



Severn Group

# Relationships at Work Policy

JULY 2025

Defined by fairness and transparency, underpinned by inclusive communication to inspire trust and respect; we challenge and support one another to achieve our shared goals.

# Introduction

We understand that you may meet your partner at work and that personal relationships are inevitable. The purpose of this Policy is to govern personal relationships in the workplace, while respecting your right to a private life. This Policy does not prohibit you from having a personal relationship with another employee, but instead, sets out guidelines for conduct within the workplace and provides a framework for line managers to deal with personal relationships which may affect the business.

## **Who does this Policy apply to?**

This Policy applies to all employees, officers, consultants, self-employed contractors, casual workers, agency workers, volunteers, and interns.

## **Who is responsible for this Policy?**

The Executive Committee has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this Policy. The Executive Committee has delegated responsibility for overseeing its implementation to the Chief People Officer. Therefore suggestions for changes to this Policy should be reported to the Chief People Officer.

Any questions you may have about the day-to-day application of this Policy should be referred to your line manager in the first instance.

## **Definition of a personal relationship**

When we use the phrase "personal relationship" in this Policy, we mean any emotional or romantic relationship which goes beyond the normally accepted boundaries of the professional sphere between employees. This will include formal, family relationships (for example, where employees are married or living together). It will also include less formal situations (for example, where the employees consider that they are "seeing each other" or "going out together").

This definition is not intended to be exhaustive. Given the sensitive nature of personal relationships, you are required to use common sense in assessing whether or not this Policy is relevant to you. If you are unsure whether this Policy applies to you, you should speak to your line manager or a member of the People Team in confidence about your situation.

This definition includes all personal relationships between employees, regardless of whether you work in the same team, department, division, region, office, or at the same site.

# The Process

## Our Policy's purpose

In many cases, your personal relationship will not interfere with work. However, sometimes a personal relationship will be or become problematic because it adversely impacts on other employees or negatively affects business efficiency. Personal relationships can be particularly problematic where they involve members of the same team or are between a supervisor or line manager and subordinate.

This means that personal relationships are potentially a legitimate management concern. In issuing this Policy, we seek to address the following, non-exhaustive, issues which may arise where there is a personal relationship:

- Lack of transparency in relation to workplace matters.
- Risks to the confidentiality of business information.
- Legal risks regarding discrimination and harassment.
- Potential conflicts of interest among those involved in personal relationships.
- Actual or perceived bias regarding recruitment, promotion, rostering, annual leave allocation, appraisals, discipline, grievance and other operational matters, where employees in a personal relationship are also in a direct reporting or subordinate relationship.
- Potential for negative effect on general employee perception of fairness, objectivity, and impartiality.
- Embarrassment of other employees.
- Fear of favouritism by other employees.
- General adverse impact on team dynamics and reduction in team morale.
- Outputs may be disrupted in the event of relationship breakdown.
- Impact on management resources and increased legal risks in the event of relationship breakdown.

## Management guidelines

Where a line manager becomes aware that a member of their team is in a personal relationship with another employee, they are required to treat this sensitively and, as far as possible, in confidence.

Most personal relationships should not have a significant impact on the workplace or efficiency of work. However, line managers need to recognise their responsibility to all team members and to the needs of the Company.

# The Process

No action should be taken simply because you are in a personal relationship with another employee. Only if there is an issue or risk as outlined above, should an action be considered.

Line managers will know that they must not discriminate against you on various protected grounds, including, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Line managers should be aware that conduct directed towards an employee for personal reasons may be unwanted and that, in some circumstances, this could amount to unlawful harassment for which the employer could be liable. We will take any grievances (formal or informal) very seriously and investigate these without delay. Line managers should escalate any complaints of this nature to the local HR Team, as soon as possible.

Any information regarding personal relationships is confidential and likely to be protected under the data protection laws. Line managers are reminded about their data protection obligations under the law and our Employee Data Protection Policy and Employee Privacy Notice, including ensuring the security of such information.

Line managers are also reminded that we have a duty to protect the health and safety of our employees, including mental health. If a line manager has concerns regarding the health impact of a personal relationship on an employee, they should bring this to the attention of the local HR Team without delay.

Given the highly sensitive nature of personal relationships, line managers should seek the assistance of the People Team before dealing with any issues which may arise. They should also ensure that a formal note is taken of any meetings discussing personal relationships.

## **Conduct of those in personal relationships**

If you are in a personal relationship, you are expected to conduct yourself in a professional manner at work at all times in respect of such relationship. This means being considerate of the feelings of other employees in your day-to-day dealings and being discreet in any discussions regarding your private life within the workplace. Public displays of affection are inappropriate in the work environment.

# The Process

Our confidentiality rules continue to apply regardless of any personal relationship. You must ensure that you protect all confidential and commercially sensitive information from unauthorised disclosure.

If your personal relationship involves a direct or indirect reporting line or a manager/subordinate role, you are both required to disclose this as soon as reasonably practicable. Disclosures should be made via the Conflicts of Interest - Disclosure Form on the HR System (Cezanne) and you must alert your line manager. While there is no formal requirement for you to disclose if you are not in a manager/subordinate relationship, you should consider whether it may still be appropriate to disclose.

Failure to disclose a personal relationship as required by this Policy will be treated as a disciplinary matter and, subject to investigation, could result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

## **Discrimination, harassment, and other policies**

You are reminded that you are subject to our policies on equality and diversity, discrimination and harassment, confidentiality and trade secrets and data protection, and that breach of these policies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

We are committed to providing a workplace which is fair and equal. Nobody will be disadvantaged, discriminated against, or otherwise subjected to a detriment because they are in a personal relationship. If you have concerns about your treatment, you should raise this informally with your line manager in the first instance (if appropriate), or otherwise use the formal grievance procedure.

We will not tolerate any form of harassment and will take any allegations extremely seriously. You are reminded to consider your legal obligations towards colleagues. These may be especially pertinent at the beginning or end of a relationship when professionalism and discretion will be particularly important.

# The Process

## **Data protection**

For information about our processing of personal data under this Policy, including details of our legal grounds for doing so, how long we retain such personal data, who your personal data is shared with, your rights under data protection law and who you should contact if you have any concerns, please see our Employee Data Protection Policy and Employee Privacy Notice, which can be accessed on the Group Policy Hub.

## **Agreement to follow this Policy**

This Policy is fully supported by the Executive Committee. This Policy is non-contractual, and the Company reserves the right to update it at any time.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Conflicts of Interest Policy, Employee Data Protection Policy, Employee Privacy Notice and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy. All Severn Group policies can be accessed on the Group Policy Hub.



At Severn, our business success flows from expertise – from technical knowledge and experience that position us as a leader in our field. Not everything, however, can be engineered. The Values which underpin that success stem instinctively from the culture we seek to sustain. Everything we do is tested against our Values, and our people are encouraged to apply them every day: they are the stewards of our brand, our reputation, our heritage, our ambitions.



**Customer**



**Integrity**



**Excellence**



**Accountability**



**SEVERN**  
Superior Valve Engineering