



POLICIES



Helen Owen Marketing Enterprises (HOME) CIC

Company Number: 89455585

Address: 29 Desmond Road, Eastbourne, BN22 7LF

Tel No: 07720 854185

Email address: info@homecic.com



POLICIES

HOME CIC is currently staffed by apprentices and volunteers, nevertheless it is desirable that their conditions of working are formally covered in a set of policies that HOME CIC have found to be equitable, fair and contributing to a happy, efficient workplace.

To that end, HOME CIC has adopted the national standard set by the UK Head Office of the Charity.

The Policies are set forth below as follows:

- Complaints
- Health and Safety
- Disciplinary
- Grievance
- Equality
- Vulnerability

Complaints

COMPLAINTS- A SUMMARY OF RESPONSIBILITIES

HOME RESPONSIBILITIES

1. To follow a fair complaints procedure that is easily understood.
2. To ensure that all complaints are dealt with and resolved in a professional, sensitive and timely manner.
3. To make any amendments to company policies if needed.
4. To ensure that all trustees, employees and volunteers are aware of the complaints procedure.

VERBAL COMPLAINTS

In the first instance it is HOME's recommendations that complaints are dealt with face-to-face with the Company Director however if this is not possible then complaints can be made in writing to the address below.

WRITTEN COMPLAINTS

In the event that complaints are not handled verbally then complaints can be made in writing the Company Director at the following address: HOME, 29 Desmond Road, Eastbourne, BN22 7LF

RESOLVING COMPLAINTS

In the first instance it is believed that the person involved in the complaint can resolve any issues directly however if this is not appropriate then the complaint should be issues for the attention of the Company Secretary at the address above. All complaints shall be treated in a confidential and professional manner.

RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS

HOME shall acknowledge any complaints within 10 works days and allow up to 28 days to respond to the complaint should any investigation be necessary. It will be made clear in all correspondence the nature of the complaint and the person involved in dealing with it.

MONITORING & EVALUATION

All complaints shall be recorded, monitored and evaluated at Trustee meetings and any changes in procedure will be agreed and actioned.

TRAINING

HOME shall provide any training for trustees, staff and volunteers to enable everyone to respond to complaints in a professional manner.

Health & Safety

HEALTH & SAFETY - A SUMMARY OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The MANAGER duty extends to:

1. Maintenance of a safe workplace, means of access and working environment
2. Provision of safe plant and safe systems of work
3. Preparation and review of written statement on safety policy
4. Safe storage and transport of substances
5. Ensuring that substances are able to be used and handled without risk to health and safety
6. Provision of training and supervision
7. Provision of suitable information and instruction

In addition the Manager must carry out regular inspections of the workplace to ensure that any potential risks/hazards are identified and suitable remedial action taken as appropriate.

A VOLUNTEER OR EMPLOYEE must:

1. Take reasonable care for their own and other peoples' safety
2. Co-operate with the employers to the extent necessary to allow those employers to comply with their statutory obligations
3. Not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare in pursuance of any of the relevant statutory provisions

All volunteers/employees of HOME should ensure that they have read and understood the above responsibilities together with the HOME's Health and Safety policy statement. In addition you should refer to the Risk Assessment documentation copies of which are available to all staff. If there are any aspects of which you are unsure please mention this to your manager at the earliest opportunity.

POLICY

HOME recognises its health and safety duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and related protective legislation, both as an employer and as a company.

The Purpose of this policy is to:

1. Ensure the effective operation of the Health and Safety policy.
2. Ensure that all staff work safely and report any hazards that they encounter.

PROCEDURE

The manager must ensure that the following are available to staff:

- The Health and Safety Policy.
- The Certificate of Employer's Liability.
- The Fire Policy.
- The Smoking Policy.

The manager should ensure there is a representative for each area and a suitable number of appropriately trained staff are available to deal with accidents and health emergencies. The premises should provide a suitable first-aid box and maintain appropriate records.

TRAINING

The manager should include Health and Safety training as part of HOME's training plan to ensure that all staff have received the appropriate level of training.

Training in Health and Safety should cover:

- Induction training.
- Ongoing training which is specific to the work undertaken by staff on a daily basis.
- Refresher training to ensure that certification for time-limited accreditation remains current and embraces updated practices.
- First Aid.

CHECKING THE OPERATION OF THE POLICY

The manager should ensure that regular checks of the work premises are made to identify potential hazards and to confirm the continuation of safe working practices.

The manager should carry out inspections at frequencies stated in the Health and Safety Inspection Schedule, and ensure that all areas identified are included in the Health and Safety Inspection Checklist.

The manager should ensure that on completion of the Health and Safety inspection using the appropriate checklist, a written report of the findings is produced.

Where the checks highlight the need for action to be taken, the manager should take the action necessary to remedy the situation or document the reasons why action cannot be taken.

The manager should ensure that, over a period of time, all areas and all activities within the work premises have been checked in sufficient detail and that all practical and reasonable steps to minimise risks have been taken.

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REPORTING AND RECORDING

The manager is responsible for maintaining a system of recording all reports of accidents, incidents and hazards. In some cases there is a legal obligation to use forms which must either be purchased from HMSO Bookshops or must conform to the requirements of the Health and Safety Executive.

All staff should be aware that they are responsible for reporting any accident, incident or hazard to the senior member of staff on duty.

The manager is responsible for ensuring that any accident, incident or hazard is reported to the relevant enforcing agency in the proper way. These agencies will include:

- The Health and Safety Executive, RIDDOR.
- Environmental Health Department, Report of Infectious or Communicable Disease.
- Registration and Inspection, Notification to an Enforcing Agency.

As a minimum, the manager should ensure that the following records are maintained to ensure legislative compliance and support the Health and Safety system in use at the premises:

- An Accident / Incident Report Form
- A supply of RIDDOR Notification Forms.
- Staff Communication Book.

CONTRACTORS

Before any contractor begins work at the premises, they must have been made aware that they must comply with all statutory Health and Safety requirements for the work being done.

Where a contractor is unable to comply with any part of the Health and Safety Policy or requirements, they should inform the manager and stop work immediately.

Staff are responsible for reporting if they observe any unsafe practices, on the part of a contractor, to the manager.

The manager is responsible for taking such steps as may be necessary to address unsafe practices when they are reported to them. This might include informing the Health and Safety Executive or asking them for advice.

Disciplinary

In the policy below, where the words “employee” or “staff” are used, these should be taken as including voluntary workers where the context so allows.

POLICY

HOME's disciplinary procedures exist to assist and encourage all employees and volunteers to achieve and maintain high standards of conduct, attendance and job performance and to ensure fair and consistent treatment for all. This procedure sets out the action which will be taken where there is cause for belief that HOME's rules may have been broken. In the remainder of this policy the terms “employee” and “employees” include volunteers where the context so allows.

PRINCIPLES

If you are subject to disciplinary action:

1. The procedure is designed to establish the facts quickly and to deal consistently with disciplinary issues. No disciplinary action will be taken until the matter has been fully investigated.
2. At every stage you will be advised of the nature of the complaint, be given the opportunity to state your case, and be represented or accompanied by a fellow volunteer/employee, relative or Trades Union representative.
3. You will not be dismissed for a first breach of discipline except in the case of gross misconduct, when the penalty will normally be dismissal without notice and without pay (where relevant) in lieu of notice.
4. You have a right to appeal against any disciplinary action taken against you.
5. The procedure may be implemented at any stage if it is felt the alleged misconduct warrants such action.

INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS/COUNSELLING

Before taking formal disciplinary action (with the exception of cases of Gross Misconduct) your Manager will normally make efforts to resolve the matter by one or more informal discussions with you. Only where this fails to bring about the desired improvement, should the formal disciplinary procedure be implemented.

1ST WRITTEN WARNING (Stage 1)

If, despite informal discussions, conduct or performance does not reach acceptable standards, the employee will be given a first written warning by their Manager.

They will be told:

- * The reason for the warning.
- * That this warning is the first stage of the disciplinary procedure.
- * That they have a right of appeal.

A copy of the warning will be kept on file but cancelled after a period of 6 months, subject to satisfactory conduct and/or performance.

2ND WRITTEN WARNING (Stage 2)

If there is no improvement in standards, or if any further offence occurs, a written warning will be given. This will state the reason for the warning and explain that if there is no improvement after a specified time period, a final warning will be given. A copy of this first written warning will be kept on file but the warning will lapse after 12 months subject to satisfactory conduct and/or performance.

FINAL WRITTEN WARNING (Stage 3)

If conduct or performance remains unsatisfactory, or if the misconduct is sufficiently serious to warrant only one written warning, then a final written warning will be given making it clear that any recurrence of the offence or other serious misconduct within a specified time period, will result in dismissal. A copy of the warning will be kept on file but the warning will lapse after 24 months subject to satisfactory conduct and/or performance.

DISMISSAL (Stage 4)

If there is no satisfactory improvement or if further serious misconduct occurs, this may result in dismissal.

GROSS MISCONDUCT

If, after investigation, it is deemed that an offence of the following nature has been committed the normal consequence will be summary dismissal:

- Negligence - any action or failure to act which seriously threatens the health or safety of a client, member of the public or another person working at the premises.
- Harassment/bullying - of a verbal, physical or sexual nature of a fellow employee, other person working at the premises or visitor. This includes making lewd remarks, shouting aggressively and other generally recognised forms of harassment or bullying.
- Theft/Unauthorised Possession - i.e. any instance of theft/unauthorised possession of property belonging to HOME, or belonging to visitors or other members of staff on HOME's premises. HOME's property must not be removed from the premises for personal use, nor used for private purposes within the premises without express permission from your manager.
- Fraud - any deliberate attempt to defraud HOME or a member of the public in the course of official duties. This includes deliberate misrepresentation of information, entitlement to expenses or allowances, any falsification or misrepresentation on a time sheet of any nature with the intention to deceive etc.
- Assault - any assault upon a trustee, member of the public or fellow employee that takes place on HOME's premises, or whilst on or off duty (if it is relevant to the position of trust that the employee holds, or affects working relationships with other members of staff).
- Malicious Damage/Intent - wilful damage to HOME's property or the property of visitors or staff; wilful dishonesty with malicious intent.
- Gross Insubordination - deliberate and persistent refusal to comply with any reasonable request made by your manager or supervisor.
- Illegal Substances – bringing on to the premises, taking of or supplying illegal substances/drugs at any time.
- Being Unfit for Work - through the effects of alcohol, drugs or other inappropriate substances or being asleep at work
- Corruption - the receipt of money or goods, favours or excessive hospitality in respect of services rendered or in recognition of receiving orders for goods.
- Failure to disclose an interest - in a contract contrary to standing orders of HOME

The above list is only a guide and is by no means exhaustive.

SUSPENSION

Whilst any disciplinary action is being investigated an employee may be suspended during which time normal salary will be paid. Volunteers may also be suspended. Such suspension is not to be regarded as a form of disciplinary action and will be for as short a period as possible.

If an employee is found to have committed an act of gross misconduct they will be dismissed without notice or payment in lieu.

APPEALS

If an employee wishes to appeal against any disciplinary decision, they should do so in writing within seven working days from the date of the letter confirming the original decision. The appeal notification should include the principal reasons upon which the appeal is based. Wherever possible, a senior person who was not involved in the original disciplinary action will hear the appeal. They will decide the case as impartially as possible.

Grievance

In the policy below, where the words “employee” or “staff” are used, these should be taken as including voluntary workers where the context so allows.

POLICY

Any employee who has a grievance is likely to be demotivated and unhappy at work. We wish to encourage openness and fairness in dealing with all our employees’ grievances and therefore wish to promote a working environment in which any employee feels comfortable in voicing a grievance.

The aim of the grievance procedure is to allow employees to voice their opinions over a matter with which they are unhappy, thereby helping to resolve the complaint. This will encourage honesty throughout HOME and help ensure consistent treatment for all employees. Grievances will be resolved as quickly as possible and at the lowest managerial level.

PROCEDURE

Where there is a grievance relating to any aspect of employment the following procedure will be adopted:

STAGE 1

The grievance should be raised verbally with the appropriate Supervisor/Manager. We anticipate that most grievances will be resolved at this stage.

STAGE 2

If the employee is still not satisfied with the course of action adopted by their manager, they should inform their manager of their grievance in writing. The employee will then be invited to a meeting to discuss the grievance. Following the meeting the employee will be notified in writing of the decision.

APPEALS

The employee has the right to an appeal meeting in the event that they feel their grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved. If an employee wishes to appeal against the decision taken at Stage 2, they should do so in writing within seven working days from the date of the letter confirming the original decision. The appeal notification should include the principal reasons upon which the appeal is based. Wherever possible, a senior person who was not involved in the original grievance meetings will hear the appeal. They will decide the case as impartially as possible. All such decisions will be reviewed by the Management Committee, which has a majority of members who are not trustees or volunteers with HOME.

At any stage of the grievance procedure, the employee may ask to be accompanied by a fellow employee, relative or Trades Union representative.

Equality Policy

In the policy below, where the words “employee” or “staff” are used, these should be taken as including voluntary workers where the context so allows.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. HOME recognises that discrimination, bullying and victimisation are unacceptable and that it is in the interests of the Company and its employees to utilise the skills of the total workforce. It is the aim of the Company to ensure that no employee or job applicant receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) in recruitment or employment on grounds of age, disability, gender / gender reassignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (the **protected characteristics**).
2. Our aim is that our workforce will be truly representative of all sections of society and each employee feels respected and able to give of their best.
3. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination or victimisation. To that end the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in our employment.
4. All employees and volunteers, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees and volunteers will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
5. Our staff, whether employed or voluntary, will not discriminate directly or indirectly, or harass or bully customers or clients because of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation in the provision of the Company's goods and services.

This policy and the associated arrangements shall operate in accordance with statutory requirements. In addition, full account will be taken of any guidance or Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, any Government Departments, and any other statutory bodies.

OUR COMMITMENT

- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff are recognised and valued.
- Every employee and volunteer is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff.
- To promote equality in the workplace which we believe is good management practice and makes sound business sense.
- We will review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.
- Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- This policy is fully supported by senior management and has been agreed with trade unions and/or employee representatives.
- The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MANAGEMENT

Responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of the arrangements will rest with the Manager who will ensure that he and the staff operate within this policy and arrangements, and that all reasonable and practical steps are taken to avoid discrimination. All staff will ensure that:

- all their staff are aware of the policy and the arrangements, and the reasons for the policy;
- grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible;
- proper records are maintained.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF

Responsibility for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination rests with all staff and the attitudes of staff are crucial to the successful operation of fair employment practices. In particular, all members of staff should:

- comply with the policy and arrangements;
- not discriminate in their day to day activities or induce others to do so;
- not victimise, harass or intimidate other staff or groups who have, or are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics.
- ensure no individual is discriminated against or harassed because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.
- inform their manager if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

THIRD PARTIES

Third-party harassment occurs where a Company employee or volunteer is harassed, and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties such as clients or customers. HOME will not tolerate such actions against its staff, and the employee concerned should inform their manager / supervisor at once that this has occurred. HOME will fully investigate and take all reasonable steps to ensure such harassment does not happen again.

RELATED POLICIES AND ARRANGEMENTS

All employment policies and arrangements have a bearing on equality of opportunity. The Company policies will be reviewed regularly and any discriminatory elements removed.

RIGHTS OF DISABLED PEOPLE

The Company attaches particular importance to the needs of disabled people.

Under the terms of this policy, the Manager is required to:

- make reasonable adjustment to maintain the services of a volunteer/ employee who becomes disabled, for example, training, provision of special equipment, reduced working hours. (NB: managers are expected to seek advice on the availability of advice and guidance from external agencies to maintain disabled people in employment);
- include disabled people in training/development programmes;
- give full and proper consideration to disabled people who apply for jobs, having regard to making reasonable adjustments for their particular aptitudes and abilities to allow them to be able to do the job.

EQUALITY TRAINING

A series of regular briefing sessions will be held for staff on equality issues. These will be repeated as necessary. Equality information is also included in induction programmes.

Training will be provided for managers on this policy and the associated arrangements. All managers who have an involvement in the recruitment and selection process will receive specialist training.

MONITORING

- The Company deems it appropriate to state its intention not to discriminate and assumes that this will be translated into practice consistently across the organisation as a whole. Accordingly, a monitoring system will be introduced to measure the effectiveness of the policy and arrangements.
- The system will involve the routine collection and analysis of information on employees by gender, marital status, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion / beliefs, grade and length of service in current grade. Information regarding the number of staff who declare themselves as disabled will also be maintained.
- There will also be regular assessments to measure the extent to which recruitment to first appointment, internal promotion and access to training/development opportunities affect equal opportunities for all groups.
- We will maintain information on staff who have been involved in certain key policies: Disciplinary, Grievance and Bullying & Harassment.
- Where appropriate **equality impact assessments** will be carried out on the results of monitoring to ascertain the effect of the Company policies and our services / products may have on those who experience them.
- The information collected for monitoring purposes will be treated as confidential and it will not be used for any other purpose.
- If monitoring shows that the Company, or areas within it, are not representative, or that sections of our workforce are not progressing properly within the Company, then an action plan will be developed to address these issues. This will include a review of recruitment and selection procedures, Company policies and practices as well as consideration of taking legal Positive Action.

GRIEVANCES/DISCIPLINE

Volunteers/Employees have a right to pursue a complaint concerning discrimination or victimisation via the Company Grievance or Harassment Procedures.

Discrimination and victimisation will be treated as disciplinary offences and they will be dealt with under the Company Disciplinary Procedure.

REVIEW

The effectiveness of this policy and associated arrangements will be reviewed annually under the direct supervision of the Trustees.

Vulnerability Policy

POLICY STATEMENT FOR WORKING WITH VULNERABLE PEOPLE

1. Clients shall be treated with respect and dignity at all times; being made aware that all information given will be treated as confidential. Exceptions being: self-harm or suicide, or intent of harming another individual.
2. At all times the client's integrity shall be respected and manipulation of any kind is strictly forbidden.
3. At no time should a client be taken advantage of, or in any way be exploited.
4. Every effort must be made to ensure that the client understands, to the best of their ability, the help that is being provided.
5. There will always be the need to be acutely aware of the responsibility there is for clients who are not well equipped to take decisions for themselves. Such as: youth, advancing age, illness, distress or learning disability

POLICY STATEMENT REGARDING STAFF SAFETY IN THE OFFICE & HOME VISITS

1. Any person can work alone on the premises providing the doors are locked and the Public not admitted. In the case of other agencies who hire the Centre, where a lone worker has remained in situ, on leaving they must text Lesley Allaway on 07983578159 to confirm that the building is secure.
2. Home visits can only take place, with either male or female, whilst a chaperone is present. A conversation with a client may take place on their doorstep without the need of a chaperone. However, visits to clients of the same sex, who are of longstanding could be permitted.
3. When making home visits another staff member/volunteer will always be aware of this visit. Mobile phones will be carried at all times.