



Performance Through People

Staff Handbook

Guidance for Employees

PERFORMANCE THROUGH PEOPLE

**Company Rules, Policies and
Procedures**

CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction To PTP Training Limited	3
Mission, Vision And Values	4
Purpose Of The Staff Handbook	5
Timekeeping And Absence	6
Annual Leave Policy	8
Disciplinary Procedure	10
Gross Misconduct Policy	12
Grievance Procedure	13
Appeals Procedure	14
Confidentiality Policy	15
Health And Safety, Safeguarding, E-Safety, Equality And Diversity And Quality Issues	16
Internet And Electronic Mail Usage	17
General Rules	21
Company Property	23
Company Vehicle Drivers Policy	24
Drug And Alcohol Abuse Policy	27
Emergency Time Off For Dependants	29
Flexible Working Policy	30
Harassment And Bullying Policy	33
Maternity Policy	36
Parental Leave Policy	39
Paternity Policy	41
Retirement Policy	43
Smoking Policy	44
Dress Policy	45
Environment Policy	46
Performance And Capability Procedure	47
Personal Records And Data Protection Policy	49
Recruitment And Selection Of Staff Policy	50
Redundancy Policy	54
Reference Request Policy	56
Special Leave Policy	57
Telephone Policy	58
Whistle-Blowing Policy	59
Code Of Professional Conduct	64
Training And Development Policy	72

INTRODUCTION TO PTP TRAINING LIMITED

“On behalf of Performance Through People, I am pleased to welcome you to the organisation.

You are joining a team of professionals who are truly committed to the highest levels of service and support to our users and colleagues alike. You will find your colleagues are friendly, so please feel free to seek their help and advice at all times.

Enthusiasm and innovation is the key to our success, so you are encouraged to participate whatever your role.

Above all I hope you are happy at Performance Through People and enjoy working here”

Rob Colbourne – Managing Director

PTP Training Limited, trading as Performance Through People, is one of the largest independent training organisations in the Midlands having national coverage.

The training division was formed in the 1970's and originally based in Wednesbury, providing skills training for Engineering Apprenticeships. Centres in Walsall soon followed and now PTP can proudly boast centres in Walsall, Birmingham, Cannock, Wolverhampton and Newcastle.

The Head Office of Performance Through People is based in Walsall after moving in 2010 from Cannock. As a result of our many years of experience as the training division of a Chamber of Commerce, we are in the unique position to understand the needs of business organisations and individuals. PTP employ occupationally competent staff to provide training and consultancy solutions, whether the result is a one-day short course, assistance with systems to meet legislative requirements, NVQ's or Apprenticeships.

MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

Mission Statement

Performance Through People is a provider of training solutions acting as a single contact to employers. Providing excellent training and development which meets the needs of learners and companies, delivered by highly competent specialist staff.

Vision

To be the Chosen Provider for employers, clients and funding agencies throughout the Midlands, with motivated staff training in inspirational learning centres with Quality marks to confirm our standing as a provider of training.

Values

- Promote Lifelong Learning
- Reward and Celebrate Success
- All Learners are supported
- Involve all staff
- Support equality of opportunity for staff and learners
- Encourage self-review and continuous improvement

Our values are linked to **7 core behavioural competencies** and are applicable to all staff:

- Managing relationships
- Communication
- Meeting customer needs
- Quality conscious
- Integrity
- Developing people
- Involving people

These core competencies are fundamental to the way in which we work at PTP.

PURPOSE OF THE STAFF HANDBOOK

The purpose of this staff handbook is to provide you with information relating to your employment with us. It is very important that you read through this handbook as together with your Contract of Employment, it sets out the main terms and conditions of your employment with us. If you have any questions regarding any part of this handbook then please do not hesitate to ask. Please note that where there is any conflict between this handbook and your Contract of Employment, the Contract takes precedence.

We reserve the right to alter or amend terms and conditions of employment and policies and procedures, according to our business needs. As such the employee handbook will be subject to change from time to time. You will be advised of any changes via the staff intranet.

Please note that the policies and procedures contained in this handbook are non-contractual.

We recognise that our employees are our most important resource and are vital to our continued success. We hope through this handbook to provide a measure of support to all our employees and also to ensure that rights of individuals are respected and that all employees are treated with courtesy and consideration.

If your employment with us has resulted following a transfer under the TUPE Regulations, the information set out in this handbook may not reflect what was agreed with you prior to you joining us. In such circumstances please contact the Managing Director's office for further details.

TIMEKEEPING AND ABSENCE

1. Employees are responsible for attending punctually for work in accordance with the hours defined in their contract of employment. Office hours are 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday inclusive, excluding public holidays.
2. Where your working hours are subject to statutory control and you have not signed an agreement to “opt out” of these Regulations, then there is a maximum working week of 48 hours. Please note that this includes any secondary employment that you may have, for which you will need written permission from the Managing Director’s office. It remains your responsibility to notify your Line Manager of your circumstances or indeed any changes to your circumstances which would affect the total amount of weekly hours worked. We may require you to sign an “opt out” agreement so that you are not bound by the 48 hour limit.
3. Clearly, contracted hours may differ but the principle remains that you must arrive on time and not leave early without the express permission of your Line Manager. In the event of any employee requiring time away from work during normal working hours, he/she must discuss the request with their manager and on receiving permission contact their manager before leaving and on returning to work. Where time keeping becomes a consistent problem then this may become a matter for disciplinary action.
4. Lateness for work may result in pay being reduced accordingly. Persistent lateness may lead to disciplinary action being taken.
5. If you need to be absent from work for a dental, medical or other essential appointment then prior permission should always be obtained from your Line Manager. Payment for such absences (excluding pregnancy related appointments) will be at our sole discretion. You are asked to make all necessary appointments outside working hours wherever possible. Any such absences during working hours should be minimal and will require you either to take holiday to cover your absence or to make up the time taken by working additional hours at another time.
6. If employees are absent from work for any reason they (or someone else on their behalf) must notify the Company as soon as possible and in any event no later than your normal starting time on the first day of absence. Any unauthorised absence must be properly explained. In the case of absence of uncertain duration, employees should keep the Company informed on a daily basis of the reason for continued absence and the progress towards a return to work. If you cannot locate your Line Manager you must speak to the next most senior Manager available. You must be aware that failure to follow the absence policy may render you subject to investigation and potential disciplinary action.
7. If an employee’s incapacity through illness or injury continues for more than seven consecutive calendar days, the employee must provide the Company with a doctor’s medical certificate as soon as it is available.
8. Immediately upon return to work after a period of sickness or injury absence of less than seven days, employees are required to complete and submit a Company self certification form.
9. Failure to comply with the requirements in the paragraphs above may result in Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) being withheld, and, where appropriate, Company sick pay.

10. In the event of persistent absenteeism, the employee may be asked to give permission to the Company to contact the employee's doctor or to undergo an independent medical examination at the Company's expense. This is to enable the Company to obtain up to date authoritative information on the employee's health problems.
11. Unauthorised absence may lead to disciplinary action being taken. This may result in the termination of your employment. We reserve the right to deduct from your salary any amount paid to you during a period of unauthorised absence.
12. In circumstances where employees have taken unauthorised absence medical certificates may be requested for all subsequent periods of absence.
13. Requests for compassionate leave, in the event of death in an employee's immediate family or other exceptional personal circumstances should be discussed with your line manager. You will be allowed a short period of leave of absence following the death of a close relative (for the purposes of this handbook a close relative includes spouse, parents, grandparents, children or siblings). The length of time allowed should be agreed between you and your Line manager but will not exceed 3 days (we will retain our discretion regarding the amount of time allowed).
14. Payments for any time off granted in these circumstances are at the discretion of the Company and form no part of the contract of employment.
15. If you are required to attend Court for jury service then you must notify your Line Manager as soon as you are made aware of this requirement. You must also provide written confirmation of your required attendance at Court. You will be allowed time off with normal basic pay less a deduction from the Loss of Earnings Allowance which you should claim from the Court together with any travelling and any other expenses.

If you are required to attend Court as a witness in matters not affecting us you will be granted unpaid leave of absence upon production of written confirmation of the notification of the requirement for you to attend Court.
16. We will respect any reasonable requests for unpaid leave due to voluntary public duties such as a Magistrate, a Member of the Statutory Tribunal, a Member of the Police Authority, a Territorial Army volunteer reserve etc. If you have such an involvement then any potential for leave of absence should be communicated to your Line Manager either at the commencement of your employment, or the commencement of any relevant involvement, whichever is earlier.
17. Time off in lieu for overtime worked may, at the discretion of the manager, be given instead of payment. Time off will be the same number of hours as the additional hours worked.

ANNUAL LEAVE POLICY

1. As indicated in the written statement of main terms and conditions of employment, the Company holiday year runs from January to December. This is the twelve month period during which employees accrue their holidays.
2. During your first year of service you will not be permitted to take holiday until it has been accrued. Any request during your first year of service to take more leave than you have accrued must be made in writing to your Line manager who in turn will obtain agreement from a senior manager. It is our discretion to grant or deny this written request.
3. All holidays may only be taken after prior agreement with your Line Manager. Holidays are booked on a first come, first served basis.

In any holiday year, staff must take a minimum of 20 days (pro-rata for part-time staff) by 1st October; the shortfall cannot be taken forward into the final quarter unless this has been agreed by your Line Manager in advance.

Employees who join after the start of the holiday year are entitled to holiday on a pro-rata basis for each calendar month worked during that holiday year.

A certain number of days of the above entitlement will be retained each year, by PTP Training Limited towards the annual Christmas close down period. Details of these will be advised annually on the staff intranet.

4. Unused holiday entitlement cannot be carried over from one year to the next. We will not make a payment in lieu of unused holiday except upon the termination of your employment where you have accrued but not taken a proportion of your holiday.
5. You are asked to give as much notice as possible of any holiday you wish to take. All holiday dates must be agreed with your manager not less than 2 weeks in advance of the holiday requested for holiday of less than 5 days duration. At least 1 month's notice must be given for holiday of more than 5 days duration. No more than 15 days can be taken at any one time during the holiday year unless specific permission is given by the Managing Director.
6. Holiday dates will be agreed after taking into account the needs of the business and its clients, and ensuring that the minimum staffing levels needed to provide the best services to our clients are maintained.

All holiday requests will be fully considered within 3 working days of the request being made. All requests will be considered in the date and time order that they were received. We retain the discretion not to allow holiday to be taken where the above notice requirements have not been complied with. In the event that we refuse a holiday request, we are not responsible for any financial commitment made by you prior to authorisation of holiday.

7. Any holidays taken without prior permission will lead to disciplinary action being taken. The disciplinary procedure could be invoked and the employee could be dismissed in the case where an employee requests a holiday, which is refused, and then the employee subsequently takes that holiday without permission.

8. Upon completion of one year's service as at the 1st January you are entitled to receive a further one day holiday to be taken on your birthday. Where this day falls on either a weekend or public holiday the next working day should be taken.

Upon completion of two year's service as at 1st January you will accrue additional holiday at the rate of one day per complete year of service as at 1st January up to a maximum of 5 days. This entitlement is pro-rata for part-time employees.

Completion of less than 1 year's service, as at 1st Jan - 25 days

Completion of 1 year's service, as at 1st Jan – 26 days (1 day must be taken on your birthday)

Completion of 2 years service, as at 1st Jan – 27 days

Completion of 3 years service, as at 1st Jan – 28 days

Completion of 4 years service, as at 1st Jan – 29 days

Completion of 5 years service, as at 1st Jan – 30 days

9. In addition to the above you are entitled to bank and public holidays unless you are required to work by us on those days. When this occurs you will be entitled to additional holiday in lieu to be taken at a time agreed with us. Part time staff are only eligible for bank and public holidays where they fall on days normally worked.
10. If you suffer from an illness immediately before commencing a period of authorised holiday or during an authorised holiday period and the illness is sufficiently serious that you would otherwise have been given time off for medical reasons, the following applies.

In order to claim any period of authorised holiday as a period of sick leave, you must provide medical evidence in the form of a GP Certificate to cover each day of holiday that you wish to be counted as sick leave and which you wish to reclaim as holiday at a later date. Self Certification of such illness will not be accepted as proof of illness. All such illness must be notified to your line manager immediately, in line with the company absence reporting procedure. The GP Certificate must be submitted as soon as it is available; backdated GP Certificates or Self certification forms will not be accepted as proof of illness. All requests to reclaim holiday days lost as a result of illness during an authorised or actual holiday period, must be submitted in writing to your Line Manager within one working week of your return from holiday or illness, whichever is the later.

You will only be entitled to reclaim days which fall within the statutory holiday entitlement. Any contractual holiday entitlement over and above the statutory holiday entitlement may not be taken at another time and you will be deemed to have taken this leave as holiday and not sick leave.

The company reserves the right to require you to take any reclaimed holiday at a time that is convenient to the business.

11. On termination of employment, employees are entitled to receive payment for all unused accrued holidays in the current holiday year only. The Company reserves the right to insist employees take accumulated annual leave within their notice period.
12. Any payments of holiday pay made to employees in excess of the amount accrued on termination of employment, will be deducted in full from the final monies due on termination. Where the amount of the overpayment exceeds any final payment, employees must reimburse the Company accordingly.
13. We reserve the right to enforce a period of annual leave for staff providing that adequate notice is given to all affected employee - that is, at least twice the length of the period of annual leave being enforced.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

1. The disciplinary system has been designed to provide employees with every opportunity to explain the circumstances surrounding any breach of Company rules and is essentially intended to give employees the opportunity to conform to the standards of conduct and performance set out by the Company. Consequently, where the facts of a case warrant disciplinary action being taken against an employee, it is the intention that such action be seen as remedial rather than punitive.
2. Disciplinary action may be taken only when the facts of the situation warrant it. Persistent breaches of the same or similar rules may lead to progressively more serious action being taken and ultimately dismissal.
3. Prior to any disciplinary action, an investigation will be conducted into the circumstances of the alleged offence or problem.
4. Dependent upon the seriousness of the offence, disciplinary action may take one of the following forms:
 - A verbal warning, which will be recorded within the employee's personnel file for a period of six months and confirmed to the employee in writing.
 - A first written warning, which will be recorded within the employee's personnel file for a period of twelve months and confirmed to the employee in writing.
 - A final written warning, which will be recorded within the employee's personnel file for a period of twelve months and confirmed to the employee in writing advising the employee that further breaches of rules could lead to dismissal.
 - Dismissal with notice, or as in the case of gross misconduct without a period of notice.
5. For employees in their probationary period or first two years of employment with the Company, only one warning may be given prior to dismissal.
6. The Company reserves the right to suspend employees from work whether with or without pay in appropriate circumstances.
7. Before any decision is made regarding a disciplinary matter, employees will normally be given:
 - A letter setting out the complaint against them and inviting them to a disciplinary hearing explaining the possible outcome;
 - The right to be accompanied at the hearing by a work place colleague or a Trade Union official;
 - The right of reply throughout the hearing to any allegations made against them.
8. If disciplinary action is imposed, all employees can expect to receive written confirmation detailing:
 - The complaint and facts that the decision was based on;
 - Rectification required (except in the case of dismissal);
 - The timescales issued for rectification (if appropriate);
 - The possible consequences should an employee fail to reach the desired standard in the required timescales;
 - The right to appeal (please see separate Appeals Procedure).
9. Each stage of the procedure will be administered by the appropriate manager within the Company.

10. In extreme cases of serious gross misconduct (e.g. physical injury, where there may be an ongoing risk of harm) the Company reserves the right to utilise a modified dismissal procedure. In this situation, written submissions will be accepted by the employee. The employee will receive a summary statement of the reasons why they have been dismissed. In these cases, the employee would still retain the right of appeal.
11. Where a proven case of gross misconduct results in loss to the company, financial or otherwise, we reserve the right to deduct from your salary an amount equal to the loss suffered.

GROSS MISCONDUCT POLICY

The following are examples of gross misconduct and as such may render employees liable to summary dismissal (i.e. dismissal without notice). This list is not exhaustive.

1. Fighting, physical assault or dangerous horseplay.
2. Failure to carry out a reasonable instruction during working hours.
3. Gross insubordination or the use of aggressive behaviour or excessive bad language on Company premises, or towards customers/colleagues, or on any occasion whilst performing job duties.
4. Theft, wilful damage or negligence that leads to damage to property belonging to the Company, its clients or suppliers or other employees.
5. Fraud or any other offence committed against the Company or customers, which could be a breach of the law of the land.
6. Drunkenness or drug abuse.
7. Gross immorality or sexual harassment.
8. Breach of safety rules and/or actions that seriously endanger the health or safety of another person whilst at work.
9. Divulging to any persons any confidential information relating to the Company's business processes or clients.
10. Wilful or reckless overcharging and undercharging of customers.
11. Deliberate falsification of records and/or signatures.
12. Serious breach of payment procedures or purchase rules.
13. Unauthorised access to or use of Company correspondence, computer data or manual files.
14. Unlawful race, sex or disability discrimination against fellow employees or customers.
15. Gross breach of the Company Internet or electronic mail policy.
16. Failure to properly supervise learners' use of Company Internet or electronic mail.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

1. Employees who have a grievance with the Company relating to any aspect of their employment should in the first instance, wherever possible, discuss it at any time with their line manager.
2. If the grievance is not satisfactorily resolved in informal discussions, employees have a duty to state the full details of their grievance in writing to your Line Manager in confidence.
3. A formal meeting will then be arranged as soon as possible, normally within ten days. Following which written confirmation of the outcome will be forwarded to the employee within 28 days of the grievance being received.
4. Employees have a duty to make all reasonable attempts to attend any meeting arranged.
5. Employees will have the opportunity to be accompanied at any formal meeting by a fellow employee or a Trade Union official should they so wish.
6. Employees who are dissatisfied with the outcome of the grievance have the right to appeal. For further information about the rights of appeal, please refer to the appeals procedure.

APPEALS PROCEDURE

1. Employees may appeal against any disciplinary action brought against them or the outcome of a grievance by requesting an appeal in writing to the relevant manager within five working days of receiving the confirmation letter.
2. Where an appeal is made against disciplinary action, including dismissal, the appeal will be conducted by a manager or director not previously involved in the matter and wherever possible will be of a higher grade than the original manager.
3. Where an appeal is made against a grievance outcome, the appeal will be conducted by a member of the Senior Management Team who has not previously been involved in the original decision.
4. Appeals will be held as quickly as possible but in any event will be normally carried out within five working days of the appeal being received.
5. Once an appeal has been heard, a decision will be made and confirmed, normally in writing within 48 hours.
6. Once you have appealed against a decision imposed and received that decision in writing, there will be no further right of appeal.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

1. During the course of your employment you will have access to confidential information. We require you to abide by a strict duty of confidentiality. This covers all information concerning our client's and work colleagues, their business or indeed our business. We regard this matter as very serious and require you not to share any such confidential information with any third parties and under no circumstances with anyone outside of our company.

Should you become aware of any breach of confidentiality either on your own part or by any other employee then this must be reported immediately to your line manager or more Senior Manager, as appropriate.

2. PTP Training Limited has a good relationship with the press, which has been achieved through a pro-active policy of regular press releases and maintaining accessibility.

Due to the size and complexity of PTP Training Limited it is important that a clear and unified message is presented.

Therefore, the following members of staff ONLY are authorised to speak to the press:

- When a departmental press release is sent:
Director and/or, for purely factual information relating to the press release, the contact officer named in that release.
- On policy/management issues:
Managing Director and/or, for purely factual issues, the relevant divisional Senior Manager.

In any other circumstance, if you receive a call from the press, you must refer them to your immediate Manager. All press releases must be approved by the relevant divisional Senior Manager. Copies of all press releases must be forwarded to the Managing Director's office.

HEALTH AND SAFETY, SAFEGUARDING, E-SAFETY, EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY AND QUALITY ISSUES

PTP Training Limited recognises both the legal and moral obligations of ensuring the health safety and welfare of its employees. This includes all people receiving training, work experience and all others who may be affected by its activities. PTP Training Limited will take all steps to meet these obligations.

Separate policies relating to Health and Safety, Safeguarding, E-Safety, Equality and Diversity and Quality are available in the Quality Manual on the Company's intranet site and you should familiarise yourself with these policies.

The operational procedures contained in the Quality Manual are considered to be a fundamental part of working practices within PTP. As such they are contractual and must be followed at all times. Failure to adhere to these procedures will be considered to be misconduct and may result in disciplinary action.

INTERNET AND ELECTRONIC MAIL USAGE

1. PTP Training Limited provides internet and e-mail access in order that employees may perform their duties. We encourage you to use our e-mail system for business purposes but please note that misuse of any part of the system will result in disciplinary action being taken against you.
2. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the proper use of the Internet and e-mail system by its employees, contractors, part-time employees, volunteers, and other individuals (hereafter referred to as "users") who are provided with access to the system.
3. Users will only be provided with such access to the Internet and e-mail system as is necessary to carry out their specified roles or business purpose with the Company, and only if they abide by all applicable rules, including the e-Safety & Responsibility Policy and Staff Acceptable Use Agreement as stated below. Users who are in violation of this policy may be removed from the e-mail system and be subject to disciplinary action.
4. Employees are prohibited from using the passwords of other employees to gain access to other employees' e-mail messages or files. However, where appropriate and authorised to do so, staff are encouraged to use the facilities within the e-mail software to deal with e-mails in the case of an employee's illness or absence. If in doubt about the appropriateness of doing so, please ask for guidance.
5. E-mail and Internet access is a tool for business communications, and users have the responsibility to use this resource in an efficient, effective, ethical and lawful manner.
6. E-mail communications should follow the same standards expected in written business communications and public meetings. All messages should be constructed professionally (spelling, grammar), politely and efficiently.
7. Caution should be taken to ensure that messages are addressed to the appropriate recipient. It is easy to inadvertently address e-mail messages incorrectly.
8. All e-mail accounts maintained on the e-mail systems are the sole property of the Company. The Company has the right to monitor any user's e-mail and Internet access record for legitimate business reasons, including compliance with this policy, where there is reasonable suspicion of any activities that are in breach of this policy.
9. The Company may access private electronic messages or files of an employee with good cause, provided that appropriate procedures designed to ensure compliance with Company policies, are followed. Good cause shall include the need to protect system security, fulfil Company obligations, detect employee wrongdoing, comply with legal process, or protect the right of property of the Company. Appropriate procedures shall include reviews by senior Company managers to ensure that employee privacy is not infringed without good cause. Users should be aware that despite the deletion of messages, access to deleted messages is still possible.

The following use of the e-mail and Internet systems is strictly prohibited:

10. The exchange of proprietary information, trade secrets or any other privileged information including information relating to any potential or actual litigation, confidential or sensitive information.

11. Downloading any pornographic material or any other type of offensive material is strictly forbidden and would constitute gross misconduct and potentially, a criminal offence.
12. Users must not download any shareware, freeware, trial ware, games, desktop themes or any unauthorised software onto any PC. All software must be approved and installed by the Facilities Manager or Central Networks.
13. The creation and exchange of non-work related communications, chain letters, hoaxes and other unsolicited e-mail.
14. The creation and exchange of information in violation of any copyright laws or other intellectual property rights of third parties including registration to list servers without proper authorisation. Subscription to such a service can result in an overload of received messages directly impacting the performance of the e-mail system.
15. Messages should not be read or sent from another user's account except under properly approved arrangements.
16. Users must not compromise the privacy of their password by giving it to others or exposing it to public view.
17. The Company's e-mail system may not be used for illegal or wrongful purposes. This includes the distribution of material which may be, or is, prohibited under an Act of Parliament or any other law including material containing critical or defamatory statements about employees, clients, other companies, organisations or individuals.
18. Distribution of any material, which depreciates the performance of the e-mail system and servers, is strictly prohibited. This includes sending non-business related attachments, files, and junk mail.
19. Entering into any contractual obligations or pre-contractual obligations or representations, which bind the Company without prior authorisation, is also prohibited.

Breaches of this policy may result in users being removed from the e-mail and Internet system and disciplinary action being taken, which may include dismissal.

Staff Acceptable Usage Agreement

20. As part of your Contract of Employment, Performance Through People (PTP) expects staff to demonstrate appropriate behaviour towards learners, employers and other staff members whilst within PTP centres and on employers premises.

Equipment and resources required for you to work effectively and efficiently will be made available. It is expected that this equipment be used responsibly, respectfully and in accordance to the manufacturer's instructions. PTP will not tolerate any abuse of equipment or resources. Any reported unacceptable conduct will be treated seriously and in line with the staff disciplinary codes. Staff will be responsible for the replacement of equipment or resources where replacement is due to not normal wear and tear or manufacturing fault.

Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, PTP will deal with the matter internally. Where conduct is considered illegal, PTP will report the matter to the police. Serious breaches of codes could lead to dismissal.

The Acceptable Usage Agreement includes, but is not limited to, the internet and electronic communication devices such as email, mobile phones, games consoles, social networking sites, MP3 Player, e-books and iPods.

- Mobile Phones

Mobile devices are to be switched off or to silent during taught delivery sessions and employer visits. Interruptions by mobile devices can be very distracting for the employer, staff and learners.

Should you need to be contactable for business or family reasons, switch phones to vibrate. Such call should be kept to a minimum. Where it is important for PTP to contact staff in company, calls will be made via an employer's landline. It is therefore important that diaries are kept up-to-date.

Work mobile devices should be checked during break times and between visits so that messages can be dealt with as soon as possible.

Personal mobiles should be switched to vibrate or silent during the working day and should not be accessed outside of break times. Where calls are important family members should be encouraged to contact staff through a PTP landline.

- Internet Access

Part of a learner's programme of learning, learners may be expected to access to the internet for research purposes or as a vehicle to access learning resources. It is expected that learner's access approved sites only. It is important that before asking students to undertake an internet research project a Risk Assessment is completed to ascertain which sites are considered appropriate for learner use.

Incidents where staff have accessed sites and materials that are considered offensive or may cause offence to other staff or learners will be treated seriously and in line with the staff disciplinary codes. PTP defend the right to maintain an environment where staff and learners feel safe and secure.

Staff are expected to insure that ICT equipment used as part of a lesson is checked prior to the session commencing to ensure that equipment is in full working order. Where problems are identified, staff must report these following the Fault Reporting process.

At the end of the session staff are expected to ensure that equipment has not been changed from its default settings and that all equipment is closed down following manufacturer's instructions. Where problems are identified, staff must report these following the Fault Reporting process.

- Social Networking

Staff can follow PTP on Facebook and Twitter. It is expected that if staff wish to do so this is done so during break times only.

PTP staff members are discouraged from accepting learners as friends on all social networking sites.

Staff are encouraged to use social networking sites in a responsible and professional manner. More and more employers use social network sites as a form of reference for potential employees. Something added to your site as a joke may not be seen as such by an employer.

Staff must ask permission before posting pictures of staff or learners onto a social networking site. By not gaining permission it may be considered an invasion of someone's privacy which may lead to a breach of their security.

PTP will not accept staff disrespecting PTP, or its staff members, employers or learners on social networking sites. Where staff have a concern or a complaint, staff are expected to

use the complaints process to air that concern or a complaint. Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, PTP will deal with the matter internally. Where conduct is considered illegal, PTP will report the matter to the police. Serious breaches of conduct could lead to dismissal.

- E-mails / Texts

All communication between staff, employers and learners must be professional in tone and content at all times. Communication which is offensive or considered offensive by others will not be tolerated. Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, PTP will deal with the matter internally. Where conduct is considered illegal, PTP will report the matter to the police. Serious breaches of conduct could lead to dismissal.

To support learners, staff are encouraged to issue their e-mail address and mobile number to learners and employer. Learners are encouraged to use these forms of communication to receive help and support with the programme of learning as and when necessary.

Please note that when off-duty, staff mobiles may be switched off. It is advised to encourage learners to contact staff during normal working hours. Staff are expected to make every effort to reply at their earliest, convenient moment.

- iPods / MP3 Player / Digital Radio

During taught sessions learners are expected to switch off equipment that may cause distractions to themselves or others.

Staff, who wish to listen to music, may do so during their break times as long as it is through an ear piece and not broadcast on loud speaker or through the intranet. If you play recorded music or music videos in public, you are legally required to have a Public Performance Licence (PPL).

- Use of Images and Video

The use of images, or photographs, is popular in teaching and learning and should be encouraged where there is no breach of copyright or other rights of another person. This will include images downloaded from the internet and images belonging to staff or learners.

All learners and staff will receive training on the risks in downloading these images as well as posting them online and sharing them with others. There are particular risks where personal images are posted onto social networking sites, for example. PTP staff will provide information to learners on the appropriate use of images as detailed in the Acceptable Usage Agreement. Our aim is to reinforce good practice as well as offer further information for all users on how to keep their personal information safe.

Photographs should not be taken of learners, staff or any other individual without express consent. No image/photograph can be copied, downloaded, shared or distributed online without permission from a Director. Photographs of activities on PTP premises should be considered carefully and have the consent of those pictured before being published. Approved photographs should not include names of individuals unless permission has been given.

GENERAL RULES

1. Employees are expected to act wholeheartedly in the interests of the Company at all times. Any conduct detrimental to its interests or its relations with its clients, suppliers, the general public, or damaging to its public image will be considered to be a breach of Company rules.
2. All our employees will receive a general induction upon commencement of their employment. This will provide you with the basic and general information about our company, your place of work, job role, important health and safety issues and any other relevant topics.
3. As and when training is required it will be provided. It is our policy to provide for all necessary training. However, should you leave your employment with us within eighteen months of undertaking an element of training then we retain at our discretion the right to require that you repay the cost of this training. To this end we reserve the right to deduct the cost of this training from your wages. For further guidance, please refer to the Training and Development Policy.
4. Confidential information relating to the Company, its clients or suppliers must not be disclosed to any third party at any time, either during or after employment. This includes removing or copying documents, electronic data or tangible items that belong to the Company and which contain any confidential information. On termination, you must return all such items that are in your possession to the Company.
5. All authorised notices displayed throughout the Company are expected to be observed.
6. Dress and appearance is an important requirement of your work and should always be of the highest standard to protect the image and reputation of the business. Employees must therefore be prepared to improve or change their dress and appearance if reasonably requested to do so. For further guidance, please refer to the dress policy and the code of professional conduct.
7. You agree that you will not work for any other organisation whilst you are employed by us without prior written permission from a Director of the organisation. Any such additional employment should not affect the standard of their performance with the Company.
8. To ensure maximum efficiency, employees are employed on the basis that they must be prepared to undertake all reasonable requests to carry out duties other than those for which you have been specifically engaged.
9. Unfortunately, from time to time errors may occur in the processing of wages. If there is any underpayment, overpayment or other anomaly then you must inform us immediately. We reserve the right to recover any amount of overpayment directly from your salary and also to make any further payments to you as necessary to rectify these errors.
10. We do not accept responsibility for any bank transfer delays or for any other delay or problem that is beyond our control
11. The Company understands that you may occasionally need to make or receive personal telephone calls. You must keep the use of the Company telephone to a minimum. Employees should also be aware that the use of mobile phones on Company premises during working hours for personal calls is not permitted. If you need to make or receive lengthy or frequent personal calls, you should first seek the Company's approval. On those occasions where the Company telephone is used, an appropriate charge may be made.

12. In the event of a shortage of work for whatever reason, the Company reserves the right to introduce short time working or to lay off employees without pay. This, however, will be a last resort, as every effort will be made to avoid this action. Statutory guarantee payments will be paid where appropriate in these circumstances.
13. In the event that the need arises to permanently reduce staffing levels, the following selection procedure will apply where there is more than one employee of a particular type at risk of redundancy.

Selection for redundancy will be based upon an assessment of relative capabilities, performance, service length, reliability, conduct, attendance record and suitability for the work that remains. Due weight will be given to each of the above criteria.

Employees must throughout their employment disclose to the Company details of any criminal or civil proceedings brought against them.
14. Employees must not speak or communicate with the press or broadcasting media about the Company or its business activities. All such communications will be made solely by the nominated spokesperson, for the Company.
15. Employees who find any item of lost property on the premises are required to bring it to the Company's attention immediately.
16. Receiving gifts from clients or suppliers is not good practice. Any employee who receives a gift, other than one of a nominal nature, from a business contact (e.g. client or suppliers, potential or actual) must disclose details of it to the Company. Similarly, any gifts to business contacts from employees must be disclosed in the same way. For further guidance, please refer to the code of professional conduct.
17. Intellectual property, copyright, topography or other rights in relation to any invention, process, design, programme or other matter created by you (alone, or with others) during your employment and capable of being used in the business the Company, shall immediately be communicated to the Company by you and shall be the sole and absolute property of the Company. You shall execute all documents and take all steps necessary to vest the same in the Company.
18. Occasionally, changes to the nature of our business may make it necessary to discuss with individual employees, the feasibility of carrying out alternative positions within the Company. Employees are encouraged to embrace such changes and to develop new skills.
19. If you are required to use your own motor vehicle for the performance of your duties under your contract of employment you must ensure that your vehicle is roadworthy, that you have a valid driving licence and the appropriate insurance cover. Staff are required to provide a copy of both documents annually to the Finance Manager. Failure to adhere to this may result in disciplinary action being taken against you. For further guidance, please refer to the code of professional conduct.
20. Employees who need to claim expenses or make mileage claims must follow the procedure as laid down in the Quality Manual. Expenses must be authorised by a Line Manager prior to making a purchase and a standard rate car mileage is paid for journeys performed on official business, excluding normal mileage travelling to and from home to work. If a journey starts from home or ends at home, your usual mileage travelling to work must be deducted. This rule does not apply to authorised home based workers. If travelling between centres, the standard mileage as quoted on the vehicle mileage sheet must be used. In the event that Finance do not receive your claim on time, the payment will be processed the following month. Claims that are more than 2 months old will not be processed.

COMPANY PROPERTY

1. Any facilities, equipment, tools, stock and/or any other type of property provided by us for the better performance of your employment duties remains our property at all times, should only be used for those duties and for no other purposes (unless prior written authority has been obtained) and must be returned to us on completion of the specific duties the property was required for.

We retain the right at our absolute discretion to require employees to pay for any company property or equipment that is damaged, lost or stolen through their own negligence.

2. The Company's time, materials or equipment must not be used for any unauthorised work.
3. The Company must be notified immediately of any incident in which damage or injury is caused to Company property, to fellow employees, clients and/or their personal effects.
4. The Company reserve the right to search staff and their personal property (including vehicles) whilst on Company premises. Searches will be carried out by a person of the same sex as the employee being searched. These searches are random and do not imply suspicion in relation to any individual concerned. If you are required to submit to a search, you will have the right to be accompanied by a third party of the same sex. Whilst you have the right to refuse to be searched, refusal will be considered to be a breach of contract and could result in disciplinary action. We reserve the right to involve the police at any stage if we believe this to be appropriate.
5. The Company accepts no liability for loss or damage to your personal property whilst on the Company premises. You are advised not to bring anything of value to work.

COMPANY VEHICLE DRIVERS POLICY

Statement

This policy sets out the Company's statement in relation to the safe and effective driving of Company vehicles, as well as the essential requirements in relation to the use and maintenance of such vehicles.

General

1. The vehicle is provided for Company use and private use for normal social and domestic activities and vehicles should be kept clean and tidy at all times.
2. All employees who drive or use Company vehicles are required to produce their full driving licence on an annual basis at the anniversary of their commencement of employment. The Company may require the production of the full licence at other times on giving reasonable notice. A failure to produce will result in disciplinary action and potential suspension from using the Company vehicle until the Company is satisfied with the explanation for non production.
3. Employees are required to notify the Company immediately they incur any form of points, penalty or licence endorsement. In the event that their licence is rescinded they must notify the Company immediately and they must cease driving forthwith.
4. Any employee who commits a road traffic offence may be subject to disciplinary action and in serious circumstances may face termination of employment. Employees will be liable for any road traffic fines including any speed camera or similar fines.
5. All employees should ensure that they take due care and attention of other road users at all times.
6. No employee may drive a Company vehicle where they are physically or mentally unfit to drive and employees should immediately notify the Company of any condition that may affect the employee's ability to drive.
7. Employees must never allow an unauthorised person to drive the vehicle unless it is an emergency situation and preferably with prior Company approval.

Servicing and Maintenance

8. Employees are responsible for ensuring that the vehicle is serviced and maintained in accordance with the required servicing schedule for the particular vehicle. Only authorised garages should be used and warranty enforceable parts only should be used for repairs to the vehicle.
9. Employees should ensure that the vehicle is road worthy at all times and ensure that they undertake normal routine checks on the vehicle, in particular in relation to tyre pressure, oil levels and screen wash levels. Any defect that may affect road safety should be attended to at the earliest opportunity. Employees should ensure that they use the correctly specified items when undertaking any top up of oils, fluids etc.

10. You should take care to ensure that the correct fuel and correct grade of fuel is used for the vehicle. A failure to do so may render employees liable for the remedial costs to the vehicle together with potential disciplinary action.

Safety Factors

11. Employees must check the safety of the vehicle before commencement on any journey.
12. Employees must not drive whilst they may be, in any way, under the influence of alcohol or similar nor whilst they may be subject to effects from the taking of any drug or other similar substance.
13. Employees who are required to take any form of medication must notify the Company of this fact in writing and they should desist from driving until they receive written confirmation that they may continue driving.
14. Employees should not drive whilst over tired. In the event that you feel tired or drowsy you should stop at the earliest safe opportunity and take a break until you feel able to proceed. If the stop means that you will be delayed in making an appointment you should contact the person and the Company explaining the reason for the delay.
15. Always plan your journey in advance and allow time for breaks and unexpected delays. Always drive safely within the restrictions of the particular road conditions. Employees should take special care during adverse weather conditions.

Mobile Telephones

16. Employees who do not have hands free set for their mobile telephones should switch their telephones off and should not make or receive any calls whilst they are driving or deemed to be in control of the vehicle for the purposes of the law.
17. Where employees have hands free telephones they should avoid making any telephone calls unless absolutely necessary. They should also not take any calls where the conditions would place them or other road users at any risk.

Smoking

18. The Company does not permit any smoking in its vehicles at any time whether in or outside Company hours. Passengers should be reminded of this policy and asked not to smoke whilst in the vehicles.

Accidents

19. In the unfortunate situation of an accident the employee should ensure their safety and that of any other passengers where they are able to do so.
20. Details of the accident should be noted together with the full details of any other vehicles or persons involved in the accident. Under no circumstances should any admission of liability be made.
21. As soon after the accident as possible you should report the details to the Company. You should complete the Company accident report form and return within 48 hours of the accident wherever possible. Any repairs to the vehicle must have insurer approval.
22. If the accident has been due to any failure or neglect on your part then disciplinary action may be taken once the full facts of the incident have been obtained.

Vehicle Return

23. The employee shall return the vehicle forthwith on being requested to do so by the Company for whatever reason.
24. The employee shall, on termination of employment for whatever reason, return the vehicle to the appointed location on the day appointed by the Company for the return of the vehicle or on the last day of employment if no other date is specified.
25. The vehicle shall be returned in a sound, clean and tidy condition.
26. It is an express term of the employee's Contract of Employment that the Company shall have the right to retain from the employee's salary the cost of any repairs to the vehicle.
27. It is an express term of the employee's Contract of Employment that any failure to return the vehicle on the day appointed, in a sound condition, shall result in the cost of its recovery being deducted from any monies due to the employee.

The Company has a responsibility for ensuring that employees drive in a safe and sensible manner. This policy is subject to review to ensure that it remains compliant with current legislation.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE POLICY

Policy Statement

1. The Company is aware of its responsibilities to provide for the health and safety of its employees and visitors to its premises and to ensure that a safe working environment is maintained.
2. The Company recognises that personal problems may give rise to a drink or drug problem. Staff are encouraged to seek help in the strictest of confidence if they have a problem that is alcohol related.
3. The Company will seek to offer assistance and help staff with an alcohol or drug abuse problem.
4. The Company may offer help with the problem through a referral to a counselling service or offer assistance to the employee in being placed with such a facility.
5. The Company will offer ongoing support during a recognised period of treatment which may include offering help with adjustment in the nature of the work undertaken by the employee.
6. The Company expects the employee to recognise that they are suffering from a problem and are prepared to co-operate fully in the referral and treatment from appropriate sources.
7. Where an employee fails to co-operate and there is deterioration in work performance, conduct or attitude this will be dealt with through the Company disciplinary process.
8. To ensure the safety of the workplace the Company will implement a strict policy in relation to the consumption of alcohol or the taking of drugs at work which will be dealt with through the Company disciplinary process.
9. This policy will apply to all staff irrespective of their position within the Company.

Alcohol Guidance

10. There is a strict prohibition against the consumption of alcohol on the Company's premises or during periods when the staff member is undertaking work for the Company.
11. Drivers of Company vehicles must not to consume alcohol either during their period of driving or for a reasonable period prior to commencing driving to ensure that they are not intoxicated and incapable of driving in a safe and responsible manner.
12. No staff member should attend work in a state where they are intoxicated or still under the influence of alcohol.
13. Any breach of this guidance will be dealt with through the Company's disciplinary process and, as this is a gross misconduct offence, this may lead to the summary termination of employment.

14. Where it is established a staff member has an alcohol related problem the Company may suspend the application of disciplinary action provided the employee is willing to co-operate with a referral to an appropriate drink counselling service and follow the advice and medication offered. Where a staff member refuses to follow that advice and medication or continues to abuse the alcohol policy they may be subject to disciplinary action.
15. Alcohol will be allowed within moderation at Company sponsored functions where staff have been formally notified that the drinking of moderate amounts of alcohol is to be permitted. This allowance does not affect any person who is driving a Company vehicle and the guidance will still apply to those persons who should not drive where they have consumed alcohol.

Drugs Abuse Guidance

16. The possession, use or distribution of drugs for non medical purposes on Company premises is both illegal and strictly forbidden.
17. Where a staff member has been prescribed medication by their medical practitioner which may affect their work ability they should discuss the problem, in the strictest confidence, with their immediate manager.
18. No staff member should undertake work for the Company whilst under the influence of any non prescribed drug or other substance that may affect the ability to properly fulfil their duties.
19. No person should drive a Company vehicle where they are, or might be, under the influence of any non prescribed drug or substance.
20. The Company reserves the right to search any staff member, their vehicle or property (including workplace lockers) if there are reasonable grounds to believe that this policy is being infringed.
21. A refusal to submit to a reasonable request to undertake such a search will normally be regarded as a matter to be dealt with through the Company's disciplinary procedure.
22. If the Company suspects that you have breached this guidance on drug abuse in any respect or that your work performance or conduct has been affected through such abuse the disciplinary procedure will be undertaken and such breaches are deemed to be gross misconduct that may lead to the summary termination of your employment.
23. Staff are reminded that they have a duty of care and will be expected to report to their immediate manager any concerns that they may have in relation to incidents relating to drink or drugs or where they suspect other staff of misuse or abuse.
24. The Company has a legal duty to notify the police where they believe that there has been a use of controlled drugs by its staff on Company premises or in vehicles.

EMERGENCY TIME OFF FOR DEPENDANTS

1. The Company operates a policy to allow you to take reasonable time off work to deal with an emergency situation concerning a dependant.
2. A dependant can be any of the following:
 - Your spouse, child or parent.
 - Someone who lives with you (but who is not your employee, lodger or boarder)
 - Anyone who relies on you, when he or she is ill or injured, either to assist them or to make arrangements for their care.
3. You may take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off work in the following circumstances:
 - To help when a dependant gives birth, is ill, injured or assaulted.
 - To make arrangements for the care of a sick or injured dependant.
 - To deal with the death of a dependant.
 - To cope when care arrangements for a dependant are unexpectedly disrupted.
 - To deal with an unexpected incident involving a dependent child at school.
4. You may only take time off work if you tell your manager as soon as possible why you need time off and how long you expect to be away from work.
5. You may take a reasonable amount of time off work. What is reasonable will depend on the circumstances of each incident. You should, as far as possible, agree with your manager how long you will be away from work.
6. You should note that any time off taken under this policy will be unpaid.

FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

Policy Statement

The company recognises that, as a responsible employer, it has obligations to ensure that employees are able to maintain an effective balance of their obligations in relation to work and home commitments.

The company is aware that there is a growing expectation that employees should be able to provide child care in relation to their younger children, in order to help in their early years' development.

The company also understands that in a period, when more employees find that they have aged relatives and dependants, the company needs to be responsive to reasonable requests to enable an employee to balance their work and caring responsibilities.

The provision of flexible working can also be beneficial to the company through retention of skills and abilities within its workforce.

The company also recognises that a positive approach to flexible working applications can enhance staff morale, retention rates and assist in the reduction in recruitment costs.

The company will look positively at such applications but employees must understand that there will be occasions when an application has to be rejected for relevant reasons, in those circumstances the company will seek to find a mutually suitable alternative although that may not always be possible.

Provisions

1. Flexible working is not an automatic right but there is a legal entitlement for certain employees to approach the company through the correct procedure to request a change in their working arrangements.
2. Flexible working can be achieved through a variety of ways. These can include:
 - a. A simple change in the number of days worked;
 - b. A change in the hours worked;
 - c. Changes in starting and finishing times;
 - d. A combination of flexi-time and home working.
3. Those employees wishing to apply should check to ensure that they are eligible.
4. The company may, in exceptional circumstances, consider applications for flexible working from employees who do not strictly meet the criteria laid down in the statutory scheme. This could be where an employee requires an adjustment for health reasons or where they wish to undertake a period of training or education that may be beneficial to the company. Employees should be aware that in these types of situations the company has an absolute discretion whether or not to consider them. A decision to consider and approve will not set any commitment that similar requests in the future will be accepted.
5. Employees should ensure that they follow the formal application procedure when making their request.
6. Employees who need assistance in completing documentation, or general advice on the scheme, should contact the Finance Manager.

7. The company is prepared to discuss any matters in relation to flexible working on an informal basis.
8. Employees should remember that unless otherwise agreed any change will be permanent. The company is prepared to consider applications that incorporate a trial period, or consider a trial period, prior to any formal request.
9. Employees should also remember that any flexible working application that is agreed, and involves a reduction in hours or alteration in duties and responsibilities, will mean a variation in pay and benefits.
10. Employees who are taking maternity leave should consider their intentions for the future and discuss options with the company. Such discussion would be on an informal basis, as employees taking maternity leave have a basic entitlement to return to work on either the same or similar arrangements to that which they have when they begin maternity leave, dependent upon whether they return after ordinary or additional maternity leave.
11. Employees on maternity leave who have decided that they wish to apply for flexible working should aim to apply as soon as possible, as the formal process can take up to 14 weeks to complete.

Procedure

Qualifying Requirements

12. Employees may make a formal request for flexible working, where they have worked for the company for a period of 26 weeks prior to the date of the application (at its absolute discretion the company will consider applications from employees who do not meet this time criteria) and have not already made a statutory application to work flexibly in the previous 12 months.
13. Employees have the statutory right to ask for flexible working under the following circumstances:
 - have or expect to have parental responsibility of a child aged under 17 (from April 2011 a child aged under 18 and applications need to be no later than two weeks before the child's relevant birthday)
 - have or expect to have parental responsibility of a disabled child under 18 who receives Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
 - be the parent/guardian/special guardian/foster parent/private foster carer or as the holder of a residence order or the spouse, partner or civil partner of one of these and are applying to care for the child
 - be a carer who cares, or expects to be caring, for an adult who is a spouse, partner, civil partner or relative; or who although not related to you, lives at the same address as you

Application

14. Employees will be required to complete the relevant application form which may be obtained from the Staff Intranet. You must ensure that this form is completed in its entirety. If assistance is needed in the completion you should contact the Finance Manager.
15. On receipt of a properly completed application form the application will be considered. Normally a meeting will be arranged within 28 days after the date on which the application was made. Employees may be accompanied at this meeting by a work colleague.

16. Within 14 days after the meeting the company will notify employees of the outcome of the meeting. If the application is successful this will be confirmed, and a start date for the new working arrangement agreed. Successful applicants will be provided with details of the new terms and conditions. If the application is unsuccessful employees will be notified of the reasons why and reminded that they may appeal against the decision. Employees will be given details of how to make the appeal and to whom it should be submitted.
17. Employees must make their appeal in writing within 14 days of receiving notification of the company's decision.
18. An appeal meeting will be arranged within 14 days if receiving the application.
19. The employee may be accompanied in the meeting by a fellow work colleague. The appeal meeting is an opportunity of explaining why the employee feels the company's original decision to reject the application was incorrect.
20. Within 14 days of the meeting the company will provide the employee with a written outcome. If the appeal is successful the company will confirm the new decision, together with the date for the commencement of the new arrangements, and provide the employee with the new terms and conditions. If the appeal is unsuccessful you will be given details of the reasons why. This will be the end of the company appeal process.

The company will undertake regular reviews of this policy to ensure that it remains legally compliant and conforms to best practice, as well as the best interests of the company and its employees.

HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

(Dignity at Work)

Statement

1. The Company recognises the need to create a working environment where staff are treated with respect by their fellow colleagues as well as guests and customers.
2. The Company strives to create a working environment in which no person feels threatened or intimidated.
3. The Company will not tolerate any form of harassment or bullying whether on the grounds of sex, race, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief or for any other reason.
4. Further, the Company, will not tolerate any form of retaliation or violence or victimisation against any member of staff and in particular, where they have brought a complaint of harassment or bullying under the Company's policy.
5. Staff who do harass or bully any other member of staff will be subject to discipline in accordance with the Company's disciplinary policy.
6. It is the responsibility of senior management to ensure that the Company's policy on dignity at work (harassment and bullying policy) is fully implemented and that relevant line managers are duly trained in the undertaking of the policy and its enforcement.

Harassment

7. Harassment may come in many forms, some of which are not always obvious to the individual members of staff. It will usually take the form of some unwanted behaviour by one member of staff to another.
8. Harassment can include verbal, non verbal or physical conduct which:
 - Belittles someone;
 - Can include comments about a person's appearance, clothes or body;
 - Patronises someone;
 - Has the purpose of degrading someone;
 - May involve unwelcome sexual attention or comment;
 - Can include the display of offensive or sexually explicit material such as posters, pinups, books or visual display images of that nature or the use of e-mail to forward similar types of material;
 - Can include touching, caressing, hugging or encroaching on a person's individual space or other similar unwelcome approaches;
 - May involve staring at a person;
 - Includes the deliberate exclusion of someone from work activities or discussions for any reason but especially because of their race, sex, gender orientation, disability, age or similar.
9. The essence of harassment is that the behaviour of the individual or individuals is unwelcome, unwanted and not reciprocated in any way.
10. Harassment is a serious matter that may amount to gross misconduct within the Company's disciplinary policy.

11. Further, staff should be aware that harassment involving any aspect of discrimination in relation to a person's age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment may constitute a serious criminal offence, making a person liable to prosecution. Further individuals so harassed may bring private claims under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997.

Bullying

12. Bullying is a persistent course of behaviour by an individual or a group of individuals that creates a situation where people are undermined due to threatening or intimidating behaviour.
13. There is no single definition of what amounts to bullying but it can include, amongst other actions:
 - A threat of physical violence or actual physical violence;
 - Unfairly picking on someone;
 - Imposing unrealistic targets or work expectations;
 - Abuse of authority in dealing with an individual;
 - Making unpleasant remarks or jokes about a person;
 - Playing practical jokes on an individual or taking, hiding or damaging their personal property;
 - Requiring new members of staff to undertake a new staff initiation ceremony or similar degrading expectation.
14. Bullying is a serious disciplinary matter that may amount to gross misconduct within the Company's disciplinary policy.

Implementation

15. Staff who become aware of a problem of this nature should ensure that they make a responsible person aware of the position.
16. If you are subject to unwelcome conduct or remarks you should make the person aware that you find the conduct unacceptable or offensive.
17. It is the responsibility of all employees to make sure that they understand and follow this policy.
18. Management are expected to ensure that the policy is fully understood by the staff, that it is properly implemented, and that suitable disciplinary action is taken in the event of any breach of the policy.
19. The Company recognises that complaints of harassment or bullying can be of a sensitive or worrying nature. Staff may feel unable to speak directly to their line manager. If this is the case you may wish to speak to someone in a more senior position. Alternatively you may wish to put your concerns in writing and send them to the appropriate person.
20. All staff members should treat their colleagues with respect and comply with this policy.

Outline Procedures

21. Wherever possible the Company will aim to try and resolve difficulties and concerns within the workplace through an initial informal approach.
22. The informal approach will usually involve a meeting of the relevant parties to discuss the concern and attempt to resolve the difficulties.

23. Where this informal approach fails or a staff member feels that the issue is of such a serious nature that an informal approach is inappropriate the matter will be dealt with through a formal complaint procedure in line with the Company's grievance procedure.
24. A formal complaint will be thoroughly investigated by the Company. Staff are reminded that they should keep full details of the alleged concerns and be specific when raising a complaint in relation to the incident or incidents, including date, times and parties involved.
25. Following the investigation, the staff member raising the complaint will be informed of the outcome of the investigation and be given an opportunity to respond. If the Company decides to take formal disciplinary action there will be no obligation to notify the staff member complaining of the nature of any such action.
26. If the staff member raising the complaint is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation they will have a right to appeal in writing to more senior management.
27. The appeal will undertake a separate investigation of the concerns and the nature of the original investigation meeting, where relevant with all involved parties.
28. The outcome of the appeal will be notified to the staff member complaining and this will form the end of the appeal process and grievance procedure.
29. The Company aims through this policy to ensure that no staff member shall feel harassed or bullied. If such circumstances should occur that the staff member is aware of and feels confident to use the policy knowing that they will suffer no detriment as a result of so doing.
30. In order to ensure that this policy remains fully compliant with current legislation, it will be reviewed on a regular basis and may be subject to change.

MATERNITY POLICY

The company is keen to promote opportunities for its staff and to encourage applications from all people irrespective of sex. The Maternity Policy forms part of the company's overall equal opportunities and Dignity at Work philosophy.

Purpose

1. To promote equality within the workplace.
2. To provide a structured approach to maternity and maternity leave to ensure that staff are adequately protected and encouraged to benefit from the opportunities available during the maternity period.
3. Provide a philosophy of inclusion for its staff during this time.
4. To ensure that employees are not treated unfairly or discriminated against in any way arising from their pregnancy or maternity leave.

Practice

5. All female employees are able to benefit from maternity leave irrespective of service.
6. This leave is currently for a period of 52 weeks, part of which (39 weeks) may be paid subject to the employee meeting certain qualification requirements. Full details of the current qualifying periods and payment rates will be provided on application. The details of this entitlement will also be included in correspondence employees will receive on notifying the company that they are pregnant.

Prior to Maternity Leave Commencing

7. Employees are encouraged to notify the company of their pregnancy at the earliest opportunity.
8. Whilst a risk assessment is undertaken in relation to all staff any staff member notifying the company that they are pregnant will receive the benefit of an individual risk assessment specifically addressing their safety and the safety of their unborn child.
9. Employees will receive details of the company benefits relating to maternity, maternity leave and maternity pay.
10. Employees who have any concerns in relation to benefits and future payments should contact their line manager.
11. Employees have the right to take reasonable periods of time for the purpose of ante natal classes as recommended by their doctor/midwife. Employees should discuss the practicalities of this with their line manager.
12. The company may request written confirmation from the employee of the relevant appointments except for the first appointment.
13. Employees who have problems or difficulties during their pregnancy are encouraged to talk matters through with their line manager or with the Finance Manager if the matter is of a particularly personal or confidential nature.
14. Where employees encounter difficulties continuing with their current role because of maternity issues or as a result of a risk assessment evaluation the company will discuss options for alternative work during the remainder of the maternity period.

15. Maternity leave may commence automatically when an employee is absent with a maternity related illness four weeks prior to the expected week of childbirth.
16. Employees have the right to take a full 52 weeks' maternity leave but if an employee wishes to make arrangements to return early they should contact their line manager to discuss the position. The company cannot allow any employee to return during the compulsory period of maternity leave which is for a period of 2 weeks from the date of the baby's birth.

During Maternity Leave

17. The company encourages a philosophy of maintaining contact with employees during their maternity leave, as well as encouraging them to maintain contact with the company.
18. Whilst an employee is on maternity leave their normal terms and conditions of employment, with the exception of salary, will be maintained.
19. The company encourages employees to take advantage of the "Keeping in Touch" days that are available for up to 10 days during Statutory Maternity Leave. "Keeping in Touch" days may only be worked if agreed by the company and the employee.
20. Where an employee comes into work on a "Keeping in Touch" day they will be entitled to normal pay without them risking the end of their maternity benefits. "Keeping in Touch" days do not extend the maternity leave, the maternity pay continues in a week where keeping in touch work is done. The company endeavours to use these days for the purpose of keeping employees abreast of new developments and training opportunities within the company. Employees are under no obligation to participate in or agree to attend work for "Keeping in Touch" days.
21. The company will endeavour to ensure that employees who are on maternity leave are kept fully informed of developments within the company. Employees will be contacted personally by telephone, through welfare visits (where employees have no objection to this) and by e-mail where employees have provided such facility and confirmed that the company may make contact through this means.
22. The company will utilise these means to ensure that employees are aware of any vacancies within the company. Employees on maternity leave who are interested in staff vacancies should make contact with their line manager or the Finance Manager in order that their interest be noted and full details provided to them.

Prior to the End of Maternity Leave

23. Employees will have been provided with details of the date their maternity leave will end at the time when they notify the company of the date they intend to start their maternity leave. Employees may have discussed an early return to work and where this has been done it will be recorded. Alternatively, employees may still contact the company and agree to an earlier return date than that which was originally detailed. In this event employees are required to give the company eight weeks' notice wherever possible of such an intention. The company may, at its discretion, allow an earlier return to work.
24. Employees have the legal entitlement to apply to the company to change their hours and working arrangements. If any employee wishes to apply for flexible working they should contact their line manager or the Finance Manager and the employee will be provided with full details of the flexible working entitlements.
25. Employees are encouraged to consider their childcare arrangements and ensure that they balance the needs of work, their own needs and their childcare arrangements when making a reasoned decision on how best they may continue their work career.

26. Employees have the right to continue to accrue holiday entitlement during maternity leave and employees should consult with the company on how best to take advantage of any entitlement due to them on their return. In some circumstances it may be preferable for the employee to indicate an earlier return to work and then take accrued holiday prior to the actual re-commencement of work. These are matters that the company will be pleased to discuss with the employee. Leave not taken in a current leave year will not be allowed to be carried over into another leave year.
27. The company operates a salary sacrifice child care voucher scheme. Employees can obtain full details of the scheme from the Finance Manager.

The company aims to promote a positive environment for employees who are pregnant or with child care needs so that they may continue to work and progress their careers.

This policy is subject to regular review to ensure that it continues to promote the ethos of the company whilst remaining legally compliant.

PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY

Entitlement to Parental Leave

1. You will be entitled to parental leave if:
 - You have been continuously employed by the Company for at least one year, and
 - You have parental responsibility for a child under the age of 5 or
 - You have, or expect to have parental responsibility for a child under 18 who has been placed with you for adoption on or after 15 December 1999.
2. In most cases parents will have parental responsibility for a child, but in some instances legal guardians may also have this responsibility. If you are unsure of whether you meet these requirements, you should speak to your line manager.

Period of Leave

3. You are entitled to 13 weeks' parental leave in respect of each child. Therefore, for example, if you have twins, you are entitled to 26 weeks' leave. If you work part-time, your period of leave is reduced in proportion to your reduced working hours.
4. The right to parental leave is a right to take up to 13 weeks per child in total and not 13 weeks during successive contracts with different employers. The Company will, therefore, ask you (and may ask any previous employers) to confirm how much parental leave you have already taken, before granting any request for leave.
5. You may apply to take parental leave in blocks of one week (or, if your child is disabled, in blocks of one day) up to a maximum of four weeks for any individual child in any one year. For this purpose a year is each successive period of 12 months, starting on the date you are first eligible to take parental leave.

When Can Leave be Taken?

6. Provided you have one year's continuous employment with the Company you may take leave as soon as the child is born (or placed with you for adoption). Otherwise you must wait until you have the requisite period of service.
7. Leave cannot be taken after the child's 5th birthday or, if your child is adopted, after the 5th anniversary of the date on which the child was placed with you for adoption, or the child's 18th birthday, if earlier.
8. If your child is disabled, you may take leave at any time up to your child's 18th birthday.
9. If the Company has to postpone your leave, you will still be able to take it, even after the dates mentioned above.

Application for Parental Leave

10. If you want to apply for parental leave you should complete a Request for Parental Leave form, available from the Finance Manager.

Minimum Notice

11. You must give at least 21 days' notice of when you want to take leave and confirm the proposed start and end dates. If that is not possible, this information must be given as soon as is reasonably practicable.

12. If you are adopting a child and are unsure of the exact date of the placement, you should confirm on your request form the expected week of placement and the length of leave you wish to take and the request should be made at least 21 days before the expected week of placement.

Supporting Evidence

13. The first time you request parental leave for a child, you must include with your application, evidence of your parental responsibility, confirmation of the date of birth or the date on which the adoption began or, if your child is over five and disabled, evidence of the child's disability living allowance entitlement.
14. You should also confirm whether you have previously taken parental leave for that child and, if so, when you took the leave and for how long.

Postponement of Leave

15. The Company will attempt to grant all requests for parental leave. However, unless your parental leave is to start upon the birth of your child, or when the child is first placed with you for adoption, your leave may be postponed if:
 - You have not fully complied with the minimum notice provisions.
 - The Company's business would be unduly disrupted by you taking leave during the time you have proposed, or;
 - After consulting with you, we decided that you should take the same period of leave within the next six months.
16. If the Company does postpone your parental leave, it will notify you of this in writing within seven days of receiving your request and will confirm the dates on which you may take leave.

Rights During Parental Leave

17. Parental leave is unpaid and during this leave you will not receive your salary or any other cash payments normally paid to you when you are at work. However, you are still eligible for all your contractual benefits including your holiday entitlement.
18. However, we would remind you that for all other purposes, your Contract of Employment remains in place and you will continue to be bound by your contractual obligations to the Company, such as your duty of confidentiality.

Return to Work After Parental Leave

19. After parental leave of four weeks or less, you are entitled to return to the job you had before your leave.

Parental Leave After Maternity Leave

20. You are entitled to take up to four weeks' parental leave immediately after OML, you are entitled to return to the job you had before your maternity leave.
21. If you take up to four weeks' parental leave immediately after OML, you are entitled to return to the job you had before your maternity leave (AML).
22. If you take up to four weeks' parental leave immediately after AML, you are entitled to return to the job before your maternity leave, or if that is not reasonably practicable, to a suitable alternative position.

PATERNITY POLICY

1. Following the birth of a child, the right to paternity leave and pay will give employees the right to take paid leave to care for the child or support the mother.
2. In order to qualify for paternity leave you must satisfy the following conditions:
 - Have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing.
 - Be the biological father of the child or the mother's husband or partner.
 - Have worked continuously for their employer for 26 weeks ending with the 15th week before the baby is due.
3. If you satisfy the criteria above you will be entitled to take either one week or two consecutive weeks' paternity leave. You may choose to start your leave:
 - From the date of the child's birth (whether this is earlier or later than expected), or
 - From a chosen number of days or weeks after the date of the child's birth (whether this is earlier or later than expected), or
 - From a chosen date later than the first day of the week in which the baby is expected to be born.
4. Ordinary Paternity Leave can start on any day of the week on or following the child's birth but must be completed:
 - Within 56 days of the actual date of birth of the child, or
 - If the child is born early, within the period from the actual date of birth up to 56 days after the first day of the expected week of birth.

Employees may now also be entitled to Additional Paternity Leave and Pay. For you to qualify for Additional Paternity Leave and Pay, you must be taking the time off to care for the child. The child's mother or adopter must have been entitled to one or more of the following:

Statutory Maternity Leave
Statutory Maternity Pay
Maternity Allowance or
Statutory Adoption Leave or Pay

She must also have returned to work and ceased to claim any relevant pay.

Additional Paternity Leave can be for a maximum of 26 weeks. If your partner has returned to work, the leave can be taken between 20 weeks and one year after your child is born or placed for adoption. You may be also entitled to receive Additional Statutory Paternity Pay during your partner's Statutory Maternity Pay, Maternity Allowance or Adoption Pay period. Employees are requested to contact their manager in the first instance for any requests of this nature.

5. Only one period of leave is available to employees irrespective of whether more than one child is born as the result of the same pregnancy.
6. If you earn above the Lower Earnings Limit for National Insurance purposes you will be entitled to Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP). The rate of SSP is the same as the standard rate of Statutory Maternity Pay.
7. You must inform your Manager of your intention to take paternity leave by the end of the 15th week before the baby is expected, unless this is not reasonably practicable.

You must give details regarding:

- The week the baby is due.
- Whether you wish to take one or two weeks' leave.
- When you want your leave to start.

8. You can change your mind about the date you wish this leave to start but you must inform your manager at least 28 days in advance. You must tell your Manager the date they expect any payments of SPP to start at least 28 days in advance, unless this is not reasonably practicable.
9. You must give your manager a completed self-certificate as evidence of your entitlement to SPP.
10. You are entitled to the benefit of your normal terms and conditions of employment, except for terms relating to wages or salary (unless your contract states otherwise), throughout your paternity leave.
11. Employees are entitled to return to the same job following paternity leave.

RETIREMENT POLICY

Policy Statement

1. When employees look forward to and prepare for their retirement, we are committed to providing employees with a smooth transition from working life to retirement. We also wish to ensure that no employee is subjected to any form of discrimination on the grounds of age at any point during their employment and in particular in relation to their retirement from work.
2. The company does not however operate a compulsory retirement age. If employees wish to terminate their employment before, at or after State Pensionable Age, they should do so by submitting their resignation in line with the normal notice provisions within their contract of employment
3. During your continuing employment and regardless of your age, we will discuss with you your future plans for your employment with us, through formal workplace discussions, in order that your job aspirations and objectives may be properly evaluated.
4. If, during such discussions, employees confirm their intention to retire from working on a particular date, we will require employees to confirm their intentions in writing and, as a minimum, to give the period of notice specified in their written statement of main terms and conditions of employment.

SMOKING POLICY

Policy Statement

1. The Company recognises its responsibilities under health and safety legislation to ensure that the environment in which its staff work is as free from harm as is reasonably possible, as well as to take appropriate measures to protect non-smokers against discomfort caused by tobacco smoke.
2. It is widely recognised and accepted that smoking constitutes a danger to the health of those that smoke as well as those that do not. Smoking also presents a serious fire risk within the building. The Company therefore prohibits smoking by staff and visitors on any part of its premises except designated smoking areas which are clearly marked.

Policy Guidelines

3. The Company is committed to promoting the health and safety of its staff and visitors. To minimise health risks and the risk of fire damage the premises have been designated as non smoking.
4. Where appropriate designated smoking areas are provided and staff are entitled to two five minute breaks each day, excluding their lunch break, one to be taken during the morning and one during the afternoon. For health and safety reasons, staff must sign in and out of the premises when taking a smoking break.

Staff who work on equipment with visual displays are recommended to have breaks away from the machine but this is a break away from a specific task and not from work, other work should be undertaken during such breaks.

5. Staff are requested therefore not to leave site during normal working times for the purpose of smoking off site. In the event that staff do undertake such behaviour they will be informally warned that this is contrary to the Company's policy and in the event that staff persist with such conduct then it may lead to action being taken within the Company's disciplinary process.

All visitors who are seen smoking in any designated non smoking areas should be politely notified of the no smoking policy and asked to stop smoking.

DRESS POLICY

1. Throughout your employment you will be representing the Company. Your appearance and professional conduct are important for both your own advancement and the continuing development of the Company.
2. We encourage everyone to present themselves in dress and appearance in a way which reflects the Company's professional approach.
3. You should at all times be neat, tidy, smart and well groomed, whether or not you are in role which brings you into direct contact with our clients/customers or visitors.
4. Casual wear (such as denims, leggings, ski pants, tee shirts and sweat shirts) is not acceptable.
5. Hair should always be kept clean, neat and tidy. Hair colouring should represent a professional image and should be of a natural hair colour.
6. Good standards of personal cleanliness and hygiene are very important and are essential for ensuring good working relations with colleagues, customers and clients.
7. Earrings may be worn as long as they are discreet. Other body piercings which are visible should be removed whilst you are at work.
8. If you are unclear as to what the Company would regard as an appropriate standard of dress you should seek guidance from your line manager.
9. Any employee who fails to comply with these rules may be subject to disciplinary action under the disciplinary procedures.
10. All employees should also comply with the Code of Professional Conduct regarding dress and appearance.

ENVIRONMENT POLICY

Policy Statement

1. The Company is aware of its responsibilities to the general environment and to the well being of its staff in providing a suitable environment in which to work and operate.
2. This policy reflects the importance attached to protecting the environmental concerns and issues relating to the workplace and protecting the welfare of its employees, visitors and other persons who may be affected.

Objective

3. That the Company will comply with statutory requirements.
4. To ensure that effective procedures are developed and maintained within the Company.
5. That a positive safety and environmentally responsible culture is developed and that each employee understands and recognises their responsibilities.
6. That employees are aware of their responsibilities both within the concepts of good safety concerns but also in relationship to the protection of the environment within which they work.
7. To achieve continual improvement in the conditions for the employees, visitors and others who may be affected by the Company's activities.
8. To work with employees, suppliers and contractors to minimise environmental impact.
9. To encourage the protection of the environment, to work within acceptable guidelines to ensure the protection of the staff.
10. To encourage responsible sourcing of products to reduce environmental impact and wherever possible source materials locally.
11. To encourage the development of business with local organisations and communities.

Implementation

In working to achieve our objectives, the Company will:

- Periodically undertake a review of the policy and update where necessary.
- Monitor and review the environmental impacts of the business.
- Work with all employees to improve the situation.
- Select suppliers and contractors with regard to good environmental practices wherever possible.
- Educate employees on their safety and environmental responsibilities through suitable training and communication of information.
- Ensure that all employees work in a safe and decent environment with acceptable working conditions suitable to their employment.
- Work in partnership with others to improve environmental conditions and work to achieving more sustainable business practices.
- The Company is committed to ensuring that this policy remains legally compliant and consistent with current practices. It will be subject to regular review and updating where necessary.

PERFORMANCE AND CAPABILITY PROCEDURE

1. This procedure is designed to help all employees to attain and maintain the necessary standards for optimum job performance. The aim of the procedure is to resolve problems in performance at the earliest possible stage.
2. A non-exhaustive list of situations where the capability procedure could be invoked includes:
 - Excessive absenteeism
 - Substandard performance (e.g. a failure to meet required targets or standards).
3. In the first instance, a meeting will be arranged with you to discuss any concerns that have arisen about capability including:
 - The cause for any shortcomings and the areas for improvement will be discussed. An action plan will also be discussed with you, along with any appropriate assistance in the form of, for example, training, guidance, advice or referral to a Company medical adviser. Timescales for improvement will then be agreed with you and review dates set.
 - The Company will confirm to you in writing the details of the meeting, including the improvement(s) required, the agreed action plan and the timescale for improvement. A copy of this letter is placed on your personal file.
 - If there is no improvement or little sustained improvement within the specified period, further action will be taken under the formal procedure.
4. If the required improvement is not achieved within the specified periods or is not sustained, or if the shortcoming is serious enough to enter into the formal stage immediately, you will be asked to attend a meeting under the formal procedure. At this meeting the shortcoming or lack of sustained improvement will be discussed and you will be given every opportunity to respond to points raised. Prior to the meeting you will be informed of the possible outcomes.
5. You are entitled to be accompanied to such a meeting by a work colleague or Trade Union Official.
6. A formal performance/attendance improvement plan will be agreed for a specified period (e.g. one to three months) outlining the areas for improvement and the relevant timescale(s). Where appropriate, further training, guidance or advice will be given.
7. You will be given confirmation in writing of details of the meeting and the performance/attendance improvement plan. The letter will also state that a lack of improvement or a lack of sustained improvement will lead to the issue of a written warning.
8. You have the right to appeal a decision made at this stage of the procedure. You should follow the appeals procedure as set out below.
9. If the required improvement is not achieved within the specified period, or the improvement is not sustained, you will be invited to a further formal meeting. You are entitled to be accompanied to such a meeting by a work colleague or Trade Union representative.

10. If after discussions regarding the lack of improvement/sustained improvement, the Company considers that a final written warning should be issued, this will be confirmed to you in writing, along with notification of the consequence of failing to achieve the required improvement (i.e. termination of employment/alternative action).
11. A final written warning will remain active on your file for 12 months from the date of issue.
12. You have the right to appeal a decision made at this stage of the procedure. You should follow the appeals procedure as set out below.
13. If the required improvement is still not achieved or not sustained or if your performance is such that it warrants entering the capability procedure at this stage, the termination of your employment or alternative action will be considered.
14. You will be invited to a hearing setting out the details of the complaint. You are entitled to be accompanied to this meeting by a work colleague or a Trade Union representative.
15. The Company will confirm to you in writing the details of the meeting. If the Company decides to terminate your employment, the effective date of termination, the reason for termination (i.e. on the grounds of capability), the process which has been followed, and the assistance which has been offered will also be confirmed in writing. If alternative action is decided upon, this will also be detailed in writing.
16. You have a right of appeal against any decision by the Company. The appeals procedure found below must be followed:
 - If at any stage in the process, your performance or attendance improves, reaches the required standard and is sustained, this improvement will be confirmed to you.
 - If the Company deems it appropriate you will be taken off the improvement plan, but if performance or attendance deteriorates again, further action will be taken.
 - If you have regular short-term periods of sickness absence for different reasons, there may be an underlying medical condition, which needs to be investigated. Should the absence level continue, the Company may decide that it would be beneficial for all parties if you were referred to the Company medical adviser.
17. Anyone who wishes to appeal against a decision under the capability procedure should inform their line manager who held the capability procedure meeting, within five working days of receiving the warning or termination of employment. Written grounds for the appeal should be provided. A more senior manager will hear the appeal and their decision is final. Wherever possible, all appeals will be heard by a level of management that is higher than the level involved in the original capability meeting and who have not been involved in the original capability decision.

PERSONAL RECORDS AND DATA PROTECTION POLICY

1. All employees must notify the Company of their permanent home address, telephone number, next of kin, bank branch and account number.
2. It is important that changes in your personal circumstances are notified immediately to the Finance Manager these include changes to the following:
 - Name.
 - Address/telephone number.
 - Dependants (e.g. for private medical insurance purposes).
 - Beneficiaries (e.g. for death in service benefit).
 - Persons to be notified in case of emergency.
 - Bank details for salary payments.
 - Tax code.
 - Driving licence.
 - Motor insurance.
3. Some employee records are kept on computer. In accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 you may request a print-out of the information held on computer. Periodically you will be asked to check the data held by the Finance Department.
4. In accordance with the provision of the Data Protection Act 1998, the information held by the Company about yourself will be made available to you on request, together with a description of the purposes for which the Company keeps this information, and to whom it may be disclosed.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF STAFF POLICY

Introduction

1. The Company aims to ensure that the highest standard of care to its service users is maintained at all times. To this end the Company operates a recruitment and selection policy designed to ensure that the right person is appointed to the right job without regard to any discriminatory factor.
2. When a vacancy occurs existing employees, wherever possible, will be considered for promotion, or a change of department/job role.
3. Recruitment procedures and the composition of the staff team should as far as possible match the mix of cultural and language backgrounds as possible.
4. The Company has been awarded the Positive About Disability Symbol by jobcentre plus which recognises the Company's commitment to employ, keep and develop the abilities of disabled staff.

Advertising

5. Vacancies may be advertised both internally and externally using as wide a variety of advertising media as possible. Advertisements are prepared to ensure that they comply with all current legislation and relevant regulations.

Applications

6. All applicants should complete an application form. Each applicant will have access to information relevant to the position applied for, which should include a current role profile. The applicants' employment list should be checked for any gaps or evidence of misconduct.
7. Each person will also have access to details about the conditions of service including pay.
8. Applicants who are successful at Stage 1 (short listing) will receive a reply from the Company.
9. From an equal opportunity point of view the same people are involved at all stages of the recruitment and selection process. It is not appropriate for one member of staff to shortlist alone.

Interviews

9. The Company will assess the style, format and number of interviews according to the job, which is under consideration. The process may include any of the following:
 - a. Aptitude tests;
 - b. Assessment centres; or
 - c. Other procedure, which the Company considers suitable for the job in question.

10. Confirmation of appointments are subject to the following:
 - a. Receipt of two satisfactory references including a reference from the most recent employer (See Reference Request Policy);
 - b. The completion of and receipt of a satisfactory CRB / Disclosure Scotland check;
 - c. Receipt of a satisfactory check from the protection of vulnerable children and adults list, if required under regulated activity;
 - d. Confirmation of qualifications claimed in particular evidence of any NVQ or similar qualifications;
 - e. Completion of satisfactory six month probationary period;
 - f. Provision of relevant documentation in accordance with the legislation current at the time to confirm entitlement to work within the United Kingdom.

Appointment

11. The Company reserves the right to take up references in respect of any candidate, including references from past employers, and to make any job offer conditional upon the receipt of satisfactory references being obtained within a reasonable time period (usually 28 days).
12. The decision to shortlist and appoint will be a joint decision between at least two senior members of staff. The manager should confirm a provisional offer of employment in writing, subject to the requirements of the following paragraph and, if appropriate, subject to the Equality Act.
13. A contract is entered into when a job is offered and accepted. Any offer of employment should be made conditional upon any relevant disclosure checks and receipt of satisfactory references.
14. In accordance with the current employment legislation, a Contract of Employment will be issued to the employee within eight weeks of commencement of service.
15. It is not possible to provide all relevant information on Company policies and procedures in the Contract of Employment. A staff handbook has been originated to supplement the Contract of Employment. The current copy of the handbook will be available on the company intranet at the same time the contract of employment is issued.
16. The employee is required to sign a copy of the Contract of Employment and to acknowledge that the staff handbook has been accessed and understood, signifying agreement to the terms and conditions that will regulate the employment relationship.
17. It is the responsibility of the Finance Manager to ensure that a signed copy of the Contract of Employment is received from the employee, and that this copy is retained in the employee's personnel file for future reference purposes.

Probationary Period

18. All staff will be required to complete a satisfactory induction and probationary period of six months. All potential job applicants should be notified of this requirement in the application details and at the first interview.
19. During that time there will be an opportunity for service users to become acquainted with the staff member and express a view on their suitability, wherever possible, for confirmation in the post.

20. During this period staff will receive all relevant documentation in order for them to fulfil their duties. This will include copies of relevant regulations and standards together with codes of conduct.
21. All staff will receive and be familiarised with their role profile. This is to ensure that they understand their role and how it interacts with other staff members and the aims of the Company in providing a proper standard of care to the service users in line with the individual needs of those service users.
22. In the event that a member of staff fails to meet the required standards at any time during the probationary period their employment with the Company may be terminated.
23. This will be undertaken in accordance with the correct dismissal procedure which will involve written notification and relevant meeting(s) prior to termination.

Failure to Disclose Information

24. Because of the nature of the employment there is a strict obligation on prospective employees to provide accurate information on the application form.
25. The Education and Training sector is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and as a consequence all prospective employees must make a full declaration prior to employment of any criminal charges of whatever nature (including informal police cautions or Anti Social Behaviour Orders). A failure to do this would result in disciplinary action being taken for making a false and misleading statement and is likely to result in dismissal for gross misconduct within the disciplinary procedure.
26. All existing employees are required to notify their manager immediately of any charges or similar action if they should occur during employment. A failure to do so could result in disciplinary action leading to dismissal for gross misconduct.
27. The Company expects the highest level of integrity from its employees and in view of the nature of the work such information must be made available to the management.

Drivers/Vehicles

28. It is a condition of employment that employees who are recruited to a job where driving is an integral part of their duties, must be eligible for fully comprehensive business cover, and must forward a copy of their current driving licence and certificate of insurance to the Finance Manager.
29. Applicants must declare at interview details of any motoring offences with which they have been charged or convicted, including details of any which are pending.
30. Any failure to do so would render the employee liable to disciplinary action and could result in termination of employment.
31. Employees must declare any future motoring offences, convictions or refusal of insurance to the manager immediately. A failure could result in disciplinary action leading to possible dismissal.

Medical Information

32. It is a condition of engagement by, and of continued employment with, the Company that the employee's general state of health is maintained at a level satisfactory to the Company.

33. In order to ensure that this requirement is fulfilled the Company reserves the right to require any employee to undertake a medical examination by a fully qualified medical practitioner appointed for the purpose.
34. In the event that the medical report indicates an unsatisfactory state of health the Company reserves the right to consider the termination of an employee's contract of employment. Such action would only be taken following a thorough consideration of the position and examining reasonable adjustments or alternatives that could be offered to the employee. In the event that this action is taken the process would be dealt with through the Company Performance and Capability Procedure.
35. Should an employee become disabled during the course of his/her work the Company is required to determine whether any adjustments can be made to the workplace, which would allow the employee to continue in his/her job. The range of adjustments and considerations that should be given to the situation are wide. Failure to consider such aspects could lead to individuals pursuing claims under the Equality Act.

Flexibility

36. Whilst it is our policy to endeavour to offer the type of work for which employees are engaged, occasions may arise when it is not possible to carry on doing so. We therefore reserve the right to change the type of work provided and to require that employees undertake any jobs/duties, within their existing or potential capabilities, between the Company as and when requested to do so by management, following consultation with affected individuals.

REDUNDANCY POLICY

Policy Statement

1. The Company is actively aiming to expand and develop its business.
2. The intention is to provide employment that is reasonably secure and undertaken in a stable work environment.
3. Unfortunately circumstances may arise, often brought about by new developments that may call for reduction in numbers or redeployment of staff.
4. All steps would be taken to avoid redundancies and wherever possible compulsory redundancy would occur in exceptional circumstances only following a full and proper period of consultation.

Guidance

5. Prior to consulting on redundancy the Company will seek to find alternative ways to reduce the size of the workforce. The Company would consider a freeze on recruitment as well as looking at re-training or redeployment of staff with their agreement. The possibility of early retirement would also be considered.
6. If the situation arose where the staff numbers had to be reduced or circumstances arose where new developments required redeployment of staff a period of consultation would be undertaken.
7. The purpose of the consultation would be to actively seek alternatives to any proposal for redundancies and to establish whether job losses or cost reductions could be achieved in alternative ways.
8. One alternative that would be considered would be a voluntary redundancy programme although the Company would reserve the right to make the final determination as to the acceptance of a person for voluntary redundancy.
9. In the event that redundancies still have to proceed, details of the proposals would be provided to staff or their representatives. These details would include the proposed selection criteria.
10. All employees would be seen on an individual basis and full details of the reason for selection would be explained.
11. Staff would be offered alternative work where it was available.
12. A formal meeting would be held with staff prior to any confirmation of redundancy and staff would be entitled to be accompanied at individual meetings by a work colleague or an accredited Trade Union representative.
13. Where redundancy is confirmed staff would be given full details of entitlement including notice period, redundancy entitlement and any additional discretionary sums being offered by the Company.
14. All staff would be given the right to appeal against the decision to make them redundant.
15. Redundancy entitlement will be based on current statutory levels of entitlement.

16. Where alternative work is available staff would be offered this on a trial basis without it affecting their subsequent entitlement to redundancy entitlement where they decided they did not wish to continue with that employment.
17. Staff at risk of redundancy will be given assistance in relation to job interview applications, interview techniques and skills.
18. Where a member of staff leaves during the notice period provided this is with the agreement of the Management the staff member will not lose their entitlement to redundancy pay.
19. This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it remains legally compliant and that it provides a satisfactory manner of dealing.

REFERENCE REQUEST POLICY

1. The aim of this policy is to give guidance to managers for the obtaining and giving of references in connection with staff recruitment and ex employees.

Staff Recruitment

2. Any offer of employment from us is subject to the receipt of satisfactory references. Whilst all effort will be made to obtain references prior to your employment starting, this is not always possible

It may from time to time be necessary to request further information through a Criminal Record Check. Any such application will be carried out in accordance with our policy on the Recruitment of Staff with Criminal Convictions and the Use of Criminal Records Checks.

3. It is essential that the proposed new employee provides a minimum of two references prior to confirming employment. All employment offers are subject to receipt of satisfactory references.
4. Where a member of staff is employed prior to receipt of satisfactory references that employee shall be kept under supervision until such time as satisfactory references have been obtained. They will be notified in writing that their continued employment is subject to receipt of satisfactory references.
5. Managers should wherever possible undertake a telephone check of references prior to such engagement and then write with formal request. Managers should make a file note of the comments obtained during the telephone reference conversation.
6. It is essential that one of the references is given by the last employer and managers are reminded that any break in service should be closely questioned prior to recruitment.
7. In the event that references are not received or they prove to be unacceptable for the purpose of employment with the Company then the manager will begin the formal dismissal process in relation to the staff member.
8. Where a written response is not received but a telephone reference from that referee was obtained prior to commencement then the manager may consider exercising discretion and allow employment to continue subject to an extended period of supervision.
9. Managers are reminded that a failure to follow this policy may place learners at risk. A failure to follow the procedure may result in disciplinary action being commenced against the manager.

Request for References for Ex Employees

10. The Company receives requests for references in relation to previous employees. When such requests are received they should be passed to the Finance Manager.
11. The Company has a duty of care both to its employees and to third parties to whom it supplies references. This duty of care requires that references are provided in good faith and are fair, reasonable, true and accurate, as well as being not misleading when considered overall.

SPECIAL LEAVE POLICY

1. Throughout your employment there are times when time away from the office is unavoidable for various reasons, this policy sets out the Company provisions during these times:

Compassionate Leave

2. The death of a member of your family or friend is recognised as a time where grieving is necessary, and in order to support you throughout this period, the Company will provide payment for the time required to attend any funeral arrangement.
3. Any additional time that may be required in order to make the necessary arrangements or support may be approved, payment for additional leave may also be made, however, it is at the absolute discretion of the Company.
4. The maximum period paid during compassionate leave will be at the discretion of the Directors.

Dependants Leave

5. The Company believes in its duty to allow you to take reasonable time off work in order to deal with an emergency situation concerning a dependant.
6. A dependant can be a partner, child, parent, someone who lives with you (but not a lodger) or anyone who relies on you to make arrangements for their care.
7. It is imperative for the smooth running of the Company to inform your line manager as soon as possible, why you need the time off and how long you expect to be away from work.
8. You should note that dependants leave is normally unpaid.

Parental Leave

- Please see the Parental Leave Policy

Study Leave

9. The Company supports the further development of all employees, and recognises the importance of professional development in order to meet the business goals.
10. The Company will assist employees throughout any recognised and approved study by granting the following periods of leave:
 - a. Exam days, maximum of three days in any one year.
 - b. Paid study leave, with a maximum of three days in any one year.
 - c. Any additional days required in order to meet the requirements of the course i.e. obligatory attendance days.
11. The Company will support any additional requests for study leave, however, anything further than the provisions listed above may be unpaid.
12. For further guidance, please refer to the Training and Development Policy.

TELEPHONE POLICY

Personal Telephone Calls from the Company's Telephones

1. The Company recognises that occasionally you will need to make personal telephone calls from your work telephone, as, for example, some businesses are only open during your working day. However, where possible, such calls should be made at lunchtime. The Company does not expect you to make non-essential calls during work time.
2. Incoming telephone calls for non-essential business are not encouraged as such calls will block the Company's telephone lines as well as cause a distraction for you.

Mobile Telephones

3. If you are provided with a mobile telephone, this is to be used primarily for business telephone calls only. You are permitted to make emergency personal calls only.
4. Personal information about learners, such as telephone numbers must not be stored on mobile telephones. Individual mobile telephones and monthly statements will be checked periodically by Line Managers and discussed at contract meetings.
5. You should take care of the telephone and ensure it is secure at all times. In the event that the telephone is stolen you should notify your line manager immediately to report the theft. In the absence of your line manager you should take all reasonable steps to report the matter so that steps can be taken to disconnect the telephone.
6. The mobile telephone should be immediately returned to the Company if you are requested to do so by your line manager or on the termination of your employment.
7. As many employees now have mobile telephones of their own, it is clear that use of these telephones in the office environment is becoming increasingly annoying. If you bring your mobile telephone to work, you should ensure its use does not disturb your colleagues and does not distract you from your work. The Company suggests that the phone should be either switched off, or if it is essential to be switched on to be on silent.
8. A breach of the telephone policy may result in the Company's disciplinary procedure being invoked.

WHISTLE-BLOWING POLICY

Introduction

1. Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within PTP. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues or to the Company. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.
2. PTP is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment we expect employees, and others that we deal with, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Company's work to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis.
3. The policy document makes it clear that you can do so without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. This whistle-blowing policy is intended to encourage and enable employees to raise serious concerns within the Company rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside.
4. The policy applies to all employees.

Aims and Scope of this Policy

5. This policy aims to:
 - encourage you to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice;
 - provide avenues for you to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken;
 - ensure that you receive a response to your concerns and that you are aware of how to pursue them if you are not satisfied;
 - re-assure you that you will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if you have a reasonable belief that you have made any disclosure in good faith.
6. There are existing procedures in place to enable you to lodge a grievance relating to your own employment. The whistle-blowing policy is intended to cover major concerns that fall outside the scope of other procedures. These include:
 - conduct which is an offence or a breach of law
 - disclosures related to miscarriages of justice
 - health and safety risks, including risks to the public as well as other employees
 - damage to the environment
 - the unauthorised use of public funds
 - possible fraud and corruption
 - sexual or physical abuse of learners, or
 - other unethical conduct

7. Thus, any serious concerns that you have about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of staff can be reported under the whistle-blowing policy. This may be about something that:
 - makes you feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, your experience or the standards you believe PTP subscribes to; or
 - is against PTP's policies; or
 - falls below established standards of practice; or
 - amounts to improper conduct.

Safeguards

Harassment or Victimisation

8. PTP is committed to good practice and high standards and wants to be supportive of employees.
9. PTP recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make. If what you are saying is true, you should have nothing to fear because you will be doing your duty to your employer and those for whom you are providing a service.
10. PTP will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect you when you raise a concern in good faith.
11. Any investigation into allegations of potential malpractice will not influence or be influenced by any disciplinary or redundancy procedures that may already affect you.

Confidentiality

12. All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal your identity if you so wish. At the appropriate time, however, you may need to come forward as a witness.

Anonymous Allegations

13. This policy encourages you to put your name to your allegation whenever possible.
14. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but will be considered at the discretion of PTP.
15. In exercising this discretion the factors to be taken into account would include:
 - the seriousness of the issues raised
 - the credibility of the concern; and
 - the likelihood of confirming the allegation from reliable sources.

Untrue Allegations

16. If you make an allegation in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. If, however, you make an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against you.

How to Raise a Concern

17. As a first step, you should normally raise concerns with your immediate manager or their line manager. This depends, however, on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and who is suspected of the malpractice. For example, if you believe that management is involved you should approach the Managing Director.
18. Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing. Staff who wish to make a written report are invited to use the following format:
 - the background and history of the concern (giving relevant dates);
 - the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation.
19. The earlier you express the concern the easier it is to take action.
20. Although you are not expected to prove beyond reasonable doubt the truth of an allegation, you will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are reasonable grounds for your concern.
21. You may wish to consider discussing your concern with a colleague first and you may find it easier to raise the matter if there are two (or more) of you who have had the same experience or concerns.
22. You may invite a colleague to be present during any meetings or interviews in connection with the concerns you have raised.

How PTP Will Respond

23. PTP will respond to your concerns. Do not forget that testing out your concerns is not the same as either accepting or rejecting them.
24. Where appropriate, the matters raised may:
 - be investigated by management, internal audit, or through the disciplinary process
 - be referred to the police
 - form the subject of an independent inquiry.
25. In order to protect individuals and those accused of misdeeds or possible malpractice, initial enquiries will be made to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take.
26. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. If urgent action is required this will be taken before any investigation is conducted.
27. Within ten working days of a concern being raised, the responsible person will write to you:
 - acknowledging that the concern has been received;
 - indicating how we propose to deal with the matter;
 - giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response;
 - telling you whether any initial enquiries have been made;
 - supplying you with information on staff support mechanisms, and
 - telling you whether further investigations will take place and if not, why not.

28. The amount of contact between the staff considering the issues and you will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, PTP will seek further information from you.
29. Where any meeting is arranged, off-site if you so wish, you can be accompanied by a colleague.
30. PTP will take steps to minimise any difficulties which you may experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if you are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings PTP will arrange for you to receive advice about the procedure.
31. PTP accepts that you need to be assured that the matter has been properly addressed. Thus, subject to legal constraints, we will inform you of the outcome of any investigation.

The Responsible Officer

32. The Managing Director has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy. They maintain a record of concerns raised and the outcome (but in a form which does not endanger your confidentiality) and will report as necessary to the Senior Management Team.

How the Matter can be Taken Further

33. This policy is intended to provide you with an avenue within PTP to raise concerns. PTP hopes you will be satisfied with any action taken. If you are not, and if you feel it is right to take the matter outside the organisation, the following are possible contact points:
 - the Skills Funding Agency
 - the Department for Work and Pensions
 - your local Citizens Advice Bureau
 - the police

All Allegations Made Against an Employee

34. It is important to remember that when any allegation has been made against a fellow employee that colleagues remain impartial. Each individual case must be determined on its own merits. Where an allegation has been made against an employee the following actions will be considered and/or undertaken.
 - Redeployment on either a permanent or temporary basis (pending the outcome of any investigation) depending on the circumstances of the allegation.
 - Where it is not possible to offer redeployment, for example due to Health and Safety issues, or business constraints it may be appropriate to suspend the individual/s pending the outcome of the investigation.
 - Disciplinary action in accordance with PTP's Disciplinary Procedures in instances where the investigation concludes that there is a case to answer. PTP recognises that discipline is essential for the proper conduct of PTP's affairs, and for the Safeguarding of all employees and the public.

Working with the Aftermath

35. After an allegation has been investigated, there is likely to be strong feelings amongst employees, parents and learners and possibly amongst the wider community, all of which will need to be addressed.

There are likely to be issues of:

- Communication - if rumour or fact.
- Guilt and blame - especially if suspicions had been around for some time.
- Impact - on individuals, or the nature of what occurred and to whom.
- Gaps in the organisation in terms of roles and post held.

Careful consideration will need to be given to the sharing of information and the provision of appropriate support.

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Context

1. PTP has a responsibility to safeguard and protect children and young people aged under 18 years and vulnerable adults of 18 years and over. For further details, please refer to our Safeguarding Policy within the Quality Manual.
2. All staff within PTP have a crucial role to play in shaping the lives of our learners. Staff have a unique opportunity to interact with learners in ways that are both affirming and inspiring. This code has been produced to help staff working in all settings with young people and vulnerable adults to establish safe and responsive environments which safeguard learners and reduce the risk of staff being unjustly accused of improper or unprofessional conduct.

Unsuitability

3. This code is an attempt to identify what behaviours are expected of staff. Staff whose practice deviates from the code of conduct may bring into question their suitability to work with learners.

Duty of Care

4. All staff who work with learners are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority; manage safeguarding and use resources.
5. Whether working in a paid or voluntary capacity, staff have a duty to keep our learners safe and to protect them from sexual, physical and emotional harm. Learners have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. It follows that our staff are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and well-being of our learners.
6. The duty of care is in part, exercised through the development of respectful and caring relationships between staff and learners. It is also exercised through the behaviour of staff, which at all times should demonstrate integrity, maturity and good judgement.
7. PTP also have a duty of care towards its staff, both paid and unpaid, under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. This requires us to provide a safe working environment for staff and provide guidance about safe working practices. PTP also have a duty of care for the well-being of staff and to ensure that they are treated fairly and reasonably in all circumstances. Staff who are subject to an allegation should therefore be supported and the principles of natural justice applied.
8. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 also imposes a duty on staff to take care of themselves and anyone else who may be affected by their actions or failings. PTP's duty of care and staff's duty of care towards learners should not conflict. This 'duty' can be demonstrated through the use and implementation of this code.

Confidentiality

9. Staff may have access to confidential information about learners in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some circumstances they may have access to or be given highly sensitive or private information. These details must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when it is in the interests of the learner to do so. Such information must not be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the learner concerned.

10. If staff who work with learners are in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from their Line Manager or Designated Officer. Any actions should be in line with our safeguarding policy.
11. The storing and processing of personal information about learners is governed by the Data Protection Act 1998. Learner telephone numbers or any other personal information about learners must not be stored on mobile telephones or laptops. Personal information must only be held on PTP's nominated databases in accordance with company procedures.
12. Whilst staff need to be aware of the need to listen and support learners, they must also understand the importance of not promising to keep secrets. Neither should they request this of a learner under any circumstances.

Making a Professional Judgement

13. This code cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not appropriate behaviour for staff in all circumstances. There may be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the learner which could contravene this code or where no guidance exists. Staff are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the learner in their charge. Such judgements, in these circumstances, should always be recorded and shared with a Designated Officer. In undertaking these actions staff will be seen to be acting reasonably.
14. Staff should always consider whether their actions are warranted, proportionate and safe and applied equitably.

Power and Positions of Trust

15. As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, all staff working with learners are in positions of trust in relation to the learner in their care. Broadly speaking, a relationship of trust can be described as one in which one party is in a position of power or influence over the other by virtue of their work or the nature of their activity. It is vital for all those in positions of trust to understand the power this can give them over those they care for and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence of this relationship.
16. A relationship between a member of staff and a learner cannot be a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of Learners. Staff have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.
17. Staff should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries and avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others. They should report and record any incident with this potential.
18. Where a person aged 18 or over is in a specified position of trust with a child under 18, it is an offence for that person to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child, or to cause or incite that child to engage in or watch sexual activity.

Propriety and Behaviour

19. All staff working with learners have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of learners. It is therefore expected that they will adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of the public in general and all those with whom they work.
20. There may be times, for example, when a member of staff's behaviour or actions in their personal life comes under scrutiny from local communities, the media or public authorities. This could be because their behaviour is considered to compromise their position in their workplace or indicate an unsuitability to work with learners. Misuse of drugs, alcohol or acts of violence would be examples of such behaviour.
21. Staff in contact with learners should therefore understand and be aware, that safe practice also involves using judgement and integrity about behaviours in places other than the work setting.
22. The behaviour of a member of staff's partner or other family members may raise similar concerns and require careful consideration by PTP as to whether there may be a potential risk to learners in the workplace.

Dress and Appearance

23. A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However staff should dress in ways which are appropriate to their role and this may need to be different to how they dress when not at work.
24. Staff who work with learners should ensure they take care to ensure they are dressed appropriately for the tasks and the work they undertake.
25. Those who dress in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegations.
26. This means that staff should wear clothing which:
 - Is appropriate to their role
 - Is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative
 - Does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding
 - Is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans
 - Is not considered to be discriminatory and is culturally sensitive

Personal Living Space

27. No learner should be in or invited into, the home of a member of staff who works with them. Under no circumstances should learners assist with chores or tasks in the home of a member of staff who works with them. Neither should they be asked to do so by friends or family of that member of staff.

Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism

28. The giving of gifts or rewards to learners should be part of PTP's agreed policy for supporting positive behaviour or recognising particular achievements.

29. It is acknowledged that there are specific occasions when staff may wish to give a learner a personal gift. This is only acceptable practice where, in line with the agreed policy, the member of staff has first discussed the giving of the gift and the reason for it, with their Line Manager. Any gifts should be given openly and not be based on favouritism. Staff need to be aware however, that the giving of gifts can be misinterpreted by others as a gesture either to bribe or groom a young person.
30. Staff should exercise care when selecting learners for specific activities or privileges to avoid perceptions of favouritism or unfairness. Methods and criteria for selection should always be transparent and subject to scrutiny.
31. Care should also be taken to ensure that staff do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.
32. There are occasions when learners may wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff e.g. on special occasions or as a thank you: this is acceptable but should not be encouraged. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

Infatuations

33. Occasionally, a learner may develop an infatuation with a member of staff who works with them. Staff should deal with these situations sensitively and appropriately to maintain the dignity and safety of all concerned. They should remain aware, however, that such infatuations carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and should therefore make every effort to ensure that their own behaviour is above reproach.
34. Staff, who become aware that a learner is developing an infatuation, should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with their Line Manager or Designated Officer so appropriate action can be taken to avoid any hurt, distress or embarrassment.

Communication with learners (*including the Use of Technology*)

35. Communication between staff and learners, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs. Staff should not share any personal information with a learner. They should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the learner, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. Staff should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.
36. Staff should also be circumspect in their communications with learners so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming. Wherever possible verbal conversation should be used rather than text. They should not give their personal contact details to learners including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers, unless the need to do so is agreed with their Line Manager. E-mail or text communications between staff and learners outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations. This also includes communications through internet based web sites such as Facebook.
37. Learners in employment should be contacted via their employer. Learners on a School Apprenticeship Programme should be contacted via their school or parent. Learners should only be contacted directly through their mobile telephone as a last resort and details must be recorded on the e-assessor contact notes if the learner is 18 or under.
38. Internal e-mail systems should only be used in accordance with PTP's policy.

Social Contact

39. Staff who work with learners should not seek to have social contact with them or their families, unless the reason for this contact has been firmly established and agreed with their Line Manager. If a learner seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, staff should exercise professional judgement in making a response but should always discuss the situation with their Line Manager. Staff should be aware that social contact in certain situations can be misconstrued as grooming.
40. Where social contact is an integral part of work duties, e.g. pastoral work in the community, care should be taken to maintain appropriate personal and professional boundaries. This also applies to social contacts made through interests outside of work or through the staffs own family or personal networks.
41. It is recognised that some staff may support a parent of a learner who may be in particular difficulty. Care needs to be exercised in those situations where the parent comes to depend upon staff for support outside their professional role. This situation should be discussed with Line Managers and where necessary referrals made to the appropriate support agency.

Sexual Contact

42. Staff should clearly understand the need to maintain appropriate boundaries in their contacts with learners. Intimate or sexual relationships between learners and staff who work with them will be regarded as a grave breach of trust. Allowing or encouraging a relationship to develop in a way which might lead to a sexual relationship is also unacceptable.
43. Any sexual activity between a learner and a member of staff with whom they work may be regarded as a criminal offence and will always be a matter for disciplinary action.
44. Learners are protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether the learner consents or not. The sexual activity referred to does not just involve physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts. It may also include non-contact activities, such as causing learners to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of pornographic material. 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' defines sexual abuse as "forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening".
45. There are occasions when staff embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child, and manipulate that relationship so sexual abuse can take place. Staff should be aware that consistently conferring inappropriate special attention and favour upon a child might be construed as being part of a 'grooming' process and as such will give rise to concerns about their behaviour.

Physical Contact

46. Physical contact may be misconstrued by a learner or observer. Touching learners, including well intentioned informal and formal gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm, can, if repeated regularly, lead to questions being raised. Staff must not make gratuitous physical contact with learners and should avoid attributing 'touching' to their teaching style as a way of relating to learners.

47. There will be occasions when physical contact will be acceptable. In general these will fall into one of these categories:

Action to prevent harm or injury to the learners or to others

48. If it is necessary to prevent a learner causing injury to him/herself or to others the use of minimum force and contact necessary to prevent harm or injury is acceptable and defensible. Such incidents must always be reported using the **Safeguarding Report Form** by a Designated Officer.

Comforting a learner in distress

49. There is no easy definition of what is acceptable since much will depend on the circumstances, the age of the learner, the extent and cause of the distress and the alternative means of providing comfort. Staff will need to use their professional judgement and discretion in relation to these factors. Staff should consider how others might perceive their actions, even if no one else is present, and ensure that it does not develop into unnecessary contact. Particular care must be taken in instances, which involve the same learner over a period of time.
50. Physical contact may be questioned even if the intention is innocent. Staff should therefore ensure that their actions recognise the possibility of misinterpretation and are open to the scrutiny of colleagues. Individual professional judgments will be required about the level of physical contact with individual learners, which will take account of their age, circumstances and background.
51. It is recognised that some learners who have experienced abuse may seek inappropriate physical contact. Staff should be particularly aware of this when it is known that a learner has suffered previous abuse or neglect. In the learner's view, physical contact might be associated with such experiences and lead to some actions being misinterpreted. In all circumstances where a learner initiates inappropriate physical contact, it is the responsibility of staff to sensitively deter the child and help them understand the importance of personal boundaries. Such circumstances must always be reported and discussed with their Line Manager or Designated Officer.

Behaviour Management

52. All learners have a right to be treated with respect and dignity even in those circumstances where they display difficult or challenging behaviour.
53. Staff should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a learner. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards learners is not acceptable in any situation. Any sanctions or rewards used should be part of PTP's behaviour management policy.
54. The use of corporal punishment is not acceptable and whilst there may be a legal defence for parents who physically chastise their children, this does not extend, in any circumstances, to staff who work with or on behalf of learners.
55. Where learners display difficult or challenging behaviour, staff must follow PTP's behaviour policy, and use strategies appropriate to the circumstance and situation. The use of physical intervention can only be justified in exceptional circumstances and must be used as a last resort when other behaviour management strategies have failed.

56. Where a learner has specific needs in respect of particularly challenging behaviour, a positive handling plan may be drawn up and agreed by all parties. Only in these circumstances should staff deviate from the behaviour management policy of the organisation.

One to One Situations

57. Staff, by the very nature of their job role, will be required to carry out reviews with learners on a one to one basis. These reviews must only take place either within designated areas of the training centre or within the work placement environment.
58. Staff working in one to one settings with learners may also be more vulnerable to unjust or unfounded allegations being made against them. Both possibilities should be recognised so that when one to one situations are unavoidable, reasonable and sensible precautions are taken. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety and security of both the learners and staff.
59. Meetings with learners outside agreed working arrangements should not take place without the agreement of Line Managers.
60. Further guidance can be found within the Health and Safety Policy, the section which covers Lone Worker arrangements.

Home Visits

61. It is sometimes necessary for staff to conduct home visits where learners fail to attend their programme of learning. In these circumstances it is essential that the member of staff is accompanied by another work colleague and a verbal risk assessment must be conducted by the Line Manager and recorded on the learner's contact log.
62. A risk assessment should include an evaluation of any known factors regarding the learner, parents and others living in the household. Risk factors such as hostility, child protection concerns, complaints or grievances can make staff more vulnerable to an allegation. No visits must be conducted outside of 'office hours' or in remote or secluded locations. Following an assessment, appropriate risk management measures should be in place before visits are agreed.

Transporting Learners

63. There will be occasions when staff may wish to transport learners to support their programme of learning. In the first instance, public transport or approved Taxi firms should be used unless other circumstances prevail. As a last resort staff may need/elect to use their own vehicle, staff who use their own vehicles for transporting learners should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy, appropriately insured, and that the maximum seating capacity is not exceeded. All staff using their own vehicle for business use must provide a copy of their valid insurance certificate and driving licence annually to the Finance Manager. Staff must be accompanied by a work colleague under these circumstances
64. It is a legal requirement that all passengers must wear seat belts and it is the responsibility of the staff member to ensure that this requirement is met. Where staff transport learners in a vehicle which requires a specialist license/insurance e.g. PCV or LGV staff should ensure that they have an appropriate licence and insurance to drive such a vehicle and proof of this should be given to the Finance Manager.
65. It is inappropriate for staff to offer lifts to a learner outside their normal working duties.

66. There may be occasions where a learner requires transport in an emergency situation or where not to give a lift may place a learner at risk. Such circumstances must always be recorded on the learners contact log and reported to the Line Manager.

Trips and Outings

67. Staff should take particular care when supervising learners on trips and outings, where the setting is less formal than the usual workplace. Staff remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times and stays within clearly defined professional boundaries.
68. Where activities include overnight stays, careful consideration needs to be given to sleeping arrangements. Learners should be informed of these prior to the start of the trip and if this involves young people, parents or carers should also be informed. In all circumstances, those organising trips and outings must pay careful attention to ensuring safe staff/learner ratios and to the gender mix of staff especially on overnight stays.
69. Health and Safety arrangements require members of staff to keep colleagues/employers aware of their whereabouts, especially when involved in activities outside the usual workplace.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

1. The Company recognises that the quality of the Company and its ongoing success are directly related to the quality and effective performance of employees. Organisational and individual training and development needs will be identified formally through the TNA (Training Needs Analysis) procedure annually for existing members of staff, during induction for new members of staff and informally through discussions between the Line Manager and Member of Staff . Staff Training will be appropriately managed taking into account the training budget, priorities to meet the needs of the business and taking into account our Equality & Diversity Policy.
2. It is the policy of the Company to ensure that employees are able to improve their performance by having appropriate access to effective training, development and coaching.
3. All training and development should be recognised through effective management in conjunction with the performance planning and review process.
4. Prior to agreeing to any training or development commitments, all training and development needs must be approved by the line manager in conjunction with the annual training priorities agreed by the Directors.
5. The training policy applies to all employees, and all managers are responsible for ensuring compliance is maintained.
6. Training will be provided in the following formats:
 - a. Induction Training.
 - b. Skills Training.
 - c. Knowledge Training.
7. In addition, when the role demands, training may be offered in the following formats:
 - a. Professional Training.
 - b. Further Education Training.
8. Where professional further education has been agreed, you may be required to enter into a training agreement. Failure to enter into the Company training agreement will result in the fees not being met by the Company.
9. On agreement of either professional training or Further Education training the Company will normally commit to the following:
 - a. Meeting the basic cost of the course.
 - b. Any exam fees.
 - c. Paid study leave, with a maximum of three days in any one year.
 - d. Exam days, with a maximum of three days in any one year.

Continuous Professional Development

10. PTP is committed to developing every employee so that individuals can reach their full potential. Additionally this supports the Institute for Learning (IfL) requirement of 30 hours continued professional development per academic year. As valued professionals all have equality of opportunity with regard to staff development. This entitlement is dependent upon organisational, team and individual needs.

There is a full commitment to meet the following responsibilities:

- meeting statutory requirements for CPD registration;
- formulating a programme for CPD activities which meets the identified needs;
- delivering the CPD programme and support services by making best use of the resources available;
- monitoring and evaluating the CPD programme and support services against its outcomes and performance indicators;
- creating a culture that supports individuals to take responsibility for their own development.

11. From September 2007, the Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) introduced a set of changes to the ways that teaching staff manage and record CPD.

These can be summarised as follows:

- All teaching practitioners need to maintain their professional membership with IfL on an annual basis.
- All teaching practitioners, managers and leaders will need to demonstrate a minimum of 30 hours CPD per year. This will be pro rata for part time staff.
- Teaching Practitioners will maintain their own CPD record.

12. ALL staff involved in “providing education” will need to register with the Institute for Learning (IfL). This is a mandatory requirement. It may be worth knowing what the definition of a ‘teacher’ is: “a person who provides education at a further education institution under a contract of employment or a contract for services”. Staff appointed to PTP have 6 months from appointment to apply.

13. All staff registered with the IfL will be required to maintain their record of continued professional development (CPD) using the REfLECT tool via the IfL website. Over the performance year you will be expected to undertake and record 30 hours CPD. This record may be open to ‘sampling’ by the IfL, your Line Manager and Ofsted.

14. Further information and up to date developments are available on the IfL website – <http://www.ifl.ac.uk/>