

CLYDESDALE HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

Policy: **Personal Relationships at Work Policy**

Date: **27 May 2026**

Lead Officer: **Chief Executive**

Review Date: **27 May 2029**

Regulatory Standards

Standard 5 The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity.

Guidance

5.1 The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity and, through the actions of the governing body and staff, upholds the good reputation of the RSL and the sector.

5.2 The RSL upholds and promotes the standards of behaviour and conduct it expects of governing body members and staff through an appropriate code of conduct. It manages governing body members' performance, ensures compliance and has a robust system to deal with any breach of the code.

5.3 The RSL pays due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and advance equality of opportunity and human rights, and fosters good relations across the range of protected characteristics in all areas of its work, including its governance arrangements.

5.4 Governing body members and staff declare and manage openly and appropriately any conflicts of interest and ensure they do not benefit improperly from their position.

Clydesdale Housing Association will provide this policy on request at no cost, in large print, in Braille, in audio or other non-written format, and in a variety of languages.



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 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 Clydesdale Housing Association ensures that all employees behave appropriately and adhere to our code of conduct.
- 1.2 This policy sets out Clydesdale 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.
- 1.3 This policy applies to all employees and workers within Clydesdale Housing Association.
- 1.4 The provisions of this policy will be applied during the recruitment and selection process for both candidates and those involved in decision making.

2. Policy Aims

- To set the standards and expectations concerning personal relationships at work which are respectful of an employee's right to a private life but also protect the interests of Clydesdale 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 outwith 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

3. Definitions

- 3.1 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

3.2 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.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 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 Clydesdale 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 Clydesdale 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.

4.2 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.

5. Personal Relationships – starting

- 5.1 The organisation acknowledges that friendships between colleagues are important and support employee wellbeing.
- 5.2 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.

6. Personal Relationships – breaking down

- 6.1 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.
- 6.2 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.

7. Risk Assessment

- 7.1 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 inappropriately
 - 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

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

8. Mitigations

8.1 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

8.2 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.

9. Relationships with others connected to work

9.1 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.

10. Recruitment

10.1 Clydesdale 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.

10.2 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. They should not be excluded from shortlisting, nor prevented from being interviewed solely on the basis of their disclosure. 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.

10.3 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.

11. Raising Concerns

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 Concerns raised will be managed sensitively and will be cognisant of maintaining effective working relationships.

12. Confidentiality

- 12.1 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.

13. Breaches of the policy

- 13.1 Any breaches of this policy will be managed in line with the disciplinary policy.

14. Policy Review

- 14.1 This policy will be monitored and reviewed as appropriate. The next review date is 27 May 2029.

15. General Data Protection Regulations

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

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.			

<p>Confidentiality Breach Sharing sensitive organisational information.</p>			
<p>Unprofessional Conduct Always maintaining appropriate behaviours including at work events and through communication mediums which could be associated with work.</p>			
<p>Team Dynamic Impact on the team in relation to morale, fairness & trust.</p>			
<p>Compliance Breaches of company policy which impact governance, finance or legal obligations.</p>			
<p>Sexual Harassment Potential of sexual harassment when in a</p>			

relationship or if the relationship breaks down.			
Any other risks identified			
Review Date			
Assessor			
Assessor Signature			
Date			