

# Voluntary Action-Leeds Being a Good Employer

Stringer House, 34 Lupton Street, Hunslet, Leeds LS10 2QW

## **BEING A GOOD EMPLOYER**

There are many things to consider in making your organisation an effective, flexible and efficient employer. These range from legal compliances (many of which come under contracts, and terms and conditions) to effective management practices. This factsheet looks at a range of issues, from legal paperwork to effective supervision, in order to give you a guide to understanding good practice in employment and to help balance that with the needs of the organisation. This Factsheet covers a number of specific areas that you might want to think about but it is not an exhaustive list of best practice or legal necessities and should be used only as a guide. You should also be aware that employment law changes rapidly and policies need to be reviewed on a regular basis – ideally at least once a year.

### **1: Insurance**

It is vital for you as an employer to make sure that you have employers liability insurance. This is a legal requirement if you employ staff. You should also have other kinds of insurance, for example to protect the organisation against employee claims, employment tribunals, etc. Professional Liability Insurance is also essential if your staff are involved in activities such as advice giving or advocacy. This would protect them and the organisation in the event of a loss or problem due to incorrect information or advice being given out. For more information on types of insurance and where to get further information please refer to the factsheets on *Insurance* and *Insurance Providers*.

### **2: Paperwork**

As a legal employer you are required to keep payroll and National Insurance contributions records. It is also good practice to keep records of time off due to employee sickness and holiday leave. You should also keep records of employees hours, particularly if you operate a Time Off in Lieu (TOIL) or other flexible working scheme. You should set up a confidential file for each employee, containing a copy of their contract and terms and conditions, correspondence, supervision records and other relevant documents.

### **3: Supervision**

Employees need to be effectively supervised in order to ensure that their work is properly planned, carried out and monitored. Supervision is also a mechanism for making sure that staff are supported in their work and for highlighting any issues and working out any problems. You should make it clear who is

supervising each position, and how and when it will take place. It is also useful for both the employer and the employee to keep records of supervision sessions. A sample supervision policy is available on the VA-L website.

#### **4: Organisational Policies & Procedures**

These are the formal written documents that outline the processes by which the organisation is run and they will impact on staff, their working conditions and the boundaries within which they work. These are outlines of the main policies you should consider having in your organisation.

- **Statement of Written Employment Particulars**

This is the terms and conditions under which staff are employed. It has to cover certain legal minimum requirements, but may include other arrangements as well. The Statement/Contract must be provided within two months of the employee's start date (but ideally at the beginning of their employment). The Statement/Contract must also contain the following:

- The names of the employer and the employee
- The date on which employment began and when continuous employment began
- The rate of pay, intervals of payment and any other benefits
- The hours of work
- The holiday entitlement
- The place of work and the address of the employer
- The job title and a brief description of the role

There are other details that should be provided to the employee, either in the Statement/Contract or in other documents. Contact the Pay and Employment Rights Service (PERS) or another support agency for more advice. A sample Statement is available on the VA-L website.

#### **Health and safety**

This policy will give details of working conditions, safety requirements and procedures, and whether the building is non smoking, etc. You should also consider personal safety issues for staff and volunteers.

#### **Equal Opportunities**

Your staff will require a good understanding of equal opportunities and how it might affect their work.

#### **Grievance and Disciplinary**

These are the procedures by which an organisation deals with problems between employees and the organisation. The disciplinary

procedure outlines the steps that the organisation would take in the event of a complaint against an employee or in the case of poor performance by an employee. The grievance procedure covers the process that would be initiated should an employee have a problem with their employment.

### **Redundancy**

Here you should cover what systems the organisations will implement in the event of the need for redundancies among the staff. Should the organisation need to make staff redundant then there may be measures, over and above the basic legal requirements, that the organisation might want to take. For more information about redundancy seek advice from the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) whose contact details are below in the further help section.

### **Training & Staff Development**

This area might include information on how staff go about requesting funds for training courses, procedures for promotions, mentoring support, etc. You might want to set up specific systems for ensuring that staff training is prioritised in the organisation and that all staff get information about appropriate training and know about budgets for such things.

### **Maternity/Parental Leave/Adoption**

There are certain legal entitlements for employees. Contact Pay and Employment Rights Service (PERS) or another support agency for more advice.

### **Sickness & Absence Management**

Terms relating to sickness, notification of sickness, pay relating to this period and rules relating to deduction of statutory sick pay.




### **Expenses and allowances**

This policy would explain what expenses, built up in the line of their regular employment, that an employee could claim from the organisation. It should outline what amounts they can claim and what they can claim for (e.g. meals, transport, etc). This may form part of another policy or the terms & conditions, rather than being a stand-alone document.

## 5. Other issues

You may also want to consider policies/procedures relating to: Confidentiality, Data Protection, Whistleblowing, Working from Home, IT, and Recruitment & Selection.

## 6: Further Reading

-  The Good Employment Guide for the Voluntary Sector. NCVO Publications 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition 2002 ISBN 0-7199-1601-1
-  Sandy Adirondack and James Sinclair Taylor. The Voluntary Sector Legal Handbook. Directory of Social Change 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 2001 ISBN 1-900360-72-1 (Updates are available at: <http://www.sandy-a.dircon.co.uk/legal.htm>)
-  Emma Burrows (ed.). Employment Law for Charities. Jordans 2003 ISBN 0-85308-858-6

## 7: Further Help

### Voluntary Action-Leeds

T: 0113 297 7920

F: 0113 297 7921

E: [info@val.org.uk](mailto:info@val.org.uk)

Sample policies can be downloaded from our website [www.val.org.uk](http://www.val.org.uk)

### PAY AND EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS SERVICE (YORKSHIRE) LTD (PERS)

T: 01924 439381

[www.pers.org.uk](http://www.pers.org.uk)

### ADVISORY, CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION SERVICE (ACAS)

T: 08457 47 47 47

[www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

### Inland Revenue Employers Helpline

T: 08457 143 143

NACVS also has a list of model policies available

<http://www.nacvs.org.uk/resources/policies/>

### Voluntary Action-Leeds

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