

## Personal Relationships at Work Policy

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<b>Owner:</b>	Walter Kane	<b>Job Title:</b>	Head of Organisational Development
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<b>To be issued to:</b>		Board of Management ARK Management All Staff Unite	
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### Version Control

Date	Owner	Version	Reason for Change
Nov 2020	As above	Insert No. 2	Updated to the new format

### Summary of Changes

Section	Change
Policy	The content throughout the policy is broadly similar but the wording has been condensed.

# Personal Relationships at Work Policy

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## 1.0 ARKs Values

Our organisational values are the basis for everything that we do, from providing housing, care and support to tenants and service users to ensuring that staff have clear standards of performance set. ARK believes that everyone should have the opportunity to lead a happy, healthy and safe life. We value:

- The worth of each person
- Trusting relationships
- Understanding difference
- Challenging oppression
- Personal and organisational accountability
- Caring for our physical environment
- Enjoyment

All ARK policies and procedures are underpinned by our values and we will ensure that our employees are treated fairly, consistently and in line with our values.

## 2.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure we are open and transparent in all our activities and to work in the best interests of all employees by outlining the position on personal relationships at work.

## 3.0 Policy Statement

This policy informs all Ark employees of their responsibilities regarding personal relationships that develop within Ark or relationships that become relevant to Ark when someone commences employment with Ark, starts using the services Ark provides or begins providing services to Ark.

## 4.0 Scope

This policy applies to all Ark employees and members of the Board of Management.

## 5.0 Legal/Regulatory Framework

The relevant legislation relating to personal relationships at work is:

Not Applicable

## 6.0 Responsibilities

### 6.1 Board of Management

Ark's Board of Management is responsible for consideration and approval of this policy.

### 6.2 Executive Team

ARK's Executive Team is responsible for ensuring that this policy is reviewed in accordance with ARK's schedule for review of policies, or sooner if required.

### 6.3 Senior Leadership Team

ARK's Senior Leadership Team is responsible for review of the policy and for ensuring that relevant measures are put in place in order to implement its requirements.

### 6.4 Managers

ARK Managers are responsible for the effective implementation of this policy and to adhere to this policy at all times during their employment with Ark.

### 6.5 All Staff

All staff are required to adhere to this policy at all times during their employment with Ark.

## 7.0 Personal Relationships at Work

A close personal relationship is defined as a regular & ongoing relationship that is romantic, familial (family) or financial.

The types of relationships that could be considered under this policy include:

- A romantic relationship between employees (under this policy this includes agency workers and relief workers)
- A financial relationship between an employee and a contractor who provides services to Ark such a cleaner or electrician
- A familial relationship where members of the same family work both work for Ark or where a one family member works for Ark and another uses Arks services or provides services to Ark

This list is not exhaustive.

We recognise that close personal relationships may develop over time or that existing relationships may impact on the work of Ark. Examples of this could include:

- Where one or more of the people in the close relationship works for Ark
- Where one or more of the people in the close relationship uses Ark's services
- Where one or more of the people in the close relationship provides services to Ark

Close personal relationships therefore may be considered as a conflict of interest. In order to ensure transparency and to avoid any actual or perceived unfairness, close relationships must be disclosed as soon as they commence so that steps can be put in place to mitigate any risks.

### 7.1 Applicants

Where an applicant applying for a post is connected to an existing employee or a person who uses Ark's service this must be disclosed by the applicant at recruitment stage using the procedure under G54 - Entitlements Payments and Benefits procedure section 3. A risk assessment will be carried out and in some circumstances this will be sufficient for the recruitment to continue. In other situations however, the recruitment may not be able to continue and reasonable alternatives will be sought such as recruitment to another service or location. If no reasonable alternatives can be agreed then the recruitment process will be unable to continue. All reasonable alternative options will be considered before bringing the recruitment process to an end.

Where an existing Ark employee is aware that someone with whom they have a close personal relationship has been offered a position with Ark they should also disclose this to their line manager at the recruitment stage.

Any failure to disclose personal relationships this may mean that action is taken under the disciplinary policy.

### 7.2 Service Users or Tenants

Where a person wishes to use Ark's services or commence a tenancy with Ark and they have a close personal relationship with an existing member of staff or Member of the Board this should be disclosed by the employee as soon as it is known and a risk assessment will then be undertaken to mitigate any risks.

### 7.3 Board of Management

Where a Board of Management Member has a close personal relationship with an employee or a person who uses Arks service they must disclose this as soon as this becomes a conflict of interest. They will be withdrawn from any decisions that may involve or impact their this person. This will be the case for up to 12 months after the relationship ceases.

## 7.4 Line Management

Anyone with management responsibility (either directly or indirectly) will not line manage or take part in any recruitment process with anyone with whom they have a close personal relationship. Any relationship that develops or already exists at recruitment stage (for example if someone has applied for a promoted post) must be disclosed as soon as it commences. In these circumstances Ark reserves the right to move one of the parties to another service or location. If no suitable alternative can be found or redeployment to another service or location is refused or not suitable there may then be no option to cease the recruitment or dismiss one or both of the parties. Every effort will be made to resolve this issue and manage the risk without ceasing recruitment or dismissal.

12 months after the end of any close personal relationship employees can request to be moved back to their original service or applicants re-apply for any vacancies where recruitment was ceased or there was a dismissal.

## 7.5 Between Employees

Where a relationship is between two employees in the same service both employees must disclose this to their line manager when this commences. Where the relationship involves their line manager they must report this to another suitable manager and this will be dealt with under the section "Line Manager" above.

Where a personal relationship exists or develops between employees who work in different services or locations this should be disclosed by both parties in the same way as if they both worked in the same service. On this occasion a risk assessment will be conducted by both parties and their line managers in conjunction with each other.

Failure to disclose a close personal relationship appropriately will be dealt with under the disciplinary policy.

## 7.6 Relationships with People who use Arks Services

Another type of relationship to consider is a close relationship between an employee and someone who uses Ark's services such as tenants or service users. We appreciate that through providing services relationships between employees and service users will develop, however when these relationships become too close or too personal both the service user and employee are put at risk. Therefore this type of relationship is unacceptable and if this relationship develops it may be treated under the disciplinary policy.

Where an employee has concerns a service user may be breaching the boundaries between them, including agency staff and relief workers, they must speak to their manager as a matter of urgency who will then take steps to re-establish boundaries.

If you have concerns about the relationship developing between a colleague and someone who uses our services you have a duty to raise this with your line manager or another appropriate manager.

It is also unacceptable for any employee to use their position as a support worker for financial gain for them or someone they are close to. An example of this would be an employee or their family member providing a cleaning service in return for money to someone who uses Ark's service. This may be treated under the disciplinary policy.

## 8.0 Related Policies & Procedures

- G 11 Entitlements, Payments and Benefits at Work Policy and Procedure
- G 54 Entitlements, Payments and Benefits at Work Policy and Procedure
- HR 01 Recruitment and Selection Policy
- HR 18 Disciplinary Policy

## 9.0 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

An EIA has not been completed.

## 10.0 Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)

This has been included in the OD DPIA.

## 11.0 Stakeholder Consultation

In developing this policy the following groups were consulted:

- ARK Board of Management;
- ARK Executive Team; and
- ARK Senior Leadership Team
- Unite the Union

## 12.0 Monitoring and Review

### 12.1 Monitoring

ARK's Executive and Senior Leadership Teams will monitor implementation of this policy on an ongoing basis.

## 12.2 Review

This policy will be reviewed within 3 years from the date of approval by our Board of Management, in accordance with ARK's policy review framework.