



Name of Policy	Personal Relationships at Work
Responsible Officer	Director
Date approved by Committee	28 April 2026
Date of next Review	July 2029
Section	Corporate Services

Introduction

We recognise that employees may form close friendships and sometimes personal relationships with colleagues or those connected with their work. While we do not wish to interfere with these relationships, it is important the Kingsridge Cleddans Housing Association ensures that all employees behave appropriately and adhere to our code of conduct

This policy sets out Kingsridge Cleddans Housing Association's expected standards regarding personal relationships connected to work. Employees should speak to their line manager if they are unsure of the standards expected of them. Any breaches of the standard as set out within this policy will be managed in line with our disciplinary procedure.

This policy applies to all employees and workers within Kingsridge Cleddans Housing Association.

The provisions of this policy will be applied during the recruitment and selection process for both candidates and those involved in decision making.

Policy Aims

- To set the standards and expectations concerning personal relationships at work which are respectful of an employee right to a private life but also protect the interests of (Kingsridge Cleddans Housing Association) and its stakeholders
- To ensure that any personal relationships which may create an actual or perceived conflict of interest are reported to allow appropriate mitigations to be put in place
- To minimise the risk of problems arising and provide guidance for the management of any situations out with the expected standards in accordance with this policy
- To manage situations that may arise in a fair, consistent and appropriate way
- To ensure all employees act in accordance with the organisation's code of conduct

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the term personal relationship is defined as:

- Employees who are dating, in a partnership, cohabiting, married or in a sexual/romantic relationship
- Immediate family members of the employee e.g. parent, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandparent or grandchild
- Extended family members e.g. extended family member such as aunt, uncle, cousin, niece or nephew
- Individuals the employee has a close personal relationship with e.g. close friendships

An actual or perceived conflict of interest might include the following examples (this list is not exhaustive):

- Where a line management relationship exists between the employees

- Where both employees are involved in financial / governance matters on behalf of the organisation
- Where one of the employees is involved in decision making that can be made in a way to advantage the other employee e.g. salary, annual leave, promotions etc.

Responsibilities

We expect that employees will:

- Not allow personal relationships with colleagues, contractors, clients, customers, suppliers or anyone connected with their employment to influence their conduct, judgement or decisions while at work
- Declare any personal relationships with a colleague or any other person connected to their employment to their line manager (more senior manager if the personal relationship is with the line manager)
- Discuss with their line manager if they are unsure whether an actual or perceived conflict of interest would exist and therefore if a declaration about a personal relationship is necessary
- Act professionally at all times and respect their surroundings, colleagues and the values of (Kingsridge Cleddans Housing Association)
- Not behave inappropriately during or outwith working hours, with any matters connected or associated with their employment
- Not to behave inappropriately in any social media interaction connected to personal relationships at work
- Adhere to the expectations as set out within the Code of Conduct at conferences and all other internal or external events where they are attending in connection with (Kingsridge Cleddans Housing Association)
- Declare any actual or perceived conflicts of interest relating to any recruitment process they are involved in where a candidate is identified as having a close personal relationship with them and they have a decision-making role in the process.

Employees can expect the organisation to

- Treat any information concerning a personal relationship connected to an employees work in the strictest of confidence. This will also be recorded on the personal files of the employees involved.
- Discuss the implications with those involved in the personal relationship with an appropriate senior manager.
- Carry out a risk assessment (appendix 1) regarding the personal relationship and the potential impacts this may have on the roles carried out by the employees. After this the organisation will consider any necessary measures to mitigate the impact of the personal relationship.
- Discuss potential mitigations with both employees to reach an agreement about these.
- Consider alternatives if an agreement cannot be reached and seek appropriate advice on the next steps.

Personal Relationships – starting

The organisation acknowledges that friendships between colleagues are important and support employee wellbeing.

Employees are encouraged to exercise judgement on when a friendship may be perceived as a close personal relationship. Employees should discuss this with their line manager or a more senior manager if their line manager is involved.

Personal Relationships – breaking down

The organisation acknowledges that relationship break downs can be difficult for all concerned. However, it is important that an effective working relationship is maintained in these circumstances.

A manager will speak to the employees concerned if this happens and carry out a risk assessment to mitigate any risks to the organisation or individuals involved.

Risk Assessment

If a personal relationship is identified a manager will carry out a risk assessment to identify the specific risks which could reasonably influence workplace decisions and create an actual or perceived conflict of interest.

- Conflict of Interest – this is typically associated with line management positions and includes where one employee is in a decision making where the other can be advantaged
- Confidentiality Breach – where there is a risk of sensitive organisational information being shared in appropriately
- Unprofessional Conduct – where there is a risk of unprofessional conduct including public displays of affection during working hours, at work events and through communication mediums which may have an impact on the reputation of the organisation
- Team Dynamic – what impact might the personal relationship have on the team dynamics and perceptions of other colleagues in terms of morale, fairness and trust
- Compliance – where there is a risk that employees could collude to breach policy which has an impact on governance, finance or legal obligations.
- Sexual Harassment – where there is the potential for sexual harassment for those in relationships or in the event of a relationship breakdown

Any other risks identified which are not covered by the above list will also be considered as part of the risk assessment process.

Mitigations

Where a personal relationship, through the risk assessment process, has been identified as having the potential to adversely affect the organisation then the following mitigations may be considered.

- Change in line management
- Review of decision-making processes
- Change of team / department
- Adjustments to roles / responsibilities
- Independent verification of processes

This list is not exhaustive, and mitigations will be dependent on the situation. Mitigations will be discussed with both the employees involved to seek agreement.

Relationships with others connected to work

If an employee has a personal relationship with an individual connected with our organisation, we expect the relationship to be declared to the employee's line manager. In these circumstances a risk assessment will be carried out to identify what mitigations may be necessary.

Recruitment

Kingsridge Cleddans Housing Association's Recruitment & Selection Policy is designed to ensure objectivity and is designed to uphold objectivity, fairness, and equality of opportunity for every candidate throughout the process. While these principles guide all recruitment activity, situations may arise where personal relationships between applicants and those involved in recruitment decisions, such as members of the recruitment panel could create a real or perceived conflict of interest.

Candidates Declaring a Personal Relationship

All candidates should be asked to indicate on their application form whether they are related to, or have a close personal relationship with, a current employee, governing body member, or anyone closely associated with the organisation.

Where a candidate declares a personal relationship on their application form, this declaration must not disadvantage the candidate. In these cases, the panel should discuss this with the candidate and undertake a risk assessment to understand whether the relationship presents a real or perceived conflict of interest. It is possible that some conflicts cannot be effectively managed and this could preclude a candidate from being able to take up a post.

Recruitment Panel Members Declaring a Personal Relationship

If a recruitment panel member becomes aware that they have a personal relationship with a candidate, they must notify the rest of the panel immediately. A risk assessment should then be carried out to determine the nature and extent of any real or perceived conflict of interest. Where a conflict is identified, the panel member must withdraw from any further involvement in the shortlisting, interviewing, or decision-making stages for that recruitment process. This ensures that the integrity, impartiality, and fairness of the recruitment process is maintained.

Raising Concerns

Any employee who has a concern regarding a personal relationship, whether that be one they are involved in or observing, can raise this by speaking to their line manager (or a more senior manager) or raising the concerns in line with the grievance procedure.

Concerns raised will be managed sensitively and will be cognisant of maintaining effective working relationships.

Confidentiality

If the employees involved in the personal relationship request that this is kept confidential this will be maintained as far as possible. If alternative working arrangements are necessary, the organisation may need to disclose some information about the reasons but will not do this without first discussing this with the employees involved.

Breaches of the policy

Any breaches of this policy could be managed in line with the disciplinary policy.

This policy will be monitored and reviewed as appropriate.

General Data Protection Regulations

The organisation will treat your personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our own policies and procedures. Information regarding how your data will be used and the basis for processing your data is provided in Kingsridge Cleddans Housing Association's employee privacy notice.

Equality & diversity

As a service provider and employer, we recognise the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, oppose any form of discrimination and will treat all customers, internal and external, with dignity and respect. We recognise diversity and will ensure that all of our actions ensure accessibility and reduce barriers to employment and the services we provide.

This policy does not form part of the contract of employment, therefore may be updated or withdrawn at any time. If this happens it will be communicated to staff accordingly.

Appendix 1

Personal Relationships at Work – Template Risk Assessment

For the purposes of this risk assessment, a personal relationship is any relationship beyond a purely professional interaction that could reasonably influence workplace decisions and create an actual or perceived conflict of interest.

This risk assessment should be used in the following circumstances,

1. During the recruitment process when a candidate discloses a personal relationship with a current employee, governing body member or contractor.
2. During the recruitment process when a member of the recruitment panel discloses a personal relationship with a candidate.
3. A current employee discloses a personal relationship within the workplace with another employee, governing body member or contractor.

Roles & Responsibilities

- Candidates: Disclose relevant personal relationships as part of their job application.
- Employees: Promptly disclose relevant relationships via the confidential disclosure process.
- Managers: Receive disclosures, complete/refresh this risk assessment, implement proportionate controls, maintain confidentiality.
- HR: Advise on proportionality, consistency, legal compliance and retain records in line with organisational policy.
- Senior Leadership/Governing Body Members: Oversight of /complex cases, especially where senior managers and or governing body members are involved.

Details	
Candidate/ Employee Name	
Assessor Name & Role	
Department/ Team	
Type of Relationship e.g. romantic, family, extended family, friendship	
Brief description of the workplace context e.g. colleague – colleague, manager – team member	
Declaration Form Received From	

Risk Assessment			
1. Risk	2. Persons at Risk	3. Mitigation Measures	4. Actions/ Controls
Conflict of Interest Influence over pay and grading, disciplinary/ grievance issues, recruitment decisions, performance and any other line management decisions.			
Confidentiality Breach Sharing sensitive organisational information.			
Unprofessional Conduct			

Always maintaining appropriate behaviours including at work events and through communication mediums which could be associated with work.			
Team Dynamic Impact on the team in relation to morale, fairness & trust.			
Compliance Breaches of company policy which impact governance, finance or legal obligations.			
Sexual Harassment Potential of sexual harassment when in a relationship or if the relationship breaks down.			
Any other risks identified			
Review Date			
Assessor			
Assessor Signature			
Date			