



Public – To be published on the Trust external website

Staff Relatives and Close Family Friends

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1 Introduction

- It is acknowledged that at times people working for the Trust will be related to other members of staff, have close friendships with other employees; or may be in or develop a close personal relationship with another employee. These relationships/friendships can cause embarrassment and awkwardness for fellow workers and can be a source of difficulty when a line management relationship also exists between the two employees.
- The 'During Employment Policy' contains a policy statement in relation to this issue and this procedure outlines the process to be followed when staff declare a family or close personal relationship.

2 Why we need this procedure

2.1 Purpose

- To avoid situations where staff feel unable to raise concerns due to family/close personal relationships within the department or team.
- To minimize the possibility of allegations of favouritism, unfair treatment etc, especially where a line management relationship also exists.

2.2 Objectives

- To avoid situations where close family members or staff in a close personal relationship work together in the same team or department
- To avoid situations where two people who have a close family/personal relationship are in a line management arrangement.
- To provide a range of options for managers to consider when staff declare a relationship.

To ensure that all staff are treated in a fair and equitable way in accordance with employment legislation and that all staff treat each other in accordance with the Trust's Values



Respect

- Listening
- Inclusive
- Working in partnership



Compassion

- Kind
- Supportive
- Recognising and Celebrating



Responsibility

- Honest
- Learning
- Ambitious

- To ensure that staff feel comfortable in challenging individuals who are not living the Trust values, and are aware of mechanisms in place to raise their concerns and receive appropriate support in doing so.

3 Scope

3.1 Who this procedure applies to

- To all employees of Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust)
- To prospective employees applying for posts within the Trust

3.2 Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To declare within the recruitment process and to their line manager any close personal relationship/friendship with another employee of the Trust. This is an ongoing requirement throughout an individual's employment should a relationship develop whilst at work • To acknowledge that being in a close personal relationship/friendship with another employee may be a cause for concern for colleagues.
Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To record any declaration and assess the potential impact within the team/department • To address any concerns caused by a close personal relationship/friendship in line with this procedure
Staff Side representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To advise employees in accordance with this procedure
Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To advise managers and employees in accordance with this procedure.

4 Procedure



If you are closely related to another employee or have a close personal relationship with another employee who you directly/regularly work with you must **make sure that your manager knows**. If the person you are related to or that you have a close personal relationship with is your manager then you need to approach their manager.

Your manager will assess the situation and consult with you about any arrangements which may need to be put in place



Friendships quite naturally are formed in the workplace. Employees are expected to exercise judgement in determining whether or not a friendship has developed to such an extent that it can be described as a close personal relationship. Staff should work with their managers to ensure personal relationships between staff do not compromise their work or lead others to believe that they might.

4.1 Working in the same team, location or department

Your manager will discuss with you the potential problems which may arise, e.g.

- arranging shifts/annual leave to accommodate both people;
- embarrassment or awkwardness for colleagues;
- Perceived loyalty to each other may compromise the reporting/investigating of incidents when both parties are involved;
- performance may be affected not only of yourselves but also other staff in the team.

If the situation becomes problematic, as a result of these discussions, one of you may be asked to move to another team or special arrangements may be put in place such as ensuring that you do not work on the same shift or in the same office; and/or having a means for other employees to raise concerns about the effect your relationship is having.

Where there are serious concerns raised about you working together and the effect this is having on your performance or on others in the team then managers will discuss this with you and one or both of you may be permanently redeployed.

4.2 Line Management Issues

The professional relationships between some staff are so important that they should not be compromised at all by the existence of a close personal relationship. As such, the Trust will take steps to ensure that staff in close personal relationships/friendships are not directly or indirectly line managed by the other person. When such a relationship is declared discussions will take place with both employees and one of you will be redeployed if satisfactory arrangements cannot be put in place. If redeployment is appropriate then until such time as a post becomes vacant another appropriate manager will undertake the authorization of travel claims, pay, timesheets, appraisals etc. Making a declaration will not put your employment at risk

4.3 Staff Concerns

Where an employee feels that a colleague’s family member or close personal relationship is adversely affecting their employment, the functioning of the team or the provision of services, they are encouraged to share their concerns at the earliest opportunity. This also applies to employees who have a family or close personal relationship who feel they are being disadvantaged because of the relationship.

Concerns should be raised with their line manager, or more senior manager if they prefer. Where an employee is not comfortable with either of these options, they may consider raising their concerns with a Dignity at Work Champion, HR representative, Employee Support Officer or Staff Side representative, or Freedom to Speak up Guardian (please refer to the Bullying and Harassment Reporting and Resolution Procedure)

4.4 Recruitment

If you are the recruiting manager or an interview panel member and a close relative or friend applies for the post then you must declare an interest and withdraw from the process. It is your responsibility to discuss with your friend or relative the implications of this procedure and you must make your manager aware of the application.

If you are an employee and you are aware that a close relative or friend may be applying for a post it is your responsibility to make them aware of this procedure. You must also make your manager aware of the application.

5 Definitions

Term	Definition
Close personal relationship	A close or familiar relationship (e.g. husband/wife/spouse, civil partnership, cohabitation)
Relatives	Family relationship/individuals who are related (children, siblings, parents, grandparents, aunts/uncles, cousins etc. including in-laws and step relatives)
Close personal friendship	Someone you know personally and meet and/or socialize with outside of work
Dignity at Work Champions	Dignity at Work Champions are employee volunteers who have been trained to support staff experiencing conflict at work which may be linked to bullying and/or harassment. Dignity at Work Champions are available to provide confidential advice or to help facilitate a resolution conversation. Note - Please email the HR Operations team, TEAWVNT.HROperations@nhs.net , for additional

6 Related documents

During Employment Policy
Recruitment and Selection Policy
Bullying and Harassment Reporting and Resolution Procedure
Disciplinary Procedure
Whistleblowing Policy
Trust Values

7 How this procedure will be implemented

- This procedure will be published on the Trust's intranet and external website.
- Line managers will disseminate this procedure to all Trust employees through a line management briefing.

8 How this procedure will be audited

- Managers are required to record the discussions held with employees on the individuals personal files and the record should show the measures which are to be put in place in accordance with the procedure.
- If any grievances or concerns are raised in respect of a relationship then the documents on the personal files will be examined as part of that process and the implementation of the actions will be assessed.

9 Document control

Date of approval:	13 th April 2021	
Next review date:	13 th April 2024	
This document replaces:	HR-0025-v2	
This document was approved by:	Name of committee/group	Date
	HR Policy Working Group	09 April 2021
	JCC	13 April 2021
This document was ratified by :	Name of committee/group	Date
	n/a	
An equality analysis was completed on this document on:	April 2021	
Document type	Public	
FOI Clause (Private documents only)	n/a	

Change record

Version	Date	Amendment details	Status
3	13 April 2021	<p>Page 4 – Role of Employee - added wording to include declaring within the Recruitment Process</p> <p>Page 6 – Added Whistleblowing Policy to related documents</p> <p>Page 5 – Added paragraph regarding friendships</p> <p>Page 6 – Further clarified definitions</p> <p>Page 1, Section 1 and Page 7, Section 9 – removed reference to the Francis Report</p> <p>Page 6 – Section added entitled Staff Concerns</p> <p>Page 6 – Added definition of Dignity at Work Champion</p> <p>Page 7 – Section 6 – added Bullying and Harassment Resolution Procedure</p> <p>Added reference to speaking up Guardian in Section 4.3</p> <p>Added Trust Values to Related Documents</p> <p>Added Trust Values in the Objectives section 2.2</p>	Published

10 Appendix 1 - Declaration Form

Name:.....

Job Title:.....

Ward/Team:.....

Base:.....

Directorate:.....

Line Manager:.....

Details

Please provide details including the individual's name, place of work and relationship/friendship they have directly with you

Please describe any actions implemented to mitigate risks.

Declaration

I declare that the information I have provided is accurate

Employee Signature:

Date:.....

11 Appendix 2 - Equality Analysis Screening Form

Name of Service area, Directorate/Department i.e. substance misuse, corporate, finance etc	Directorate of Human Resources and Organisational Development			
Name of working party, to include any other individuals, agencies or groups involved in this analysis	Policy Working Group			
Title	Staff Relatives and Close Friends Procedure			
Is the area being assessed a	Policy/Strategy		Service/Business plan	
	Procedure/Guidance		x	Code of practice
	Other – Please state			
Geographical area	Trust wide			
Aims and objectives	Provides guidance on the potential conflict of interest that may arise when involved in working alongside a relative or close friend.			
Start date of Equality Analysis Screening	6 th April 2021			
End date of Equality Analysis Screening	6 th April 2021			

1. Who does the Policy, Service, Function, Strategy, Code of practice, Guidance, Project or Business plan benefit?					
The procedure aims to provide guidance to all employees of the Trust in relation to working alongside or closely with a relative or close friend. The procedure also covers prospective employees.					
2. Will the Policy, Service, Function, Strategy, Code of practice, Guidance, Project or Business plan impact negatively on any of the protected characteristic groups below?					
Race (including Gypsy and Traveller)	No	Disability (includes physical and mental impairment)	No	Sex (Men, women and gender neutral)	No
Gender reassignment (Transgender and gender identity)	No	Sexual Orientation (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Heterosexual)	No	Age (includes, young people, older people – people of all ages)	No
Religion or Belief (includes faith groups, atheism and some other non religious beliefs)	No	Pregnancy and Maternity (includes pregnancy, women who are breastfeeding and women on maternity leave)	No	Marriage and Civil Partnership (includes opposite sex and same sex couples who are either married or civil partners)	No
<p>Yes – Please describe the anticipated negative impact</p> <p>No – Please describe any positive outcomes-</p> <p>The aim of the procedure is to avoid situations where staff feel unable to raise concerns due to family/close relationships/close friendships within the department or team. Along with minimizing the possibility of allegations of favouritism, unfair treatment etc, especially where a line management relationship also exists.</p>					

3. Have you considered any codes of practice, guidance, project or business plan benefit? If 'No', why not?	Yes x		No	
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Sources of Information may include:

- Feedback from equality bodies, e.g. Care Quality Commission, Disability Rights Commission, etc
- Investigation findings
- Trust Strategic Direction
- Data collection/Analysis
- Staff grievances
- Media
- Community Consultation/Consultation Groups
- Internal Consultation
- Other (Please state below)

4. Have you engaged or consulted with service users, carers, staff and other stakeholders including people from the following protected groups?: Race, Disability, Gender, Gender reassignment (Trans), Sexual Orientation (LGB), Religion or Belief, Age, Pregnancy and Maternity or Marriage and Civil Partnership

Yes – Please describe the engagement and involvement that has taken place

The policy working group includes a select group of staff who are drawn from management and staff side representatives. The Joint Staff Consultative Committee is a formal committee who are responsible for signing off the agreement.

No – Please describe future plans that you may have to engage and involve people from different groups

5. As part of this equality analysis have any training needs/service needs been identified?

Yes	Please describe the identified training needs/service needs below – training would be through general ongoing awareness raising within operational services.
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A training need has been identified for

Trust staff	Yes	Service users	Yes/No	Contractors or other outside agencies	Yes/No
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Make sure that you have checked the information and that you are comfortable that additional evidence can provided if you are required to do so

Please contact E & D team for further advice and information on equality analysis

Appendix 2 – Approval checklist

To be completed by lead and attached to any document which guides practice when submitted to the appropriate committee/group for consideration and approval.

	Title of document being reviewed:	Yes/No/ Not applicable	Comments
1.	Title		
	Is the title clear and unambiguous?	Y	
	Is it clear whether the document is a guideline, policy, protocol or standard?	Y	
2.	Rationale		
	Are reasons for development of the document stated?	Y	
3.	Development Process		
	Are people involved in the development identified?	Y	
	Has relevant expertise has been sought/used?	Y	
	Is there evidence of consultation with stakeholders and users?	Y	
	Have any related documents or documents that are impacted by this change been identified and updated?	Y	
4.	Content		
	Is the objective of the document clear?	Y	
	Is the target population clear and unambiguous?	Y	
	Are the intended outcomes described?	Y	
	Are the statements clear and unambiguous?	Y	
5.	Evidence Base		
	Is the type of evidence to support the document identified explicitly?	Y	
	Are key references cited?	Y	
	Are supporting documents referenced?	Y	
6.	Training		
	Have training needs been considered?	Y	
	Are training needs included in the document?	Y	

	Title of document being reviewed:	Yes/No/ Not applicable	Comments
7.	Implementation and monitoring		
	Does the document identify how it will be implemented and monitored?	Y	
8.	Equality analysis		
	Has an equality analysis been completed for the document?	Y	
	Have Equality and Diversity reviewed and approved the equality analysis?	Y	
9.	Approval		
	Does the document identify which committee/group will approve it?	Y	
10.	Publication		
	Has the document been reviewed for harm?	Y	
	Does the document identify whether it is private or public?	y	Public
	If private, does the document identify which clause of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 applies?	n/a	