 What tax information will I receive?**
At the end of the tax year you will receive a P60 showing the totals you have received from us during that year and the amount of deductions from income tax and National Insurance. You may also receive a P11D if you receive any non-salary benefits.
**3.4 What if there is a shortage of work?**
If there is a shortage of work for any reason, we will try to maintain your continuity of employment even if this necessitates placing you on short time or having to lay you off work without pay other than statutory guarantee pay.
**3.5 What is statutory guarantee pay?**
It is a statutory payment made to employees with one month's service with their employers, who are not provided with work throughout a day during which they would normally be required to work under their contracts of employment. Payment is limited to a maximum of five days in any period of three months but the entitlement cannot exceed the number of days a week the employee is contracted to work in a normal week. Guaranteed pay is determined by the government and this figure is revised annually.
**3.6 Am I entitled to paid overtime?\***
There is no contractual entitlement to pay overtime. Where local arrangements apply you will be advised of this.
**3.7 Holiday Entitlement**
All employees have an entitlement to annual holiday in order to take a break from work. All holiday is subject to business needs and must be approved in advance by using the holiday form available from your Line Manager. Your holiday entitlement is set out in your terms and conditions or available from your Manager.
For employees who work part time, holiday is calculated on a pro rata basis.
The holiday year runs from 1st January to 31st December. The Company may require you to work bank
holidays or to take bank holidays off. Holiday is expected to be used in the year in which it accrues and payment will not be made in lieu of holiday. Carry forward of holiday from one year to the next is not encouraged and will only be considered on an exceptional basis where it has not been possible to take all the holiday entitlement due to operational requirements. Carry forward of holiday will be limited to a maximum of five days which must be taken within three months of the start
of the new holiday year and will be forfeited if it is not taken within that timescale except where this means that statutory holiday rules are not complied with. Only holiday, which is in excess of the statutory requirement of four working weeks, can be carried forward. Statutory holiday not taken in the holiday year in which it applies is lost. It is your responsibility to ensure that you
manage your holiday entitlement effectively. The Company does not make payment in lieu of holidays except upon termination of employment. Any failure to comply with this policy may be dealt with under the Company's disciplinary procedure.
**3.8 Pension Scheme**
All eligible persons will be enrolled in the company pension scheme.
**3.9 Death in Service Scheme\***
For employees who joined the business prior to 1st August 2011, We maintain a death in service scheme in respect of which you may receive benefits at the absolute discretion of the Company and in any event subject to the terms and conditions of the scheme. We reserve the right to terminate, alter or replace this scheme without notice or compensation.
**3.10 Bonus Scheme**
If you are eligible to participate in one of the company's discretionary bonus or commission schemes, details will be given to you.

**3.11 Length of Service Award**
ICS values the commitment and contribution that our people make to the success of our business
and as such have in place a loyalty recognition scheme.
Length of service is recognised at key milestones namely: 1 year, 3 years, 5 years, 7 years, 10 years, 15 years, 20 years and 25 years’ service.
The awards are a mixture of additional paid gift days and unpaid leave, where applicable.
These only apply in the award year. Please refer to the table below for details of all the awards.
The award year runs 1st January to 31st December. Employees receive recognition retrospectively for the relevant milestone they have passed at 1st January.
All additional unpaid leave and gift days, where applicable, must be booked following the company procedure for booking leave.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Length Of Service | Gift Days | Additional Gift |
| 1 | 1 |  |
| 3 | 2 |  |
| 5 | 3 |  |
| 10 | 5 | £100 |

**3.13 Adoption Leave Guide**
This guide will help you understand your adoption leave rights and the procedures relating to adoption leave and pay.
Adoption leave and pay is available to:
•Individuals who adopt
•One member of a couple where a couple adopt jointly (the couple may choose which partner takes the adoption leave)
The partner of an individual who adopts, or one member of a couple who are adopting jointly, may be entitled to take paternity leave and pay subject to the fulfilment of the qualifying criteria for eligibility (for further information please refer to the Company’s Adoption Policy)
**3.14 Maternity Guide**
See our maternity policy .This guide will help you understand your maternity rights and the procedures relating to maternity leave and pay. In addition, the guide contains general information relating to pregnancy and childcare. *In addition to maternity leave and pay, you may be eligible to opt in to the Shared Parental leave and Pay system.* Employees are protected from suffering unfair treatment or dismissal as a result of taking or seeking to take maternity leave. Line managers should maintain contact with employees whilst they are on maternity leave in order to keep them
up to date with significant changes at work which may affect their roles.
**3.15 Paternity Guide**
See our Paternity policy .This guide will help you understand your paternity rights and the procedures relating to paternity leave and pay.*.*
**3.16 Parental Leave Guide**
See our Parental Leave Policy This guide will help you understand your right to parental leave and the procedures relating to parental leave.
**3.17 Time off for Dependants**
**3.17.1 What is Time off for Dependants?**
Time off for Dependants is a statutory right allowing employees to take a reasonable amount of time off work to deal with certain unexpected or sudden emergencies, and to make any necessary longer-term arrangements. The emergency must involve a dependant of the employee.
Time off for Dependants is always unpaid.
**3.17.2 Who can take Time off for Dependants?**
Any employee of ICS, whether on a permanent or temporary contract is entitled to take Time off
for Dependants. There is no qualifying length of service for this entitlement.
**3.17.3 Who qualifies as a Dependant?**
A dependant is considered as being an employee’s husband, wife, partner, child or parent, or someone else living with the employee as part of the family, with the exception of lodgers or tenants. Other people who rely solely on the employee for help in an emergency may also qualify, for example elderly relatives or neighbours where there is no other care available.
**3.17.3 What qualifies as an emergency?**
The following situations are all examples of when an employee would be entitled to Time off for Dependants:
•When a dependant is ill and needs help.
•When a dependant is involved in an accident or assaulted.
•When a dependant needs the employee to arrange their longer-term care e.g. making arrangements to take a sick child to relatives.
•When a dependant needs the employee to deal with an unexpected disruption or breakdown in care e.g. if a childminder or nurse fails to arrive for their shift.
•When a dependant goes into labour – other forms of leave such as parental or paternity leave can be used for the period after the birth.
•When a dependant dies and the employee needs to make funeral arrangements and attend the funeral (Compassionate Leave may also be appropriate depending on the relationship).
•When there is an unexpected incident involving the employee’s child during school time – e.g. a fight at school or the child being suspended.
**3.17.4 What does not qualify as an emergency?**
The following situations would normally not entitle the employee to Time off for Dependants:
•Situations where the employee was aware beforehand that they would need to take time off – such situations should be dealt with by arranging other forms of leave for example annual leave, parental leave, maternity and paternity leave.
•Other domestic situations such as a burst boiler or a car breakdown.
**3.17.5 How much time can be taken off in any one episode of Time off for Dependants?**
Employees are entitled to take as much time off as it takes to deal with the **immediate emergency**. In most cases this will be one or two days at the most, but this will depend on individual circumstances.
**3.17.6 How much notification must an employee give of their intention to take Time off for Dependants?**
Employees should inform their manager as soon as possible if they require leave of this type, and the reason for and expected duration of the leave.
**3.18 Time Off for Public Duties**
Employees who perform certain public duties have a statutory right to be permitted reasonable time off work without pay. The Company wishes to encourage participation in public duties and therefore managers may use their discretion to give up to five days paid leave for these purposes. Further periods of unpaid leave may be granted according to the reasonable needs of the business. For these purposes public duties are defined as follows:
•Justice of the Peace
•Member of Local Authority
•Member of a National Health Service Trust, or in England and Wales a regional district or special health authority or a Family Practitioner Committee, or, in Scotland a Health Board
**3.18.1 Jury Service**
On receiving notification regarding the provision of jury service you should forward all documentation to the line manager who will then pass to Human Resources. The ‘Certificate of Loss of Earnings’ form will be completed and returned to you prior to your attendance in court.
Courts have the discretion to exempt potential jurors from attendance, but it is not guaranteed that this will be exercised in favour of the Company even in circumstances of major business need.
**3.18.2 Witness Leave**
Leave will be granted to employees who are required or subpoenaed to attend court as a witness. Supporting and relevant documentation must be shown to the line manager.
**3.18.3 Voluntary Armed Forces Leave**
Employees who are serving members of the Territorial Army or a similar branch of the armed forces reserve may take up to an additional five working days paid leave to attend annual exercises. This leave must be authorised in advance by the manager. Further time off may be taken with line management permission but this will be taken as employee’s annual leave entitlement. Confirmation from army officers must also be supplied if employees are called out to duty.
**3.19 Flexible Working Guide**
First please consider if the request is for a short or long term change.
*Short term requests for a change to your work pattern or hours which will be required for 6 months or less should be made informally to your Line Manager.*
Requests for changes which are likely to last for more than 6 months should be made using a Statutory Flexible Working request
ICS as an employer has a statutory duty to seriously consider all applications received as statutory
requests for flexible working.
**3.19.1 Who can make a request to work flexibly?**
Every employee has the statutory right to ask to work flexibly after 26 weeks employment. An employee can only make a statutory request once in any 12 month period.
Employees will be able to request:
•A change to the hours they work
•A change to the times when they are required to work
•To work from home
**3.19.2 How should a request to work flexibly be made?**
All requests must be in writing and must include the following information:
• The date of application, the change to working conditions you are seeking, and when you would like the change to come into effect.
• You must detail in the request what effect,
if any, you think the requested change would have on the business and how, in your opinion, any such effect may be dealt with.
• In your request you must state that this is a statutory request and if and when you have made
a previous application for flexible working.
**3.19.3 What happens after an application to work flexibly is made?**
After an employee has made an application to work flexibly ICS will arrange to meet with the
employee within 28 days. The purpose of the meeting is to explore the application and discuss whether it can be accommodated. If the desired working pattern cannot be accommodated alternatives will be considered. Employees have the right to bring a companion to this meeting. There are a few possible outcomes to the meeting these are: the request is agreed, declined or an alternative suggested for consideration After the meeting and within 14 days ICS will write to the employee either to agree the new working pattern and a start date or to provide clear business grounds as to why the application cannot be accepted or to propose and alternative .
An accepted application will mean a change to the employee’s terms and conditions however the company reserves the right to review this arrangement when and if the business needs change. .
If a flexible working pattern cannot be accommodated employees have the right of appeal against
ICS’s decision. The appeal must be received by the employer within 14 days of the decision being
notified to the employee, and the reasons for their appeal must be apparent. A meeting will be scheduled to discuss your appeal within 14 days. After the meeting and within 14 days ICS will write to the employee detailing the outcome of the appeal.
**3.20 Shared Parental Leave Guide**
**See our Shared Parental Leave Policy**

**What is Shared Parental Leave?**
Shared Parental Leave enables eligible parents to choose how to share the care of their child during the first year of birth or adoption. Its purpose is to give parents more flexibility in considering how to best care for, and bond with, their child. All eligible employees have a statutory right to take Shared Parental Leave. There may also be an entitlement to some Shared Parental Pay. This policy sets out the statutory rights and responsibilities of employees who wish to take statutory Shared Parental Leave (SPL) and statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP).
**Section Four**
**Standards at Work**

**4 ICS/Site Local Policies**

**4.1** Sickness / Other Absence– call 0113 8231924. If you are sick please call one hour before your shift start time or at 8am if you are on an early shift.

**4.2** Late – Call on 0113 8231924 if you are going to be late for whatever reason. Inform your Team leader/manager when you arrive.

All late time must be made back on the day/arranged with your TL/manager. Persistent lateness may be addressed with a change in shift pattern or sanction if the situation fails to improve.

**4.3** Leaving early – if you have to leave in an emergency please speak to a TL/Manager before you leave.

**4.4** Lockers – all staff will be assigned a locker when joining. This is secure and should be used for all personal belongings.

**4.5** Mobile phones – should be switched off and placed in lockers. They should not be carried in pockets /jackets on the area. Mobile phones can be used on breaks/lunches.

TL/Managers are permitted to carry their phones for business purposes

**4.6** Breaks/ Lunches – you have 10 minutes am and ten minutes pm - phone lines must be covered at all times. This is monitored via daily reporting.

Offenders who consistently overtake on breaks/comfort/lunch will be addressed individually.

**4.7** Kitchen – is a shared facility, please clear up after yourself and wash up anything used. We have our own cupboard for storage in the kitchen allotted to suite 14. We do supply tea/coffee/milk/sugar. This will be clearly marked in the cupboard/fridge.

**4.8** Breakout areas – there is seating in the kitchen area and the atrium which can be used for breaks. This is a shared facility so please ensure you clear up when you have finished. Reception provide picnic blankets on loan during summer.

**4.9** Eating on the area – should be kept to a minimum and no food should be consumed when you are on the phone. Food should not be on desks and should be kept in lockers or the fridge. Incentive rewards are permitted.

**4.10** Overtime – if you have pledged it ensure you work it!  Overtime is allocated fairly across the team/floor. Please observe the overtime policy

**4.11** Change of hours – to request a change of hours (minimum 3 months service). Please complete a change of hours form and email to your TL/manager detailing your current hours, shifts you are requesting and detail the reason for the change.

Full consideration will be given according to business needs

**4.12** Change of Team – please complete a change of team request form (minimum 6 month service). Changes are approved according to business need / performance

**4.13** Internet Usage – Internet is for work use only. All usage is regularly monitored.

**4.14** Compliance – lock your screen before leaving your desk. Paper and pens are not permitted. DPA is everyone’s responsibility.

**4.15** Fire Register – everyone must sign in and out including breaks every day without fail. The fire assembly point is at the top left of the car park next to the bin area. The fire alarm is tested once a week.

**4.16** Holiday Booking Process – holiday request forms are kept in the holiday request folder.

To request a holiday, get your form, complete it and give to your TL

Your holiday will reviewed and your TL/manager will let you know if the holiday has been accepted.

Minimum 7 days’ notice is required for all holidays.

**4.17** Personal calls – Please seek authority from a TL/manager to make a personal call, (all calls are recorded)

**4.18** Dress code- is business casual and dress down every Friday. It may be necessary to wear business attire on certain dress down days for business reasons. Hats and hoods are not acceptable on any day.

**4.19** Access Fobs – each person is responsible for their own access fob and these should not be shared. There is s £25 charge if you lose your fob so please take care of this.

**4.20** Car Park – is on a first come first served basis. Please ensure you display your parking permit. These can be obtained from reception.

**4.21** Smokers – can use the smoking shelter at the far end of the bike shelter. No smoking is allowed on the decking or any part of the building. This includes e-cigarettes.

**4.22** Toilets and shower facilities - can be found on every floor and should be left as you find them.

**4.23** Bicycle Parking – free bike parking is available but you must supply you own lock. There is also an electric bike that can be used. Please enquire at reception

**4.24** Pure Office Reception – is open from 8.30 to 5.30 pm. Outside of these hours please use the access door activated with your fob.

**Section Five**
**Security and Data at Work**
**5.1 Rights of Search**
On occasion it may be necessary for us to carry out a search of individuals’ possessions or vehicles. We would ask all employees to assist us in this matter should we feel that such a search is necessary. These searches are random and do not imply suspicion in relation to any individual concerned.
We reserve the right to involve the police at any stage. In some areas of the business it may be necessary to carry out searches on a regular and frequent basis. Employees have the right to be accompanied during the search process by another employee who is on the
premises at the time of the search.
**5.2 Weapons**
No weapons including firearms may be brought on site. Bringing weapons of any kind on site may be considered to be gross misconduct.
**5.3 Confidentiality**
All information that: -
•Is or has been acquired by you during, or in the course of your employment, or has otherwise been acquired by you in confidence,
•Relates particularly to our business, our clients or that of other persons or bodies with whom we have dealings of any sort, and
•Has not been made public by, or with our authority,
Shall be confidential, and (save in the course of our business or as required by law) you shall not at any time, whether before or after the termination of your employment, disclose such information to any person without our written consent. You are to exercise reasonable care to keep safe all documentary or other material containing confidential information, and shall at the time of termination of your employment with us, or at any other time upon demand,
return to us any such material in your possession.
**5.4 Copyright**
All written material, whether held on paper, electronically or magnetically, which was made or acquired by you during the course of your employment with us, is our property and our copyright. At the time of termination of your employment with us, or at any other time upon demand, you shall return to us any such material in your possession. No material published by Newspapers, Magazines or Periodicals etc. shall be reproduced for circulation without the express permission of the Copyright owner.
**5.5 Inventions/Discoveries**
An invention or discovery made by you will normally belong to you. However, an invention or discovery made by you will become our property if it was made: -
•In the course of your normal duties, under such circumstances that an invention might reasonably be expected to result from those duties
•Outside the course of your normal duties, but during duties specifically assigned to you, when an invention might reasonably be expected to result from these
•In the course of any of your duties and at the time you had a special obligation to further our interests arising from the nature of those duties and your particular responsibilities.
**5.6 Statements to the Media**
Any statements to reporters from newspapers, radio, television, or via social media etc. in relation to our business will be given only by a Director.
**5.7 Competition Agreement**
It is a condition of your employment that for a period of 12 months immediately following the termination of your employment for any reason whatsoever you will not, whether directly or indirectly, as principal, agent, employee, director, partner or otherwise howsoever, approach any individual or organisation who has during the period of your employment been a customer of ours if the purpose for such an approach is to solicit business which could have been undertaken by us.
**5.8 Use of Personal Mobile Phones**
The use of personal mobile phones on any call centre floor, or work area is prohibited and unacceptable. All mobile phones should be switched off during your working hours and not put onto silent mode. Personal mobile phones are also not to be used at the edge of any call centre floor, work area, or in the stairwells/toilets during your working hours. Your phone should be stored in your bag and not on your desk. If you need to use your personal mobile phone, you should do so within your allocated breaks, using either the staff rest areas, or outside of the building.
The Company identifies the fact that, in cases of emergency, an employee may need to be contacted. Where applicable a landline number, such as your line manager’s desk phone, should be provided, with your line manager’s permission, to relatives/friends who may need to contact you under such circumstances. A landline is seen to be a more reliable source of contact. Or in areas where no landline is available, you must discuss this with your line manager to seek agreement to have your mobile phone switched on in cases of an emergency. If you need to make an urgent call during your shift, again the permission of your line manager must be obtained. If you do require that your mobile phone is switched on during a shift for special circumstances you must discuss
this with your line manager, on whether this can be accommodated. In some designated business areas, where the security of data is particularly important, personal mobile phones must be stored in lockers with other personal possessions. Other specified arrangements regarding mobile
phones may also apply in these areas and in this case these will be communicated to you. In areas of the business where campaign/department specific security policies apply and you are found to be using you mobile phone unauthorised and whilst on your shift, then the company may choose to invoke the right of search policy. Failure to comply with this policy may result in formal disciplinary action being taken.
**5.9 Mobile Computing**
Portable computer/equipment covered under the requirements of this handbook can be, but are not limited, to any of the following:
•Laptop computer
•Handheld computer
•Notebook computer
•Palmtop computer
•Personal Digital Assistant (PDA)
•Blackberry or Smartphone
•Mobile phone
•Digital camera
•Mass Storage Devices – including discs, memory sticks
All users of portable equipment must ensure they have read and understood policies regarding the use of this type of equipment. Users must also be aware of the requirements of transporting company data found in the Information Security Policies.
Mobile equipment is the responsibility of the user at all times.
Users must ensure that all portable media is encrypted.
Portable equipment must not be left unattended in any public places.
Portable equipment must be kept in the possession of the employee at all times.
Therefore the equipment must be removed from the car when the employee leaves the car unattended e.g. in car park.
Ensure that any equipment is always kept within the environmental ranges detailed with the user guide that accompanies the equipment. This also applies to the media that may also be carried with the equipment e.g. CD, memory stick or other media. No client customer information must be stored on portable devices, with the exception of approved mass storage
devices e.g. back up Tapes
**5.9.1 Acceptable use**
The acceptable use of ICS Systems is clearly documented in the Acceptable Use policy. It is the employee’s responsibility to ensure they are aware of this document and its contents. It covers but is not limited to:
•Information Systems
•Software
•Electronic Mail
•Internet
•Portable and Remote Electronic Devices
•Instant Messaging
•Telephone and Faxes
•Screen Sharing
•Management Responsibilities
•Passwords
•Monitoring
•Compliance to policy

**Section Six**
**Health and Safety**
**6.1 Safety**
You should make yourself familiar with our Health and Safety Policy and your own health and safety duties and responsibilities, as shown separately.
You must not take any action, which could threaten the health or safety of yourself, other employees, customers or members of the public.
Protective clothing and other equipment that may be issued for your protection because of the nature of your job must be worn at all appropriate times. Failure to do so could be a contravention of your health and safety responsibilities. Electrical power supplies should be switched off when not in use unless instructed otherwise, e.g. for some computer purposes. Do not overload circuits by using multi-plug adapters. If an electrical appliance breaks down do not attempt to repair it yourself contact Facilities. Report all new equipment to Facilities for appropriate testing.
If you are aware of any equipment that does not bear a test label, please contact Facilities.
Do not lift or try to move heavy or bulky loads on your own. Remember that the weight of the item may not be in relation to its size. Obtain assistance and use mechanised means where these are available. Advice on these matters can be obtained from Supervisors or Managers.
All waste must be properly deposited in the designated bins provided. Any oils, liquids, chemicals or sharp pieces of broken glass/wood should be disposed of separately in accordance with current legislation or as instructed by your Supervisor/Manager.
Names of current fire marshals and first aid personnel are posted on all main notice boards, together with other relevant information. Please keep yourself appraised of these details.
Your manager will make you aware of the bomb threat procedures, which apply to your local site. Please keep yourself updated with these details.
If you require First Aid please contact reception and they will locate the nearest First Aider to you.
All accidents however minor and regardless of whether injury is sustained, must be reported in the accident book.
In line with the Display Screen Regulations, all employees who use display screen equipment for significant periods of time are eligible for a regular company funded eye test every two years. Details can be obtained from Facilities.
As part of the induction process, all employees should be aware of the Company's emergency evacuation procedures. Any queries should be directed to the employee’s manager.
**6.2 Hygiene**
Any exposed cut or burn must be covered with a first aid dressing and should be reported through the Accident Reporting Procedure. If you are suffering from an infectious or contagious disease or illness such as rubella or hepatitis you must not report for work without clearance from your own doctor. Contact with any person suffering from an infectious or contagious disease must be reported before commencing work.
**6.3 Stress at Work Policy**
Stress At Work Policy. ICS are committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our employees. Everyone is responsible for ensuring their own health, safety and welfare and the health, safety and welfare of their colleagues. We recognise that workplace stress is a health and safety (H&S) issue and acknowledge the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stress’s.

**6.4 Smoke Free Policy**
It is against the law to smoke in virtually all workplaces and substantially enclosed public places. A smoke free work place will ensure a healthier environment, so everyone can socialise, relax, travel, shop and work free from second hand smoke. There are designated smoking areas outside of our premises where you may smoke. See Smoke Free Policy.
**6.5 Alcohol and Drugs Policy\***
**6.5.1 Policy Statement**
The Company recognises that the misuse of drugs and alcohol can have a detrimental effect on an employee's health and welfare and as a result can compromise the overall safety and efficiency of the organisation. Therefore, the Company has adopted this policy to encourage early identification of alcohol and drug related problems and to provide the Company with a constructive and preventive strategy regarding alcohol and drug problems amongst its employees.
**6.5.2 Aims**
This policy has been introduced with the aim of -
•Reducing and ultimately preventing any work impairment related to the abuse of drugs and alcohol
•To identify problems at the earliest stage.
•Fostering a culture, which encourages openness, honesty and confidence to deal with problem situations relating to drug and alcohol abuse
**6.5.3 Definition**
•Workplace - any premises owned by the Company including buildings and car parking areas
•Alcohol - any alcoholic beverage or food
•Drug - illegal substances
•A drug related problem is defined as any use of drugs, or substances which in themselves are legal but may be subject to abuse such as glue or solvents, which interferes with an employee’s health, safety, welfare and performance in any aspect of employment.
**6.5.4 Mandatory Regulations**
The Company strictly prohibits the following:
•the consumption of alcohol whilst on Company property, reporting to work, working or attempting to work under the influence of alcohol or the possession of alcohol in suspicious circumstances.
•the consumption of alcohol before or whilst using machinery
•the possession or use of a prohibited substance while on Company property, on Company business, reporting to work, working or attempting to work under the influence of such a substance
•reporting to work, working or attempting to work while under the influence of any drug, prescribed or otherwise unless directed by a doctor or where such use will not affect an employee's ability to perform their duties safely and or effectively or affect the safety of others
•dispensing, distributing, possessing, buying, selling, offering to buy or sell a prohibited substance whilst on Company property
Any breaches of the above rules may result in the Company disciplinary procedure being invoked and are potentially gross misconduct matters, which may lead to summary termination of employment. The Company strictly requires the following:
Any employee who is using a prescription drug which may impair their ability or affect the safety or well being of others should provide the Company with a letter either from themselves or their doctor to outline the likely effects of the medication as soon as the use begins. If the Company determines that the employees performance will be impaired or a safety threat may exist they may be temporarily reassigned, their job duties could be modified or given a medical leave of absence. Also, an employee should not enter into an activity which may render them unfit to perform their duties or which affects their level of performance, for example, consumption of alcohol
outside working hours that affects their performance the following day.
Compliance
Compliance with all parts of this policy is a condition of continued employment. Anyone breaching the conditions may be disciplined. For employees who may work at client’s premises, they must comply with the Company’s and Client’s Alcohol and Drugs policy. Employees who have any queries should check with their manager.
**6.5.5 Responsibilities**
Every employee of the Company has some responsibility in ensuring this policy works but some specific responsibilities are as follows:
Management
It is the responsibility of managers to set a good example; to be familiar with the policy and procedures; to ensure the policy is understood; to monitor changes in attitude, work performance, attendance and accident records; to intervene when problems occur at the first opportunity when there are signs of substance or alcohol misuse. To refer employees for assistance and to identify aspects of the work environment that may contribute to the problem
HR Department
It is the role of the HR department to offer advice and implementation support on the policy.
Employees All employees are responsible for making themselves familiar with the policy and to operate in a manner consistent with the policy.
**6.5.6 Recognition of the Problem**
The following characteristics may be indicative of a drugs and/or alcohol problem. However, some signs may be linked with other illnesses rather than drugs or alcohol therefore caution should be of paramount importance.
Absenteeism
•Unauthorised absences
•Patterns of absence e.g. Friday/Monday
•Attending work late or leaving early including at break times
•Excessive levels of sickness absence
•Increasingly suspicious reasons for absence
•High levels of absences for flu, colds, stomach upsets
Poor Work Performance
•Lack of concentration
•Poor production levels
•Increase in time taken to perform tasks
•Memory problems
Attitude Alterations
•Mood swings
•Depression
•Confusion
•Irritability
**6.5.7 Intervention and Conduct of Meetings**
When a concern is raised regarding an employee’s performance, poor attendance etc. and it is indicated that the difficulties may be connected to drugs or alcohol a combined disciplinary/capability meeting will be held with the employee concerned and it will include the following:
•A Company representative should be in attendance along with the employees manager
•The employee may bring a representative if
they so require, either a fellow employee or Trade Union Official.
•The employee will be advised of the area of concern and an attempt will be made to establish the cause of the problem
•Although if suspected the question of an alcohol or drug problem may be discussed but at no time will the employee be accused of having a problem
•The drugs and alcohol policy may be highlighted
•If the employee informs the Company that they do have a problem with drugs or alcohol, they will be offered the opportunity to discuss this with their manager. When discussing these problems with employees the intention of the Company is to assist the employee in addressing the issue. The employee will be advised to seek medical advice and support from their GP and the Company will consider referring them to the Company’s Occupational Health Practitioner.
•The employee will be advised that they are not immune from the formal disciplinary procedure should there be incidences of misconduct in the future.
•The employee will be advised that they will have follow-up reviews with their manager, in order to obtain progress updates and ensure the Company is exploring any adjustments on either a temporary or permanent basis, which it should consider to assist the employee.
•If the employee denies that any problem exists but attendance, attitude or performance difficulties persist the normal disciplinary procedure will be followed through
•The employee will be advised of their rights
All discussions with an employee in connection with this policy will be strictly confidential. This will equally be the case with any counselling or other treatment undertaken by the employee.
**6.5.8 Intoxicated Employees**
Any employee who is suspected to be experiencing the effects of drugs or alcohol on site may be suspended on full pay by their line manager or member of management. The employee will be sent from the premises pending full investigation of the alleged misconduct. On conclusion of the investigation, if there is found to be any substance to the concern then the employee will be instructed to return to work at the earliest opportunity to discuss the matter within a disciplinary hearing.
If an employee who is visibly affected by drugs or alcohol makes any attempt to drive this should be prevented by a manager. If necessary the manager should arrange transport for the employee.
**6.5.9 Voluntary Disclosure**
An employee may seek assistance for a drugs or alcohol problem at any time during their employment. He or she will be advised to seek medical advice from their GP and the Company will consider referring the employee to the Company’s Occupational Health Practitioner. The employee will be advised that they will have follow-up reviews with their manager, in order to obtain progress updates and ensure the Company is exploring any adjustments on either a temporary or permanent basis, which it should consider to assist the employee. Any information disclosed will be treated in the strictest confidence.
**6.5.10 Relapse**
If an employee who has previously undergone effective treatment but suffers a relapse the Company will consider each case individually. A medical report will be sought indicating the likely treatment/rehabilitation time that the employee will require. The question of whether time will be provided for this is at the discretion of the Company. If further treatment is unsuccessful or if recovery seems unlikely the company may follow the capability/disciplinary policy and action may be necessary up to and including possible dismissal.
**6.5.11 Employee Rights**
•The Company recognises that alcohol or drug dependency is an illness and will therefore treat it in such a way. As a result, reasonable time off may be considered in order for any employee to seek outside assistance. (Please refer to policy for time off for medical appointments)
•An employee has the right to return to the same job after effective treatment or where this is not advisable to suitable alternative employment wherever possible.
•An employee’s promotional prospects will not be affected provided that they have received effective treatment for their drug or alcohol addiction and have demonstrated the ability to perform the requirement of the role.
•If no suitable employment can be found for the employee then dismissal on the grounds of capability may be an option for consideration
**6.5.12 Social Functions and Other Company Business**
Employees are expected to act in a reasonable and orderly manner during social functions/work related events, where alcohol would be made available. Any misconduct at such functions may be dealt with under the Company Disciplinary Procedure. An employee will be expected to demonstrate conduct that is acceptable in the circumstances. Any employee whose behaviour is deemed inappropriate, may be subject to serious disciplinary action, the most extreme cases being dealt with as Gross Misconduct. With prior senior management permission, on very special occasions there may be limited alcohol provided on site.
**6.5.13 Testing and Searching**
Should the Company have reasonable cause to suspect that a worker is under the influence or in the possession of drugs and alcohol on Company premises, the Company may request to search the individual’s person and belongings. In addition the Company may consider that it is appropriate to contact the police service at any time during the proceedings.
**Section Seven**
**Email, Voicemail, Telephony, Intranet and Internet**
**Policy**
ICS IT, systems, voicemail and telephony systems are important tools, which aid
communication internally and with clients to improve organisational efficiency. However, inappropriate use of these systems can cause serious problems, which may involve legal claims against both the Company and individual employees. Moreover, excessive unnecessary traffic on the network places constraints on its use for business purposes and slows it down, inappropriate use and personal calls made from the Company’s telephone systems can also impact on our ability to conduct our business. The Company has therefore established this policy setting out the correct use of the Internet, email and voicemail and telephony systems and the response to inappropriate use. This policy is designed to:
•Ensure that the Company’s IT, voicemail and telephony facilities are used effectively as business tools.
•Ensure all employees recognise their rights and obligations with regard to the use of these systems.
•Protect the interests of both of the Company and individual employees by expressly stating the rules governing the use of e-mail, Internet and intranet, voicemail and telephony systems and in particular forbidding unauthorised activity and abuse of the facilities.
•Clarify the access and disclosure of electronic mail messages created, sent or received by employees using the Company’s electronic mail systems and covers inappropriate use of the voicemail and telephony systems.
Non-compliance with this policy could constitute misconduct including gross misconduct and may result in dismissal, including summary dismissal.
It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure that voicemail and telephony systems, e-mail and the Internet are used properly as business tools. Anyone aware that the voicemail and telephony systems, e-mail and Internet facilities have been abused should report the violation to his or her immediate line manager, who is expected to take appropriate action, which could include recourse to the disciplinary procedure. Any action taken will be in accordance with the Company’s disciplinary procedure.
**7.1 Authorised Use**
The Company maintains email, voicemail and telephony systems intended to assist in conducting our business. Emails and voicemails should only be sent or left in this context. It is not practical to forbid all employees’ use of the systems for non-business matters, however this type of communication must be kept to a minimum and engaging in extended social exchanges both internally and externally is not permitted. The abuse of e-mail can have a serious impact upon both the individual recipients of the e-mail messages and on the wider reputation of the Company, where acts of harassment or negligent acts may have an impact in law for the sender, the recipient and the company. The Company is strongly committed to ensuring that e-mail is used effectively as a business tool. Evidence of any employee using e-mail in an inappropriate manner will be investigated and disciplinary action may apply.
**7.2 Practical Points**
Internal emails should only be sent to those employees to whom they are relevant.
The Company has distribution lists for the email system, however, these should only be used by authorised individuals for appropriate business purposes. If you need to send an email to a group of people either via a distribution list or by selecting names through the address book, always check with your manager whether it is appropriate before you do so. Although the business has checks to prevent the sending and receipt of e-mails containing offensive material it is not always possible to prevent these from reaching your inbox. If you receive an offensive or inappropriate e-mail
from a colleague or external source you should advise your line manager immediately.
When sending confidential emails you must make every effort to ensure that this confidentiality is protected. External emails automatically have a confidentiality notice attached, however a confidentiality notice should be included on such internal emails as follows: “This document is strictly confidential and intended only for use by the addressee”.
Email is one form of communication only and emails and voicemails should not be used as a substitute for face to-face communication or communication by telephone, fax or regular mail, where these are more appropriate. Emails must be drafted carefully taking into account discrimination, harassment, company representation and defamation issues.
Floppy discs or CDs may be a source of viruses and should never be used without first being scanned.
Never import non-text files such as screen savers, graphics files, cartoons or other unknown messages.
Never load any additional software on the PC.
Always make hard copies of emails both sent and received if records are required. All paper files should contain a complete record of all relevant communications.
Always ensure that you obtain confirmation of receipt of important internal messages.
Unnecessary messages can cause irritation and create congestion and bottlenecks preventing business emails reaching their destination and thereby affecting the service we give to clients. Do not add to this by sending trivial messages or by unnecessarily copying emails and do not advertise by email or send messages for missing items unless they are genuinely urgent for business reasons. The Company provides employee notice boards for “social notices”.
Delete unopened mail messages you have left in other people’s mailboxes when you have received an answer to a general query or when the message is time sensitive and has passed its sell-by date. This is particularly important to ease the burden on people who have been away from their PC’s for some time, e.g. return from holiday or sickness absence.
If you make a telephone call from any Company telephone, the system automatically sends a CLI (Call Line Identification), which the caller can establish originated from ICS. Inappropriate calls could be investigated by Ofcom and could lead to disciplinary action being taken.
Please be aware that calls may be recorded for training, quality and monitoring purposes.
**7.3 Unauthorised Use**
The following are regarded as incorrect use of the email, internet and voicemail and telephony systems:
▪Accessing, sending or leaving messages which may be considered pornographic to any degree, offensive or defamatory or may constitute bullying or harassment, e.g. on the grounds of, for example, age, sex, race, disability, gender specific comments, religious or political beliefs or sexual orientation or which may cause offence to colleagues including comments about
other employees or workers. Any act of discrimination which contravenes equal opportunities or is offensive to the dignity of people at work.
▪Private or freelance business.
▪Gambling.
▪Conducting political activities.
▪Any breach of the company’s information security policy, including the sharing of e-mail sign-ons and passwords, unless specifically created for this purpose and authorised
▪Any illegal activity.
▪Use of the email system for sending or receiving chain letters.
▪Use of the systems for humour and trivial use other than in the context of a business relationship.
▪Sending anything that might cause clients or other outsiders to consider the Company uses the media for trivial or improper purposes.
▪Use of the systems to communicate non-business matters to large groups of people, for example items for sale.
▪Sending or receiving copyright material, trade secrets, proprietary financial information or similar materials
without prior authorisation.
▪Disclosing confidential information about other employees, the Company or its clients.
▪Entering into contractually binding commitments by email or voicemail unless you are authorised to do.
▪Transmission of non-approved data.
▪Transmission of data, which contains viruses or other computer programs of a malicious nature.
▪Incorporating screen savers other than those approved by the Company.
▪Incorporating bit map files which are graphics/image files. Files of excessive size (more than 10mb) are blocked by the e-mail system. Contact the Technical Services Team for alternatives.
▪For security reasons all executable files plus the following file attachments are automatically blocked by the email systems:
•.scr
•.bat
•.com
•.vbs
•.wsh
•.sys
•.reg
•.drv
▪Access to e-mail or the Internet may be restricted. Please note that internet usage is monitored
▪Attempting to access read or tamper with other people’s communications.
▪Unauthorised attempts to circumvent security systems.
▪Forging the source of communications.
▪Interfering with the operation of computers or the network
▪Where your responsibilities include monitoring of call recordings, using the NICE Perform Utility, you are only permitted to review calls from the campaigns for which you work. Unauthorised monitoring and searching for calls unrelated to your area of work is prohibited. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in formal disciplinary proceedings.
**7.4 Implementation**
No email, voicemail, or internet activity sent or received through the Company’s system is private. The Company reserves and intends to exercise its right to review, audit, intercept, access and disclose on a random basis all messages created, received or sent over the email or voicemail system for any purpose. Incoming and outgoing e-mail traffic is monitored. This includes automated monitoring which blocks e-mails containing profanities and alerts the IT and HR departments.
The contents of email or voicemail so obtained by the Company in the bona fide exercise of these powers may be disclosed without the permission of the employee. Employees should be aware that emails or voicemails however confidential or damaging might have to be disclosed in court or other proceedings. An email, which has been trashed or deleted, can still be retrieved.
Email messages may be used as evidence in disciplinary proceedings or for any other legitimate purpose as required by the Company. All email and voicemail users will be issued with a unique individual password. Use of passwords for security does not guarantee confidentiality and all passwords must be disclosed to the Company if requested. Access to any system using another employee’s password without prior authorisation from a Manager or Director is likely to
result in disciplinary action.
Any employee who reasonably suspects a violation of this policy shall notify their Departmental Manager or Director.
**7.5 Other IT-related issues**
**7.5.1 Authorised software only**
Only software packages provided by the Company may be used
**7.5.2 Virus protection**
The Company uses virus-checking software that scans all files on the system at least once per day. No discs should be inserted or loaded before they have been virus-checked by an authorised member of the Company’s IT Department.
**7.5.3 Password protection and non-disclosure**
Passwords should not normally be disclosed to anybody, not even members of your team;
There are two exceptions to this;
1) There may be occasions when it is necessary to divulge passwords to members of the IT Department in order to resolve technical problems.
2) If you are out of the office due to unforeseen circumstances, it may be necessary to divulge your password to a colleague so that they can access a document urgently.
In both cases you should change your password afterwards at the earliest possible opportunity.
**7.5.4 Games**
No computer games are to be circulated by e-mail or on disc, or saved on any internal system.
**7.5.5 Company property**
Employees who leave the Company should return any IT items, including mobile phones, which are the property of the company.
**7.5.6 Confidentiality**
•Never read e-mails that are not addressed to you.
•If you receive an e-mail that has been sent to you by mistake, notify the sender by sending the message back to them. Delete the original message from your Sent Items and Inbox.
•If you read any confidential information by accident in this way, you have a duty of confidentiality not to reveal the information, as outlined in your contract.
•You have no right to read other people’s e-mails without their consent or to send e-mails under someone else’s name. This will be treated as gross misconduct. Any related incidents of slander, libel or offensive language will be dealt with as deemed appropriate.
•You should protect your e-mail by closing it down when you are away from your terminal.
•Approved screensavers with passwords should be set to come on to protect any documents that you have opened. The Company reserves the right to deal with any suspicion of illegal activity on company premises or using company equipment by referring to the police or the Data Protection Registrar.
**7.6 Consequences of Non-Compliance with this Policy**
Any employee who fails to observe this policy or uses the Internet, Intranet, email or voicemail system in any other way for improper purposes is liable to be referred to the disciplinary procedures. Serious or persistent non observance may constitute gross misconduct within the Company disciplinary policy and may result in summary dismissal.

**Section Eight**
**Employment Policies**
**8.1 Company Sickness Absence Policy\***
**8.1.1 Introduction**
The Company is committed to ensuring that all sickness absence is responded to in an appropriate and supportive manner and that sickness procedures are applied consistently to all employees. All managers and staff are expected to co-operate in order to achieve the aims of this policy.
Employees are responsible for ensuring their regular attendance at work. In addition to this employees are responsible for ensuring that they notify the Company when they are unable to attend work due to sickness absence in accordance with the procedure set below.
Sickness absence is both costly and disruptive. High levels of sickness absence within a work area have a detrimental effect on the level and quality of the provision of our service to our clients, place an additional burden on colleagues at work and can result in increased costs through the use of agency staff and overtime. It is therefore in the mutual interest of both the Company and individuals to ensure that sickness absence is kept to a minimum.
**8.1.2 Recording Sickness Absence**
Clear and accurate absence records are essential for monitoring sickness absence and a requirement for calculating sick pay entitlements. Records are maintained for every member of staff. Such records show dates of absence and the recorded reason for such absence and /or the nature of the illness. This information is confidential.
It is the aim of the Company that overall sickness levels are recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.
**8.1.3 Sick Pay Scheme – Company Sick Pay and Statutory Sick Pay**

Company sick pay is discretionary. No sick pay will be paid to any employee with less than two years’ service. SSP will be paid as per below.

**8.1.3.1 Employee’s Responsibilities**
It is the responsibility of every employee to look after his or her own health and fitness for work.
It is also their responsibility to:
•Ensure regular attendance at work
•Notify their line manager (or other designated person) if unable to attend for work in accordance with the Company and any agreed departmental procedures
•Submit the relevant certificates for absences
•Keep the Company informed of all sickness absence and of the expected date for returning to work
•Attend an appointment with Occupational Health on request
•Ensure that they do not do anything which is inconsistent with being on recorded sickness absence, or which delays their expected return to work.
•Advise Manager where, as part of their recuperation whilst on recorded sickness absence, they intend to take a holiday prior to returning to work and give details of location and dates etc.
Any failure to comply with any of these responsibilities may lead to any Company sick payments being withdrawn and/or an investigation under the Company’s Disciplinary procedure.
**8.1.3.2 Line Manager’s Responsibilities**
Line Managers are responsible for monitoring sickness absence in their own areas and for responding to all individual sickness absence cases appropriately, including seeking advice from Human Resources and taking action where necessary. Line Managers are also responsible for maintaining contact with staff absent from work and ensuring their return to work is supported appropriately. Line Managers should conduct a return to work discussion with staff, completing the relevant documentation, however short the absence. (See return to Work
following absence below). **Line Managers must ensure Fobs are deactivated for employees who will be on long term absence of 2 weeks or more.**
**8.1.3.3 The role of Human Resources**
Whilst the responsibility for managing individual sickness absence cases rest ultimately with the appropriate Manager, advice must be sought from Human Resources where appropriate. Human Resources are up to date with employment law and good practice and therefore their advice, contribution and involvement can make a significant contribution towards ensuring a consistent approach across the Company and achieving effective resolution in such cases. In addition, Human Resources maintain close professional links with Occupational Health advisors.
**8.1.3.4 The role of Occupational Health and the GP reports**
Occupational Health and GP reports provide appropriate specialist advice to individuals, managers and HR where requested on any matter relating to an individual’s fitness for work. Occupational Health provides a confidential and advisory service to managers and staff on matters of fitness for work related to the working environment. Employees who meet the criteria for either intermittent or long-term sickness absence may be referred to the appropriate Occupational Health specialist and/or a request made to secure a GP medical report. The purpose of a referral is to seek advice on an individual’s fitness for work. Occupational Health will not provide information on a specific diagnosis; instead the emphasis is on the employee’s fitness for the work for which
he/she is employed. The Company will request that Occupational Health arrange an independent assessment of an employee’s health if appropriate.
**8.1.4 Notifying Sickness**
Every employee has the responsibility for immediately notifying their Line Manager of an absence, including the reason, and the likely duration of this absence. Failure to report sickness within the specified time and procedures may result in sick pay being withheld and/or an investigation under the disciplinary procedure.
In cases of sickness at work employees must report to their Manager and complete the necessary form to absent them from work on the grounds of feeling unwell. Failure to do so may result in an investigation under the disciplinary procedure.
It is the employee’s responsibility to ensure that an appropriate certificate, either an Absence and Self certification Statement or a Doctor’s certificate, covers all absence. Failure to produce sick certificates within 2 days of receipt of the certificate from the Doctor may result in pay being withheld or delayed. When an employee has exhausted their entitlement to Company Sick Pay, they are still required to submit the appropriate medical certificates for the duration of their absence from work.
Where an employee ceases or fails to submit appropriate certificates, they would be informed that their pay has been withheld and that a continued failure to submit medical certificates may result in an investigation under the disciplinary procedure. If sickness absence continues for eight calendar days or more staff must submit a Doctor’s certificate. The line manager must receive the certificate in good time, normally within five days of the start of the second week of absence. The Company does not guarantee payment of sick pay on backdated certificates from GP’s and failure
to supply a certificate will result in the withholding of pay.
Employees falling sick during a period of annual leave should normally notify their Manager of their sickness as soon as practicable, and in any event no later than the date of their expected return to work from holiday. Employees who become sick during annual leave must submit, at the latest on their first day back at work, a Doctor’s certificate in order to convert the annual leave to recorded sick leave. Where annual leave immediately follows a period of sickness, the employee must inform their Manager of termination of sick leave and commencement of annual leave.
Sickness absence as a result of accidents or incidents whilst on duty must be reported to Health and Safety. Details must be recorded by completion of an Accident/Incident form.
**8.1.5 Return to Work following Sickness Absence**
On return to work from a period of sickness absence, employees must report to their Manager.
When an employee returns to work following sickness absence, regardless of the length or reason for the absence, the line manager will arrange to conduct a return to work discussion as an opportunity to cover the following points
•Welcome the employee back to work
•Update them on any work issues they may have missed during their absence
•Assess whether it is appropriate to seek medical advice as to the individual’s fitness to return to work
The manager is responsible for ensuring that they keep a diary note of this meeting and completing with the employee an Absence and Self-Certification Statement.
Where an employee fails to return to work on the expected date and fails to communicate appropriately with the Company, the circumstances shall be regarded as No Call No Show or Unauthorised Absence and will be dealt with under the Disciplinary procedure.
**8.1.6 Return to Work after Long Term Absence**
In some cases, employees who have been on long-term absence (i.e. greater than 2 weeks or pro rata equivalent) may require Occupational Health or GP clearance that they are medically fit to return to work. If sufficient notice is not given the return to work may be delayed pending Occupational Health and/or GP advice. Completion of a medical consent form may also be asked to be provided. It is also important to understand we have the right to contact a GP for reference to your illness. Furthermore OH physicians may wish to contact GP’s for clarity, and
there is a charge should employees fail to attend arranged OH appointments.
**8.1.7 Intermittent Sickness Absence**
Intermittent absence may consist of a series of individual days off, a number of episodes of a few days sickness or a mixture of these.
Following each instance of absence the manager will conduct a return to work interview with the employee to explore the reasons for the employee’s absence and to advise the employee of the potential consequences of further absences in the future.
Where a manager is concerned by an employee’s level of recorded sickness absence the manager will seek advice from Human Resources and an employee may be referred to Occupational Health for an assessment of fitness for work. The Manager will keep notes of all actions and discussions, as they may be required in the future. In the event that the pattern of intermittent absence continues and exceeds the Company’s standards, as set out in the section on Attendance Standards, advice will be sought from HR as to whether either the disciplinary or capability process as applicable. It is possible that combined Disciplinary and Capability hearings are held when it is unclear which is
the most appropriate procedure to follow. It will be for the combined hearing to determine which is the most appropriate policy based on the information provided at the hearing.
**8.1.8 Long Term Sickness Absence**
Long-term sickness absence is defined as absence of twenty working days (or pro rata equivalent) in any twelvemonth period or more, which need not be continuous. In such cases it is essential that regular contact with the employee is maintained by their line manager with advice available as applicable from HR during their recorded absence. Advice may be sought from the Occupational Health and/or GP as to the fitness for work, and likely return to work date if appropriate. It is not necessary to await a return to work to initiate a referral to Occupational Health or request a GP medical report.
The following steps will normally be followed where a long-term absence has been identified:
•The appropriate manager with advice from Human Resources will review the sickness absence record of the individual highlighting any issues or areas of potential concern.
•Manager will write to the employee explaining that their sickness absence record meets the criteria for long-term absence. It may be appropriate to refer the individual to Occupational Health for further advice on the individual’s fitness for returning to work and any support or adjustments, which may be appropriate. Information will normally also be sought from the individual's GP or Consultant.
•The employee may be referred to Occupational Health for an assessment of fitness for work where appropriate.
•On receipt of the Occupational Health report and/or a GP report, a formal meeting will be arranged with the employee and their Manager. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the recommendations from the report/s, the implications and an action plan for improvement, including expected return to work dates and review dates where appropriate.
The manager, in considering how best the Company can support the individual to return to work and seek to reduce further absence in the future. Factors to take into account include:
•Arrangements for a return, where the OH report indicate a return to work immediately or in the foreseeable future.
•The ability of the employee to undertake their full normal duties.
•The advice from Occupational Health in relation to the likelihood of related absence in the foreseeable future.
•The feasibility of reasonably practicable adjustments on either a temporary or a permanent basis.
These are not exhaustive or listed in order of priority and usage will depend on the particular circumstances of the case.
**8.1.9 Dismissal on the Grounds of Long Term Sickness Absence**
In cases of continuous long-term sickness absence where all reasonable attempts to support a return to work have been tried or are deemed not appropriate and there is still no likely return to work date in the foreseeable future, as a last option dismissal on grounds of capability will be considered. This will normally require medical advice confirming that the employee is unfit for work and unlikely to return in the foreseeable future. In the event of the above and where the employee is a member of the Pension Scheme consideration may be given to making an application for retirement on grounds of ill health. Any failure to comply with the Company's requirements regarding reporting of sickness absence of any aspect of the Company's policies and procedures for managing absence may result in loss of pay and/or an investigation under the Company's Disciplinary Procedures.
**8.2 Sick Pay Scheme\***
**8.2.1 Introduction**
The Company’s policy on sick pay provides for the following:
•A fair and consistent process for paying employees who are absent from work due to ill health
•A reasonable length of time for employees to recover from illness and return to work
**8.2.2 Sick Pay**
Sick Pay is made up of two elements:
•Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) – SSP regulation and amounts are set by the Government and may be varied from time to time. SSP is payable for 28 weeks after 3 linked working days of recorded sickness absence (provided that eligibility criteria such as minimum National Insurance contributions are met). Payment is at the level set by the Government and information regarding the current sum payable is available from Human Resources. Where a second or subsequent period of incapacity (of four days or more) occurs within 56 days of a previous period of incapacity of four days or more, SSP is payable from the first day of incapacity on the second or subsequent period – there are no waiting days)
•In some areas of the business, Company Sick pay (CSP) – a discretionary enhancement to ‘top-up’ SSP entitlement to full normal pay. Please check your offer of employment letter to ascertain whether you may be considered for discretionary sick pay.
**8.2.3 Payment of Sick Pay**
All sick pay payments are subject to the requirements for notification and certification of sickness absence as set out the in the Sickness and Absence Policy. Delay in completion and providing the appropriate sickness certification may result in payments under the Sick Pay scheme being withheld or delayed. Normally, no more than 5 days sickness would be paid in any rolling 12 month period.
**8.2.4 Discretionary Company Sick Pay**
Your manager will inform you of the discretionary company sick pay that applies in the area where you work.
•Any payment of Statutory Sick Pay will be offset against any payment of Company Sick Pay.
•In determining full pay, this is taken as full normal weekly pay as actually paid to the employee, and will include overtime should this be an express requirement of the employee’s terms and conditions. Where an individual’s paid hours vary week by week; the average hours worked over the three months prior to the start of the period of absence will be calculated.
•Holiday is likely to continue to accrue as normal during periods of paid sick leave (both CSP and SSP).
•If a public (or ‘bank’) holiday falls during a period of paid sick leave, the employee will continue to receive the sick pay to which they are entitled (SSP and CSP). However, no payment will be made for a public holiday that falls during a period of unpaid sick leave.
•Employees will not be eligible for any payments under this scheme for any period for which they receive any payments from other sources or schemes.
**8.2.5 Right of Appeal when Procedures have not been followed**
Where absence is unpaid due to failure to follow correct procedure, the employee has the right to appeal against this decision and must do so in writing to the Operations Director/Head of Department, stating who the absence was reported to and specific reasons as to why procedures were not followed. Appeals must be lodged within 5 working days from return to work and decisions will be given within 10 days. When the outcome of the appeal is decided, the Senior Manager will advise Human Resources who will record the outcome and submit a completed Payroll Adjustment Form, and Human Resources shall in turn inform Payroll where appropriate.
**8.2.6 Right of Appeal**
Where sickness absence exceeds the period of paid absence, an employee has the right to appeal for this additional absence to be paid. Appeals must be made in writing to the Operations Director/Head of Department, stating reasons why they believe payment should be made in this instance. The decision of the Operations Director/Head of Department is final. Appeals must be lodged within 5 working days of return to work and decisions will be given within 10 working days.
Where an appeal is upheld, the Operations Director/Head of Department will inform HR by submitting a completed Payroll adjustment form. Human Resources will confirm the decision in writing to the employee, and also inform payroll.
**8.2.7 Absence due to Injuries caused by Accidents**
•Normally, there will be no entitlement to CSP in the case of accidents due to either active participation in sport on a professional basis or where the absence is proven to be attributable directly to the employee’s own actions.
•The total sick pay entitlements for an employee who is absent as a result of an injury caused by an accident at work will not normally exceed the provisions of this policy. Payment of CSP may be withheld where the absence is due to the employee’s own negligence or an infringement of any Company rules or legislation (including the Health and Safety at Work Act etc).
•Employees who are absent as a result of an accident at work may be eligible to receive damages from a third party. The Company will pay the employee the equivalent of their normal entitlements under this Sick Pay Scheme in advance of any damages being received. In the event that the employee receives damages, any award for loss of earnings will be repayable to the Company to the equivalent of the sick pay entitlements actually paid but not in excess of the amount of compensation or damages paid by the third party and up to, but not exceeding, any
amount paid by us.
•Where an employee’s absence is a result of an accident at work consideration will be given, at the discretion of the Company, to discounting all or part of the period of sickness absence for the purposes of calculating sick pay entitlement for future periods of absence.
**8.2.8 Absence due to being a Victim of a Crime of Violence**
•An employee who is absent due to an injury as the result of a crime of violence in the normal course of their work will receive their normal entitlement under this scheme.
•Consideration will be given, at the discretion of the Company, to discounting all or part of the period of sickness absence for the purposes of calculating sick pay entitlements for future period of absence.
**8.2.9 Absence due to Contact with Infectious Diseases**
•An employee who is unable to attend work due to contact with any infectious disease e.g. meningitis, tuberculosis,
chicken pox etc must notify the Company immediately and provide the appropriate medical certification and if appropriate supporting evidence from a medical practitioner.
•Employees who are absent due to contact with an infectious disease may be entitled to receive full normal basic pay, at the discretion of the company, during their period of absence in line with the time limits set out in the CSP scheme. All the normal rules will apply in terms of notification and recording of the period of absence and arrangements for a return to work. However,
the period of absence may not count towards the entitlement to sick pay entitlements.
**8.2.10 Time off for Medical Appointments**
These guidelines are non-contractual and do not form part of your terms and conditions of employment. The Company recognises that it is likely to be necessary for all employees to attend medical appointments, at some point in their employment with the Company, and undertakes to treat every request for time off for medical appointments sensitively and fairly.
**8.2.11 Types of medical appointments**
Medical appointments covered by these guidelines are as follows:
•GP appointments
•Dental appointments
•Physiotherapy appointments (when referred by a GP or an occupational health doctor)
•NHS consultant or specialist appointments
•Diagnostic tests as recommended by a GP, occupational health doctor or specialist.
•Counselling appointments (when referred by a GP or the occupational health doctor)
•Antenatal appointments
•Chiropractor/osteopathy appointments (when referred by a GP or the occupational health doctor)
**8.2.12 Guidelines for requesting time off**
Management will undertake to ensure that requests for time off for medical appointments are not refused unnecessarily and that similar requests across teams are treated consistently. However, it is important to realise that the ability to accommodate the requested time off will be largely dependent on the size of the team and the nature of the work carried out.
Reasonable notice should be given. Employees should provide a copy of the appointment card or referral letter where this is practical, or provide evidence of the visit after the event.
Employees should try in the first instance to organise appointments for non-working hours. Where this is not possible, employees should try to organise appointments for the beginning or the end of their shift. As a general rule, up to 1 hour is allowed for all appointments other than antenatal appointments. Employees who feel they may need more time for a single appointment are advised to discuss this matter with their manager prior to the appointment.
**8.2.13 Is time off for medical appointments paid?**
There is no automatic right to paid time off for medical appointments, other than antenatal appointments. Where possible, appointments should be arranged for outside working hours or booked for early morning or late afternoon. You should try not to be absent from work for more than one hour at a time. Evidence of Doctor/Dentist/Hospital visits may be required.
All employees are entitled to paid time off for antenatal appointments as advised by a GP, midwife or registered health visitor. In areas of the business where there is more flexibility in working hours it may be possible to grant an employee time off in lieu to attend medical appointments, or to agree that the hours will be made up elsewhere in the week. All employees are requested to try to arrange appointments outside their normal working hours, wherever possible.
**8.3 Compassionate Leave Guidelines\***
These guidelines are non-contractual and do not form part of your terms and conditions of employment. The Company recognises that at some point in their working lives most employees will have to take unexpected time off to deal with a distressing situation in their personal lives.
All employees, regardless of their length of service and whether they have a permanent or temporary contract are entitled to request Compassionate Leave if they should feel it appropriate.
**8.3.1 When is Compassionate Leave appropriate?**
Compassionate Leave is appropriate in the following circumstances, at the discretion of the company:
•Bereavement in the immediate family (e.g. spouse, partner, parent, son, daughter, sibling, grandparent or any other relationship which the Company judges to be immediate at its discretion) – time should be allowed to enable the employee to make immediate arrangements with the appropriate authorities and manage immediate domestic affairs, where appropriate. A copy of the death certificate may be required.
•Funeral attendance for a member of the immediate family (as specified above)
Employees can also request unpaid Time off for Dependants (see guidelines) for the death/funeral of a dependant as defined by the regulations, but the Company may consider that it is appropriate instead to grant this time as paid or unpaid Compassionate Leave
•The death of a person who is not an immediate family member but for whom the employee is the named next of-kin and as such has to make arrangements and manage affairs.
Compassionate Leave **may** be appropriate in other circumstances. Employees are advised to speak to their line manager for clarification as to whether Compassionate Leave may
be granted. Employees should contact their line manager as soon as practical to request Compassionate Leave. Employees will normally receive a Return to Work Interview on their return to work.
**8.3.2 When is Compassionate Leave not appropriate?**
Other than in exceptional circumstances, sudden, serious illness of a dependant who has to attend hospital unexpectedly or requires total care at home. Any request for leave of this type should be requested as Time off for Dependants.
**8.3.3 How much Compassionate Leave can be granted?**
Management discretion is applied to all requests for compassionate leave, taking each individual situation into account. An appropriate amount of time will be agreed with employees at the time they make the original request for Compassionate Leave. Employees can request longer periods of
leave than originally granted if they feel it necessary, giving their full reasons for making the request.
Where employees are dealing with particularly difficult domestic circumstances, Compassionate Leave may be supplemented by some annual leave, or a period of unpaid parental leave (subject to qualifying conditions).
**8.3.4 Is Compassionate Leave paid?**
All requests for Compassionate Leave will be reviewed on their own merits and considered on a case-by-case basis. Managers will normally confirm with employees at the time they request Compassionate Leave whether this is paid, unpaid or a mixture of both. A copy of the death certificate may be required where Compassionate Leave is to be paid.
Normally a maximum of 2 days paid compassionate leave will be granted. In exceptional circumstances Directors have discretion to award an extension to this.
**8.4 Company Disciplinary Policy and Procedure\***
**8.4.1 Disciplinary Policy**
This policy sets out the Company’s expectations in relation to conduct and performance at work as well as a framework for dealing with to deal with difficulties which may arise in relation to this during the course of your employment. The policy and procedure does not form part of your Contract of Employment and may be amended and reviewed from time to time.
The Company reserves the right to curtail or to dispense with the procedure set out below in the case of employees with short service. Short service is someone that has been working for less than one year.
**8.4.2 Aims of the Policy**
The Company expects the highest standards of conduct and performance from every employee in order to ensure that it achieves its business objectives.
Managers at all levels have a responsibility to:
•Set high standards of conduct for themselves and for their staff
•Clearly define and communicate the Company’s expectations on standards of conduct to their employees.
Every employee has a responsibility to:
•Ensure that they observe the standards of conduct set by their line manager/the Company
•Draw their line manager’s attention to anything which hinders them in achieving those standards.
The Company’s HR department has responsibility to:
•Provide guidance and support to managers in relation to the application of this policy.
•Ensure that this policy is applied fairly and consistently across the Company.
•Up date this policy in line with relevant employment legislation and best practice as and when required.
The Disciplinary Procedure should be viewed as a mechanism for helping employees where their conduct is unsatisfactory, rather than merely as a process for imposing sanctions.
This policy and procedure does not form part of an employee’s Contract of Employment. Further, the Company reserves the right to give notice of termination to employees with less than twelve months service without reference to this procedure. However, no employee will be dismissed before the Company has set out the nature of the complaint against them in writing and invited them to a meeting to discuss the complaint. The Company reserves the right to move to any stage of the procedure it sees fit, dependent upon the severity of the incident/s in question
**8.4.3 Disciplinary Procedure: Informal Stage**
Minor or initial issues will normally be dealt with informally by the employee’s line manager by giving an informal reprimand, advice or counselling. The line manager will normally:
•Make clear what the expected standards of conduct are e.g. attendance, adherence to policies, punctuality.
•Explain how the employee’s performance has fallen short of expected standards, and therefore what the employee needs to do to comply with such standards
•Explain any repetition of misconduct may lead to formal disciplinary action
•Advise the employee that a confidential file note of the informal warning will be made including the date and any resulting action plans.
•Document the key points of the discussion using a Conversation Recorder.
Informal warnings/counselling do not form part of the formal Disciplinary Procedure.
**8.4.4 Disciplinary Procedure: Formal Stages**
The following procedure will apply to more serious problems after an investigation of the facts. Where appropriate, and particularly in cases of serious misconduct, the Company may suspend an employee on full pay during the course of such an investigation or where it is inappropriate for the employee to attend work. Suspension from duty, on full pay, is not regarded as disciplinary action but merely a holding measure pending further investigations and for which it is clearly undesirable for an individual to remain on duty. The Disciplinary Procedure will normally be pursued in the following stages. However, if misconduct occurs which the Company considers being sufficiently serious, the Company may enter the Procedure at the stage that it considers is most appropriate in the circumstances.
**Stage 1 – Recorded Verbal Warning**
**Stage 2 – First Written Warning**
**Stage 3 – Final Written Warning**
**Stage 4 – Dismissal**
If an employee fails to attend a disciplinary hearing, without just cause and notification the Company reserves the right to make a decision in their absence based on the information available at the time.
**8.4.5 Misconduct**
The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples, which are normally regarded as misconduct:
•Poor timekeeping, including persistent lateness (even for short periods) or leaving early without prior permission.
•Inaccurate completion of expense claims or timesheets.
•Persistent short term absence.
•Pledging credit without authority.
•Serious negligence.
•Wilful negligence (may be gross misconduct depending on seriousness)
•Committing any act bringing yourself or the company into disrepute e.g. benefit fraud\* (may be gross misconduct depending on seriousness)
•Customer or client complaint (may be gross misconduct depending on seriousness)
•Refusal to carry out lawful or reasonable management instruction
•Failure to follow Company rules, policies, procedures and operational instructions
•Not carrying out duties in a satisfactory manner
•Failure to follow procedures regarding Company property or security
•Carelessness with the property of other employees, the Company, customers or other third parties
•Failure to observe IT guidelines and rules concerning use of e-mail and internet
•Smoking in an unauthorised area
•Behaviour inconsistent with ICS's Equal Opportunities Policy or any act of discrimination or
harassment on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religious belief, political opinion or affiliation, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or disability.
•Inappropriate postings on internet or social networking forums including any mention of clients by name and any
potentially damaging comments about the business, its clients or customers.
•Minor breaches will mainly be memory lapses such as, but are not limited to, coats behind chairs, cigarettes,
tobacco, carrier bag after lunch, paper left in printer, packaging around medicines, bags, purses, writing materials.
**8.4.6 Criminal proceedings**
Employees must declare to their manager any act or incident where it is likely to lead to criminal proceedings being brought which are relevant to their job duties, to the Company and its activities or which may require time off from work to attend court.
**8.4.7 Procedure for Disciplinary Hearings**
Appendix One sets out the procedure to be followed at a disciplinary hearing.
**8.4.8 Disciplinary Sanctions**
The decision as to the appropriate disciplinary sanction (if any) will be made by the manager conducting the hearing after hearing the facts of the case and any explanation offered by the employee. The decision will normally be confirmed in writing within a reasonable timescale after the hearing. In each case the warning will state:
•The reason for the hearing
•The explanation given by the employee and any mitigating factors presented
•The finding of the disciplinary hearing
•The stage of the warning
•The improvement expected from the employee
•The warning will be effective for 12 months from the date of the warning for Written or Final Written (6 months
in the case of Verbal warning)
•What the next disciplinary stage may be if there is any further misconduct
•The employee has a right of appeal
If an employee is found to have committed a further disciplinary offence before the expiry of an existing warning, the Company may move to the next stage in the disciplinary procedure whether or not the offences are of the same nature. The procedure may be invoked at any stage if the seriousness or repetitive nature of the employee’s conduct or performance warrants such action.
**8.4.9 Stage 4: Dismissal**
If the employee is responsible for further misconduct following a Stage 3 final written warning or commits an act of gross misconduct, dismissal will normally result.
The outcome of the dismissal hearing will be confirmed in writing. The letter will confirm:
•The reason for dismissal
•Whether dismissal is with or without notice, and the date from which dismissal takes effect
•The employee has a right of appeal
**8.4.9a Fraud Prevention**
We will check your details with/against fraud prevention databases.
Fraud prevention databases have been established for the purpose of allowing employers to share data on their employment fraud cases. Should our investigations identify fraud or the commission of any other criminal offences by you [on your part] when applying for, or during the course of your [employment or duties] with us, we will record the details of this on the relevant fraud prevention databases. This information may be accessed from the UK and other countries and used by law enforcement agencies and by us and other organizations to prevent fraud. Please contact us at hr.administrators@ICS.co.uk if you want to receive details of the relevant fraud
prevention databases through with we share information.
**8.4.10 Gross Misconduct**
The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of misconduct that are normally regarded as gross misconduct and could therefore result in summary dismissal:
•Theft, fraud\*, deliberate falsification of records, reports, timesheets, expense claims, data or customer records
•Fighting, assault on another person
•Deliberate damage to property of the Company or of a third party
•Being in possession of, consuming or being under the influence of illegal drugs at work or on Company premises
•Consuming or being under the influence of alcohol at work or on Company premises
•Negligence which causes or could cause significant loss, damage or injury or other serious consequences (for example criminal or civil liability or damage to the Company’s reputation)
•A serious act of insubordination
•Committing any act bringing yourself or the Company or any of its clients into disrepute including postings on social networking forums, internets or blogs.
•Wilful or reckless failure to follow the Company’s health and safety rules that endangers the lives of, or may cause serious injury to, employees or any other person(s)
•Serious harassment or bullying (including where motivated by race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religious belief, political opinion or affiliation, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, age, gender reassignment or disability)
•Disclosure of confidential information
•Refusal or persistent failure to carry out working instructions or Company rules and procedures
•Serious breach of the Company’s e-mail, internet and computer use policies
•Cutting off calls
•Call avoidance (including subverting handling calls for example short calls and placing calls on hold unnecessarily)
•Behaving in a way that is found to be offensive by clients or customers
•Bringing weapons on site
•Using social media to make adverse comments regarding the business, its clients or customers
•Major breaches will be considered as real
threat for the company. They include, but are not limited to, phones **turn on or off** on call floors, USB sticks, unauthorised pens + paper, drinks with packaging and pen next to it, recordable devices, papers with customer details, card details etc.
•AWOL
If an employee is dismissed for gross misconduct then the dismissal will take immediate effect and the employee will not be entitled to work their contractual or statutory notice period or be entitled to pay in lieu of their notice period.
**8.4.11 Suspension, Demotion and/or Transfer**
The Company reserves the right to suspend an employee on full pay during any period of investigation under the disciplinary procedure. Whilst on suspension, the employee shall co-operate with any investigation and be available for interview during their normal working hours.
The Company may impose disciplinary suspension without pay to a maximum of one working week, or may demote or transfer an employee. If an employee is demoted or transferred, they are entitled to salary and other terms and conditions appropriate to the position to which they have been demoted and/or transferred. Unless specifically agreed in writing by the Company, suspension, demotion and/or transfer will not result in warnings being ineffective.
**8.4.12 Appeals**
An employee has the right to appeal against any sanction imposed under the Disciplinary Procedure. The letter confirming the outcome of the disciplinary hearing will also outline how the employee may submit an appeal. The employee must submit their appeal in writing, stating the reasons, within 5 working days of receiving the outcome in writing, to the person specified in the outcome letter who will appoint an appropriate person to hear the appeal. Reasons for appeal may include the following:
•New relevant information has come to light
•The Disciplinary Procedure has not been followed correctly
•The sanction issued is too harsh
**8.4.13 Appendix One - Procedure for the conduct of Disciplinary Hearings**
Once the investigation has determined there is a case to answer, the following procedure will apply:
1. The employee is informed in writing of the details of the allegation, including details of the investigation. The employee is given reasonable notice, of the date, time and venue of the disciplinary hearing and provided with a copy of the disciplinary policy and procedures unless already supplied with the employee handbook. The employee is also notified of their right to be accompanied at the hearing. The employee must confirm to the manager before the day of the hearing that they will be attending the disciplinary hearing and whether they will be accompanied and if so by whom.
2. At the hearing, the disciplinary manager will be accompanied by either a representative from Human Resources or another manager who has not been involved with the investigation. There also may be an additional impartial individuals appointed as a note taker as part of the proceedings
3. It is the role of the accompanying company representative to help take notes of the meeting and assist the disciplinary chair in determining the level of any appropriate disciplinary sanction. The company representative may also ask questions to assist with the procedure.
4. The person conducting the hearing will introduce everyone and ensure that everyone attending understands the procedure and their own and each other’s roles.
5. The evidence gathered by the investigating manager in respect of the allegation will be presented. The investigating manager may be present to answer questions and provide clarification.
6. The employee will be given the opportunity to provide an explanation.
7. The hearing manager will ask questions to clarify any relevant points and to seek confirmation of the information provided.
8. The hearing will then adjourn to allow the manager to consider all of the information that has been provided before reaching a decision. Whilst it is acknowledged that it is in no-one’s interests to prolong the adjournment more than it is absolutely necessary, it is also recognised that in complex and/or potentially serious matters it may be appropriate to adjourn for a period of time.
9. Once a decision has been reached, the manager will convey his/her decision regarding the level of disciplinary sanction and the reasons why.
10. A letter confirming the decision will be sent to the employee or given to them in person as soon as reasonably possible following the hearing. The letter will set out the right of appeal.
11. The Company representative present at the hearing will produce notes of the hearing. All documentation connected with the hearing will be placed on the personal file – electronic and/or hard copy.
**8.5 Company Capability Policy and Procedure\***
This Policy sets out the Company’s approach to dealing with employee performance issues, and as such does not form part of any contract of employment. The Company reserves the right to amend the Policy from time to time. The Company reserves the right to curtail or to dispense with the procedure set out below in the case of employees serving their probationary period.
**8.5.1 Aims of the Policy**
Our clients and customers expect the highest level and quality of service from our employees on all occasions. The aim of the Capability Procedure is to provide a consistent and reasonable approach to identifying and managing employee performance issues. The Company aims to provide staff with the necessary support and training to enable them to undertake their tasks and responsibilities to a satisfactory level. As part of this process, the Company’s information on training and development and induction is set out elsewhere.
**8.5.2 When to use the Capability Procedure**
Capability refers to the employee's ability to perform the duties of the job as these duties develop – as exemplified in levels of skill, aptitude, knowledge or experience. It is important to distinguish lack of capability from misconduct, for which the Disciplinary Procedure is appropriate.
The Capability Procedure may be used:
•Where an employee is performing below the standard required by the job, although they are not doing anything deliberately wrong, or
•Where an employee may be deemed to be medically incapable of performing their current role.
The Procedure recognises the need to provide reasonable and practical support to assist the employee.
**8.5.3 Capability or Disciplinary?**
Deliberate substandard performance (e.g. deliberate wrongdoing, persistent lateness without cause) amounts to misconduct and should be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.
There may be occasions where situations begin as a capability issue, but as the matter progresses it becomes clear that it is more appropriate to treat it as a conduct issue under the Disciplinary Procedure. It is perfectly acceptable to transfer between the Capability and Disciplinary Procedures in appropriate cases.
**8.5.4 Capability and sickness absence/health issues**
A capability issue may arise as a consequence of an underlying health issue or a period of long term sickness absence. In such cases, managers should refer to Human Resources for guidance. Managers should take particular care where performance may be affected by a physical or mental condition which may fall within the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 - e.g. dyslexia, repetitive strain injury, traumatic stress syndrome and should seek advice from Human Resources on this matter.
**8.5.5 Managers’ responsibilities**
Managers have overall responsibility for the standard of work of employees in their area. Specific managerial responsibilities include:
•Setting and monitoring standards of work
•Conducting regular performance reviews
•Communicating information about what is required to perform in the job through induction, training, supervision and training needs analysis.
•Providing informal counselling, support and guidance
**8.5.6 Management Actions to help avoid performance problems**
•Clearly defining the requirements of the job via full and accurate role guides
•Careful recruitment of the ‘best person for the job’ taking into account the job requirements
•Effective delivery of induction, including an explanation of the required standards and the potential implications if standards are not met
•Effective use of the probationary and performance management procedures
**8.5.7 Employees' Responsibilities**
Employees are expected to:
•Achieve a satisfactory performance in their work
•Seek help and guidance with any work problem they may have
•Co-operate with any informal or formal action under the Capability Procedure
•Request any training that they identify is needed
**8.5.8 Identifying a Capability issue**
Capability issues may arise for a number of reasons:
•Changes to the requirements of the job: for example new skills are required; the business needs changes; the organisational structure changes
•Factors related to the individual employee – e.g. fitness for work, health issues, age, limitations in skill or physical ability
•Factors outside work may also have an impact on an individual’s capability to perform: e.g. family/personal issues
The Company understands that there will be fluctuations in the level of performance of individual employees, and is committed to operating a sympathetic and caring response to capability issues which best balances both the needs of the individual and the needs of the business.
**8.5.9 Capability: Informal Counselling**
The first stage of dealing with a capability issue will normally be through informal discussion/counselling. The manager would be expected to meet the employee in private, and to explain that the matter is being dealt with on an informal basis. The manager would outline the areas of concern and discuss reasonable support that may be provided to assist the employee in achieving the required standard. Informal discussions and counselling sessions do not form part of the formal Procedure. The manager is responsible for keeping a confidential file note of the date of the meeting, broad content and any action plan arising from an informal discussion/counselling session. The notes may be referred to at a later date as part of the formal Procedure.
**8.5.10 Formal Capability Review Procedure**
The formal Procedure will normally progress through the following stages:
**Stage 1: Recorded Verbal warning**
**Stage 2: Written Warning**
**Stage 3: Final Written Warning**
**Stage 4: Dismissal**
However, if the performance failing is serious, the Company may apply whichever stage in the Procedure it considers most appropriate in the circumstances.
**8.5.11 Formal Procedure: Procedure for Meetings**
The employee will be called to a formal meeting to discuss concerns regarding their performance at work. They will normally receive reasonable notice and will be notified in advance of the purpose of the meeting. Employees have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague, employee representative or trade union representative if the employee is a member of the trade union.
The line manager will normally chair the meeting and be accompanied by a representative from Human Resources or another manager.
When discussing performance issues with employees, at whatever stage of the Procedure, managers should:
•Explain how the employee’s performance is falling short of the expected standard
•Give the employee an opportunity to provide an explanation for the alleged poor performance
•Explain what the expected level of performance is, and therefore what improvements the employee needs to make in order to achieve the required standard, ensuring that the employee fully understands this.
•Offer constructive advice to support improvements in performance
•Identify any further support required (e.g. training/supervision) to enable the employee to achieve the required standard
•Draw up an action plan for improvement. Ideally this should be agreed with the employee. Set realistic and achievable timescales for improvements
•Diarise a review meeting
•Make a confidential file note of the discussion
•Confirm the outcome of the meeting to the employee in writing. Where a warning is issued, advise the employee of their right of appeal
•Inform the employee that if the required improvement in performance is not achieved, this may lead to further action under the Procedure
If appropriate, the manager and employee may explore the possibility of other alternatives, which may include:
•A permanent adjustment to the job role, subject to business needs
•Transfer to another more suitable post on a temporary or permanent basis - this may be at a different grade with associated terms and conditions and/or different area of the business
•Change in existing hours and duties
•Formal retraining
As an outcome of any meeting under Stages 1 to 3 of the Procedure, the employee will receive written confirmation of the points discussed. This will include:
•The reason for concern about their capability
•The details of any formal sanction issued
•The details of the action plan for tackling the problem
•The details of any temporary support or adjustments put in place to assist the employee
•A review date giving a reasonable period of time for the action plan and the improvements to be measured
•Confirmation that, should the specified improvement in performance not be reached and sustained as a result of the action plan, further action will follow under the procedure
**8.5.12 Improvement in levels of Performance**
If, following the issuing of a formal sanction, the individual’s performance has improved and this improvement has been sustained for an appropriate period of time, the manager will inform the employee that the warning has now expired.
**8.5.13 Dismissal, Suspension or Transfer**
In very serious cases, where an employee has failed to attain acceptable standards of performance despite the earlier stages of the Review Procedure or where an employee is medically incapable of working in their current role, a line manager will proceed to Stage 4 of the Procedure. The purpose of the Stage 4 meeting is for the manager to review all the facts of the case, and to determine whether or not the Capability Procedure has been exhausted. The manager may take account of:
•The extent to which the employee has fulfilled any action plan which has been set up;
•Whether the employee has been given reasonable support e.g. off-the-job and on-the-job training, information and supervision whether the employee has been given sufficient time to demonstrate improvement
•Any temporary support or adjustments that have been put in place during the review period
•Any specialist advice received regarding the employee’s capability and likelihood of improvement to the standard required
•Medical evidence which may include reports from the employee’s own GP or specialist or from the Company Occupational Health providers or independent specialists
•Any other relevant factors
The manager may decide that the Procedure is exhausted and that dismissal is the appropriate sanction. Possible alternative remedies to dismissal include:
•Transferring the employee to a more suitable job role, which better matches their skills and capabilities. There is no requirement for the business to ‘create’ a role and it is important that the employee genuinely matches the requirements of the alternative role. A new role may not necessarily be on the same grade, hours of work or other benefits.
•Offering early retirement/ ill health retirement (where health matters have been an issue) subject to any requirements of the Pension Scheme.
**8.5.14 Right of Appeal**
An employee has the right to appeal against any sanction imposed under the Capability Procedure. The letter confirming the outcome of the capability hearing will also outline how the employee may submit an appeal. The employee must submit their appeal in writing, stating the reasons, within 5 working days of receiving the outcome in writing, to the person specified in the outcome letter who will appoint an appropriate person to hear the appeal. Reasons for appeal may include the following:
•New relevant information has come to light
•The Capability Procedure has not been followed correctly
•The sanction issued is too harsh
**8.6 Company Grievance Policy and Procedure**
**8.6.1 Introduction**
It is the Company’s policy that grievance matters are dealt with in a fairly and timely manner and at the level of management at which a resolution is most appropriate and achievable.
The Grievance Policy applies to all employees in the Company including those in their probationary periods.
**8.6.2 Purpose of the Grievance Policy**
The purpose of the policy is to provide an appropriate mechanism for resolving disputes or issues about which the employee is dissatisfied. It is recognised that it is in everyone’s best interests to ensure that employees’ grievances are dealt with quickly, fairly and at the lowest level at which they can possibly be resolved. If you are concerned about how a disciplinary matter has been dealt with then you should lodge an appeal in accordance with the Company's disciplinary process.
**8.6.3 Grievance involving allegations of harassment or discrimination**
Where a grievance involves an allegation of harassment of any kind (including sexual harassment or bullying) and/or discrimination of any kind: i.e. on the basis of, for example, race, sex, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political belief, ethnic or national origin, age or economic status, it may be appropriate for the employee to consult with Human Resources in the first instance.
**8.6.4 The Procedure in Operation**
**8.6.4.1 Informal Stage**
Most routine complaints and grievances are best resolved informally in discussion with the employee's immediate line manager. The employee's first step is to seek to resolve the matter informally through the normal management and communication channels with his or her immediate manager. Normal day-to-day management methods are expected to provide employees with the opportunity to raise and seek resolution of grievance matters.
It may be helpful to both the manager and the employee to keep a note of any informal discussions.
Where the grievance cannot be resolved informally it should be dealt with under the formal grievance procedure.
**8.6.4.2 First Formal Stage**
Employees should put their grievance, preferably in writing, to their immediate line manager.
Where the grievance is against the line manager the matter should be raised with a senior manager or Operations Director. Advice can also be obtained from an HR Business Partner
If the grievance is challenged the manager will invite the employee to attend a hearing at a reasonable place and time which you must take all reasonable steps to attend in order to discuss the grievance and should inform the employee of his or her statutory right to be accompanied.
The manager will respond in writing to the grievance within a specified and reasonable time. If it is not possible to respond within the specified time period the employee will be given an explanation for the delay and told when a response can be expected.
**8.6.4.3 Final Stage**
Where the matter cannot be resolved at the First Stage, the employee can appeal against the outcome of their grievance to a higher level of manager. The employee must submit their appeal in writing, stating the reasons, within 5 working days of receiving the outcome of their grievance.
**8.7 Company Redundancy Policy and Procedure**
This policy applies to all permanent employees of ICS.
Whilst it is ICS’s intention to grow its business activities, it is recognised that there may be changes
in the organisation and business focus that could lead to a need for redundancies.
ICS will make every effort to avoid redundancies and, where they are avoidable, ICS
will look to minimise the impact on employees through support in seeking suitable alternative employment within ICS.
Prior to any redundancy decision being made, affected employees will be consulted as follows:
Where there are less than twenty employees at risk of redundancy within a ninety-day period, individual consultation will take place.
•The individual will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the situation. The invitation will be in writing.
•The individual will be given the opportunity to consult fully with regard to the situation and explore all available alternatives to redundancy.
•The individual will be provided with the right to appeal against any redundancy decision made.
Employees affected by redundancy may bring a representative to their consultation meetings. This representative may be a colleague or a trade union representative.
Where there are more than twenty employees (but less than ninety-nine) at risk of redundancy within a ninety day period, collective consultation will take place.
The Company will:
•Request nominations for consultation representatives
•Hold elections, where necessary
•Provide full details of the proposed redundancies, the reason for the proposal and benefits to the
business, and the likely timescales involved, in order for meaningful consultation to take place.
•Meet with consultation representatives until discussions have been exhausted, or have lasted for at least thirty days (where less than ninety-nine people are being made redundant) or for at least 45 days if one hundred or more people are being made redundant.
•Follow the individual consultation process detailed above with all those affected if the proposal goes ahead.
This policy may be reviewed and amended by the Company when necessary.
**8.8 Personal Harassment Policy and Procedure**
**8.8.1 Introduction**
This policy is applicable at all sites.
Harassment means unwanted conduct of a sexual, sectarian or racial nature or other conduct based on sex, religious belief, sexual orientation, political opinion, age, race or disability affecting the dignity of employees at work. Throughout this policy "race" is to be understood in line with the Race Relations (Northern Ireland) Order, to include colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins. Irish Travellers are recognised by the Order as being members of a racial group.
Harassment can include unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct. Such behaviour is unacceptable where it is unwanted, where it is unreasonable and offensive to the recipient, where it is used as the basis for an employment decision or where it creates a hostile environment.
Some examples are given below but this list is not exclusive and other behaviour may constitute harassment:
•Physical contact ranging from touching to serious assault
•Verbal and written harassment through jokes
•Racist remarks
•Offensive language
•Gossip and slander
•Sectarian songs, threats and letters
•Visual displays of posters, graffiti, obscene gestures, flags, bunting or emblems or any type of offensive material.
This may include tattoos or sports shirts that may be linked to religious belief or political opinion.
•Isolation or non-co-operation at work, exclusion from social activities
•Coercion, including pressure for sexual favours and pressure to participate in political or religious groups
•Intrusion by pestering, spying, stalking, following etc.
Employees should note that it is the impact of the behaviour which is relevant and not the motive or intent behind it. The Company recognises that personal harassment can exist in the workplace as well as outside and that this can seriously affect employees' working lives by interfering with their job performance or by creating a stressful, intimidating or unpleasant working environment.
Bullying is a form of psychological harassment. It is intimidation that serves to undermine self-esteem, confidence, competence, effectiveness and integrity. Examples of bullying include:
•Continual, undeserved criticism
•Arbitrary and inconsistent demands
•Imposition of unreasonable deadlines
•Shouting, swearing and offensive language
•Displaying overbearing or intrusive behaviour
Harassment is inappropriate behaviour at work and will be treated by the Company as misconduct, which may include gross misconduct and may result in dismissal from the Company. Employees should note that harassment may also be a civil offence and/or criminal offence.
**8.8.2 Policy**
The Company deplores all forms of personal harassment and seeks to ensure that the working environment is sympathetic to all employees.
All employees have the right to work in an environment, which is free from any form of harassment. The Company fully recognises the right of employees to complain about harassment should it occur.
All complaints will be dealt with seriously, promptly and confidentially. Every effort will be made to ensure that employees making complaints and others, who give evidence or information in connection with the complaint, will not be victimised.
The Company will ensure that adequate resources are made available to promote respect and dignity in the workplace and to deal effectively with complaints of harassment. This policy and procedure will be communicated effectively to all employees and the Company will ensure that all employees and all managers and supervisors are aware of their responsibilities. Appropriate training may be provided including training on induction and management courses.
Managers and supervisors have a duty to implement this policy and make every effort to ensure that harassment does not occur, particularly in work areas for which they are responsible. Managers and supervisors have responsibility for any incidents of harassment of which they are aware or ought to be aware. If harassment does occur, they must effectively deal with the situation.
Managers and supervisors should explain Company policy to their employees and take steps to promote awareness of the procedure for dealing with complaints. They should be responsive and supportive to any member of staff who makes an allegation of harassment, provide clear advice on the procedure to be adopted, maintain confidentiality and seek to ensure that there is no further problem of harassment or victimisation after a complaint has been resolved.
They should set a good example by treating all employees and customers with dignity and respect. They should be alert to unacceptable behaviour and take appropriate action. They should ensure that employees know how to raise harassment problems.
All employees have a responsibility to help ensure a working environment in which the dignity of your colleagues is respected. Everyone must comply with this policy and should ensure that their behaviour to colleagues and customers does not cause offence and could not, in any way, be considered to be harassment. All employees should discourage harassment by making it clear that they find such behaviour unacceptable and by supporting colleagues who suffer such treatment.
In the case of company events outside of work such as Office Parties, Christmas Parties or any other events outside working hours or off company premises all employees are required to conduct themselves with the same level of professionalism and the same codes of conduct as with normal work time. This is a reasonable expectation as the company is vicariously liable for the actions of its employees in such situations. Intoxication and a party atmosphere do not excuse misconduct sometimes experienced in the form of unprofessional behaviour such as swearing, inappropriate banter, inappropriate touching etc which could constitute harassment/ assault.
There are also instances where the company simply isn’t liable or involved in any way in the actions of employees i.e. within the scope of their private lives, private interactions and activities unrelated to work. In such circumstances to a very large extent it is the responsibility of those individuals to resolve any personal issues or conflicts privately without it interfering whatsoever with their working lives. In the vast majority of such circumstances resolution of such issues would be beyond the remit and jurisdiction of the employer. However the company is fully aware and committed in terms of its responsibility for the health and safety of employees both within the workplace at work sponsored events.
**8.8.3 Complaining about personal harassment**
**8.8.3.1 Informal complaint**
This stage is appropriate where the complainant simply wants the behaviour to stop, where the harassment is not serious or where it has not been repeated.
An employee who is the victim of minor harassment should make it clear to the harasser on an informal basis that their behaviour is unwelcome and ask the harasser to stop. The complainant may prefer to do this with the support of a colleague or employee representative. If the complainant feels unable to do this verbally then they should hand a written request to the harasser, and their confidential helper can assist with this. Where a complainant seeks the support of their manager, he/she will be sensitively informed that their role at the informal stage can only be one of support or assistance.
A complainant will be advised that:
•A formal investigation into the issues raised and possible disciplinary action can only take place if the complaint is investigated under the formal procedure.
•A written record of the action taken will be made to assist with any formal proceedings, which may arise if the behaviour does not stop. Failure to maintain such a record will not invalidate proceedings at the formal stage.
•All reported incidents of harassment will be monitored and in the event of any patterns emerging, management may wish to initiate its own formal investigation and take remedial action where this proves to be necessary.
Additionally, there may be situations where the seriousness of a complaint warrants formal proceedings.
**8.8.3.2 Formal Complaint**
Complaints should be made as soon as possible following an act of alleged harassment so that the matter can be dealt with swiftly and decisively.
The formal complaints procedure is appropriate if the harassment is serious, if the person making the complaint prefers this, or if the harassment continues after the informal procedure has been used. Where the informal approach fails or if the harassment is more serious, the complainant should bring the matter to the attention of a senior member of management as a formal written complaint, and this will not preclude investigation of a complaint made verbally. The complainant should keep notes of the harassment so that the written complaint can include:
•The name of the alleged harasser
•The nature of the alleged harassment
•The dates and times when the alleged harassment occurred
•The names of any witnesses
•Any action already taken by the complainant to stop the alleged harassment.
On receipt of a formal complaint the Company will consider taking action to separate the complainant from the alleged harasser before action is taken to inform the alleged harasser of the complaint and to enable an uninterrupted investigation to take place.
Appropriate action will be discussed including the possibility of a temporary transfer of the harasser to another work area. If the alleged harassment is serious then precautionary suspension to enable investigation may be considered. Both parties will also be advised not to communicate with each other either directly or indirectly or seek to influence other potential witnesses in relation to the complaint. The procedure will be completed within a reasonable timescale of the complaint being received. Managers carrying out investigation at the formal stage should not be connected in any way with the allegation that has been made.
The manager, will meet with the complainant to:
•Clarify and formally record the nature of the complaint and that it is being handled under the formal procedure
•Ensure that the complainant is aware of the next stage of the procedure
•Advise the complainant of their right to be accompanied and/or represented at the investigatory meeting by a union representative, employee representative or work colleague.
The manager will meet with the alleged harasser and:
•Outline the nature of the complaint
•Confirm that it is being handled under the formal procedure
•Ensure that the individual is aware of the next stage of the procedure
•Advise that the alleged harasser has the right to be accompanied and/or represented at the next stage of the procedure by a trade union representative, employee representative or work colleague.
Following this meeting the manager will write to the alleged harasser outlining the nature of the complaint and setting a date for a formal meeting to be held within a reasonable timescale of the complaint being received.
The investigation should include the following:
•The Manager and where applicable an HR representative will meet with anyone who can assist with the investigation. This may include anyone who witnessed any of the alleged harassment and anyone that the complainant discussed the harassment with.
•The Manager and where applicable an HR representative will meet with the supervisor of both the complainant and the alleged harasser to establish if there has been any history of previous conflict between both parties and/or with other parties.
•The Manager and where applicable an HR representative may then wish to have further meetings to clarify or gain additional information.
Whilst the Manager will seek to resolve the matter as quickly as possible, the meetings with all involved need not necessarily follow immediately after each other. Every effort will be made to hold all necessary meetings within a reasonable timescale of the date the complaint was received. Where this is not practicable the complainant and the alleged harasser will be advised.
Those involved in the investigation will be expected to act in confidence and any breach of confidence will be a disciplinary matter
**8.8.4 Consideration of information**
Having investigated the complaint fully, the Manager will consider whether the Company’s disciplinary procedure should be invoked or some other action taken.
The Manager will then decide whether:
•To initiate our agreed disciplinary procedure against any party as appropriate and /or
•To take no further action or to take any other
appropriate management action, e.g. the provision of training or counselling.
When the investigation has been concluded, a draft report of the findings and of the investigators’ proposed decision will be sent, in writing, to the complainant and to the alleged harasser.
Where a complaint has been upheld the complainant may wish to avoid any further contact with the harasser. Should the harasser remain in employment with the Company and where it is agreed that further contact between the individuals concerned would be unacceptable, every effort will be made to accommodate this. Consideration should always be made to relocating the harasser in the first instance and if a requirement to transfer occurs it should not lead to any disadvantage to the complainant. The Company may decide, at its discretion, to offer counselling or training to either the complainant or the alleged harasser.
**8.8.5 Right of Appeal**
Employees will have the right of appeal against the outcome of the harassment investigation. The letter confirming the outcome will also give details of how to submit an appeal. The employee may submit an appeal in writing to the person designated in the outcome letter within five working days of the date of the letter. Reasons for appeal may include
•New relevant information has come to light
•The Procedure has not been followed correctly
A decision will be made whether the purpose of the hearing is to review the initial decision, or whether a complete rehearing is necessary. The appeal would normally be heard by a more senior manager than the manager who handled the original complaint.
**8.8.6 Malicious Complaints of Harassment**
If an employee brings a complaint of harassment they will not be victimised for having brought the complaint. However if an employee brings a complaint of harassment that is found to be vexatious or malicious then this could result in disciplinary action, which may result in dismissal.
**8.9 Company Equal Opportunities Policy**
The Company is committed to providing equal opportunities for all workers and potential workers and is opposed to all forms of unfair or unlawful discrimination.
The Company recognises the contribution which each individual can make to the business irrespective of their age, gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, race, colour, religious belief, disability, political opinion, ethnic/cultural/natural origin and whether or not they are members of a trade union.
**8.9.1 Our Standard of Practice**
We will take every possible step to ensure that every individual is treated equally and fairly and that decisions on recruitment, selection, pay, terms and conditions, training and development, promotion, performance management, access to benefits and termination of employment are based on objective and job related criteria. All workers will be given an equal opportunity to develop and demonstrate their capability and potential. Career opportunities will be available equally to everyone and will be based solely on merit. They will not discriminate or be subjective or biased in approach.
All instances and acts which are in breach of this policy will be taken seriously, will be investigated thoroughly and fairly and may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. An individual may find themselves personally liable in law for discriminatory actions.
Each head of department or function, with their senior management team and assisted by the local Human Resource team, will take responsibility for monitoring and ensuring that best practice is in place at all times. Feedback from employees on Equal Opportunity policy and practice will be welcomed and will be a regular subject of employees’ feedback surveys and forums. This will ensure that everyone’s views are listened to and acted upon appropriately. An employee who feels they have been treated unfairly will have the right to raise a complaint under the company grievance and disciplinary or harassment procedures and all such complaints will be taken seriously and
investigated fully.
All internal processes, procedures and systems involving employees will be designed to ensure that there is no bias against candidates on the grounds of age, gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, race, colour, religious belief, disability, political opinion, ethnic/cultural/natural origin and whether or not they are members of a trade union.
**8.9.2 Applying Standards of Best Practice at Work**
It is everyone’s responsibility to provide an environment of Equal Opportunities for all. Our standards of best practice apply to all our dealings with one another and in particular in the following areas:
•Behaviour at work
•Approach to working arrangements
•Training and Development opportunities
•Job advertising and selection
**8.9.3 Behaviour at Work**
Everyone has a right to be treated with respect, courtesy and dignity irrespective of their status within the company i.e. each person is obliged and expected to demonstrate the highest standards of behaviour (courtesy, dignity, respect) in their dealings with each other and should expect the same high standards from colleagues and others.
Managers and supervisors in particular will ensure that each individual in their team or working group, is included in the activities of the team or working group and that no individual is ignored or treated in such a way as to make them feel isolated.
Training and development initiatives will be provided to support the maintenance and development of an Equal Opportunities environment.
Bullying and/or intimidation of any kind, of any employee by another, irrespective of status i.e. rank, grade, length of service, contract, area of work, responsibilities etc., is not acceptable behaviour.
**8.9.4 Approach to working arrangements**
Existing working arrangements will be reviewed regularly in the light of changing employment practices. Criteria applied in evaluating applications for changing working arrangements will be fair and seen to be fair. We will make every effort to enable every employee and worker to achieve an acceptable balance between work related and personal priorities subject to meeting the needs of the business. Employment documents, agreements, practices and procedures will be reviewed regularly in the light of changes in employment and equality legislation and best practice.
The Company’s reward and recognition practices will acknowledge the contribution of individuals and teams, will support high performance, the achievement of business goals and will take the company’s ability to pay into account. They will follow all legislation and recommendations of the EU Code of Practice in relation to equal pay, adapting them to the size and structure of the business.
**8.9.5 Training and Development**
Training and development opportunities will be designed to assist all employees develop the skills and competence to meet current and future requirements. Training will be designed to prepare any individual or group to take on new or additional roles, tasks and responsibilities.
Business related personal development initiatives will be encouraged and supported where practical and possible. Support will be given without bias of any kind.
**8.9.6 Job advertising and selection**
Vacancies will normally be advertised and sufficient notice will be given for anyone wishing to apply. Job advertising will encourage applications from the widest possible range of candidates. Job profiles will reflect our equal opportunities policy. All recruitment, selection and promotion decisions will be objective and made entirely on merit using work related criteria.
The selection and interview processes will ensure that there is no discrimination of candidates on the grounds of age, gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, race, colour, religious belief, disability, political opinion, ethnic/cultural/natural origin and whether or not they are members of a trade union. Relevant experience and past performance record will be critical factors in the selection process. Education or professional qualifications will be sought where these are considered necessary and will be recognised and valued appropriately.
**8.9.7 Employment Equality Considerations**
The following actions are those which hinder the development of employment equality and which conflict with the values of the Company.
**8.9.8 Discrimination**
Discrimination in employment occurs as a result of prejudice; misconception and stereotyping that may inhibit the full consideration of an individual’s abilities, skills, potential and experience.
Discrimination can be direct, indirect, intentional or unintentional. Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than someone in similar circumstances was treated or might have been treated due for example, to gender, religious, marital status, contract etc.
Indirect discrimination is less obvious and occurs when a requirement or condition is applied equally to all groups but has a disproportionately adverse effect on one particular group of employees and cannot be justified objectively.
**8.9.9 Harassment**
Harassment is behaviour that is unwelcome and offensive to or is unreciprocated by the recipient. For further details, refer to the Company policy on Harassment in the Workplace.
**8.9.10 Fostering an Equal Opportunities Environment**
This policy will be supported by a programme of activities, developed in consultation with employees’ members to ensure the removal of all barriers, procedures, attitudes and behaviours that inhibit equal opportunity. This Equal Opportunities policy is designed to meet and exceed current legal requirements in each jurisdiction. The Company reserves the right to enhance the policy and procedures to meet future legislative requirements and guarantees to advise any changes to our stated policy.
**8.10 Social Media Policy\***
**Definition of social media**
For the purposes of this policy, social media is a type of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. This includes online social forums such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Social media also covers blogs and video- and image-sharing websites such as YouTube and Flickr.
Employees should be aware that there are many more examples of social media than can be listed here and this is a constantly changing area. Employees should follow these guidelines in relation to any social media that they use.
**Use of social media at work**
The Organisation understands that employees may wish to use their own computers or devices, such as laptops and palm-top and hand-held devices, to access social media websites while they are at work. Employees must limit their use of social media on their own personal equipment to their official rest breaks such as their lunch break/times or when they are between appointments, for example travelling/times. Access to these social media sites should occur away from calling floors on all sites. Any such access must comply with the rules set out in this policy and must not interfere with the employee's responsibilities and productivity at work.
**Use of social media**
Employees may contribute to ICS’s social media activities, for example by writing for our
blogs/managing a Facebook account/running an official Twitter account for the organisation/part of the organisation Employees must be aware at all times that, while contributing to ICS’s social media activities, they are representing ICS. Staff who use social media as part of their job must adhere to the following rules. Employees should use the same safeguards as they would with any other form of communication about the organisation in the public sphere. These safeguards include:
•making sure that the communication has a purpose and a benefit for the organisation;
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•obtaining permission from a manager
(if required) before embarking on a public campaign using social media; and
•Getting a relevant individual with an appropriate level of authority to check the content before it is
published.
•Any communications that employees make in a professional capacity through social media must not:
•bring ICS into disrepute, for example by:
o criticising or arguing with customers, colleagues, clients or rivals;
o making defamatory comments about ICS or other organisations or groups; or
o posting images that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate content;
•breach confidentiality or data protection, for example by:
o revealing trade secrets or information owned by ICS;
o giving away confidential information about an individual (such as a colleague or customer contact)or organisation (such as a rival business or clients); or
o discussing ICS’s internal workings (including potential or existing deals with clients
or potential clients or its future business plans that have not yet been communicated to the
public.)
•breach copyright, for example by:
o using someone else's images or written content without permission; or
o failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something; or
•do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual, for example by:
o making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender reassignment, race (including
nationality), disability, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or belief or age;
o using social media to bully another individual (such as an employee of the organisation); or
o posting images that are discriminatory or offensive (or links to such content).
•Employees shall not post any personal identifiable information (“PII”) relating to any employee of any Client or Prospect (as defined under the Employee Confidentiality Policy), or any customer of any Client or Prospect. Such PII includes, but is not limited to, name, photograph, address, telephone number, social security number, employee number, driver license number, credit card number, credit information, health related information, etc.
•Employees shall at all times maintain the confidentiality of ICS Proprietary Information, as
defined under the Employee Confidentiality Policy (GESP#14).
**Social media in your personal life**
ICS recognises that many employees make use of social media in a personal capacity. Whilst they
are not acting on behalf of ICS, employees must be aware that they can damage the Company’s
reputation through their association with the business. We recognise that it is natural for employees to discuss their work across social media channels. However, the employee's online profile (for example, the name of a blog or a Twitter name) must not contain the organisation's name and they should protect the Company’s name from any negative association wherever possible. Employees
are reminded that comments made by them, or encouraged by them that bring the Company and/or its clients or their customers, into disrepute or have any damaging effect whatsoever may result in disciplinary action being taken against them. This disciplinary action may lead to their dismissal from the business.
**Use of social media in the recruitment process**
Unless it is in relation to finding candidates (for example, if an individual has put his/her details on social media websites for the purpose of attracting prospective employers), the HR department and managers should conduct searches, either themselves or through a third party, on social media channels only when these are directly relevant to the applicant's skills or claims that he/she has made in the recruitment process.

For instance:
•a prospective employee might claim that he/she has used social media in his/her previous job (for example, as a publicity tool); or
•a prospective employee's social media use may be directly relevant to a claim made in his/her application (for example, if he/she runs a blog based around a hobby mentioned in his/her CV or a skill in which he/she claims to be proficient).
There should be no systematic or routine checking of prospective employees' online social media activities, as conducting these searches during the selection process might lead to a presumption that an applicant's protected characteristics (for example, sexual orientation or religious beliefs) played a part in a recruitment decision. This is in line with ICS’s equal opportunities policy. This excludes business networking sites used predominantly as a tool to support and individual’s career such as Linkedin.com.
**Monitoring use of social media during work time**
The organisation reserves the right to monitor employees' internet usage. The Company will monitor internet use when it has valid reasons to do so, which includes suspicions that the employee has:
•been spending an excessive amount of time during working hours using social media websites for non-work related activity; or
•acted in a way that is in breach of the rules set out in this policy.
ICS reserves the right to retain information that it has gathered on employees' use of the internet
for a period of one year. Access to particular social media websites may be withdrawn in any case of misuse.
**Disciplinary action in relation to social media use**
All employees are required to adhere to this policy. Employees should note that any breaches of this policy may lead to disciplinary action. Serious breaches of this policy, for example incidents of bullying of colleagues or social media activity causing serious damage to the organisation, may constitute gross misconduct and may lead to summary dismissal.