

15. Producing a Staff Handbook

1 WHAT IS A STAFF HANDBOOK?

A staff handbook is also sometimes known as an employee or company handbook.

It is good HR practice to have a handbook in place. A handbook outlines your policies, practices, expectations and essential information about your business in one place. The handbook should be accessible to employees and is often given to employees on their first day of work in order to familiarise them with your business and its practices.

2 CONTENTS OF THE HANDBOOK

These are some of the aspects of employment that are often included in a handbook:

Company Mission Statement. Making your mission statement accessible to your employees will help them to become engaged with your business.

Employee Code of Conduct. A Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behavior that you expect from employees.

Attendance and timekeeping. Set out your expectations in relation to employee attendance and timekeeping at work.

Communications. Set out rules regarding personal mobile phone use during working hours.

Email and internet use. Set out your expectations around the use of email and internet during working hours.

Social media. Set out expectations for use of social media and if required for work purposes, how this will be managed.

Fraternisation. Set out the required expectations for maintaining professional conduct and behavior with clients and customers.

Smoking, alcohol and drugs. Outline your company’s stance on the use of cigarettes, drugs and alcohol during working hours.

Health and safety. Refer to the Health and Safety policy and remind employees of their responsibility to ensure they are familiar with the policy.

Business Gifts. Outline the Company’s stance on gifts or hospitality offered or received by the Company.

Confidentiality. Outline the importance of the confidentiality of information gained in the course of someone’s employment.

Property and equipment. Outline the standards of care expected with company property and equipment and what action may be taken in the event of damage to Company property.

Breaches. Outline the importance of complying with the standards set out in the handbook and what action may be taken if breaches occur.

Dress Code. Outline the standards of dress you expect from employees.

Equal opportunities statement. Outline that you are an employer that is committed to equality of opportunity and the expectations you have of your employees in the way they treat other employees and customers.

Additional employment. Outline the Company’s stance on employees carrying out additional work for other employers.

Holiday leave. Outline the annual leave entitlement for staff, and whether this entitlement includes public and bank holidays. Any shut down periods, such as the Christmas period, should also be outlined.

Time off in lieu. Outline any processes regarding granting of additional time off work where employees are carrying out extra unpaid hours of work.

Sick leave. Outline the Company’s reporting requirements for staff who are absent on sick leave.

Pensions. The handbook should outline the Company pension scheme available to employees, including the type of scheme and set out where employees can access further information.

Overtime. Outline the process for making overtime claims if applicable.

Expenses. Outline information about incurring and submitting expenses.

Data protection. The handbook should outline the process for employees to request information under the legislation or direct employees.

HR policies. Other HR policies can be kept within the handbook or if they are separate, outline where employees can access policies, for example, disciplinary procedure, grievance procedure, health and safety policy.

This is not an exhaustive list and can be tailored to your business requirements.

3 NEXT STEPS

- Consider the position you want your company to have on the aspects of employment you are planning to include in your handbook.
- Create a handbook using a friendly tone, as you want your employees to feel welcomed to your company.
- Issue the handbook to employees during the induction process and ask them to sign a form to confirm they have read it.

4 FACTSHEETS TO HELP

- How to Create a Job Description and Person Specification
- How to Make an Offer of Employment
- How to Prepare for your New Employee
- Pensions Considerations
- Health and Safety

5 FOR MORE ADVICE AND INFORMATION

ACAS - (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) free and impartial information and advice to employers and employees on all aspects of workplace relations and employment law. www.acas.org.uk

Achieve in Bath & North East Somerset - free recruitment support, advice and help. Matching job seekers, employers and course providers to help employers recruit, train and retain employees. www.achieveinbathnes.co.uk

Future Bright - free help & support for businesses and employees to realise their full potential. Provide access to training and development, workshops and networking. HR support to promote career progression and best practice to attract and retain staff. www.futurebright.org.uk

Bibliography - this fact sheet was produced by Rathbone HR Solutions in association with Cool Ventures Ltd in December 2018 with content sourced from; HR Inform (www.hr-inform.co.uk), ACAS (www.acas.org.uk), CIPD (www.cipd.co.uk), the pensions regulator (www.thepensionsregulator.gov.uk/en/employers), HMRC (www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs), the Information Commissioner's Officer website (www.ico.org.uk)



Created for Future Bright by Cool Ventures - Business Support in Bath, Bristol, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, South Gloucestershire and throughout South West England www.coolventures.co.uk