



# COMPANY HANDBOOK

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## Section 1 – Introduction

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This is your personal copy of MG ALBA's Company Handbook and as such, you should keep it in a safe place where you can access it as and when required. The aim of this handbook is to draw together as much information as possible into one place, on your general terms and conditions of employment, our personnel policies and procedures and the benefits and training we provide.

This company handbook has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Employment Rights Act 1996 and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. It must be read in conjunction with your contract of employment. You should note that the Terms and Conditions and the IT Policy contained within this handbook form part of your contract of employment.

Inevitably, the contents of this handbook will change and be updated from time to time. Please take the time to read and note any changes notified, as they are for the benefit and protection both of you as an employee, and MG ALBA as a responsible employer.

All employees are required to read this handbook carefully and to understand its contents fully. Should clarification of any point be required, please take the matter up with your Line Manager. However, you always have the facility to discuss individual personal matters with an external HR Advisor.

Please note that this Handbook should be read in conjunction with the [Health & Safety Handbook](#) which contains important information about the company's Health and Safety Policy as well as other welfare and wellbeing policies.

### 1.1 Fàilte bhon Àrd-Oifigear / Chief Executive Welcome

*Bu mhath leam an cothrom seo a ghabhail fàilte a chur oirbh gu MG ALBA.*

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to MG ALBA.

*Tha rùn uabhasach cudromach againn: spionnadh agus brosnachadh a thoirt tron Ghàidhlig agus tro na meadhanan. Ann an àrainneachd an là an-diugh a tha a' sìor ghluasad, feumaidh MG ALBA a bhith aig toiseachd gnothaich gus taic a thoirt don Ghàidhlig tro na meadhanan. Gus a bhith soirbheachail, tha e riatanach dhòmhsa gum bi gach neach aig MG ALBA a' cur romhpa fhèin a bhith ag obair chun na h-ìrean as àirde gu proifeiseanta agus gu pearsanta. Bidh mi a' sùileachadh gum bi èiginn oirbh air thòir sàr-mhathas agus seo a shealltainn tro ur dealas ann a bhith gur leasachadh fhèin gu proifeasanta agus gu pearsanta.*

We have a very important mission: to provide inspiration and encouragement through Gaelic and through Media. In today's fast-changing media environment MG ALBA must be a catalyst for positive change and an enabler of the Gaelic language through media. To succeed in this, I need all at MG ALBA to aspire to the highest professional and personal standards. I will expect you to be restless in the pursuit of excellence and to demonstrate this through your ongoing commitment to professional and personal development.

*Tha MG ALBA dealasach gum bi àrainneachd onarach, fosgailte, co-obrachail agus cumhachdach an sàs, far a bheil gach fear agus tè co-ionnan agus barail gach neach a' cunntais. Ma tha sinn gu bhith soirbheachail nar rùn, feumaidh gach fear agus tè againn a bhith nar ceannard. Co-fhreagraidh sinne ur dealas le bhith a' cur taic ri ur leasachadh agus a bhith a' cur an tuilleadh uallaich an urra ribh. 'S e*

*stòras air leth a tha annaibh an seo aig MG ALBA agus tro obair sgioba agus tro bhith ag obair còmhla, ni sinn strì gu dèanamh cinnteach gu lean soirbheas ar buidheann.*

MG ALBA is committed to an honest, open, interactive and empowered environment where everyone is treated as an equal and where everyone's opinion counts. If we are to succeed in our mission each one of us needs to be a leader. We will match your commitment by supporting your development and entrusting you with responsibility. You are a unique resource here at MG ALBA and, through teamwork and working together, we will strive to ensure the continued success of our Company.

*Tha ar n-amas sìmplidh. Feumaidh sinn gu cunbhalach a bhith a' libhrigeadh meadhanan Gàidhlig aig àrd ìre gu luchd-amhairc agus luchd-cleachdaidh a tha a' cur luach nar cuid susbaint. Agus feumaidh sinn seo a dhèanamh ann am beachd-inntinn com-pàirteachaidh fad na tìde.*

Our goal is simple. We must consistently deliver high quality Gaelic media to appreciative audiences and consumers. And we must do this in an ethos of partnership at all times.

*Tha min dòchas gum bi ur ceangal le MG ALBA na chùis fhada agus thoilichte agus tha mo cho-obraichean agus mi fhèin a' coimhead air adhart ri ur taiceachadh ann as bith dè an dòigh as urrainn dhuinn.*

I hope that your association with MG ALBA will be a long and happy one and my colleagues and I look forward to supporting you in whatever way we can.



**Dòmhnall Caimbeul / Donald Campbell**  
**Àrd-Oifigear / Chief Executive**

## 1.2 The Company and our Partnership with the BBC for BBC ALBA

MG ALBA or Meadhanan Gàidhlig ALBA is the operating name for Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig (Gaelic Media Service).

## 1.3 Company Mission Statement

- Bringing Gaelic to you
- Our promise is to inspire and encourage through Gaelic and Media

## 1.4 Our Business Values

Our values are the key principles that guide the work we do. They determine our priorities and underpin the way we operate in all that we do.

### **Creativity**

- We enable the creation of high-quality Gaelic content

### **Audience**

- We are informed and inspired by our audience

### **Ambition**

- We strive for and deliver excellence

### **Partnership**

- We achieve through collaboration

### **Respect**

- We listen; we encourage; we are fair

## 1.5 Company Vision Statement

- That Gaelic Media is recognised universally for creativity, innovation and the highest standards

## 1.6 How to Use this Handbook

This Company Handbook does not aim to provide full information about every aspect of employment as MG ALBA endeavors to consider many issues on an individual and ongoing basis.

Policies and procedures are summarised in general terms and are not to be interpreted in a strict literal sense. MG ALBA reserves the right to make final interpretation and application of all policies and procedures and to change or discontinue them from time to time at its sole discretion. We will issue any updates to these Handbook Policies as Company Policy or Legislation changes.

You should refer to the Handbook if you have questions relating to your employment. It contains much of the information you will need and will also guide you to other sources of information. If you are in doubt about any aspect or interpretation of the policies or procedures – or simply want more information – you should speak to the external HR Adviser.

To assist you in the use of this Company Handbook, a small selection of Frequently Asked Questions have been highlighted and the appropriate policies which would apply have been referenced.

If you have any queries about any of the policies contained within the Company Handbook please speak to your Line Manager or the external HR Advisor.

## 1.7 Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is a Fit Note and when is it needed?**

*The “Fit Note” was introduced to replace the old sick note in 2010. Doctor’s issue Fit Notes to employees to provide evidence of the advice the doctor has given about the employee’s fitness for work. Phased return to work and alternative tasks can be considered where appropriate. Fit Notes are required after absences of more than 7 calendar days.*

**Handbook - Page 26**

### **Why are there so many different types of leave?**

*As your employer, MG ALBA recognises that there are many genuine reasons that can cause an employee to require time off work, other than rest time (annual leave) and illness. Statute and Regulations also provide various entitlements to employees to support life situations such as family commitments, bereavement and other circumstances. Policy recognises this and exists to ensure that leave is granted in a fair, transparent and consistent manner.*

**Handbook – Pages 31-42**

### **Why do we have “Return to Work” interviews?**

*Return to Work interviews will be carried out as a matter of routine with your line manager following any period of absence. These are informal and will always be held in private. Their purpose is to keep the lines of communication open, to be empathetic and supportive to the employee, allow the line manager to understand the nature and cause of absence and to ensure the employee is ready/able to resume their duties.*

**Handbook – Page 30**

### **What is the Grievance Procedure for?**

*If you have a concern, problem or complaint relating to your job or your working life at MG ALBA you can raise a Grievance.*

*Any staff member may at some time have problems or concerns with their work, working conditions or working relationships with their colleagues that they wish to raise with management.*

*It’s important to stress that any workplace issue should be attempted to be resolved informally in the first instance, and your line manager or the external HR Adviser should be consulted.*

**Handbook – Page 50**



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## Section 2 – Conditions of Employment

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### Introduction

The following should be read in conjunction with the Contract of Employment, which contains information specific to your employment. Provisions in your individual contract will always supersede those in this handbook.

### 2.1 Probationary Period

Generally, employees will be engaged for a probationary period. During this time your suitability for employment, your behaviour, attendance and performance will be monitored, and you will be required to participate in performance reviews every 4 weeks. Your employment is subject to a probationary period of six months as stated in your contract of employment. During this period either you or MG ALBA may terminate your employment by giving one week's notice in writing.

During this period MG ALBA reserves the right to extend your probationary period or to terminate your employment during or on conclusion of the probationary period for any reasonable reason, in accordance with the notice provisions as detailed in your contract of employment.

During this period the provisions of the Disciplinary and Appeals Procedure as set out in Section 7 will not apply.

### 2.2 Documentation

On starting work with the company, each employee must present:

1. National Insurance Number
2. P45
3. Job related qualifications when requested
4. Passport/work permit when requested
5. Driving Licence when requested and required in terms of your job roles and responsibilities
6. Bank/Building Society details for payment of wages by credit transfer directly into employees account.

### 2.3 References

References from previous employers will be requested in respect of all employees. Continued employment is subject to receipt of replies which are satisfactory to the Company. References will be sought once offer and verbal acceptance from successful candidate has been received. No references will be undertaken prior to interview.

## 2.4 Your Salary

### **Payments**

You will be paid in accordance with the details contained in your terms and conditions of employment. You shall be issued with a confidential pay slip each month detailing your gross pay, statutory deductions, net pay and other deductions made with your written approval.

You will be paid monthly in arrears, by credit transfer direct to your bank or building society account. All payments will be processed by no later than the last Friday of each month and paid directly into your nominated account.

### **Salary Review**

MG ALBA operates a Pay Grading Structure which is governed by an analytical points rating Job Evaluation process.

Our pay policy aims to be fair and provide equality of opportunity. We aim to offer pay and benefits competitive with the leading employers in the industry in order to attract and retain the highest quality people.

Salary grades will be reviewed each year for potential inflation-related rises, generally in line with public pay policy, and subject to Board and Ofcom approval.

Staff members who are not at the top of their Pay Bands will be eligible for Progression in the following financial year.

Progression will be based on performance management, business case and available budget. Each June the Chief Executive will ask for business case submissions from directors, which will form the basis for staff budgets for the following year's Operational Plan.

Staff members who are already at the top of their Pay Band are ineligible for progression. Pay movement will be restricted to annual inflation-based movement of the Band ceiling unless the job is re-scored through Job Evaluation into a higher Band. In exceptional circumstances a pay supplement may be awarded to take remuneration beyond the Band ceiling. Compelling reasons and evidence will be required.

Please refer to Section 7.20 for detail on the MG ALBA Grading Scheme.

Please also refer to the Recruitment Policy and Guide to Salary Structures, published on MG ALBA's website.

### **Under/Over Payment of Salary**

If you feel that a mistake has been made with regards to your salary/wage payment, you should notify the Accountant as soon as possible. Thereafter an investigation will be made into the issue and any adjustments made.

Where for any reason you have been overpaid, the amount will normally be deducted from your salary the following month. However, if this is going to cause you undue hardship, arrangements for re-payment over a longer period of time may be negotiated. Failure to report an overpayment may, subject to an investigation into the matter, may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you.

Should you leave the Company, all monies owed to you will be paid into your bank account on the next available pay day. If your salary and other monies have already been paid, or credited to your account, any overpayment will have to be reimbursed.

## **Salary Deductions**

As a term of your employment, MG ALBA has the right to make deductions from your salary (and you agree that MG ALBA has the right to make such deductions) because of:

- Cash or stock shortages, attributable (in whole or part) to your dishonesty and/or neglect of duties.
- The cost of repairing any damage to MG ALBA property, which you have caused or contributed to, or for which you were otherwise responsible.
- The cost of replacing any MG ALBA property lost, stolen or damaged whilst in your possession and/or custody attributable (in whole or part) to your neglect of duties, and not covered by MG ALBA insurance provision.
- Liabilities, damages, costs, losses or expenses incurred by MG ALBA and attributable (in whole or part) to your dishonesty and / or neglect of duties or under the terms of use of the corporate credit card (see below).
- A statutory requirement or court order, or in consequence of a disciplinary decision against you, or in respect of any other contractual arrangements or arrangements authorised by you for the payment of sums to third parties, or in respect of any deductions because you took part in a strike or other industrial action.
- This clause is an express written term of your contract of employment in accordance with the Employment Rights Act 1996.

Any salary enquiries should be, in the first instance, taken up with your Line Manager.

### ***Presentation Staff & MG ALBA Events***

There may be occasions where presentation staff are asked to perform special short-term staff roles beyond their contractual scope of work, on behalf of MG ALBA. In these circumstances, a payment of 80% of the equivalent freelance contractor rate will be agreed and approved by the SAS on an individual / case by case basis. Presentation staff will separately invoice MG ALBA for each agreed piece of work.

## **2.5 Taxation**

### **P45**

On commencing employment, you should hand in your Income Tax Form P45 to your Line Manager to ensure that the correct income tax is deducted.

On leaving employment your P45 will be posted to your home address, normally after your final wage has been paid into your bank account.

### **P60**

At the end of each Income Tax Year, which is 5<sup>th</sup> April, you will be given a certificate of PAYE, Income Tax and National Insurance Contributions (P60), which shows the total amount for income tax purposes that has been paid to you in the year.

Always remember to keep your P60 as the Inland Revenue or the Department of Social Security may request them.

This will apply to board members and employees.

## **Tax Queries**

There may be times when you need information about your tax affair, for instance if you get married, are claiming family tax credit or have a part-time role. If so, please contact the Director of Finance who will be able to assist with your query.

You will need to quote your National Insurance Number, which you can find on your payslip.

## **2.6 Expenses**

MG ALBA will reimburse expenses necessarily incurred by you in the course of doing your work, over and above costs you would otherwise have incurred; for instance, the cost of travelling to and from work. In some circumstances pre-authorisation of the expense may be required.

The company will reimburse you for all necessary approved travel, accommodation and other reasonable expenses incurred whilst you are engaged on authorised Company business.

You must check with your Line Manager regarding the precise rules and your entitlements before incurring any expenses, especially in relation to the standard of accommodation and travel plus any incidental expenses to which you may or may not be entitled.

In certain circumstances you may request a cash advance to cover anticipated expenses when travelling on Company business or attending a course. When doing so, you must ensure that you provide the appropriate receipts on your return.

If you are given a personal float because of the nature of your job, this is repayable when you stop this type of work or leave the Company. If necessary, this will be deducted from your salary or any other monies to which you are entitled.

To make a claim you must submit your expense claim in Xero within 6 weeks of the expenses being incurred. All claims must be supported by the appropriate receipts which should be uploaded in Xero. Reimbursement may be refused where the claim does not have supporting receipts attached or where you did not have authority in advance to incur the expenses.

Abuse of the Expense System may be deemed as an act of gross misconduct, which could result in summary dismissal, and would be dealt with through the Disciplinary Procedure.

As a general rule MG ALBA expects all employees to be both reasonable and cost-conscious when incurring expenses in the course of their work. This will apply to board members and employees.

## **2.7 Travel**

You should always consider whether you really need to travel and only do so in your capacity as an employee of MG ALBA when there is a business case. Alternatives to travelling include:

- Telephone or video conferencing
- Scheduling a meeting at the same time as other meetings or events to which you are already committed
- Asking a colleague who does not have to travel to represent you.

All travel should be arranged by a member of the Officer Manager's administration team. The travel booking team will seek to put in place the most economical travel arrangements and will work within the budgetary guidelines provided by the Finance team. Business case approval from a Line Manager may be required prior to bookings being confirmed.

It may be necessary for you to incur travel costs, for example, the cost of fuel when driving company or hire vehicles, taxi fares, train and bus tickets, and exceptionally airline tickets when purchased out

of hours. MG ALBA will reimburse travel costs incurred in the course of your work, except for the cost of travelling between your home and your permanent place of work for normal working hours.

As a general rule, you are expected to travel by the most economical form of transport available for a particular journey. You are encouraged:

- to use bus services instead of taxis, where possible (for example between Glasgow Airport and Glasgow city centre when travelling alone and without luggage in fair weather)
- to use off-peak second-class rail travel where possible (for example between Glasgow and Edinburgh)
- to make fixed-fare advance bookings when travelling by air to fulfil commitments made in advance (for example attendance at Board or committee meetings and training courses).

As a matter of policy, you must travel on the lowest available fare, normally standard or economy class, except in the following circumstances:

- rail travel when you have prior business case approval from your line manager or are within circumstances where pre-approval has already been granted;
- UK domestic air travel when you need flexible travel arrangements and the business case has been approved in advance by your line manager;
- International air travel, where business class travel may be permitted on flights of over 5 hours' duration, subject to the Chief Executive's prior written approval and in the case of the Chief Executive, the Chairman's approval.

## **2.8 Accommodation & Subsistence Costs**

Hotel bookings should be made through the Office Manager's administration team. Only in exceptional circumstances should you make a hotel booking.

The Director of Finance will issue guidelines to the administration team regarding preferred suppliers and applicable cost limits for all hotel accommodation and the administration team will keep to those limits except where there is prior business case approval in writing from the line manager.

Subsistence allowances, when absent from the usual place of work on MG ALBA business, are payable at the appropriate rate. However, you are asked to bear in mind that as far as reasonably possible, best value should always be obtained for accommodation and meals. The Chief Executive will intervene if there is reasonable concern over the level of accommodation and subsistence costs being incurred, or where best value for money principles are challenged.

This will apply to board members and employees.

## **2.9 Subsistence Rates – Summary**

HMRC no longer accepts a scale rate payment for staying with friends or family and therefore the previous rate of £51.15 has been withdrawn from 6 April 2016.

If you incur personal expenditure on travel and subsistence in the course of business travel you may claim reimbursement of that expenditure, within limits.

With supporting receipts, you may claim the actual cost of meals provided the expenditure is within the agreed limits per overnight.

Expense claim limits per overnight are:

○ Room only	£90
○ B&B	£105
○ B&B by prior agreement with line manager	£138
○ Breakfast	£10
○ Lunch	£12
○ Dinner	£20

- Where appropriate, staff may dine in the hotel and claim the actual cost of a reasonable meal.
- If it is necessary to pay more than £105 for bed and breakfast, for example in Central London, Edinburgh or Aberdeen, or if there is increased demand for accommodation at the location due to events or if certain business facilities are required, written business case approval, signed by your line manager, must accompany the expenses claim for it to be allowed.
- If the cost of meals exceeds the limits shown, and in the opinion of the Director of Finance are of a reasonable cost, the expense will be also allowed. The Director of Finance (or in the case of Members or the Director of Finance, the Chief Executive) may decline to reimburse more than the above limits should the business case not be deemed proven.
- Incidental expenses (telephone, newspapers, laundry) of up to £5 per overnight (£10 for overseas travel) may be claimed on the production of receipts. Rates are subject to review in line with HMRC guidelines.
- If you are away from your normal place of work for more than 5 hours, a subsistence of £5.00 can be claimed. If absent for more than 10 hours, this can be increased to £10.00. These cannot be claimed when overnight subsistence is claimed. Rates are subject to review in line with HMRC guidelines. You must have incurred a cost on a meal (food and drink) after starting the journey and retained appropriate evidence of the expenditure
- A rate of 45p per mile is allowed for business use of a private car up to 10,000 miles and 24p per mile thereafter in any one tax year. A passenger rate of 5p per mile per eligible passenger is allowed. Rates are subject to review in line with HMRC guidelines.
- A rate of 24p per mile and 20p per mile is allowed for motorcycles and bicycles respectively. Rates are subject to review in line with HMRC guidelines.
- Expenses claims should be made within 6 weeks of incurring the expenditure. Claims made more than 3 months after the expenditure has been incurred will not be paid.
- The reimbursement of incidental expenses and subsistence expenses using the above rates may only be used where all the qualifying conditions are met. The qualifying conditions are:
  - the travel must be in the performance of an employee's duties or to a temporary place of work
  - the employee should be absent from his normal place of work or home for a continuous period in excess of the five hours or ten hours as above
  - the employee should have incurred a cost on a meal (food and drink) after starting the journey
- The employee may claim these rates and prove to MG ALBA that the costs of meals and incidental expenses have been actually incurred by retaining appropriate evidence of their expenditure. The MG ALBA management accountant may request such evidence from the employee in order to demonstrate that they satisfy the qualifying conditions.

## 2.10 Corporate Credit Cards

### Purpose of Policy

1. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that corporate credit cards are issued and used appropriately for MG ALBA business purposes, that all credit card expenditure is properly authorised and evidenced and to clarify the circumstances in which it would be appropriate to issue a member of staff with a corporate credit card.

### Overview

2. In some circumstances MG ALBA may provide staff members with corporate credit cards for certain types of business expenditure. Credit cards can assist in making payments more efficiently, prevent fraud and offer security when applied correctly for appropriate business expenditure.
3. However, it should be noted that the majority of business expenditure must be incurred in line with MG ALBA's normal purchasing and payment rules and that credit cards should only be used for payment in certain circumstances (eg: where expenditure cannot be met by normal purchasing methods or where payments can be made more efficiently or more securely by credit card).

### Eligibility & Approval

4. Corporate credit cards will only be issued to staff members where it has been demonstrated that the issuing of a credit card will aid in the effective performance of their duties.
5. A business case should be submitted to the CEO detailing the business requirement for a credit card. This should include the proposed nature, extent and frequency of purchases intended to be made by credit card and the reasons why these purchases are deemed more appropriate by credit card (where the CEO is the one making a business case this must be approved by the Board).

### Spending Limits

6. Any credit card issued to a staff member will come with a specified credit limit. This credit limit must not be exceeded, and it is the responsibility of the card holder to ensure adherence to the credit limit. Credit card limits may be adjusted in certain circumstances based on specific work requirements, if approved by the CEO.

### Permitted Expenditure

7. Corporate credit cards are only to be used for legitimate business expenditure related to MG ALBA's operations and for purposes in conjunction with the card holder's work duties.
8. Current MG ALBA card holders and type of permitted expenditure are:

#### Chief Executive

- Stakeholder-related expenses including certain hospitality/entertainment costs.
- Overseas travel & associated costs in relation to attendance at festivals, forums, events etc

#### Director of Finance, Business Affairs Manager

- Urgent or time-sensitive purchases. (eg: emergency office repairs)
- Other purchases that are best facilitated through the use of a credit card (eg: training courses requiring online registration & payment, professional fees, etc)

#### Channel Editor

- Overseas travel & associated costs in relation to attendance at festivals, forums, events etc

#### IT Manager

- IT-related purchases that are best facilitated through the use of a credit card (eg: software/licences, file-hosting/cloud storage).

#### Office Manager, Gaelic & Corporate Affairs Manager

- Travel & accommodation bookings where no corporate account facilities exist, made by the Office Manager's administration team

9. As well as the above there may be occasions where other goods/services require to be purchased from suppliers who only accept payment via credit card (this must be evidenced, and the Finance team retains full discretion to make the final decision on how items should be paid for).
10. All expenditure incurred on a corporate credit card must be within existing budgets and within the card holder's financial authority as set out in the procurement policy.

#### **Prohibited Expenditure**

11. Corporate credit cards must not be used for the following purposes:
  - to procure goods/services where the normal purchasing/payment methods can be utilised.
  - to make non-business purchases or purchases for personal use.
  - to make cash withdrawals.
  - for domestic staff travel & subsistence costs.
12. Where any inappropriate expenditure occurs, the value of the expenditure may be recovered from the card holder and may result in the expense being deducted from the card holder's salary payment.

#### **Further Guidance on Travel & Subsistence**

13. For the purposes of this policy it is important to note the distinction between *domestic* and *overseas* travel & subsistence. As stated above, domestic travel & subsistence costs must not be paid for using a corporate credit card as such costs should always be dealt with through the staff expenses system. Overseas travel & associated costs may be paid for using a corporate credit card but only in circumstances where the cardholder has obtained authorisation for this as a permitted expenditure type for their credit card.

#### **Cardholder Responsibilities**

14. Staff members issued with a corporate credit card are in a position of trust in regard to the use of public funds and a card holder's responsibilities include the following:
  - the safe keeping of their cards and for keeping the credit card details and physical card secure.
  - ensuring that any PIN number issued with a card is not disclosed or carried with the card.
  - being solely responsible for all purchases on the card and ensuring that the card is not used by any other unauthorized person.
  - obtaining and retaining expenditure receipts for all transactions made on their cards.
  - if a card is lost or stolen, reporting the loss immediately to the Finance team.
  - ensuring that any transactions on a credit card account which cannot be identified or were not authorised by the card holder are reported to the Finance team immediately.



### **Reconciliation of Credit Card Statements**

15. Credit card statements itemising transaction activity are received and reconciled on a monthly basis.
- monthly card holder statements are received by the CEO and are then passed to the Finance team for distribution to card holders.
  - card holders must then reconcile and return their monthly statement within 14 days. Failure to submit reconciled statements in a timely fashion may result in withdrawal of a credit card.
  - card holders must attach supporting receipts for each transaction on the monthly statement along with an explanation as to the nature of the expenditure before signing and dating the statement and forwarding to their Line Manager within 7 days for approval.
  - the Line Manager will certify that all charges shown are correct and were incurred for appropriate business purposes by countersigning the monthly statement.
  - any instance where documentation or receipts in support of a transaction is not available or has been misplaced must be explained by the card holder to their Line Manager who must confirm their acceptance of the cost by signing the statement and noting that a receipt was missing
  - the card holder will forward the certified statement and supporting receipts to the Finance team who will ensure that the statement balance is paid on time and the expenditure is correctly accounted for and recorded.

### **Policy Monitoring**

16. The Audit & Assurance Committee is responsible for the implementation and review of MG ALBA's Credit Card Policy.
17. The Finance team will report to the Audit & Assurance Committee every 6 months on the nature and volume of credit card transactions.

## **2.11 Entertaining and Provision of Hospitality**

The provision by individuals of entertainment or hospitality at MG ALBA's expense should be approved in advance by the Chief Executive. Expense claim forms must state clearly who was being entertained – name and organisation – and for what reason.

## **2.12 Receipt of Gifts or Hospitality**

Gifts (for you or your immediate family) from organisations or individuals with whom you have or might have business dealings on behalf of MG ALBA should not be accepted. This can include goods and services in kind, at preferential rates or cash. Gifts should be returned to the sender or donated to charity.

Very modest gifts e.g. diaries or a bottle of wine, of less than £25 in value, may be occasionally accepted subject to notification being made to the Management Accountant, who will maintain a register of such gifts.

Whilst modest hospitality is an accepted courtesy of a business relationship, you should not allow a position to be reached whereby its acceptance might be deemed by others to have influenced a decision or lead to potential allegations of conflict of interest.

Invitations to modest corporate entertainment events may be accepted if there is clear benefit to MG ALBA e.g. to build supplier relationships or to network with other customers/contacts. Before any invitation is accepted Line Manager approval must be sought in writing. The Management Accountant will keep a register of attendance at corporate entertainment events funded by other parties.

Invitations to corporate hospitality events funded by other parties should not normally be accepted if the event is overseas or includes an overnight stay. Exceptionally the Chief Executive, or in the case of the Chief Executive, the Chairman, may be able to authorise acceptance if there is a strong business case and this is evidenced in writing.

Invitations which include partners may be accepted, with line manager approval, and provided they meet the above criteria, if there is no cost to MG ALBA.

Board members are also subject to the provisions set out in the Members' Code of Conduct as published on MG ALBA's website.

### **2.13 Air Miles / Hotel Point Schemes**

If you receive points from the above schemes, you may use the points for personal travel. Bookings, however, must be carried out in accordance with the recommended MG ALBA system. Travellers may retain 'Frequent Flyer' programme benefits, but the Company should not incur any additional cost as a result. Also, the Company is not responsible for any associated tax liability.

### **2.14 Hours of Work**

Your individual contractual hours of work are stated in your contract of employment. In addition to your contractual hours, you may be required to work additional hours as stated in your contract of employment. In some instances, you may be asked to change your starting and finishing times to meet the needs of MG ALBA. You may be required to travel in the course of your employment.

The normal working week for most full-time employees is 37 hours, worked between the hours of 9.00 and 17.30 hours each day, Monday to Thursday and until 17.00 on Friday, excluding 1 hour for lunch, which is unpaid. Studio staff will be required to work to flexible work patterns in order to fulfil MG ALBA's broadcasting commitments. Part time employees will work the hours as detailed in their individual contracts of employment. MG ALBA also operates flexibility of working patterns under our Agile Working Policy (non-contractual). Full details of this policy can be found in the Health & Safety Manual.

All employees are expected to work outside of normal hours from time to time; for instance, in the case of evening events or meetings. Studio staff should expect to work on weekdays until 21.30 by rotation and from time to time on weekends.

No employee of MG ALBA will be expected to work more than 48 hours per working week (Monday to Sunday) unless you agree in writing that this limit will not apply. The 48 hours will be calculated as an average over a 17-week reference period.

### **2.15 Time off in Lieu (TOIL) and Overtime**

Studio staff are entitled to take time off in lieu (TOIL) for any hours worked over those set out in your contract of employment, provided the additional hours worked have been authorised and evidenced in a time sheet signed off by your Line Manager.

Non-studio staff are discouraged from regularly working hours in excess of the normal working week. Non-studio staff may only take time off in lieu in circumstances where your Line Manager has requested you to work additional hours and you have agreed to do so. This should be arranged on a common-sense basis with your Line Manager.

Exceptionally we may, at our absolute discretion, pay overtime to studio staff. This will be agreed on an individual basis with your Line Manager. Overtime will only be paid when the time can be charged back to a client who has placed unusual or unexpected demands on MG ALBA.

Other than in exceptional circumstances, TOIL should be used up within two months of the month in which it is accrued, minimising the need to take off long, concentrated periods of time as TOIL. Any

carry forward of TOIL for more than two months must be authorised in writing by the Finance Director.

The designated Management Accountant will monitor time and costing on a weekly basis and appropriate time sheets should be submitted on the Monday following the week to which the hours apply.

## 2.16 Time Keeping

You are responsible for attending punctually for work in accordance with the hours stipulated either on your shift rota or defined within your individual contract of employment. You may not leave work prior to your normal finishing time without permission from your Line Manager. In the event of you obtaining permission to have time away from work during your normal working period, you must report to your Line Manger upon leaving, and again on your return.

All employees must fob in/out when entering/leaving the building. This is essential for fire evacuation and search purposes. If you forget your fob, you must sign in/out. Periodic audits will be conducted to ensure compliance and persistent failure to comply following investigation may result in disciplinary action.

## 2.17 Conduct

It is a condition of your employment that you engage in no activity, whether inside or outside work, which would be considered damaging to the public image and reputation of MG ALBA. If you have any concerns in this regard, please speak to the Chief Executive in the first instance.

MG ALBA expects all employees to be positive, enthusiastic, pleasant and well-mannered as per our core standards of behaviour. (Please refer to section 7.3). Much of MG ALBA's work relates to confidential information about individuals and organisations; you are expected at all times to respect the confidentiality of those with whom MG ALBA works, and of other employees.

## 2.18 Conflict/Declaration of Interest *(This policy is non-contractual)*

MG ALBA does not allow employees or Board members to engage in any activity that involves or might involve a conflict of interest either as an individual or as part of a partnership/company.

A conflict of interest is where you have a direct or indirect interest in, or benefit from, in any way, a commercial activity that might affect MG ALBA or your judgment whilst acting on MG ALBA's behalf.

Members of the Board, senior management, commissioning team members and budget holders must declare conflicts of interest twice yearly in a **Declaration of Interests form**.

If you are asked to take part in activities that could create an actual or perceived temporary conflict of interest, such as taking a paid position in a programme funded by MG ALBA, you must obtain authorisation from the Chief Executive (if you are a staff member) or the Chair (if you are a Board member) prior to undertaking those activities. Staff and Board members must complete the **Authorisation to take part in Productions Form**.

### ***Taking part in the production of programmes***

In general, staff and Board members should not take a paid role in the production by third parties of content commissioned and funded by MG ALBA.

However, in certain circumstances this may be possible provided the following conditions are adhered to.

- **Taking an unpaid role in a production**
  - It must be clear that the individual is not representing MG ALBA; **or**
  - If they are representing MG ALBA written permission must be obtained from the Chief Executive (staff) or from the Chair (members).
  
- **Taking a paid role in a production\*:**
  - It must be clear that the individual is not representing MG ALBA; **and**
  - they did not take part in the commissioning of the programme (staff) or in board decisions leading to the commissioning of the programme if it could be reasonably assumed that the individual could have been a beneficiary of such a decision (members); **and**,
  - they will not take part in the editorial, technical or financial assessment of the programme or of similar programmes in the same genre (staff and members); **and**
  - The Chief Executive (staff) or the Chair (members) has given written Authorisation in advance.

*\* "Taking a paid role in a production" includes any relationship with the producer whereby the individual, in exchange for payment or other personal benefit, provides services or support to the producer, including but not limited to the provision of scripts, research, advice, off-screen production services or on-screen contributions.*

MG ALBA may from time to time second staff to a production for their own personal and professional development. In such cases, the staff member will continue to be paid by MG ALBA and must not be paid by, or receive other benefits from, the producer.

### **Procedure**

- Members of the Board, senior management, commissioning team members and budget holders must declare conflicts of interest twice yearly in a **Declaration of Interests form** to be submitted to the Corporate Affairs Manager.
  
- The Corporate Affairs Manager will publish on MG ALBA's website a **Register of Interests** for senior staff and Board Members.
  
- If staff wish to participate in a production funded by MG ALBA, they must complete the **Authorisation to take part in Productions Form** and submit it to their line manager. If approved by the Line Manager, the form should be submitted to the Corporate Affairs Manager who will (a) seek the required authorisation from the Chief Executive, (b) notify the applicant of the outcome and (c) update MG ALBA's records accordingly.
  
- For staff, it will be a condition of participation that the individual does not take part in external work during their core contracted working hours, unless unpaid leave has been authorised.
  
- If Board members wish to participate in a production funded by MG ALBA, they should request the necessary Authorisation from the Chair, copying the Corporate Affairs Manager who will update MG ALBA's records accordingly.
  
- Authorisation must be given in advance in writing by the Chief Executive (staff) or the Chair (members).

## **2.19 Holidays**

The holiday year commences on 1<sup>st</sup> January and ends on 31<sup>st</sup> December. Employees who join the Company part way through the year will be entitled to holidays on a pro rata basis relative to the number of completed month's service in that year.

All MG ALBA employees are entitled to 25 days (5 weeks) paid holiday leave per year on a pro-rata basis depending on the hours worked per week. You are also entitled to 12 public holidays per annum as days of leave. The public holidays which MG ALBA recognises are detailed on the employee notice board and may be subject to change from year to year.

Holidays must be taken at such times as may be agreed between yourself and your Line Manager and / or Departmental Head. You should give as much notice as is reasonably practicable in applying for annual leave. In any event, such notice must be at least twice the number of days' leave as that you wish to take as annual leave, for example, you must give four weeks' notice to take two weeks' annual leave. The Company will try to co-operate with your holiday plans where possible, but all leave is subject to operational requirements and the need to maintain reasonable staffing levels.

With prior approval from your Line Manager/Departmental Head, you may carry over up to 5 days' annual leave into the following holiday year. No payments in lieu will be made for any outstanding holiday entitlement, except where the employment relationship is terminated.

You may "buy" up to 5 days' holiday annually. You should refer to your contract of employment for further details. Should you join or leave MG ALBA during the annual leave year, your holiday entitlement will be calculated on a pro-rata basis. If you leave MG ALBA, any difference between your accrued holiday entitlement and holiday actually taken will be treated as an adjustment, at your normal rate of pay, to your final salary.

## 2.20 Termination of Employment

If you decide to leave MG ALBA, you must give notice in writing to your Line Manager. The period of notice you must give, or will be given, to terminate your employment with MG ALBA is stated in your terms and conditions of employment.

The whole or any part of the period of notice may be waived by mutual agreement between you, the Chief Executive, and the Chair of the Board. We reserve the right to require you to take any unused holiday during your notice period, even if booked to be taken after the end of the notice period. Your final pay will be adjusted for any current year holiday entitlements not taken; for holiday taken in excess of your entitlement; or for expenses before the end of your notice period. You will normally receive your final salary cheque and P45 on your last day of work.

### Fixed Term Contracts

If you are employed on a fixed term contract your employment will end at the termination of the fixed term, with notice as detailed in your contract of employment having been given.

### Dismissal

Your notice period will be forfeited if your employment is terminated as a result of dismissal for gross misconduct under MG ALBA's disciplinary procedure.

## 2.21 Exit Interviews

MG ALBA has a policy of carrying out exit interviews which enables us to find out why employees are leaving and to see if any lessons are to be learnt for the future. The interviews are normally carried out by a senior member of staff, supported by the HR Adviser.

## 2.22 References

Only the Chief Executive and Chair may write references on behalf of MG ALBA about MG ALBA employees. References will be copied to Personnel file. If a reference is given by telephone, notes of what was said will be kept and placed in Employee's Personnel file. References will be factual and will follow a standard format. The HR Advisor will supply the format. Personal and character references will not be made by MG ALBA. This type of reference is made by individuals only and must not be issued on behalf of MG ALBA.

## 2.23 Redundancy

From time to time MG ALBA may require fewer employees because of economic, technological or business-related reasons. Regrettably, this could result in some employee redundancies as the organisational design changes in line with business needs and to aid future growth and sustainability.

The constantly changing business environment means that redundancy is occasionally inevitable, but MG ALBA will do its utmost to find other solutions first and wherever possible, employees will be redeployed. There will be support made available where redeployment is not possible.

It is MG ALBA's intention to avoid redundancies wherever possible, and if they should be unavoidable to mitigate their effect. Furthermore, this policy reflects MG ALBA's commitment to full employee consultation and to provide appropriate support to staff should redundancies take place.

This applies to all categories of staff and this policy is in line with all relevant employment legislation and requirements including:

- Equality Act 2010;
- Employment Rights Act 1996;
- Fixed Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002;
- Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000; and
- Employment Act 2002 (Dispute Resolution) Regulations 2004

This policy also applies to any situation where fewer employees are required due to a reorganisation of work.

MG ALBA will comply with all requirements under statute, employment regulation and in line with current guidance provided by ACAS in terms of identifying alternatives to redundancy; voluntary redundancy; consultation and information; redundancy selection, suitable alternative work, time off to look for work / undergo training, support for redundant employees, notice and termination of employment.

### **Statutory Redundancy Payments**

Those employees with two or more years' continuous service with MG ALBA will be entitled to receive a statutory redundancy payment. This will be calculated according to their age, length of service and final gross weekly pay subject to the statutory maximum (based on the maximum rate of a week's pay at the time of the redundancy dismissal). There will be discretion to pay enhanced redundancy monies assessed on a case by case basis and using objective criteria, subject to authorisation by the Chief Executive.

## 2.24 Out of Hours Call Outs

To manage building security, MG ALBA contracts with an external security company. The building is locked at 17:30 hours. The premises are alarmed and managed by the security company. In the case of the alarm being activated after 17:30 hours and at weekends, there are 3 employees on a rota who will be called out to attend. MG ALBA will pay £30 per hour, or part thereof, for out of hours call outs.

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## Section 3 – Benefits

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### 3.1 Pension Scheme

MG ALBA operates defined contribution pension arrangements for all eligible employees. The assets are held separately from those of MG ALBA in independently administered funds with insurance companies. MG ALBA's basic contribution is 10% of gross salary. This is increased to 15% on the condition that you contribute an additional 5%. Further information is available from the Director of Finance.

MG ALBA offers staff an opportunity to consult once a year with a pension's adviser to enable you to consider your pension planning. You may choose an adviser from a list which the Accountant will maintain, and MG ALBA will pay for one consultation per year. The contract will be between you and the adviser and if you require further consultations that will be a matter for you to decide at your own discretion and expense. Matters discussed will be purely a matter for you and your adviser, and MG ALBA will bear no responsibility other than to pay for an annual consultation.

### 3.2 Death in Service

MG ALBA operates a scheme where a sum equal to 4 times annual salary is payable on your death. Nomination forms and further information are available from the Director of Finance.

### 3.3 Eye Tests

Display screen equipment users are entitled to an eye test every 2 years. If the eye test determines that glasses are either required for VDU use or glasses need replacing for a change of prescription, then the company will contribute £35 towards the cost. This money will be paid out on submission of a receipt from your optician. Further information on the use of display screen equipment is available in our Health & Safety Policy Arrangements paragraph 4.10.

### 3.4 Local Authority Health Club

Membership to a Local Authority run health and sports club is open to all full-time employees. Should a staff member wish membership to a private club then MG ALBA will contribute to the annual membership up to the costs of membership to the nearest local authority run club. You should advise the Finance Team if you are not utilising your membership as the company reserves the right to cancel memberships that are not being utilised.

### 3.5 Salary Sacrifice Schemes

MG ALBA offers staff access to benefits through Salary Sacrifice schemes.

Salary sacrifice is when you agree to sacrifice or give up part of your salary in order to receive tax or National Insurance savings for both you and MG ALBA and increase the value of your overall pay package.

The "Cycle to Work" scheme gives employees access to a tax-free bicycle and safety equipment in return for a reduction in their taxable salary through a hire agreement for a defined period. Further details of the Salary Sacrifice Scheme can be obtained from the Accountant.

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## Section 4 – General Conditions

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### 4.1 Training & Development

#### Training & Development – General

MG ALBA is committed to the role of training in helping individual employees, both to become more effective in their jobs and to develop their career potential.

#### Induction Training

As a first-time visitor to the premises you are required to go through a very short induction process to read and understand some on-site welfare and safety information and to comply with certain requirements such as parking and security measures.

Your Line Manager is responsible for giving you a more specific induction during your first month of employment, which should give you a thorough grounding in your new job and a general introduction to procedures. At this time, specific additional training needs may be identified or at your next scheduled employee appraisal.

#### Training Programme

Each employee is required to have a Learning and Development plan which will enable them to become more effective in their job and fulfill their annual job objectives. The Learning and Development Plan should enable the continuing professional development of the employee by a variety of means, including (but not limited to) attendance at suitable courses, gaining relevant accreditation, online learning, commitment to self-development by reading and participation in external for a, short placements, conference and event attendance and participation in professional development programmes.

Subject to budgetary constraints and agreement with your Line Manager MG ALBA will pay for and/or organise other training to support:

- Development of skills/knowledge that are essential to the job
- New skills/knowledge that you would like to develop and are identified by the annual appraisal process
- New skills/knowledge that may be required for MG ALBA work in the future
- Skills/knowledge which can develop yourself and your career at MG ALBA.

#### Competency Framework

MG ALBA have developed a Competency Framework to support employees in their Continued Professional Development (see Section 11). The MG ALBA Competency Framework gives guidance to employees and line managers on the range of knowledge, skills, behaviours, attitudes and values that enable employees to perform their role to the standards required and achieve growth in a range of skills and abilities. Performance Appraisal, Objective Setting, Training Plans and Job Evaluation/Salary Review will all use the Competency Framework as a reference tool.



## On the Job Training

Most of your training at MG ALBA will be informal and on the job. This will include:

- Coaching from line manager
- Assistance from colleagues and employees in similar roles elsewhere
- Reference material and books
- Setting targets for development
- Conference and seminar attendance and participation in related fields

## External Training

MG ALBA are committed to investing in training and development for staff through the use of external training providers. When fully funded by MG ALBA, MG ALBA reserves the right to make external training conditional upon the employee undertaking in advance of participation in the course to repay all or part of the costs if he /she leaves MG ALBA within twelve months of undertaking the training. If the condition is accepted and the training undertaken this will be applied as follows:

Date of Leaving MG ALBA after completion of the Training Course	Percentage repayment by Employee
Between 0 and 6 months	100%
Between 6 and 9 months	50%
Between 9 and 12 months	25%
Leaving prior to completion of training	100%

You should attend all courses agreed with your line manager and paid for by MG ALBA and be prepared to give formal evaluation of the course or receive formal evaluation of your participation if requested. Should you fail to attend or complete a course through no fault of MG ALBA and without reasonable excuse as determined by your line manager, you may be asked to repay either as a lump sum or through a scheduled programme of repayments the whole amount incurred by MG ALBA.

## Personal Development

Occasionally MG ALBA employees may want to request unpaid leave and sabbaticals to undertake continuing personal development or to pursue personal interests. MG ALBA will treat all such requests sympathetically while taking into account current resources. Secondments and placements are dealt with in sections 7.15-7.16.

## 4.2 Retirement

With effect from 6 April 2011, MG ALBA no longer operates a fixed retirement age.

MG ALBA will not require employees to retire from employment upon reaching a particular age. We recognise the value and contributions of our employees and we wish to retain the skills and experience of all employees within the business.

Employees may however request to retire if they choose. MG ALBA recommends that any employees who are contemplating retirement should consider their pension provision and seek independent financial advice before making any final decision in relation to retirement.

### Retirement Procedure

An employee who wishes to retire should write to their Line Manager to confirm his or her decision to retire and the date on which he or she intends that the employment will end. The employee is required to provide at least his or her contractual period of notice before his or her chosen retirement date.

The Company will arrange a meeting with the employee to discuss his or her retirement and any necessary arrangements in relation to this. This may, for example, include making arrangements in relation to a handover of the employee's work or responsibilities, assisting with training of other members of staff or making arrangements in relation to any pension entitlement of the employee.

The Company will also write to the employee to formally acknowledge his or her notice to retire and to confirm the date on which employment will end.

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## Section 5 – Absence from Work

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### 5.1 Notification

If you are absent from work for any reason other than a planned holiday you must follow the Company's rules below:

- You must inform your Line Manager of your absence as soon as soon as possible and within 30 minutes before your scheduled start time.
- To report your absence, contact your Line Manager on the appropriate telephone number. The Line Manager should keep the Office Manager informed who will update the personnel system.
- You must keep your Line Manager informed of your progress during your absence by contacting him/her (on his/her direct number) on the third day of your absence and if your absence is to exceed 8 days, by keeping in contact according to an agreed plan which will state how contact will be made and what frequency contact will be within.
- Failure without good cause to comply with these arrangements may result, following investigation, of your Company Sick Pay being withheld and disciplinary action being instigated.

### 5.2 Medical Appointments

You are normally expected to ensure that any appointments made to visit a Doctor, Dentist, Optician, Physio etc, are made in your own time and outside normal working hours. Where this is not possible, reasonable time off will be allowed provided that:

- The appointment is substantiated with an appointment card.
- The time of the appointment causes as little disruption as possible, i.e. at the end or beginning of your working day
- Prior permission from your Line Manager has been obtained.

Payment will only be made for reasonable time off if the hours are made up at another time.

Time off for hospital appointments will be granted, provided that the appointment is substantiated with an appointment card and prior permission from your Line Manager has been obtained. There is no requirement to make this time back.

### 5.3 Statutory Sick Pay

You are entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) during authorised absence as a result of sickness, provided you meet the criteria laid down by Government SSP regulations. When you are sick for 4 or more consecutive days, you will be paid SSP by MG ALBA, if you are eligible. This is treated like wages, being subject to Income Tax deductions and National Insurance contributions.

Qualifying days are the only days for which you are entitled to SSP. These will be days on which you would normally be required by your contract of employment to be available for work. The first 3 qualifying days of sickness are waiting days, for which SSP is not payable. Where a second or subsequent period of incapacity of 4 days or more 'links' with a previous period of incapacity (i.e. within 56 days) waiting days will not be served again.

## 5.4 Company Sick Pay

Sickness benefit is equivalent to your basic salary less the current rate of Statutory Sick Pay (SSP).

Payment is not automatic and is always at the discretion of your Line Manager. Therefore, subject to your overall attendance record, compliance with the rules on notification of absence due to sickness and the satisfaction of your Line Manager that the absence was due to your own genuine illness or incapacity, you will be eligible for the following sickness benefit during any rolling 12-month period:

Up to two years' service	1 month full pay and 1 month half pay, in a rolling 12 month period
After 2 years' service	2 months' full pay/2 months' half pay in a rolling 12 month period
After 3 to 4 years' service	3 months' full pay/3 months' half pay in a rolling 12 month period
After 5 years' service	4 months' full pay/4 months' half pay in a rolling 12 month period

Your eligibility for sickness benefit relates to a rolling twelve-month period, which commences on the first day of sickness absence.

### Pregnancy Related Illness

If an employee is off-sick because of her pregnancy, then she is entitled to sick pay in the normal way. Antenatal care does not count as pregnancy-related illness in this respect. Her pregnancy sickness will be recorded separately from other illness and will not be counted towards a total sickness record. A pregnancy-related sickness absence will not be used as a reason for disciplinary action or redundancy selection.

With one notable exception mentioned below, maternity leave and pay generally start on the date the employee chooses it to start, regardless of sickness absence or the reason for it. Sick pay stops as soon as maternity leave starts.

If the employee is away from work because of a pregnancy-related sickness in the four weeks before the expected week of childbirth (EWC), her maternity leave starts on the day after the first day of her absence (unless otherwise agreed between the Company and the employee). Employees aren't entitled to statutory sick pay during the maternity pay period. The employee should notify her line manager of her absence if it's because of her pregnancy and when the absence began as soon as reasonably practicable.

## 5.5 Certification

If you are unable to attend work due to sickness, you will need to provide medical certification as follows:

Absence of up to seven calendar days: For any period of absence lasting up to seven calendar days, you should fill out a self-certification form on return to work which can be obtained from your Line Manager.

Absence for more than seven calendar days: If absence has been, or is expected to be, longer than seven days, then a Fit Note (Statement of Fitness for Work) must be submitted to MG ALBA. If sickness absence extends to more than the original seven-day period, you are required to notify your Line Manager of this on a weekly basis and supply an additional fit note to cover the on-going absence.

Submission of a fit note, although a useful piece of information, may not always be regarded by MG ALBA as sufficient justification for accepting employee absence. Illness is just one of a number of reasons for absence, and although it is generally accepted that if illness occurs, time off may be

required, continual or repeated absence through sickness may not be acceptable to MG ALBA. Therefore, although the fit note will give a reason for the absence, MG ALBA may decide that repeated absences for those reasons are not acceptable. In consultation with the staff member, and with the support of an external HR Advisor, MG ALBA will seek to assist with any underlying issues that are contributing to an employee's capability for attending work.

In deciding whether or not the absence is acceptable, MG ALBA will take into account the reasons for and extent of the absence, including any absence caused by sickness.

MG ALBA will view any sickness leave taken that is found to be not genuine very seriously indeed and will always result in disciplinary action being taken. MG ALBA may consider the use of outstanding holiday entitlement payments in lieu of SSP payments if requested by you.

## 5.6 Sickness during Holidays

If you fall sick immediately before or on the first working day of your holiday it may be treated as a sickness absence, enabling you to take the holiday at a later date. This will be at your Line Manager's discretion.

This will only be considered if you: -

- Notify your Line Manager of the circumstances by telephone on the first working day of the absence.
- Provide medical evidence from your Doctor or the hospital. This must be dated on and related to the first working day of your absence. You must then submit this to your Line Manager as soon as possible.

In making a decision, your Line Manager will also consider your attendance record. If your request is granted, you will be able to take these holidays at another mutually agreed time.

If, however, you fall sick after the first working day of your holiday, then that holiday will be deemed to have been taken.

## 5.7 Medical Examinations

MG ALBA may at any time, require you to undertake a medical examination and consent to reports on your absence being supplied to MG ALBA by its medical advisers where:

- The validity of information concerning your absence is in doubt, or
- Absence appears to cause or is likely cause a deterioration of your work performance.

Failure to agree to such examinations without good cause may render you liable to disciplinary action and may result in your Company sick pay being withheld.

## 5.8 Absence for Reasons Other than Sickness

For any absence during working hours other than sickness or unexpected causes, you must obtain your Line Manger's prior agreement. Where you have to leave work quickly to deal with an emergency, it is your responsibility to contact your Line Manager as soon as is possible with details of the problem and likely length of absence.

## 5.9 Authorised Absence – (Paid)

Some employees are entitled to time off with pay for public duties as set out under statute; for example, JPs and local authority councillors. You should give your Line Manager as much notice as you can, and also advise them of your intention of taking up public duties prior to any commitment being made.

In addition, employees will be entitled to reasonable paid time off if they are:

- Recognised Trade Union or accredited safety representatives, to attend to their duties or undergo training.
- Pregnant and attending ante-natal care.
- Under notice of redundancy, with at least two years' continuous service, to look for employment or undergo training.

The HR Adviser will collect data from employees about trade union membership and paid or unpaid "Facility Time" for Trade Union representatives to attend to duties for the purposes of reporting. This data will be collected, stored and processed in line with the MG ALBA Privacy Policy.

## 5.10 Authorised Absence – (Unpaid)

Employees will be entitled to reasonable unpaid time off if they are the holders of certain public offices.

In the case of any statutory time off, paid or unpaid, the employee should give as much notice of this proposed absence as possible. Written evidence of the reason for the time off should be provided on request.

## 5.11 Unauthorised Absence

All unauthorised absence will be without pay and will be fully investigated under the MG ALBA disciplinary procedure. Recurring unauthorised absence may result in dismissal.

## 5.12 Suspected Abuse of Absence Management Policy

When there is reasonable doubt regarding your reason for absence, the Chief Executive and HR Advisor will discuss this matter with you and may require you to see a doctor. The Chief Executive and HR Advisor will not divulge medical information about you to any other employee without your consent.

Where abuse of the sickness absence policy is clearly in evidence following investigation, the Chief Executive in consultation with the HR Advisor will consider withdrawing MG ALBA Sick Pay. The disciplinary procedure may also be invoked.

## 5.13 Monitoring and Reviewing of Absence

Levels of absence within MG ALBA need to be minimised, as every employee has an important part to play as part of the team.

In order to establish consistency, fairness and best practice, absence will be monitored by your Line Manager with support and advice given by the HR Advisor. If any member of employees has three periods of absence due to illness (certified or not) within a twelve-month period, or if the length of the absence is deemed to be unacceptably high, you may be asked to attend a meeting with your Line Manager and the HR Advisor.

Such a meeting, where it is warranted, may result in a further review after an agreed length of time. If no substantial improvement takes place over this agreed period, a medical examination may be requested.

Employees with health problems may be referred by the Chief Executive to undertake an examination by MG ALBA's nominated medical practitioner, who will advise management on the current state of their health in relation to the job they are doing. The medical practitioner may offer advice, and if necessary, will liaise with your own doctor.

#### **5.14 Return to Work Interview**

The objective of a Return to Work Interview is to understand the reasons for the absence and to discuss with you any assistance MG ALBA can give in terms of hours or workload if these have been a contributory factor to the absence.

A period of absence due to illness will result in a Return to Work Interview being arranged by your Line Manager. The interview should be conducted by your Line Manager on the first day of you returning to work. A copy of the interview report will be kept in your personnel file. In cases where the absenteeism level is in excess of MG ALBA averages then it may be necessary to conduct further investigations which may lead to disciplinary action.

#### **5.15 Accidents at Work**

All accidents and incidents (near misses and dangerous occurrences) must be reported immediately to the Office Manager, who will inform the Chief Executive. Details will be recorded in the accident book and kept on file. The accident book will be maintained by the Office Manager.

Further information on our accident reporting procedure is available in our Health & Safety Policy Arrangements.

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## Section 6 – Other Leave

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### 6.1 Maternity Leave

Every effort is made to encourage women to return to work from maternity leave. This policy applies to all employees, full-time and part-time.

We also recognise that arrangements for cover during the period of maternity leave and additional leave, as well as arrangements for communication during maternity leave, are important for ensuring smooth transitions at every stage.

#### Notification

When you receive medical confirmation that you are pregnant, you should notify your Line Manager in writing as soon as possible that you are pregnant, of your EWC (expected week of childbirth) and of the date on which you intend to begin your maternity leave (this must be no earlier than the 11<sup>th</sup> week before the EWC).

If requested to do so, you must provide a medical certificate confirming your EWC (this is called a MATB1 and should be given to you by your doctor or midwife).

Within 28 days of receiving notification from you of the date on which you will start your maternity leave, MG ALBA will write to you to inform you of the date when you are expected to return to work if you take your full entitlement to maternity leave.

If you wish to change the start date of your maternity leave, you must notify MG ALBA of the variation at least 28 days before the date which you wish to vary or 28 days before the new date, whichever is earlier.

#### Ante-Natal Care

Employees who are pregnant are entitled to paid time off work to attend ante-natal care. If requested by MG ALBA, you may be asked to provide a certificate of pregnancy and an appointment card.

#### Entitlement to Maternity Leave

You are entitled, irrespective of your length of service or hours of work, to 52 weeks' maternity leave (subject to complying with the notification requirements above). Maternity leave is divided into ordinary maternity leave of 26 weeks and additional maternity leave of a further 26 weeks.

#### Commencement of Maternity Leave

Maternity leave will begin on whichever is the earliest of:

- (a) the date you have notified as the intended start date; or
- (b) the day following the first day of absence wholly or partly because of pregnancy after the 4<sup>th</sup> week before the EWC; or
- (c) the day following the date of the birth.

Where an employee suffers a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy, maternity leave will begin automatically.



### **Compulsory Maternity Leave**

You are not entitled to return from maternity leave until two weeks after the birth of your child.

### **Maternity Pay**

You are entitled to statutory maternity pay (SMP) provided you comply with the notification requirements above and you:

- Have 26 weeks' continuous service with MG ALBA, ending with the 15th week before the EWC (expected week of childbirth);
- Earn more than the lower earnings limit (LEL) for National Insurance purposes;
- Provide evidence of the EWC – this is usually in the form of the MATB1 form which is provided by a registered midwife or medical practitioner; and
- Are still pregnant or have given birth by the 11<sup>th</sup> week before the EWC.

If you meet all of these criteria, you will be entitled to up to 39 weeks' SMP. The first 6 weeks are earnings-related - 90% of your average weekly earnings and the remaining 33 weeks are at a standard rate. The remaining 13 weeks of maternity leave are unpaid.

Your average pay is calculated by assessing the average weekly pay you received in the 8-week period immediately prior to the 15<sup>th</sup> week before your EWC. In other words, during weeks 16 to 24 of your pregnancy.

You can start your maternity pay period (providing you stop work) at any time from the 11th week before the EWC, up to the date of your baby's birth. You must give MG ALBA at least 28 days' notice in writing of the date on which you expect your maternity pay to start. Maternity pay can commence on the day on which your maternity leave begins if desired.

However, if you are not entitled to SMP you may be eligible for maternity allowance which you can claim from the Department for Work and Pensions.

### **Occupational Maternity Pay**

Occupational Maternity Pay is a sum paid in addition to Statutory Maternity Pay to employees who fulfil additional conditions.

If an employee has 26 weeks or more continuous service by her qualifying week, she will be entitled to 39 weeks paid leave, as follows:

First 18 weeks	Full Pay
Following 21 weeks	Statutory Maternity Pay
Remaining 13 weeks	No pay

### **Rights while on Maternity Leave**

During maternity leave, your contract of employment will continue, and you remain entitled to all contractual benefits, with the exception of remuneration. While you are on Maternity Leave your contractual holiday entitlement continues to accrue.

During the course of your entire maternity leave, you will continue to be entitled to pension payments to your nominated fund at the same level as if you were working at full pay.

## **Keeping in Touch**

Before going on maternity leave your Line Manager will encourage you to remain in contact during your maternity leave. MG ALBA is entitled to make reasonable contact with you from time to time during your leave.

You will also be able to work (and receive pay) for up to 10 days during your maternity leave without losing your right to SMP for that week or bringing maternity leave to an end. This will allow you to “keep in touch” with what is happening in the work place should you choose to take up this option.

## **Returning to Work**

If you return to work during or at the end of ordinary maternity leave, you are entitled to return to the same job in which you were employed before your absence (subject to any redundancy situation).

If you return to work during or at the end of additional maternity leave, you have the right to return to the job in which you were employed before your absence (unless there is a redundancy situation) or, if it is not reasonably practicable for MG ALBA to permit you to return to that job, to another job which is both suitable for you and appropriate in the circumstances. The job will be on terms and conditions, including those relating to remuneration, which are no less favourable than those which would have applied had you not been absent at any time since the commencement of your maternity leave period.

You do not need to write to say when you are returning unless you want to return earlier than the date originally agreed with MG ALBA, in which case you must give 8 weeks’ notice in writing.

## **Early Return to Work**

If you wish to return to work early you must give 8 weeks’ notice. If you fail to do so MG ALBA may postpone your return to the extent necessary to give 8 weeks’ notice or to the end of your maternity leave period, whichever is earlier.

## **Deciding not to return to work**

If you decide not to return to work following your maternity leave, you should give MG ALBA the required notice under your contract of employment. If you decide you do not wish to return at the end of maternity leave you will continue to be entitled to SMP (if eligible) and maternity leave even though you are not coming back.

## **Flexible/Part-time return to work**

MG ALBA is committed to being as flexible as possible in accommodating the wishes of employees who wish to return to work on a part-time or other basis; however, because we are a small organisation, this may not be possible in all circumstances.

If you wish to return to work on a part-time basis, or on a different basis to your existing job, MG ALBA will try to accommodate these wishes. If this is your intention, you should understand that whether MG ALBA can accommodate your wishes or not may depend on practical matters; it may be advisable to explore the options at an early stage by speaking to your Line Manager.

You may make a request to work flexibly if you have 26 weeks’ employment service. Please refer to Section 7.1 for details on how to make a Flexible Working Request.

If you are unclear about any aspect of maternity leave and/or allowance, please speak to your Line Manager or our external HR Advisor.

## Health and Safety

MG ALBA has a general duty to take care of the health and safety of all employees. MG ALBA will, carry out a risk assessment to assess the workplace risks to women who are pregnant, have recently given birth or are breastfeeding a child. The risk assessment will identify any hazards and control measures required. If the risks are unavoidable then the woman's working conditions will be altered to avoid the risks. Alternatively, she will be offered other work or suspended from work.

MG ALBA will comply with any legislative requirement to suspend employees for health and safety reasons. However, MG ALBA is obliged to offer any suitable alternative work available, on terms and conditions not substantially less favourable to those on which the employee is then employed, to employees affected before deciding to suspend them.

If you are suspended on such grounds you shall be entitled to full salary during such suspension unless you refuse the offer of suitable alternative employment in which case MG ALBA has the right to suspend you without pay.

Further information on Expectant or Nursing Mothers is available in our Health & Safety Policy Arrangements.

## 6.2 Paternity Leave

Paternity leave is available for the purpose of caring for a new-born baby or adopted child and supporting the mother or adopting parent. To be eligible for paternity leave, you must have responsibility for bringing up the child. You must be the biological father, the mother's husband or partner (including same sex couples) or one member of a couple who have jointly adopted a child (and you are not taking adoption leave).

In order to be entitled to paternity leave, you must have had at least 26 weeks' continuous service by the end of the 15th week before the week the baby is due (or the week in which a match is made with a child for adoption) and must continue to work for MG ALBA until the baby's birth or the adoption of the child.

You are entitled to take up to 2 weeks' paternity leave in either a single block of 2 weeks or a single block of 1 week.

You can choose to take paternity leave from the date of the baby's birth (or child's placement) or later as long as leave is taken within 56 days of the birth/placement. An employee who has adopted a child from overseas must arrange for leave to be taken within 56 days from the date on which the child entered Great Britain. If the birth is premature, the leave can be taken within 56 days of the expected date of birth.

The same right to leave exists for stillbirths if born after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

You must notify MG ALBA of the day on which you expect to start your paternity leave and whether you wish to take 1 or 2 weeks' leave, on or before the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (or within 7 days of matching a child for adoption).

If this is not reasonably practicable, MG ALBA must be notified as soon as is reasonably practicable.

If MG ALBA requests it, you must complete a self-certificate as evidence of your eligibility for paternity leave. The same procedure acts as evidence for paternity pay.

In order to qualify for statutory paternity pay (SPP), you must notify MG ALBA at least 28 days before you expect your pay period to start (or if that is not reasonably practicable, as soon as is reasonably practicable).

If you were not asked by MG ALBA for a self-certificate for paternity leave, you must now give MG ALBA a completed self-certificate as evidence of eligibility for SPP.

You must earn, on average the Lower Earnings Limit to qualify for paternity pay. SPP will be paid at the same flat rate as SMP.

Occupational Paternity Pay is a sum paid in addition to Statutory Paternity Pay to employees who fulfil additional conditions.

If an employee has 26 weeks or more continuous service by the end of the 15th week before the week the baby is due (or the week in which a match is made with a child for adoption), and continues to work for MG ALBA until the baby's birth or the adoption of the child, he will be entitled to take 2 weeks off work on full pay.

### 6.3 Shared Parental Leave

#### Introduction

The Company is committed to equality of opportunity for all employees and will not treat any employee less favourably because they have taken advantage of their rights in respect of their family or caring commitments. We understand that, as an employer, we have a role in assisting employees to achieve a work-life balance and, as far as the business is able, we support this.

If your baby is due, or you are adopting a child on or after 5 April 2015, you may be entitled to Shared Parental Leave (SPL) and Shared Parental Pay (ShPP). SPL and ShPP give parents the opportunity to share an entitlement to time off and pay during the first year of a child's life, or the first year following adoption.

The right to maternity or adoption leave and pay remains in place but if the employee chooses to bring their maternity or adoption leave and pay to an early end then eligible working parents will be able to share the balance of the remaining leave and pay as SPL and ShPP. Partners of the mother or primary adopter maintain their entitlement to up to 2 weeks' paternity leave and pay, but this will be deducted from any available SPL and ShPP.

Depending on their eligibility, SPL and/or ShPP may be available to one or both parents.

#### Eligibility - Shared Parental Leave

To be eligible for SPL, the child's mother or the other adoptive parent must be eligible for maternity leave or pay, maternity allowance or adoption leave or pay.

If you wish to take SPL you must:

- Have at least 26 weeks' continuous service with the Company by the end on the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the due date (or by the date you are notified of a match for adoption),
- Still be employed by the Company when you take SPL
- Have or expect to have parental responsibility for the child, and
- Give the correct notice, including a declaration that your partner meets the employment and income requirements for SPL.

#### Shared Parental Pay (ShPP)

You may be eligible for ShPP during a period of SPL if:

- You qualify for Statutory Maternity Pay, or Statutory Adoption pay, or
- You qualify for Statutory Paternity Pay and you partner qualifies for Statutory Maternity Pay, or Statutory Adoption Pay.

## **Entitlement**

If you are eligible and you or your partner being your maternity or adoption leave and pay to an end early, then you may:

- Take the remaining balance of the 52 weeks' leave as SPL
- Be paid ShPP for the balance of the 39 weeks' pay period.

The mother must take a minimum of 2 weeks' maternity leave following the birth, therefore the maximum leave that can be shared is 50 weeks and the maximum pay to be shared is 37 weeks.

If your partner is eligible for SPL you can take the leave together or at different times.

You may request SPL in continuous or discontinuous periods. A continuous period would be where you take your SPL in a fixed block of for example one month. A discontinuous period would be where you are to take your leave in shorter blocks, so for example you might ask to take every other week off over a period of eight weeks.

## **Starting and Taking SPL**

For SPL to begin, the mother or adopter must do one of the following:

- End their maternity or adoption leave by returning to work
- Give us/their employer binding notice of the date when they'll end their maternity or adoption leave (at least 8 weeks beforehand)
- End adoption pay, maternity pay or Maternity Allowance (if they are not entitled to maternity leave).

SPL can start for the partner whilst the mother or adopter is still on maternity or adoption leave provided the mother/adopter has given binding notice to end their leave (or pay if they are not entitled to leave).

## **Notification Requirements**

### **Written notice of entitlement**

If you wish to take SPL you must give us written notice of your entitlement to SPL and ShPP.

This notice must include the following information:

- Your partner's name
- The start and end dates of maternity or adoption leave
- The total amount of SPL and ShPP available and how much you and your partner intend to take
- Confirmation that you are sharing childcare responsibility with your partner.

You must also give us a signed declaration from your partner, stating the following:

- Their name, address and national insurance number
- Confirmation that they satisfy the qualifying requirements for SPL
- That they agree to you taking SPL and ShPP

If we ask you for a copy of the child's birth certificate and the name and address of your partner's employer, you must provide us with this within 14 days.

Any dates indicated in your notice of entitlement are not binding and, having given us this notice of entitlement you may vary it provided you still have at least 8 weeks to go before you are due to start a period of SPL. Any variation notice must also be signed by your partner.

### **Notice to take SPL**

In addition to giving us the notice of entitlement set out above, you must give us notice of each particular period of SPL you wish to take. The notice must be given at least 8 weeks before the start date of the first period of leave you are requesting.

### **Notice for SPL at the time of the birth or adoption**

If you are giving notice for a period of SPL just after the expected birth or adoption then the notice must contain a start date that is on the birth/adoption of the child or that is expressed as a number of days following the birth or adoption, and an end date expressed as a number of days following the birth or adoption.

### **Notice of a continuous period of leave**

If you give us notice of a continuous period of SPL (e.g. to take one month of SPL in one go) you will be entitled to take that leave.

### **Notice of a discontinuous period of leave**

If you request discontinuous periods of SPL (e.g. you ask to take every other week off over a period of eight weeks), then we will consider your request and give you a decision within two weeks of receiving it. We may agree to the leave, propose alternative dates to you or refuse the request. We will usually want to meet with you to discuss your request if we don't think we can agree to it.

If we agree to the requested SPL dates or we agree alternative dates with you within that two weeks, then the agreement is binding, and you are entitled to take that leave.

If we cannot reach agreement within the two weeks, then you may choose to take the total amount of SPL requested in one continuous block. Where this is the case you must choose a start date for SPL which cannot be sooner than eight weeks after your original notice was given. You must give us your new start dates within five days of the end of the two-week period. If you don't give us a new date, then your leave will start on the date given in your original notice.

You may, if you wish, decide to withdraw a request for discontinuous SPL. Provided you do so before we have agreed a period of leave with you, and within 14 days of giving us notice of your request, this request will not count towards the 3 blocks of leave that you can request.

### **Requesting a variation to leave**

If you wish to request a variation to either a period of continuous or discontinuous leave you must set out your request in writing. Your request should set out the SPL periods you are entitled to (i.e. what has already been agreed) and then you may:

- Vary the start or end of any period of SPL (provided you give at least 8 weeks' notice)
- Ask for a single period of leave to become discontinuous or vice versa
- Cancel completely or vary the amount of leave requested (provided you give at least 8 weeks' notice)

### **Total number of notices**

You may only give a maximum three notices to take SPL is 3. The following do not count towards this maximum:

- Any notices withdrawn at our request because the request is for discontinuous leave
- Any notice that varies an earlier notice because the child is born earlier or later than expected
- Any notice where you change your mind giving at least 8 weeks' notice before the original start date

### **Cancelling the decision to end maternity or adoption leave**

In certain circumstances the mother or adopter may be able to change the decision to end maternity or adoption leave early provided the planned end date has not already passed and she has not already returned to work.

These circumstances are:

- You find out during the 8-week notice period that neither partner is eligible for SPL or ShPP
- The mother or adopter's partner has died, or
- The mother gave notice before the birth and then tells her employer less than 6 weeks after the birth

### **Shared Parental Leave in Touch (SPLIT) Days**

You and your partner can work for up to 20 days each during SPL. These days are known as SPLIT days and may be taken in addition to the 10 Keeping in Touch days already available if you are taking maternity or adoption leave.

There is no obligation for you to work, or for us to offer you any SPLIT days but where such days are agreed, payment will be agreed in advance and provided you do not work more than the maximum, your entitlement to ShPP will be unaffected.

### **Questions about SPL**

The eligibility criteria and the notification requirements for SPL are complex. If you are considering taking SPL you are encouraged to talk to your line manager about the sort of arrangements you might like as discussion may mean you can reach agreement and then formalise the arrangement through notification process.

For further information, you should contact the HR Advisor.

## **6.4 Leave for Family Emergencies**

The Employment Relations Act 1999 gives an employee the right to take a reasonable amount of unpaid leave to deal with incidents involving a "dependant". Therefore, all requests from employees will be investigated thoroughly to ensure that legislation is followed and that requests are treated fairly and sympathetically.

A dependant is defined as the employee's parent, partner, child or someone else who lives as part of the family, for example somebody for whom the employee is the main carer. Some examples of family emergencies could be:

- To help when a dependant falls ill or injured.
- To cope when the arrangements for caring for a dependant unexpectedly breaks down.
- When a dependant gives birth.
- When a dependant dies.
- To deal with an unexpected incident involving a dependent child during school hours or on a school trip.

There is no entitlement for leave to be paid. In exceptional cases, however, it may be appropriate for pay to be given. Note that it may also be appropriate for the employee to take annual leave in some cases.

During leave employees must advise their Line Manager at the earliest opportunity if they need longer off work than anticipated to deal with the emergency.

Due to the nature of emergency leave, there are no minimum notice requirements. However, before taking leave, employees must speak to their Line Manager, or if unavailable the team Manager. Email/text is not an acceptable form of communication of the intention to take leave.

Upon returning from leave employees must meet with their Line Manager.

Taking emergency leave without advising the appropriate personnel and/or using appropriate media, as detailed above, may result in disciplinary action.

## 6.5 Personal Leave

Personal leave in addition to your annual holiday entitlement may also be granted in special circumstances, at the discretion of the Chief Executive in consultation with the HR Advisor. The Chief Executive will have the authority to grant up to five days' additional leave with pay or up to one month's unpaid leave.

## 6.6 Bereavement Leave

MG ALBA recognises that time off work following the death of a family member for mourning, supporting other family members and/or to make funeral arrangements and to attend the funeral are necessary. Therefore, some paid leave can be given, up to the following amounts, if agreed with the employee's Line Manager.

- 5 days paid leave on death of partner, child or parent/legal guardian.
- 3 days paid leave on death of brother, sister, grandparent or parent-in-law
- 1 day paid leave for other close family member (to attend funeral).

Employees are not obliged to use all leave or to take it one block and can take individual days as required around the time of the bereavement.

Bereavement leave is fully paid, based on a normal day's pay or all rostered shift hours. Pay will be received as if the employee had attended.

Employees should discuss their individual situation with their line manager and annual leave and/or unpaid leave can also be used if agreed with the employee's line manager.

## 6.7 Parental Leave

Subject to having one year's service, if you are the parent or adoptive parent of a child, you are entitled to 18 weeks' unpaid leave up to the child's 18th birthday (or if the child is adopted, up to the fifth anniversary of the adoption).

MG ALBA may require you to produce evidence of the following:

- your responsibility or expected responsibility for the child in respect of whom you propose to take parental leave;
- the child's date of birth or in the case of a child who is placed with you for adoption, the date on which the placement began; and
- in a case where your right to exercise an entitlement to parental leave depends upon whether the child is entitled to a disability living allowance, the child's entitlement to that allowance.



The maximum leave that may be taken each year is limited to 4 weeks. Those wishing to take parental leave must give at least 21 days' notice of the required dates. MG ALBA has the right to postpone the leave (for no more than 6 months) where it considers that its operation would be unduly disrupted if you took leave during the period identified in their written notice. Leave must be taken in blocks of one week, with part of a week e.g. a single day, counting as a single week. The exception to this is employees with disabled children (registered disabled) who can take the leave in days.

For the purposes of parental leave the period of 1 year commences on the date on which you first became entitled to take parental leave and, in the case, where your entitlement has been interrupted at the end of a period of continuous employment, on the date on which you most recently became entitled to take parental leave in respect of that child. Each successive period of 12 months will begin on the anniversary of that date.

## 6.8 Time off for Dependants

A dependant is defined as:

- a spouse or partner
- a child
- a parent
- someone who lives in the same household (other than an employee, tenant, lodger or a boarder)
- anyone who reasonably relies on you either for assistance or to make care arrangements in the event of illness or injury.

An employee is entitled to take a reasonable amount of time off:

- to provide assistance on an occasion when a dependent falls ill, gives birth or is injured or assaulted;
- to make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured;
- in consequence of the death of a dependant;
- because of the unexpected disruption or termination of arrangements for the care of a dependant;
- to deal with an incident which involves your child, and which occurs unexpectedly in a period during which an educational establishment which the child attends is responsible for the child.

### **What will you have to do to become entitled to time off?**

You should:

- tell MG ALBA as soon as reasonably practicable;
- tell MG ALBA how long you expect to be absent unless this is impossible until you return to work. In most cases, it is estimated that one or two days' leave would be sufficient.

There is no minimum qualifying period of service with MG ALBA required in order to be entitled to the right to take emergency time off for dependants. All time off is unpaid. If in the opinion of MG ALBA, there is any abuse of this policy, you may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure.

## 6.9 Adoption Leave

You are entitled to adoption pay and leave if:

- you are an adoptive parent of a child newly placed for adoption. It will not apply to step-family adoption or adoption by a child's existing foster carers as these do not involve the new placement of a child
- you adopt a child from overseas

Adoption leave is a day one right, and employees do not need a minimum length of service to be eligible.

Where a couple adopts a child, only one parent is entitled to take the adoption leave. The parent who is the primary adopter may be able to convert a period of adoption leave or pay into a period of shared parental leave or pay that can be taken by either parent on a flexible basis.

Eligible employees will be entitled to 52 weeks' adoption leave, made up of 26 weeks' ordinary adoption leave and 26 weeks' additional adoption leave. Employees may be entitled to up to 39 weeks' paid adoption leave, with the remaining 13 weeks of leave being unpaid.

You may choose to start your adoption leave from the date of placement of the child (whether this is earlier or later than expected) or from a date up to 2 weeks before the expected date of placement.

Eligible employees who earn above the Lower Earnings Limit will be entitled to adoption pay for the first 39 weeks. This will be paid at the same flat rate of SMP per week or 90% of weekly earnings if lower. During the adoption leave, your terms and conditions which would normally apply if you had not been absent will apply.

If you are the primary adopter, you are eligible to take paid time off for up to five "adoption appointments", and if you are the secondary adopter you may take unpaid time off for up to two such appointments.

You must notify MG ALBA of the day on which you expect your adoption leave to start within 7 days of being notified that you have been matched with a child for adoption. If this is not reasonably practicable, then you should do so as soon as is reasonably practicable.

If MG ALBA requests it, you must provide a matching certificate - provided by your adoption agency - as evidence of your eligibility for adoption leave. This certificate will also act as evidence for adoption pay. For adoption pay, you must notify MG ALBA at least 28 days before you expect your pay period to start or if that is not reasonably practicable, then as soon as is reasonably practicable.

You are normally entitled to return to work in the same position as you held before commencing leave. Your terms and conditions of employment shall be the same as they would have been if you had not been absent. However, if you have taken any period of additional adoption leave and it is not reasonably practicable for MG ALBA to allow you to return to the same position, MG ALBA may give you another suitable and appropriate job on terms and conditions that are not less favourable.

If you adopt a child from overseas you must notify MG ALBA of each of the following: the date on which you received an official notification of adoption; the date on which the child is expected to enter Great Britain; the date you have chosen as the date on which your period of adoption should begin; and the date on which the child enters Great Britain.

## 6.10 Reserve Military Service

Prior to volunteering for Reserve Military Service such as the Territorial Army, the employee must seek the permission of their line manager. Employees who are members of the non-regular armed forces and attend an annual training camp may be granted special leave with pay up to a maximum of 5 days, subject to the deduction of any service pay and allowances during the period of special leave.

Leave required in excess of the 5 days will be deducted from the employee's annual leave entitlement.

### **6.11 Jury Service/Court Appearance as a Witness**

An employee who is called for Jury Service must inform their line manager as soon as possible. Unless exemption is secured, leave with full pay will be granted, subject to the deduction from salary of the allowance paid by the court. It is therefore important that the employee claim the appropriate amount from the court.

### **6.12 Parental Bereavement Leave Policy**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to set out MG ALBA's stance on employee entitlements to parental bereavement leave which are effective from 6 April 2020. The Company is committed to providing support to employees who experience loss in their lives and, in particular, understands that the death of a child, or a stillbirth, can be one of the most harrowing experiences of someone's life. This policy explains rights to time off, pay during time off and other support offered.

#### **Eligibility**

Parental bereavement leave is available from day one of employment. It is available to employees on the death of a child under the age of 18. You may take parental bereavement leave if you fall into any one of the following categories:

- A 'natural' parent
- An adoptive parent, and those with whom a child has been placed under the 'foster to adopt' scheme, provided the placement is ongoing
- A 'natural' parent where the child has been adopted but a Court Order exists to allow the 'natural' parent to have contact with the child
- An employee who is living with a child who has entered Great Britain from overseas in relation to whom has received official notification that they are eligible to adopt
- An intended parent under a surrogacy arrangement where it was expected that a parental order would be made
- A 'parent in fact' which is someone in whose home the child has been living for a period of at least four weeks before the death and has had day to day responsibility for the child, subject to exceptions. This category includes guardians and foster parents but does not include paid carers
- The partner of anyone who falls into the above categories, where they live in an enduring family relationship with the child and their parent.

In addition, parents who suffer a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy are entitled to take parental bereavement leave.

#### **Length of Leave and How it may be Taken**

A total of two weeks may be taken as parental bereavement leave and you may choose to take leave as:

- A single block of one week
- A single block of two weeks
- Two separate blocks of one week

Leave may start on any day of the week and must be taken in whole weeks. It may be taken at any time in the 56 week period following the death.

If you have suffered a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy, you are still entitled to take your full entitlement to maternity and paternity leave, provided you were eligible to take maternity or paternity leave in the first place, in addition to parental bereavement leave. Parental bereavement leave cannot be taken at the same time as maternity or paternity leave.

Where more than one child dies or is stillborn, you are entitled to two weeks of parental bereavement leave in relation to each child.

### **Notification Requirements**

#### Leave to be taken within the first 56 days of the death

You do not need to give any advance notice of taking parental bereavement leave. MG ALBA asks that you contact your line manager by telephone or email by the time you were due to start work on the day you wish leave to begin, or if this is not possible, as soon as is reasonably practicable, giving the date of the death, the date on which leave will start and whether one or two weeks is to be taken.

#### Leave to be taken later than the first 56 days since the death

You need to give one week's advance notice of taking parental bereavement leave to your line manager by telephone or email giving the date of the death, the date on which leave will start and whether one or two weeks is to be taken.

### **Cancelling or Changing Leave Dates**

You can cancel a period of leave that you have already told us about, as long as the period of leave has not already started. If you wish to cancel a period of leave which was to begin within the first 56 days of the death, you can cancel it by letting us know by your normal start time on the day that leave was originally due to start.

To cancel leave which was to begin later than 56 days after the death, you should let us know no later than one week prior to the intended start date.

You can also change the start date of leave by following the notice requirements above.

### **Payment During Leave**

You will qualify for statutory parental bereavement pay during leave if you meet the following criteria:

- You have been continuously employed with us for at least 26 weeks by the week prior to the week in which the child dies
- Your normal average weekly earnings are not less than the lower earnings limit relevant for national insurance purposes
- You are still employed by us on the date the child dies.

Payment will be made at the rate set by the Government each year or 90 per cent of your average weekly earnings (whichever is lower).

In order to receive statutory parental bereavement pay, you must provide us with notice of this and the following information within 28 days, or as soon as is reasonably practicable, of the first day of parental bereavement leave:

- The child's name
- The date of the death or stillbirth
- A declaration that you fall into the one of the categories listed under 'Eligibility' above.

### **Terms and Conditions During Leave**

During parental bereavement leave, you remain entitled to receive your normal contractual terms and conditions of employment that you would have received had you not taken this leave, with the

exception of remuneration. This will include contractual benefits, subject to the terms of these benefits.

### **Right to Return**

Upon your return to work, you are entitled to return to the same job, with the same terms and conditions, in which you were employed before your absence unless:

- the period of leave you have taken is more than 26 weeks when added to any other period of statutory leave including maternity, paternity, adoption leave etc in relation to the same child and
- it is not reasonably practicable for you to return to the same job.

On your first day back to work, your line manager will set time aside to hold an informal meeting with you to discuss any arrangements regarding your return to work and any additional support we may be able to offer you.

### **Flexible Working**

We appreciate that a temporary period of flexible working may be beneficial to employees after they have suffered a loss. If you would like to discuss this further, please contact the HR Adviser in the first instance.

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## Section 7 – General Employment Policies

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This section of the handbook summarises MG ALBA’s main employment policies and procedures.

### 7.1 Disciplinary Procedure

MG ALBA strives to establish an enterprise committed to the highest standards of quality, productivity and competitiveness. The Company seeks to attract, retain and motivate quality people by providing an effective working environment, which supports quality results. To this end the Company believes in the importance of clearly communicating the performance standards and behavioural conduct that are expected of all employees. As such, the Company has set standards by which to measure conduct. These are laid down in section 7.3. Where conduct or performance falls below the acceptable standard, the disciplinary procedure set out below will be used. This disciplinary and dismissal procedure will apply to any act of misconduct or failure to meet satisfactory standards of behaviour or attendance. Although this procedure is primarily aimed at misconduct, it will also be applied to cases where conduct or performance falls below the acceptable standard.

Management is responsible for maintaining behaviour and performance standards and discipline throughout the business. Employees are responsible for their own actions and for abiding by Company rules and standards of conduct.

This procedure complies with the statutory dismissal and disciplinary procedure, as required under the Employment Act 2002.

#### Principles

- Minor cases of misconduct and poor performance may be dealt with informally through advice, coaching, re-training and counselling and not through the formal disciplinary procedure.
- No disciplinary action will be taken against you until the matter has been fully investigated.
- In advance of any disciplinary hearing, you will be advised in writing of the nature of the conduct, capability or other circumstances that may result in disciplinary action or dismissal. You will be given the opportunity to discuss the issue and state your case at a meeting before any decision is made.
- You will be given the opportunity to prepare before attending a disciplinary hearing.
- At all stages, you will have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague of your choice or your trade union representative during the disciplinary hearing.
- The disciplinary action taken will depend on the circumstances (including the nature of the complaint) and will be dealt with as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- Only the appropriate manager can take the decision to dismiss.
- Any suspension necessary before a disciplinary measure is determined will be on basic pay.
- You will have the right of appeal against the disciplinary or dismissal decision, wherever practicable, to a level of management not previously involved. The employee making the appeal has the right to be accompanied at the appeal hearing. If an employee wishes to appeal against the formal warning or decision to dismiss they should do so in writing within 5 calendar days of the issuing of the warning or decision. The employee should state clearly their grounds for appeal. An appeal will ordinarily be held within 5 calendar days of receiving the appeal letter. The decision of the appeal interview is final and not subject to further appeal.

### **Capability**

Where an employee fails to meet the standards required to fulfil the requirements of their role due to a lack of capability, management will endeavour to help the employee to come up to standard, as appropriate. Such endeavours will include coaching, re-training and counselling in order to offer the employee help and support.

The employee will be advised of:

- The standards expected of them
- The improvements required
- The consequences of failing to improve
- The risk to their continued employment
- Any suitable alternative employment available

If an employee fails to make the improvements required within the specified timescales, they may be subject to action and ultimately dismissal.

### **The Right to be Accompanied**

At any disciplinary hearing you may request to be accompanied by a fellow employee of your choice or by a trade union official. Where a Trade Union is recognised in the workplace it is good practice for workers to ask an official from that union to accompany them. If you choose a lay trade union official, they should be certified by their union as having experience of having received training in acting as an employee's companion at disciplinary hearings. MG ALBA may wish to see evidence that the trade union official who accompanies you is so certified.

When you are choosing a companion, you should bear in mind that it would not be reasonable to insist on being accompanied by a colleague whose presence would prejudice the hearing or who might have a conflict of interest. Nor would it be reasonable for you to be accompanied by a colleague from a geographically remote location when someone suitably qualified is available on site.

Before the hearing takes place, you should tell MG ALBA whom you have chosen as a companion. If the companion can't attend on a proposed date, you can suggest an alternative time and date so long as it is reasonable, and it is not more than five working days after the original date.

The companion will be allowed to address the hearing in order to put forward your case and sum up where appropriate. The companion can also confer with you during the hearing. The companion has no right to answer questions on your behalf, or to address the hearing if you do not wish to do so or to prevent MG ALBA from explaining their case.

### **The Procedure**

Minor cases will be dealt with informally, when counselling may often be a more satisfactory method of resolving problems than using the Disciplinary Procedure. However, where informal action does not bring an improvement, or the matter is more serious, the following formal procedure will be used. Before any formal action is taken by MG ALBA, you will receive in writing sufficient information for you to be able to fully understand both what it is you are alleged to have done wrong and the reasons why this is not acceptable. This written explanation will also invite you to a disciplinary hearing at which the problem can be discussed and will inform you of your right to be accompanied at the hearing.

#### **Stage 1 – Verbal Warning**

For minor breaches of discipline, or failure to achieve satisfactory standards of behaviour or performance, you will normally be given a formal **VERBAL WARNING**.

A note of this warning will be recorded and will advise of the right of appeal, but it will be considered invalid for disciplinary purposes after 6 months, subject to satisfactory conduct and performance.

### **Stage 2 - Written Warning**

If the offence is a serious one, or if a further offence occurs, a **WRITTEN WARNING** will be given to you. It will detail the complaint, the improvement required and the timescale. It will warn that action under Stage 3 will be considered if there is no satisfactory improvement and will advise of the right of appeal.

Written Warnings will be considered invalid for disciplinary purposes after 12 months, subject to satisfactory conduct and performance.

### **Stage 3 - Final Written Warning**

If there is still a failure to improve, and conduct or performance is still unsatisfactory, OR if the misconduct is sufficiently serious to warrant only one written warning (but insufficiently serious to justify dismissal) a **FINAL WRITTEN WARNING** will normally be given to you. It will detail the complaint, the improvements required and the timescale over which improvements are required. In addition, it will warn that dismissal will result if there is no satisfactory improvement and will advise on the right of appeal.

Final Written Warnings will be considered invalid for disciplinary purposes after 12 months, unless specified otherwise.

### **Stage 4 - Dismissal**

If conduct or performance is still unsatisfactory and you still fail to reach the prescribed standards, or misconduct is sufficiently serious to warrant it, then DISMISSAL will result. Only the appropriate senior manager can take the decision to dismiss. You will be provided, as soon as is reasonably practicable, with written reasons for the dismissal, together with the date on which employment will terminate and the right of appeal.

### **General Offences**

The following list of offences is intended to be neither comprehensive nor complete. It is intended solely to give examples of the more common offences. A general offence which is flagrantly committed can be regarded as a serious offence.

- Failure to carry out reasonable instructions in a proper manner.
- Poor timekeeping or attendance.
- Failure to produce work of an acceptable standard.
- Failure to conform to safety regulations.
- Unauthorised absence from work.
- Disruption of the work of others.
- Poor performance standards.
- Private trading.

### **Gross Misconduct**

You will be summarily dismissed if it is established, after investigation and hearing your case, that there has been an act of gross misconduct or poor performance of sufficient gravity to warrant summary dismissal. Such dismissals will occur without the need to issue prior disciplinary warnings. As a precautionary measure, you may be suspended from work on full pay to enable MG ALBA to investigate the alleged offence.

Gross misconduct giving rise to dismissal without warning(s) will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Fighting, physical assault, violent conduct or dangerous horseplay.



- Sexual, racial or other harassment or bullying
- Failure to carry out a reasonable and lawful direct instruction given by a superior during working hours.
- Gross insubordination.
- The use of aggressive behaviour or excessive bad language.
- Theft, wilful damage or negligence, which leads to damage of property belonging to MG ALBA or other employees.
- Falsification of MG ALBA records (including timesheets, clock cards, expenses claim, etc.).
- Wilful acts of damage when representing MG ALBA or engaged on MG ALBA business.
- Performing, arranging or carrying out work or activity, which could be considered to be in competition with or which adversely affects in any way MG ALBA's interests.
- Fraud or any other offence committed against MG ALBA, which would be a breach of the law of the land.
- Attending work while intoxicated by alcohol or non-medically prescribed drugs.
- Acts of gross negligence or misconduct involving carelessness or reckless driving.
- Loss of driving licence on conviction when driving is all or an essential part of the job requirements.
- Serious breach of legal limits when driving MG ALBA vehicles.
- Breach of safety rules and/or any action, which seriously endangers the health or safety of an employee or any other person whilst at work.
- Deliberately making a false entry in the written records of MG ALBA.
- Knowingly giving false information or deliberately omitting relevant information on the job application form or curriculum vitae.
- Partaking in discrimination or harassment.
- Smoking in designated non-smoking areas
- The viewing or downloading of pornographic or other derogatory, defamatory, obscene or inappropriate material from internet/e-mail systems.
- Unauthorised access to, or disclosure of, any confidential information.
- Abuse of internet/e-mail systems/telephone for personal usage.
- Bribing or being bribed whilst employed by MG ALBA.

The list above is not exhaustive. Acts of breaches of duty or other substantial reasons comparable to any of the above may constitute gross misconduct.

This list may be amended or modified by the Company to keep pace with legislation, legal practice and interpretation and general standards of conduct in society.

#### **Other Punitive Action**

You may have other punitive action imposed as a disciplinary measure as an alternative to dismissal including (but without limitation): demotion or transfer; loss of seniority or salary increment; or suspension without pay. You will have the right to appeal against any such alternative disciplinary sanction, as set out below.

#### **Appeals**

At any stage after a disciplinary decision has been taken by MG ALBA, including Dismissal, you have the right to appeal to the next level of management.

To start an appeal, you must confirm your intention to appeal in writing within five working days of receiving the written notification, following the disciplinary action. The written confirmation should set out the grounds for the appeal. The Warning or Dismissal will stand unless and until it is altered on appeal.

MG ALBA will undertake any Appeal Hearing as soon as is reasonably practicable after receiving written confirmation of your wish to appeal.

At any appeal hearing you may request to be accompanied by a fellow employee of your choice or by a trade union official.

MG ALBA will endeavour to ensure that the person hearing the Appeal was not party to the original disciplinary decision.

**The decision taken at the Appeal is deemed to be final.**

## 7.2 Grievance Procedure

The object of the grievance procedure set out below is to provide a means for dealing promptly with any grievance, which you may have in the course of, and connected with, your employment.

### Informal Procedure

You should aim to resolve most grievances informally with your line manager. This allows for problems to be resolved swiftly. If the grievance cannot be resolved informally then the following formal procedure should be followed.

### Formal Procedure

The formal procedure complies with the statutory grievance procedure as required under the Employment Act 2002.

There will be no requirement for you to follow this formal procedure where you have a complaint regarding your dismissal or where MG ALBA is contemplating dismissal. Likewise, there is no requirement to follow the grievance procedure if MG ALBA has taken or contemplates taking disciplinary action on the basis of conduct or capability. Such complaints will be dealt with through the Disciplinary Procedure. However, should you feel that the disciplinary action taken is discriminatory or that, contrary to MG ALBA's assertion, has not been taken on conduct or capability grounds then you should put full details of their grievance **in writing** to your immediate line manager.

### The Right to be Accompanied

At any grievance hearing you may request to be accompanied by a fellow employee of your choice or by a trade union official. Where a Trade Union is recognised in the workplace it is good practice for you to ask an official from that union to accompany you. If you choose a lay trade union official, they should be certified by their union as having experience of having received training in acting as an employee's companion at grievance hearings. MG ALBA may wish to see evidence that the trade union official who accompanies you is so certified.

When you are choosing a companion, you should bear in mind that it would not be reasonable to insist on being accompanied by a colleague whose presence would prejudice the hearing or who might have a conflict of interest. Nor would it be reasonable for you to be accompanied by a colleague from a geographically remote location when someone suitably qualified is available on site. Before the hearing takes place, you should tell MG ALBA whom you have chosen as a companion. If the companion can't attend on a proposed date, you can suggest an alternative time and date so long as it is reasonable, and it is not more than five working days after the original date.

The companion will be allowed to address the hearing in order to put forward your case and sum up where appropriate. The companion can also confer with you during the hearing. The companion has no right to answer questions on your behalf, or to address the hearing if you do not wish to do so or to prevent MG ALBA from explaining their case.

### Stage 1

You should put full details of your grievance in writing, to your immediate line manager. Where the grievance is against the line manager the matter should be raised with a more senior manager.

The manager will then invite you to attend a meeting in order to discuss the grievance and will inform you of your statutory right to be accompanied at this meeting. This meeting will be convened at a reasonable time and place to be determined by MG ALBA. You must take all reasonable steps to attend this meeting.

This meeting will not take place until you have informed MG ALBA in writing as to the basis for the grievance and MG ALBA have had a reasonable opportunity to consider their response to this information.

After the grievance meeting, the manager will endeavour to issue his/her response to the grievance as soon as is reasonably practicable and will inform you of your right to appeal against the decision if you are not satisfied with it.

Where reasonably practicable the appeal will be dealt with by a more senior manager than attended the first meeting.

### **Stage 2 (Appeal)**

If you feel that the grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved, then you should write, setting out the grounds for any appeal, to the relevant manager (or Chief Executive) hearing the appeal.

The relevant manager will then invite you to attend a further meeting in order to discuss the grievance and any specific grounds of appeal and should inform you of your statutory right to be accompanied at this meeting. You must take all reasonable steps to attend this meeting. The manager will endeavour to issue his response in writing to the grievance as soon as is reasonably practicable after the appeal meeting.

The manager will endeavour to issue his response in writing to the grievance as soon as is reasonably practicable after the appeal meeting. **The decision taken at the Appeal is deemed to be final.**

## 7.3 Individual Behavioural Standards & Code of Conduct

*(This policy is non-contractual)*

The Company is committed to devoting our efforts and time to the success of the business and embracing best practice and supporting flexibility. MG ALBA are therefore committed to continuous improvement, development and training of self and others. To enable effective operations and commitment to the business, we aim to keep all others informed about performance, standards and achievement.

When working for the Company we recognise that we are acting for and on behalf of the Company in our personal conduct.

### Core Standards of Behaviour

MG ALBA has integrity, trust and excellent customer service at the heart of its values. Application of these in all that we do builds our reputation, unites us, sets us apart from the competition and ultimately makes us even more successful.

#### Active Listening

- Listens carefully to customers and colleagues giving them undivided attention and asking thoughtful questions to confirm facts
- Is genuinely concerned about others and is ready to act in their best interest

#### Understanding

- Greeting customers, clients, and colleagues in a polite, friendly and personalised manner
- Demonstrating a pleasant, enthusiastic, helpful manner when dealing with customers, clients, colleagues and other people whom we work with
- Communicating relevant information clearly and accurately
- Treating all customers, clients, colleagues and other people whom we work with dignity and respect, ensuring that each receives the very best service
- Handling all customer, client and colleague enquiries, instructions and complaints promptly, willingly, accurately and efficiently

#### Freedom to Deliver

- Taking pride in providing excellent customer service and taking personal responsibility for getting things right the first time
- Positively challenging existing processes in order to improve the quality of service, removing the barriers that impede us from deepening our relationship with customers and clients
- Adopting a 'can-do' approach and taking appropriate action to meet the needs of customers, clients and customers

#### Integrity

- Acting in an open and honest way, recognising that personal conduct reflects on MG ALBA
- Attending work regularly and punctually and being committed to team effort
- Actively promoting MG ALBA as a reputable organisation
- Maintaining appropriate standards of responsible behaviour, dress and appearance

#### Straightforward

- Welcoming feedback and readily apologising when mistakes have been made
- Addressing all matters, particularly difficult issues, with frankness, facts and tact
- Ensuring that all commitments given are achievable and fully honoured

### **Forward Thinking**

- Developing skills and knowledge required to do your current job well and improving your own performance
- Being adaptable and maintaining a positive approach to change
- Thinking ahead and anticipating customers' and colleagues' needs

### **Teamwork**

- Sharing knowledge, best practice and experience to support colleagues in the achievement of their goals
- Leading by example, contributing to team morale
- Actively contributing to the overall team effort
- Treating all colleagues with dignity and respect
- Placing team goals before own individual goals if appropriate

## 7.4 Media Relations Policy

*(This policy is non-contractual)*

MG ALBA encourages the use of media and associated services because they can make communication more efficient and effective and because they are valuable sources of information about vendors, audiences, technology, and new products and services.

To enable us to best serve our audiences and stakeholders and to provide our employees with the best tools to do their jobs, it is important that enquiries by the media in relation to MG ALBA and our brands be handled in accordance with the following policy:

- All enquiries should be referred to MG ALBA's Chief Executive (the "Spokesperson") and other designated officers ("Designated Officers"). This includes:
  - MG ALBA initiated activity
  - Direct media requests
  - Informal/ unsolicited media enquiries
- As MG ALBA's chief spokesperson, the Chief Executive will respond directly or designate another party to serve as spokesperson as appropriate in terms of the nature of the enquiry. Where prior allocation of the responsibility has been agreed, designated officers may respond on behalf of MG ALBA.
- The Spokesperson or Designated Officer also will direct the process by which a response is determined, or position taken.
- The Spokesperson or Designated Officer, prior to communicating with the media, will ensure they are fully prepared and will inform colleagues of their intended messages and their intended responses to areas of challenge or controversy, seeking guidance and support as appropriate.
- The Spokesperson or Designated Officer will maintain a proper spirit and tone to communications with the media, in line with MG ALBA Values.

This policy covers all forms of responses to the media, including "off the record" and anonymous statements. All staff must comply with the requirements of the Social Media Policy when making comments or statements using digital platforms or communication channels.

"The Media" includes television, radio, newspapers, journals, websites, digital media outlets and social media in the public domain.

All employees must comply with the foregoing policies, rules, and conditions governing the relations with the media. Employees have responsibility to maintain a positive representation of MG ALBA.

Date Approved	09 March 2022
Date Implemented	01 April 2022

The current authorised spokespeople/designated officers are:

- Chair
- Chief Executive
- Director of Strategy & External Affairs
- Director of Multiplatform Content
- Director of Finance

The Designated Officers can also elect to nominate another staff member to act as the authorised spokesperson in certain circumstances.

## 7.5 Equal Opportunities Policy Statement

*(This policy is non-contractual)*

MG ALBA is committed to maximising the effective use of people in the Company's and employee's best interests and will pursue equality of opportunity as a means of achieving this objective.

Thus, the MG ALBA policy requires that employment in any one of its companies and progression within them will be determined solely by personal merit and the application criteria which are related to the effective performance of the job and the needs of the business. No applicant or employee will be treated less favourably than any other on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, membership or non-membership of trade unions, ethnic or national origin, religion, or belief disability, spent convictions or age.

### **Equal Opportunities and Discrimination**

MG ALBA is committed to Equal Opportunities in all aspects of employment, recruitment and training. We are committed to ensuring that no job applicant or employee is discriminated against on the grounds of sex, gender reassignment, marital, civil partnership or parental status, religious or other beliefs, colour, race, ethnic or national origins, pregnancy or maternity, sexual orientation, age or disability. This principle applies to all aspects of recruitment and employment of employees, including conditions of employment, pay, training, promotion, disciplinary and grievance procedures, termination of employment and redundancy. All appointments will be made on merit.

If at any time you feel treated less favourably than others in relation to equal opportunities, you should raise the matter with your Line Manager.

In the event that you have been the subject of discrimination by another employee, client or anybody else connected with your work either in terms of physical or verbal abuse or harassment, you should inform your Line Manager immediately.

The perpetrator of such actions, if proven following investigation, will be subject to the disciplinary procedure or other actions as appropriate if they are not employees of MG ALBA.

### **Company Culture**

MG ALBA is committed to being a successful, caring and welcoming place for all employees. We want to create a supportive and inclusive environment where our employees can reach their full potential, without prejudice and discrimination. We are committed to a culture where respect and understanding is fostered and the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances will be positively valued.

Equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and compliance with the law is to the benefit of all employees of MG ALBA as it seeks to develop the skills and abilities of its people. While specific responsibility for eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity lies with managers and supervisors, with the support of HR, individuals at all levels have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect.

### **7.51 Equal Opportunities Procedures - Scope**

Through this policy and procedures, and the training and development of managers and staff, MG ALBA will do all it can to promote good practice in this area in order to eliminate discrimination and harassment as far as is reasonably possible. MG ALBA will also continue to work towards its dedicated goal of encouraging and promoting equality and diversity within the workforce.



The policy aims to achieve equality by removing any potential discrimination in the way that our employees are treated by fellow employees or the Company.

MG ALBA will not unlawfully discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics of:

1. age
2. disability
3. gender reassignment
4. marriage or civil partnership
5. pregnancy and maternity
6. race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin)
7. religion or belief
8. sex
9. sexual orientation

Discrimination can be either direct or indirect discrimination. The above are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 and discrimination is prohibited, unless there is a legal exception under the Equality Act.

#### **Direct Discrimination**

This is where someone is treated less favourably due to one (or more) protected characteristics. It can be intentional or unintentional discrimination. Occasionally the discrimination may occur due to a protected characteristic of another person, so the discrimination may be because of association. An example is an advert for a job that requires 'men only' or 'under 30s only'.

#### **Indirect Discrimination**

This is where someone is disadvantaged by an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice (PCP) that is applied 'across the board' or 'equally across a particular group', which is not justified. The PCP may have the consequence (usually unintended) of causing a disadvantage, which then actually affects somebody. For example, a PCP relating to clothing or headwear could be applied 'equally', but may cause someone with a protected characteristic to be disadvantaged. The PCP could be justified if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

#### **Victimisation**

This is not the same as the common meaning of victimisation, but is specifically regarding treating someone less favourably because they have complained about or given information about discrimination or harassment, either regarding themselves or someone else.

#### **Harassment**

This includes sexual harassment and other unwanted conduct related to a Protected Characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. This is part of the Equality Act but is covered in more detail in the Harassment & Bullying Policy.

The Equality Act 2010 applies to how employees treat fellow employees, visitors, suppliers and former employees. The Act also applies to customers/clients.

MG ALBA is committed to equality of opportunity and to providing a service and following practices which are free from unfair and unlawful discrimination.

The personal commitment of every employee to this policy and its procedures are essential to eliminate discrimination and provide equality throughout MG ALBA.

Training, development and progression opportunities will be made available to all staff.

The HR Adviser has particular responsibility for implementing and monitoring the equality and diversity policies and, as part of this process, all personnel policies and procedures are administered with the objective of promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating unfair or unlawful discrimination.

There will be monitoring and reviews of the effectiveness of the equal opportunities policy, including a review of job applicants and the benefits/career progression of existing employees. Comments and suggestions on the policy can be directed to the HR Advisor.

## 7.52 Equal Opportunities Procedures – Diversity & Inclusion

The terms equality, inclusion, diversity and equity are at the heart of the MG ALBA Equal Opportunities policy.

**'Equality'** means ensuring everyone has the same opportunities to fulfil their potential free from discrimination.

**'Inclusion'** means ensuring everyone feels comfortable to be themselves at work and feels the worth of their contribution.

**'Diversity'** means the celebration of individual differences amongst the workforce.

**'Equity'** means recognising barriers and that some groups are more advantaged than others, and putting measures in place to eliminate these barriers, ensuring equal opportunities for all.

We will actively support diversity, equity and inclusion and ensure that our workforce is valued and treated with dignity and respect. We want to encourage everyone in our organisation to reach their potential.

We value people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles and circumstances. This includes all employees, officers, consultants, contractors, volunteers, casual workers and agency workers and it applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, selection, training, deployment, career development, and promotion. These areas are monitored and policies and practices are amended if necessary to ensure that no unfair or unlawful discrimination, intentional, unintentional, direct or indirect, overt or latent exists.

All managers must set an appropriate standard of behaviour, lead by example and ensure that those they manage adhere to the policy and promote our aims and objectives with regard to equal opportunities. Managers will be given appropriate training on equal opportunities awareness, equal opportunities recruitment and selection and diversity and inclusion best practice.

Equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and compliance with the law is to the benefit of all individuals at MG ALBA as it seeks to develop the skills and abilities of its people. While specific responsibility for eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity lies with managers and supervisors, individuals at all levels have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect. The personal commitment of everyone to this procedure and application of its principles are essential to eliminate discrimination and provide equality and equity throughout MG ALBA.

Staff are invited to comment on this procedure and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting the HR Advisor.

Breaches of the Equality policy and procedures will be dealt with in accordance with our Disciplinary Procedure. Serious cases of discrimination may amount to gross misconduct resulting in dismissal without notice.

If you believe that you have suffered discrimination you can raise the matter through our Grievance Procedure or through our Harassment and Bullying Policy as appropriate.

### **Our Commitment as an Employer**

MG ALBA is committed to:

- creating an environment in which individual differences and the contributions of our staff are recognised and valued
- everyone is entitled to a working environment that promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated
- providing training, development and progression opportunities to all staff
- understanding equality and inclusion in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense
- reviewing all our employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness and inclusion for all
- taking steps to ensure equity amongst our workforce such as ensuring that our vacancies are advertised to a diverse range of potential candidates and, where relevant, to particular groups that have been identified as disadvantaged or underrepresented in our Company, taking positive action to recruit disabled people and ensuring there are no unlawful barriers to accessing our employment opportunities, training, progression opportunities, benefits and facilities
- diversity in our workforce will be regularly monitored to ensure equal opportunities throughout MG ALBA. Where appropriate, measures will be taken to identify and remove unnecessary obstacles and to meet the special needs of disadvantaged or underrepresented groups
- monitoring and reviewing this policy and procedures annually.

### **Age**

We will:

- ensure that people of all ages are treated with respect and dignity
- ensure that people are given equal access to our employment, training, development and promotion opportunities and
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about younger and older people.

### **Disability**

We will:

- provide any reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled people have access to our services and employment opportunities. If we feel that a particular adjustment would not be reasonable, we will discuss this with you and try to find an alternative solution where possible
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about disabled people and
- seek to continue to improve access to information by ensuring availability of loop systems, braille facilities, alternative formatting and sign language interpretation
- If you are disabled or become disabled, we encourage you to tell us about your condition so that we can support you as appropriate
- We will keep the physical features of our premises under review to consider whether they might place anyone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage. Where necessary, we will take reasonable steps to improve access.

## **Race**

We will:

- challenge racism wherever it occurs
- respond swiftly and sensitively to racist incidents and
- actively promote race equality and inclusion at MG ALBA
- take positive action to redress the negative effects of discrimination against everyone
- offer equal access for everyone to representation, services, employment, training and pay and encourage other organisations to do the same.

## **Gender**

We will:

- challenge discriminatory assumptions about gender
- take positive action to redress the negative effects of discrimination against everyone
- offer equal access for everyone to representation, services, employment, training and pay and encourage other organisations to do the same and
- provide support to prevent discrimination against transgender people who have or who are about to undergo gender reassignment.

## **Sexual Orientation**

We will:

- ensure that we take account of the needs of everyone, including the LGBTQ+ communities
- promote positive images of the LGBTQ+ communities
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about the LGBTQ+ communities
- take positive action to redress the negative effects of discrimination against everyone and
- offer equal access for everyone to representation, services, employment, training and pay and encourage other organisations to do the same.

## **Religion or Belief**

We will:

- ensure that employees' religion or beliefs and related observances are respected and accommodated wherever possible and
- respect people's beliefs where the expression of those beliefs does not impinge on the legitimate rights of others.

## **Pregnancy or Maternity**

We will:

- ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity during pregnancy or maternity leave
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about pregnancy or maternity and
- ensure that no individual is disadvantaged during pregnancy or maternity leave and that we take account of the needs of our employees' during pregnancy or maternity leave.

## **Marriage or Civil Partnership**

We will:

- ensure that people are treated with respect and dignity regardless of marriage or civil partnership status
- challenge discriminatory assumptions about the marriage or civil partnership of our employees and
- ensure that no individual is disadvantaged as a result of their marriage or civil partnership status.

## **Part Time and Fixed Term Work**

Part time and fixed term staff should be treated the same as comparable full time or permanent staff and enjoy no less favourable terms and conditions (on a pro-rata basis where appropriate), unless different treatment is justified.

## **Equal Pay**

We will ensure that all employees have the right to the same contractual pay and benefits for carrying out the same work, work rated as equivalent work or work of equal value.

## 7.6 Harassment and Bullying

*(This policy is non-contractual)*

MG ALBA is committed to developing a working environment in which bullying and harassment are known to be unacceptable and are not tolerated at any level of the organisation. MG ALBA seeks to ensure that every individual can work effectively in comfort and dignity. MG ALBA will provide any employee who suffers bullying or harassment with an appropriate form of redress and seeks to guarantee that complainants will not encounter any form of reprisal or victimisation as a result of their complaint.

### Harassment

Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for a reason which relates to a person's sex, race, sexuality, disability, religion or age.

Examples of harassment are given below, but many forms of behaviour can constitute harassment.

*Unwanted Physical Conduct* such as unnecessary touching, patting, pinching, brushing against another person's body, insulting or abusive behaviour or gestures, physical threats, assault, coerced sexual intercourse or rape.

*Unwanted Verbal Conduct* such as unwelcome advances, patronising titles or nicknames, propositions or remarks, innuendo, lewd comments, jokes, banter or abusive language, which refer to a person or a group's gender, colour, race, religion, belief, ethnic or national origins, disability or sexual preference, etc., or repeated suggestions for unwanted social activities inside or outside the workplace. This "verbal" conduct includes conduct either in printed format or via e-mail or other electronic means.

*Unwanted Non-verbal Conduct* such as racially or sexually based messages or graffiti (including where it refers to an individual's characteristics or private life), abusive or offensive gestures, leering, whistling, creation or distribution of suggestive or offensive pictures or videos including distribution of such pictures on any media including via e-mail or on display units (VDU's or network systems).

A single incident can amount to harassment if sufficiently serious.

The behaviour referred to above may be directed toward an individual or group. It should be noted that it is the impact of the behaviour which is relevant and not the nature or intent behind it.

A complaint may be raised formally through the grievance procedure. All alleged acts of harassment should be thoroughly investigated, and the standard of evidence required under the grievance and discipline procedures will apply. In addition, due to the sensitive nature of harassment, the following considerations will be taken into account:

- The rights of both parties must be clearly respected.
- Evidence must be objective rather than interpretative.
- Confidentiality must be maintained at all times.

All acts of harassment upheld following an investigation will be dealt with through the Disciplinary Procedure. Serious acts of harassment constitute gross misconduct and will lead to summary dismissal.

When a complaint is made which is not upheld following investigation and there is reason to believe it has been made with malicious or vexatious intent, the complaint may be subject to disciplinary proceedings.

## **Bullying**

In addition, the policy actively promotes an environment free from inappropriate behaviour such as bullying and intimidation.

Bullying includes persistent actions, criticism or personal abuse, which humiliates, intimidates or undermines the individual involved. Bullying can involve a person in authority abusing their power and bullying subordinates or an individual bullying a peer or a group of people picking on one individual.

Bullying can take varying forms including:

- derogatory remarks;
- insensitive jokes or pranks;
- insulting or aggressive behaviour;
- shouting and swearing;
- ignoring or excluding an individual;
- setting unrealistic deadlines and making excessive and unreasonable demands;
- destructive, unfair or public criticism;
- substituting responsible tasks with menial or trivial ones;
- withholding necessary information; and
- constantly undervaluing effort.

As with harassment, bullying is defined largely by the impact of the behaviour on the recipient, not its intention.

## **Responsibilities**

You are responsible for your individual compliance with the terms of this policy and for the development of a working environment in which the dignity of all employees is respected. All Managers have a duty to ensure that harassment and bullying does not occur in work areas for which they are responsible. Managers have a further responsibility to explain the policy to their employees and to take steps to positively promote the policy.

All Managers must be responsive and supportive to any employee who complains about harassment or bullying, provide advice to the employee on the procedure to be adopted and maintain confidentiality.

Managers are responsible for eliminating any harassment, bullying or intimidation of which they become aware.

It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive in consultation with the HR Advisor to regularly review complaints of harassment and bullying and how they have been resolved in order to ensure that MG ALBA's policy is working effectively. The complainant should be contacted following the formal resolution to the issue to establish whether the solution has been effective. Where it has not been effective, further action may be necessary.

***Disciplinary action will be taken against those failing to fulfil their responsibilities under this policy.***

## **Complaints Procedure**

If you feel you have been subjected to bullying or harassment, you have two options in seeking a resolution: an informal and formal approach. (These options are not mutually exclusive).

### *Informal Approach:*

You may seek confidential informal advice and support from your Line Manager or the HR Advisor.

In certain instances, it may be appropriate for the complainant to approach the alleged perpetrator personally indicating that a particular action is regarded as offensive. You should warn the alleged

perpetrator that should the behaviour continue a formal complaint will be made to the alleged perpetrator's Line Manager. Alternatively, you may request a colleague or Manager to speak to the alleged perpetrator informally.

*If the informal approach has proved ineffective or the alleged offence is of a more serious nature it may be necessary to adopt a formal approach.*

**Formal Approach:**

At all times, whether or not informal steps have been taken, if you feel that you have been harassed or bullied, you may make a formal complaint and raise a grievance.

Due to the sensitivity of such complaints and the need to resolve them speedily, the complaint should be made in writing and sent to your Line Manager as soon as possible.

Should the allegation be against your Manager, the written complaint should be sent to a more senior level of Management.

Every effort will be made to address the issue within ten working days of receipt of the complaint.

**Investigation**

The Manager (or their nominated Investigating Officer) and HR Advisor will ensure that a full investigation is made into any allegation of bullying or harassment.

You and the person against whom the allegations are made will be interviewed separately and the proceedings will be confidential.

Both you and the person against whom the allegations are made may be accompanied or represented at all stages of the procedure by a fellow employee. The individual under investigation and you must understand that no victimisation as a result of the complaint is to occur.

Any witnesses will be interviewed and will be required to respect the need for confidentiality. Any breach of this confidentiality may result in disciplinary action.

An accurate record will be made of the investigation and its conclusion. Both you and the person against whom the allegations are made will be informed in writing of the findings of the investigation within five working days after the conclusion of the investigation.

**Outcome**

If, following investigation, it is found that there are grounds to believe that bullying/harassment has taken place; appropriate use will be made of MG ALBA's Disciplinary Procedure. Disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal may be taken, even for a first offence. Please see the disciplinary procedure for more details.

If, following investigation, it is considered that no bullying or harassment has taken place, any record of the accusation will be removed from the accused's personal file.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your grievance, you have the right of appeal to the Chief Executive. Any allegation of harassment or bullying which is found to be false or made in bad faith will also be treated as a serious disciplinary issue.



## 7.7 Recruitment and Selection

MG ALBA is proud to be an equal opportunities employer that values and respects the people who work for us. We seek to ensure that all job applications are treated fairly, with respect and without bias. We positively encourage applications from suitably experienced candidates regardless of sex, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief, marital status or pregnancy or maternity.

The recruitment process is governed by MG ALBA's principles of non-discrimination and is designed to achieve the best match between the skills and knowledge of the applicant on the one hand, with the needs of the organisation on the other. However, the following general rules will apply.

- The ability to do the job will be the main requirement but ability to work with others, willingness to train and potential will be taken into account.
- All applicants will be treated courteously, and applications will be dealt with as expeditiously as possible.
- Appointments will be confirmed on receipt of certificates, disclosures, satisfactory references and/or medical report.

Where appropriate, MG ALBA will recruit internally. Please refer to the full Recruitment Policy & Guide to Salary Structures as published on MG ALBA's website.

## 7.8 Use of Telephones and Computers

MG ALBA accepts that it is sometimes necessary to make personal telephone calls or send personal e-mail during working time. However, it is expected that such use be kept to a minimum.

The development of MG ALBA's computer system is managed centrally in line with an agreed strategy. You must not load any software (including games and screen savers) without the prior agreement of the System Administrator.

Those employees with access to the Internet must only use the facility during working hours for the benefit of MG ALBA.

Inappropriate use of the Internet (such as access to pornography) and e-mail system is viewed as gross misconduct and as such, any abuse will result in disciplinary action, up to and including summary dismissal.

A full IT policy is appended to this Handbook and you will be requested to sign this to signify your compliance with that policy.

## 7.9 Mobile Telephones and Driving

MG ALBA supports the police and other organisations interested in improving road safety, which regard the use of mobile phones whilst driving as being an illegal and dangerous practice. If you are caught using your mobile phone, you are now liable to prosecution. Consequently, you must not make or answer calls or use your phone in any other way whilst driving (even where a 'hands free' kit has been fitted to the vehicle) but instead pull over and use your phone when safe to do so. If you receive a call whilst driving and cannot immediately stop safely to take it, you should allow your phone's message facility to record the caller's message and access it when you next stop driving.

You are responsible for payment of any fines or penalties incurred as a result of being caught misusing your mobile phone.

## 7.10 Smoking Policy

Breathing air which contains other people's smoke has been identified as a health risk. MG ALBA seeks to minimise the risk to your health by providing a smoke free working environment.

The Smoking, Health and Social Care (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Prohibition of Smoking in Certain Premises (Scotland) Regulations 2006 prohibit smoking within MG ALBA premises. Smoking is also prohibited in MG ALBA owned motor vehicles.

In addition, MG ALBA wishes to portray a professional business image to its employees, tenants and suppliers when they visit MG ALBA premises. Therefore, employees are not allowed to smoke immediately outside the entrance to or exit from the workplace.

### E-Cigarettes

The use of e-cigarettes in the workplace is not currently prohibited by legislation. Whilst it is recognised that employees may use e-cigarettes as an aid to give up smoking tobacco, it is not known if there are any health risks to individuals from the vapour released by e-cigarettes.

Use of e-cigarettes by any workers or visitors is not permitted in company buildings, company vehicles, in client meetings, or while working in clients' premises.

### Implementation, Training & Guidance

Overall responsibility for policy implementation and review rests with the Office Manager. However, all staff are obliged to adhere to and support the implementation of the policy. The Office Manager will inform all existing employees, third parties, tenants or contractors of their role in the implementation and monitoring of the policy. The Office Manager will give all new staff a copy of the policy as part of the induction process.

Appropriate "no-smoking" signs will be clearly displayed at the entrances to and within the premises, and in all smoke-free vehicles.

If any staff member has a concern relating to a potential breach of this policy, it should be reported immediately to the Office Manager.

### Externally Designated Areas

Smoking is permitted in externally designated areas to the rear of the building and appropriate signage will be displayed. MG ALBA will provide cigarette litter bins and all smokers are responsible for the disposal of cigarette litter safely including discarded cigarette butts, cigarette packets, matches and match boxes. Smoking litter must not be discarded on the ground.

### Non-Compliance

A breach of these rules may result in disciplinary action. If you are found to be smoking within MG ALBA premises in breach of this policy, you will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including summary dismissal.

### Education and Help to Stop Smoking

It is recognised that the smoking policy will impact on smokers' working lives. MG ALBA will support those staff that would like to quit smoking by:

- Displaying smoking cessation posters and advice in staff rooms and on the intranet system.
- Supporting National No Smoking Day - [www.nosmokingday.org.uk](http://www.nosmokingday.org.uk)

In addition, the NHS offers a range of free services to help smokers give up. Visit [www.gosmokefree.co.uk](http://www.gosmokefree.co.uk) or call the NHS Smoking Helpline on 0800 848 484 for details. You can also contact Smokefree Hebrides on 01851 701623.

## 7.11 Health and Safety at Work

### Statement of Intent

It is the policy of MG ALBA to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees whilst at work, and to have due regard for others such as users of the production facilities, contractors, visitors or members of the public who may be affected by their work activities. This is a statutory duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and supporting regulations.

The Directors aim is to ensure good standards of health and safety practice and compliance throughout the Company at all times to minimise the risk of injury, damage or loss to all employees, subcontractors, general public and property concerned with the undertakings of the Partnership.

Our aims are:

- To provide and maintain a safe place of work.
- To provide comfortable working conditions to include adequate welfare facilities.
- To provide equipment and PPE for use
- To provide employees with information, training, instruction and supervision.
- To assess the risks associated with the workplace and implement adequate control measures.
- To monitor the compliance with health and safety.
- To prevent environmental nuisance, air and water pollution and ensure appropriate waste disposal.
- To comply with our legal duties.
- To ensure the safety all of employees, subcontractors and the general public.

Our objectives are:

- To prevent any major accidents occurring in the workplace during our undertakings.
- To ensure no enforcement notices are issued from the HSE or Local Authority.
- To increase the reporting of minor accidents, near misses and dangerous occurrences.
- To increase employee awareness of health and safety through consultation, toolbox talks and specific training.
- To introduce a disciplinary procedure to ensure compliance with health and safety measures implemented.

Our employees have a statutory duty to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and others that may be affected by their acts or omissions at work and to co-operate with the Organisation to meet its duties.

The Management and Staff Committees provide and maintain effective procedures for consultation and communication between all levels of management and employees on all matters regarding health and safety.

Whilst it is a statutory duty to comply with regulations, these are seen as a minimum requirement only. MG ALBA expects the full co-operation of all employees to continuously improve standards in all aspects of health and safety at work.

The organisation of health & safety and individual responsibilities for health & safety within MG ALBA is available in our Health & Safety Policy.

## 7.12 Protection Regulations

MG ALBA is registered under the General Data Protection Regulations, the purpose of which is to protect information held about people both in manual records and on computer and to enforce a particular set of standards for the processing of that information.

Anyone processing personal data must comply with the eight principles of Data Protection. They say that Data must be:

- Fairly and lawfully processed
- Processed for limited purposes
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Accurate and up to date
- Not kept for longer than is necessary
- Processed in line with your rights
- Secure
- Not transferred to other countries without adequate protection

### **Confidentiality**

All personal information is held on a confidential basis and will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent and all employees should note that it is a disciplinary offence for anyone to disclose employee data to a third party without authorisation.

### **Computerised Data**

Personal details are kept on computer for the purposes of processing your salary and for legal obligation such as PAYE and NIC. You have the right to view your own computerised data and personal data on request.

### **Personal Files**

MG ALBA keep information in your personnel file as required under the terms of your contract. This will include your address, next of kin, salary, most recent appraisal, training, sickness and absence details. You may request access to these files but you will have to give a least 24 hours' notice. The file may not be taken away to be read and may only be read in the presence of a member of the board or the Chief Executive.

There may be exceptions to access where this would breach the confidentiality of a third party.

All queries should be referred to MG ALBA's Data Protection Officer.

## **7.13 Whistleblowing**

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1988 is designed to protect employees, and other workers such as agency temps, who disclose genuine concerns, which seem to involve unlawful conduct or financial malpractice, from victimisation. The disclosure of wrongdoings is commonly known as "whistleblowing".

One of MG ALBA's key business values is to be a fair and objective employer and so it has developed a procedure to help you raise any concerns about wrongdoings at work, at an early stage, and in the right way.

You can make something called a "protected disclosure" by reporting the matter to your Line Manager. If you feel unable to raise the matter with your Line Manager, for whatever reason, you may make a protected disclosure to the Chief Executive or to the Chairperson or if the circumstances warrant it to a prescribed external person or body, such as Ofcom. Guidance is given at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies>

## **What should I report?**

The UK Government has a useful guide at <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing/overview> If you have a personal complaint relating to your own employment situation, this is a “grievance” and should be dealt with as set out in the Employment Guidelines.

However, if through your work you witness or become aware of risks or malpractice that adversely affects other staff, the organisation or the public, particularly if it involves fraud, bribery, wrongdoing or corruption, you should not turn a blind eye to it. Examples might include:

- someone’s health and safety is in danger
- damage to the environment
- a criminal offence
- the company isn’t obeying the law (like not having the right insurance)
- covering up wrongdoing

## **Who do I make a disclosure to?**

In the first instance you should tell your employer as set out in our Policy – your Line Manager, or Chief Executive or, exceptionally, the Chair of the Audit Committee or the Chairperson. Our HR Adviser is available to assist you as appropriate.

You may also make a disclosure to a “prescribed person or body” if you think your employer:

- will cover it up
- would treat you unfairly if you complained
- hasn’t sorted it out and you’ve already made a disclosure to them

For MG ALBA the recommended body would be Ofcom, although you may also make a disclosure to another regulator or the police. Contact details are given in the [List of Prescribed People and Bodies](#).

## **What form should the disclosure take?**

There is no standard form of disclosure, but our preference is for you to speak with one of the named officers first. Guidance issued by Audit Scotland directs readers to impartial and free advice on the website of the [Public Concern at Work Charity](#).

## **What will happen as a result?**

If a decision is made to investigate the disclosure we will commission an investigation from an independent third party.

The Chief Executive will make an initial decision on whether an investigation is required. If the Chief Executive does not believe there are sufficient grounds for an investigation, he/she will refer the matter to the Chair of the Audit Committee for a second opinion prior to reaching a conclusion.

If the Chief Executive forms part of the subject of the complaint, the Chair of the Audit Committee will deal with the matter by commissioning an investigation from an independent third party.

If your complaint relates to an ongoing process or activity, it may be appropriate to suspend that process or activity pending investigation, particularly if there are health and safety aspects.

## **Will you maintain confidentiality? And can I remain anonymous?**

We understand that you may be concerned about your position.

We would prefer to know who you are when you raise a concern because it is often difficult to conduct an effective investigation without being able to discuss it fully with the person who first brought the issue forward.

However, we understand that some individuals may not be comfortable with what is known as 'open whistleblowing', so we will offer the option of keeping your identity confidential unless we are required to disclose it by law, or unless we have your permission. If you wish us to maintain confidentiality, we will always seek to do so.

You can remain anonymous too, but we would prefer you did not as anonymity will often present a barrier to effective investigation. For instance, it:

- is harder for investigators to ask additional questions or clarify points on the concern raised;
- does not stop others from guessing or working out who raised the concern;
- may shift the focus from the concern to the whistle-blower because there may be a suspicion that the whistle-blower is just being malicious; and
- is easier to get protection under the Public Interest Disclosure Act if concerns are raised openly.

### **What will happen to me?**

The Public Interest Disclosure Act provides you with a safe alternative to silence and provides strong protection for workers who blow the whistle on – or honestly raise a genuine concern about – malpractice or wrongdoing. The protection is most readily available when the whistle is blown internally.

A worker can't be dismissed because of whistleblowing - if they are, they can claim unfair dismissal - as long as certain criteria are met. "Qualifying disclosures" are eligible for protection. They include when someone reports:

- that someone's health and safety is in danger
- damage to the environment
- a criminal offence
- that the company isn't obeying the law (like not having the right insurance)
- that someone's covering up wrongdoing

A worker will be eligible for protection if:

- they honestly think what they're reporting is true
- they think they're telling the right person
- they believe that their disclosure is in the public interest

Workers aren't protected from dismissal if:

- they break the law when they report something (e.g. they signed the Official Secrets Act)
- they found out about the wrongdoing when someone wanted legal advice ('legal professional privilege') - e.g. if they're a solicitor.

### **More help**

We hope this guide has been helpful and assures you that we are an organisation that is committed to being honest and transparent and encourages you to play a key role in deterring and tackling malpractice or wrongdoing within our organisation. If you need more advice, please have a look at the following resources:

## Online

Audit Scotland's Guide for Employees of Public Bodies [http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/corp/2012/as\\_120829\\_whistleblowing\\_employee.pdf](http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/corp/2012/as_120829_whistleblowing_employee.pdf)  
UK Government advice <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing/overview>  
Public Concern at Work – a dedicated charity <http://www.pcaw.org.uk/>

## In person

You may also speak to our HR Adviser in confidence.

This policy is also published on MG ALBA's website.

## 7.14 Career Advancement

More details on MG ALBA's Training and Development policy are contained within Section 4 of this handbook. In summary, it is our policy to ensure that every employee has the right to express their desires for professional advancement within the organisation. This will be incorporated as part of your regular appraisal. The MG ALBA Human Resources, Learning and Development Strategy provides a comprehensive outline of the organisation's commitment to developing employees and can be accessed on the Company Intranet.

## 7.15 Staff Development – Placements

From time to time MG ALBA participates in initiatives to share knowledge and insights with fellow broadcasters and are willing to participate in staff placements and exchanges as and when it is opportune to do so.

Staff are eligible to apply for a placement with a broadcaster or other relevant partner organisation on the following basis:

- The staff member must have at least 3 years' service with MG ALBA
- The staff member must be a high performer as evidenced by performance appraisals
- The placement must form a core element of the individual's personal and development plan
- MG ALBA must find a suitable placement
- It is unlikely that MG ALBA will offer more than one placement per year.
- Applications for placements should be made in writing to the Senior Management Team, detailing the business case and providing supporting documentation/evidence referencing a minimum of 3 Exceptional Performance indicators described in the Competency Framework

On agreement of the placement MG ALBA will offer the staff member:

- Full salary paid for a placement of between 2 and 12 weeks
- Support in arranging visa and making overseas tax arrangements
- Subsidised accommodation up to £200 per week
- Return economy flights to and from the destination
- Medical and dental insurance for the duration

MG ALBA will expect the staff member to return to MG ALBA following the placement or following a period of leave at the end of the placement. However, MG ALBA will not place conditions of continuing employment on the staff member unless the placement was a direct response to a particular business need of BBC ALBA and it is business-critical to retain the services of the employee for a period.

## 7.16 Performance Management

### Job objectives and appraisal

MG ALBA operates a job appraisal system, which has the objective of improving work performance by developing employees both professionally and personally.

Each post in MG ALBA should have a job description. The job description defines key job responsibilities and skills. It may need to be reviewed from time to time.

Each employee of MG ALBA should have specific job objectives. A template document is provided for this purpose. These objectives should be agreed with your Line Manager at the start of each year (January) and should include key outcomes and measurable deliverables. Job Objectives should be reviewed in June and January each year.

Each employee of MG ALBA must commit good quality time to the process of setting objectives and appraising both performance and development needs. Failure to put good quality job objectives in place in a timely manner will itself be treated as failure to meet a key objective on the part of both the employee and the line manager.

Your job should be subject to your own and your Line manager's ongoing appraisal. In particular a half-year appraisal should be undertaken in June which will allow you to discuss with your Line Manager whether you are on track to achieving your job and development objectives for the year and to take remedial action if necessary.

The annual appraisal meeting in January provides a formal setting in which to discuss your job. The appraisal meeting gives you an opportunity to discuss your work with your line manager and get feedback on your work performance; it should also help you agree priorities and objectives for the year ahead. Your appraisal will also include a formal assessment of your performance by your Line Manager. This will take the form of an evaluation of the extent to which you met, did not meet or exceeded the job objectives agreed at the start of the year.

You are encouraged to use the appraisal system to help develop your job and work skills, by identifying areas for learning such as special projects, training courses, or placements. The annual appraisal meeting will also identify whether there have been significant changes in job responsibilities, which may require a subsequent grading review. A standard form will be used for the annual job appraisal meeting. You can obtain a copy of this form and guidance notes from your Line Manager.

If MG ALBA at any time operates a bonus policy, bonuses will be linked to fulfilment of job objectives and performance measures, and in all cases will operate under the terms set out by MG ALBA's remuneration committee.

Requests for additional training requirements may be made at any time.

Calibration will be carried out in January. "Calibration" is an opportunity for the management team to discuss your performance using constructive debate and challenge and will result in you receiving a rating reflective of your performance. This is intended to generate good quality feedback for you and to ensure a more fair and equitable approach to performance management.

You will be measured on performance against agreed objectives and your adoption of our core values and core behaviours in the completion of those objectives.

If your performance appraisal, including Calibration, identifies that you may require professional or personal development you will be offered appropriate support which may include coaching and more intensive feedback, as well as training.



If you are graded as not meeting agreed expectations, you will be asked to agree and implement a Personal Improvement Plan.

You should in any event have a Personal Development Plan in progress, agreed with your manager.

You should meet frequently with your Line Manger (monthly or at least quarterly) to discuss areas that are going well, that need to be improved and that need to change. These discussions should be documented if appropriate and may be used as evidence for calibration discussions.

### **7.17 Work Experience**

Support for Gaelic medium education is a significant way in which MG ALBA works to improve the communities in which we live.

We will provide quality work experience placements to enable Gaelic-speaking young people to gain skills and be better able to make informed career decisions and ideally attract high quality candidates and students into the Gaelic media sector. To ensure this MG ALBA will commit to a maximum of 2 students in the months of June and September. Summer positions will be reviewed each year.

## 7.18 IT Policy

MG ALBA intends that the following IT policy will lead to the most efficient and safe use of the organisation's IT resources.

For the avoidance of doubt the guidance applies to members of the Board and to members of staff.

By adhering to the following guidelines MG ALBA aims to:

- Protect its IT infrastructure from malicious outside elements.
- Protect all systems from damage caused by misuse or careless work practices.
- Ensure efficient in-house work practices are adhered to.
- Ensure that staff are aware of both the legal and moral obligations surrounding the use of the organisations systems.

Managers are responsible for the enforcement of this policy within their teams.

Failure to follow the organisation's IT policy will be dealt with seriously and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

Staff and members should be aware of their responsibilities under the Data Protection Act, Computer Misuse Act<sup>1</sup> and the Copyright Design and Patents Act. The IT Manager will provide guidance where required.

1. Network management, administration and maintenance within MG ALBA are the responsibility of the IT Manager and/or any organisation holding a system maintenance contract. Access to and usage of the Servers is restricted to authorised staff.

### Hardware

2. Any requirement for new office equipment will be assessed by the IT Manager.
3. Individual hardware should be brought to the attention of the IT Manager, after discussion with Line Manager and completion of the appropriate Requisition Forms.
4. The main office infrastructure will be replaced after a preordained period of time. This time period will be set by the IT Manager and the Director of Finance.
5. The purchase, installation, configuration and maintenance of computer equipment is the responsibility of the IT Manager and/or any organisation holding a system maintenance contract.
6. Computer equipment registers will be maintained by the IT Manager to ensure full tracking of equipment.
7. The IT Manager will liaise with the Director of Finance to ensure adequate insurance cover for computer equipment. The IT Manager will ensure staff are aware of any restrictions and limitations.
8. The deployment of new equipment or re-deployment of existing equipment is undertaken by the IT Manager after consultation with Managers.
9. The security and safekeeping of portable and other equipment used out with MG ALBA offices is the responsibility of the user. If any damage or loss is deemed to have been caused by negligence

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<sup>1</sup> *Computer Users shall not, by any wilful or deliberate act, jeopardize the integrity of the computing equipment, its systems programs or any other stored information to which they have access. Under the Terms of the Computer Misuse Act (1990), unauthorized access to a computer (sometimes called "hacking") or other unauthorized modification to the contents of a computer (such as the deliberate introduction of viruses) are criminal offences punishable by unlimited fines and up to 5 years imprisonment*

the user may be asked to make reimbursement to the company for the repair or replacement of the item.

10. All users are responsible for the proper usage, care and cleanliness of the computer equipment they use. Managers should ensure that staff maintain the cleanliness of their machines.
11. Problems with office hardware should be reported to the IT Manager. If it is deemed that damage has been caused by negligence the user may be asked to make reimbursement to the company for the repair or replacement of the item.

### **Software & Software Applications**

12. The purchase, installation, configuration and support of all software and software applications used within MG ALBA are the responsibility of the IT Manager.
13. Software, including screensavers, must not be installed by users without prior authorisation from the IT Manager.
14. MG ALBA will treat the installation of unlicensed software by users as a serious breach of the IT Policy.
15. Software license registers will be maintained by the IT Manager to ensure compliance with legislation.
16. Software disks will be kept securely by the IT Manager.
17. Requirements for new software/software applications should be discussed in advance with the IT Manager to assess the detailed specification and implications.
18. Problems with software should be reported to the IT Manager.
19. Requests for modifications, enhancements and upgrades of existing software applications should be discussed with the IT Manager.

### **Data Management**

20. Data Management should be in accordance with the data management policies and procedures of MG ALBA.
21. Managers are responsible for maintaining the quality of the computer-held data processed by their teams.
22. The individual user is responsible to their line manager for the quality of the computer data they have personally processed.
23. Managers are responsible for ensuring compliance with Data Protection legislation with regards to data processed within their teams.
24. In conjunction with the nominated Data Protection Officer of the organisation, the IT Manager will keep abreast of data protection legislation, advise accordingly and ensure applications and databases are registered in accordance with the legislation and internal organisational data management policies.
25. All information/data held on the organisation's systems is deemed the property of MG ALBA.
26. As a condition of employment, staff consent to the examination of the use and content of all data/information processed and/or stored by the staff member on the organisation's systems as required.

### **Back Up**

27. The IT Manager is responsible for ensuring the implementation of an effective back-up strategy for server-held software and data.
28. Users of networked desktop PCs should avoid storing data on their local hard drives. Data so stored may be lost if a problem develops with the PC, and the IT Manager may not be able to assist in its recovery.
29. Staff must ensure that all important corporate documents are stored on the main server within the file directory (folder) structure used by the office and that said documents are accessible to at least one other member of staff and the Chief Executive.
30. Server held data will be backed up on a daily basis with one copy being held off site.
31. Remote and laptop PC users must ensure they back up their data regularly. The IT Manager will provide advice and assistance.

32. Confidential data being carried off the premises via a portable storage device (e.g. memory stick) must be encrypted.

### **Anti-Virus Protection**

33. The IT Manager is responsible for the implementation of an effective virus security strategy. All machines, networked and standalone, will have up-to-date anti-virus protection.
34. The installation of anti-virus software on all machines is the responsibility of the IT Manager.
35. The IT Manager will ensure the upgrade of the anti-virus software on networked desk-top PCs.
36. Remote users and users of portable machines will assist in the upgrade of anti-virus software in accordance with specified mechanisms agreed with the IT Manager, e.g. internet updates
37. Users should virus-scan all media (including memory sticks, DVDs and CDs) before first use. The IT Manager will provide assistance and training where required.
38. In the event of memory sticks being used off-site e.g. home, hotels, other companies, the memory stick should be scanned for viruses before it is used again in the office. This should be done by the IT Manager on a stand-alone machine.
39. On detection of a virus users should notify the IT Manager who will provide assistance.
40. Under no circumstances should staff attempt to disable or interfere with the virus scanning software.

## **Part 2 - Computer Users**

### **Health & Safety**

1. Health and safety with regards to computer equipment and computer work stations should be managed within the context of the general and any specific Health & Safety policies and procedures within MG ALBA. The Office Manager will provide advice.
2. Managers are responsible for ensuring health & safety legislation and procedures with regards to computer equipment are implemented within their teams.
3. Employees who use Display Screen Equipment will be assessed in accordance with the Health and Safety Policy, paragraph 4.10, and appropriate control measures implemented to mitigate all potential health problems related to design of the workplace, the job, training and consultation.
4. The IT Manager will keep abreast of IT-related legislation and advise accordingly.

### **Training**

5. It is the responsibility of Managers to ensure appropriate computer training for their teams. The IT Manager can advise on computer-related training issues.

### **User Accounts**

6. Managers should notify the IT Manager of new users in advance to allow the creation of network and e-mail accounts and system permissions.
7. Managers should notify the IT Manager of the departure of users to allow the deletion of network and e-mail accounts.

### **Passwords**

8. The IT Manager will ensure passwording is part of the security strategy of the MG ALBA IT system. The IT Manager is responsible for formulating and updating the Password Policy and all employees must comply with the provisions of the Password Policy.
9. Users should change their passwords when prompted by the system in the case of networked machines or on a regular basis for standalone machines.

10. Users are responsible for the security of their password which they should not divulge, even to colleagues. The IT Manager may need to know passwords in order to carry out essential maintenance.
11. Problems with passwords should be reported to the IT Manager.

### **System Usage**

12. Computers should be locked or shut down when left unattended for any significant period of time.
13. Users should ensure that their computers are fully shut down and turned off at least once a week.

## **Part 3 - E-mail & Internet**

### **E-Mail**

1. The MG ALBA e-mail system should not be used for political, business or commercial purposes not related to MG ALBA.
2. The MG ALBA e-mail system must not be used to send illegal or inappropriate material.
3. Limited personal use of email is permitted. Managers should ensure there is no abuse of this privilege.
4. Global distribution lists should be used appropriately. Email to all users (spamming) should be used only when appropriate.
5. Users should minimise the number of messages in their email in-box to ensure maximum efficiency of the delivery system. Folders should be set up and messages filed accordingly.
6. Users should utilise the archiving facility within the Email system in accordance with current guidelines.
7. Confidential material sent by e-mail should be so marked but sent only with caution.
8. MG ALBA retains the right to access and view all Emails sent and received by the Email system. This right is exercised solely through the IT Manager on the instructions of the Chief Executive.
9. Users should only divulge their email address to trusted parties, failure to do this may lead to a significant increase in spam email.
10. Do not broadcast email addresses to other organisations. If you are forwarding a message to both staff and outside parties, the blind carbon copy (bcc) option should be selected.
11. Do not open any emails that you are not completely sure about. If you have any doubts about the content of an email contact the IT Manager.
12. If the supply of an email address is essential in any given transaction, and you are not dealing with a trusted supplier, it would preferable if the user supplied a disposable email address e.g. Hotmail, Yahoo or Google Mail.
13. The use of internet-based email programmes such as "Squirrel Mail" should be limited to the viewing of email only. Email bearing the MG ALBA address should only be sent from office-based PCs.

### **Internet**

14. Access to the Internet is provided for business purposes. Limited personal use is permitted as long as it does not incur specific expenditure for MG ALBA, impact on job performance, break the law or bring MG ALBA into disrepute.
15. Staff should not make inappropriate use of their access to the Internet. They must not use MG ALBA systems to access pornographic, illegal or other improper material.
16. Users should not subscribe to chat rooms, dating agencies, messaging services or other on-line subscription Internet sites unless they pertain to work duties.
17. Programs, including screensavers, must not be downloaded from the Internet without authorisation from the IT Manager.
18. MG ALBA retains the right to monitor Internet usage by users. This right is exercised solely through instruction by the Chief Executive and where relating to a specific user. This will be carried out by the IT Manager.

19. It is a condition of employment that all users consent to the examination of the use and content of their Internet activity as required.
20. Abuse of Internet access will be dealt with relative to seriousness. Minor abuse may lead to removal of internet access from an individual's workstation. More serious breaches will be dealt with in accordance with MG ALBA's disciplinary procedures or, in the case of members, the Members' Code of Conduct.

## 7.19 Social Media Policy

Staff who are authorised to post under MG ALBA, BBC ALBA, LearnGaelic accounts are also referred to the specific Policy and Guidelines for official social and digital media accounts.

MG ALBA operates a social media policy to govern the use of this media within the organisation. The policy covers profile pages and other resources maintained by employees on networking sites including, but not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn; as well as blogs, forums, message boards, review sites and online polls.

This policy sets out how staff and members should behave when using the MG ALBA's social media platforms and governs how staff and members should refer to and promote MG ALBA on their own personal accounts. Please note that all social networking activities are also governed by MG ALBA's main IT policy and any violation of these policies may result in disciplinary action.

### Policy Aims

MG ALBA's Social Media use policy is applied in conjunction with MG ALBA'S IT Policy. This policy applies to all employees, contractors and board members who use social media either for personal or professional reasons. Full details of the IT Policy are contained in section 7.19 of the Company Handbook.

It is important that employees using social media in the workplace use it in a way which does not adversely affect MG ALBA's reputation.

Social media can involve communication between job applicants and MG ALBA and is an avenue for MG ALBA to promote our reputation. Social media may blur the boundaries between what is home and work. Access is often public, even amongst a limited group of connected accounts, and comments are often permanent.

Staff and members should be honest and respectful when using social media. Everything posted on social media may be tracked back to the source, so staff and members must ensure content posted on social media accounts, both in a work and personal capacity, fits with MG ALBA's ethos and values.

### Terms of Use

Social media usage for MG ALBA purposes is overseen by the the Digital Hub Manager. Social media usage for personal reasons does not need approval by MG ALBA.

When using social media, either in a personal or work capacity, during or outside working hours, posts on social media must not:

- compromise MG ALBA, disclose confidential data or disclose sensitive data
- damage MG ALBA's reputation or brand
- breach copyright or data protection laws or regulations
- contain libel or defamatory content
- engage in bullying or harassment
- be of illegal, sexual or offensive content
- interfere with your work commitments

- use the name of MG ALBA to promote products or political opinions
- contain anything that could be deemed as inappropriate
- tag colleagues in photos without their permission

Staff and members should ensure they consider the MG ALBA's other policies on IT, passwords, marketing, public relations, press announcements and branding.

Social media content attributable to staff which breaches the terms of this policy, or the other related policies, may result in an investigation and disciplinary action under the MG ALBA's disciplinary policy.

### **Social Media and Recruitment**

Recruitment processes are increasingly utilising social media as a method of engaging job-seekers. Due to the increasing amount of content posted online, viewing candidate's social media profiles is a quick and effective way of checking details contained in a CV or getting an idea of the personality of the candidate.

MG ALBA permits reviewing the social media profiles of candidates for recruitment purposes. This review must be carried out in accordance with the MG ALBA's policies and code of conduct.

Accessing of the candidate's profile page may be disclosed to the candidate during the recruitment process. Where information is discovered that makes the candidate unsuitable for the position, the candidate will be notified and they will be entitled to make representations about the information and their unsuitability.

### **Business Contacts**

Details of business contacts obtained during the course of an employee's employment are considered confidential information and remain the property of MG ALBA. Business contact details includes the contacts records in computer software installed on an employee's computer as well as maintained in third party websites including social media. Staff and members must ensure they are fully aware of MG ALBA's Data Protection policy in this area and that policy is fully observed should they wish to add business contacts to personal social media.

### **Policy Enforcement**

Using social media in a way which breaches this policy will result in such content being removed from corporate accounts and the employee's authorisation to use corporate social media accounts on behalf of MG being suspended and removed. Such content may be damaging to MG ALBA or employees and may lead to disciplinary action under MG ALBA's disciplinary policy, which may be serious or gross misconduct.

MG ALBA reserves the right to visit the social media accounts of employees if it is necessary to verify compliance with the terms of use.

## 7.20 MG ALBA Salary Grading Structure

### Introduction

This policy is an introduction to the pay and grading structure adopted by MG ALBA. Our pay policy aims to be fair and provide equality of opportunity. We aim to offer pay and benefits competitive with the leading employers in the industry in order to attract and retain the highest quality people.

### Job Evaluation

Job Evaluation is a systematic process for defining the relative worth of jobs within organisations.

The review process looks at the overall demands and size of a job within the structure of the organisation. The process is in no way linked to individuals, their abilities or performance and it is not about the post holder, the volumes of work they do or the hours that they work.

A point's-based scheme assesses each job in the organisation against a number of factors. The Job Description is the central document referenced in the review, along with input from managers, staff and HR.

### Factor Plan

Factors used are non-discriminatory and meet all the requirements of equal pay legislation. The factors that were used in designing the MG ALBA job evaluation project were:

- Complexity of Work
- Accountability
- Contacts and Relationships
- Knowledge & Skills
- Team Work
- Freedom to Act
- Planning & Organising
- Leadership & Direction
- Experience
- Quality & Improvement

Within each Factor, there are 5 points levels that range from 1 (scoring 10) to 5 (scoring 50) dependent on demands of the role in each factor.

The total points produce a ranked score for the post, which relates to the pay grading structure for the organisation.

### Job Bands & Salary Structure

(refer to Recruitment Policy and Guide to Salary Structures on MG ALBA's website)

Each post below Director level has been allocated to a Job Band. Within each Band there are 4 possible salary spans corresponding to (1) entry level; (2) demonstrable competence, (3) expertise and (4) wider influence and seniority.

For example, within Band A, an employee will be in Band A1, A2, A3 or A4. Each salary band contains 4 salary points, meaning that for a new entrant there will be three possible salary progressions to be earned in the same post over the course of a career with MG ALBA. Once an employee reaches the highest salary point for the post no further progressions will be possible.

### Progression

(refer to MG ALBA Salary Band Core Competency Requirements table)

Progression through bands will be based on performance, business case and available budget. There is no automatic right to progression.



It is possible that the job might be re-graded and allocated to a different salary span if the responsibilities attached to the post have increased. The position of an employee within the salary band will be determined according to their competence, expertise and seniority. Progressions however will be based on performance; core competencies being achieved and will be subject to business case and budget constraints.

### **Promotion**

The re-scoring of a job to the next Band above (e.g. from Band C to Band D) will create a promoted post to which the incumbent will be invited to apply. Failure to apply or an unsuccessful application would lead to open recruitment.

### **Pay Review**

Salary points will be reviewed each year for potential inflation-related rises, generally in line with public pay policy, and subject to Board and Ofcom approval.

Staff members who are not at the top of their Pay Bands will be eligible for Progression in the next financial year.

Progression will be based on performance management, business case and available budget. Each June the Chief Executive will ask for business case submissions from directors, which will form the basis for staff budgets for the following year's Operational Plan.

Staff members who are already at the top of their Pay Band are ineligible for progression. Pay movement will be restricted to annual inflation-based movement of the Band ceiling unless the job is re-scored into a higher Band. In exceptional circumstances a pay supplement may be awarded to take remuneration beyond the Band ceiling. Compelling reasons and evidence will be required.

### **Recruitment**

Before recruitment takes place, any vacant post will be subject to evaluation using the Factor Plan to set the salary range.

Vacant posts will be advertised showing the relevant salary span. On appointment the salary for the post will generally be at the lowest Salary Point for the post.

This process will also apply to temporary / fixed term posts and secondments.

## MG ALBA Salary Band Core Competency Requirements

COMPETENCY / SALARY POINT	HIGHEST	HIGH-MID	LOW-MID	LOWEST
<b>Employee Characteristic</b>	<i>Seniority, Wider impact / influence</i>	<i>Expertise</i>	<i>Competence</i>	<i>Entry Level</i>
Job Knowledge & Technical Skills	✓	✓	✓	✓
Supervisory / Management Skills	✓	✓		
Leadership / Strategic / Decision Making Skills	✓			
Problem Solving / Innovation Skills	✓	✓	✓	
Improvement / Quality Control Skills	✓	✓	✓	✓

### 7.21 Confidentiality Policy (This policy is non-contractual)

In the course of your employment with MG ALBA you may have access to, and close working knowledge of, the Company's confidential information and trade secrets. Disclosure of any confidential information or trade secrets by you either alone or with others would place the Company at a serious disadvantage and would do material damage, financial or otherwise, to its legitimate business interest.

You must keep confidential and shall not at any time either during your employment or after its termination, use, communicate or reveal to any person for your or any other person's benefit, any trade secret or confidential information concerning the business, finances or organisation of MG ALBA or any Associated Company, their systems, techniques or know how of their suppliers or customers.

For the purposes of this policy and by way of illustration (and not limitation), information will be secret and confidential if it is not in the public domain and relates to:

- programming techniques, systems, designs and other computer technology;
- software specifications;
- instruction manuals and/or any documentation relating to computer programs and applications;
- product lists;
- research and development;
- formulae or formulations;
- costings, profit margins, discounts, rebates and other financial information;
- current activities and current and future plans relating to all or any development, production or sales including the timing or all or any such matters;
- the development of new products;
- production or design secrets;
- technical design or specifications of the products of the Company or any Associated Company;
- pricing, credit policies, credit procedures, payment policies, payment procedures and systems for the same, whether of the Company or of any Associated Company;
- the Company's clients and customers or prospective clients and customers; and
- any other information which is notified to you during the course of your employment as being confidential or secret or is received or obtained by you in confidential circumstances.

The restrictions contained in this policy shall not apply to:

- any disclosure or use expressly authorised by the Company or any Associated Company or as required in the ordinary and proper course of your employment or as required by a court or tribunal of competent jurisdiction or as required by an appropriate regulatory authority; or
- any information that is in the public domain otherwise than as a result of a breach of this clause or breach of an equivalent provision or other unlawful act (whether by you either personally or by an agent, whether on your own account or for or in association with any other person or by any other employee of the Company or any Associated Company).

#### **Notes, Memoranda and other Documents**

All notes, memoranda, records and writing made by you relating to the business of MG ALBA or any Associated Company shall remain the property of MG ALBA or Associated Company to whose business they may relate and shall be delivered by you to the company to which they belong forthwith upon request.

On termination of your employment for whatever reason you shall immediately deliver to an officer of MG ALBA all books, documents, papers (including copies), materials and other property of or relating to the business of MG ALBA or any Associated Company then in your possession or which are or were last under your power or control.

## 7.22 Children & Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy

MG ALBA makes a positive contribution to a strong and safe community and recognises the right of every individual to stay safe.

MG ALBA may come into contact with children and / or vulnerable adults through the following activities:

- Work experience placements
- Summer placements
- Guided facility tours
- MG ALBA events
- Industry events
- Community engagement events
- School events and activities
- Location filming

This policy seeks to ensure that MG ALBA undertakes its responsibilities with regard to protection of children and vulnerable adults and will respond to concerns appropriately.

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers and the Board of Members, employees, students, contractors, suppliers or anyone working on behalf of Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig (operating as MG ALBA).

Employees who come in to contact with children and / or vulnerable adults in any capacity related to BBC ALBA must also comply with the BBC Child Protection Policy and Guidelines on Working with Vulnerable Adults. The provisions of these policies will be covered during Induction Training and employees will be required to complete relevant training courses to embed knowledge and understanding.

### Definition of a Child

A child is under the age of 18.

### Definition of Vulnerable Adults

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 years or over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited.

### Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children and vulnerable adults, namely:

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children Act 2004
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Mental Health Act 1983
- NHS and Community Care Act 1990
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Relevant government guidance on safeguarding children

MG ALBA commits resources to providing Disclosure Scotland Protection of Vulnerable Group Scheme checks on staff (paid or unpaid) whose roles involve contact with children and / or vulnerable adults.

MG ALBA commits resources for induction and training of staff (paid and unpaid), and effective communications in relation to Safeguarding.

All staff who, through their role, are in contact with children and/or vulnerable adults will have access to safeguarding training at an appropriate level.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount, as enshrined in the Children Act 1989
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:


- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- adopting child protection practices through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and related procedures
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- sharing concerns with agencies who need to know and involving parents and children appropriately.

We will seek to keep vulnerable adults safe by ensuring they are protected from:

- physical abuse – including hitting, pushing, kicking, misuse of restraint or inappropriate sanctions
- sexual abuse – including sexual assault or acts to which the adult did not, or could not, consent
- psychological abuse – including emotional abuse, threats, deprivation of contact, humiliation, intimidation, coercion, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services
- financial or material abuse – including exploitation and pressure in connection to property or financial transactions
- neglect or acts of omission – including ignoring medical or physical care needs, discriminatory abuse – including racist, sexist and other forms of harassment.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy was last reviewed on: 6 December 2018

Signed: 

Print Name: Donald Campbell  
Position: Chief Executive

### **7.23 Dignity at Work Policy** *(This policy is non-contractual)*

#### **Scope**

The aim of this policy is to convey MG ALBA's position to creating and maintaining a workplace culture free from hostility, reflective of the whole of society, in which each member of staff is valued and enabled to develop to their full potential.

MG ALBA will not tolerate behaviour which may have the effect of belittling another person. Examples of this behaviour includes: bullying, harassment, derogatory or offensive comments, malicious or insulting communication, humiliation, hurtful or gossip based dialogue, uninvited physical contact and any other act which creates an intimidating work environment. Employees must be able to carry out their work duties without fear of any unfair treatment. The scope of this policy extends to Board members.

#### **Your Rights and Responsibilities**

We expect all staff and Board members to adhere to the following:

- Treat all colleagues with dignity and respect
- Be aware of the effect that your own behaviour and activities can impact on others
- Communicate openly and inclusively
- Dress appropriately for workplace
- Always set a positive example to all colleagues
- Seek to understand each other, our backgrounds, cultures, beliefs and personal values
- Consider language, attitudes and culture of all colleagues
- Not participate in any discussion that could be offensive, intimidating, untrue or insulting to anyone else.
- Think before making personal comments to or about others; and
- Actively promote dignity and respect in the workplace.

All employees and Board members have a right to work in an environment that:

- Is safe – occupationally, physically and psychologically
- Promotes dignity at work
- Encourages individuals to treat each other with respect
- Promotes speaking politely, openly and honestly with others
- Is open, transparent and fair
- Respects other people's cultures and beliefs
- Encourages them to take responsibility for each other.

All employees and Board members have a responsibility to:

- Ensure they are supportive to individuals who state they have been bullied or harassed and take seriously and full account of their feelings and perceptions of the situation;
- Encourage those individuals to seek help from an appropriate source;
- Speak up if we see or witness something that makes us feel uncomfortable;
- Participate fully to assist in any investigation and to help get to the truth;
- Refrain from participating in, encouraging or condoning vexatious gossip including that related to cases of alleged or actual bullying or harassment.

We hope that the implementation of this policy means that no person should need to make a complaint. However, should a complaint be made, the staff member should hold the honest and genuine belief that they are being treated without dignity.

In making a complaint, reference should also be made to the following policies contained in the Company Handbook:

- Individual Behavioural Standards & Code of Conduct
- Grievance Procedure
- Harassment and Bullying

## **MG ALBA's Responsibilities**

### **Promotion of Policy**

This policy and procedure will be communicated to all colleagues, and all will be made aware of their responsibilities under it. Training will be given on its implementation, at regular review dates and in line with any refresh of Company Values.

### **Confidentiality**

Any information gathered in the handling of a complaint will be treated sensitively. However, it will be explained to those involved that some information may have to be shared as part of an effective process in order to come to a satisfactory conclusion.

## **Complaint Procedure**

### **Informal Approach**

The first step you are encouraged to take is to raise such issues in confidence with a senior colleague of your choice (whether or not that person has a direct supervisory responsibility for you) as a confidential helper.

You may decide you can deal with the inappropriate behaviour informally, for example, if the act concerned is relatively minor, isolated or clearly unintentional. In these situations, it is possible that the matter can be resolved immediately by letting the alleged perpetrator know that the behaviour in question is unacceptable to you and should be avoided in future. If you feel unable to do this verbally, you should hand a written request to your harasser; this is something your confidential helper can assist you with.

### **Formal Approach**

If you feel uncomfortable about raising the issue directly with the alleged perpetrator or if you consider the behaviour is more serious because it was deliberate, part of a persistent pattern, or serious in nature, or has been repeated despite having discussed a previous incident informally, then you should bring the matter to the attention of the HR Adviser as a formal written complaint and again this is something that your confidential helper can assist you with.

On receipt of a formal complaint, an investigation will take place.

MG ALBA will ensure that staff who make complaints or who participate in good faith in any investigation will not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result.

### **Disciplinary Action**

If the decision is that the allegation is well founded, the perpetrator will be liable to disciplinary action in accordance with our disciplinary procedure.

### **No Action Taken**

If there are no grounds to substantiate the allegation that unacceptable behaviour has taken place, this outcome will be confirmed in writing to all involved.

### **Dissatisfaction with the Outcome**

Recourse to the Company's Grievance procedure is available if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the process.

### **Malicious False Allegations**

Any allegations found to be both false and malicious will be taken very seriously and may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

### **Mediation**

Mediation may be suitable in some circumstances following an informal or formal dignity at work complaint. This may be used where the unresolved issues are of a more personal level rather than work-related, such as difficulties in communication or being able to see one another's point of view.

Mediation could be used where any work-related matters have been addressed by MG ALBA, but personal issues still remain between the parties as they continue to work together.

Agreement to the process by both parties is a must: mediation will not be considered unless all parties consent to it.

### **Responsibility**

Management, with support from the HR Adviser, are responsible for the implementation of this policy.

### **Record-Keeping**

Information about a complaint by or about an employee may be placed on the employee's personnel file, along with a record of the outcome and of any notes or other documents compiled during the process. These will be processed in accordance with our Data Protection Policy.



## **7.24 Employee Volunteering Policy** *(This policy is non-contractual)*

### **Purpose**

MG ALBA promotes the taking part in volunteering opportunities by its employees and encourages employees to volunteer for activities in the local community.

Part of this promotion involves the sponsorship by MG ALBA of voluntary projects in the local community as well as permitting the personal volunteering opportunities by employees in other projects.

MG ALBA is also open to suggestions from its employees for new volunteering arrangements with charities or other bodies where volunteer work is available.

Both aspects of the volunteering programme support MG ALBA's business strategy and objectives. MG ALBA seeks to add value through the positive impacts that result from a successful and integrated volunteering programme.

### **Benefits of Volunteering**

Participation in volunteering creates mutual benefits for MG ALBA, the local community and MG ALBA employees. Some of the volunteering projects that MG ALBA and its employees get involved in may support the local economy and enable skills and competencies to be developed and enhanced within the community. Skills and practical assistance are rendered to the community at little or no cost to the recipient.

Employees benefit from the development of new skills. Physical improvements to health may be coupled with mental improvements to competencies beneficial in the workplace as well as personal wellbeing.

MG ALBA's standing in the community is enhanced by participating in volunteering projects, which make a contribution to the local economy, with lasting community benefits.

Work undertaken on volunteering projects that are sponsored by MG ALBA are usually carried out during normal working hours.

MG ALBA keeps a record of the volunteering activities it sponsors and those employees participate in. MG ALBA keeps a log, which employees should fill in when they volunteer during their usual working hours, together with a periodic report to their line manager of their experiences. These periodic reports may be used in promotional communications, both internally within MG ALBA and externally in marketing materials.

### **MG ALBA Sponsored Community Projects**

The list of community voluntary projects that MG ALBA sponsors is available on the intranet or from the Business Affairs Team.

### **Personal Volunteering**

Employees are not obliged to volunteer their time exclusively on projects sponsored by MG ALBA. Employees may wish to participate in volunteering projects which are similar in spirit to the projects already sponsored by MG ALBA. Projects chosen by employees may or may not be related to the type of volunteering work already sponsored by MG ALBA.

MG ALBA does not support political or lobbying projects or activities.

Participation will be permitted by MG ALBA where this does not have a detrimental impact on the employee's work.

Employees should inform their line manager of their intention to undertake personal volunteering. If granted, MG ALBA may allow additional unpaid leave of up to 2 days a year for this purpose, or the equivalent monthly hours. These days/hours should be applied for using the Simply Personnel system. The volunteering must not be undertaken until the employee's line manager has authorised. Employees may be able to vary their hours of work providing their line manager can support the variation, taking into account business needs and efficiency.

### **Applications**

Employees should submit an application to their line manager through Simply Personnel if they wish to apply for volunteering work, either through an MG ALBA project, or a project of their own choosing.

The application will ask the employee to provide details of the following:

- volunteer project name and type
- reasons why the employee is wishing to volunteer
- the skills the employee can bring to the project
- the timescale for the project and the time the employee proposes to allot to the project
- if voluntary charitable contributions will be necessary, whether the employee intends:
  - to seek charitable contributions from fellow employees
  - to seek charitable contribution from MG ALBA

If the employee believes training may be required for the provision of the voluntary services, the employee should set out any associated costs for doing so.

### **Consideration of Application**

The employee's line manager will discuss the application with the HR Advisor to determine whether to grant or reject the application.

MG ALBA will reject applications for operational reasons, if the employee's line manager believes the employee's work will suffer. A request from a team leader or supervisor may be declined if it is considered that their team may struggle without them or the department itself may suffer a detriment.

If the employee has requested any training, MG ALBA may consider this in respect of the costs involved. If the cost is deemed excessive, the application may be declined.

### **Time off for Volunteering**

Full time employees are eligible to apply for a maximum of 2 days of paid time off for volunteering. These days/hours cannot be carried forward into the following holiday year.

Volunteering should take place during an employee's normal working hours, unless agreed otherwise with the employee's line manager. If volunteering is undertaken outside working hours, there will be no time off in lieu permitted; time spent volunteering is not absence from work. The decision on the working arrangements is at the discretion of line managers in order to facilitate business operations and the smooth running of MG ALBA -sponsored volunteering projects. The arrangements are not a change to terms and conditions of employment.

## **Disclosure / PVG Checks**

For those types of volunteering work that require a PVG check, the charity will carry this out for the voluntary work.

PVG checks will be required for certain types of voluntary work such as work involving children or healthcare. Employees should not incur the cost of obtaining these until their application has been finalised and signed by their line manager.

## **Volunteering Project Progress**

The employee may be asked to provide feedback on progress being made in their volunteering project, bearing in mind MG ALBA may wish to use the positive aspects and benefits of the volunteering project both in its internal volunteering project promotions and also externally in publicity both with existing and new volunteer projects, and in the wider marketing sphere.

If MG ALBA finds it is experiencing serious operational issues as a consequence of the employee being in attendance at the volunteering project, it may unfortunately find it necessary to withdraw support for the attendance of the employee on an MG ALBA sponsored or privately sourced volunteering project. This should hopefully be a last resort and MG ALBA hopes it can work around any issues, but the right is reserved to withdraw the support/attendance of an employee immediately and with no notice.

## **Insurance and Liability**

The appropriate level of insurance is provided as part of MG ALBA sponsored volunteering projects during MG ALBA's usual working hours, which extends to personal injury, professional and public liability insurance. Vicarious liability for employee actions during periods spent volunteering does not extend to equipment, tools, materials, premises or instructions provided by the third-party volunteering charity.

Risk assessments will be carried out in respect of health and safety. Charities providing volunteering opportunities to MG ALBA employees, whether MG ALBA -sponsored or not, will be required to confirm to MG ALBA that the employee has been trained in undertaking the work to be performed, that hazards and risks have been assessed and steps taken to control the risks.

## **7.25 Menopause Policy**

*(This policy is non-contractual)*

### **Introduction**

Menopause is the time during a woman's life when menstruation periods permanently stop. It is defined as occurring when the individual has experienced no periods for 12 consecutive months and no other biological or psychological cause can be identified.

Also referred to as 'the change of life', the menopause can cause a chain reaction of physical and psychological side effects to a woman's body. As a company, we have a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all of our employees under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. In addition, the Equality Act 2010 outlines that individuals must not be discriminated against due to any form of disability and we recognise that the symptoms of the menopause may constitute a disability. We are committed to ensuring appropriate support and assistance is provided to any employee who is going through the menopause.

We recognise that the menopause can be a significant issue in the workplace for those affected, and we seek to actively support and inform all employees about the help and assistance that we can provide

The purpose of this policy is to assist with creating an open and honest workplace where line managers and employees can discuss any issues associated with the menopause, and to ensure the necessary support is known and offered to employees when needed. Our aim is to be able to talk openly and honestly about the impact of the menopause on affected employees, and act in a positive and respectful manner towards them.

It is important to note that while we predominantly talk about women in relation to the menopause here, we also recognise and appreciate that the menopause can impact trans and non-binary people who don't identify as women in the same manner.

Menopause can be experienced by trans masculine presenting individuals, and non-binary identified people may retain female anatomical features at this stage of their lives. They require the same support, flexibility and dignity in the workplace as others with similar symptoms.

### **Employee Responsibilities**

#### Reporting any Issues

It is important that, as an employee, you prioritise your personal health and wellbeing. If you are struggling with any aspect of your role as a result of symptoms associated with the menopause, you should report any concerns you may have to your line manager, who will treat the matter with complete confidence.

Physical symptoms of the menopause can include the following:

- hot flushes
- insomnia
- fatigue
- poor concentration
- headaches
- skin irritation
- urinary problems.

As a result of the above, or as an extension of the hormone imbalance, individuals going through the menopause can also experience psychological difficulties, including:

- depression
- anxiety
- panic attacks
- mood swings
- irritability
- problems with memory / brain fog
- loss of confidence.

In order to ensure we can provide you with the best support possible we encourage you to be open and honest in these conversations. We welcome any suggestions that you may have to improve the workplace environment in relation to menopause symptoms in order to further discussion on this.

#### Supporting Colleagues

There is an expectation on all employees to conduct themselves in a helpful and open-minded manner towards colleagues.

We maintain a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment and will treat any and all complaints seriously. If you feel that you have been mistreated in any way by a colleague because of matters related to the menopause, please make your concerns known to the HR Advisor.

#### **Employer Responsibilities**

##### Approachability

When responding to an employee experiencing difficulties caused by menopause, line managers will maintain an open-door policy so that employees feel comfortable in approaching them. They will support you to talk openly about your current situation and will not make presumptions about how it is affecting you, nor compare your situation to that of others as every individual is affected uniquely.

## Discussion

During any discussions, your line manager will consider your individual situation and evaluate if any adjustments can be made. Your individual needs will be addressed sensitively, and confidentiality will be maintained.

Line managers will also arrange follow up sessions in order to evaluate the effectiveness of any adjustments put in place.

We understand that you may feel uncomfortable discussing personal information with your line manager. If this is the case, you are encouraged to discuss your situation with another senior member of staff or the HR Advisor.

## Workplace Adjustments

In order to assist you in your daily duties, we will explore making adjustments to your role or working environment with the aim of reducing the effect that the menopause is having on you. We acknowledge that the menopause affects each individual in different ways so no adjustment will be made without fully discussing it with you first.

Examples of adjustments include:

- conducting a risk assessment to identify any particular areas that are a detriment to individuals going through the menopause
- changing the location of the employee so they are closer to toilet facilities or away from hot and cold spots around the office
- implementing further temperature control, such as access to a fan
- assessing how work is allocated and whether the employee is affected at particular points of the day
- allowing additional rest breaks
- considering flexible working hours or allowing the employee to work from home
- making allowances for additional needs for sickness absence.

Once the adjustments are agreed, they will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure they are having the required effect.

The Company is legally obliged by the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to an employee's role or working conditions if they have a disability that places them at a disadvantage when performing their role and we will ensure compliance with our obligations in this regard.

## **Training Resources**

<https://menopauseintheworkplace.co.uk/what-we-do/>

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## Section 8 – General Information/Administration & Employee Facilities

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### 8.1 Kitchen Facilities/Staff Room

Kitchen facilities and staff room are provided for all personnel and must be used properly. As this is a self-service kitchen, employees must ensure that they clean up after themselves. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

### 8.2 Car Park

Car parking facilities are available for employees at the rear of the building. Parking at the front of the building is only for very short pick-up or drop-off. Should MG ALBA's car park be full, please be aware that the car park to the side of An Tosgan is available to us at all times. Under **no circumstances** can the disabled spaces at MG ALBA be used unless you are a registered disabled badge holder.

The company accepts no responsibility for loss of damage to any vehicles whilst on Company premises.

### 8.3 Change in Personal Circumstances

If there are any changes in your personal circumstances relating to your employment or benefits, you should notify your Line Manager immediately. This ensures that MG ALBA has up-to-date records, but it is also for the following:

- Statutory purposes, including payroll
- To ensure you are covered by appropriate benefits
- Health & Safety reasons, so your family/next of kin can be contacted in emergencies

In particular you should advise MG ALBA of any changes in the following:

- Address/telephone number
- Marital status
- Next of kin/emergency contacts

### 8.4 Notice Boards

Notice boards are placed at various points throughout the site. No unauthorised posting of notices is allowed.

### 8.5 Personal Property

The Company accepts no liability for money or personal property lost or damaged on the premises. Any property lost or found should be reported to your Line Manager or the HR Advisor.

## 8.6 Forms and Templates

The following are available from the HR Adviser and should be used in all the circumstances set out below:

### Job Objectives, Appraisals and Recruitment

- Job Recruitment Template & Scoring System
- Job Evaluation / Grading System
- Job Objective, Appraisal and Mid Year Appraisal Pack
- Training Plan Template
- Maternity Letter
- Paternity Self Certificate
- Training Evaluation Form
- Exit Interview Form

### BBC Compliance for Sgioba ALBA team members

- Editorial Compliance Form
- Declaration of Personal Interest Form

The following are available from the Office Manager and should be used in all the circumstances set out below:

### HR Administration and Professional Development

- Annual Leave Form
- Other Leave Form
- Return to Work Interview Form
- Absence Management Forms (eg Self-certificate sickness form)
- Equipment Handover Form (to accompany Exit Interview)

### Finance

- Expense Claim Form
- Procurement form for mobiles, IT etc

## 8.7 Investors in People Working Group

This is a Staff/Management consultative group, representing the Senior Management Team and a staff member from each team. The membership rotates by one third every 18 months.

The remit of the group is to develop and implement a rolling programme of events and improvement initiatives that impact staff's working lives at MG ALBA and can include but are not limited to health and wellbeing programmes, charitable and social activities and review of HR policies and procedures.

The work of the IIP Group is also key to achieving, maintaining and progressing external accreditations such as Investors in People, Investors in Young People, We Invest in Wellbeing and Broadcast Best Places to Work Awards.

Regular updates from the group are available on the Company Intranet and at quarterly Staff Meetings. Any staff member with suggestions for the IIP Group should speak to their team representative, the Office Manager or the HR Adviser.