

Title	Managing Personal Relationships at Work
Purpose	<p>The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to all employees about personal relationships at work in order to avoid any actual or potential conflicts of interest or misuse of authority.</p> <p>MH wants to ensure that employees behave in an appropriate, professional and responsible manner at work and that they fulfil their duties diligently and effectively. Personal relationships at work have the potential to jeopardise this so this policy has been developed to provide guidance and advice to employees. It aims to strike a balance between employees' rights to a private life and the organisation's right to protect its interests.</p>
Scope	<p>This policy applies to all employees, workers, agency workers, and volunteers at Maryhill Housing. [For the purposes of this policy, 'employees' will be used to cover all groups as noted above.]The policy will be managed by line managers within the organisation and will affect any employees who enter into a personal relationship with another employee, worker, agency worker, volunteer or Board member.</p>
Definitions	<p>For purposes of this policy, unless otherwise stated, a personal relationship is defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A family relationship; • A business / commercial / financial relationship; • A romantic / sexual relationship <p>The definitions above are examples of personal relationships which may give rise to conflicts of interest in the workplace, however personal relationships are not restricted to these examples and anyone who considers that they are in a potential conflict of interest should declare it, as outlined in the policy below.</p>
Policy Statement	<p>Good Practice</p> <p>Employees should conduct themselves at all times in ways that are consistent with their role and duties, and with all HR policies (including those relating to equal opportunity, harassment and the Code of Conduct). The recruitment, selection, treatment, development and promotion of staff should be based solely on evidence and not be in any way affected by personal relationships at work.</p> <p>Where personal relationships occur between employees, it is the responsibility of both individuals to avoid any actual or potential conflicts of interest.</p> <p>Identifying and declaring a personal relationship at work</p> <p>Employees should declare to their line manager any existing or new personal relationship they have with other employees, workers, agency workers, volunteers, Board members, contractors or suppliers which may give rise to an actual or potential conflict of interest, trust or breach of confidentiality, by using the Declaration of Interest form included within the Code of Conduct.</p>

The line manager will treat these matters in confidence and in consultation with the employee, find ways in which potential conflicts of interest can be avoided. The Declaration of Interest form should be returned to the HR department.

All declarations will be treated in confidence, recorded in writing and placed on the employee's personnel file located within the HR department. Should there be any changes in the future, the employee should request that the document should be removed from file and destroyed.

Employees who declare a personal relationship at work, should be treated fairly and with due regard to equality of treatment.

Employees who are uncertain about whether there is likely to be any risk of a potential conflict of interest arising from a personal relationship at work, should discuss the matter with their line manager (or their line manager's manager if the issue involves the immediate line manager) in the first instance.

Where either a personal relationship as defined above, or failure to comply with this policy (following investigation), results in an unfair advantage or disadvantage to either of the parties involved, the matter will be considered seriously by MH. This includes investigation of the above in accordance with the Disciplinary procedures.

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Line managers should not seek to prevent or deter personal relationships at work on a blanket basis. Where two employees do not work together on a regular basis, there should be no barrier to their having a relationship. Similarly where two employees work together in the same team, it does not follow that problems will inevitably arise and the line manager should not intervene, except in circumstances where one of the two employees has some sort of authority over the other.

The normal policy of MH is that partners / relatives will not be employed where there is a line management relationship between them relating to discipline, promotion, pay and / or where they will be employed together in the areas of contracts or finance. This is to ensure that colleagues and customers feel confident that decisions made within MH are made in a fair and equitable way. Managers should also want to ensure that their decisions are not influenced by personal considerations.

If a personal relationship develops where there is also a line management relationship, this must be declared. Where there is evidence that the working relationship will cause, or has the potential to cause, a conflict of interest, consideration must be given to whether the next line manager can take on the line management element of the role or be involved in decision making concerning the employee. A decision can only be made once full consideration has taken place and the employees have had an opportunity to express their views.

Where there is no alternative way of working, the manager must look for an alternative post for one of the employees involved. The decision of who

	<p>should move to an alternative post must be based on the degree of impact the loss of either employee would have on the particular service. Each case must be decided on its merits to ensure that the decision made is on objective and reasonable grounds and not unfairly discriminatory.</p> <p>If it is not possible to effect a transfer - for example, if no suitable vacancies exist, or if the employee refuses to transfer - the organisation may elect to dismiss either one or both employees, with notice in accordance with their contracts of employment. Dismissal should, however, be undertaken only as a last resort in circumstances where no other course of action is reasonably open to the organisation and where it is felt that the situation justifies such action. It is anticipated that such situations would occur very infrequently.</p> <p>Recruitment and Selection</p> <p>Employees who are in a line management role should not normally be involved in any way in the recruitment, selection or appointment of any applicant with whom that have a personal relationship. Employees involved in the recruitment of staff (both internal and external) must ensure that the decision to appoint is based on merit (see the Recruitment and Selection policy for further details). An appointment based on anything other than the ability of the candidate to do the job may leave MH vulnerable to allegations of discrimination.</p> <p>Misuse of power / authority</p> <p>Where an employee feels that there is a possible or actual misuse of power / authority or conflict of interest relating to a personal relationship at work involving a line manager, they should raise this in the first instance with the next higher level of management.</p> <p>The principles referred to in this policy also apply to any employee who becomes involved in a close personal relationship with a customer, contractor, supplier or Board member of the organisation.</p> <p>Related Policies</p> <p>This policy should be read in conjunction with the Code of Conduct and the Entitlement, Payments and Benefits policy.</p>
Approval	Senior Management Team 24 July 2018
Policy Owner	Carol Bain, HR Manager
Review	The policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if legislation requires it.