

Company Logo

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# Inside Connections Solutions CIC



## HR Policy Manual

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## Introduction

### Inside Connections Solutions CIC HR Policy Manual

This Human Resources Policy Manual is provided as a central reference for all managers, supervisors and employees and applies to staff across all locations where the Company carries out its work.

The specific policies that follow promote the philosophy of Inside Connections Solutions CIC with regard to standards of excellence; terms of employment; employee development; and employee services.

It may be necessary to change these policies from time to time to reflect changes in the workforce, employment trends, economic conditions and UK and European legislation. However, any changes in policy will be consistent with the Company's approach to:

- Employing talented individuals whose creativity and imagination will support and contribute to achieving the Company's business objectives;
- Communicating Company standards and expectations in all aspects of employment including performance;
- Valuing diversity, and assure equal employment opportunity and a workplace where relationships are based on mutual respect;
- Treating all staff, workers, contractors and customers in a professional, non-discriminatory manner;
- providing safe, effective working conditions, and;
- providing competitive terms and conditions in our workplace market

Any Policy changes will be fully consulted on and communicated to all staff through normal communication channels. This Policy Manual will also be updated as necessary.

This Policy Manual should be read in conjunction with the Company Staff Handbook.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\* Managing Director

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**SECTION 1 – EMPLOYING STAFF:** *Employing staff fairly and expertly, ensuring they are properly inducted, and ensuring they are aware of the required standards of business conduct including use of email and the internet.*

## 1. Recruitment and Selection

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Effective recruitment and selection is central and crucial to the successful functioning of Inside Connections Solutions CIC. It depends on finding people with the necessary skills, expertise and qualifications to deliver the Company's strategic objectives and the ability to make a positive contribution to the values and aims of the organisation.

### 2. Advertisements

- 2.1 Vacancies will generally be advertised on an appropriate online Job Board and occasionally in the press or technical journal if required. Advertising will not be confined to those media which, because of their particular source of applicants, provide only or mainly applicants of a particular group.
- 2.2 Vacancies may also be posted to the .Gov Universal Jobmatch service.
- 2.3 All vacancies will also be posted on internal notice boards. Inside Connections Solutions CIC is keen to facilitate internal promotions wherever possible as development opportunities for its staff.
- 2.4 Inside Connections Solutions CIC may, on occasions, decide to restrict advertisement to internal candidates only. Furthermore, **junior** posts will always be advertised internally in the first instance, to provide continuous development of existing members of staff unless the Management team agrees that this is not appropriate due to the specialist skills required for the post involved.
- 2.5 Vacancies, which are restricted to internal candidates only will be clearly indicated on the advertisement. All internal candidates will be selected for interview on the same criteria as external candidates.
- 2.6 Employees on maternity leave will receive all advertisements for posts advertised in the Company during their period of maternity leave.

### 3. Application Form

- 3.1 Candidates for all posts will, except on some occasions when a vacancy is restricted to internal recruitment, be asked to complete a standard application form, in order that they can be judged on the basis

“Effective recruitment and selection is central and crucial to the successful functioning of Inside Connections Solutions CIC. It depends on finding people with the necessary skills, expertise and qualifications to deliver the Company's strategic objectives and the ability to make a positive contribution to the values and aims of the organization”

- of comparable information. However, CVs may be requested in certain circumstances.
- 3.2 In applying for posts, all candidates will be provided with a job description, details of the appropriate conditions of service and details about the Company. A brief statement about the appointment procedure will also be provided and, if possible, an indication of the date (or week) when interviews will be held. The job description will include a list of the main duties and responsibilities of the post, together with an outline of the qualifications and experience which candidates are expected to possess.
  - 3.3 In drawing up the job description and conditions of service the Company will ensure that no job applicant receives less favourable treatment than another on the grounds of disability, gender, race, religion or belief, age, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, caring responsibilities or hours of work, and that no applicant is placed at a disadvantage unjustifiably by requirements or conditions which have a disproportionately adverse effect on a particular group.
  - 3.4 Applicants will be asked to specify whether they have any disabilities, and whether there are any reasonable adjustments needed for them to attend an interview. All applicants with a disability who meet the essential criteria for a job will be interviewed, and considered on their merits
  - 3.5 Applicants will be required to supply the names and addresses of two people from whom references can be obtained, one of which should normally be the applicant's current or most recent employer.
  - 3.6 Only references for candidates short listed for interview will be obtained. References will normally be sought prior to interview, unless the candidate indicates otherwise.
  - 3.7 References should normally be made in writing or email, but those received by telephone will be accepted, provided that a note of the conversation is recorded and placed on file.
  - 3.8 Inside Connections Solutions CIC will not discriminate on the grounds of criminal conviction. If integral to the role, candidates may be asked if they have an unspent conviction however, unless the role falls outside of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, this will not have a determination on the success or otherwise of the applicant.
  - 3.9 For posts that involve working with children and vulnerable adults / law enforcement / legal profession / finance work / licensing work (e.g. security), applicants will be asked to reveal details of 'spent' and 'unspent' convictions. Successful candidates for such posts will be required to provide the necessary documentation in order to complete a standard criminal records disclosure. Posts, which require such a

disclosure, will be clearly indicated on the conditions of service and appointment procedure.

- 3.10 Applicants will also be required to declare if they are related to any member of staff within the Company. Canvassing of members of the Company is not permitted. No manager should be put into a position where he or she is asked to interview a person to whom they are related.
- 3.11 It is the Company's policy to communicate further with applicants who have not been shortlisted by ensuring they receive an email stating they have been unsuccessful and, if requested by the candidate, offering feedback as to the reasons they have not been shortlisted.
- 3.12 Applicants details will be recorded at the point of receipt. All information relating to the data collected in the equality and diversity recruitment monitoring form will be hidden from all those involved in the recruitment and selection process. The information collected will be solely used for the purposes of equality monitoring.
- 3.13 All completed applications forms are private and confidential and should only be made available to those directly involved in the recruitment and selection process.
- 3.14 All application forms will be collated by the Operations Manager and supplied to the appointing manager and interview panel for shortlisting purposes.
- 3.15 A shortlist of candidates will be drawn up for interview, based entirely on merit and suitability for the post but taking account of the Company's responsibilities in relation to the Equality legislation. Other than in exceptional circumstances, reasonable notice will be given to ensure that candidates have sufficient time in order to prepare for and make the necessary arrangements to attend the interview.

#### **4. Selection Methods**

- 4.1 Interviews will be held by a panel comprising of ideally three persons, but a minimum of two persons, gender balanced wherever possible. The interviewers will encourage candidates to be at ease during the interview, in order that they can give a fair and accurate impression of themselves.
- 4.2 The selection and appointment of the Chief Executive will be made by members of the Board and the panel will be chaired by the Board Chairman.
- 4.3 A set of questions will be agreed by the interview panel in advance and will be developed from the current job description for the post. The

panel will seek to develop questions which ask the candidates to give examples of their previous relevant experience

- 4.4 All candidates will be asked the same questions in the same order, and their responses rated between 1-10. The panel will each have a copy of the questions and will score independently of each other during the interview. Time is allocated between interviews for the panel to discuss each candidate and to award a total points score. Additional notes may be made by the panel during the interview, however it should be noted that candidates will have access to all information should they request it.
- 4.5 It should be remembered that an interview is a two-way process, and candidates will be given every opportunity to view the premises where they will work and ask questions about the Company, to ensure that they have a full understanding of the post for which they are applying and the way the Company operates.
- 4.6 In addition to interviews, a range of other selection techniques may be used. In such circumstances reasonable notice and relevant information will be given to ensure that candidates have sufficient time and information to prepare.
- 4.7 Candidates attending an interview will be reimbursed any reasonable expenses incurred. For travelling expenses this would normally be at the appropriate second-class rail fare. A candidate who withdraws or refuses an offer of appointment for reasons considered by the Company to be inadequate will not be reimbursed his/her expenses.
- 4.8 All appointments will be made strictly on merit and related to the requirements of the job.
- 4.9 The Chief Executive has delegated powers to make appointments to posts below Director level or equivalent. For Director level posts the Chief Executive will consult with the Chairman to determine Board Members' level of involvement.
- 4.10 All interviewed candidates will be notified of the outcome of the selection process as soon as possible, either by telephone or email.
- 4.11 All unsuccessful candidates' application forms and interview notes will be retained for one year from the date of interviews taking place. After this date they will be destroyed.

## **5. *Relevant Checks***

- 5.1 All offers of employment will be made conditional upon satisfactory results from the following:
  - two satisfactory references;

- confirmation of the right to work in this country
- Disclosure and Barring Service check (or the country equivalent) if appropriate.

## **6. Probationary Period**

- 6.1 All appointments into the Company will be made subject to a probationary period of six calendar months. After three months a review meeting will take place between the post holder and their line manager to discuss progress. At the end of the probationary period, and subject to a satisfactory report by the appropriate head of section or line manager, employees will be notified in writing that they have successfully completed their probationary period. The probationary period can be extended by a further 3 months should the individual's line manager consider this appropriate.

## **7. Recruitment Monitoring**

- 7.1 The Company seeks to recruit employees on the basis of their ability and the requirements of the post.
- 7.2 The Company wants to ensure that no applicant receives less favourable treatment than another on the grounds of disability, gender, race, religion or belief, age, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, caring responsibilities or hours of work.
- 7.3 In order to meet this commitment, all candidates are asked to complete a recruitment monitoring form enclosed with the application form. All completed monitoring forms will be treated as confidential. The form will be separated from the application form on receipt and those involved in the selection process will not have access to it. The information given by candidates will be solely used for the purpose of monitoring the recruitment process.

## **8. Exit Interviews**

- 8.1 All employees who leave the employment of the Company voluntarily will have an exit interview with their manager before their last day of employment.
- 8.2 Exit interviews provide the opportunity for departing employees to discuss their reasons for leaving. The information provided is useful in identifying trends, learning and development and evaluating the effectiveness of Company policies and practices.
- 8.3 The appropriate line manager should record all appropriate information, such as recommendations made for change, or significant issues raised in the interview, whilst bearing in mind confidentiality issues.

## 2. Induction Policy and Checklist

### 1. General Policy Statement

Inside Connections Solutions CIC believes that all new employees MUST be given timely induction training. This training is regarded as a vital part of staff recruitment and integration into the working environment. This policy, associated procedures and guidelines define the Company's commitment to ensure that all staff are supported during the period of induction, to the benefit of the employee and Company alike.

### 2. Aim

It is the aim of the Company to ensure that staff induction is dealt with in an organised and consistent manner, to enable staff to be introduced into a new post and working environment quickly, so that they can contribute effectively as soon as possible. This induction policy, associated procedures and guidelines aim to set out general steps for managers and staff to follow during the induction process. It is expected that all managers and staff will adhere to this policy.

The Company expects that the implementation of good induction practice by managers/supervisors will:

- Enable new employees to settle into the Company quickly and become productive and efficient members of staff within a short period of time.
- Ensure that new entrants are highly motivated and that this motivation is reinforced.
- Assist in reducing staff turnover, lateness, absenteeism and poor performance generally.
- Assist in developing a management style where the emphasis is on leadership.
- Ensure that employees operate in a safe working environment.
- Will reduce costs associated with repeated recruitment, training and lost production.

**“Inside Connections Solutions CIC believes its employees are its greatest asset and recognises its responsibility to ensure they are afforded appropriate development throughout their employment. This development begins at the Induction stage when a new employee joins.”**

### 3. The Company's Commitment

The Company Human Resources Department / Head Office will:

- Issue guidelines to familiarise managers and staff with the induction process.
- Maintain and update the Induction Policy.
- Provide a checklist for managers and staff to follow during the induction period.
- Ensure there is effective monitoring of the induction process particularly in the first three months.
- Deal with any problems promptly providing an efficient service for both managers and staff.
- Review all policy, procedure and guideline documents on a regular basis.
- Provide relevant formal training courses necessary to assist the induction process.

## **GUIDELINES FOR MANAGERS/SUPERVISORS**

### **4. General**

Starting a new job is a demanding and often stressful experience. Quite apart from the obvious challenge of tackling new tasks, there is also the need to become accustomed to a new organisation, a new environment and new colleagues. The purpose of induction is to support new employees during this difficult period and to help them become fully integrated into the Company as quickly and as easily as possible.

Induction has benefits for all involved in the process. Employees who settle quickly into the Company will become productive and efficient at an early stage and in turn will experience feelings of worth and satisfaction.

It is generally recognised that new employees are highly motivated and an effective induction process will ensure that this motivation is reinforced.

### **5. Benefits of Induction**

The advantages of an effective and systematic induction process are as follows:

- To enable new employees to settle into the Company quickly and become productive and efficient members of staff within a short period of time.
- To ensure that new entrants are highly motivated and that this motivation is reinforced.
- To assist in reducing staff turnover, lateness, absenteeism and poor performance generally.
- To assist in developing a management style where the emphasis is on leadership.
- To ensure that new employees operate in a safe working environment.

- To reduce costs associated with repeated recruitment, training and lost production.

## 6. Induction Checklist

The Induction checklist is a very useful way of ensuring that information is imparted to new employees when they are likely to be most receptive. It avoids overloading employees with information during the first weeks whilst ensuring that all areas are covered. Managers/supervisors should ensure that these matters have been properly understood whilst the checklist is being completed, perhaps in the form of a weekly chat with the new entrant. Arrangements should also be made for the employee to visit any relevant departments with which they have regular contact in the course of their duties. At the end of the process the induction checklist should be signed by the relevant parties and placed in the member of staff's personnel file.

## 7. First Day of Employment

Preparations should be made for the arrival of the new entrant well in advance, for example, arrangements should be made to provide desk, equipment and lockers etc.

Most new employees tend to be concerned primarily with two matters:

- a) whether they can do the job and
- b) how they will get on with their new colleagues.

It is therefore important to introduce them to their new workplace and colleagues at the earliest opportunity. An introductory talk will be appropriate at this time and can be combined with the provision of general information and exchanging any necessary documentation. This talk should be as brief as possible, because the employee is unlikely to be receptive to detailed information at this stage, and should be conducted by someone who is well prepared and has sufficient time available. Managers/supervisors should refer to the Induction Checklist and use it as a basis for discussion thus ensuring all documentation is complete.

A tour of the workplace should be arranged for the new entrant allowing the Company / Division to be viewed as a whole and the recruit to see where he/she fits into the organisation.

The new entrant will want to get to know his/her colleagues and quickly become part of the team and time should be made for this process. Colleagues should be briefed on the new entrant's arrival. If possible one of the new entrant's colleagues should be nominated to ensure that he/she has every assistance in settling in quickly.

## 8. Induction Programmes

Induction programmes must be geared to the individual's needs. Some of the more obvious new members of staff requiring special attention are as follows:

### **School Leavers**

For most new employees, induction is concerned with getting accustomed to a new job. For school leavers, however, it is about adjusting to a whole new way of life - the world of work. Consequently, school leavers are likely to need more support than other groups. Wherever possible, induction and subsequent training should relate to knowledge and skills which go beyond the employee's own particular job. School leavers will need guidance on wider issues, such as career planning, acquiring qualifications, coping with the routine and discipline of work and managing money.

It would also be helpful for school leavers to be introduced to an approachable person to whom they could take any queries they might have.

### **Graduates**

Graduates tend to have a high-level knowledge but may not have the skills relevant to the job. They will want to feel that they are making a contribution from early on and to understand the organisation of the Company and their role within it. Also they will want to have a clear picture of future career prospects and to gain broad experience with this in mind. The Company will provide the graduate recruit with an adviser - such as a senior manager - who can organise the necessary breadth of experience and offer advice and support in relation to career progression.

### **Managers**

Whilst many of the points in the checklist apply equally to all new managerial staff, in most cases individual induction programmes will be necessary. These should be drawn up in consultation with new managers, taking into account their backgrounds and experience and the nature of their new roles. Priority should be given to helping new managers establish and maintain relationships with management colleagues and opportunities should be provided for them to spend time in other relevant departments to facilitate this process. This will help managers quickly to gain an understanding of the Company's philosophies, strategic plans and business plans.

### **Ethnic Minorities**

In some cases, it may be necessary to design induction programmes with the special needs of ethnic minorities in mind. Language problems and attitudes amongst existing staff may be areas requiring particular attention. This is preparation that should be completed before any member of staff joins the Company. The Company will not tolerate racist or prejudiced behaviour in any form.

### **Long-term Unemployed**

Previously long-term unemployed people who have been recruited may have been absent from the working environment for some time so it will be helpful to recap on some of the issues relating to school leavers. These should, of course, be adapted to suit older workers, who may need to build up

confidence and the induction process can be used to update knowledge of technology which may be new to them such as photocopiers, smart phone systems, tablets as well as the Company email and social media systems and intranet if appropriate.

### **Other Groups**

Other groups that may need particular consideration include disabled employees, those with criminal convictions and women returning to work after having raised a family.

These groups will also require the induction procedure as women returning to work may, like the long-term unemployed, be out of touch and lacking in confidence. Disabled employees may have all or a combination of induction needs, but these needs may be compounded by their disabilities. Part of the induction process for disabled employees will involve checking such things as wheelchair access to parts of the workplace, toilets and lifts etc. The necessary reasonable adjustments to the workplace required to accommodate the disabled individual should be completed prior to them commencing, and carried out in discussion with the individual or their adviser.

## **9. Completing the Induction Process**

Induction can be said to end when the individual become fully integrated into the organisation. Of course, there is no set timescale within which this will happen and follow up is essential. Giving new employees the opportunity to ask questions several weeks into employment can be useful, and the induction checklist will provide this opportunity. In some areas, such as understanding wider aspects of the organisation, follow up after a number of months may be appropriate.

Inside Connections Solutions CIC

10. Induction Programme for New Staff

DEPARTMENT .....

NAME OF EMPLOYEE .....

JOB TITLE .....

DATE COMMENCED .....

This is a checklist of information for Induction which managers / supervisors should use with new staff as part of their induction programme within the first few days, and certainly within the first two weeks of employment. Health and Safety items should be identified immediately. The new employee should be asked to tick each subject as he/she has been informed about it, and sign the end of the form. The manager / supervisor then sends the form to Head Office for inclusion in the employee’s personnel file.

Not all the following subjects are applicable to all departments. Should this be the case, record N/A.

Please read the guidance notes below before completing this form.

**Guidance Notes**

Certain groups of staff have specific induction needs. The main groups are detailed below; particular points to take account of are described.

**Staff who describe themselves as having a disability**

Disabilities include for example physical handicap, deafness, blindness, mental illness. Consider the following for discussion:

1. Confirm the nature of the disability.
2. Clarify if the employee has any special needs relating to disability.
3. Explore with them any reasonable adjustments that could be made for them.
4. Check whether employee has any particular concerns regarding the workplace.

**Graduates and College/School Leavers**

These staff may have no previous work experience and will need careful integration into the department. Discuss the following:

1. Their specific role within the department.
2. Reporting responsibilities and the importance of good timekeeping.
3. Allocation and prioritisation of work.
4. Where to go if they need advice or help.

**Staff Returning to Work after a Period of Absence**

This includes staff who were previously unemployed, women returning after starting a family, or after any other prolonged period of non-employment. Discussion should include, for example:

1. The difference between the employee’s previous working environment and this new one.
2. Changes in skills required for this area of work.
3. Requirement for training to update skills.
4. Concerns they might have about returning to work

**Managers and Professional Staff**

These staff need a broader induction to put their post in context.

1. Structure and culture of department and Company
2. Role in relation to Department / Company as appropriate.
3. Training course in supervisory and management skills, if required.

**ITEMS TO COVER WITH EACH NEW EMPLOYEE**

<b>The Department</b>	<b>Complete</b>
1. Department function	
2. Introduction to colleagues	
3. New entrant’s own job	
4. Supervision	
5. General layout - entrances and exits	
6. Telephone system, bleeps and intercom systems	
7. Other topics:	
<b>Conditions of Employment</b>	
1. Information on hours of work, including duty rotas, shift systems "on-call" breaks	
2. Time recording, flexi-time	
3. Bonus scheme, allowances	
4. Probationary periods of employment	
5. Company Pension scheme and eligibility	
6. Reporting in when sick including when on leave	
7. Arrangements for requesting leave: annual leave, unpaid leave, compassionate leave	
8. Issue of uniforms, and uniform policy, protective clothing, replacement, laundry arrangements	
9. Other topics:	



2. Means of advancement, promotion opportunities	
3. Employee appraisal, review systems	
4. Other topics	
<b>Employee Involvement and Communication</b>	
1. Employee or Trade Union representative	
2. Communication arrangements	
3. Information sources, e.g. notice boards, circulars etc.	
4. Food and Health Policy	
5. Handling Complaints	
6. Other topics:	
<b>Items Specific to Department</b>	
1. Pay	
2. Notice of termination of employment	
3. Sick certificates	
4. Waste disposal	
5. Control of infection	
6. Lifting and handling	
7. Other topics:	

OTHER RELEVANT ISSUES SPECIFIC TO DEPARTMENT

I have been informed about and understand the above items.

Signature: ..... Date: .....

I confirm that the above Induction Programme has been completed for the above member of staff.

Signature of Supervisor / Manager: ..... Date: .....

### 3. Standards of Business Conduct

#### 1. Introduction

1.1 Inside Connections Solutions CIC expects its staff (including temporary, agency, interim, contractor, voluntary or consultant staff) to be scrupulously impartial and honest in all affairs relating to the Company and their job within it. All staff also bear a responsibility as employees to act as ambassadors for the Company in terms of their general conduct both within and outside the organisation. This policy outlines the responsibilities of staff working for the Company.

1.2 The duties of an employee are embodied in Common Law and built on by Statute.

1.3 Under Common Law the duties of an employee are as follows:

- to be ready and willing to work;
- to offer their services personally: for example must not subcontract the work for which they are employed;
- to take reasonable care in the exercise of that service, including the duty to be competent at work and to take care of the Company's property;
- to not wilfully disrupt the Company's business;
- to obey reasonable orders as to the time, place, nature and method of service;
- to work only for the Company in the Company's time;
- to disclose information to the Company relevant to the Company's business: for example that they might know or discover;
- to hold solely for the Company the benefit of any invention relevant to the business on which the Company is engaged;
- to respect the Company's trade secrets;
- in general, to be of good faith and do nothing to destroy the trust and confidence necessary for employment;
- to account for all benefits – monetary or in kind - received in the course of employment;
- to indemnify the employer for loss caused by the employee.

1.4 United Kingdom Statute places further responsibilities on individual employees in regards to their own behaviour and their behaviour towards other employees.

You should not, directly or indirectly, engage in, or have any interest, financial or otherwise, in any other business enterprise which interferes or is likely to interfere with your independent exercise of judgement in Inside Connections Solutions CIC's best

## **2. Standard of Conduct Required by the Company**

### **Gifts and Hospitality**

2.1 In addition to the duties placed on employees by Civil and Statute Law. The Company requires its employees to ensure that gifts and hospitality offered by suppliers and potential suppliers of goods and services to the Company are declined. This applies, whether the gifts or hospitality are offered within, or outside normal working hours. The only exceptions to this are trivial gifts with a nominal value of less than £10 such as a calendar, diary, chocolates or mugs can be accepted. All other gifts must be politely refused or, if received through the post, returned to the donor with a suitably worded letter signed by a line manager.

### **Transaction of Private Business**

2.2 Employees having official dealings with contractors and other suppliers of goods or services must avoid transacting any kind of private business with them by any means other than the Company's normal commercial channels. No personal favours or transactions should be sought or accepted.

### **Visits to Conferences, Demonstrations etc**

2.3 The Company intends that when it is necessary for employees to visit conferences, demonstrations and similar occasions, it should bear the travelling and subsistence expenses itself unless otherwise approved by a line manager

### **Attendance at Luncheons, Receptions etc**

2.4 Where it is evident that the work of the Company will be facilitated, invitations to attend receptions, luncheons may be accepted under the following rules:

- no employee may accept an invitation without first obtaining the approval of their line manager;
- in exceptional circumstances, where it is not possible to seek prior approval, the facts should be reported immediately afterwards;
- if addressed personally, such an invitation may not be transferred to another employee, except with the consent and approval of a senior manager as above and with the concurrence of the party issuing the invitation;
- invitations involving attendance outside normal working hours may be accepted only on the authority of the Departmental Manager;
- as a general rule, any officer who has any doubts about the wisdom of accepting any hospitality should decline the offer.

NB The important difference between, for example, attendance in an official capacity at a function organised by the Company and the acceptance of hospitality from a private individual or firm should be recognised.

**Identification**

2.6 Employees who have been issued with identity badges should wear or carry these whilst carrying out their duties.

**Confidentiality**

2.7 At all times confidentiality must be maintained. No information can be released to unauthorised persons or organisations. The Chief Executive / Business Owner or other Senior Managers of the Company will inform employees of those authorised to receive information.

2.8 If doubt exists as to the validity of an organisation or individuals to receive information, this must be checked with a Senior Manager.

**Personal Relationships**

2.9 If a personal relationship between two employees develops within the working environment, the onus is on the senior employee concerned to bring this to the attention of his or her manager to confirm that there is no conflict of interest, nor will a conflict of interest arise. The Company reserves the right to move one of the employees concerned if it deems it necessary to do so.

**Outside Interests and Employment**

2.10 Outside interests include directorships, ownership, part ownership or material shareholdings in companies, business or consultancies likely to seek to do business with Inside Connections Solutions CIC. These should be declared to the individual's line manager as should the interests of a spouse / partner or close relative.

**Political and Civic Activities**

2.11 It is not the intention of Inside Connections Solutions CIC, or this policy, to dissuade employees from participating actively in public duties. It is important, however, that by doing so there is no suggestion to a third party that the employee is acting on behalf of, or with the support of, Inside Connections Solutions CIC. To avoid any misunderstanding, no Company employee should permit his or her company affiliation to be noted in any outside organisation's materials or activities without the express written approval of a member of senior management.

**Bribery and Corruption**

2.12 The Company has a strict anti-bribery and corruption policy in line with the Bribery Act (2010). A bribe is defined as: giving someone a financial or other advantage to encourage that person to perform their functions or activities improperly or to reward that person for having already done so.

If you bribe (or attempt to bribe) another person, intending either to obtain or retain business for the company, or to obtain or retain an advantage in the conduct of the company's business this will be considered gross misconduct. Similarly accepting or allowing another person to accept a bribe will be considered gross misconduct. In these circumstances you will be subject to

formal investigation under the Company's disciplinary procedures, and disciplinary action up to and including dismissal may be applied.

### **General Conduct**

2.13 Employees should at all times conduct themselves in such a way as to enhance the reputation of the Company.

Inside Connections Solutions CIC will support employees who become aware of and are willing to report breaches of this policy or who genuinely believe that a breach is occurring, has occurred or is likely to occur within the business. Employees should raise the issue internally with their manager or supervisor or in accordance with the Company's Policy on Disclosing Information ('Whistleblowing').

These standards of conduct are intended to underpin and clarify standards required by the Company of its employees and form a fundamental part of the employment contract. Staff who fail to comply with the guidance detailed in this Policy could be subject, following full investigation, to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. If through their actions or omissions staff are found to be in contravention of either this Policy or, indeed, their legal responsibilities then the Company reserves the right to take legal action if it deems it to be necessary to do so.

## 4. Internet and Email Usage Policy and Guidelines

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out the obligations and expectations on employees of the Company including contractors and temporary staff, who use the Company's IT facilities. IT facilities are provided to assist with day to day work. It is important that they are used responsibly, are not abused, and that individuals understand the legal professional and ethical obligations that apply to them.

*"If you have access to the Company's computers including email and access to the internet as part of your job, you must not abuse this by using these facilities for purposes unrelated to Company business."*

### 2. Authorisation

- 2.1 No person is allowed to use Company IT facilities who has not previously been authorised to do so by the Company IT Department / Line Manager. Unauthorised access to IT facilities is prohibited and may result in either disciplinary action or criminal prosecution.

### 3 Legislation

All users shall comply with the relevant legislation. This includes the following:

#### 3.1 Data Protection Act 1998 / the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

Any personal information on an individual which the Company holds is covered by this legislation. This includes emails too. If you receive a subject access request you should refer this immediately to your line manager.

Users need to be sure that they are not breaching any data protection rules when they store or use information and when they write and send emails. This could include but is not limited to:

- Using data which has not been kept up-to-date.
- Passing on or processing personal information about an individual without their consent.
- Keeping personal information longer than necessary.
- Sending personal information outside the country.

If any breach of data protection rules is discovered such as the leaking or hacking of personal or sensitive data, this should be reported immediately to your line manager, and any immediate action should be taken to close down such leaks. Your line manager will ensure this is properly investigated and the appropriate reporting actions taken if necessary.

### 3.2 **Computer Misuse Act 1990**

This Act makes it an offence to try and access any computer system for which authorisation has not been given.

### 3.3 **Copyright Design and Patents Act 1988**

Under this Act it is an offence to copy software without the permission of the owner of the copyright.

### 3.4 **Defamation Act 1996**

Under this Act it is an offence to publish untrue statements which adversely affect the reputation of a person or group of persons.

### 3.5 **Terrorism Act 2006**

This Act has makes it a criminal offence to encourage terrorism and/or disseminate terrorist publications.

### 3.6 **Telecommunications (Lawful Business Practice) (Interception of Communications) Regulations 2000.**

This allows for any organisation to monitor or record communications (telephone, internet, email, and fax) for defined business related purposes.

## 4. ***Responsibilities***

4.1 All Users are expected to act in a manner that will not cause damage to IT facilities or disrupt IT services. Any accidental damage or disruption must be reported to IT / Line Manager as soon as possible after the incident has occurred. Users are responsible for any IT activity which is initiated under their username.

### 4.2 **Use of the Internet**

Use of the Internet by employees is encouraged where such use is consistent with their work and with the goals and objectives of the Company in mind. Reasonable personal use is permissible subject to the following:

- Users must not participate in any online activities that are likely to bring the Company into disrepute, create or transmit material that might be defamatory or incur liability on the part of the Company, or adversely impact on the image of the Company.
- Users must not visit, view or download any material from an internet site which contains illegal or inappropriate material. This includes,

but is not limited to, pornography (including child pornography), obscene matter, race hate material, violence condoning messages, criminal skills, terrorism, cults, gambling and illegal drugs.

- Users must not knowingly introduce any form of computer virus into the Company's computer network.
- Personal use of the internet must not cause an increase for significant resource demand, e.g. storage, capacity, speed or degrade system performance.
- Users must not "hack into" unauthorised areas.
- Users must not download commercial software or any copyrighted materials belonging to third parties, unless such downloads are covered or permitted under a commercial agreement or other such licence.
- Users must not use the internet for personal financial gain.
- Users must not use the Internet for illegal or criminal activities, such as, but not limited to, software and music piracy, terrorism, fraud, or the sale of illegal drugs.
- Users must not use the internet to send offensive or harassing material to other users.
- Use of the internet for personal reasons (e.g. online banking, shopping, information surfing) must be limited, reasonable and done only during non-work time such as lunch-time.
- Use of gambling sites, online auction sites and other such inappropriate websites is not permissible. If you are in any doubt, you should confirm with your line manager whether a site is permissible or not before accessing the site.
- Staff may face disciplinary action or other sanctions (see below) if they breach this policy.

### **4.3 Use of Email / Instant Messaging**

Messages sent or received on the Company email / IM system form part of the official records of the Company; they are not private property. The Company does not recognise any right of employees to impose restrictions on disclosure of such messages within the Company. These may be disclosed through legal obligations, as part of legal proceedings (e.g. tribunals), and as part of disciplinary proceedings. Users are responsible for all actions relating to their IT account including username and password, and should therefore make every effort to ensure no other person has access to their account.

When using Company email, users must:

- ensure they do not disrupt the Company's wider IT systems or cause an increase for significant resource demand in storage, capacity, speed or system performance e.g. by sending large attachment to a large number of internal recipients.
- ensure they do not harm the Company's reputation, bring it into disrepute, incur liability on the part of the Company, or adversely impact on its image.

- not seek to gain access to restricted areas of the network or other “hacking activities” is strictly forbidden
- must not use email for the creation, retention or distribution of disruptive or offensive messages, images, materials or software that include offensive or abusive comments about ethnicity or nationality, gender, disabilities, age, sexual orientation, appearance, religious beliefs and practices, political beliefs or social background. Employees who receive emails with this content from other employees of the Company should report the matter to their line manager or supervisor.
- not send email messages that might reasonably be considered by recipients to be bullying, harassing, abusive, malicious, discriminatory, defamatory, and libellous or contain illegal or offensive material, or foul language.
- not upload, download, use, retain, distribute, or disseminate any images, text, materials, or software which might reasonably be considered indecent, obscene, pornographic, or illegal.
- not engage in any activity that is likely to
  - Corrupt or destroy other users’ data or disrupt the work of other users
  - Waste staff effort or Company resources, or engage in activities that serve to deny service to other users
  - Be outside of the scope of normal work-related duties – for example, unauthorised selling/advertising of goods and services
  - Affect or have the potential to affect the performance of damage or overload the Company system, network, and/or external communications in any way
  - Be a breach of copyright or license provision with respect to both programs and data, including intellectual property rights
  
- not send chain letters or joke emails from a Company account.

Staff who receive improper email from individuals inside or outside the Company, should discuss the matter in the first instance with their line manager or supervisor.

Personal use of a Company email / message account is **not** permitted.

## **5. Email Good Practice**

- 5.1 The Company has good practice guidelines for dealing with email when staff are out of the office for longer than three days. When activating the "out of office" facility messages should name an alternative member of staff for correspondents to contact if necessary. This will ensure that any important messages are picked up and dealt with within required timescales.

- 5.2 During periods of absence when highly important emails are anticipated, the employee (or manager) should make arrangements for notification and access by another appropriate member of staff.
- 5.3 Where sensitive and confidential information needs to be sent via email for practical reasons, please be aware that email is essentially a non-confidential means of communication. Emails can easily be forwarded or archived without the original sender's knowledge. They may be read by persons other than those they are intended for.
- 5.4 Users must exercise due care when writing emails to avoid being rude or unnecessarily terse. Emails sent from the Company may be interpreted by others as Company statements. Users are responsible for ensuring that their content and tone is appropriate. Emails often need to be as formal and business-like as other forms of written correspondence.
- 5.5 Users should delete all personal emails and attachments when they have been read and should also delete all unsolicited junk mail. In the process of archiving emails, users should ensure inappropriate material is not archived
- 5.6 The Company provides a current and up to date automatic virus checker on all networked computers. However, caution should be used when opening any attachments or emails from unknown senders. Users must best endeavour to ensure that any file downloaded from the internet is done so from a reliable source. It is a disciplinary offence to disable the virus checker. Any concerns about external emails, including files containing attachments, should be discussed with the IT / Line Manager.

## **6. Use of Social Media**

- 6.1 Many Company employees will already be using social media in their personal lives. When you are not at work, it is, of course, entirely up to you to decide whether and how you choose to create or participate in a social media space or any other form of online publishing or discussion. This is your own business. The views and opinions you express are your own.
- 6.2 However, if you identify yourself as an employee of the Company or as being associated with it in any way, you must be mindful of this when participating in social media. We have a responsibility to make you aware that, even where you don't intend it, you can harm the company's business and reputation when using social media in a personal capacity, and that breaching this policy outside of work can still result in disciplinary action.

## **7. Legitimate Access to Prohibited Material**

- 7.1 There may be circumstances where Users feels that the nature of their work means that they are required to access or use material prohibited under this policy. If so, this should be discussed with the Line Manager concerned. The Company is legally responsible for the content and nature of all materials stored on/accessed from its network.

## **8. Remote Users**

- 8.1 Users may sometimes need to use Company equipment and access the Company network while working remotely, whether from home or while travelling. The standards set out in this document apply whether or not Company equipment and resources are being used.

## **9. Monitoring**

- 9.1 All resources of the Company, including computers, email, and voicemail are provided for legitimate use. If there are occasions where it is deemed necessary to examine data beyond that of the normal business activity of the Company then, at any time and without prior notice, the Company maintains the right to examine any systems and inspect and review all data recorded in those systems. This will be undertaken by authorised staff only. This examination helps ensure compliance with internal policies and the law. It supports the performance of internal investigations and assists in the management of information systems.

## **10. Penalties for Improper Use**

- 10.1 **Withdrawal of facilities**  
Users in breach of these regulations may have access to Company IT facilities restricted or withdrawn.
- 10.2 **Disciplinary Action**  
Breaches of these regulations may be dealt with under the Company's disciplinary procedures. It may lead to termination of employment from the Company.
- 10.3 **Breaches of the law**  
Where appropriate, breaches of the law will be reported to the police.

**SECTION 2 – MANAGING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: SETTING OBJECTIVES, ASSESSING AND MANAGING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE INCLUDING ABSENCES, MISCONDUCT AND CAPABILITY ISSUES**

## 5. Performance Appraisal Policy

### 1. *Appraisal Policy*

Inside Connections Solutions CIC are committed to supporting every employee to reach their potential and achieve their personal goals, which in turn will assist the organisation to achieve its objectives.

The performance appraisal policy supports the performance appraisal scheme. The scheme is a formal process centred on an annual meeting of each employee and their line manager to discuss his/her work. The purpose of the meeting is to review the previous year's achievements and to set objectives for the following year. These should align individual employees' goals and objectives with organisational goals and objectives.

*"The appraisal process aims to improve the effectiveness of the organisation by contributing to achieving a well-motivated and competent workforce"*

### 2. *Core Principles of the Appraisal Policy*

1. The appraisal process aims to improve the effectiveness of the organisation by contributing to achieving a well-motivated and competent workforce.
2. Appraisal is an ongoing process with an annual formal meeting to review progress.
3. The appraisal discussion is a two way communication exercise to ensure that both the needs of the individual, and of the organisation are being met, and will be met in the next year.
4. The appraisal discussion will review the previous year's achievement, and will set an agreed Personal Development Plan for the coming year for each member of staff.
5. All directly employed employees who have completed their probationary period are required to participate in the appraisal process.
6. The appraisal process will be used to identify the individual's development needs and support the objectives of the Training and Development Policy.
7. All staff will receive appraisal training as an appraisee, and where appropriate as an appraiser.

8. The appraisal process will provide management with valuable data to assist succession planning.
9. The appraisal process will be a fair and equitable process in line with our Equality Policy.

### **3. *Performance Appraisal Implementation***

Performance appraisal discussions will be held over a designated 4-week period on an annual basis. They will be arranged by the appraisee's line manager. Line managers are encouraged to provide the opportunity for an additional 6-month verbal appraisal review, mid-year and other informal reviews as necessary throughout the year.

The discussion will be held in private. Information shared during the appraisal will be shared only with senior management. The exception is training needs, that will be provided to HR / Company administration for action. Confidentiality of appraisal will be respected.

The appraiser (usually the employee's line manager) will be expected to have successfully completed appraiser training, and to be familiar with the appraisee's work.

All appraisal documents should be issued to both parties prior to the discussion, in order to allow time for both parties to reflect and prepare. These will provide a framework and focus for the discussion.

A time and venue for the discussion will be advised at least one week before the meeting takes place.

#### **1. *The Appraisal Discussion***

The appraisal discussion will allow an opportunity for both the appraisee, and the appraiser to reflect and comment on the previous year's achievements. It will praise achievement and encourage the appraisee in his/her role.

The appraiser is accountable for giving the employee constructive, timely and honest appraisals of their performance, which should take into account both the goals of the organisation and of the individual.

The discussion should be a positive dialogue, and will focus on assisting the appraisee to acquire the relevant knowledge, skills and competencies to perform his/her current role to the best of his/her abilities.

The appropriate forms will be completed and signed by both parties. The appraisee will be given the opportunity to note any comments that he/she does not agree with and complete a self-assessment.

The appraisee and line manager should agree on a Personal Development plan for the appraisee for the following year. This will reflect the appraisee's

aspirations and the organisation's requirements, and should align personal and organisational goals. The organisation and the line manager will support the individual to achieve these goals during the forthcoming year.

Any training needs, future training requirements, planned qualifications, development opportunities and career planning should be discussed in the light of the Personal Development Plan.

## ***2. Training and Monitoring***

Senior Management are responsible for the appraisal process, and he/she shall ensure that appraisers and appraisees are adequately equipped and trained to undertake performance appraisal.

## Inside Connections Solutions CIC

### ***3. Performance Appraisal & Personal Development Plan Pro Forma***

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Job Title:</b>
<b>Appraiser</b>	<b>Job Title:</b>
<b>Reviewer</b>	<b>Job Title:</b>

#### **REVIEW OF LAST YEARS OBJECTIVES**

Outline:

- those of last years objectives which were achieved successfully
- those which were partly achieved or did not meet timescales and why
- those which were not achieved and why

**REVIEW OF LAST YEARS PERSONAL PERFORMANCE**

Focus on recording examples of

- situations where the individual performed well / not so well – what lessons can be learned?
- where they have come across obstacles in the job situation or in their own skills that have prevented them from working effectively – if so what were they and how can they be overcome?
- where their effort was appropriately / inappropriately focused

**OVERALL PERFORMANCE RATING**Superior Fully Acceptable Incomplete Unsatisfactory 

Reason for rating:

## **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**APPRAISERS COMMENTS**

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPRAISEES COMMENTS**

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**REVIEWERS COMMENTS**

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_



## 6. Controlling Absence Policy

### 1. Policy

It is recognised by the Company that from time to time staff may require to be absent from their place of work due to illness. The length of time lost by employees through illness must however be monitored to ensure that each member of staff is able to do their job, effectively and without putting themselves or others at risk. It is not the intention of the Company to penalise the genuinely sick, however it must be recognised that an employee who is medically unfit to carry out his/her contractual duties may not be able continue in that employment.

Managers will consider cases of sickness absence on an individual basis and ensure the provision of appropriate support, advice and Occupational Health / Company Approved Doctor input where appropriate. However, it is recognised that in some cases, patterns/levels of absence will be unacceptable and formal management action will be required.

Employees who become aware that they have an illness problem are encouraged to inform their manager at the earliest opportunity. All such requests will be dealt with as speedily and compassionately as possible.

### 2. Overview of Procedural Stages

On return from absence all employees must be interviewed by their immediate line manager. At this interview the employee and the line manager must complete a 'Return to work interview' form agreeing the reason for the absence, the period of absence and, where appropriate, what course of action is required as a result of the absence. This form must be signed by both parties before being forwarded to the employees personnel file

#### Stage 1

In situations where an employee's sickness record is giving some cause for concern, then the employee's Line Manager will discuss those concerns with the employee, providing support and counselling where appropriate. It is essential that any message conveyed in this manner is clear and unambiguous.

*“Inside Connections Solutions CIC values good attendance at work and is committed to improving the general wellbeing of its employees to achieve this. Although we aim to secure regular attendance, we do not expect employees to attend when they are*

## **Stage 2**

If there is no obvious improvement in the health of the employee or there are signs of unacceptable patterns emerging in an employee's absence then the line manager would arrange for the employee to meet the next-in-line manager who would 'formally' review the employee's case. At this formal stage the employee must be offered the opportunity for appropriate representation by a work colleague or trade union official.

The employee must be given the outcome of this meeting in writing and where appropriate they must be given notice that their level of absence is unacceptable and a period of time to improve.

## **Stage 3**

If the employee fails to improve in the given time scale then a formal second Review Meeting must be undertaken by the manager (or if possible a more senior manager). Again, the employee must be offered the opportunity for appropriate representation by a work colleague or trade union official at this meeting.

In order to obtain a medical opinion on the employee's health prior to the meeting the employee may be asked to attend for an Occupational Health / Company Approved Doctor appointment, or be asked to authorise a medical report from his / her GP. The employee will be given a copy of any medical reports obtained. Where appropriate the employee will be given notice that their level of absence is unacceptable and that they are being given a period of time during which to reduce their level of absence. The employee must also be informed at this stage that any further absences may result in their employment being terminated.

## **Stage 4**

If there is still no improvement within the laid down time scale a Review will be held with the appropriate Senior Manager / Director in the chair. The employee must be offered the opportunity for appropriate representation at this meeting. The Director / Manager will review all the available evidence including any medical reports.

If there are no special circumstances the employee will be dismissed on the grounds of capability because of their inability to meet the acceptable standards of attendance required by the Company.

## **3. Appeals**

Every employee has the right to appeal against the outcome of any formal review stage of the absence procedure. The basis of an appeal should normally relate to one of the following areas:

- that the Policy had not been followed correctly.
- that the resulting action was inappropriate.
- that the need for action was not warranted.

### **Appeals against the formal stages of this Procedure**

An appeal should be put in writing to the appropriate Director / Senior Manager / Owner. The letter of appeal may be constructed by the employee or their

representative. The letter should contain the grounds for appeal and should be lodged within 7 days of receipt of the issue of a formal letter. An appeal hearing should be arranged within 7 days of receipt of the appeal letter. An appeal against Dismissal will be considered in the same way, but should be heard by the owner / a Director / senior manager who, if possible, has not previously been involved in the case.

## 1. Procedures Check List

### Stage 1

#### Return to Work Interview

This is an informal part of the Procedure, however in order to give the process credibility the following rules should be followed:-

- Every employee should complete a 'Return to work interview' form with their immediate line manager.
- Interviews should be carried out in an area where there will be no interruptions and where both parties may feel at ease.
- The employee should always be informed of the reason for the meeting.
- The meeting should be prefaced by an indication of concern for the employee as well as the need for the Manager to be aware of the health of his/her employees.
- The employee should be encouraged to discuss any problems they may be having with their health and to actively contribute to the solution to the problem.
- Any apparent problem or patterns of absence should be brought to the employee's attention.
- All relevant absence documentation **must** be recorded on the employees personnel file.

#### Counselling

- As the first step in procedure it is vital that the message conveyed is clear and unambiguous.
- Prior to counselling, full details of the employee's absence record along with reasons should be made available to both participants.
- The employee should be made aware of the date and location of the Meeting and the reasons for it.
- The employee should be given the opportunity to explain absence records and present any evidence required.
- If there are medical problems it may be necessary to adjourn the Meeting for medical advice.
- The Manager/Supervisor will advise the employee of the outcome of the meeting and where appropriate of the need for improvement of their current absence level. Written confirmation of the outcome of the meeting will be given to the employee and a copy recorded on their personnel files.

## Stage 2

- Prior to calling a hearing, full details of absence record along with reasons should be made available to all participants.
- The employee should be made aware of the date and location of the Review and the reasons for it.
- In addition, they should be informed of the right to be represented at the Review.
- The employee should be given the opportunity to explain absence records and present any evidence required.
- If there are medical problems it may be necessary to adjourn the Meeting for medical advice.
- The Manager should set out clearly the improvements expected and the time scale over which these improvements must be achieved.
- The employee should be informed in writing of the requirements and the time scale and advised if the warning is to be recorded on his record.
- Any warning letter should be copied to the Trade Union Representative if present at the hearing. The employee must be informed of their right to appeal against this decision.
- Any warnings issued will remain on the record for 12 months.

## Stage 3

- If there has been no improvement in the absence record in the period set at the first Review or there has been a further breach of policy during the lifetime of a written warning then the employee must be informed and asked to attend a Second Review. In addition they should be informed of the right to be represented at the Review.
- Medical reports must be sought prior to the date of the Meeting and results made available to both parties.
- The employee should be given the right to present any evidence in mitigation.
- The employee should be informed of the need to improve their record and the possibility of dismissal if they do not do so. The employee must be informed of their right to appeal against this decision. (see Appeals). This should be confirmed in writing to the employee and held on their personnel file for 18 months.

## Stage 4

- The employee must be given full details of the case and the

possible consequences prior to attendance. The employee must also be informed of their right to representation at this meeting.

- All medical evidence should be taken and considered before a final decision is taken.
- If the decision is taken to dismiss the employee then this should be done by giving full entitlement to notice (even if sick pay is exhausted).
- The employee must be informed of their right to appeal against this decision. (see appeals).

## Inside Connections Solutions CIC

**2. Return to Work Interview Form**

Name
Designation
Department
First Day of Absence
Last Day of Absence
Total number of days absent
Total number of days off work
Is absence due to an injury at work? YES/ NO
Have you seen a doctor? YES/ NO
Reason for absence (Please give a brief description of the illness or other reason for absence)
Action Taken (please give a brief description of any action taken to date)
Proposed Course of Action

I understand that if I knowingly provide inaccurate or false information regarding my absence it may result in disciplinary action

Employees Signature

Managers Signature

## 7. Disciplinary Procedure

### 1. Scope

The Company Disciplinary Procedure will be used only when necessary and as a last resort. Where possible, informal and/or formal counselling or other good management practice will be used to resolve matters prior to any disciplinary action being taken. The procedure is intended to be positive rather than punitive but takes cognisance of the fact that sanctions may have to be applied in some circumstances.

An employee can discuss any part of this policy with their Union Representative or their Line Manager. They can help clarify an employees rights as well as give guidance and support where it may be needed. Every individual has the right to representation at any point during the disciplinary process.

### 2. Suspension

Suspension is not disciplinary action. The purpose of suspension is manifold and can be used when it is necessary to remove a member of staff from the workplace pending an investigation for example, to allow time for a 'cooling down period' for both parties, for their own or others protection, to prevent them influencing or being influenced by others or to prevent possible interference with evidence. Only the Manager in charge of that individual, at that time or their superior, have the authority to suspend an individual.

An employee suspended from duty will receive written confirmation within three days of:

- the reason for the suspension
- the date and time from which the suspension will operate.
- the timescale of the ongoing investigation.
- the right of appeal to the immediate manager of the suspending manager should the suspension last more than 7 days

### 3. Counselling

Counselling is an attempt to correct a situation and prevent it from getting worse without having to use the disciplinary procedure. Where improvement is required, the employee must be given clear guidelines as to:

- what is expected in terms of improving shortcomings in conduct or performance
- the time scales for improvement
- when this will be reviewed

*"The procedure is intended to be positive rather than punitive but takes cognisance of the fact that sanctions may have to be applied in some circumstances."*

- the employee must also be told, where appropriate, that failure to improve may result in formal disciplinary action.

A record of the counselling should be given to the employee and a copy retained in their personnel file. It is imperative that any counselling should be followed up and improvements recognised and recorded. Once the counselling objectives have been met, any record of the counselling will be removed from the employees file.

If during counselling it becomes clear that the matter is more serious, then the discussion should be adjourned, and pursued under the formal disciplinary procedure.

#### **4. Procedure for Formal Investigation**

1. Formal investigations should be carried out by the most appropriate manager who is not directly involved with the incident being investigated. This manager may involve others to assist with the investigation process. All the relevant facts should be gathered promptly as soon as is practicable after the incident. Statements should be taken from witnesses at the earliest opportunity. Any physical evidence should be preserved and/or photographed if reasonable to do so.
2. A report should be prepared which outlines the facts of the case. This should be submitted to the appropriate senior manager / Director who will decide whether further action is required. Where appropriate, this report may be made available to the individual and their representative.
3. In most circumstances where misconduct or serious misconduct is suspected, it will be appropriate to set up an investigatory hearing. This would be chaired by the appropriate Senior Manager / Director, who would be accompanied by another manager. The investigating manager would be asked to present his/her findings in the presence of the employee who has been investigated. Witnesses should be called at this stage, and the employee (or their representative) allowed to question these witnesses. The employee has a right of representation at this hearing.
4. Following the full presentation of the facts, and the opportunity afforded to the employee to state his side of the case, the hearing should be adjourned, and everyone would leave the room except the senior manager / Director hearing the case, and the other manager. They would discuss the case and decide which of the following option was appropriate:
  - take no further action against the employee
  - recommend counselling for the employee
  - proceed to a disciplinary hearing
5. All parties should be brought back, and informed as to which option has been chosen. Should the decision be taken to proceed to a disciplinary hearing, then this may follow on immediately from the investigatory hearing if the following criteria have been met:

- the employee has been informed by letter that the investigation may turn into a disciplinary hearing, and that he has the right of representation
  - he has been told in advance what the nature of the complaint is, and had time to consult with a representative
  - all the facts have been produced at the investigatory hearing, and the manager / Director is in a position to decide on disciplinary action.
  - the manager should inform the employee and their representative that the hearing would now become a formal disciplinary hearing, and invite them to say anything further in relation to the case.
6. It may be appropriate at this point to adjourn proceedings, whilst necessary arrangements are made for a representative to attend the hearing at the request of the employee.
7. Should anyone who is subject to disciplinary action resign during the course of it, the action will cease unless there are extenuating circumstances which require it's continuance. The subject of the discipline may also request that the disciplinary action continue.

## **5. Warnings**

### **Examples of Minor Misconduct**

Below are listed examples of misconduct which may warrant either a Verbal Warning or a First Written Warning. It is stressed however that this list is not exhaustive and that on all occasions a full and proper investigation must take place prior to the issue of a warning.

- Persistent lateness and poor time-keeping.
- Absence from work, including going absent during work, without valid reason, notification or authorisation.
- Smoking within unauthorised areas.
- Failure to work in accordance with prescribed procedures.
- Incompetence.
- Unreasonable standards of dress or personal hygiene.
- Failure to observe Company regulations and procedures.

### **Verbal Warning**

A Verbal Warning is appropriate when it is necessary for the manager in charge to take action against an employee for any minor failing or minor misconduct.

### **First Written Warning**

A First Written Warning is appropriate when:

- a verbal warning has not been heeded and the misconduct is either repeated or performance has not improved as previously agreed.

- an offence is of a more serious nature for which a written warning is more appropriate.
- the recurrence or accumulation of an offence/offences, if left, will lead to more severe disciplinary action.

### **Examples of Gross – Misconduct**

Listed below are examples of misconduct which may be considered to be Gross Misconduct and may warrant a Final Warning, Demotion or Dismissal. It is stressed however that this list is not exhaustive and that on all occasions a full and proper investigation must take place prior to the issuing of a Final Warning, Demotion or Dismissal.

- Theft, including unauthorised possession of Company property.
- Breaches of confidentiality, prejudicial to the interest of the Company,
- Being unfit for duty because of the misuse/consumption of drugs or alcohol.
- Refusal to carry out a management instruction which is within the individuals capabilities and which would be seen to be in the interests of the Company.
- Breach of confidentiality / security procedures.
- Physical assault, breach of the peace or verbal abuse.
- False declaration of qualifications or professional registration.
- Failure to observe Company rules, regulations or procedures.
- Wilful damage of property at work.
- Incompetence or failure to apply sound professional judgement.

### **Final Written Warning**

A Final Written Warning is appropriate when:

- an employee's offence is of a serious nature falling just short of one justifying dismissal.
- an employee persists in the misconduct which previously warranted a lesser warning.

### **Downgrading or Transfer to another Post**

This action is appropriate when:

- previous attempts, via the disciplinary procedure, to rectify a problem have failed and this is a final attempt to solve a problem without having to dismiss an employee.
- an employee is considered by the Manager of the department to be incompetent or otherwise unfit to fulfil the duties for which he is employed but where dismissal is not thought to be appropriate.

### **Dismissal**

Dismissal is appropriate when

- an employee's behaviour is considered to be Gross Misconduct.
- an employees misconduct has persisted, exhausting all other lines of disciplinary procedure.

### **Time Scales for the expiry of Warnings**

Warnings issued to employees shall be deemed to have expired after the following periods of time.

- Verbal Warnings: 6 months
- First Written Warnings: 12 months
- Final Written Warnings: 18 months (or as agreed and recorded at the hearing)

These time scales remain provided that during that period, no further warnings have been issued in respect of the employee's conduct.

## **6. Letter of Warning**

All Warnings must contain the following information

- The letter must be issued within 7 days of the date of the disciplinary hearing.
- The nature of the offence and where appropriate, that if further misconduct occurs, more severe disciplinary action will be taken.
- The period of time given to the employee for improvement.
- The employees right to appeal to the manager directly above that of the one issuing the warning.
- A copy of the warning and any supporting documentation must be attached to the individuals personnel file.
- The employee must also receive a copy of the warning which in the case of any written warning will be sent to their home address by recorded delivery if not handed to them in person.
- In the case of a final written warning, reference must be made to the fact that any further misconduct will lead to dismissal, and that the employee has the right of appeal, and to who they can make that appeal.

The letter confirming dismissal will contain the following information:

- The reason for dismissal and any administrative matter arising from the termination of their employment.
- The employees right of appeal and to whom they should make that appeal

## **7. Appeals**

Every employee has the right to appeal against the outcome of a disciplinary hearing. The basis of an appeal should normally relate to one of the following areas:

- that the Company's Procedure had not been followed correctly.
- that the resulting disciplinary action was inappropriate.
- that the need for disciplinary action was not warranted.
- that new information regarding disciplinary action has arisen

An appeal should be put in writing to the HR Department / Head Office. The letter of appeal may be constructed by the employee or their representative. The letter should contain the grounds for appeal and should be lodged within 10 days of receipt of the warning / dismissal letter.

An appeal will be arranged within 20 working days of receipt of the appeal letter.

### **Appeals against Verbal and First Warnings**

In the case of verbal and first warnings, the appeal will be heard by the manager next in line to the one who issued the warning.

### **Appeals against Downgrading, Final Warnings and Dismissal**

The hearing and determining of appeals against final warnings and dismissal will be heard by the appropriate Director or Chief Executive / Business Owner. They may also involve another senior manager / Director not previously involved with the case.

When dealing with an appeal against a Final Warning or Dismissal written statements of case may be submitted no later than 2 days prior to the date of Appeal Hearing. No additional written evidence will be admitted by the Appeal Committee on the date of the Hearing.

Witnesses may be required by either party at an appeal hearing, dependent upon the circumstances and nature of the case. However, there is no specific obligation on either party to produce a witness. Either party must give 5 days prior notice that they intend to call specific persons involved or associated with the case under consideration.

It is the responsibility of the management representative and for the appellant to each arrange for the availability and attendance of any witness they wish to call.

## 8. Capability Procedure

### 1. Introduction

Inside Connections Solutions CIC places great importance on maintaining levels of performance at an acceptable standard and the capability procedure provides a fair and objective process to enable managers to ensure that those standards are met in every aspect of the company's operations.

#### Definition

For the purpose of this Capability Procedure, capability is defined as:

*"Where a member of staff is failing in a significant or persistent way to carry out their responsibilities or duties in a satisfactory manner, either due to a lack of ability, inadequate training or lack of experience.*

*Such failings will be identified by use of the following procedures and steps taken to improve performance. Where such steps prove unsuccessful the member of staff may have their employment terminated on the grounds of incapacity".*

*"Inside Connections Solutions CIC places great importance on maintaining levels of performance at an acceptable standard and the capability procedure provides a fair and objective process to enable managers to ensure that those standards are met.."*

The procedures set out in this document aim to ensure that there is:

1. A means of monitoring performance and establishing performance criteria.
2. A degree of consistency in how staff with widely differing responsibilities and duties are given opportunities to attain satisfactory levels of performance.
3. Assistance in identifying the most appropriate form(s) of support and providing that support.
4. If a member of staff fails to overcome their difficulties, any consequent action will be based on:
  - Adequate evidence that the member of staff is incapable of performing their duties satisfactorily.
  - A fair procedure.
  - The fact that the member of staff was given all reasonable assistance to overcome such failings.

### 2. Procedure

#### Stage 1 - Informal Procedure:

Where an employee of the Company exhibits an inability to perform their duties satisfactorily, the Company will attempt to resolve the matter informally via a meeting between the Line Manager and the member of staff. The nature and date of the meeting will be recorded and a letter sent to the member of staff indicating the nature of their unsatisfactory performance and how such performance can be improved to the satisfaction of the Line Manager. The member of staff should be informed that they may be accompanied at any meetings by a trade union representative or work colleague.

At this meeting, the line manager will agree performance standards with the member of staff, and a time period (normally three months) over which improvement will be expected. They will also agree how the individual's performance will be monitored.

If the individual's performance improves adequately over the timescale, then the process will terminate at this stage. If performance remains unsatisfactory, then the formal procedure will be invoked by the Line Manager as set out in stage 2.

### **Stage 2 - Formal Procedure - Information Collection:**

The Senior Manager / Director of the Line Manager concerned may call on the support of an external advisor or another member of the Management Team, to undertake collecting the necessary information. They would be expected to interview the member of staff concerned and the Line Manager, as well as any other appropriate individuals. The member of staff should be informed that they may be accompanied at any meetings by a trade union representative or work colleague.

A written report based on evidence gained e.g. by interviews and observation of performance will be prepared by the advisor / Manager. The report should be precise and specific in the observations and comments it makes and shall contain clear information on:

1. areas where the member of staff is failing to perform adequately
2. actions already taken by management to address these failings and whether these actions were adequate - i.e. were clear performance standards set and monitored
3. whether the member of staff acknowledges a problem and shows a willingness to improve
4. the impact of the individual's failings on colleagues and work output
5. any other mitigating factors

The report should be given to the member of staff concerned and to the Line Manager. Both may record in writing any comments on the observations contained within the report.

The Senior Manager / Director will consider the report, and may opt to take one of the following options:

- no further action
- instruct the line manager to set reasonable performance standards for the individual and monitor these for a set period of time. (*This option should be*

*chosen if this has not previously been carried out adequately and at least three months given to improve)*

- convene a formal capability hearing to consider the matter further

### **Stage 3 - Capability Hearing**

The Senior Manager / Director will write to the member of staff informing them of the date of the hearing, attaching any relevant documentation. The letter shall contain:

- The performance deficits in sufficient detail to ensure that the member of staff fully comprehends their nature, extent and seriousness.
- The time, date and venue of the interview.
- The person who will conduct the interview, usually the Senior Manager / Director
- A statement that all employees have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague at any interview or hearing held under the provision of these procedures.
- At least 10 days notice of the hearing.

At the hearing, the member of staff will be given the opportunity to put forward a defence, to bring witnesses in support of their defence, to present mitigating circumstances and to make a full statement. A written copy of the procedure to be adhered to during the hearing should be made available to the member of staff before the hearing takes place.

If the allegation is found to be justified, then a decision on the action to be taken must be made. Depending on the nature, frequency and seriousness of the allegation(s) it is expected that at this stage a Warning will be given and this will be confirmed in writing.

A letter should be sent to the member of staff confirming the decision and the reason(s) why it was made. The letter will also indicate that the member of staff's progress will continue to be monitored and how this will be carried out. A time scale for performance to improve and a review date(s) will be specified.

If the failings are found to be not sufficiently serious to warrant a formal warning or where there are mitigating circumstances, then monitoring should be discontinued subject to a clear indication to the member of staff that it may be reintroduced if the problem(s) reappear.

### **Stage 4 - Second Capability Hearing:**

If poor performance continues, the process set out in stage 3 should be repeated. The time scale for improvement will depend on the nature of the duties and responsibilities of the employee concerned and the seriousness of the complaint(s).

If the conclusion of the second hearing is that performance has not sufficiently improved and that there is still evidence of incapability despite support and prior warnings, a final warning should be issued.

The letter confirming the decision as well as covering the points made at Stage 3, should clearly state that if an improvement is not forthcoming, the Company will convene a final meeting at which it will consider terminating the contract of the member of staff involved on the grounds of capability.

### **Stage 5 - Third Capability Hearing:**

The appropriate Director will conduct the third hearing at which if previous advice, training and warnings have not had the desired effect, he/she will terminate the contract of the employee concerned. The procedures outlined in Stage 3 will be followed.

### **3. *Appeals***

An appeal against any decision to terminate the employee's contract of employment on the grounds of capability may be made in writing to the HR Department / Head Office within 14 days of the decision. The employee's appeal will be heard by the appropriate Director. Decisions made on appeal shall be final.

### **4. *Long-Term/Persistent Illness***

Where any shortfall in expected performance arises from long term or persistent illness the Company shall refer to the Management of Absence policy.

**SECTION 3 - DEALING WITH EMPLOYEE CONCERNS:** *Hearing Grievances, Dealing with Bullying & Harassment, and making provisions for “Whistleblowing”*

## 9. Grievance Procedure

The grievance procedure is intended as the tool by which a member of staff may formally have a grievance, regarding any condition of their employment, heard by the management of the Company. The aggrieved employee has the right to representation by a Trade Union Representative or a work colleague

In the event of a member of staff wishing to raise a grievance, it is preferable for the grievance to be satisfactorily resolved as close to the individual and their line manager as possible. It is understood however that this is not always possible and that a formal procedure is required to ensure the swift and fair resolution of matters which aggrieve the Company's employees.

Time scales have been fixed to ensure that grievances are dealt with quickly, however these may be extended if it is agreed upon by both parties.

This procedure is not intended to deal with:

1. Dismissal or disciplinary matters which are dealt with in a separate procedure.
2. Disputes, which are of a collective nature and which are dealt with in a separate procedure.

### 1. Stage 1

An employee who has a grievance, should raise the matter with his line manager / supervisor immediately either verbally or in writing. If the matter itself concerns the employee's immediate manager, then the grievance should be taken to their superior.

If the manager is unable to resolve the matter at that time then a formal written grievance form should be submitted (see appendix 1). The manager should then respond within **2 working days** (i.e. the managers normal working days) to the grievance unless an extended period of time is agreed upon by both parties. The response will give a full written explanation of the managers decision and who to appeal to if still aggrieved.

### 2. Stage 2

In most instances the Company would expect the managers' decision to be final and for the matter to come to a close. However, in some circumstances the employee may remain aggrieved and can appeal against the decision of the manager concerned.

*"The grievance procedure is intended as the tool by which a member of staff may formally have a grievance, regarding any condition of their employment, heard by management.."*

The appeal, to the manager next in line, must be made within ten working days of the original response to the employee's grievance. The appeal must be in writing (see appendix 2) and contain the original formal Grievance form. This manager will attempt to resolve the grievance. A formal response and full explanation will be given in writing, as will the name of the person to whom they can appeal if still aggrieved, **within 7 days**.

Where the 'next in line' manager at this stage is the Director with responsibility for the employees function, then the grievance should immediately progress to stage 3.

### **3. Stage 3**

If the employee remains aggrieved there will be a final level of appeal to the Director responsible for the employees function. This appeal must be made in writing (see appendix 3), enclosing a copy of the original Formal Grievance form, to the Director within ten working days of receipt of the Stage 2 response. This Director will arrange and hear the appeal with another management representative and respond formally with a full explanation **within 20 working days**.

Where a grievance is raised against a Director then the grievance will be heard by the Chief Executive / Business Owner.

There is no further right of appeal. Where however **both** parties agree that there would be some merit in referring the matter to a third party for advice, conciliation or arbitration, arrangements will then be made to find a mutually acceptable third party.

### **4. Using mediation**

An independent third party or mediator can sometimes help resolve grievance issues before it is necessary to invoke the formal procedure. Mediation is a voluntary process where the mediator helps two or more people in dispute to attempt to reach an agreement. Any agreement comes from those in dispute, not from the mediator. The mediator is not there to judge, to say one person is right and the other wrong, or to tell those involved in the mediation what they should do. The mediator is in charge of the process of seeking to resolve the problem but not the outcome.

Inside Connections Solutions CIC will seek to identify employees who have been trained and accredited by an external mediation service who can act as internal mediators in addition to their day jobs. When this is not appropriate the Company will source an external mediation provider. Mediators will work individually or in pairs as co-mediators.

There are no hard-and-fast rules for when mediation is appropriate but it can be used:

- for conflict involving colleagues of a similar job or grade, or between a line manager and their staff

- at any stage in the conflict as long as any ongoing formal procedures are put in abeyance
- to rebuild relationships after a formal dispute has been resolved
- to address a range of issues, including relationship breakdown, personality clashes, communication problems and bullying and harassment.

Mediation is not part of Inside Connections Solutions CIC's formal grievance procedure. However, if both parties agree to mediation, then the grievance procedure can be suspended in an attempt to resolve the grievance through that route. If mediation is not successful, then the grievance procedure can be recommenced.

## 5. Appendices

### Appendix 1

*To:*

*From:*

*Dept:*

*Date:*

*Immediate Superior:*

Dear

I wish to take a formal grievance out against:

---

in line with the Company Grievance Procedure. The details of my grievance are shown below:

Yours sincerely,

***(Manager should respond to this formal written grievance within 2 working days unless an extended period for response is mutually agreed)***

## Appendix 2

*To*

*From*

*Dept*

*Date*

*Immediate Superior*

Dear

On (within 10 days of the response to the initial formal grievance) my grievance against was heard by

I am not satisfied with the outcome of this meeting and would like to appeal to yourself for a further hearing of my grievance, in line with the Company Grievance Procedure.

I enclose a copy of the original letter regarding this matter and other correspondence and information related to it.

Yours sincerely

***(Manager should respond to this formal written grievance within 7 days unless an extended period for response is mutually agreed)***

## Appendix 3

*To (Director):*

*From:*

*Dept:*

*Date:*

*Immediate Superior:*

Dear

On (within 10 days of the response to the second stage of the formal grievance) I appealed to against the decision made at my initial grievance against

---

I remain dissatisfied with the outcome of this meeting and would like to appeal to you for a further hearing of my grievance, in line with the Company Grievance Procedure.

I enclose a copy of the original letter regarding this matter and other correspondence and information related to it.

Yours sincerely

***(Director should respond to this formal written grievance within 20 working days unless an extended period for response is mutually agreed)***

## 10. Prevention of Bullying and Harassment at Work

### 1. **Statement of Policy**

1. Inside Connections Solutions CIC is committed to encouraging and maintaining good employee relations within a working environment which fosters team working and encourages employees to give of their best. Everyone in the Company and those who have dealings with the Company has a responsibility to maintain good working relationships and not use words or deeds that may harm the wellbeing of others. In addition to the obligations placed upon both employers and employees by the Equality and Human Rights legislation, everyone has the right to be treated with consideration, fairness, dignity and respect. This contributes to a workplace environment in which individuals feel safe and can work effectively competently and confidently.
2. The Company's policy applies to all staff working within the organisation and to all employees working off the premises. It extends to include non-permanent workers such as secondees, contractors, agency, temporary staff, consultants and any other workers. The policy, in addition, covers the behaviour of staff outside working hours which may impact upon work or working relationships.
3. The Company has a "zero tolerance" policy and will investigate vigorously any allegations of bullying or harassment, regardless of whether the matter has been raised formally or informally.

*The Company believes that the working environment should at all times be supportive of the dignity and respect of individuals. If a complaint of harassment is brought to the attention of management, it will be investigated promptly and appropriate action will be taken.*

### 2. **Key Principles**

1. The Company will provide and sustain a safe working environment in which everyone is treated fairly and with respect. Those working or dealing with the Company must not encounter harassment, intimidation or victimisation on the basis of gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or belief, age, trade union membership, disability, offending background or any other personal characteristic.
2. Everyone carries a personal responsibility for their own behaviour and for ensuring that their conduct is in accordance with the principles set out in this

policy. In addition, each person has a responsibility to report any instance of bullying or harassment which they witness or which comes to their attention. Employees have a responsibility to act as role models, pro-actively addressing instances of bullying and harassment. Managers should also make themselves aware of their responsibility.

3. Harassment may be defined as any conduct which is :-
  - unwanted by the recipient
  - is considered objectionable
  - causes humiliation, offence, distress or other detrimental effect.
  
4. Harassment may be an isolated occurrence or repetitive: it may occur against one or more individuals. Harassment may be, but is not limited to:
  - Physical contact – ranging from touching to serious assault, gestures, intimidation, aggressive behaviour.
  - Verbal – unwelcome remarks, suggestions and propositions, malicious gossip, jokes and banter, offensive language.
  - Non-verbal – offensive literature or pictures, graffiti and computer imagery, isolation or non-co-operation and exclusion or isolation from social activities.
  
5. Bullying is unlikely to be a single or isolated instance. It is usually, but not exclusively repeated and persistent behaviour which is offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting. Bullying includes but is not limited to:
  - Conduct which is intimidating, physically abusive or threatening
  - Conduct that denigrates, ridicules or humiliates an individual, especially in front of colleagues
  - Humiliating an individual in front of colleagues
  - Picking on one person when there is a common problem
  - Shouting at an individual to get things done
  - Consistently undermining someone and their ability to do the job
  - Setting unrealistic targets or excessive workloads
  - “cyber bullying” i.e. bullying via e-mail. (This should be borne in mind where employees are working remotely and are managed by e-mail. Care and sensitivity should be practised with regard to the choice of context and language).
  - Setting an individual up to fail e.g. by giving inadequate instructions or unreasonable deadlines.

***Harassment and Bullying may be summarised as any behaviour that is unwanted by the person to whom it is directed. It is the impact of the behaviour rather than the intent of the perpetrator that is the determinant as to whether harassment or bullying has occurred.***

6. Any employee who wishes to make a complaint of harassment or bullying is encouraged to first discuss matters informally with their line manager or with Human Resources, provided that they feel able to do so. Should the issues not be resolved at this stage, or the employee feels unable to raise the issue informally, then a formal resolution should be sought.
7. When a complaint of Harassment or Bullying is brought to the attention of a manager at any level, whether informally or formally, prompt action must be taken to investigate the matter. Corrective action must be taken where appropriate and this may require an investigation under the Company's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
8. If it is considered that one of the parties concerned in a harassment or bullying case should be moved from their current workplace, then as a matter of principle the Company will normally remove the alleged perpetrator rather than the complainant. However, the final decision on who should be moved should reflect the particular circumstances of the case and advice from Human Resources to the relevant manager. It should be noted and explained to those concerned that the moving of either party is not an implication of guilt or culpability and no detriment to either party will be construed as a consequence.
9. All matters relating to the investigation of complaints of harassment or bullying will be treated in strict confidence. Any breach of confidentiality in this regard may render those responsible liable to disciplinary actions. However, it will be necessary that any alleged perpetrator is made aware of the allegations against them and the name(s) of those making the allegations together with the name(s) of any witnesses.
10. No employee will be victimised or suffer detriment for making a complaint of harassment or bullying and no manager shall threaten either explicitly or implicitly that an employee's complaint will be used as the basis for decisions affecting that employee. Such conduct will be treated as a very serious disciplinary offence. Similarly, managers are required to act on any complaint of harassment or bullying. Failure to do so will be regarded as misconduct which if proven, will result in disciplinary action.
11. All complaints of harassment or bullying whether raised formally or informally must be notified by the recipient of the complaint to Human Resources for recording in accordance with the requirements of the Equality and Human Rights legislation. This legislation requires such records to be maintained and the incidence of bullying and harassment to be monitored.
12. This policy and procedure will be reviewed periodically giving due consideration to legislative changes.

## **APPENDIX**

### **3. Procedure**

#### **1. Informal Resolution**

- 1.1 Very often people are not aware that their behaviour is unwelcome or misunderstood and an informal discussion can lead to greater understanding and agreement that the behaviour will cease.
- 1.2 Complainants are therefore encouraged to try, if they feel able to do so, to resolve the problem informally by making it clear to the alleged harasser that his/her actions are unwanted and should not be repeated. This may be done verbally or in writing in which case the complainant should keep a copy of the documentation and, where possible, the times and dates of incidents should be recorded.
- 1.3 If the complainant feels unable to approach the alleged harasser, a work colleague, or Trade Union representative could be asked to speak to the alleged harasser on the complainant's behalf. A note should be made of the action taken and the matter notified to Human Resources.
- 1.4 An individual who is made aware that their behaviour is unacceptable should:-
  - Listen carefully to the complaints and the particular concerns raised;
  - Respect the other person's point of view: everyone has a right to work in an environment free from harassment/intimidation;
  - Understand and acknowledge that it is the other person's reaction/perception to another's behaviour that is important;
  - Agree the aspects of behaviour that will change;
  - Review their general conduct/behaviour at work and with workplace colleagues.

#### **2. Formal Resolution**

- 2.1 If the alleged harassment continues, the complainant feels unable or unwilling to deal with the matter informally, or the allegation is so serious as to prevent use of the informal procedure, a complaint should then be raised formally with the employer.
- 2.2 Normally, the employer's representative will be the employee's line manager. However, if the employee feels unable to do this they should submit the complaint in writing to a more senior manager within their Department or Directorate. In exceptional circumstances, allegations may be raised directly with the relevant Director, who will with other appropriate senior managers, arrange for the matter to be progressed in accordance with this policy and procedure.

- 2.3 When dealing with a complaint of harassment under the Formal Resolution Procedure, the relevant manager should:
- a Take full details of the incidents in writing from the complainant and their representative (if appropriate);
  - b Take full details from any witnesses/other complainants who come forward and may have witnessed the alleged behaviour
  - c Inform the alleged harasser of the complaints against him/her, advise the alleged harasser to seek representation and invite him/her to a meeting in order that they can comment on the allegations against them.
  - d Keep all parties informed of expected timescales.
  - e Inform all parties in writing of the outcome and any action that may be required.
- 2.4 If the allegations and the working situation warrant it, the alleged harasser may be suspended during the investigation (in accordance with established disciplinary procedure) or transferred temporarily pending the outcome of the inquiry to another Department.
- 2.5 Should there be a case to answer against the alleged harasser, the manager who has dealt with the complaint will communicate this to an impartial manager who will conduct a separate disciplinary investigation. The normal disciplinary procedure for misconduct/gross misconduct should then be followed. However, the following points should be taken into account:-
- The complainant will normally be required to attend the disciplinary hearing as a witness, unless there are exceptional circumstances which prevent them from doing so;
  - If the complainant is required to attend, they are entitled to be accompanied by either a Trade Union representative or work colleague and have any questions directed through that person.
- 2.6 If the complaint is upheld at the disciplinary stage, there are a number of possible outcomes for the harasser, depending on the evidence presented and the circumstances. These could include, but are not limited to:-
- Dismissal
  - A formal warning
  - A recommendation of redeployment of the harasser, either on a temporary or a permanent basis. This will not be on any less favourable terms and conditions of employment.

- Implementation of other sanctions as detailed in the Company's Disciplinary Policy.
  - Making arrangements for both parties to work as separately as possible within the same workplace.
- 2.7 In addition to the above, the harasser may be required to attend any training courses as deemed necessary by the Company.
- 2.8 It should also be noted that the complainant may wish to move Department/section depending upon the nature of the complaint and the people involved. Appropriate consideration should be given to this request and the outcome with reasons provided to the complainant.
- 2.9 With any allegation, the need for a thorough and objective investigation is paramount. Consequently, if through the course of the investigation evidence demonstrates that the allegation has been made frivolously, maliciously, or for personal gain, then the individual making the complaint will be subject to Disciplinary proceedings as outlined in the Company's Disciplinary Policy.

### **3. Appeals**

Appeals against decisions taken under the Bullying and Harassment at Work Policy and Procedure shall be dealt with as follows:-

- Appeals against a disciplinary sanction will be dealt with in accordance with the appeals process in the Disciplinary Procedure.
- Appeals by a complainant about the outcome of any inquiry will be dealt with in accordance with the appeal process in the Grievance Policy.

### **4. Records**

Where the complaint is informal and resolved at this stage, no record will be kept on personal files.

Following formal investigation, where the complaint is not substantiated, no records will be retained.

Where a complaint is substantiated or partially substantiated but does not proceed to disciplinary, a letter confirming the outcome will be retained on the personal file and supporting documentation retained in a separate file for a period of 12 months.

Where the matter proceeds to a disciplinary hearing then the storage of records should be in accordance with the disciplinary procedure.

## 11. "Whistleblowing" Policy (Making a Disclosure in the Public Interest)

### 1. Introduction

Inside Connections Solutions CIC is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability.

An important aspect of accountability and transparency is a mechanism to enable staff and other members of the Company to voice concerns in a responsible and effective manner. It is a fundamental term of every contract of employment that an employee will faithfully serve his or her employer and not disclose confidential information about the employer's affairs. Nevertheless, where an individual discovers information which they believe shows serious malpractice or wrongdoing within the organisation then this information should be disclosed internally without fear of reprisal, and there should be arrangements to enable this to be done independently of line management (although in relatively minor instances the line manager would be the appropriate person to be told).

*"...this policy is intended to assist individuals who believe they have discovered malpractice or impropriety. It is not designed to question financial or business decisions taken by the Company..."*

The Public Interest Disclosure Act, gives legal protection to employees against being dismissed or penalised by their employers as a result of publicly disclosing certain serious concerns. The Company has endorsed the provisions set out below so as to ensure that no members of staff should feel at a disadvantage in raising legitimate concerns.

It should be emphasised that this policy is intended to assist individuals who believe they have discovered malpractice or impropriety. It is not designed to question financial or business decisions taken by the Company nor should it be used to reconsider any matters which have already been addressed under harassment, complaint, disciplinary or other procedures.

### 2. Scope of Policy

This policy is designed to enable employees of the Company to raise concerns internally and at a high level and to disclose information which the individual believes shows malpractice or impropriety. This policy is intended to cover concerns which are in the public interest and may at least initially be investigated separately but might then lead to the invocation of other procedures e.g. disciplinary. These concerns could include

- Financial malpractice or impropriety or fraud

- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or Statutes
- Dangers to Health & Safety or the environment
- Criminal activity
- Improper conduct or unethical behaviour
- Attempts to conceal any of these

### **3. Safeguards**

#### **i. Protection**

This policy is designed to offer protection to those employees of the Company who disclose such concerns provided the disclosure is made:

- in good faith
- in the reasonable belief of the individual making the disclosure that it tends to show malpractice or impropriety and if they make the disclosure to an appropriate person (see below). It is important to note that no protection from internal disciplinary procedures is offered to those who choose not to use the procedure. In an extreme case malicious or wild allegations could give rise to legal action on the part of the persons complained about.

#### **ii. Confidentiality**

The Company will treat all such disclosures in a confidential and sensitive manner. The identity of the individual making the allegation may be kept confidential so long as it does not hinder or frustrate any investigation. However, the investigation process may reveal the source of the information and the individual making the disclosure may need to provide a statement as part of the evidence required.

#### **iii. Anonymous Allegations**

This policy encourages individuals to put their name to any disclosures they make. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less credible, but they may be considered at the discretion of the Company.

In exercising this discretion, the factors to be taken into account will include:

- The seriousness of the issues raised
- The credibility of the concern
- The likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources

#### **iv. Untrue Allegations**

If an individual makes an allegation in good faith, which is not confirmed by subsequent investigation, no action will be taken against that individual. In making a disclosure the individual should exercise due care to ensure the accuracy of the information. If, however, an individual makes malicious or vexatious allegations, and

particularly if he or she persists with making them, disciplinary action may be taken against that individual.

#### **4. Procedures for Making a Disclosure**

On receipt of a complaint of malpractice, the member of staff who receives and takes note of the complaint, must pass this information as soon as is reasonably possible, to the appropriate designated investigating officer as follows:

- Complaints of malpractice will be investigated by the appropriate Director unless the complaint is against the Director or is in any way related to the actions of the Director. In such cases, the complaint should be passed to the Chief Executive / Business Owner for referral.
- In the case of a complaint, which is any way connected with but not against the Director, the Chief Executive / Business Owner will nominate a Senior Manager to act as the alternative investigating officer.
- Complaints against the Chief Executive should be passed to the Chairman who will nominate an appropriate investigating officer.
- The complainant has the right to bypass the line management structure and take their complaint direct to the Chairman. The Chairman has the right to refer the complaint back to management if he/she feels that the management without any conflict of interest can more appropriately investigate the complaint.

Should none of the above routes be suitable or acceptable to the complainant, then the complainant may approach one of the following individuals who have been designated and trained as independent points of contact under this procedure. They can advise the complainant on the implications of the legislation and the possible internal and external avenues of complaint open to them:

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

If there is evidence of criminal activity then the investigating officer should inform the police. The Company will ensure that any internal investigation does not hinder a formal police investigation.

#### **5. Timescales**

Due to the varied nature of these sorts of complaints, which may involve internal investigators and / or the police, it is not possible to lay down precise timescales for such investigations. The investigating officer should ensure that the investigations are undertaken as quickly as possible without affecting the quality and depth of those investigations.

The investigating officer, should as soon as practically possible, send a written acknowledgement of the concern to the complainant and thereafter report back to them in writing the outcome of the investigation and on the action that is proposed. If the investigation is a prolonged one, the investigating officer should keep the complainant informed, in writing, as to the progress of the investigation and as to when it is likely to be concluded.

All responses to the complainant should be in writing and sent to their home address marked "confidential".

## **6. Investigating Procedure**

The investigating officer should follow these steps:

- Full details and clarifications of the complaint should be obtained.
- The investigating officer should inform the member of staff against whom the complaint is made as soon as is practically possible. The member of staff will be informed of their right to be accompanied by a trade union or other representative at any future interview or hearing held under the provision of these procedures.
- The investigating officer should consider the involvement of the Company auditors and the Police at this stage and should consult with the Chairman / Chief Executive / Business Owner
- The allegations should be fully investigated by the investigating officer with the assistance where appropriate, of other individuals / bodies.
- A judgement concerning the complaint and validity of the complaint will be made by the investigating officer. This judgement will be detailed in a written report containing the findings of the investigations and reasons for the judgement. The report will be passed to the Chief Executive or Chairman or Business Owner as appropriate.
- The Chief Executive / Chairman / Business Owner will decide what action to take. If the complaint is shown to be justified, then they will invoke the disciplinary or other appropriate Company procedures.
- The complainant should be kept informed of the progress of the investigations and, if appropriate, of the final outcome.
- If appropriate, a copy of the outcomes will be used to enable a review of Company procedures.

If the complainant is not satisfied that their concern is being properly dealt with by the investigating officer, they have the right to raise it in confidence with the Chief Executive / Chairman, or one of the designated persons described above.

If the investigation finds the allegations unsubstantiated and all internal procedures have been exhausted, but the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, Inside Connections Solutions CIC recognises the lawful rights of employees and ex-employees to make disclosures to prescribed persons or body (e.g. the Health and Safety Executive). A full list of prescribed people and bodies can be found on the Government Website ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)).

**SECTION 4 – SUPPORTING OUR STAFF IN THE WORKPLACE:** *By ensuring Equality and Fairness in all aspects of Employment; dealing with Alcohol and Drug issues, and ensuring their Health & Safety is properly guarded.*

## 12. Equality Policy

### 1. Policy Statement

1. Inside Connections Solutions CIC recognises that discrimination and victimisation is unacceptable and that it is in the interests of the Company and its employees to utilise the skills of the total workforce. It is the aim of the Company to ensure that no employee or job applicant receives less favourable facilities or treatment (either directly or indirectly) in recruitment or employment on grounds of age, disability, gender / gender reassignment, marriage / civil partnership, pregnancy / maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation (the **protected characteristics**).
2. Our aim is that our workforce will be truly representative of all sections of society and each employee feels respected and able to give of their best.
3. We oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination or victimisation. To that end the purpose of this policy is to provide equality and fairness for all in our employment.
4. All employees, whether part-time, full-time or temporary, will be treated fairly and with respect. Selection for employment, promotion, training or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.
5. Our staff will not discriminate directly or indirectly, or harass customers or clients because of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation in the provision of the Company's goods and services.
6. This policy and the associated arrangements shall operate in accordance with statutory requirements. In addition, full account will be taken of any guidance or Codes of Practice issued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, any Government Departments, and any other statutory bodies.

*"Our aim is that our workforce will be truly representative of all sections of society and each employee feels respected and able to give of their best."*

### 2. Our Commitment

- To create an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of all our staff are recognised and valued.

- Every employee is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- Training, development and progression opportunities are available to all staff.
- To promote equality in the workplace which we believe is good management practice and makes sound business sense.
- We will review all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness.
- Breaches of our equality policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- This policy is fully supported by senior management and has been agreed with trade unions and/or employee representatives.
- The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually

### **3. *Responsibilities of Management***

Responsibility for ensuring the effective implementation and operation of the arrangements will rest with the Chief Executive. Directors / Managers will ensure that they and their staff operate within this policy and arrangements, and that all reasonable and practical steps are taken to avoid discrimination.

Each manager will ensure that:

- all their staff are aware of the policy and the arrangements, and the reasons for the policy;
- grievances concerning discrimination are dealt with properly, fairly and as quickly as possible;
- proper records are maintained.

Human Resources / Head Office will be responsible for monitoring the operation of the policy in respect of employees and job applicants, including periodic departmental audits.

### **4. *Responsibilities of Staff***

Responsibility for ensuring that there is no unlawful discrimination rests with all staff and the attitudes of staff are crucial to the successful operation of fair employment practices. In particular, all members of staff should:

- comply with the policy and arrangements;
- not discriminate in their day to day activities or induce others to do so;
- not victimise, harass or intimidate other staff or groups who have, or are perceived to have one of the protected characteristics.
- ensure no individual is discriminated against or harassed because of their association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.

- inform their manager if they become aware of any discriminatory practice.

## **5. *Third Parties***

Third-party harassment occurs where a Company employee is harassed, and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties such as clients or customers. Inside Connections Solutions CIC will not tolerate such actions against its staff, and the employee concerned should inform their manager / supervisor at once that this has occurred. Inside Connections Solutions CIC will fully investigate and take all reasonable steps to ensure such harassment does not happen again.

## **6. *Related Policies and Arrangements***

All employment policies and arrangements have a bearing on equality of opportunity. The Company policies will be reviewed regularly and any discriminatory elements removed.

## **7. *Rights of Disabled People***

The Company attaches particular importance to the needs of disabled people.

Under the terms of this policy, managers are required to:

- make reasonable adjustment to maintain the services of an employee who becomes disabled, for example, training, provision of special equipment, reduced working hours. (NB: managers are expected to seek advice on the availability of advice and guidance from external agencies to maintain disabled people in employment);
- include disabled people in training/development programmes;
- give full and proper consideration to disabled people who apply for jobs, having regard to making reasonable adjustments for their particular aptitudes and abilities to allow them to be able to do the job.

## **8. *Equality Training***

A series of regular briefing sessions will be held for staff on equality issues. These will be repeated as necessary. Equality information is also included in induction programmes.

Training will be provided for managers on this policy and the associated arrangements. All managers who have an involvement in the recruitment and selection process will receive specialist training.

## 9. **Monitoring**

- The Company deems it appropriate to state its intention not to discriminate and assumes that this will be translated into practice consistently across the organisation as a whole. Accordingly, a monitoring system will be introduced to measure the effectiveness of the policy and arrangements.
- The system will involve the routine collection and analysis of information on employees by gender, marital status, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion / beliefs, grade and length of service in current grade. Information regarding the number of staff who declare themselves as disabled will also be maintained.
- There will also be regular assessments to measure the extent to which recruitment to first appointment, internal promotion and access to training/development opportunities affect equal opportunities for all groups.
- We will maintain information on staff who have been involved in certain key policies: Disciplinary, Grievance and Bullying & Harassment.
- Where appropriate **equality impact assessments** will be carried out on the results of monitoring to ascertain the effect of the Company policies and our services / products may have on those who experience them.
- The information collected for monitoring purposes will be treated as confidential and it will not be used for any other purpose.
- If monitoring shows that the Company, or areas within it, are not representative, or that sections of our workforce are not progressing properly within the Company, then an action plan will be developed to address these issues. This will include a review of recruitment and selection procedures, Company policies and practices as well as consideration of taking legal Positive Action.

## 10. **Grievances/Discipline**

Employees have a right to pursue a complaint concerning discrimination or victimisation via the Company Grievance or Harassment Procedures.

Discrimination and victimisation will be treated as disciplinary offences and they will be dealt with under the Company Disciplinary Procedure.

## 11. **Review**

The effectiveness of this policy and associated arrangements will be reviewed annually under the direct supervision of the Company Chief Executive.

## 13. Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy

### 1. Introduction

1. Inside Connections Solutions CIC recognises that alcohol and drug abuse related problems are an area of health and social concern. It also recognises that a member of staff with such problems needs help and support from his / her employer.
2. The Company also recognises that alcohol and drug abuse problems can have a detrimental effect on work performance and behaviour. The Company has a responsibility to its employees and customers to ensure that this risk is minimised.
3. Accordingly, Company policy involves two approaches:
  - Providing reasonable assistance to the member of staff with an alcohol or drug abuse problem who is willing to co-operate in treatment for that problem.
  - Disciplinary rules, enforced through disciplinary procedures, where use of alcohol or drugs (other than on prescription) affects performance or behaviour at work, and where either (1) an alcohol or drug dependency problem does not exist or (2) where treatment is not possible or has not succeeded.
4. The Company has not the internal resources to provide or arrange treatment or other forms of specialist assistance. Such services are provided by GPs, hospitals and other agencies. Through this policy the Company will seek both to assist a member of staff in obtaining such specialist help, and to protect his/her employment.

*"The Company recognises that alcohol and drug abuse problems can have a detrimental effect on work performance and behaviour. The Company has a responsibility to its employees and customers to ensure that this risk is minimised."*

### 2. Assistance for a Member of Staff

1. The Company will, where possible, provide the following assistance to a member of staff:
  - Support during a period of treatment. This may include a period of sick leave or approved other leave, continuation in post or transfer to other work, depending upon what is appropriate in terms of the staff member's condition and needs of the Company.

- The opportunity to remain or return to work following the completion of a course of treatment, as far as is practicable, in either the employee's own post or an alternative post.
2. The Company's assistance will depend upon the following conditions being met:
    - The Occupational Health Service / Company Approved Doctor (or where appropriate the individual's GP or other appropriate professional) diagnoses an alcohol or drug dependency related problem.
    - The member of staff recognises that he/she is suffering from an alcohol or drug abuse problem and is prepared to co-operate fully in referral and treatment from appropriate sources.
  3. The Company and its employees must recognise the following limits to the assistance the Company can provide:
    - Where a member of staff fails to co-operate in referral or treatment arrangements, no special assistance will be given and any failure in work performance and behaviour will be dealt with through the Disciplinary Procedure.
    - If the process of referral and treatment is completed but is not successful, and failure in work performance or behaviour occurs, these will be dealt with through the Disciplinary Procedure.
    - A member of staff's continuation in his/her post or an alternative post during or after treatment will depend upon the needs of the Company at that time.

### 3. ***Disciplinary Action***

1. In line with the Company's disciplinary rules, the following will be regarded as serious misconduct:
  - a) Attending work and/or carrying out duties under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
  - b) Consumption of alcohol or drugs whilst on duty (other than where prescribed or approval has been given).

Breach of these rules will normally result in summary dismissal, and only in exceptional cases will either notice or the reduced disciplinary action of a final written warning be applied.

2. Where a breach of these rules occurs, but it is established that an alcohol or drug abuse related problem exists, and the member of staff is willing to co-operate in referral to an appropriate service and subsequent treatment, the Company will suspend application of the Disciplinary Procedure and provide assistance as described above. Staff who do not comply with the treatment

suggested or continue to abuse alcohol or drugs will be subjected to the application of the Disciplinary Policy.

#### **4. Procedures**

1. Alcohol or drug dependency related problems can come to the notice of management through:
  - Failures in work performance or behaviour necessitating possible use of the Disciplinary Procedure e.g. a member of staff smelling of alcohol at work. In such situations the procedure described below will be followed.
  - Other means, where a member of staff seeks or agrees to accept assistance on a voluntary basis and informs the Company management.
2. These procedures define management responsibilities and provide guidelines on:
  - Where assistance to a member of staff should be provided and the nature of and limits to such assistance.
  - The application of the Company's Disciplinary Procedure.
3. Through the Occupational Health Service / Approved Company Doctor (or if appropriate through the individual's GP or other appropriate professional), the Company will provide:
  - a) Confidential advice and support to the managers and supervisors of the individual on
    - i) whether an alcohol or drug related problem exists
    - ii) progress in treatment
    - iii) re-establishment or continuation at work of the member of staff or other appropriate arrangements.
  - b) Any requested assistance to the member of staff concerned where this is practicable and reasonable in the circumstances.
4. This does not include directly providing treatment or specialist help which is the responsibility of GPs, hospitals and other agencies working in the field.

#### **Situations where use of the Disciplinary Procedure is Appropriate**

5. Abuse of alcohol or drugs can affect performance and behaviour at work, ie, either through serious misconduct at work, (where there is a direct and demonstrable breach of the disciplinary rules regarding alcohol or drug abuse at work), or where there is a falling off of standards of work performance or behaviour, and abuse of alcohol or drugs is a possible cause.

6. The immediate supervisor / line manager will be responsible for responding to such situations, carrying out either counselling or disciplinary investigations and interviews, supported as appropriate by a more senior Manager.
7. In such interviews the possible existence of an alcohol or drug abuse problem should be explored. The manager is not required to diagnose the existence of an alcohol or drug abuse problem, merely to assess whether such abuse is a possible factor.
8. Any requirements of the Disciplinary Procedure regarding allowing the member of staff representation will be observed.

### **Determining the existence of an alcohol or drug abuse problem.**

9. Should the interviews lead to the conclusion that an alcohol or drug abuse problem might exist and the member of staff accepts referral, the manager should refer the matter to the Occupational Health / Company Approved Doctor (or where appropriate a report should be requested from the individual's GP), who will be responsible for establishing whether or not a diagnosis of alcohol or drug dependence can be made.
10. Disciplinary action should be suspended until diagnostic advice is obtained. However if appropriate, immediate suspension arrangements in the Disciplinary Procedure may be followed.
11. If the interview fails to lead to the conclusion that an alcohol or drug abuse problem exists, or the member of staff rejects, or fails to co-operate in referral, disciplinary action should be continued, where and as the situation justifies.

### **Confirmation that an alcohol or drug abuse problem exists and treatment arrangements.**

12. If a positive diagnosis of an alcohol or drug dependency problem is made, and the member of staff agrees to co-operate in treatment, treatment arrangements should commence.
13. Where necessary, either the Occupational Health Service / Company Approved Doctor, or the individual's own GP will advise the member of staff regarding treatment and will be responsible for monitoring progress with this treatment.
14. Inside Connections Solutions CIC will request a regular update on the individual's progress from the medical professional concerned (the member of staff must agree to this). This advice should be available at least monthly following commencement of treatment and thereafter as appropriate. (Disciplinary action should be discontinued unless the member of staff fails to co-operate on the treatment arranged.) Should a diagnosis of alcohol or drug dependence not be confirmed or should the member of staff refuse to co-operate in treatment, the

- Company will review the facts and consider whether or not there needs to be a return to the use of disciplinary action.
15. Where medical certificates are submitted, sick leave should be given. Should the employee continue to be fit for work during the period of treatment, he/she should be permitted to continue in his/her post or alternative work unless such an arrangement would have an adverse effect on Company services. In such circumstances, annual or unpaid leave should be approved or, exceptionally, suspension arranged.
  16. If a member of staff has been off work during the period of treatment, before returning to duty, he/she will be seen by the Occupational Health Service / Company Approved Doctor, or a report sought from the individual's GP to advise management regarding capability for continuation in his/her own post and whether any special supervision or other arrangements are required.
  17. Every effort should be made to comply with the advice provided. If it is not reasonably practicable to do so, and as a result, the member of staff is not able to resume duty, employment may be terminated on the grounds of incapacity (ill health).
  18. If a member of staff is again involved in disciplinary situations resulting from alcohol or drug abuse related problems, a second referral to the Occupational Health Service / Company Approved Doctor and suspension of the disciplinary procedure may be appropriate. If they advise positively on the possibilities of further treatment or help and the willingness of the member of staff to co-operate, the disciplinary procedure may be suspended again to permit treatment and help to be undertaken. This second referral will not apply if the further disciplinary problems involve serious misconduct. Third and subsequent referrals are not permissible.

### **Situations where a Disciplinary Situation does not exist**

19. There may be situations where the possible existence of alcohol or drug abuse problems affecting a member of staff comes to a manager's attention, although there is, or has been, no discernible affect on work performance or behaviour. This could arise if a member of staff confides in his/her manager about an alcohol or drug abuse problem, or a manager could see a need to approach a member of staff after observing possible "indicators" of an alcohol or drug abuse problem e.g. an absence pattern, information provided by the member of staff's colleagues, etc.
20. In such situations, Inside Connections Solutions CIC would wish staff to feel they could seek help from their employer (in complete confidence) without worry that their job security would be in jeopardy. Accordingly if managers should be faced with a situation of this type they should:
  - a) seek the advice of the Occupational Health Service / Company Approved Doctor / other appropriate professional regarding how the matter should be dealt with;

- b) discuss the situation with the member of staff and, if appropriate, arrange for the member of staff to be interviewed by the Occupational Health Service / Company Approved Doctor, or at least to attend their own GP.
  - c) as in the procedure described above, the Occupational Health Service / Company Approved Doctor / their own GP will play a facilitating role in seeking to establish whether a problem exists and advising and directing the member of staff towards appropriate forms of treatment and help.
21. These steps cannot be taken without the co-operation of the member of staff. If the member of staff does not wish to co-operate, no further action should be taken. There are however a number of external organisations which provide help and support for individuals with an alcohol or drug related problem – a list of contacts is provided at appendix 1.
22. Should a member of staff take up the opportunity of assistance on this voluntary basis there need be no further formal involvement of management in terms of action or the right to learn of progress with treatment. It may be however that the member of staff would wish, or agree to, further involvement of management as a means of assisting progress with treatment.
23. Use of the disciplinary procedures and/or the application of the approach described above would only be appropriate if subsequently, the member of staff is involved in a breach of Company rules.
24. Should the problems of the member of staff develop to an extent that his/her continuation in post or employment became impossible, it may be necessary to identify alternative work or arrange for termination, on the same basis as the Company operates for staff with problems of incapacity due to ill health.

### **<OPTIONAL SECTION>**-----

#### **Drug /Alcohol Testing**

25. Inside Connections Solutions CIC will ensure that all it's employees work within the laws of the land. The UK laws on use of drugs and alcohol are clear:
  - It is a criminal offence for certain workers, such as drivers or operators of public transport systems, to be unfit for their work due to taking drugs or alcohol.
  - It is a criminal offence to be unfit to drive, attempt to drive or be in charge of a motor vehicle when under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
  - The possession, supply or production of controlled drugs is unlawful except for in special circumstances (e.g. when they

have been prescribed by a doctor).

- Employees are also legally required to take reasonable care of themselves and to behave in a way that does not pose risks to the health and safety of themselves or others in the workplace. This includes consideration of the effects that intoxication through taking alcohol or drugs may have.

26. In order to ensure compliance with the law, Inside Connections Solutions CIC will undertake drug / alcohol testing for certain key jobs within the Company. These will be carried out pre-employment, as part of a random testing scheme or as a result of an incident. These jobs are:

- <Insert jobs in Company which will be subject to testing – usually posts where safety is vital such as driving or machine operating posts> The Company reserves the right to add to or amend this list as appropriate.
- Individuals in these posts will be asked to agree to testing as part of their contract of employment.

27. To ensure the testing is legal and safe the following arrangements will apply:

- Testing only to be carried out as a part of this policy, and only by trained staff who will carry out the test in a non-invasive way – usually by urine sample, exhalation, hair strand or oral drug testing.
- Samples to be collected under supervised conditions but respecting human dignity. Two identical samples are taken either on site or split in the test laboratory;
- Samples to be kept under “Chain of Custody” at all
- Screening test for alcohol / common drugs to be carried out on one sample with either positive or negative results;
- Any positive results from screening to be confirmed by approved scientific techniques;
- Results to be reviewed by an expert and reported back;
- Second sample to be kept for further analysis as part of any appeal by the employee;
- Confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

28. Inside Connections Solutions CIC believes that effective workplace drug and alcohol policies are a better way of achieving results than drug/alcohol testing and that providing an environment where employees can discuss any drug/alcohol problems they have, with the prospect of gaining help and support will be more effective than a testing regime. Therefore, the undertaking of drug / alcohol testing in the workplace will be minimal and used only where the Company has a reasonable belief that drug / alcohol abuse would create a serious safety issue.



## 14. Health and Safety Policy

### 1. **Statement of General Policy**

The Company fully accepts the obligations placed upon it by the various Acts of Parliament covering health and safety. The Company requires its Chief Executive to ensure that the following policy is implemented and to report annually on its effectiveness.

### 2. **Management Organisation and Arrangements**

This policy has been prepared and published under the requirements of Health & Safety at Work legislation. The purpose of the policy is to establish general standards for health and safety at work and to distribute responsibility for their achievement to all managers, supervisors, and other employees through the normal line management processes.

### 3. **Management Responsibilities**

#### **Chief Executive**

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Company's policy. In particular he is responsible for ensuring that the policy is widely communicated and that its effectiveness is monitored.

#### **Directors and Senior Managers**

These managers are wholly accountable to the Chief Executive for the implementation and monitoring of the policy within the area of their specified responsibility.

#### **Safety Officer**

The Safety Officer is a nominated manager responsible for co-ordinating effective health and safety policies and controls across the organisation.

The Safety Officer is responsible for:

- the production and maintenance of the Company's policy and ensuring that Department Guidelines are consistent with policy;
- its application;
- monitoring and reporting on the effectiveness of the policy;
- the provision of general advice about the implication of the law;
- the identification of health and safety training needs. The safety officer also acts on behalf of the Chief Executive, as the Company's formal link

*“Inside Connections Solutions CIC recognises and accepts its responsibility as an employer to maintain, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety and health of its employees, and of other persons who may be affected by its activities.”*

- with the Health and Safety Executive, Environment Health Departments and other external agencies;
- the production and maintenance of Health and Safety Codes of Practice for each aspect of the services within the Company.

### Responsibilities for Specific Workplaces

<b>WORKPLACE</b>	<b>SENIOR MANAGER</b>	<b>ACCOUNTABLE TO THE SENIOR MANAGER FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THEIR DEPARTMENTS</b>
Xxxxx Department etc	Director of Xxxxx	All Xxxxx Department Managers are accountable to the Director of Xxxxx for their respective areas

#### 4. *Health and Safety Management Process*

The Company believes that consideration of the health, safety and welfare of staff is an integral part of the management process. The provision of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act, associated Codes of Practice and E.C. Directives will be adopted as required standards within the Company. Responsibility for health and safety matters shall be explicitly stated in management job descriptions.

The Company requires managers to approach health and safety in a systematic way, by identifying hazards and problems, planning improvements, taking executive action and monitoring results so that the majority of health and safety needs will be met from locally held budgets as part of day-to-day management, although many health and safety problems can be rectified at little additional cost.

If unpredictable health and safety issues arise during the year, the Chief Executive must assess the degree of risk, in deciding the necessary resources and actions to commit to addressing these issues.

#### 5. *Health, Safety and Welfare Guidelines*

It is the policy of the Company to require departmental managers to produce appropriate health and safety policies or guidelines. These should embody the minimum standards for health and safety for the department and the work organised within it.

It shall be the responsibility of the manager to bring to the attention of all members of his or her staff, the provisions of the guidelines, and to consult with appropriate

Health and Safety Representatives about the updating of these guidelines. The model contents of a guideline are:

- a clear statement of the role of the department;
- regulations governing the work of the department;
- clear reference to safe methods of working, for example nursing procedures, manufacturers' manuals;
- information about immediate matters of health and safety concern, such as fire drills, fire exits, first aid;
- training standards;
- the role and identity of the Health and Safety Representative;
- names of specialist advisers who can be approached about the work of the department;
- the manager responsible for organisation and control of work;
- accident reporting procedures;
- departmental safety rules;
- fire procedures;
- policies agreed by the Company.

## 6. ***Identification of Health and Safety Hazards***

### **- ANNUAL AUDIT AND REGULAR RISK ASSESSMENTS**

It is the policy of the Company to require a thorough examination of health and safety performance against established standards in each department, at least annually. The technique to be adopted for such examinations will be the 'Safety Audit'. The Audit requires review of:

- standards laid down in the policy;
- departmental guidelines;
- relevant regulations;
- environmental factors;
- staff attitudes;
- staff instructions;
- methods of work;
- contingency plans;
- recording and provision of information about accidents and hazards and the assessment of risk.

The information obtained by the Audit will be used to form the basis of the plan for the department for the following year.

The responsibility for ensuring that audit activity is carried out as part of this policy rests with the Chief Executive and will be carried out by the Safety Officer. Although the Audit remains a management responsibility, managers are required as part of this policy to seek the involvement of the appropriate Health and Safety Representative in the conduct of the Audit.

It is the management's responsibility to ensure that any deficiencies highlighted in the Audit are dealt with as speedily as possible.

In addition to carrying out Safety Audits, it is the responsibility of the department manager to check, at least quarterly, all portable equipment, including electrical appliances, in their area, and to ensure that all problems are immediately dealt with.

Managers have a continual responsibility for the elimination of hazards in order to maintain a safe working environment and will also be expected to carry out regular **risk assessments** in line with the Health and Safety Executive Guidelines; that is follow the 5 steps:

1. Identify the hazards
2. Decide who might be harmed and how
3. Evaluate the Risks and decide on precautions
4. Record the findings and implement the precautions
5. Review the assessment and update when necessary

## **7. Safety Representatives**

The Company will support Safety Representatives in carrying out their role and give all reasonable assistance. Safety Representatives will be encouraged to discuss specific health and safety issues with the relevant Head of Department. They may also formally report hazardous or unsafe circumstances to the Head of Department and will be formally notified of the remedial action taken or be given a reason why the action cannot be taken.

## **8. Training**

Health and Safety training shall be incorporated within annual training programmes, as part of the development of a systematic training plan. Health and Safety training needs will, therefore, be identified and planned for in the same manner as other training needs.

Four areas of need shall be given special priority:

- training for managers, to equip them with an understanding of the manager's responsibilities under this policy, and the role and purpose of safety representatives;
- training for safety representatives to enable them to discharge their function;
- training for all members of staff to acquaint them with the main provisions of the law and its practical implication, the main features of this policy and key safety rules;
- induction and in-service training for staff at all levels to acquaint them fully with new requirements and hazards.

## **9. *Records, Statistics and Monitoring***

The Company will operate systems for recording, analysis and presentation of information about accidents, hazard situations and untoward occurrences. Advice on systems will be provided by the Safety Officer, in conjunction, where appropriate with specialist advisory bodies for example local Environmental Health Departments, and the responsibility for the operation of these systems rests with managers and supervisors at all levels. Information obtained from the analysis of accident statistics must be acted upon and, where necessary, bids for additional expenditure made to the Chief Executive.

## **10. *Reports to the Health and Safety Executive***

The responsibility for meeting the requirements of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1985 to the Health and Safety Executive, shall rest with the Chief Executive as delegated to the Safety Officer.

## **11. *Specialist Advisory Bodies***

Certain bodies and the individual members of those bodies, have always had a Health and Safety role, most notably, the Health & Safety executive, or local Environmental Health Departments. If further specialist advice is required, this may be obtained by Managers from expert individuals or bodies outside the Company.

## **12. *The Occupational Health Service***

It is the policy of the Company to obtain independent Occupational Health advice when required. Such services can include counselling on health and associated matters, investigation of hazards and accidents, environment studies, health interviews and employment medicals.

## **13. *First Aid***

It is the policy of the Company to make provision for First Aid and the training of 'First Aiders' in accordance with the First Aid Regulations (1982). The Safety Officer is responsible for ensuring the Regulations are implemented and for identifying training needs.

## **14. *Fire***

The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring that the staff receive adequate fire training, and that nominated fire officers are designated in all Company premises. The Chief Executive delegates these responsibilities to the Directors.

In addition the Company will nominate a Fire Officer (this may be the Safety Officer or someone external to the Company) who will:

- report and advise on the standard of fire safety in the Company's premises and the standard of fire training of its staff;
- undertake overall responsibility for fire training;
- assist in the investigation of all fires in the Company's premises and to submit reports of such incidents.

### **15. *Condemnation and Disposal of Equipment***

Procedures for the, condemnation and disposal of equipment are set out in the Company's Standing Financial Instructions. Managers introducing new equipment should have new equipment checked by the Safety Officer.

### **16. *Food Hygiene***

Those Managers who have responsibility for food acquisition, storage, processing and serving, and staff induction and training, are responsible for ensuring that these functions are undertaken to the necessary legal standards. Any suspected outbreak of food poisoning or other unexplained and possibly food related incidents must be reported to the Safety Officer

### **17. *Lifting and Handling***

Managers are responsible for informing staff of safe lifting techniques. The Safety Officer will identify specific training needs and ensure training in lifting and handling is provided to staff who require it.

### **18. *Non-Smoking On Company Premises***

The Company has agreed that there will be no smoking in its buildings. The overall aim is to reduce smoking and so save life, reduce risk of fire, prevent unnecessary illness and chronic disability. The rules relating to smoking on Company premises are available from Head Office. These rules also extend to e-cigarettes / vaping.

### **19. *Control of Substances Hazardous to Health***

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) require the Company to identify those substances which are in use and which are hazardous to health (as legally defined) and to assess the risk of those substances. The Company must also provide and use controls to prevent exposure to substances hazardous to health; maintain controls by monitoring exposure, or by health surveillance of

employees; and provide information, instruction and training for employees on all these matters. The Safety Officer is responsible for implementing these Regulations.

## **20. Computer Installations and Visual Display Units**

All new computer installations must adhere to the British Standard Specifications and comply with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992. All new employees operating VDUs are issued with a copy of the Health and Safety Executive Booklet entitled 'Working with VDUs'. New employees who regularly use VDUs will be required to undergo sight screening.

## **21. Control of Working Time**

The Company is committed to the principles of the Working Time Regulations. No member of staff is expected to work more than 48 hours per week (including overtime) unless there are exceptional circumstances. Similarly all other requirements of the regulations e.g. in relation to breaks, night workers etc. will be complied with.

## **22. Health and Safety and the Individual Employee**

The Health and Safety at Work Act requires each employee 'to take reasonable care for the Health and Safety of himself and of other persons who may be affected by their acts and omissions' and co-operate with management to enable management to carry out their responsibilities under the Act. Employees have equal responsibility with the Company for Health and Safety at Work.

The refusal of any employee to meet their obligations will be regarded as a matter to be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure. In normal circumstances counselling of the employee should be sufficient. With a continuing problem, or where an employee leaves themselves or other employees open to risk or injury, it may be necessary to implement the formal stages of the Disciplinary Procedure.

## **23. People Working On Company Premises Not Employed By The Company**

Persons working in the Company premises who are employed by other organisations are expected to follow Company Health and Safety Policies with regard to the safety of Company employees, their own personal safety (and that of other parties such as the general public if appropriate) and their method of work. This responsibility will be included in contracts or working arrangements.

## **24. Visitors and Members of the Public**

The Company wishes to ensure that as far as is reasonably practicable, the Health, Safety and Welfare of visitors to Company establishments will be of the highest standard.

Any member of staff who notices persons acting in a way which would endanger other staff, should normally inform their Head of Department. If the danger is immediate, common sense must be used to give warning, call for assistance or give aid as necessary. It is equally important not to over-react to a situation.

## **25. Contractors**

The Company wishes to ensure that as far as is reasonably practicable, the Health, Safety and Welfare of Contractors working in the Company's establishments will be of the highest standards. In addition, Contractors and their employees have an obligation so far as is reasonably practicable to ensure all equipment, materials and premises under their control are safe and without risks to health.

Contractors must also observe the Company's Fire Safety Procedures. These obligations will be drawn to the attention of the Contractors in the contract document issued to them. In addition a Company Manager will be identified in the contract as having authority to stop the work of Contractors who are placing themselves, other staff, or visitors at risk. Any member of staff who judges there is a risk where contractors are working, should inform their Manager immediately.

In tendering, Contractors will be asked to confirm they have a written Health, Safety and Welfare Policy. The Company's Manager letting the Contract will be responsible for monitoring the Health and Safety performance of the Contractor and the Contractor's performance will be a factor in deciding whether or not to invite the Contractor to tender again.