



Relationship at Work Policy

Document Reference:	POL135
Document Status:	Approved
Version:	V1.0

DOCUMENT CHANGE HISTORY		
Initiated by	Date	Author (s)
[Committee etc. originally requiring/ commissioning]	[Completion date of first Version]	Culture Director
Version	Date	Comments (i.e., viewed, or reviewed, amended approved by person or committee)
Draft V0.1	[date]	Circulated to HR Policy Subgroup, Heads of Ops and Unison.
V0.2	24.5.2022	Sent to Unison Branch Meeting and EqIA panel

POL135 – Relationship at Work Policy

Version	Date	Comments (i.e., viewed, or reviewed, amended approved by person or committee)
V0.3	8 July 2022	Policy sent back to Unison Branch, following initial feedback
V0.4	12 July 2022	Updated version following Unison feedback
V0.5	14 July 2022	Policy Sent to ELT for sign off
V1.0	26 July 2022	Approved at ELT

Document Reference	People Services
Recommended at Date	SPF 23 June 2022
Approved at Date	ELT 26 July 2022
Valid Until Date	25 July 2025
Equality Analysis	Completed
Linked procedural documents	The Standards of Business Conduct Policy
Dissemination requirements	All Trust employees by Intranet
Part of Trust's publication scheme	Yes / No?

POL135 – Relationship at Work Policy

The East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (the Trust) has made every effort to ensure this policy does not have the effect of unlawful discrimination on the grounds of the protected characteristics of: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion/belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership and pregnancy/maternity. The Trust will not tolerate unlawful discrimination on the basis of, spent criminal convictions, trade union membership or non-membership. In addition, the Trust will have due regard to advancing equality of opportunity for and fostering good relations between people from different groups and people with protected characteristics.

All Trust policies can be provided in alternative formats if required.

Please contact the Human Resources Department if you require an alternative_format.

Contents

Paragraph		Page
1.	Introduction	5
2.	Policy Statement	5
3.	Purpose	6
4	Workplace Relationships	7
5	Relationships involving student supervisors, line managers, senior managers, or directors	7
6	Responsibilities	8
7	Nepotism in the Workplace	9
8	Extra-marital relationships	10
9	Policy Review	10
 Appendices		
Appendix A	Equality Impact Assessment	11

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy and guidance are intended to raise awareness of personal relationships across the workforce, how they can affect fairness and perceptions of fairness in the workplace, and what each individual's responsibilities are to declare any conflicts of interest resulting from being in a relationship.

1.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Trust's Standards of Business Conduct Policy, which also addresses the potential impact of any relationship at work in creating an actual or apparent conflict of interest.

This policy is not intended to cover every situation that is faced, as every case must be determined on its facts, but sets out the broad principles to support decision-making.

2. Policy Statement

2.1 All our workforce have the right to a private life outside of work. It is not the policy of the East of England Ambulance Service Trust (EEAST) to prevent individuals from having a relationship, but it is a requirement for leaders in our organisation to 'register' or declare a personal, marital or family relationship, with another employee of the Trust, even if they are in different departments. If you are a leader or senior manager, you must register such a relationship. This is particularly necessary, especially in employee relations processes, line management, recruitment, promotion or discretionary career development where one party could seek to favour a relative, family member or another party in the relationship.

2.2 It is accepted by East of England Ambulance Service Trust (EEAST) that relationships can often exist and develop between colleagues. It is also accepted that across our workforce there are instances where staff members are related to each other, with family members in the same team, sector or department. There are many happy relationships that form within the Ambulance Service and broader NHS and it is not for EEAST to intervene with this unless it becomes a conflict of interest or an issue within a relationship impacts the service provided to each other, our stakeholders and our patients.

2.3 However, when relationships breakdown and become acrimonious or strained, staff are reminded to maintain professional boundaries between personal life and the workplace. If a relationship impacts your ability or capability to perform your role you should discuss with a more senior manager or seek support from specialist agencies.

2.4 Relationships in the workplace between colleagues (new, existing, and former) must be conducted with complete professionalism, in order not to impact negatively on service delivery or public confidence. The potential for relationships to create an actual or apparent conflict of interest at work must also be considered by individuals involved this includes amongst family members who form part of the EEAST workforce.

2.5 At no point will sexually intimate acts be tolerated in the workplace, including premises, locations and vehicles. For the avoidance of doubt, this may be treated as gross misconduct and may lead to dismissal of those involved.

2.6 It is imperative that all our people feel that they work in a fair, inclusive and transparent environment, where for example recruitment, promotion and development opportunities are merit-based and not influenced by any relationship. Where this is not the case, or when relationships break down and affect the effective implementation of the Trust policies and procedures, then further action may be taken, including disciplinary action if appropriate.

2.7 The policy applies to all our workforce and also includes , bank staff, , volunteers, contractors, students, and agency workers.

3. Purpose

3.1 The purpose of the policy is to ensure that those in our workforce who are in, about to enter or are ending a relationship (including marital or family) recognise when a conflict may be created and that it does not negatively impact on the work of the Trust or its reputation. It is not intended that a register of personal relationships

is created or that our approach does not recognise that relationships exist in the Trust.

3.2 Strict policy on maintaining a professional boundary between operational staff and patients is available from our Safeguarding team.

4. Workplace relationships

4.1 In determining whether or not a relationship creates any negative impact on the legitimate aims of the Trust, the following factors could be considered:

- a power imbalance is not used to initiate, control or maintain the personal relationship
- physical and intimate relations do not take place in works time, on duty, or off duty on Trust premises including liveried vehicles
- the relationship does not have an adverse impact on the workplace e.g, by creating division and/or friction between those in the relationship or amongst work colleagues
- there is no fear, fraud or workplace benefit driving the relationship
- the relationship has no influence on workplace decisions or activities and is not being used to gain or provide some workplace advantage
- lines of reporting are not abused or compromised
- personal or work friendship groups, which have influenced decisions in recruitment, development etc.

5. Relationships involving student supervisors, line managers, senior managers or directors

5.1 Where a relationship involves any power imbalance, such as with supervisors, trainers, line managers, senior managers and directors, then it will always have the potential for a conflict of interest or an abuse of that power. These relationships should be carefully considered by the individuals involved and, if appropriate, guidance sought in confidence from the Director of People Services.

5.2 It is not advisable for a trainer to have a relationship with a student or an apprentice. Likewise, it is not advisable that a line

manager (at all levels) would be seeking a relationship with new entrants to their team. It is accepted that close relationships do form, but consideration needs to be given to perception of cohesion, power and influence. This remains a matter of choice for those involved though as the employer EEAST has a duty of care to its staff, managers and stakeholders and therefore it is expected in circumstances where there is an imbalance of power and influence that these would be declared for transparency.

5.3 For clarity, at no stage should a member of the Trust who is responsible for recruitment, assessment, confirming completion of probation, promotion, development, or discretionary benefit (annual leave, overtime, TOIL etc) be the sole decision maker without declaring a conflict of interest as this is a clear conflict of interest. Failure to declare the relationship in this context could result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

5.4 Where a conflict of interest exists that would have an adverse impact on the service provided, the perception of the public, of the Trust, or any individual: necessary and proportionate steps should be taken to ensure that the conflict is mitigated or other appropriate action taken depending on the facts of the case (for example reallocation of a supervisor, trainer, mentor, or change in line manager).

6. Responsibilities

6.1 The expectation to manage a potential conflict of interest rests with the individuals concerned, or managers at a more senior level if a conflict is declared.

6.2 Line managers are expected to ensure this policy and the Standards of Business Conduct Policy is followed. However, if a colleague is involved in a relationship that has the potential to result in a conflict of interest then they are encouraged to speak up about this matter. Reporting can be to your line manager, HR, or via the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian.

7. Nepotism in the workplace

7.1 Favouritism or conflict of interest may occur when a manager is involved in a process with someone with whom they are in an intimate relationship with. .

Examples are when:

- Managers decide which team member to promote.
- Managers decide which contracts to renew.
- Managers complete performance reviews.
- Managers discipline the individual
- Managers are part of a recruitment team.

7.2 To avoid such incidents or suspicions of favouritism and conflict of interest, staff should adopt anti-nepotism guidelines:

- Employees who are related must not be involved in a supervisory/reporting relationship with one another.
- Employees cannot be transferred, promoted, or hired inside a reporting relationship with a relative.
- Employees cannot be part of a recruitment team, when a relative is being considered for the position.

7.3 Staff will be expected to report or declare any relationship with a relative to HR, if they find themselves in a reporting line relationship with that relative or in a recruitment team that considers that relative for employment. Failure to declare the relationship in this context, could also result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

7.4 When one person in the relationship reports to the other, the lines of accountability and responsibility becomes tricky. This includes relationships of an intimate sexual nature or relationships with staff related to each other. Consider an alternative line manager or transferring one of the employees to a suitable alternative role, following a discussion with both individuals. The two employees must take time to discuss between themselves and decide which one of them will be transferred. Any transfers would need to be practical, done sensitively and carefully, so not to discriminate on grounds of gender or any other protected characteristic.

8 Extra-marital relationships

Special consideration should be given to extra-marital relationship activities and the impact on colleagues and the workplace. Any workplace romance, extramarital or not, can damage workplace morale or productivity, if there are inappropriate displays of affection, favouritism from a supervisor dating a subordinate, a bad breakup that results in co-workers choosing “sides” or accusations of sexual harassment.

9 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed on a 3 yearly basis or amended in the light of new employment legislation and/or relevant case law.

Appendix A

Equality Impact Assessment

EIA Cover Sheet																	
Name of process/policy	Relationship Policy																
Is the process new or existing? If existing, state policy reference number	Existing V4.0																
Person responsible for process/policy	Human resources																
Directorate and department/section	People Services																
Name of assessment lead or EIA assessment team members	EQIA Panel members																
Has consultation taken place? Was consultation internal or external? (please state below):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR Policy Sub Group • Unison • Head of Ops 																
The assessment is being made on:	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Guidelines</td> <td style="text-align: center;">x</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Written policy involving staff and patients</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strategy</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Changes in practice</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Department changes</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Project plan</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Action plan</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other (please state) Training programme.</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Guidelines	x	Written policy involving staff and patients		Strategy		Changes in practice		Department changes		Project plan		Action plan		Other (please state) Training programme.	
Guidelines	x																
Written policy involving staff and patients																	
Strategy																	
Changes in practice																	
Department changes																	
Project plan																	
Action plan																	
Other (please state) Training programme.																	

Equality Analysis																							
<p>What is the aim of the policy/procedure/practice/event?</p> <p>This policy and guidance are intended to raise awareness of personal relationships across the workforce, how they can affect fairness and perceptions of fairness in the workplace, and what each individual's responsibilities are to declare any conflicts of interest resulting from being in a relationship.</p>																							
<p>Who does the policy/procedure/practice/event impact on?</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Race</td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">×</td> <td style="width: 25%;">Religion/belief</td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">×</td> <td style="width: 25%;">Marriage/Civil Partnership</td> <td style="width: 15%; text-align: center;">×</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sex</td> <td style="text-align: center;">×</td> <td>Disability</td> <td style="text-align: center;">×</td> <td>Sexual orientation</td> <td style="text-align: center;">×</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Age</td> <td style="text-align: center;">×</td> <td>Gender re-assignment</td> <td style="text-align: center;">×</td> <td>Pregnancy/maternity</td> <td style="text-align: center;">×</td> </tr> </table>						Race	×	Religion/belief	×	Marriage/Civil Partnership	×	Sex	×	Disability	×	Sexual orientation	×	Age	×	Gender re-assignment	×	Pregnancy/maternity	×
Race	×	Religion/belief	×	Marriage/Civil Partnership	×																		
Sex	×	Disability	×	Sexual orientation	×																		
Age	×	Gender re-assignment	×	Pregnancy/maternity	×																		
<p>Who is responsible for monitoring the policy/procedure/practice/event?</p> <p>People Services Directorate</p>																							
<p>What information is currently available on the impact of this policy/procedure/practice/event?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards of Business Conduct Policy 																							
<p>Do you need more guidance before you can make an assessment about this policy/procedure/ practice/event? Yes/No</p>																							
<p>Do you have any examples that show that this policy/procedure/practice/event is having a positive impact on any of the following protected characteristics? Yes/No, If yes please provide evidence/examples:</p>																							

POL135 – Relationship at Work Policy

Race	£	Religion/belief	£	Marriage/Civil Partnership	£
Sex	£	Disability	£	Sexual orientation	£
Age	£	Gender re-assignment	£	Pregnancy/maternity	£

Please provide evidence:

The policy is designed to have a positive impact on all the protected characteristics and has been produced in consultation with the Union and staff representative groups.

Are there any concerns that this policy/procedure/practice/event could have a negative impact on any of the following characteristics? Yes/No, if so please provide evidence/examples:

Race	£	Religion/belief	£	Marriage/Civil Partnership	£
Sex	£	Disability	£	Sexual orientation	£
Age	£	Gender re-assignment	£	Pregnancy/maternity	£

Please provide evidence:
At present no negative impact has been identified.

Action Plan/Plans - SMART

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Relevant

Time Limited

Evaluation Monitoring Plan/how will this be monitored?

Who

How

By

Reported to

*Once completed please keep a copy for your own records and send one to:
Equality Diversity and Inclusion team at EDI@eastamb.nhs.uk*