



New Ground Churches

Staff Handbook

Created: January 2014

Edited: April 2018, April 2020, December 2022, February 2025

Approved: March 2025

Introduction

This handbook has been written to provide you with all the information you need about working for New Ground Churches, whether as employed staff or volunteers. Here you can find all our staff policies which we encourage you to read and familiarise yourself with. As they are non-contractual, the policies may change from time to time in order to take into account changes in how we are working, or legislative changes, so please try to re-read these on a regular basis. It is your responsibility to follow the handbook.

Throughout the handbook we will often refer to New Ground Churches as “we”.

Each main heading is marked either * or ** or ***. This is to indicate the entry is:

- * Reference or;
- ** Required Reading (for employed staff) or;
- *** Required Reading (for all, including volunteers).

After each review you will be informed that the handbook has been updated and we will ask you to confirm you have read all the relevant Required Reading entries.

At the back of the handbook there are copies of forms you may need throughout the course of your employment. If you have any questions about these or anything you have read in this handbook, please feel free to contact the Operations Director.

Thank you for your commitment and cooperation.

The Management Team

Dale Barlow – Chief Operating Officer

Brett Melville – Operations Director

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Absence From Work, Sickness and Sick Pay **

When you are unwell we do not require, nor expect you, to do any work during the day. If you are unwell, work can wait, as your recovery will be quicker if you rest completely. If you do choose to log on to your email or do any work, your absence will still be treated as sick leave and the following provisions will apply.

Notification of Absence

If you are sick and cannot come to work, please notify your manager as early as possible by telephone, preferably within 30 minutes of your normal start time. It is most helpful for your manager to be able to speak to you directly so as to manage your workload for the expected duration of your absence, so please phone rather than texting your line manager. If you are unable to get hold of your manager, please leave a message on their voicemail.

The person responsible for HR should also be informed of your absence and similarly informed upon your return.

On your return to work, please complete a self-certification form, which can be found in the Appendices, and email this form to the Operations Director. In certain circumstances we may ask you to attend an examination by a recommended doctor and/or with your consent, to request a report from your doctor. This enables us to effectively manage any ongoing sickness.

If your sickness lasts for more than 7 consecutive days (including weekends) you will need to obtain a medical certificate ('fit note') and produce this alongside the self-certification form on your return to work. In accordance with the UK Government's July 2022 update, fit notes may now be issued by nurses, occupational therapists, pharmacists, and physiotherapists, in addition to doctors. If we don't receive a medical certificate for this period, your absence could be considered unauthorised which may then lead to disciplinary procedure.

If you need to take leave for other reasons than sickness, please refer to the relevant policy in this handbook.

Please be sure to let your manager know when you will be absent from work/the office for any reason. Clear and open communication prevents any absences from being an issue either for you or for us. If you have personal circumstances that are affecting your work, don't feel that you need to keep this to yourself as open dialogue will avoid any confusion and disappointment on either side. Unexplained or unauthorised absences may lead to your salary not being paid on those days and disciplinary action so we would obviously like to avoid this.

Operations and medical procedures

If you know in advance of a pending operation, let your manager know as soon as possible in writing with a letter from your doctor, detailing the approximate duration of absence. Upon return to work, a medical certificate should be submitted.

Illness during normal working hours

If you become ill at work and do not work a full working day, you must inform your manager before you leave the office or stop working and your sick leave balance will be adjusted accordingly. The minimum sick leave that can be taken is half a day.

Illness during annual leave or time off in lieu

If you are unwell during a period of booked annual leave/time off in lieu, and you can produce a medical certificate confirming this, you will be credited with the annual leave you initially requested for the number of days you are covered by the certificate. This is as long as the type of sickness would have prevented you from working. For example, if a knee injury means you couldn't go on a walking holiday, but you could have worked then this would not be covered.

Medical/dental appointments

We understand that it is sometimes difficult to attend appointments outside of office hours due to restricted surgery hours; however, we would expect you to arrange the first appointment in the morning or the last appointment in the day. In total, we would anticipate that you would not be absent from work for more than two hours at a time. If you are required to be away from the office/work for more than two hours, you should seek prior approval from your manager and this will be deducted as half a day sick leave (or a whole day depending on how long the absence is for).

Please remember to advise your manager of any appointments, giving as much notice as possible.

Keeping in contact during sickness absence

If you are absent on sick leave for more than a few days we will contact you from time to time in order to discuss your wellbeing, expected length of continued absence from work and any of your work that requires attention. Such contact is intended to provide reassurance and will be kept to a minimum in view of the needs of the charity.

After an extended period of sickness absence, your manager may conduct a return to work interview with you.

Sick Pay

Your sick pay entitlement is outlined in your contract of employment.

Accidents and First Aid **

All accidents that occur on our premises to staff, volunteers, and/or visitors should be reported immediately. If you have an accident then it is your responsibility to record the details in the Accident Book in existence in the office in which the accident occurred. You should then send an email outlining the details of the accident to the Operations Director, even if the accident occurred while you were working elsewhere.

First Aid kits are available in each office specified as your place of work in your contract. If you require first aid at another location, please contact the local office manager who will direct you to their first aider to obtain appropriate treatment.

Annual Leave *

Holiday Entitlement

If you work full time you are entitled to 25 working days holiday in each holiday year, with the condition that 3 of these days are used in the period between Christmas and New Year when the office is closed. The holiday year runs from 1 January to 31 December.

If you work on a part time basis but work five days a week (i.e. reduced hours but every day) you are entitled to the same number of day's holiday entitlement as full time staff.

If you work part time and work fewer than five days a week, you are entitled to a pro-rata entitlement of the full time allowance, based on the number of days a week that you work, e.g. 3/5 of the full time allowance if you work three days a week.

In addition to your annual leave allowance, you are entitled to the statutory number of public holidays in England, which currently stands at 8 days per year. Part-time employees are entitled to pro-rata bank holidays and will be advised by the person responsible for HR of their public holiday adjustment at the beginning of each holiday year. This will also be noted in your holiday spreadsheet (see below under 'Applying for Holiday'). If you work full time and your day off falls on a public holiday, you will be entitled to a day off in lieu to compensate you for this.

If you join or leave part way through the holiday year, you will be entitled to a pro-rata amount of holiday for the year that you join or leave rounded up to the nearest half day. If you leave us, you will be paid for the extra days if you have taken less than your pro-rata entitlement for that year or you will have a deduction from your final salary if you have taken more than your pro-rata entitlement.

We believe it is essential that you take your full holiday entitlement each year for your own well-being. Therefore only a maximum of five days may be carried forward from one holiday year to the next, or a pro rata amount for part-time staff. However, in line with UK Holiday Pay regulations (April 2024), employees who are unable to take their statutory leave due to maternity leave or long-term sickness may carry over unused statutory leave beyond this limit. This carry-over must be taken in the first three months of the new holiday year, i.e. by 31 March. If more than five days remain at the end of the holiday year or if your holiday carried over is not taken in the first three months of the next holiday year then you will lose this excess, unless the reason for not taking the leave is due to specific work commitments agreed with your manager. Only when you leave the company will a payment be made for holiday not taken.

During your probationary period we would ask that you only take holiday leave after it has accrued each month. As holiday accrues at the rate of just over two days a month, you can only take holiday after the first month at a rate of two days for each month worked (pro-rated for part time staff depending on the number of days contracted to work). After the end of the probation period holiday can be taken at mutually convenient times. (See below).

Applying for Holiday

Please do not book holidays or flights etc until you have applied and received authorisation to take the time off, as there may be others in your team who have already had leave approved on those dates. Leave always needs to be at a mutually convenient time for all those concerned and we need to ensure there is always an appropriate level of cover.

We use a spreadsheet for the approval of annual leave which enables you to complete your request, email the spreadsheet to your manager and receive approval on the spreadsheet via email. You and your manager will then have identical copies of the spreadsheet. You should then copy the spreadsheet to the Operations Director who will update the relevant records. If you cancel holidays, please help us keep our records up to date by notifying the Operations Director.

The minimum holiday leave that can be taken is half a day. Generally only a maximum of two weeks can be taken at any one time, although in exceptional circumstances longer may be booked with prior approval.

Unpaid Leave

Before considering requests for unpaid leave, we would encourage you to use annual leave for any days off. For example, if you wish to participate on a mission trip or serve at Newday in a capacity unrelated to your job, you should use your annual leave for this purpose. Likewise, days off to move house and other such one-off requests should also be taken out of the general annual leave provisions. Please remember that if you take unpaid leave, there will always be an impact on your team when a significant amount of leave is taken.

However, we are aware that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for us to consider requests for unpaid leave. As a principle, this would be most appropriate when someone has been working for us for at least a year. Excessive time off in the first year may be detrimental to you settling in to your new role.

Applications for unpaid leave for compassionate reasons (e.g., bereavement, family emergencies) will be considered on a case-by-case basis, even for employees with less than one year's service.

If you wish to apply for unpaid leave, please speak to a member of the Management Team well in

advance of the request and prior to any arrangements being made. Approval will not be given immediately but will require discussion by the Management Team.

In some circumstances, you may have a legal entitlement to unpaid leave. These are detailed elsewhere in the handbook and include parental leave, time off for emergencies and jury service.

Attendance at events **

Job specific reason

If you are required to attend an event due to a specific requirement of your role, then it is compulsory that you attend that event unless there is a justifiable reason why you can't. Where the event is on the weekend, time off in lieu will be given during the week.

Non-job specific reasons

Aside from job specific reasons to attend events there may be occasions where you are asked to attend other events, either to serve or because the event is an important time to be together with others from New Ground.

There may also be times when you are not required nor asked to attend a particular event but would like to do so to gain the benefit of the teaching, fellowship, or information sharing opportunities that exist at our events. If this is the case, you should speak to your line manager who will discuss this with you and make a decision concerning the circumstances of your attendance.

Note on expenses in relation to events

- Costs of travelling to and from events which are attended in line with the above guidelines will be reimbursed in accordance with the Staff Expenses Policy.
- Costs should be charged to events where your attendance is due to job specific and event related reasons or for serving at the event. These will need to be authorised by the Events Manager. Otherwise, costs need to be charged to your normal cost centre budget.
- Where possible, we would ask staff to travel together in cars so as to minimise travel costs, and to book trains in advance so as to take advantage of the lowest fares.

Benenden Business Healthcare *

As part of our commitment to employee well-being, we provide access to **Benenden Business Healthcare**, a discretionary healthcare service designed to support your health and peace of mind.

What Does It Include?

Benenden Healthcare offers a range of services, including:

- **24/7 GP and Mental Health Helpline** – Access to a GP and mental health support at any time.
- **Medical Diagnostics** – Support with tests and scans when NHS waiting times are excessive.
- **Treatment and Surgery Support** – Assistance with some medical procedures when NHS access is delayed.
- **Physiotherapy** – Access to musculoskeletal support.
- **Well-being and Health Assessments** – Guidance on maintaining good health.

How It Works

- Benenden Healthcare operates on a **discretionary** basis, meaning services are provided when resources allow.
- It is designed to **complement, not replace**, NHS care.
- Employees can request services directly through Benenden when needed.

Who Is Eligible?

This benefit is available to all permanent employees after 3 months of service or after successful completion of probationary period. Full details, including how to access support, are provided upon enrolment.

For further information or to activate your membership, please contact Brett Melville.

Car Parking and Vehicles on Site *

If you park your vehicle on or near our premises, please be aware that these are parked at your own risk.

Compassionate and Bereavement Leave *

Compassionate leave is usually granted because of a serious illness in the family or for bereavement. If you wish to apply for this leave for other reasons, it may be granted at the discretion of the Management Team.

In cases where the reason concerns a member of the immediate family, this may be granted for up to a total of five working days. Immediate family is considered to be spouse, (step-) child, (step-) parent, (step-) brother, and (step-) sister. For reasons to do with extended family members, including grandparents, up to three working days may be granted. The number of days given may vary in line with individual circumstances, such as whether family live overseas or in the UK, so please speak to your manager before assuming that the maximum number of days compassionate leave will be given.

In the event of a death of a close friend, please speak to your manager who will be able to advise you further. Where a member of staff becomes responsible for funeral arrangements, settlement of estate, etc, additional leave may be granted up to a maximum of five days. In these cases, it will be paid leave.

Any extension of compassionate leave will be considered by the Management Team and will be unpaid leave unless otherwise agreed.

If you wish to apply for compassionate leave, please inform your line manager as soon as possible. Agreement to such requests is at the discretion of the Management Team.

Confidential Information ***

During the course of your employment or volunteering, you will inevitably become aware of information of a confidential nature relating to us, our staff and other third parties to whom we may owe a duty of confidence. As a staff member, you may also be privy to information or announcements relating to New Ground Churches and other spheres before they are publicised. In such cases, we expect you to keep these matters confidential unless you've been told otherwise.

You should not use nor disclose to any other person any such confidential information except in the proper course of your employment or as required by law. We also need to ask that you do not remove any confidential documents from our offices or systems unless you have permission to do so. It is important that we are able to safeguard the confidentiality of information on behalf of church members and those in the wider New Ground family.

Corporate Criminal Offence ***

New Ground operates a zero-tolerance policy towards bribery, corruption and tax evasion and this includes an employee or volunteer using charity funds knowingly to assist or facilitate someone else's tax evasion. This could take the form of agreeing to pay cash to avoid VAT being added to a supply or service, falsifying expense claims or not applying appropriate Gift Aid legislation. A comprehensive Risk Assessment is included in the Appendices and shows the management strategies, which we expect all staff to follow.

Knowingly assisting or facilitating someone else's tax evasion is a criminal offence under the Taxes Management Act 1970. In addition, the Criminal Finances Act 2017 includes a corporate offence, which would impact upon the reputation of the charity. Consequently, failure to follow the management strategies would be considered a breach of disciplinary rules, and actually assisting in another's tax evasion would constitute gross misconduct.

Data Protection ***

Personal information is information that relates to a living person and which identifies the individual, either on its own or together with other information. Processing the data includes obtaining, keeping, using, disclosing and destroying the data and doing so places us under various legal obligations. Accordingly, we ask that you adhere to the principles outlined below, which reflect our separate Data Protection policy.

Basic Principles

The basic principles relating to data protection that you should be aware of are as follows:

- Data should be processed fairly and lawfully and used only for the purposes that it was intended. The data should be adequate, relevant and not excessive.
- We are required to ensure that information held is accurate and kept up-to-date and information is only kept when it is needed and only for as long as it is needed.
- Access to data should be limited to necessary staff/volunteers and personal data should be kept protected and secured. Care needs to be taken regarding transferring it to other countries with less stringent data protection requirements, or where data classified as "sensitive" is involved. Additional consents may be needed in these cases.

These principles apply to all personal data, whether in electronic or hard copy format.

Compliance with Data Protection Legislation

If you have relevant information relating to staff and volunteers, such as your own staff records on remuneration, appraisal notes or as email sub folders relating to a particular individual etc, then you need to ensure that you comply with data protection legislation. These can be electronic or hard copies. Records held on computer backup tapes, diskettes and telephone recording mechanisms may also be subject to relevant legislation. In addition, if you request copies of information, e.g. you ask for a copy of someone's CV, your keeping this information must comply with data protection legislation.

In order to comply with data protection requirements, you must:

- Review the information kept on a regular basis to ensure that it is still necessary and relevant for you to store this information;
- Ensure that information is accurate and up-to-date;
- Ensure that the information is kept secured and only passed on to others where necessary;

- If you hold sensitive personal data, which is information relating to racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious beliefs or beliefs of a similar nature, membership of a trade union, physical or mental health condition, sexual life, commission or alleged commission by the individual of any offence or related proceedings, it is essential that you obtain consent from the individual to keep this information unless there are certain legal requirements for you to hold this information.
- Please be aware of what information you are sending in emails, and what information you are storing in your emails. We would like to encourage you to take personal responsibility for protecting your own data.

Please note that any information that you hold about staff (as defined previously), or other persons with whom you interact within the course of your work, could be subject to a subject access request (see below) in which case you would be required to disclose the information to the individual.

Failure to comply with regulations could have various legal implications for us and also possible criminal proceedings against individuals.

To help in managing information well, you may prefer to pass all staff information to the Operations Director to retain securely to ensure that regulations are complied with.

If you have any questions concerning data protection, please speak to the Operations Director.

Disciplinary Procedure **

Purpose

The aim of the disciplinary procedure is to encourage improvement in individual performance and conduct. It sounds like a harsh term, but this is a nationally recognised term and legally this is how it needs to be communicated. It will only be used should the principles outlined below be breached.

This procedure sets out the action that will be taken if the disciplinary rules are breached. The procedures are designed to ensure a fair and consistent method of dealing with all staff when performance or conduct has fallen below acceptable standards. Disciplinary procedures will be conducted in accordance with UK law.

Principles

- Where your performance or conduct has fallen below acceptable standards, your manager will normally use the disciplinary procedure as a framework to inform you of the shortfall in the required standard and, where appropriate, work with you in devising a plan for monitoring and supporting your progress.
- The list of disciplinary rules is not to be regarded as exhaustive and other issues not listed in this policy could lead to disciplinary action.
- The procedure is designed to establish the facts quickly and to deal consistently with disciplinary issues. Please be assured that no disciplinary action will be taken until the matter has been fully investigated.
- The stages listed below are illustrative and we may move to any appropriate stage, skipping one or more levels, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct or poor performance.
- At every stage you will have the opportunity to state your case and be accompanied, if you wish, at the hearings by a work colleague, staff representative or trade union representative. In addition, you have the right to an interpreter if required.

- You will be advised at each stage that recurrence of the offence or other breaches of our disciplinary rules will result in further disciplinary action.
- You have the right to appeal against any disciplinary decision.
- If appropriate and necessary, you may be suspended on full pay pending an investigation into the facts or until the disciplinary hearing is held. Suspension is not regarded as a disciplinary action and should not be taken as an indication of any guilt on your part.

Rules

Breaches of our disciplinary rules, which can lead to disciplinary actions, include:

- Unsatisfactory work performance;
- Repeated or serious failure to observe a reasonable order or instruction;
- Poor timekeeping;
- Absence from work without proper cause;
- Theft or removal of our property;
- Loss, damage to or misuse of our property through negligence or carelessness;
- Conduct detrimental to the interests of New Ground Churches;
- Incapacity for work due to being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
- Physical assault or gross insubordination;
- Committing an act outside of work or being convicted for a criminal offence which is liable adversely to affect the performance of the contract of employment and/or the relationship between you and us;
- Harassment or victimisation of any other employees, clients or other third parties with whom you have contact during work; and
- Breach of the IT policy (which can be found in this handbook).

Acts, which could constitute gross misconduct, include:

- Theft, fraud or other similar criminal action;
- Using charity funds knowingly to assist someone else's tax evasion;
- Material breach of confidentiality;
- Physical violence or bullying;
- Serious misuse of our property or name;
- Serious insubordination;
- Serious breach of our policies and codes of practice; and

- Bringing our name into serious disrepute.

Please note this is not an exhaustive list.

Procedures

Oral (Verbal) warning

For simple matters or minor offences, your immediate supervisor will discuss the issue of unsatisfactory performance or conduct in private with you. A verbal warning will be issued and a record of this will be placed on your employment record. After three months such a warning will normally be removed from your record unless there are further breaches of the disciplinary rules.

Formal disciplinary hearing

If the offence is serious, if there is no improvement in standards or if a further or similar offence occurs, a formal disciplinary hearing will be called.

Prior to this you will receive a written notification to attend the disciplinary hearing. This will outline the areas of concern, following on from the investigation into the issue.

An appropriate person will chair the disciplinary. This will be a member of the Management Team who is not your line manager. They will act as chairperson and an independent third party. You are entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee, staff representative or trade union representative. Both parties may call witnesses and you will have the opportunity to state your case in full.

You have the right to access all relevant information, which is intended to be used as evidence by us.

The manager acting as chairperson will take account of possible aggravating and mitigating circumstances before taking a decision. In addition, current warnings on your file, whether they are for the same issue or other issues, may also be taken into account. Possible outcomes of the meeting include:

- No further action: the case put forward is not sufficient to issue a formal warning or mitigating circumstances do not warrant a formal warning;
- Recorded oral warning, as outlined above;
- Formal written warning, which unless otherwise stated would normally remain on your file for six months;
- Final written warning, which unless otherwise stated would normally remain on your file for twelve months;
- Dismissal with notice; or
- Other actions, e.g. demotion on appropriate terms.

You will receive confirmation in writing of the outcome of the disciplinary hearing.

Gross misconduct

Gross misconduct is indiscipline of such a serious nature that it justifies the instant dismissal of an employee, even on the first occurrence. Examples of this can be found under the rules section of this policy. When a dismissal is for gross misconduct, you will forfeit the right to any notice.

Appeals

You have the right to appeal at any stage of the disciplinary procedure. Appeals should be referred to the Operations Director in the first instance within five working days of notification of the decision of the hearing.

Appeals should be made in writing and should outline your grounds for the appeal.

An application to appeal does not invalidate a dismissal, which stands until such time as it is revoked.

The appeal will be heard by one of the Management Team, or if necessary, Trustees of New Ground Churches who have not yet been involved in the case. You will be entitled to be accompanied by a work colleague, staff representative or trade union representative and will have the opportunity to state your ground for appeal in full.

If your appeal is successful, the disciplinary action in question shall be set aside and have no effect, save that a lesser sanction may be imposed. At the appeal any disciplinary penalty imposed will be reviewed but cannot be increased.

If no appeal is lodged within five working days of notification of the decision of the hearing, then you are deemed to have accepted the decision.

The decision of those hearing the appeal will be regarded as final.

Distribution of equipment **

Laptops and Tablets

When you join us, you will be provided with a desktop computer or a laptop for use, or we may consider a tablet. If you have a preference on which you receive, please let us know. We will aim to accommodate your request but the final decision rests with us. If you are provided with a laptop/tablet, you may also use this for personal use; however, if the laptop/tablet is broken, damaged or stolen during this time you may be held liable for the costs relating to its repair or replacement. There is no guarantee that any personal data stored on your machine/device will be backed up on our systems.

Mobile Phones

The necessity of a mobile phone will be assessed on a case by case basis, depending on the number of hours worked for New Ground Churches per week and the role performed by the employee.

We will reimburse work related calls and data made on your personal mobile phone, or mobile phone provided by your church if that is the case, and these can be reclaimed via the expense reimbursement form. Where these calls are included within your monthly calling plan, you should speak to your manager to agree an amount that might be reimbursed if the number of calls you are required to make is substantial.

Dress code **

We have adopted a "smart casual" dress code. This is intended to encourage and enhance the friendly, productive and creative work environment that exists in our offices.

Naturally, we expect you to apply your sensible judgment in your choice of attire. As a guide, it may help you to ask yourself what impression your outfit gives to other people and whether it is conducive to a working environment. Many people find it helpful to make a distinction between what they would wear to work and what they would wear when they're out for the weekend or at a friend's house, particularly in terms of feeling as if they are in work mode, rather than social mode. Please consider how your choice of clothing affects other people; it is not just a matter of what you feel comfortable in, but also what

makes others feel comfortable and not unnecessarily distracted by what you are wearing. This is particularly worth considering in the summer months.

When you represent us in meetings with external visitors or parties outside this office, we would expect you to dress accordingly for the event. For example, if you are interviewing somebody you should be mindful that the interviewee will have dressed up and so you should mirror this, especially as you are representing us on this occasion. Similarly, if you are required to attend supplier meetings, it may be appropriate to dress more smartly than you would on a day-to-day basis.

It is also worth being mindful that if you are working at events like Festival, whilst this is a casual and social occasion, we may ask that you dress in such a way as to inspire the confidence of delegates if you are there in an official capacity.

If you have any questions concerning the general guidelines, please speak to your manager.

Email and Internet Usage **

Introduction

For your and our protection, we have certain rules covering email and access to the Internet. Many of the rules apply equally to other methods of communicating in and outside of New Ground Churches such as by letter, telephone and cross-platform messaging services like WhatsApp.

We reserve the right to choose whom we provide Internet access and email to. In any event we reserve the right to withdraw Internet access and email from any user. Any email or Internet account associated with us or assigned by us to employees or volunteers is our property. Any information originating from those accounts is also our property.

This policy explains how email and Internet access should be used, and explains what is and isn't permitted.

Failure to comply with the rules set out in this policy may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you, which may include dismissal.

Privacy

- 1) We reserve the right to monitor and examine all individual connections and communications. This may be done at any time without prior notice.
- 2) Please exercise caution and discernment when communicating personal and confidentially sensitive information via email systems that are not protected by encryption and digital signature technologies.
- 3) Please be aware that copies of confidential email discarded and/or deleted by you may still be recorded for some considerable time on Internet and in-house email servers, your computer, the recipient's computer, as well as backup media.

General Rules: Dos and Don'ts

- 1) The New Ground Churches email system is primarily for work use. The use of your work email address for private or freelance business is prohibited. Occasional and reasonable personal use is permitted provided that this does not interfere with the performance of your duties.
- 2) Please keep all passwords secure.
- 3) Please check your email on each working day or arrange for a duly authorised person to do so on your behalf. Reply promptly to all email messages requiring a reply. If you are away on leave, you

should always activate an out of office message which directs people to the general office number and provides the email address of someone else they can contact in your absence.

- 4) Do not impersonate any other person when using email or amend messages received without prior consent.
- 5) Do not create email congestion by sending trivial messages or personal messages or by copying emails to those who do not need to see them.
- 6) We understand that from time to time you may wish to access the Internet for personal use. We would ask that you keep this to a minimum during work hours, and use this during non-working hours instead.
- 7) Do not deliberately visit, view, or download any material from any Web site containing sexual or illegal material or material, which is offensive in any way whatsoever.
- 8) Please ensure that you have the legal licenses for any software that you wish to install on your machine.

Harassment

Our policy is that harassment for reasons of a sexual or racial nature or pertaining to a disability will not be allowed or condoned. Any use of email for sexual or any other form of harassment is barred. If you receive or have knowledge of emails containing messages which could amount to harassment or otherwise inappropriate messages you should report this information in accordance with the Grievance Procedure set out in this staff handbook.

Defamation

Defamation is defined as "the publication of an untrue statement tending to lower the subject of the statement in the estimation of right-thinking members of society generally or causing him or her to be shunned or avoided". If any email contains a defamatory statement then this will constitute libel and the author of the email will be legally liable for any damage it causes to the reputation of the individual concerned.

Copyright

The law of copyright applies to publications in digital and electronic form in the same way as it does to books and other forms of publication (including computer software). You should also ensure that any other publications accessed on the Internet are not subject to copyright before they are used by you. If you have any doubt as to whether a publication is subject to copyright you should first consult with a member of the Management Team.

Employee's Property *

We will lock all external office doors during non-office hours; however, we cannot accept any responsibility for damage or loss to employee's property. Every reasonable effort will, of course, be made to recover lost property but you are advised not to leave articles of value on the premises.

Employer's Liability Insurance *

Under the Employer's Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969, we are insured against liability for personal injury and/or disease sustained by its employees arising out of or in the course of their employment. A copy of the certificate of insurance is displayed on the wall in our registered office, 33 Amy Road, Oxted, RH8 0PW.

Employer's Property *

During the course of your employment, you will be provided with certain equipment to enable you to perform the duties of your role. This remains our property, unless otherwise agreed. If you leave our employment, we require you to return all equipment to us on or before your leave date. This includes mobile phones, laptops and any other equipment you have been provided with.

Equality and Diversity ***

We are committed to providing equality of opportunity for employees and job applicants. We wish to have and maintain a positive and inclusive work environment for all of our employees/volunteers and prevent unlawful discrimination. There is an occupational requirement for certain roles to be held by Christians due to the nature of the work or the context in which it is carried out.

Our employment contracts record our objective of creating a positive working environment and a reference to our Harassment policy. According to these provisions, every employee is required not to engage in or permit any fellow employee to engage in any sexual, racial or other harassment of or unlawful discrimination against any person in the course of their employment with us. Further, all employees are required not to disseminate any defamatory or otherwise unacceptable material via email or any other form of communication system operated by us.

We are committed to promoting a working environment in which we treat our colleagues with dignity, courtesy and mutual respect. It is the responsibility of everyone to sustain an inclusive and supportive culture and it is the duty of managers to ensure that the policy is upheld. We are committed to dealing with any breach of this promptly and fairly.

In alignment with ACAS guidance (2024), we recognise and support neurodiverse employees by making reasonable adjustments where required. Employees are encouraged to discuss any support needs with their manager.

Expenses **

We do not expect you to be out of pocket for expenses incurred in the course of your employment. However, in order to comply with tax legislation these expenses should be wholly and necessarily incurred for the purpose of work carried out on behalf of New Ground Churches. We would encourage you to exercise a duty of care when incurring such expenses on our behalf and we expect you to ensure that levels of costs are reasonable and appropriate. Please remember that we are a charitable organisation, and that the money we spend is given generously and sacrificially by churches and individuals.

Repayment of Expenses

Expenses should be claimed using the designated expenses spreadsheet or the pdf form in the Appendices.

To ensure your expenses are repaid in the month during which they are submitted, you will need to ensure you submit original receipts for all items on your claim, as well as having those expenses authorised by your manager if required. We also ask that all expenses are submitted in a timely manner. You have three months from incurring the expense to submit it for reimbursement. Older claims will not be paid so please ensure you submit a complete claim on a regular basis. Expenses will be paid directly into your bank account.

Travel Costs

- Travel costs from home to your normal place of employment are not repaid (normal place of employment is defined as per your employment contract – please refer to this if you require clarification).

- When travelling for work purposes, public transport should be used where possible by standard or economy class, unless there is a cheaper option.
- If you use your own car for the purpose of attending meetings away from your normal place of employment, mileage may be claimed at a rate of 45p per mile. (Please note that this rate applies to the first 10,000 miles per tax year, at which point the rate drops to 25p. It is your responsibility to keep a record of mileage claimed in a tax year and to ensure that you are claiming the appropriate rate.)

Before you use your own car you must ensure that it is insured for "Business Use" and that your insurance is fully comprehensive. Failure to do so may invalidate your policy. The mileage reimbursement of 45p per mile includes a supplement for the additional costs involved with using your car for business purposes, along with wear and tear. For volunteers, a lower rate of 25p per mile is provided in recognition that additional insurance is not required.

- Contactless or Oyster cards should be used for all travel around London. You can choose to use your own card and reclaim the relevant journeys (to do this you will need to register your contactless or Oyster card on the Transport for London website to obtain a statement showing your Journey History), or purchase an Oyster card for work journeys only, for which we will pay the top up. We will still require an accounting for this but realise it may make things easier for you. When you leave, we would expect you to pass this card on to another staff member, or obtain a refund for the card.

Subsistence/Accommodation Allowances

For days spent working away from your normal place of employment (as specified in your contract and excluding days working from home):

- You may claim a food allowance of up to £7.50 per meal on the basis of receipts. It is possible that you can claim a higher amount providing this is agreed in advance.
- Reasonable subsistence costs for meetings held on the road, will also be reimbursed, on the basis of receipts.

For obligatory attendance at overnight conferences/training events/meetings:

- Daily food/drinks allowance of £30 per day on the basis of receipts unless meals are provided free of charge as part of the event. This includes your evening meal.
- Where accommodation is required and is not provided free of charge, then a reasonable amount may be claimed for appropriate bed and breakfast/hotel accommodation as agreed by your line manager. To help us keep costs to a minimum, as a guide £90 per night is considered reasonable. Please book accommodation well in advance, as rates are much cheaper when booked far in advance. If you were staying for two nights or less, then if possible, we would ask you to share with someone else attending the event (same sex). However, if you are staying for longer than two nights we are happy for you to have a room to yourself.

Hospitality

For some staff, as part of your role it may be appropriate for you to provide hospitality, e.g. lunch or dinner, for visiting speakers or people with whom we want to build relationship. We would ask that you exercise discretion when providing hospitality and remember that we want to use our financial resources wisely. In some cases, paying for a coffee might be the most appropriate spend, but there will be other instances where spending more will be appropriate (such as providing hospitality for those listed above).

Other Expenditure

From time to time employees may incur other expenditure. This should be discussed with your line manager in advance of the costs being incurred.

Authorised Signatories for Approving Expenses

Your line manager is an approved signatory and is responsible for signing off your expenses. During periods of absence, an approved signatory may delegate their signing authority to another member of the Management Team.

Eyesight Examinations *

In accordance with the Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Regulations (1992), if you use a Visual Display Unit (VDU), you are entitled to have your eyes examined at our expense should you feel that your work on the VDU is causing eyestrain. We place a high priority on observing the measures set out in the regulations and will:

- Train users in the use of their workstation;
- Check that DSE users' desks, chairs and working environment provide the best working conditions that are reasonably achievable; and
- Contribute towards the cost of eye tests and eye care. We will contribute up to £20 annually towards the cost of this test carried out by a qualified optometrist. If the test reveals that glasses/contact lenses are needed solely for VDU work, we will contribute up to a further £50 towards the costs of glasses/contact lenses. We will not be able to reimburse you for these costs where the statement only confirms general use.

To claim for an eye test only, you must complete an expenses form and attach the receipt from the Optometrist showing the value of the test.

You should forward a completed expenses form, with receipts and VDU statements to Finance.

Flexible working request *

All employees have the right to request flexible working from day one of employment. If you wish to make a flexible working request, please speak to your manager.

Good Housekeeping *

We would ask that you take responsibility and contribute to "good housekeeping" by helping to maintain the cleanliness of our workplace. In particular, you are responsible for tidying up after completing work and ensuring that you leave the work area in a safe and clean condition. This includes ensuring the waste products are properly disposed of and cups are washed up or loaded into the dishwasher.

Grievance Procedure **

Purpose

This is another policy that comes across as very serious; however it is important that you are aware of the grievance procedure in case you ever need to use it. The aim of the grievance procedure is to provide a formal framework for you to raise work-related concerns, problems or complaints. This procedure sets out the process, which should be followed if you wish to raise a grievance relating to your employment. The rules and procedures are designed to ensure a fair and consistent method of dealing with grievances raised by all staff and temporary workers. Grievance procedures will be conducted in accordance with UK law.

Definition of a grievance

A grievance is a problem or concern that you have which may relate to your work, your working environment or your working relationships.

Principles

- You are encouraged to have open communication with management to try to avoid areas of concern escalating to formal grievances. This procedure is not intended to replace this.
- The procedure is designed to establish the facts quickly and to deal consistently with grievances raised. You are encouraged to raise issues as soon as possible in order to prevent minor disagreements from developing into more serious disputes.
- At every stage you will have the opportunity to state your case and be accompanied, if you wish, at the grievance hearings by a work colleague, staff representative or trade union representative.
- Grievances may be raised without fear of victimisation or retribution. All parties involved will treat grievances as confidential.
- You have the right to appeal against the decision arising from a grievance.

Informal procedure

Prior to raising a grievance using the formal procedure referred to below, you should seek to raise any queries, issues or problems on an informal basis with your line manager.

Formal procedure

If it is not possible to resolve the issue informally, then you should raise a grievance through the formal process as outlined below. In addition, for serious matters other individuals may also elect to begin the grievance process at the second stage where the individual feels that it is appropriate.

First stage

The grievance should be discussed between you and your line manager at a meeting requested by you. If the grievance relates to the conduct of your line manager, you should contact another member of the Management Team who will then conduct the first stage hearing. If the grievance is not resolved or you wish to appeal the outcome of the grievance then you should proceed to stage two. You must indicate that you wish to proceed to stage two within one week of completing stage one.

Second stage

If you wish to proceed to stage two, you should give notice by putting the nature of your grievance in writing and submit this to the Management Team.

After the discussion you will be given written confirmation of the outcome of the second stage grievance.

If the grievance is still unresolved or you wish to appeal against the decision, then you should proceed to the third and final stage. You must indicate that you wish to proceed to stage three within one week of completing stage two.

Third stage

You should advise the Management Team if you wish to proceed to stage three, again by putting the nature of your grievance in writing.

Third stage grievances will be heard by one of the New Ground Trustees who is not a member of the Management Team. After the discussion you will be given written confirmation of the outcome of the third stage grievance.

There is no appeal beyond the third stage.

Harassment **

This section expands on the references to harassment in your employment contract about creating a positive working environment. We know this is not a light-hearted subject, and it is very unlikely that it will happen, however it is important you know what to do in the event it does.

Harassment is not only related to sexual harassment, but can also include harassment on grounds of race, origin, nationality, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion or belief and other factors of a similar nature. Harassment can take many forms and can include (but is not limited to) physical contact, comments, jokes, offensive language and gestures disseminated by any medium including voicemail, email, posters or screensavers, as well as live communication.

We are committed to providing a work place in which harassment does not occur. Wherever possible, if you believe that you have been subject to harassment and you feel able to, raise the issue directly with the person in question, let them know how it affects you and ask them to stop. We would hope that this will resolve most issues as our expectation is that none of our staff would continue any form of harassment or joking once made aware that it has upset their colleagues. However, we recognise that you may not always feel able to speak directly to the person involved. In this case we encourage you to speak confidentially to your manager or to the Operations Director. Please also note our Grievance procedure is available if you feel the need to make use of it.

Harassment can constitute gross misconduct and the perpetrator may be subject to disciplinary action.

Health and Safety **

As New Ground Churches staff can be based in various church offices, we ask that you familiarise yourself with the Health and Safety arrangements and policies at your chosen office upon commencement of your employment. If you have any injuries you have that may affect your work, or require any special equipment, please let the Operations Director know as soon as possible.

Jury Service and other Public Appointments *

If you are required to serve as a juror, please notify your manager as soon as possible of any dates that you expect to be absent from work. If you are not required at court during any part of your period of jury service, you should attend work wherever this is reasonably practicable.

Please claim the maximum compensation for loss of earnings and, if applicable, we may make up the difference between this and your rate of pay, based on the number of days that the service lasts.

If you are a Justice of the Peace or a member of a public body such as a local authority, please notify your manager as soon as possible of the period and dates that you expect to be absent from work. In each case, you must produce documentary evidence of the need for and period of absence. Unless otherwise agreed, this leave will be unpaid.

If you are a member of the Territorial Army and would like to request unpaid leave in order to undertake your duties, please speak to your manager.

For any other public appointments, please speak to your manager.

Maternity and Adoption Leave and Pay *

We want to ensure that as far as possible you are able to combine your career and family responsibilities. If you have any questions in relation to this policy or your maternity and adoption entitlements then you can speak in confidence to the Operations Director.

For the purposes of this policy, adoption means the formal legal adoption of a child newly introduced to you and under the age of 18, and is treated as a birth unless it is specifically distinguished in the context.

Eligibility and notification

You are eligible for maternity leave and pay under the terms of this policy if you have been employed by us on a permanent contract for a minimum of one year before the expected week of birth of the child or the date of adoption, if you are newly adopting a child.

If you are expecting a baby or are adopting a child and you do not fulfil this eligibility criterion, you may nevertheless, be able to receive the statutory entitlements from the government.

If you are expecting a baby, please notify your manager and the Operations Director as soon as possible. Where possible, please can you try to give at least four months' notice in writing to your manager and the Operations Director of going on maternity leave and provide approximate intended dates (although it is understood that these may change depending on the actual birth/adoption date). On receiving this confirmation, the Operations Director will give you a letter confirming your entitlement to maternity leave and pay which takes into account UK legislation as well as the details of this policy.

Antenatal and medical appointments

We will give you a reasonable amount of paid time off for antenatal and doctor/midwife medical appointments (excluding non-medical appointments). Wherever possible, please try to arrange these to be at the beginning or end of the working day. Once you have made appointments, please inform your manager as soon as possible and proof of any appointments should be provided on request, with the exception of the first appointment.

Maternity leave and pay entitlement

All employees are entitled to 52 weeks of statutory maternity leave, regardless of length of service. However, eligibility for enhanced maternity pay remains subject to a minimum of one year's continuous service at the expected date of birth or adoption.

You may begin your maternity leave up to 6 weeks prior to the expected date of birth of your child or you can choose to work right up to the expected date of birth. However, if you are off sick with a pregnancy related illness in the month prior to the birth of your baby, we can ask you to start your maternity leave from the date of this absence.

During absence due to maternity leave, you will continue to receive all benefits (except pay – see paragraph below) and there will be no break in your period of continuous employment. You may choose to reduce or stop your pension contributions during your time on maternity leave.

We will pay the difference between SMP and your full salary for the first 8 weeks and the following 8 weeks maternity leave will be paid to you at half pay. The remaining 15 weeks will be paid at the current rate of SMP. Maternity pay will be paid monthly along with the normal payroll. The leave and pay detailed above includes any statutory right to maternity leave and pay and family responsibility leave, i.e. this is not in addition to associated statutory entitlements.

The pension contributions we make on your behalf will continue to be paid at 10% of your normal monthly salary for 39 weeks. For the remaining 13 weeks, it will be based on your actual salary so if your pay stops then you will not receive a pension contribution until you start receiving pay again.

When on maternity, you may choose to continue to receive general information and invitations to staff meetings, socials, and training courses etc. Please advise your manager if you would like to be kept informed of these while you are absent and advise your manager of your contact details for this purpose (e.g. home email address).

It would be helpful if you could advise your manager and the Operations Director as early as possible of your intended date of return if this is before the end of your maternity leave entitlement. If you do not specify your return date we will assume you are intending to remain on maternity leave for the full 52 weeks. If you wish to return earlier, please give us at least 8 weeks' notice of your intended return date.

If you require any further information about your rights and entitlements during maternity leave, particularly if you do not meet the criteria above for enhanced maternity pay, the gov.uk website has all the statutory information concerning maternity leave and pay, along with calculators to help you work out dates and allowances.

Media Policy ***

In the event that you are asked to respond to Media calls, emails and letters, please note the following:

- Georgina Garforth is our designated Media Officer. Please take messages in response to any enquiries and pass the details on to Georgina rather than giving her contact details to the press or other interested parties.
- Any media related emails or letters should be forwarded to Georgina Garforth – comms@newgroundchurches.org.
- If a member of the press calls, please do not put them through to someone or attempt to answer their questions. Take a message and try to gather as much information as possible, including:
 - Person he/she is trying to reach;
 - Topic of discussion;
 - Reporter's organisation/news outlet and location;
 - If the enquiry is in response to anything; and
 - Reporter's deadline, phone number and email address.
- Please make every effort to deliver the message as soon as possible, so that a prompt response can be given.
- Please do not give a comment, even if you are asked for one. Stating clearly that someone will get back to them shortly is infinitely better than stating something you've not prepared.
- In the event that Georgina Garforth is unavailable, you should contact Brett Melville or Dale Barlow.

Membership of Relevant Professional Bodies *

We will pay for the cost of the annual subscription or membership to relevant professional bodies where it is required for you to do your job, e.g. membership of the ACCA. Please discuss this with your manager if you would like to request this.

If you are sponsored by us to train for a qualification, which involves admittance to a professional body, we will pay for the annual subscription to that body.

After qualification, we will continue to pay for your membership of a professional body where this is relevant to your role, for example chartered institutes. Ordinarily we will only pay for one membership per person, approved by your manager.

Methods of Payment and Review Dates for Salary **

We will pay your salary by means of BACS on a monthly basis. Any adjustments arising in one accounting period will usually be implemented in the following period. You will be provided with access to online payslip records, detailing for each period gross pay, statutory and voluntary deductions, and net pay.

If possible, your bank account details should be supplied on the appropriate form on your first working day. Please notify the Operations Director of any changes to these details as soon as possible, on the appropriate form (See Appendices). Failure to do so may result in New Ground incurring charges for failed payments. In the event that this occurs, we will deduct the charge from your salary that month.

Money Owing to Us **

If at the end of your employment with us you owe us any money for any reason (such as overpayment of expenses), we will deduct this from your final salary. Where this amount is significant, we may agree a repayment plan with you.

New Joiners and Probationary Periods **

Your probationary period is detailed in your contract. We will work with you to ensure you have the training and development you need to get up to speed with the job. If during your probation we have any concerns about your performance in the role, we will have a meeting with you to explain this. We will provide you with targets to help you improve and may extend your probation accordingly. If your performance does not improve, we may consider it necessary to terminate your employment. However, if we find your performance to be satisfactory then your employment will be made permanent.

Parental leave *

Parental leave is a statutory entitlement for unpaid leave subject to the provisions below.

Each parent has a statutory right to take a total of up to 18 weeks parental leave for each child and adopted child up to their 18th birthday. Leave must be taken in whole weeks, unless agreed with us in advance, or your child is disabled (that is, receiving disability allowance). You don't have to take all the leave at once.

To qualify you must be an employee and have at least one year's continuous service at the time of requesting the leave. You must also either be the parent named on the child's birth certificate, or named on the child's adoption certificate, with legal parental responsibility for a child under five (under 18 if the child is disabled)

You may be required to provide proof that you are entitled to take parental leave. Parental leave is an individual right and cannot be transferred between parents. For example, a father cannot decide to take only 10 weeks and the mother take 16 weeks.

At least 21 days notice must be given for any parental leave request. Requests are not guaranteed and may be postponed for up to six months depending on the needs of the organisation.

Paternity and Adoption Leave and Pay *

We want to ensure that as far as possible you are able to combine your career and family responsibilities. If you have any questions in relation to this policy or your paternity entitlements under UK law, then you can speak in confidence to the Operations Director.

For the purposes of this policy, adoption means the formal legal adoption of a child newly introduced to you and under the age of 18, and is treated as a birth unless it is specifically distinguished in the context.

Eligibility and notification

You are eligible for paternity leave and enhanced pay under the terms of this policy if you have been employed by us on a permanent contract for a minimum of four months before the expected week of birth of the child or date of adoption and if:

- You are the biological father; or
- Your wife or partner is giving birth; or
- You are adopting a child and will be substantially involved in caring for the child as a parent.

For planning purposes it would be helpful if you could notify your manager and the Operations Director as soon as possible. You must give at least one month's notice in writing to the Operations Director of your intention to take paternity leave and provide approximate intended dates (although it is understood that these may change depending on the actual birth/adoption date). On receiving this notice, the Operations Director will confirm your entitlement to paternity leave and pay.

Paternity leave and pay entitlement

If you are eligible, you may take up to ten working days paternity leave. This may be taken immediately prior to the expected birth/adoption date and must be taken within eight weeks of the birth/adoption date.

During absence due to paternity leave, you will continue to receive all benefits, including your full salary, and there will be no break in your period of continuous employment.

Please be aware that paternity leave can only be taken in one block; it cannot be taken as two separate weeks of leave. It is up to you when and if you take your full entitlement, but the two weeks must be taken together and cannot be separated into separate weeks or days.

The leave and pay concessions detailed above are inclusive of any statutory right to paternity or family responsibility leave and pay, i.e. this is not in addition to associated statutory entitlements.

Shared Parental Leave

Shared Parental Leave (SPL), which allows parents to share up to 50 weeks of leave and 37 weeks of pay. Employees wishing to take SPL must discuss arrangements with their line manager and provide the required notice.

Pension Scheme **

We will pay an amount equal to ten per cent of your salary into an approved pension scheme upon successful completion of your probationary period. Towards the end of your probationary period we will invite you to meet with the New Ground Churches Pensions Advisor to discuss the most beneficial arrangement with regards to your pension payments.

You may elect to have your pension paid into a scheme you are already a member of, or to open a new scheme. Additionally, if you are over the state retirement age, and after meeting with a Pensions Advisor you elect not to have this element paid as pension, we will consider paying it as part of your salary less the associated costs incurred by New Ground Churches in so doing, such as employer's National Insurance contributions. Any pension contributions, or payments in lieu of pension, will be paid upon successful completion of your probationary period and backdated to your start date.

If you decide not to have payments made into a scheme of your choice, you will automatically be enrolled in the New Ground Churches NEST pension scheme. You may opt out, but this may mean you do not receive the benefit of pension contributions on your behalf. In accordance with pension regulations you will also be re-enrolled every three years, even if you have previously opted-out and we

are contributing to your own personal pension scheme, unless it is considered a qualifying scheme by the Pension Regulator.

It is your responsibility, and in your interests, to ensure your pension records are up-to-date with regards to any name changes, change of address, beneficiary details, etc.

Personal Details **

We need to keep up-to-date information of your home address and telephone number, together with the name, address and contact details of your next of kin (or other such person) for emergency contact purposes. If these details change, it is your responsibility to advise the Operations Director by email at admin@newgroundchurches.org.

Personal Telephone Calls **

Please try to keep incoming personal calls during work time to a minimum. If you need to make an external personal call, we operate on a trust basis for making reasonable low-cost personal calls at the discretion of your manager. Consistent with our mobile phone policy, please consult saynoto0870.com to find alternative numbers where appropriate.

Policy on Conflict of Interest ***

All our directors, volunteers, and employees should disclose to the relevant decision-making bodies in which they are involved, all real or apparent conflict or dualities of interest which are discovered or which have been brought to our attention in connection with our activities.

In addition, members, employees and volunteers should consult with others in the organisation (i.e. their supervisor, the relevant team or decision-making committee/group) before making decisions which will benefit themselves, their immediate families, relatives, close friends or business associates. Please also refer to our separate Conflict of Interest policy, which includes a disclosure form.

Redundancy **

Introduction

We are committed to supporting our employees and ensuring fair and transparent processes in the event of a redundancy situation. While we aim to provide job security, there may be occasions where organisational changes, funding constraints, or restructuring make redundancies necessary.

Principles

- We will explore all reasonable alternatives to redundancy, including redeployment and retraining opportunities.
- We will communicate openly and consult with affected employees.
- We will follow statutory redundancy procedures and ensure fair selection criteria are applied.
- We will provide appropriate support.

Consultation Process

If a redundancy situation arises, we will engage in a formal consultation process with affected employees. This will include:

- Providing clear reasons for the proposed redundancy.
- Exploring alternative solutions and considering employee feedback.

- Applying a fair selection process, where necessary.

Redundancy Pay and Notice Period

Employees who have worked for New Ground for two years or more may be entitled to statutory redundancy pay, calculated based on age, length of service, and weekly pay (subject to legal limits). Notice periods will be in line with contractual or statutory requirements.

Support for Affected Employees

We recognise that redundancy can be challenging and are committed to identifying the needs of affected staff during the process and providing them with any necessary support.

Appeals

Employees who believe that the redundancy process was not conducted fairly may appeal the decision in writing within 10 working days of receiving notice.

References *

When a formal offer of employment has been made, the employment is subject to receipt of satisfactory employment references.

On termination of employment, if requested we will provide written confirmation of employment dates, duration and post(s) held.

Social Networking ***

Introduction

The Internet provides a number of benefits in which you may wish to participate such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Wikipedia. If you clearly identify your association with New Ground Churches or Newfrontiers and discuss your work, please ensure you behave appropriately when on the Internet, and in ways that are consistent with our values and policies.

This editorial guidance note sets out the principles, which you are expected to follow when using the Internet, and gives interpretations for current forms of interactivity. It applies to blogs, to microblogs like Twitter and to other personal web-space. The Internet is a fast-moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances. However, the principles set out in this document should always be followed.

The intention of this note is not to stop you from conducting legitimate activities on the Internet, but serves to flag-up those areas in which conflicts can arise.

Social Networking Sites

Social networking sites provide a great way for people to maintain contact with friends. However, through the open nature of such sites, it is also possible for third parties to collate vast amounts of information.

Please be mindful of the information you disclose on social networking sites. Where you associate yourself with us (through providing work details) please remember to behave in a manner that does not bring our name into disrepute.

If you are contacted by the press about posts on their social networking site that relate to us, please talk to the Media Officer before responding.

Consideration towards other members of staff when using social networking sites

Social networking sites allow photographs, videos and comments to be shared with thousands of other users. However, it may not be appropriate to share work-related information in this way. Please think of the possible impact on others before sharing information in this way.

Open access online encyclopaedias

In the course of your work with us, you may find errors in online encyclopaedias. Please be aware that if you edit these online encyclopaedias at the office the source of the correction will be recorded as our IP address, or that of the church where you are working. The intervention may therefore look as if it comes from us ourselves. In such an event, please act in a manner that does not bring us into disrepute and in no circumstance should you post derogatory or offensive comments on any online encyclopaedias.

When correcting errors about us, we should be transparent about who we are. We should never remove criticism of New Ground Churches. Instead, we should respond to legitimate criticism. We should not remove derogatory or offensive comments but must report them to the relevant administrators for them to take action. If you read something about one of our churches, or about New Ground Churches which concerns or upsets you, please feel free to discuss the issue with your manager rather than responding online.

Before editing an online encyclopaedia entry about us, or any entry that might be deemed a conflict of interest, please consult the house rules of the site concerned and, if necessary, ask permission from the relevant wiki editor. You may wish to seek advice from the Media Officer.

Blogging and microblogging

If a blog makes it clear that the author works for us, it should include a simple and visible disclaimer such as "these are my personal views and not those of New Ground Churches".

Personal blogs, microblogs and websites should not reveal confidential information about us. This might include aspects of our policy or details of internal discussions. If in doubt about what might be confidential, please consult your line manager.

Please avoid engaging in online discussion that touch on the following topics: Sexuality; Politics; Male/Female roles; other religions; Demonology; & the Christian Agenda (any language which is particularly militant or could be described as 'under the radar').

Staff Reviews **

Appraisals

Appraisals will be conducted during the course of November and December each year. Your appraisal will cover performance over the last calendar year and objectives for the coming year.

Throughout the year, you can expect your line manager to sit down with you every three months to review your progress against objectives. Despite having these review periods, we encourage open communication and continuous feedback throughout the year between you and your manager.

Salary Reviews

Salaries are reviewed at the end of every year though a salary review does not necessarily imply an increase.

Salary Adjustment

If you receive a salary adjustment resulting from the review process, these adjustments will be communicated to you at the end of the year and will be effective from 1 January.

Extraordinary Reviews

Salaries will not be reviewed outside the time frame outlined above except in exceptional situations, which would include:

- Where, during the course of the year your role changes significantly, and this was not anticipated in January, and you are asked to take on considerably greater tasks or responsibilities;
- If you were recruited and subsequently you have developed significantly to a level that commands a higher salary.

The Management Team must approve any proposed extraordinary salary reviews before any communication is made to individuals.

Statement of Faith and Moral Code of Conduct **

We are a Christian organisation and as such we are looking for a compatibility with the Christian faith and Christian standards of conduct in those who work with the organisation. Standards of behaviour are based on organisational and individual commitments to a lifestyle of Christian morality and integrity. You should have been provided with a copy of our Statement of Beliefs and ethos statement, which asks you to be in agreement to our standards of conduct throughout your employment. Attendance and cooperation at prayer meetings is also a requirement of the role.

Time off for Dependents *

You have the right to a reasonable amount of unpaid time off to deal with an emergency involving a dependent. A dependent is a spouse, partner, child or parent or a person who lives with you (but not a lodger). However, it could also be someone else who reasonably relies on you for care, e.g. an elderly neighbour.

The right is to reasonable time off. This amount of time isn't fixed - it should simply allow you to deal with the immediate problem and put any other necessary care arrangements in place. For example, you would not normally be able to take two weeks off to care for a sick child, but in an emergency you could take one or two days to take the child to the doctor and arrange for someone else to look after him or her.

Time off in Lieu **

For the protection of our staff, we want to ensure overtime is not being worked on a regular basis and that no one is working additional hours due to unrealistic expectations or inefficient ways of working. Overtime should arise due to exceptional circumstances rather than day-to-day workloads. If overtime is required, this needs to be approved in writing (or by email) by your manager prior to being worked. The number of hours to be taken in lieu should be agreed at the same time, as well as the date on which the time off will be taken. Unless there is a good reason to do otherwise, we will ask that the days in lieu be taken within four weeks of the overtime being worked to ensure you get adequate rest.

At events, time off in lieu is given for work on Saturdays and Sundays but not for longer working days at these events. Where a series of long days are required, at Ashburnham for example, managers should ensure you are taking regular breaks during the event and that staffing levels are adequate to ensure all staff get reasonable amounts of time off during the week. To request time off in lieu, use the separate sheet of the Holiday spreadsheet allocated to you at the start of your employment.

Training **

We are committed to the training and development of our staff and therefore from time to time, we may ask you to attend training courses. Where agreed in advance, any cost incurred during attendance at these courses will be fully reimbursed by us.

If you wish to attend a particular training course or have a particular training requirement, please speak to your manager and if we feel that it is relevant to your role, we will endeavour to accommodate your request where possible.

Tuition Fees and Study Leave *

Tuition Fees

We may agree to pay tuition fees if you wish to take a course that will help further your career and benefit us. Obviously this is a financial commitment and an investment on our part, and therefore the course must be held at a recognised institution and:

- The course should be relevant to your work and will bring benefits to the organisation; and
- The absence while you are on study leave can be reasonably accommodated.

In certain circumstances we may specify certain conditions to sponsorship in addition to the conditions mentioned below to take account of special circumstances.

If you wish to request that we pay for a certain course, please speak initially to your line manager or the Operations Director.

If we have paid tuition fees in advance and the course is not completed within a reasonable period of time, we may require the fees paid to be refunded to us. We will not pay fees in respect of "retakes" or repeats.

If you leave us of your own accord within 12 months of the completion of a course or part thereof, you will be required to refund to us any tuition fees paid by us within the last 12-month period. Please be aware of this and carefully consider this when you apply for the course.

Study Leave

If we sponsor you to do a "sponsored course" we will give you a certain number of study leave days, in order to support you in your study.

For each subject that you are taking for the first time, you are permitted to take two days study leave per leave year subject to a maximum of 10 days per year. This leave is intended to cover both preparation for the examination(s) and the actual examination(s) for that subject. The timing of study leave is subject to the usual considerations applicable to all leave, and leave immediately prior to examinations may not always be possible. This is particularly applicable if more than one person in your team is studying at the same time. Therefore, we encourage advance planning as a team to ensure you are all well supported.

There is no entitlement to take paid leave to retake an exam, which must be taken in annual leave if required.

The arrangements set out above may be changed in any specific case by negotiation with us, taking into account the nature of the qualification sought and any other relevant circumstances.

Weather or Travel Disruption **

We understand that at times it may prove difficult getting to work due to circumstances outside of your control, such as adverse weather conditions or problems with public transport. This note intends to give you some guidance as to what procedure to follow if this happens. Where a situation is not covered here, we will deal with it on a case-by-case basis. In all situations, please communicate well with your manager.

Adverse weather conditions

There may be times when there are severe weather warnings and it is unsafe to come to work. In this case, we will close the office and not require you to work. If this happens then your manager will notify you at the first available opportunity. If you do not hear from anyone, then please assume it is a working day and come to the office.

In situations where the office remains open, but you are unable to come to work due to adverse weather in your area, we would advise you to work from home where possible. If this is not possible, we may ask you to take this as holiday or unpaid leave. This is to ensure all staff are treated fairly. We do ask that where it is reasonable to do so, you attempt to come to work rather than relying solely on weather reports. In the past we have often found it to be the case that the news reports severe delays or limited services, yet most staff have no trouble getting to work and those delays do not impact journey times significantly.

If it is safe to travel, but you expect it will take longer to get to work than usual, please plan ahead and leave home earlier if necessary. We would ask that if you are late or need to leave early that you make up the hours unless your line manager agrees otherwise.

Travel disruption

As we all know, public transport isn't always reliable. We appreciate there may be times when trains or tubes are delayed, and you may arrive late into work. If this happens regularly, you should expect your line manager to discuss this with you and suggest ways that this could be avoided in future. Where there are strikes or planned track closures, we would ask that you plan ahead and leave home earlier if necessary. If you were delayed because of planned public transport problems we would ask that you make up the time.

Unplanned office closure

If the office closes due to unforeseen circumstances then we will notify you as soon as we can. In the event this happens then please try to work remotely where possible. If you do not have the facilities to do this then we would not expect you to work while we are unable to work from the office.

Whistle-Blowing ***

We are committed to the standards of honesty, integrity and accountability and we expect all staff and volunteers to maintain high standards in accordance with our policies and procedures. However, all organisations face the risk of things going wrong from time to time, or of unknowingly harbouring illegal or unethical conduct. A culture of openness and accountability is essential in order to prevent such situations occurring or to address them when they do occur. We encourage staff and volunteers to report suspected wrongdoing in accordance with the procedures below in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate and that their confidentiality will be respected.

Activities covered

Although not an exhaustive list, the following activities are considered by New Ground to constitute misconduct or malpractice:

- Criminal offences
- Failure to comply with legal obligations
- Accepting gifts intended to influence decision-making
- Actions which cause risk to the health and safety of employees, volunteers or stakeholders
- Actions which cause risk to the environment
- False or inaccurate reporting of operational or financial performance or company assets
- Concealment of any of the above
- Spiritual abuse

We will evaluate any concern raised, which is in the public interest. Any false report, made with malicious intent or for personal gain, may lead to disciplinary action.

Raising a concern

Concerns can be raised with certain public authorities, but you should always raise a concern in the first instance with New Ground. Depending on the seriousness of the potential offence and who you think is involved, you may address your report to your line manager, their superior or member of the trustee board. The report can be made orally or in writing. If orally then you may bring a colleague with you if you wish. If confidentiality is required then this should be made clear in your report.

Working from Home *

Your place of work is stated in your employment contract. However, due to the fact that we do not all work from the same office, along with the move to increased hybrid working, we are also happy to allow you to work from home where you have a suitable home set up to permit this. Please be aware, however, that in most cases we will have nominated a church office for you due to the facilities available there such as printers, internet access, and stationary. This being the case, no reimbursement will be made for costs you incur by choosing to work from home on occasion.

We would also like to draw your attention to the social benefits of working in an office with others, even if they work for your church rather than New Ground Churches. Whilst your work may not overlap, we would like to ensure our staff are not isolated and therefore would encourage you to have good relationships with your church staff team as part of your work with New Ground Churches. If there is anything we could do to help facilitate this, please let your manager know.

Appendices

1. Self-Certification Form **
2. Change of Bank Account Details Form **
3. Ethos statement – New Ground ***
4. Expenses claim **
5. Finance RA – Corporate Criminal Offence ***

Self-certification of sickness absence **

If you are absent from work due to sickness, you are required to complete this form in order to obtain contractual and statutory entitlements.

If you have been off sick for more than 7 days (weekends & holidays included) please attach a medical certificate.

Please print details.

Name:

Absence Details:

First day:

Last day:

Number of days off sick:

Reason for sickness:

We have a legal requirement to maintain records of sickness absence.

Data Protection Act 1998: For the purposes of Sickness monitoring only, I consent to the above information being held and processed by New Ground Churches, for both electronic and manual records.

Medical certificate attached:

Please tick, as appropriate

 YES NO

Staff Member Signed:

Date:

Please scan and return completed forms to admin@newgroundchurches.org.

Change of bank account details **

Name:

Please change my existing details to:

(Please complete all boxes, even if not all details have changed)

Date effective from: _____

Bank Name: _____

Branch Name: _____

Account Name: _____

Account Number: _____

Sort Code: _____

I confirm that the above details are correct: _____ (Signature)

New Ground Churches Ethos Statement ***

The ethos of New Ground Churches is based on the acceptance and outworking of its foundational document, the Memorandum of Association which includes the objectives:

A) To advance the Christian faith in accordance with our statement of beliefs in the UK and other parts of the world as the Directors of the Charity may think fit, including the provision of events for Christian fellowship and teaching.

B) To relieve sickness and financial hardship and to promote and preserve good health by the provision of funds, goods or services of any kind including through the provision of counselling and support in such parts of the United Kingdom or the world as the trustees may from time to time think fit.

New Ground Churches is a family of churches from different countries, led by Dave Holden. We believe that God has caught us up in His great mission to see many churches planted across the world, and communities transformed by the love of Jesus Christ.

We are part of Newfrontiers, a group of apostolic leaders partnering together on global mission, joined by common values and beliefs, shared mission and genuine relationships – well over 1,000 churches in more than 90 nations, in every continent.

Our desire is to be a people who are passionate about the Bible and the work of the Holy Spirit and who are always committed to reaching out to others. Our ethos is based on our basis of faith, our commitment to prayer, our values and a commitment to see Jesus Christ glorified in all that we do.

As we work together to extend Jesus' model of the Kingdom of God on earth by living out a lifestyle of love, truth, justice, mercy and forgiveness, according to his teaching, we are inspired by his message and example to live lives that demonstrate his love. This means that the way in which we work together becomes a demonstration and authentication of our ethos.

Our ethos and motivation are rooted in our faith in Jesus Christ, and therefore New Ground operates on the understanding that our activities are simply an outworking of our faith; that our 'doing' derives directly from our 'being'.

We believe the message of Jesus Christ should be evident in our relationships as well as in our teaching. Therefore the working environment of New Ground aspires to be loving and righteous, where relationships deepen and where care and support, encouragement, the development of gifts and the realising of potential are all fostered, along with a spirit of forgiveness and repentance.

Central to our working together is our focus on praying together regularly, worshipping God, studying and sharing the Bible together and valuing one another as individuals loved by God.

We believe following Jesus Christ demands a distinctive lifestyle which impacts upon attitudes to money, possessions, time, work, leisure, social action and relationships. In relationships we seek to respect one another, to be accountable to one another and to seek unity without compromising individual integrity. The lifestyle we affirm is based on the teaching of the Bible which we believe is a revelation of God to man and is our plumb line against which all motives, actions, outcomes and attitudes can be measured.

People in all roles are expected to respect, uphold and commit to work within New Ground Christian faith-based ethos, faith-based statements and values.

New Ground is committed to reflecting and authenticating its Christian ethos and values in its policies, procedures, standards and practices with transparency and integrity.

Finance RA – Corporate Criminal Offence ***

BUSINESS RISK MANAGEMENT MODEL

Spreadsheet design ©



RISKS					RISK MANAGEMENT					
Risk identified	IMPACT ANALYSIS			CURRENT RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY	Monitoring responsibility	EFFECTIVENESS			Net Risk	
	Significance	Probability	Gross Risk			Strength	Further Action Required	Risk Owner & Timetable		
FINANCE										
Corporate Criminal Offence										
Cash transactions	Agreeing to pay a supplier in cash in order to benefit from VAT not being charged.	H	L	M	Maintain general principle that no transactions are paid in cash to suppliers. Where cash payment is necessary, to ensure that the supplier provides a suitable invoice indicating whether VAT is applicable.	BM / KR	S			L
	Agreeing to pay an employee in cash to avoid employers' NI and/or employee tax deduction	H	M	H	All employees must be registered with the New Ground payroll provider (Stewardship) and managed through the payroll. All cash transaction are kept to a minimum and no cash balance kept so that any cash payment has to be sourced via cheque encashment requiring dual signature	BM / KR	S			L
Expenses	Volunteers or employees reclaiming expenses at a higher level than the amounts incurred	M	M	M	All expense claims must be accompanied by suitable and relevant receipt evidence. All expense claims must be authorised by a line manager before payment is made Where receipts are unavailable the line manager authorising payment must ensure amounts are appropriate and relevant to the individual making the claim	All Line Managers	S			L
	Volunteers or employees claiming mileage for trips not taken or exaggerating distance	H	L	M	All expense claims must be authorised by a line manager who should ensure that trips were appropriate for the individual and that the distance is accurate by occasional test checking with Google Maps	All Line Managers	M			L

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RISKS					RISK MANAGEMENT					
Risk identified	IMPACT ANALYSIS			CURRENT RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY	Monitoring responsibility	EFFECTIVENESS			Net Risk	
	Significance	Probability	Gross Risk			Strength	Further Action Required	Risk Owner & Timetable		
Donations	Collaborating with a company to make a tax-deductible donation which has linked benefits or conditions	H	L	M	Donations from companies are very rare and should be documented should they occur. No benefits or conditions should be attached to any donations with the exception of those for a restricted fund	KR	M			L
	Using the Gift Aid scheme for donations which are ineligible due to being received via a third party	H	L	M	All donations attributable to Gift Aid reflect signed GA declarations from the individual donor. If there is any doubt that the donor is not the source of the donation then no Gift Aid will be claimed.	KR	S			L
	Attributing a donation to a tax-paying spouse of a non-tax-paying donor in order to claim Gift Aid	H	M	H	All claims for Gift Aid have a signed declaration by the donor. Any doubt raised requires the donation to be withheld from any GA claim until suitable evidence is received from the donor	KR	S			L
VAT	Agreeing with a supplier, where an invoice has mixed rates of VAT, to load the low or lower VATable element to reduce cost to the charity and increase the suppliers VAT reclaim	H	L	M	All supplier invoices to be authorised by the relevant budget holder reflecting not only that the total amount is accurate but that the breakdown is appropriate to the work done	All Line Managers	M			L
Grants	Misuse of grant funds for non-charitable purposes or to gain benefit from tax free income	H	M	H	Grant form, which must be signed by the recipient, stipulates conditions attached to the grant and any requirements. To the extent that we are able to without incurring inappropriate costs, we also obtain evidence of the grant being spent for the purpose it was given.	BM / KR / Core Team members and other designated travellers	M			M

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