



PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS POLICY

We will provide this policy on request at no cost, in large print, in Braille, on tape or in another non written format.

Personal Relationships Policy

1. POLICY PURPOSE

This policy provides advice and guidance to West Lothian Housing Partnership (WLHP) employees on personal relationships.

2. POLICY SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees of WLHP. It does not apply to agency workers or self-employed contractors. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment.

3. PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

3.1 Introduction

A "personal relationship" is regarded as an intimate relationship between two persons of a different or the same sex. A difficulty in respect of a "personal relationship" will be considered to have arisen when the relationship potentially leads to a breach of one WLHP's policies or when the parties leave themselves vulnerable to such allegations.

WLHP expects that employees and management board and management committee members ensure that they are not in a position where their duties to WLHP and their personal interests may conflict.

3.2 General Guidance

Everyone involved in WLHP needs to achieve and maintain effective working relationships with colleagues, management board and management committee members and external contacts, including WLHP's tenants. Employees should ensure personal integrity and maintain objectivity and professionalism of the highest standards without favouritism.

WLHP recognises that strong personal relationships and friendships start and grow from working relationships, and that many couples meet through their employment and associated networks. While strong personal relationships and friendships often have no adverse impact on employees work, they do have the potential for creating problems with the management of WLHP's business.

Close personal relationships could potentially present problems in the following ways:-

- **Allegations of favouritism (e.g. in recruitment, internal promotions or decisions on training or conferences); and**
- **Allegations of bullying and harassment (e.g. unwanted attention, after the break-up of relationships etc).**

4. PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STAFF

4.1 Prohibition

WLHP does not prohibit personal relationships between staff.

4.2 Declaration/Self Regulation

WLHP Employees and Management Board and Management Committee members are to decide when it is appropriate to declare a relationship to their respective line manager. This situation can then be monitored to ensure that it does not interfere with the relevant individuals' work; that no bias or favouritism is permitted; and, especially where a relationship has broken down, that WLHP's policies are complied with.

4.3 Personal Relationships within Reporting Line Structures

Managers are expected to treat all staff in the same professional manner. This should be expected to continue if they are close friends or in a relationship with one of their staff. If a declaration of a personal relationship is made, a more senior officer may monitor the situation to minimise any instances of favouritism or unfair advantage.

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4.4 Married Couples

WLHP does permit married couples to work together as long as no conflicts of interest arise. Where married couples work at WLHP, there may be circumstances where conflicts of interest or practical issues arise (such as the application of the disciplinary policy or the scheduling of concurrent annual leave, for example). WLHP employees are expected to discuss such issues with their line manager to identify and agree how to deal with any concerns.

4.5 Breakdown in Relationships

There will inevitably be difficulties on the breakdown of a relationship. In such circumstances, the situation will be monitored, normal standards of behaviour will be expected and WLHP's Dignity at Work Policy must be complied with.

4.6 Physical Contact

WLHP prohibits inappropriate and excessive physical contact between employees at work to ensure that their colleagues are not made to feel uncomfortable.

4.7 Office Parties / Staff Nights out

Normal standards of behaviour should be maintained at Office Parties / Staff Nights out and any inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with in line with WLHP's Policies.

4.8 Harassment

WLHP's Dignity at Work Policy clearly details the process for dealing with harassment allegations.