

VOLUNTARY ACTION-LEEDS

REDUNDANCY POLICY

Overall Policy Statement

It is the policy of Voluntary Action – Leeds by careful forward planning to ensure as far as possible security of employment for its staff, and to seek to avoid redundancies wherever possible. However, changes in the demand for services, the level of funding available, and/or the need for change because of technological or organisational development may affect jobs. Prior to reaching a decision on the need to consider any potential redundancies, the Trustee Board will undertake to satisfy itself that all other avenues have been pursued thoroughly, and that such a decision is the only reasonable next step. This Policy will apply to all employees of Voluntary Action – Leeds, and will be applied fairly, objectively, and consistently.

Steps to be taken before deciding that a redundancy is necessary

The following steps will be considered in detail in whatever order may be appropriate prior to any decision on the need for redundancies:

- Virement from other budget headings
- Utilising under spend from previous budgets to meet a temporary shortfall
- Long-term financial and service expectations, work trends and demands
- Generation of funding from other sources
- Forward planning in respect of resignations, retirements, temporary contracts, retraining, etc
- Job-share or part-time or similar working arrangements
- Use of voluntary early retirement or voluntary redundancy
- Consideration of any other measures which may avoid redundancy and which can be agreed with staff and their representatives.

Redundancy Committee

When redundancies unfortunately appear inevitable, the Trustee Board will form a sub-committee to oversee the redundancy process (hereafter called the “Redundancy Committee”)

Communication

The Redundancy Committee will communicate with staff and their appropriate representatives whenever it seems that redundancy may arise; this will include explaining why redundancy may become possible, what alternatives have been considered, how the need will be determined, and an estimate of the potential number of posts which may be affected. It is intended whenever possible that this communication will precede the start of consultation.

Consultation

Consultation will begin as soon as the probable need for redundancy has been identified. The Redundancy Committee or its chosen nominees will formally consult with staff and their appropriate representatives, providing the following information:

- The reason(s) for the proposed redundancy
- The number and job titles of staff who it proposes to dismiss as redundant
- The total number of staff employed and the staffing structure
- Confirmation of the selection criteria and procedure it proposes to use, including the proposed timeframe and any proposals with regard to redundancy payments.

The purpose of this consultation is as far as possible to avoid redundancy, to reduce the numbers involved, and to determine ways of cushioning the impact on both those affected and those left. All consultation meetings will be recorded fully, and minutes will be made available to those involved.

Compulsory Redundancy

Selection Criteria

Where formal selection is an issue in any redundancy situation, selection criteria will be applied fairly and consistently. No staff member will be selected for redundancy on discriminatory grounds (i.e. because of their gender, race, age, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic covered by VA-L's Equal Opportunities Policy) or because of their trades union activity, or in breach of the procedure outlined in this Policy, unless departure from this can be justified.

When all possible alternatives to compulsory redundancy have been exhausted, the Redundancy Committee will, in consultation with staff

representatives, seek to agree selection criteria to be used. The following are examples of the selection criteria which may be used:

- (a) length of service
- (b) skills/experience
- (c) qualifications
- (d) disciplinary record
- (e) attendance
- (f) punctuality
- (g) personal effectiveness (with regard to the latter, supervision records and capability procedure records may be considered)

In any of these cases, the relevant details on all staff will be considered.

Redundancy Process

The Redundancy Committee will be responsible for taking forward the redundancy process. The Redundancy Committee will be made up of at least four trustees, one of whom must be a member of the Personnel Committee (the four should not include VA-L's Chair). The Redundancy Committee will, where selection is an issue, make initial selection(s) based on the fair and objective application of the selection criteria, and will record the deliberations.

Where formal selection is not an issue (e.g. where the post is free-standing), the person to be made redundant will normally be the holder of the post to be deleted.

Those provisionally selected will be informed individually by their line manager(s) that they have been selected and why.

They will be advised of the next steps in the process, and will be invited to a formal meeting at which dismissal on the grounds of redundancy will be considered. They will be entitled to be formally represented at any such meeting. Any suggestions made will be given full consideration by the Redundancy Committee.

If the Redundancy Committee decides not to pursue any individual's selection, the employee will be formally notified in writing within three working days. If any individual's selection is confirmed, the employee will be notified in writing within three working days, and they will receive details of the proposed timescale and any redundancy payment, information about advice and support, and details of their right of appeal.

Any employee dismissed by reason of redundancy will have a right of appeal to a Redundancy Appeal Committee, a further sub-committee of the Trustee Board. None of the members of the Redundancy Appeal Committee should have served as a member of the Redundancy Committee during the same redundancy exercise. The Redundancy Appeal Committee will have three members. The employee has five working days to lodge a written appeal. This should be addressed to the Chair of Trustees, and should state fully the grounds for the appeal. The employee and their appropriate representative will be invited to attend the appeal meeting. If the dismissal is upheld, there will be no further right of appeal. Again, the decision will be conveyed in writing within three working days of the meeting.

The following table summarises the steps and timescales involved when the Redundancy Committee has formally identified a need for redundancies:-

Stage	Ideal Timescale (VA-L will endeavour to apply the following timescale, but some flexibility may be required)
SELECTION FOR COMPULSORY REDUNDANCY	
Trustee Board identifies the need for redundancies and delegates power to a Redundancy Committee to oversee the process	
Redundancy Committee meets to consider the proposals and to agree the process to be followed	
General announcement to staff of possible redundancies and request for alternative suggestions	Normally within 5 working days of RC meeting
Where formal selection is an issue, Redundancy Committee meets to propose selection criteria to be used. Criteria should be agreed if possible with staff and representatives	Normally within 10 working days of Redundancy Committee being instructed by Trustee Board to oversee redundancy process
Where formal selection is an issue, Redundancy Committee meets to carry out selection process	Normally within 5 working days of Redundancy Committee finalising selection criteria

Line managers informed of posts selected	Normally within 3 working days of identification of redundant staff by Redundancy Committee
Line managers inform employees of redundancy selection giving reasons why and advising them of the formal consultation process	Normally within 2 working days of when line managers informed
Deselected employee[s] invited to formal meeting with Redundancy Committee (step 1 process) at which their redundancy will be considered. Employee allowed right to representation.	Normally within 10 working days
Redundancy Committee (step 2 meeting) meets to consider redundancy and to make decision on whether to uphold redundancy	Normally within 10 working days
Decision of Redundancy Committee to be conveyed to employee	Normally within 3 working days of step 2 meeting
Employee to receive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - official notice - details of timescale - details of any redundancy payment - details of right of appeal - information on further advice & support 	Normally within 3 working days of step 2 meeting
RIGHT OF APPEAL	
Employees submit their appeal, which must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - be in writing - be addressed to the Chair of Trustee Board - state fully the grounds for appeal 	Normally within 5 working days of receiving notice
Redundancy Appeal Committee meets (step 3 meeting) to consider appeal and make final decision. Employee to attend and be given right to representation	Normally within 10 working days of receipt of appeal
Decision of appeal panel conveyed to employee	Normally within 3 working days of Redundancy Appeal Committee

Notice periods

The notice periods stated in the employee's Terms & Conditions of Employment will apply, but sympathetic consideration may be given to requests from staff for pay in lieu of notice, and VA-L reserves the right (as stated in these Terms & Conditions) to enforce this should it so wish.

Redundancy Payments

Statutory redundancy payments will be calculated where these apply (i.e. for employees with over two years' service).

Advice & Support

Staff who are to be made redundant will be given help and advice in looking for alternative employment and/or arranging training, and they will be entitled to paid time off to look for work; the amount of paid time off given will be based upon two days per week for a full-time worker (pro rata for part-time), but the decision to increase or decrease this is at the discretion of the line manager, taking into account the needs both of VA-L and of the employee.

VA-L recognises that the redundancy process is stressful for all staff, even if they are not directly involved (for example, staff may be concerned for their own future security, they may have worries about additional work pressure if colleagues are made redundant, or they may be distressed at losing colleagues/friends) and trustees and managers will endeavour to offer support to anyone who needs it.

Alternatives to Redundancy

Where a decision is made to adopt an alternative to compulsory redundancy, such as part-time hours, job-sharing, term-time working, early retirement, voluntary redundancy, redeployment, etc, the Redundancy Committee or the Redundancy Appeal Committee will base their decision on the overall needs of the organisation and those of the affected employee(s) as far as possible; the aim of this will be to avoid damaging VA-L's services and reputation, or risk to its funding. This policy was formally adopted by the Trustee Board of Voluntary Action-Leeds on 24 November 2004.