

**Personal Relationships in  
the Workplace**

**Guidance for Managers and  
Staff**

12<sup>th</sup> January 2018

## **1. Introduction**

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde recognises that employees who work together may be in, or form, personal or family relationships with colleagues. This guidance has been developed to protect the integrity and welfare of employees, managers and the organisation in any such circumstances. The guidance must be applied in conjunction with appropriate professional guidelines and codes of conduct and relevant NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde workforce policies e.g. Dignity at Work and the Staff Code of Conduct.

## **2. Aims of Guidance**

- 2.1. To protect the integrity and welfare of employees, service users and patients.
- 2.2. To ensure that conflicts of interest do not influence decisions relating to recruitment, promotion, working patterns, appraisal and development, clinical decisions or investigations, financial payments or shift rostering (this list is not exhaustive).
- 2.3. To ensure that all relationships within the workplace are conducted professionally, in a fair and reasonable manner, notwithstanding any existing or new personal or family relationship.

## **3. Scope of Guidance**

This guidance applies to all employees, volunteers and workers in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. Matters relating to relationships with patients/clients/service users are covered in other guidance and professional regulations.

Personal relationships for the purpose of the guidance include:

- 3.1. Family relationships, including the family of a new or existing partner.
- 3.2. Spouses, romantic involvements, cohabiting partners and civil partnerships.
- 3.3. Business, financial and commercial relationships.

Relationships listed above are neither exhaustive nor exclusive and individual circumstances will always be taken into account when considering a situation.

## **4. Responsibilities**

### **4.1. Employees**

Employees must not abuse their official position for personal gain or to benefit their family and friends and must disclose any business, commercial or financial

conflicts of interest relating to their employment particularly when it is connected to a personal or family relationship.

Further guidance relating to conflicts of interest can be found in the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Code of Conduct for Staff.

#### 4.2. Line Managers

Individuals in a personal or family relationship should ideally not work in the same team or associated teams to avoid conflicts of interest.

It is recognised that there will be situations where this is not possible due to existing circumstances, and in those instances decision making on the matters covered in section 2 should be fair, transparent and in line with relevant NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde guidance and Professional Codes of Conduct/guidance.

Where a relationship already exists the line manager(s) and individuals involved must agree appropriate working parameters.

Line managers must take steps to ensure that staff in personal relationships are not directly or indirectly managed by the other person within that relationship, including having line management responsibility over the other on issues relating to pay, expenses, promotion, shift rostering, working patterns, appraisals etc.

Exceptional circumstances may exist where the provision of a service requires prioritisation over existing relationships. The processes within such circumstances must be identified and steps taken to establish robust governance processes which will protect all parties involved as well as the organisation.

### **5. Examples of Application**

#### 5.1. Employee Relations

In terms of any employee relations process, the commissioning manager must ensure that those involved do not have a personal or family relationship with the staff involved in the grievance. Any conflict of interest must be declared to the Head of People and Change or People and Change Manager, before the process begins.

#### 5.2. Recruitment and Selection

Employees involved in a Recruitment or Selection process as a Recruiting Manager or panel member must declare any conflict of interest to the appropriate Head of People and Change or People and Change Manager, as soon as they become aware of it.

### 5.3. Clinical Governance

To safeguard those using NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde services, as well as those providing their care, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde will take steps to ensure that individuals or bank workers in personal or family relationships are not involved in the care of the same individual or group of individuals.

Exceptional circumstances may exist where the provision of care requires prioritisation over existing relationships (i.e. Accident and Emergency care). In such situations, local protocol and professional guidance must be followed.

### 5.4. Behaviour at Work

Individuals must behave appropriately while at work, irrespective of their position. Line managers, and individuals themselves, must ensure that personal relationships are not allowed to influence individuals conduct at work or to be a barrier to effective communication and co-operation.

Any situations which arise, giving cause for concern, must be dealt with sensitively, and with reference to the appropriate NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde workforce policies.

### 5.5. Patient/Service User Care

Where an individual is a member of a professional body, as part of their role in NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, it is also their responsibility to adhere to the professional code of conduct, relating to personal relationships in the workplace.

End.