

Housing Finance Agency plc Personnel Code of Conduct

The code is designed to be an essential reference for each staff member, dealing with matters such as office security arrangements, leave, Data Protection and to provide guidance on personnel matters and office administration generally.

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INTRODUCTION

The Minister for the Environment in his letter of 31 March 1992 requested that all state sponsored bodies under his aegis should ensure that a code of conduct covering integrity and political behaviour by staff should be drawn up and implemented in accordance with guidelines set down by the Department of Finance. He requested that the code should cover such matters as duty to the enterprise, avoidance of conflict of interest, limits on outside activities, acceptance of gifts, honesty in dealings etc.

Subsequently, the *Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies*, requires all State Bodies to have written Codes of Business Conduct for Directors and employees. This Code is available on the HFA's website at www.hfa.ie as required under the Code of Practice.

The following is the code to which all members of the Board and the HFA's staff should adhere. Where there is doubt concerning any ethical matter which might arise in the course of staff members duties, the matter should be brought to the immediate attention of the Company Secretary in the case of a Director, or the staff member's superior.

This code also sets out personnel regulations operated by the HFA.

FIRE EMERGENCY EXIT ARRANGEMENTS

A1. In the event of Fire: **THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES ARE TO BE APPLIED:**

- 1. Activate Fire Alarm Button at entrance to office** (Map attached)
- 2. Advise Fire Officers** (Financial Accountant or Company Secretary) who will alert all staff
- 3. Chief Fire Officer, Head of Treasury, to phone Fire Brigade (999)**
- 4. If practical, use the appropriate Fire Extinguisher** (see Map attached)
- 5. If practical, close doors** (last person vacating an area should close doors when leaving).
- 6. Leave quietly, by the nearest EXIT (N.B. DO NOT USE LIFT)**
- 7. Assemble outside Old Hume Street Hospital, Hume Street**

TEAM 1: ALL STAFF IN GENERAL OFFICE - FIRE OFFICER IN CHARGE

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTANT

TEAM 2: ALL OTHER STAFF- FIRE OFFICER IN CHARGE

COMPANY SECRETARY

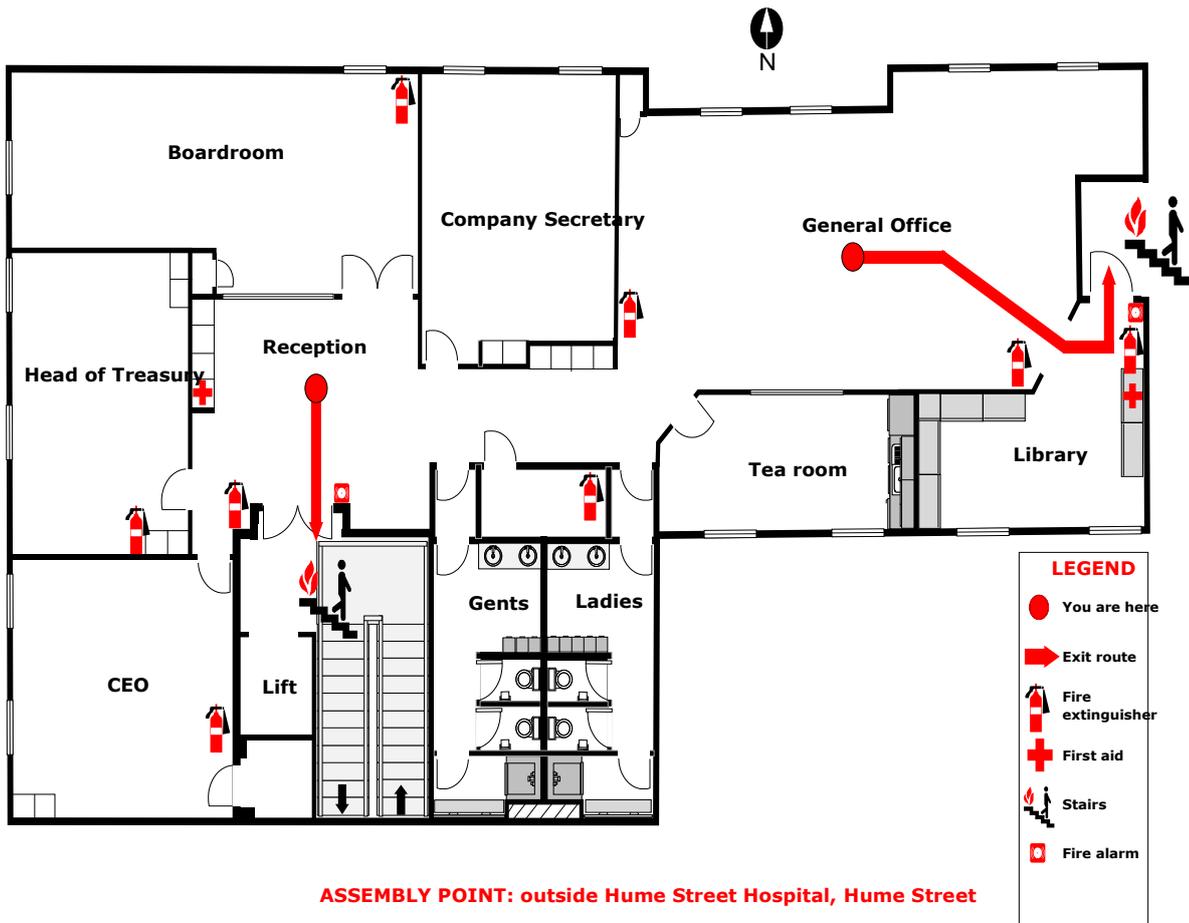
- The Team Fire Officers should retain a current list of staff on their respective teams, which in the event of fire should be taken to the assembly point in order to account for staff.
- The Chief Fire Officer should ensure that all staff and visitors have vacated the floor.
- Any staff members leaving the building during working hours should always inform their superior officer, or if he/she is unavailable another member of staff to enable the Fire Officers to check their staff off the staff list.
- It will be the responsibility of the person opening the offices in the morning to ensure that the office door is unlocked and the alarm turned off.

PLEASE NOTE LOCATION OF FIRE EXTINGUISHERS, EMERGENCY EXITS AND FIRE BELLS ON ATTACHED MAP

A2. FIRE DRILL: It will be the responsibility of the Chief Fire Officer to ensure that at least 3 fire drills are held in each 12 month period.

A3 REGISTER: The Chief Fire Officer will keep a register of the date and time of all fire drills held.

FIRE ARRANGEMENTS



PETTY CASH

1. General

Petty cash is used to pay expenses which, by virtue of their nature and small value are not appropriate for processing through the normal creditors system. It is designed to be a facility to allow staff discharge small out-of-pocket expenses.

2. Limits

The petty cash box is operated on an imprest system with a limit of €650 on the "float". Individual claims are limited to €130 except in exceptional circumstances such as Board meetings outside Dublin when special arrangements are agreed with the Chief Executive Officer.

3. Procedures

All claims for money must be supported by a receipt and a Petty Cash Voucher signed by the claimant and an approving officer. Claims may be approved by the Head of Finance, Financial Accountant or Head of Treasury. All claims should be reviewed by the Head of Finance except those relating to the Head of Treasury and Head of Finance which should be reviewed by the Chief Executive Officer. These reviews should be carried out monthly. Money may be drawn in advance of incurring an expense, provided it is supported by an 'IOU docket' and is repaid within one week. Alternatively outstanding IOUs may be deducted from the appropriate expenses claim which should be submitted within one week of incurring the expense to which the IOU relates.

4. Administration

Responsibility for administering the petty cash book rests with a designated Loans Officer. The file must be kept up to date and reconciled monthly with a reconciliation report to the Head of Finance. Claims for fresh funding to top up the float to the €650 limit must be supported by expense dockets equal to the amount of the claim.

The fire-resistant box in which the petty cash box is held should be closed and locked away when not in use. Claims should insofar as is possible be made either at 10.30 a.m. or 2.30 p.m. in the interest of security. Staff will be facilitated in exceptional circumstances.

DUTY TO THE HFA

All members of the HFA should be aware that they have a responsibility to be loyal to the HFA and be fully committed in all the HFA's business activities. All dealings carried out on behalf of the HFA should be done with absolute integrity, transparency and honesty, and conform to the highest standard of business ethics.

It should be remembered that members of the Board and staff represent the HFA, and should thus present the HFA in an open and honest way to other parties. Members of staff should not, without first seeking approval from the Chief Executive Officer, participate in, by discussion or otherwise, meetings organised by outside bodies at which issues affecting the HFA or the Ministers for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Public Expenditure and Reform and Finance are likely to be discussed in a controversial or critical way.

Obligations

Members of the HFA's Board and staff are required to fulfil all regulatory and statutory obligations imposed on the HFA. Board members are asked to see Section 2 of the HFA's Policies and Procedures manual, which gives details of the Board's procedures, remit and reporting requirements.

Under the *Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies*, the HFA is required to comply with detailed tendering procedures, have prescribed levels of authority for sanctioning any relevant expenditure, and have controls in place to prevent fraud and ensure compliance with prescribed procedures in relation to claiming of expenses for business travel. Procedures for these are detailed in the HFA's Policies and Procedures manual in Sections 2, 4, 7 AND 8.

INTEGRITY

The HFA's staff are expected to conform to the standards of integrity which apply to civil servants in the course of their duties.

No member of staff should -

- ◆ corruptly accept or obtain, or agree to accept or attempt to obtain, from any person, any gift or consideration as an inducement or reward for doing or forbearing to do, or for having done or forborne to do, any act in relation to the affairs or business of the HFA, or for showing or forbearing to show favour or disfavour in relation to such affairs or business; or

- ◆ corruptly give or agree to give or offer any gift or consideration as an inducement reward for doing or forbearing to do, or for having done or forborne to do, any act in relation to the affairs or business of the HFA, or for showing or forbearing to show favour or disfavour to any person in relation to the affairs or business of the HFA;
- ◆ knowingly use with intent to deceive the HFA any receipt, account or other document in respect of which the HFA is interested, and which contains any statement which is false or erroneous or defective in any material particular, and which to his/her knowledge is intended to mislead.

Where any member of staff suspects that illegal or dishonest activities are being carried on in relation to the HFA's business, it is the duty of the member of the staff to bring any such matter to the immediate attention of the Chief Executive Officer.

FAIRNESS & WORK/EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

The HFA is an Equal Opportunities Employer and requires members of its Board and staff to:

- ◆ comply with employment equality and equal status legislation;
- ◆ have a commitment to fairness in all of the HFA's business dealings; and
- ◆ value the HFA's customers and treat all customers equally.

The HFA places the highest priority on promoting and preserving the health and safety of employees. For further information on this matter, see the HFA's latest Safety Statement.

The HFA also aims to ensure that community concerns are fully considered in its business decisions, and that any detrimental impact on the environment by the HFA's operations is minimised (see 'Good Environmental Practice' on page 12).

The CEO and employees are subject to this Personnel Code of Conduct and comply with all statutory requirements of the Equal Status Act (2000), Equality Act (2004), Disability Act (2005) Part 5 and Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (2008) to ensure that the work environment is free of discrimination as mentioned within these Acts.

AVOIDANCE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No member of staff may at any time engage in or be connected with any outside business or activity which would in any way conflict with the interests of the HFA, or be inconsistent with his/her position, or tend to impair his/her usefulness as a member of the HFA's staff. In particular, whole-time members of staff whose duties may be of a professional nature (e.g. Accountants) must not engage in private practice in their respective professions.

Any member of staff who doubts the propriety of undertaking a particular outside business or occupation should consult the Chief Executive Officer.

If it appears at any time that there are grounds on which a relaxation of the rules would be desirable or advantageous in the HFA's interest, the prior approval of the Chief Executive Officer should be obtained for its adoption.

POLITICAL ACTIVITY

Staff members are permitted to engage in political activity. However, information relating to the HFA's business must not be used for political purpose.

Members of staff who are on secondment must conform to the rules on political activity as laid down by their respective parent organisations.

OUTSIDE OCCUPATIONS

Members of staff are prohibited from engaging in any outside occupation during their normal hours of work.

PREPARATION OF BOOKS, LECTURES, ETC BY STAFF MEMBERS

No member of staff is permitted, without the prior sanction of the Chief Executive Officer, to prepare for publication or publish any book, address, article or paragraph touching on the business of the HFA. Any member of staff, before preparing for publication any such work, containing information drawn from sources to which he/she has had access in his/her official capacity, or which he/she has acquired personal knowledge in the course of his/her official duties, must apply for permission to, and abide by the decision of the Chief Executive Officer. These provisions apply to both oral and written communications and, as well as lectures, papers, talks, etc., apply to replies to or comments on papers, lectures, and so on.

DEALING WITH THE PUBLIC

1. General

It is important that members of the public should at all times and in all places be treated by staff with the utmost consideration. Staff should remember that procedures and practices which to them as trained and experienced public officials seem obvious, may be found irksome and complicated to the person affected unless care is taken to explain, with tact and courtesy, why they are necessary.

2. Letters and written correspondence

Letters from the public, whether they are enquiries, complaints or applications should always be acknowledged unless a reply, (if called for,) can be sent within a week. Where delay is unavoidable the desirability of sending an interim reply or replies should be borne in mind. Where appropriate, replies to letters should be capable of being easily understood by any layman. Each letter should have the name and title of the person signing it typed clearly on it.

3. Callers to the HFA's offices

Persons who visit the HFA's offices for information should be seen with a minimum of delay. Where for good and sufficient reason an interview cannot be arranged, the circumstances should be explained and, if possible, a definite appointment made for an interview later.

4. Telephone calls

It must be remembered that the HFA is providing a service to the public. It is important therefore to be polite and helpful to all telephone callers, and to ensure that they make speedy contact with the person best in a position to deal with their enquiries. If receiving a call which proves to be for another member of staff, please ensure that the caller's name and purpose of the call is established before passing on the call. In the event of a call coming for a staff member who is not in the office or is engaged in some other business, please ensure full details of the call are recorded and an e-mail is sent or a message placed on the desk of the absent staff member.

INFORMATION

Directors, Management and Employees of the HFA should provide access to general information relating to the HFA's activities in a way that is open and that enhances its accountability to the general public. However, when doing this, members of the HFA must respect the confidentiality of sensitive information held by the HFA.

Data Protection Act, 1988, as amended; General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679, EU Data Protection and Privacy Regulations.

All staff must be aware of the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1988 as amended and the General **Data Protection Regulation ((EU) 2016/679)**, which came into law in 2018. The Act imposes obligations to process personal data fairly and to safeguard it against unauthorised access, alteration or disclosure.

The main implications of the Act for the HFA are as follows:

- ◆ It entitles individuals to establish the general existence of the computerised personal data in the HFA (such requests to be answered within 21 days from receipt).
- ◆ To establish the existence of personal data relating to the individual concerned and to obtain access to all of that data.
(Such requests to be answered within 40 days of receipt).
- ◆ Where appropriate to have inaccurate or irrelevant personal data corrected or erased.

The important point to note is that all telephone and letter queries be answered as normal with due care that personal data is only disclosed to the individual to which it relates. **N.B. If there is any doubt an individual should be asked to provide proof of identity, make request in writing or be phoned back after checking details in the phone book.**

It is essential that all other requests which quote the Data Protection Act be referred to the Data Protection Officer, i.e., in the case of the HFA, the Company Secretary.

The Company Secretary shall ensure that all confidential documents are kept securely. Records relating to individuals should be carefully checked for accuracy. In particular, such documents should be shredded if disposal is necessary.

Freedom of Information Acts, as amended

The Freedom of information (FOI) Act establishes a number of important new legal rights for those seeking access to official information. Everyone has the right:

- ◆ to access official records created after 21 April 1998 which are held by the HFA;
- ◆ to have personal details on official records corrected or updated where such information is incomplete, incorrect or misleading; and
- ◆ to be given reasons for decisions taken by the HFA that affects them.

Details of the HFA's obligations in respect of FOI are set out in the "Freedom of Information" return on the HFA's website.

PLEASE NOTE that all requests made under the FOI Act should be channelled through the HFA's FOI officer, Seán Cremen.

GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICE

In order to implement Government policy relating to good environmental practice, the staff of the HFA are requested to take the following steps to make our office more environmentally friendly:-

- ◆ Use recycled paper where available and satisfactory for the purpose, use discontinued paper stock and waste paper in draft documents, internal memos etc. and reuse envelopes where possible;
- ◆ Recycle electronic equipment and printer toners etc.;
- ◆ Use E-mail on network internally;
- ◆ Use pump action sprays and ozone friendly aerosols only (e.g. computer cleaning sprays).
- ◆ Use recycling bin (for cans, bottles etc.);
- ◆ Conserve energy where possible by switching off lights, computers, calculators etc., when leaving the office in the evening.

COMPUTER SECURITY

Current IT Environment

The HFA has two local area networks operating on Microsoft Windows Server Edition. There are four separate servers on these networks, these being:

- The main network server supporting the HFA's e-mail and network 'file and print' applications
- a dedicated Sonicwall firewall server
- a terminal server supporting tele-working services
- a separate network containing 1 server housing the HFA's Loan Application & Billing System (LTMS) database and web application. This server is file-protected from the main network, for security.

All of the above servers are kept in a secure, air-conditioned environment with strictly limited access. A number of tablet computers and laptops for remote working are also available to staff and Board members. All portable computer equipment such as laptops have security software installed.

All HFA equipment should be handled with care, and only used for HFA work at all times.

Under the Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000-Software Use and Management Policy in the Civil Service, from 1/1/2001, it is an offence to copy or use software without possessing an authorised licence. Infringement of this Act can result in a conviction, a fine not exceeding €1,905 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months, or both.

It is HFA policy that the acquisition of software must be authorised either by the Financial Accountant, being the Network Administrator, or the Head of Finance, being the IT Security Officer. This policy applies especially to downloading information from the Internet, where software licensing is harder to monitor and control.

All work files should be saved and maintained on the network (F :) rather than on disks or hard drives. This ensures that all authorised staff have access to them and that they are backed up to a tape on a daily basis.

1. Naming of Files on the Network

Files should be saved in the category to which they refer i.e. Arrears or MPI etc. Each subject directory is divided into years e.g. 2020, 2021 and each year is usually further subdivided into months e.g. January, February etc. All files saved on the network should be given meaningful titles.

2. Internet/Email Usage Policy

See Appendix 5 for details of the HFA's Internet/Email Usage Policy.

COMPUTERS, PHOTOCOPIER. AUDIO VISUAL EQUIPMENT ETC.

All HFA equipment should be handled with care, and only used for HFA work at all times.

TEA BREAKS

Tea breaks in the morning and afternoon should be restricted to no more than 20 minutes. Tea breaks should be staggered so that there are staff available to deal with telephone queries.

SMOKING IN THE HFA

The HFA operates a no smoking policy within the office environment.

Staff are asked to observe this policy and respect the wishes of those who do not want to work in such an environment.

All forms of smoking, cigarette, cigar or pipes etc. are covered by the policy.

ATYPICAL WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

The Housing Finance HFA operates the Shorter Working Year Scheme, worksharing and e-working schemes.

The closing date for applications under any of these schemes is normally 31 October each year. Management's decision normally will be conveyed to applicants by the end of November.

Shorter Working Year Scheme, [Circular 14/2009](#)

Details pertaining to the scheme are as follows;

Shorter Working Year Scheme is available to all members of staff.

The Shorter Working Year Scheme may be taken as one continuous period, or as a maximum of 3 separate periods each consisting of not less than 2 weeks and not exceeding 13 weeks in total. The period of leave shall be unpaid special leave. Officers on probation are not entitled to participate in this scheme.

Staff availing of Shorter Working Year Scheme will, in the absence of any other unpaid leave, be entitled to a minimum of 20 days annual leave. Extra days leave above the minimum will be reduced on a pro-rata basis.

The period of Shorter Working Year will not reckon for pension purposes.

Vacancies arising from participation in the scheme will be filled by granting of higher duty allowances or the use of temporary replacement staff (full time or part time). Recruitment under the above arrangements must be on the basis that the Housing Finance Agency remains within its agreed whole time equivalent staff complement. The approval of any application is determined by the ability of the HFA to obtain a suitable replacement within 8 weeks of the Shorter Working Year Scheme commencing.

The annual cycle for the Shorter Working Year Scheme is as follows.

- Applications must be submitted to Management by 31 October using the application form at **Appendix 6**
- Decision conveyed to applicants by the end of November
- Recruitment needs identified January/February
- Recruitment of replacement staff organised February to April
- Shorter Working Year Scheme commences in June

The period of Shorter Working Year Scheme leave is **unpaid special leave**. However, those participating in the scheme may apply for special administrative arrangements for the payment of part of basic salary during the period of Shorter Working Year Scheme.

Personnel considering applying should refer to Department of Finance Circular 14/2009 for a more detailed description.

Work-share

Work-sharing refers to a working week that is shorter in duration than 5 days; two employees are allowed to partake of this scheme, provided they are:

- (a) From a similar grade
- (b) Select different days

These two work sharing arrangements will be allotted on a first come- first served basis. Flexibility is needed between Management & Employees for cover during the HFA's busy periods.

Details pertaining to the scheme are;

Salary payments to staff on this scheme will be reduced on a pro-rata basis.
Annual leave entitlements will be reduced on a pro-rata basis.

Patterns of work-sharing are;

- Mornings only
- Afternoons only
- Split week
- A 9.00a.m. to 3.00p.m. working day
- Three day week
3 day week followed by 2 day week the following week
- Four day week

Where a person attends for at least 3 days each week and it has been agreed with local management that they need not attend on the same days each week, the same pattern must be repeated in each four week cycle. These days must be fixed in this way to facilitate compliance with the rules on PRSI contributions.

A person participating in the Work-sharing scheme may choose only one attendance option in a 12-month period. A minimum period for which a person may opt to Work-share is twelve months.

Where the Work sharing arrangement is considered by Management to be unsatisfactory, whether in the light of the operating needs of the department or otherwise, the Work-sharer(s) may be required, by direction by the Management, to alter his or her attendance pattern or to resume full-time duties. Where feasible, Management should give 6 weeks' notice that this right is being exercised.

Officers who have worked a particular pattern for at least twelve months may apply to return to full time duties, subject to the availability of a suitable fillable vacancy in their parent department.

Personnel considering applying should refer to Department of Finance [Circular 31/2001](#) for a more detailed description.

E-working

Teleworking or e-working uses information and communication technology to allow work to be carried out independently of location. Teleworking arrangements can include working;

- from home or a remote office, either full-time or part-time
- part-time at home and part-time in the office, or
- outside the home or office and communicating with the office
by means of computer or telephone technology

All posts within the HFA are eligible to apply for this scheme and applications will be assessed on an individual basis.

Management agree appropriate periods of attendance in the head office for e-working staff.

It may be necessary to carry out a health & safety assessment on the premises that will be used for e-working, as the HFA retains a certain duty of care for e-working staff.

Personnel considering applying should refer to Department of Finance [Circular 4/2003](#) for a more detailed description.

INTERNAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The following is the agreed structure for dealing with staff grievances and disciplinary matters between the HFA and staff.

1. Grievance Procedure:

The HFA and employees agree that all staff have a right to seek redress for grievance relating to their employment. The purpose of this agreement is to establish procedures for discussion, processing and settlement of grievances of individual employees or groups of employees.

Step one:

The grievance should first be raised with the employee's manager.

If for any reason the employee feels that it is neither possible nor desirable to raise the matter directly with his/her manager or if, having done so the employee is not satisfied with the manager's decision or considers that there is an unreasonable delay in dealing with the matter raised, they may raise the matter with the next level of line management or directly with the HFA's Personnel Officer if he/she is not directly involved, within ten working days after receipt of notice of said decision.

Additionally, they may request a union representative to raise the matter directly with the HFA's Personnel Officer on his/her behalf.

Step two:

If having raised the matter at this level, the employee is still dissatisfied and wishes to pursue the matter further, they shall be entitled to present his/her case orally or in writing to the Chief Executive Officer. The decision on the appeal shall where possible be given ten working days from the hearing.

It is agreed that every effort will be made by both parties to resolve the matter at this stage.

Step three:

If any employee is still unhappy with the outcome they should present their case in writing to the Chairperson of the HFA.

Step four:

If having availed themselves of the above procedures and the employee involved is still dissatisfied, they may request a union representative, or another designated person, to take the matter up formally on his/her behalf and the union involved, if they consider the circumstances warrant it, may request an independent person, agreed between the HFA and the union, to consider the matter.

The independent person selected shall be furnished with such evidence and receive such representation as they may require and may make such recommendations as they shall see fit to resolve the matter.

Representation:

At all stages of the grievance process, the employee is entitled to be advised, accompanied and represented by their trade union, or, if not a member of a union, by a person of their choice.

2. Disciplinary Procedure:

The objective of the disciplinary procedures is to ensure that fair, effective and speedy arrangements exist for dealing with disciplinary matters in the interest of improved staff relations. Disciplinary action will be taken only after thorough investigation and the employee will be given every opportunity to present his/her case beforehand.

Disciplinary action may be taken only by the Chief Executive Officer.

For the purpose of this document "Disciplinary Action" shall include:

Dismissal:

- Where it has been decided to terminate an employees' employment for serious misconduct prejudicial to the interests of the HFA.

Action, short of dismissal, including the following:

- Freezing of or reduction in salary or deferment of increment
- Suspension with or without pay
- Placement on special probationary period

Conduct meriting other disciplinary measures:

- Endangering another employees health and safety
- Unauthorised absence
- Continuous unsatisfactory performance
- Unsatisfactory timekeeping
- Disobedience of lawful reasonable orders
- Threatening or intimidating behaviour
- Violation of Criminal Law

These listings are intended as a guideline as to the act or omissions which lead to disciplinary action.

The following procedures shall be followed where disciplinary action is taken against an employee:

All of the steps, timeframes and representations listed above in the grievance procedure will be similarly followed in cases where disciplinary action has been taken against an employee.

APPENDIX 1-ANNUAL LEAVE AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

1. **Notification of leave:**

It should be remembered that while, in practice, staff members may be allowed some choice of the period to be taken as leave, they have no entitlement to take leave whenever they wish. Given the small number of staff in the HFA it is important that adequate notice of leave requirements is given, and staff should try to avoid overlapping when taking leave if possible. Staff members should inform the Company Secretary before 31 May each year when they intend taking their main portion of leave. In the case of short periods of leave, staff members should give at least 3 working days' notice to the Company Secretary of their intentions. All staff should take at least 10 consecutive days per annum.

2. **Taking of annual leave and carry-over**

Where possible, staff should take their full allowance of annual leave in the year in which it arises. Carrying over of leave may be allowed on the basis of a three year cycle as follows:

- ◆ At the end of the first year of the cycle, or of any year in which a staff member's leave allowance is the standard allowance, any untaken leave may be carried forward to the next year.
- ◆ At the end of the third year of the cycle, carry-over will be limited to the amount, if any, by which the leave actually taken during that year falls below the standard leave allowance for the grade. The cycle would then begin again i.e. the following year would then be the first year of the new cycle.
- ◆ Where any leave is carried forward, the staff member's leave allowance in the year to which the carry-forward is made would be the total of the standard allowance and the days carried forward.

3. **The public holidays to be granted are as follows:**

- a. **St Patrick's Day**
- b. **Good Friday**
- c. **Easter Monday**
- d. **May Bank Holiday**
- e. **Whit Monday**
- f. **August Bank Holiday**
- g. **October Bank Holiday**
- h. **Christmas Day**
- i. **St Stephen's Day**
- j. **New Year's Day**

4. When a public holiday falls on a Sunday the following arrangements will apply:

When a public holiday falls on a Sunday, the HFA's offices will be closed on the following day and when the public holiday in question falls on a Sunday is Christmas Day the offices will be closed on the following Monday (St Stephen's Day) and Tuesday (in lieu of Christmas Day).

5. When a public holiday falls on a Saturday the following arrangements will apply:

- ◆ **St Patrick's Day** a day off on the following Monday
19 March may be granted
- ◆ **Christmas Day** a day off on Tuesday 28 December may be granted
- ◆ **St Stephen's Day** a day off on the following Monday 27 December may be granted
- ◆ **New Year's Day** a day off may be granted on whichever of the following two days is designated by the HFA for its staff generally; Friday 31 December or Monday 3 January. Individual officers are not free to select a day not designated for the staff of the HFA generally.

6. General

Public holidays are granted in addition to the normal annual leave allowance. Accordingly, absence from duty on such days in a period of annual leave is reckonable as a public holiday, as the case may be, and does not count against annual leave.

FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS - (F.W.H.)

1. Description of System:

- ◆ The system permits staff to be able to vary their arrival and departure times within certain fixed limits which are referred to as 'FLEXIBLE HOURS'.

The main part of the day, during which all staff should be at their jobs (with the exception of lunch breaks) is known as '**CORE TIME**'.

- ◆ The operation of the system will always have to be subject to the work requirements and therefore it may not always be possible to allow the maximum flexibility.
- ◆ It is essential that staffing of the HFA must be arranged so that there is adequate cover during normal working hours, 9.00-17.00 Monday to Friday.
- ◆ Calculations of hours attended will be made over a four week period for which the required working hours are 148 hours (i.e. "Required Hours").
- ◆ An automated time-recording system is installed on each PC. Staff participating in the scheme must use the system to 'clock' in and out accordingly. Staff should not clock in until they are ready to start work. If a member of staff forgets to clock in or out, then the appropriate times should be notified to the supervisor for certification and input to the system.
- ◆ The automated time-recording system should also be used to apply for Annual and Flexi leave.
- ◆ The introduction of FWH must not adversely affect work output in any way and staff must realise that if any urgent business arises, the FWH system may have to be suspended (obviously it is hoped that this will not arise too often).
- ◆ The FWH system will be implemented on the basis that Management reserves the right to alter or suspend the scheme at any time, at one months' notice.
- ◆

2. Guidelines to the System

(a) The F.W.H. day

The working day will be as follows:

- 08.00* - 10.00** Flexible Morning Bank - staff may start work anytime during this span.
- 10.00 - 12.30** Morning Core Time - all staff must be present during this period unless on authorised absence.
- 12.30 - 14.30** Flexible Lunch Bank - staff must take a minimum lunch break of 30 minutes but the break could extend up to 2 hours.
- 14.30 - 16.00** Afternoon Core Time - same ruling as for morning core time.
- 16.00 - 18.30*** Flexible Evening Bank - staff may finish work anytime during this period.

*Staff will not get credit for time worked before 08.00 or after 18.30.

(b) Absences

Authorised absence in core time may arise as a result of annual leave, flexi-leave, sick leave or duty outside the office.

Absences during core-time will have to be notified in advance. The present procedure for annual and sick leave will continue, while absence due to flexi-leave will operate as follows:

- ◆ a half day's absence will have to be notified, at minimum, the day prior to taking such absence.
- ◆ a full days absence will have to be notified at least 3 days prior to absence.

These are minimum notification periods and if possible more advance notification should be given.

Appropriate allowance will be made for any absence from the office due to official duty.

(c) Allowances for Absences

- ◆ A full day's authorised absence from the office will be calculated as 7 hours 24minutes.
- ◆ A half day's absence will be calculated as 3 hours 42 minutes for the morning and 3 hours 42 minutes for the afternoon.

(d) Carry Forward Hours

At the end of each appropriate flexi period the accumulated attendance in excess of normal hours will be reduced to an amount within limits (- 8 to + 11 ½ hours). (i.e. under FWH, Credit/Debit hours up to a maximum 11 ½ hours above or 8 hrs. below the 148 required hours may be carried forward to the next accounting period at the end of any period).

Note: 1. Any credit hours in excess of 11½ hours at the end of an accounting period will be forfeited.

Note: 2. Any debit in excess of 8 hours at the end of an accounting period will not be permitted. (There will be a reduction in pay if this occurs).

(e) Flexi-Leave

Each staff member may only obtain a maximum of 1 ½ days per appropriate flexi period. (**Note: from 1 July 2014 the maximum amount of flexi leave allowed in any flexi period is one day, per [Circular 11/2013](#). The circular states that there is no change to the existing number of hours that can be carried over**).

APPENDIX 2-SICK LEAVE

1. General

The granting of sick leave is at the discretion of the Board and is subject to the following conditions:

Sick leave may be allowed at full-pay less Social Welfare benefits, if any, for up to six months in any period of twelve months and at half-pay less Social Welfare benefits, if any, thereafter subject to an overriding limit of twelve months' paid sick leave in any period of four years or less. In the event of an employee being unable to perform his/her duties because of sickness, accident or for any other reason, he/she shall so inform the Company Secretary as soon as possible and submit a medical certificate when such absence exceeds two consecutive days.

Where an employee is absent due to illness, but does not attend a doctor, such an absence will be classified as self-certified sick leave, as per the Department of Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Circular 05/2018 (effective from 31 March 2018).

2. Notification of sick absences

When a staff member is compelled to absent himself/herself from duty because of sickness he/she must get word to the Company Secretary as early as possible on the first day of absence. If possible, some indication of the likely duration of illness should be given.

Medical certificates must in all cases of continuous absence be furnished on the third day at the latest. As a general rule, sick leave will not be allowed for a longer period than one week on any one certificate. Each medical certificate submitted in support of an application for sick leave must be given by a qualified and registered medical practitioner and must state, in addition to the nature of the absentee's illness, the probable date of resumption of duty. For uncertified leave of one or two days duration, a sick note must be tendered to the Company Secretary on return to work.

3. Self-certified sick leave

Self-certified sick leave may not exceed two consecutive days on any one occasion. On return to work an employee must then self-certify that they were unfit to attend work due to illness. A certificate from a medical practitioner is required where the absence due to illness is longer than two consecutive working days, or where it includes both Friday and Monday spanning a weekend.

Sick leave for single or two day absences may be granted where an employee self-certifies that they were unfit for work due to illness. Such absences will not exceed 7 days in a rolling 24 month period.

Access to paid self-certified sick leave is a privilege which may be withdrawn in certain circumstances. (Examples of where access may be withdrawn include frequent absences, or where the maximum of 7 days is regularly approached or taken during any 24 month rolling period.) The 24-month rolling period is calculated by working backwards from the latest date of absence .

Where an employee exceeds 7 days' self-certified sick leave in a rolling 24 month period, the employee will be notified that his/her pay will be reduced accordingly and the appropriate sum recouped. Unpaid absences are not pensionable service.

4. Sick leave with pay at pension rate

Where the sick leave with pay allowable has been exhausted a staff member whose service would render him/her eligible for pension if he/she were retired on grounds of ill-health at the end of the period of paid sick leave may, subject to certain conditions, be granted further leave with pay at pension rate.

5. Sick leave without pay

Subject to certain conditions, sick leave without pay may be granted to established members of staff who have exhausted the maximum period of sick leave with pay allowable to them and whose service does not qualify them for sick pay at pension rate.

6. German Measles

It is important that medical certificates submitted by officers on sick leave due to Rubella (German measles) should be precise on this point. Also, officers who have been in close contact with a case of German measles (e.g. in the family) should notify the Company Secretary and Safety Officer immediately.

It is important for staff to note that the production of a medical certificate does not in itself entitle a staff member to sick leave, the grant of which is a matter for the Management. Further, no staff member has any claim whatever to be allowed the full periods of sick leave set out in this notice.

7. General

Staff members are reminded that when they are being considered for confirmation of appointment (if they are on probation), or for promotion, full account is taken of their health and of the extent and pattern of their sick absence. If any of these aspects is unsatisfactory the staff member concerned cannot be accepted as suitable.

APPENDIX 3-INTERNET/E-MAIL USAGE POLICY

The operation of the HFA's computer network relies upon the proper conduct of those who use it.

The billing system which makes use of Internet/E-mail Technology makes it all the more important that we operate to the highest standards.

Access to and use of the internet/email is a privilege, not a right. Incorrect use of /abuse of the privilege will result in the withdrawal of access.

Guidelines for internet/email usage are set out below.

Employees should not engage in any of the following:

- Violating copyright laws
- Forwarding personal communications without the author's prior consent
- Using threatening or obscene material
- Distributing material for commercial purposes
- Providing political or campaign information

Users must abide by rules to include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Be polite
- Use appropriate language – swearing, using vulgarities, or any other abusive language is inappropriate
- Never reveal your personal address or telephone number or those of anyone else
- Never reveal credit or checking account information or social security number across the internet
- Do not disrupt the use of the network
- Do not attempt to gain unauthorised access to system programs or computer equipment.

The HFA wishes to operate the same policy in this area as it does in areas such as use of phones etc. where staff are trusted to behave responsibly and with the feelings of other staff to be borne in mind. Use of the internet/email for non-business purposes should be kept to the minimum possible and must not interfere with normal HFA business. The social uses of the internet/email are very good but must not be abused. If any evidence of this emerges then privileges may be curtailed/withdrawn.

No internet/email use should result in the HFA's good name brought into disrepute or any staff member hurt, embarrassed. Any staff member who becomes aware of problems in this area should consult with the Company Secretary on a confidential basis.

Each staff member might be asked to sign the attached declaration.

DECLARATION

User's Full Name (please print):

I understand and will abide by the HFA's "Acceptable Internet/E-mail Use Policy" and understand that breach may result in withdrawal of access privileges.

User signature _____ **Date:** _____

APPENDIX 4-APPLICATION FOR ATYPICAL WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Section 1

Applicant's name: _____

Working arrangement being applied for (please tick):

- * *Shorter Working Year Scheme*
- Work-share*
- E-working*

* Shorter Working Year Scheme (Circular 14/2009), this circular supersedes the revised Term Time Scheme Circular 32/2006

Section 2 (if applying for Shorter Working Year Scheme, please complete this section)

** Shorter Working Year Scheme if applied for (please tick):

- 2 week period**
- 4 week period**
- 6 week period**
- 8 week period**
- 10 week period**
- 13 weeks period**

** The leave may be taken as one continuous period, or as a maximum of 3 separate periods each consisting of not less than 2 weeks and not exceeding 13 weeks in total. The period of leave shall be unpaid special leave. Officers on probation are not entitled to participate in this scheme.

Section 3 (if applying for work-share/e-working, please complete this section)

Work-share/ e-working proposed start date: _____ 201__

If applying for Work-share, briefly state your proposal (giving details of the number of days and the days of the week you propose to work):

If applying for e-working, please attach a separate outline of your proposal detailing the following:

- Address at which e-working will mostly be performed.
- Proposed hours of work. This should specify office-based time & home-based time.
- Work you plan to complete away from the office.
- Other items of note such as technical requirements/ health & safety or insurance issues.

Section 4

I have read, understood and agree to abide by all Departmental Circulars, HFA rules and any other decisions made by Management regarding the governing of atypical working arrangements. I also understand that if this application is approved, it may be suspended or rescinded by Management at any time.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 5-CAR PARK SPACE USAGE DECLARATION

User's Full Name (please print):

I understand that the Housing Finance HFA accepts no responsibility for any loss or damage to any vehicle that has been driven by any member of staff (or their guests) into the basement car park of 46 St. Stephens Green. Staff members of the HFA by signing this document acknowledge that they are choosing to park their vehicles in the aforementioned car park entirely at their own risk.

User Signature _____ **Date:** _____