

# *A Little Lifetime* Foundation

Formerly ISANDS - founded 1983



## **Employment Policy**

### Ethos of the Charity

To provide information and support services to Parents and families whose baby is expected to die or those already bereaved. To provide a trained Support Team to facilitate parents needs.

To seek to promote a good environment on which volunteers and staff can work together and have respect for everyones role and duties.

### Statement of Values

A Little Lifetime Foundation is a voluntary organisation founded in 1983 to provide a response to the needs of parents and families whose baby will or has already died. The charity is committed to the deep sense of respect for all who make contact with us and/or associate with us.

Any staff who work for the charity are hugely valued and their shared commitment with volunteers truly appreciated. Through the joint efforts of both volunteers and staff, parents and families will continue to be supported for generations to come.

### **Professional Behaviour Policy**

Employees are expected to behave in a professional manner. The overall conduct, performance, attitude and demeanor of each employee should be exemplary at all times.

### **Practice**

Employees are expected to observe standards of appropriate dress.

Obscene language or behaviour should not be used and may be considered to be verbal abuse.

No employee may solicit or sell goods or services without the written approval of the Board.

### **Contract of Employment**

New employees receive a contract that gives information on starting date, salary, hours of duty, and general terms and conditions of employment. Employees must read their contract carefully, retain the original and return the signed copy to the Board.

### **Confidentiality**

The employees are required at all times to maintain absolute confidentiality concerning matters which come to your knowledge in the course of his/her duties. On no account must information concerning any personal affairs of service users and/or private matters pertaining to the services of the charity be divulged or discussed except in the performance of normal duty. Records must never be left in such a manner that unauthorised persons can access them and must be kept in safe custody when not in use. Please refer to the policies on confidentiality, files and record keeping.

### **Duties/Attendance**

Duties, responsibilities and hours of duty are outlined in the contract of employment and job description.

### **Probationary Period**

A probationary period of nine months will apply from commencement of employment. During this time the employees performance will be appraised. The Manager will meet him/her at least every three months dur-

ing the probationary period to discuss with him/her their work performance and to point out, if necessary, any areas that require improvement. The employee will have the opportunity to discuss any difficulties they may experience in relation to the new position. When the Manager certifies that the employees work has been satisfactory, the permanence will be confirmed in writing, The probationary period may be extended at the employers discretion. During probation the employment may be terminated by either party in accordance with the provisions of the contract.

#### Pension Schemes

The charity will comply with all statutory obligations in relation to Pension Schemes.

#### Resignation/Notice

The Board may terminate employment by giving notice as specified in the contract of employment. Permanent employees are required to give not less than one month's notice. Resignations must be given in writing to the immediate Manager for forwarding to the Board. The employee will be advised on pensions, and a P45 will be issued. All IDs, keys and any other belonging to the charity must be returned.

#### Change in Terms & Conditions of Employment

Occasionally, changes in the terms and conditions of employment may be necessary. Any changes will be fully discussed with the employee involved.

#### Extra Time

Situations may arise where you may be required to work additional hours beyond the normal duty commitment. Such extra time will be compensated for as per agreed national and local practice.

#### Accident/Incident Reporting

Any accident/incident, that involved parents/families, volunteers or visitors and staff no matter how trivial should be reported to the Manager or Board. In the case of accidents an accident report form must be completed and signed by the employee and passed to the Manager for appropriate action.

#### Supervision

The charity has in place supervision for all volunteers dealing with families; as administration services also includes the interaction with families who may be distressed and grieving we also offer the supervision service to staff. The service is entirely confidential.

#### Payment of Wages/Salary

The employees rate of pay will be in accordance with the contract of employment. Payment will be made monthly into a bank account. The employees name, PPS number, Gross Pay and all deductions will be recorded on their pay slip.

#### Deductions/Tax/Levies/PRSI

Statutory deductions, such as income tax, USC and PRSI are made by our Accountants and paid on behalf of the employee to the Revenue Commissioners by our Finance Manager.

#### Leave

The charity will pay annual leave in accordance with statutory number of days as per contract.

#### Introduction

The charity does not pay sick pay for part time workers.

#### Notification of Absence from work due to illness

In the case of absence from work due to illness the employer must be informed of the reason for such within one hour of normal starting time by the employee or someone acting on his/her behalf.

## Medical Certificates

(a)

A medical certificate must be submitted for any illness exceeding two calendar days or more. For prolonged illness, medical certificates must be submitted at ongoing intervals for as long as the absence continues, i.e. weekly, monthly certificates. Medical certificates must continue to be submitted by an employee while s/he is out sick, even after sick pay has ceased.

(b)

Rest days, Saturdays, Sundays or Public Holidays, falling within a period of sick leave, count as sick leave, and a medical certificate must be produced to cover the total period of absence.

## Social Welfare Benefits

Statutory deductions in respect of PRSI are made from the employees pay. Information on the benefits relevant to his/her contributions may be obtained from the Finance Department.

## Policy for Other Leave

### Annual Leave

Annual leave and public holidays are granted by the charity in accordance with the provisions of the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997, and any revisions thereof. The annual leave for the year is set out in the contract of employment. The leave year operates from the 1 st January to the 31st December each year. Only in exceptional circumstances may any leave be carried forward from one year to the next, and then only on the written recommendation of the employee's immediate Manager, with the approval of the Board. The employee should apply for leave to the Manager, giving adequate notice of the proposed leave dates. Leave is granted having regard to the needs of the services and those of the employee. Annual leave should be applied for on the standard leave application form.

### Compassionate Leave

The employee will be granted compassionate leave with pay on the death of an immediate or close relative,

### Maternity Leave

Maternity leave is granted in accordance with the provisions of the Maternity Protection Act 1994, (Extension of Periods of Leave) Order 2001, which entitles the employee to eighteen consecutive weeks maternity leave. Of these eighteen weeks, the employee must take at least four weeks before the end of the week in which your baby is due, and a minimum of four weeks after the baby arrives.

- She may also avail of up to eight weeks unpaid, special leave following maternity leave but four weeks prior notice must be given.
- The annual leave entitlement and public holidays will not be affected by maternity leave.
- Paid maternity leave will count as service in all respects.
- When a baby is born prematurely but the mother is not yet on maternity leave, her maternity leave will commence from the date of confinement. However, she must notify the Manager in writing of the situation within fourteen days of her confinement.
- Under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 1989, an employer is required to carry out a hazard assessment which relates to specified rests associated with pregnant employees, employees who have recently given birth, and employees who are breast feeding within twenty-six weeks of having given birth. Therefore, it is important that a employee notifies the Manager when pregnancy has been confirmed.

### Applying for Maternity Leave

The employee should apply, in writing, for leave no later than four weeks before you are due to commence leave. This application must be accompanied by a completed Medical Certificate confirming the expected date of birth. A completed Form MB10 (available from Social Welfare) is sufficient for this purpose. The employee must confirm in writing their intention to return to work at least one month in advance of doing so.

## Payment during Maternity Leave

Payment will be made to permanent and long term temporarily employees while on maternity leave, on the basis that all monies received from the Department of Social, Community & Family Affairs are returned to our Accountant as soon as they are received by the employee.

## Emergency Leave

An employee is to entitled to emergency leave where, owing to unforeseen injury or illness, substantial in nature, of a family member, the immediate and indispensable presence of the employee is required at the place where the family member is.

A family member is defined as a child, spouse or partner, brother, sister, parent or grandparent of the employee. The maximum emergency leave that may be granted is 3 days in 12 consecutive months or 5 in 36 consecutive months. An employee who avails of emergency leave should complete the specified form as soon as possible, in consultation with their Manager.

## Paternity Leave

With effect from 1st January 2001 fathers are entitled to three days special leave with pay on the birth of a child. This leave may be taken at the time of the birth or up to four weeks afterwards. Part-time workers are entitled to paternity leave on a pro rata basis. In the case of adoptions the leave may be taken on or up to four weeks after the date of placement of the child.

## Grievance Procedures

The organisation wish to give any employee with a grievance an opportunity to have the matter discussed and resolved quickly. The grievance may be either individual or collective. In the case where problems arise, we need a procedure to deal with these problems in a fair and consistent way. To ensure that this aim is fulfilled, we have adopted a problem solving procedure. This procedure is designed to help and encourage all employees to achieve and maintain satisfactory standards of conduct and performance, and to provide the opportunity for improvement where necessary.

We have a collaborative approach to problem solving. This procedure helps us work closely with our staff if problems arise.

The following procedures will apply to allegations of unsatisfactory performance or conduct that may arise after the trial period and confirmation of the employment placement. Please note that problems with performance, conduct or commitment during a trial period or any extension of the trial period will not be dealt with under this procedure but in accordance with Section Inducton & Training.

## Informal procedure

Where minor problems of performance or conduct are alleged (e.g. poor timekeeping/unreliability, minor mistakes in the tasks being undertaken etc.), the Manager whould hold an informal discussion with the employee to discuss this and decide on an appropriate course of action. The Manager should inform the employee of future expectations, set clear goals and tell them about future action that will be taken if expectations are not met.

Where the issue is related to your ability to undertake the role, the Manager will address this during supervision and support sessions. Appropriate expectations and goals will be set. Where there is no improvement, the Manager will hold an informal three-way meeting with the employee and Member of the Board. The following courses of action will then be available:

- Reasonable changes to the employee role to enable him/her to carry it out;
- Change of employee placement, where appropriate and available;
- Developing a time-bound plan to address problems. The Manager will evaluate whether problems are addressed and carry out a review at the end of the time-bound period.

## Formal procedure

Where more serious problems of performance or conduct are alleged, or there is no improvement in relation to any earlier issues dealt with informally, the following procedure will be followed:

## Investigation

The Manager or another suitably appointed person will investigate the matter and prepare a report for the Board.

## Review meeting

The Manager will hold a review meeting with the employee and our Supervisor. The employee will be advised in advance of the allegations against him/her and given time to answer the allegations. They may, if they wish, be accompanied to the meeting by a colleague.

## Harassment & Bullying

Our organisation is committed to providing a work environment which is free from threat, intimidation and sexual harassment. Harassment of employees is considered a serious offence that will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Sexual harassment can be described as unsolicited behaviour of a sexual nature that is unwanted and offensive to the recipient. It may include:

- unwanted verbal or physical advances
- words or actions of a sexual nature or with sexual undertones even if offence is not and specifically intended: and
- display in the workplace of material of an explicit sexual nature, which causes offence, discomfort or humiliation or interferes with a person's ability to work.

Bullying is the misuse of power or position to persistently criticise and condemn; to openly humiliate and persistently undermine an individual's professional ability such that the person becomes fearful and loses confidence and belief in themselves.

Examples of bullying can include:

- shouting or other aggressive behaviour by a superior or colleague;
- public humiliation;
- personal insults and name calling;
- unfair selection for difficult or unpleasant tasks;
- persistent and unfair criticism;
- ignoring or excluding an individual.

Procedure in cases of harassment:

If you are subjected to harassment while at work the employee should explain clearly to the person causing the offence that the behaviour is unwelcome and offensive. If the employee feels unable to approach the offending person directly, he/she should get assistance from the Manager or the Board.

Keep records of incidents as they occur and request witnesses, if any, to also keep notes.

If the offensive behaviour continues after it has been made clear that it is unwelcome and unacceptable, the employee should seek advice and assistance from the Manager or the Board who will endeavour to resolve the matter at a local level. If this is not possible or desirable, the matter will be investigated under the Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures.

The employee may contact a Member of the Board directly about any matter relating to harassment or bullying.

## Equal Opportunities

The organisation, as an equal opportunity employer, treats all employees equally, regardless of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, disability, age, religious or political beliefs, race or membership of the travelling community. The policy of equal opportunity ensures that any decision relating to the selection, promotion, training or transfer of staff is made on the basis of ability, qualification and suitability.

for work. The Services are committed to implementing policies to promote these objectives, in line with the Employment Equality Act 1998.

## General Rules of Conduct

### Use of Telephone

All employees should avoid making or receiving personal calls while on duty unless in an emergency situation.

### Collections/Fundraising

All employees need to get approval from the Board to make collections or fundraise for the charity.

### Office Equipment

Office equipment; computers, photocopiers, printers or any other resource should not be used for anything connected to personal use or unauthorised use. This includes use of internet for personal use and in particular searching any pornographic sites or material. This is forbidden.

### Publication

No employee should without prior approval from the Board prepare for publication or address, article or comment touching on matters to do with the organisation.

### Meal Breaks

Appropriate lunch and tea breaks are allowed and times agreed with the organisation.

### Travel and Subsistence

Travel expenses shall be paid at an agreed rate to employees in respect of all necessary journeys made on official charity business.

Employees away from home on approved official business may be paid subsistence allowance. Overnight stays are permitted once approved by Board. Official receipts required for payment of any claims.

### Jury Service

Should an employee receive a summons to attend jury service they should immediately contact the Manager.

### Secondary Job and Conflict of Interest

Employees are not allowed to have any other business activity or gainful employment that interferes with their work performance. Where an employee is simultaneously working for another employer they should declare the hours involved in writing to the Manager so as to ensure that they are not in conflict with the terms of the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997.

### Media

All requests to give media interviews, statements or other media information connected with the organisation must be referred to a Board Member or to the delegated official spokesperson for the charity.

### Statement of Training and Development Policy

In keeping with A Little Lifetime Foundations philosophy, the organisation has a strong commitment to the training and development of employees. Training and Development is an ongoing process aimed at meeting changing organisational needs, enhancing job performance, and promoting individual growth; thus, participation in appropriate in-service and external training is strongly encouraged. Employee training requirements are identified through individual identification of needs, through evaluation procedures, and as a result of changes in service delivery and technology.

### Making an application for a course

Prior to making an application for a course, employees should consider its relevance to their work and its

benefit to themselves. Employees should discuss their training needs with their Manager, who in turn will liaise with the Staff Training and Development Department. It will not always be feasible to facilitate requests for training courses.

#### Leave to Attend Courses & Seminars

Granting of leave to attend courses and seminars is sanctioned by the Board. Guidelines are contained in the Training Policy .

#### 10.4 Feedback of Information

It is the responsibility of employees attending courses to disseminate and share relevant information with other members of their team on their return. This feedback will be facilitated at team meetings, and co-ordinated by the Manager.

#### Course Sponsorship

Recoupment of training course expenses will be in accordance with the training and development policy guidelines of the organisation.

#### Contractual Arrangements

Courses involving substantial investment, financial or otherwise by the organisation, may be subject to contractual arrangements between the employee and the organisation.

#### Library Facilities

The library is available to all employees of the organisation.

#### Health, Safety & Welfare

##### Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 1989

This Act provides for the safety, health and welfare of people at work, for protecting others against risk to safety or health in connection with the activities of people at work and for the establishment of a national authority for occupational safety and health. The Act provides for the issuing and display of safety statements, consultation between employers and employees, and selection of Safety Representatives.

The Act covers all people at work, employers, employees and the self-employed and it requires, in so far as is reasonably practicable, that employers should protect the safety, health and welfare of all who work for them.

A Little Lifetime Foundation have an obligation under the Act to display a Safety Statement for each work location identifying the hazards in the workplace and outlining procedures which would mitigate the risks to employees. This Safety Statement is available to all employees in each work location.

Employees are required to take reasonable care for their own safety and that of their co-workers. Employees must co-operate with the employer on safety matters such as training, use of protective equipment, prompt reporting of defects in the workplace and accidents.

Appropriate safety training will be provided for all employees and will be updated as required.

A breach of safety regulations will be treated as misconduct and action will be taken in accordance with disciplinary procedures.

#### Safety, Health & Welfare

The charity's aim to protect, in so far as it is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of all employees through the provision and maintenance of a safe place of work, safe access and egress, safe plant and equipment and safe systems of work. The organisation also aim to ensure the safety and health of people who come in contact with its' work activities.

#### Accident/Incident Reporting

Any accident/incident, no matter how trivial, that involves service users, employees or visitors should be reported to your Manager without delay. In the case of accidents/incidents, an accident report form must be

completed and signed. These forms are available at each operational area. Gathering accurate information helps us to prevent similar accidents/incidents occurring.

### Fire Precautions

Employees are expected to familiarise themselves fully with fire drills for their place of work. These will include detailed procedure for action to be taken in the event of an outbreak of fire. Employees must be fully aware of the exact location of the fire alarm activation point, fire extinguishers, fire hydrants, and emergency exits and how they should be used. Employees must co-operate fully with all fire prevention and fire drill procedures organised by the organisation. Failure to do so will be considered a disciplinary matter.

### No Smoking Policies

Under the Tobacco (Health Promotion and Protection) Regulations 1990, smoking is prohibited at all work locations within the organisation, apart from designated smoking areas, details of which are provided in each work location.

### Hygiene

In keeping with the Health and Safety at Work (1989) Act, the highest standards of hygiene must be maintained at all times. All employees must comply with the procedures and standards required by hygiene regulations. Employees are responsible for keeping their work areas clean and tidy at all times.

### Hepatitis A & Hepatitis B

The information programme and vaccinations are administered through the Occupational Health Service of the Services.

Hepatitis A-Hepatitis A virus (HAV) infection is a significant health problem worldwide and in Ireland accounts for most clinical cases of hepatitis.

Transmission- HAV is transmitted by the faecal-oral route.-The most common routes of infection are through person-to-person contact. The risk of faecal-oral transmission is increased where there is close person-to-person contact e.g. among infants, young children and the intellectually disabled, especially in day care and residential homes.

Effects of HAV-Infection with HAV varies from sub-clinical infection, through clinical hepatitis with or without jaundice, to fulminant disease, coma and death. During the incubation period (range 2-6 weeks), virus replicates in the liver and is shed in the faeces. Faecal excretion declines when symptoms develop and usually ceases within two weeks of the onset of jaundice. The frequency and severity of symptoms increase with age, and the illness usually lasts a few weeks.

Hepatitis B-Hepatitis B is a viral disease, which attacks the liver and causes jaundice. It is about 100 times more infectious than the AIDS virus.

Transmission- Infected blood is the commonest way the virus is transmitted from one person to another. Hepatitis B has also been found in other body fluids such as saliva, semen, vaginal secretions, sweat and tears. Persons exposed to blood or other body fluids are at an increased risk from Hepatitis B infection and should take the necessary preventative measures.

Preventative measures against Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B include the wearing of protective clothing and the use of Hepatitis A and B vaccine.

Effects of HBV- Acute Hepatitis B is rarely fatal, but victims often need several weeks or months for recovery. Chronic Hepatitis B occurs in up to 10% of those infected and can lead to irreversible liver damage and liver cancer.

### Alcohol/Drug Abuse

It is essential that all employees be alert and in full possession of their faculties when working. Employees must be free while at work from any impairment due to the influence of alcohol or other chemical substance. The objective of the organisation is to maintain a work environment that is safe and conducive to high work standards. Any unsatisfactory behaviour in this respect puts both employees and service-users at risk, and

could adversely affect the good reputation of the organisation.

The policy of the charity is to employ a workforce free from substance abuse. Any employee in violation of this policy is subject to disciplinary action, which may include termination of employment.

Any employee who suspects she/he has a substance abuse problem or who is identified as having such, will be given the opportunity to seek diagnosis and specialist help through the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). The use of prescribed drugs, which may adversely affect performance or behaviour, should be reported by the individual to his or her Manager.

#### Access to Information

##### Freedom of Information Act 1997

The FOI Act provides, that from 21 st October 1998, every person has the following new legal rights:

- The right to access official records held by the Public Bodies listed in the Act, such as Health Boards and Local Authorities.
- The right to have personal information amended where such information is incomplete, incorrect or misleading; and
- The right to be given reasons for decisions taken by Public Bodies that affect them.

This Act was extended to Voluntary Agencies, and this includes the Brothers of Charity Services, for whom the effective date was 21 st October 1999. Information on this Act is available from the FOI Officer.

##### Data Protection Act 1991

The organisation must ensure that all employees comply with the Data Protection Act 1991 which sets out to protect the rights of privacy of the individual by imposing obligations on those who collect and store information on computer. The protection of the individual lies in his or her right to establish the existence of personal information, to gain access to this information and to request amendments or erasure.

##### Reports to Media

Employees should not, under any circumstances, give a statement or make comments relating to any aspect of organisation, unless directed by the Board to do so.

##### Policy review

Our policies will be reviewed in accordance with independent agency requirements.