This template has been provided the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO).

Use of this model policy is entirely at your own risk. The policy should be adapted to suit your own organisational needs, and you should ensure if meets your own specific requirements. You should also check this policy is compliant with the law and your organisation’s governing document. No liability rests with SCVO.

For more information see our information on [using SCVO templates](https://scvo.scot/support/using-scvo-templates).

Employee handbook

**Introduction**

The handbook introduction can be used to set out the aim and purpose of the handbook. The compulsory nature of the handbook sections and the right to make amendments and changes should also be outlined.

The introduction may include a welcome paragraph to the new employee from the Managing Director, owner or other senior from the Organisation.

**Organisation information**

[INCLUDE INFORMATION ABOUT THE ORGANISATION. THIS MAY INCLUDE:

* THE ORGANISATION LOGO, NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE MAIN OFFICE
* THE ORGANISATION’S HISTORY AND FUTURE PLANS FOR THE BUSINESS
* THE ORGANISATION STRUCTURE
* THE ORGANISATION CHART
* THE SENIOR EMPLOYEES, THEIR DETAILS AND A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THEIR HISTORY WITH THE ORGANISATION.]

**Organisation mission statement**

[INSERT ORGANISATION’S MISSION STATEMENT].

**Employment contracts**

**Contracts**

[THE HANDBOOK CAN OUTLINE THE TYPES OF CONTRACTS OFFERED BY THE ORGANISATION, SUCH AS FULL-TIME, PART-TIME, FIXED TERM ETC.]

**Conditions of service, including hours**

[INSERT DETAILS ON CONDITIONS OF SERVICE].

Note

Hours of work and holiday entitlement will usually be set out in an employee’s individual contract of employment. The handbook can be used to outline information on breaks, lunch hours, holiday and any other conditions such as a flexi-time scheme, homeworking, job sharing etc.

**Probationary periods**

[INSERT DETAILS ON PROBATIONARY PERIODS].

Note

Most organisations operate probationary periods to provide a period of time for reviewing the new employee’s performance in their role. The length of the probationary period is usually set out in the contract of employment and will depend on the role. The handbook can outline the expectation of employees during their probationary period, how their performance will be monitored and when any review meetings will take place.

For most employment rights, employees have equal rights even when they are in their probation period. The handbook should outline any difference in the terms of employees during their probationary period, such as whether their participation in organisation benefits is limited or if notice periods are adjusted during their probation.

Remember probation is also a time when your new employee is assessing whether the organisation and role is right for them.

**Induction**

[INSERT DETAILS ON ORGANISATION INDUCTION].

**Training**

[INSERT DETAILS ON WHAT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT THE ORGANISATION OFFERS. FOR EXAMPLE, ARE THERE MANDATORY COURSES EVERYONE NEEDS TO COMPLETE E.G. HEALTH & SAFETY ESSENTIALS].

Note

The handbook can be used to outline the internal training and development opportunities available to employees. It can also be used to set out the organisation’s stance on time off, contribution towards payment for external training and qualifications and whether should an individual leave within a certain period of time after the training, whether you will ask for any of the organisation’s contribution to be returned.

**Career development**

[INSERT DETAILS ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT].

Note

The handbook should outline the organisation’s stance on the development and creation of opportunities for employees. Where appropriate, this may outline that employees are personally responsible for their own development and should take steps to ensure this is ongoing during their employment.

**Performance appraisal**

[INSERT DETAILS ON PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS].

Note

The handbook should outline the organisation’s aim in carrying out performance appraisals. This may also include the procedure which will be followed by the organisation, when appraisals take place, who carries out the appraisal and what the outcome will be.

If the organisation has a separate document on the appraisal procedure, the handbook may refer employees to this.

**Promotion**

[INSERT DETAILS ON PROMOTION].

Note

The handbook can be used to outline the organisation’s stance on internal promotion and outline the procedure for advertising internal vacancies.

**Relocation**

[INSERT DETAILS ON MOBILITY].

Note

The handbook can be used to outline the Organisation’s stance on relocation and the geographical extent of relocation. A ‘mobility’ clause will generally be included in a contract of employment although these may be difficult to implement.

**Disclosure of information**

[INSERT DETAILS ON DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION].

Note

The handbook should outline that all employees are prohibited from disclosing any confidential organisation information during their employment or post-employment and that all employees should make themselves aware of the organisation’s policies under the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act in force from time to time to ensure confidential information is kept secure. It may be prudent to ensure senior employees sign a separate confidentiality agreement.

**Conflicts of interest**

[INSERT DETAILS ON CONFLICT OF INTEREST].

Note

The handbook can outline that employees should not have personal interests which place them, or appear to place them, in conflict with the interests of the organisation. It may also be used to set out the organisation’s stance on the use of organisation resources for the backing of political parties or campaigns.

**Employment of relatives or people with whom there are close personal ties**

[INSERT DETAILS OF EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES OR PEOPLE IN CLOSE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS].

Note

The handbook can outline the organisation’s stance on employing relatives or those within close personal relationships. It may also set out the requirement for employees to disclose this information.

**Employee communications**

[INSERT DETAILS ON EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS].

Note

The handbook may outline the organisation’s stance on communicating within the workplace. This may set out that employees should communicate in a constructive, respectful and positive manner.

The handbook may also outline how the Organisation will communicate any important developments, information or events to staff and where this can be located, such as on the organisation intranet. It may set out the organisation’s expectation that staff will access this information and update themselves regularly.

**Speaking on behalf of the Organisation**

[INSERT DETAILS ON SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF THE ORGANISATION].

Note

The handbook should outline that employees, unless expressly authorised, should not speak on behalf of the organisation.

**Additional employment**

[INSERT DETAILS ON ADDITIONAL EMPLOYMENT OUTSIDE THE ORGANISATION].

Note

The handbook should outline the organisation’s stance on employees carrying out additional work for other employers. This may require the employee to disclose their additional employment to line managers. This will be useful to help the organisation meet their working time obligations.

**Non-executive directorships, governorships, etc**

[INSERT DETAILS ON NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORSHIPS, GOVERNORSHIPS AND SIMILAR POSITIONS].

Note

The handbook should outline the organisation’s stance on employees taking on non-executive director, governorship and similar roles as a method of development and progression within and outwith the organisation. It may also include a no-conflict statement where there is not a separate conflict of interest clause within the handbook.

**Internet and email use**

[INSERT DETAILS ON INTERNET AND EMAIL USE].

Note

It is becoming increasingly vital for businesses to set out the rules for appropriate conduct during the use of internet and email facilities. The handbook can be used to refer the employee to the separate organisation policy in place and may also outline:

* any limitations on use and the consequence of using the facilities for non-approved activities
* Organisation monitoring provisions including what is monitored and the consequences of misconduct being uncovered by monitoring.

**Leave and time off**

**Holiday leave**

[INSERT DETAILS CLEARLY SETTING OUT ENTITLEMENT TO PAID HOLIDAY].

Note

The handbook should outline the annual leave entitlement for full time staff, part time and any shift time staff, including whether this entitlement includes public and bank holidays. Any shut down periods, such as the Christmas period, should also be outlined. Any organisation schemes on awarding additional holiday for long service staff should be included.

The handbook should also outline the organisation’s leave year and state whether the organisation allows carry over of leave or if staff are required to use their leave during the leave year in which it was accrued. How holiday entitlement is calculated for staff who start or end employment during the leave year should also be outlined.

The handbook can also outline the holiday leave booking procedure or may refer staff to a separate organisation holiday procedure in place. Any additional organisation policies such as the buying and selling holiday policy can also be referred to.

**Time off in lieu**

[INSERT DETAILS ON TIME OFF IN LIEU ENTITLEMENTS].

Note

The handbook should outline any Organisation rules regarding granting of additional time off work where employees are carrying out extra unpaid hours of work.

**Sick leave**

[INSERT DETAILS ON SICK LEAVE].

Note

The handbook should outline the organisation’s reporting requirements for staff who are absent on sick leave. This will normally require staff to report their absence to their line manager by a certain time each day. The handbook should also outline the requirement for staff to either self-certify their sickness or produce a doctor’s note where they are sick for seven days or more.

The handbook can also outline the organisation’s stance on reinstating holiday leave where the employee is sick during a period of holiday.

Any additional organisation policies on leave for medical or hospital appointments may also be referred to.

**Special leave**

[INSERT DETAILS ON SPECIAL LEAVE].

Note

The handbook should outline any organisation rules regarding granting of time off work for special leave. This will, generally, include compassionate leave, domestic leave, and leave to carry out public duties, reservist leave and leave for trade union activities. Where the organisation has specific policies in place for these types of leave, the handbook should also refer the employee to these policies.

**Career breaks**

[INSERT DETAILS ON THE ORGANISATION’S STANCE REGARDING CAREER BREAKS].

Note

Career breaks are longer periods of leave mainly used to aid personal development by travel or education but may also be requested for other personal reasons such as caring responsibilities. The handbook should outline the organisation’s stance on career breaks.

**Secondments**

[INSERT DETAILS ON UNDERTAKING SECONDMENTS].

Note

Some businesses will arrange secondments internally or externally to allow staff to develop their skills and experience in a different role. The handbook should outline the process for undertaking a secondment and include any information on when these will take place, what opportunities are available for staff and what happens at the end of the secondment.

**Family friendly leave**

[INSERT DETAILS ON MATERNITY, ADOPTION, PATERNITY AND SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE].

Note

The handbook may outline all family friendly leave provisions in the same section or may cover each provision individually. Any additional benefits provided by the organisation can also be outlined.

Rather than including all details within the handbook, it may be prudent to include a statement which directs employees to speak to the HR department once the pregnancy or adoption is confirmed to receive full details of their entitlement and the procedure.

**Leaving the organisation**

[INSERT DETAILS REGARDING EMPLOYMENT ENDING AND LEAVING THE ORGANISATION].

**Notice periods**

[INSERT DETAILS ON NOTICE PERIODS].

Note

The offer letter or contract of employment received by the employee will usually outline the notice periods. To be clear, most handbooks will outline that gross misconduct dismissals will be summary dismissals and no notice will be given, although this is not strictly necessary.

**Return of organisation property**

[INSERT DETAILS ON RETURNING PROPERTY]

Note

The handbook should outline the requirement for employees leaving the organisation, for any reason, to return any organisation property within their possession. This can list the property e.g. organisation uniforms, organisation mobile phones, organisation laptops, documents containing organisation information, etc. To aid full return, the handbook can outline that a failure to return all property will lead to the cost of a replacement being deducted from the employee’s last payment.

**Restrictive covenants**

[INSERT DETAILS ON RESTRICTIVE COVENANTS].

Note

The handbook should outline the organisation’s right to enforce restrictive covenants on ex-employees following the end of their employment with the organisation. Any restrictions may be listed, such as a list of competitors the employee cannot join or a list of suppliers that cannot be contacted to entice them away from the organisation.

**Exit interviews**

[INSERT DETAILS ON EXIT INTERVIEWS].

Note

Exit interviews are useful tools to gather the views and opinions of those who are leaving the organisation, whether good or bad. The handbook should outline the purpose of these interviews, how information collected will be used and when interviews will be carried out.

**Resignation**

[INSERT DETAILS ON RESIGNATIONS].

Note

The handbook should outline the organisation’s policy on accrued but untaken holiday leave or overtaken holiday leave when an employee resigns.

The handbook should also outline the organisation’s discretionary right to place an employee on garden leave for their notice period. This should expressly state that the organisation will be under no obligation to provide the employee with work but the employee will remain bound by their contract of employment and will be entitled to receive all normal contractual benefits, including salary.

**Pay in lieu of notice**

[INSERT DETAILS ON PAY IN LIEU OF NOTICE].

Note

The handbook should outline the payment in lieu provisions. This will usually specify that where the contract of employment is terminated, for whatever reason, the organisation reserves the right to make a payment in lieu of the notice period. This payment is equal to the employee’s basic salary, plus benefit entitlements, for the duration of the notice period.

**Retirement**

[INSERT DETAILS ON RETIREMENT].

Note

The handbook should outline whether the organisation offers provision for early or late retirement. It can also be used to outline what retirement support is on offer from the organisation.

**Redundancy**

[INSERT DETAILS ON REDUNDANCIES].

Note

The handbook can outline information on redundancy and redeployment. Although this is a negative area, the handbook can outline the organisation’s intention to assess all possible alternatives, offer redeployment where possible and continue to review the possibility of alternative roles during any notice period.

**References**

[INSERT DETAILS ON REFERENCES].

Note

The handbook can outline the organisation’s stance on requiring references during the recruitment process and providing references for current or ex-employees.

**Disciplinary, capability and grievance procedures**

Note

This is an important section to include in the employee handbook to ensure all employees are clear on the procedure that should be followed if they have any concerns or the procedure that will be followed if concerns are raised against them. This section may include other issues such as harassment, rather than including this in the equality section.

If the organisation wants to incorporate these procedures on a non-contractual basis, they should include a statement to this effect e.g. “These procedures do not constitute part of your normal contractual terms and conditions and the organisation reserves the right to vary or amend these procedures with reasonable notice.”

**Disciplinary procedure**

[INSERT DETAILS CLEARLY SETTING OUT THE DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE].

Note

The handbook should state the aim of the organisation in carrying out disciplinary action and clearly outline the disciplinary procedure that will be followed, with the aid of a flowchart if appropriate.

The handbook may include a list of acts that will be classed as misconduct, serious misconduct or gross misconduct. If a list is included, the handbook should state that this is not a definitive list.

**Capability procedure**

[INSERT DETAILS CLEARLY SETTING OUT THE CAPABILITY PROCEDURE].

Note

The handbook can outline the capability procedure in full, for both capability due to poor performance and ill-health, or may refer the employee to the organisation capability procedures in place.

**Grievances and appeals**

[INSERT DETAILS ON THE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE AND THE APPEALS PROCEDURE].

Note

The handbook can outline the grievance procedure in full, with the aid of a flowchart if appropriate, or may refer the employee to the organisation grievance policy in place.

**Remuneration and benefits**

**Payment of salaries**

[INSERT DETAILS ON SALARY PAYMENT].

Note

The handbook can outline information on payment received by employees, including details of how payment is made, what deductions will be made by the organisation and how staff can access their payslips.

The handbook may also outline details on the process when payment cannot take place on the specified date because of public holidays or weekends. This may include a disclaimer against any loss suffered by employees because of any delay created by the employee’s bank.

**Salary management**

[INSERT DETAILS ON SALARY MANAGEMENT].

Note

The handbook can outline information on the organisation job evaluation scheme, if you have one, including when this takes place and the pay grading structure.

**Salary reviews**

[INSERT DETAILS ON SALARY REVIEWS].

Note

The handbook should outline how salary reviews occur within the organisation, including how often these take place and how any increase or decrease will be implemented.

The handbook may also outline the organisation’s stance on awarding pay rises for exceptional performers and whether outside factors, such as competition and market forces, will be taken into account when making salary adjustments.

**Pensions**

[INSERT DETAILS ON ORGANISATION PENSIONS SCHEMES].

Note

The handbook should outline the organisation pension scheme available to employees, including the type of scheme and who can participate, and set out where employees can access further information. The handbook may also outline the contact details of a contact from the pension provider who employees can speak to if they require any further information or advice.

**Overtime**

[INSERT DETAILS OF OVERTIME].

Note

Overtime details can be outlined in the employee’s offer letter. The handbook can be used to outline the process for making overtime claims including the deadline, the method and who to direct these claims to.

**Expenses**

[INSERT DETAILS ON INCURRING AND SUBMITTING EXPENSES].

Note

The handbook should outline the organisation’s stance on incurring expenses, including whether advance approval from the employee’s line manager is needed and if there is a maximum spend limit.

The handbook should also outline the process for submitting expense claims and how repayment will take place. It may also be prudent to state that any employee submitting false expenses claims will be subject to disciplinary action and may lead to dismissal without notice.

Any additional organisation rules on incurring expenses using organisation credit cards may also be referred to here.

**Sick pay**

[INSERT DETAILS ON ORGANISATION SICK PAY].

Note

The handbook should outline the organisation’s sick pay scheme including details on eligibility, entitlement and the effect on statutory sick pay.

**Maternity pay**

[INSERT DETAILS ON MATERNITY PAY].

Note

The handbook can outline the organisation’s maternity pay scheme, including whether this is statutory or enhanced, or may refer the employee to the organisation maternity policy in place.

**Childcare support**

[INSERT DETAILS ON CHILDCARE SUPPORT].

Note

The handbook can be used to outline any organisation support in place for childcare. This may include:

* on site nurseries or crèche facilities
* breastfeeding facilities
* schemes during school holiday periods
* workplace support with regard to childcare facilities in the local area
* workplace support for childcare fees.

**Business travel**

**Using personal cars**

[INSERT DETAILS ON THE USE OF PRIVATELY OWNED CARS].

Note

The handbook should be used to outline any organisation allowances that may be due if an employee uses a personal car for the purpose of carrying out their role. It can also be used to outline the insurance arrangements and notifications to be made if this is occurring on a regular basis.

**Travel and subsistence allowances**

[INSERT DETAILS ON ALLOWANCES FOR TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE].

Note

The handbook should outline the organisation’s stance on offering any travel and subsistence allowances for employees travelling on business. The handbook may list the items covered by the allowance, those which are not included and any financial limit. The process for incurring expenses and reclaiming the allowance should also be outlined.

**Relocation assistance**

[INSERT DETAILS ON RELOCATION].

Note

Details on assistance provided by the organisation for relocation (for moving property within the UK or globally where the location of work has changed) can be outlined in a separate relocation policy. Where there isn’t a separate policy, the organisation may exercise discretion to assist with relocation costs dependent on the individual circumstances.

**Equal opportunities at work**

**Equal opportunities**

[INSERT DETAILS ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES].

Note

The handbook should outline the organisation’s stance on equal opportunities within the workplace and may explain how the organisation ensures equal opportunity is granted to all employees and non-employees, such as job applicants. It may also refer employees to the separate organisation equal opportunities statement/policy in place.

If the organisation wants to incorporate equal opportunities procedures on a non-contractual basis, they should include a statement to this effect e.g. “These procedures do not constitute part of your normal contractual terms and conditions and the organisation reserves the right to vary or amend these procedures with reasonable notice.”

**Harassment**

[INSERT DETAILS ON WORKPLACE HARASSMENT].

Note

The handbook should outline the organisation’s stance against harassment in the workplace. It may also set out the procedure that will take place following complaints of harassment or may refer employees to the organisation anti-harassment and bullying policy in place.

**Bullying**

[INSERT DETAILS ON WORKPLACE BULLYING].

Note

Although not legally obliged, the handbook should outline the organisation’s stance against bullying in the workplace. It may also set out the procedure that will take place following complaints of bullying or refer employees to the Organisation anti-harassment and bullying policy in place.

**Health and safety at work**

**Health and safety**

[INSERT DETAILS ON WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY].

Note

The organisation is legally obliged under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to have a written policy on health and safety where they employ five or more members of staff. The handbook should outline the organisation’s stance on the importance of maintaining and being responsible for health and safety at work and can refer employees to the separate organisation policy in place.

**Security**

[INSERT DETAILS ON ORGANISATION SECURITY].

Note

The handbook should outline the employee’s duty to take all reasonable measures to secure the organisation’s property and equipment. It may also refer to applicable security arrangements in place within the organisation that must be followed.

**Safety**

[INSERT DETAILS ON SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE].

Note

The handbook should outline the organisation rules on safety including all applicable safety regulations. It may also refer to organisation policies on health and safety or provide information of where these are located.

**Fire procedures**

[INSERT DETAILS ON FIRE PROCEDURES].

Note

The handbook should outline the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire at the workplace.

**Alcohol**

[INSERT DETAILS ON ALCOHOL IN THE WORKPLACE].

Note

The handbook should outline that alcohol consumption is not permitted at work or during any work related events, unless expressly permitted. The handbook may include a list of permitted events such as celebrations, Christmas parties etc.

The handbook should also outline that the organisation will class the act of being at work under the influence of alcohol as a disciplinary matter and the potential consequences. Any applicable health and safety matters should also be included, such as where the role requires operating heavy machinery in a factory environment. The handbook may refer employees to the organisation disciplinary procedure in place.

**Drugs**

[INSERT DETAILS ON DRUGS IN THE WORKPLACE].

Note

The handbook should outline that the organisation will class the act of being at work in possession of, or under the influence of, illegal or non-prescription drugs as a disciplinary matter and the potential consequences. Most businesses will class this as an act of gross misconduct warranting a summary dismissal. The handbook may refer employees to the organisation disciplinary procedure in place.

**Smoking**

[INSERT DETAILS ON SMOKING IN THE WORKPLACE].

Note

The handbook should outline the organisation rules on smoking in the workplace, including all prohibitions, the use of e-cigarettes and listing the areas where smoking is permitted. It may also refer employees to the organisation smoking policy in place.

**Accidents and first-aid treatment**

[INSERT DETAILS ON WORKPLACE ACCIDENTS AND FIRST AID].

Note

The organisation is legally obliged to record any workplace accidents, injuries and near misses. The handbook should outline where the accident book is located and how employees should report any incidents.

The handbook may list the organisation first-aiders or refer employees to where this information is located, such as on the organisation intranet.

**Personal property**

[INSERT DETAILS ON PERSONAL PROPERTY].

Note

The handbook should outline the organisation’s stance on responsibility for personal property in the workplace. This will normally state that employees are personally responsible for their own property and the Organisation will not be liable or responsible for any personal property damage or loss. The handbook can also outline whether there are secure storage facilities for personal property.

**Employee records**

**Personal records**

[INSERT DETAILS ON IMPORTANCE OF, AND UPDATING OF, PERSONAL RECORDS].

Note

The handbook should outline the importance of the organisation storing correct contact and emergency contact information for all staff. It may also be used to set out the process for employees to update the organisation when this information changes.

**Data protection**

[INSERT DETAILS ON DATA PROTECTION AND EMPLOYEE DISCLOSURE].

Note

In certain circumstances, the organisation is legally obliged under the current Data Protection Act to disclose personal data to employees. The handbook should outline the process for employees to request information under the legislation or direct employees to separate policies which outline the process.

The Handbook may also be used to direct employees to other policies in place regarding the General Data Protection Regulation and current Data Protection Act, for example, the data protection policy and policy on data subject rights.

**Employee engagement and social**

**Employee involvement**

[INSERT DETAILS ON EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT].

Note

The handbook should outline the organisation’s attitude towards involving employees in the decision-making process and set out the forum for this, such as department meetings or staff briefings.

**Intranet**

[INSERT DETAILS ON THE ORGANISATION INTRANET].

Note

The handbook can provide guidance on the organisation intranet, including what information will be made available and where employees can access this.

**Suggestion scheme(s)**

[INSERT DETAILS ON ORGANISATION SUGGESTION SCHEMES].

Note

The handbook can outline any organisation suggestion scheme(s) in place, including details on how employees can submit suggestions and whether any reward will be offered.

**Facilities**

[INSERT DETAILS ON ORGANISATION FACILITIES].

Note

The handbook can outline the organisation facilities on offer to employees e.g. parking, transport, canteen, childcare, etc.

**Annex**

**Forms**

[INCLUDE COPIES OF FORMS REFERRED TO BY THE HANDBOOK. THESE SHOULD BE KEPT UP TO DATE AND SHOULD BE THE SAME VERSION AS THE FORMS IN USE OR STORED ELSEWHERE, SUCH AS ON THE ORGANISATION INTRANET].

**Index**

[INCLUDE INDEX]

**Document version control**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Version number** | **Change or update** | **Author or owner** | **Date** |
| 1.0 | First version |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |