

Reference Number: UHB 503 document for review Version Number: 1a	<i>Date of Next Review: 22 Jul 2028</i> <i>Previous Trust/LHB Reference Number:</i>
Relationships in Work Procedure	
Introduction and Aim Cardiff and Vale University Health Board recognises that employees can already have a personal relationship or develop close personal relationships within the workplace. It is our aim for employees to use their professionalism and integrity in ensuring that such relationships do not compromise the individuals involved, the service, or the Health Board, Either the service that the health board provide or the public image. The aim of the procedure is to ensure that both the health board and its employees are not open to allegations of impropriety, bias, abuse or conflict of interest.	
Objectives <i>To ensure all employees understand the implications of becoming involved in a close personal relationship with a colleague.</i> <i>To provide guidance to employees where close personal relationships overlap with working relationships.</i> <i>For all employees to understand they have a duty to declare any close personal relationships which exist or to develop during their employment.</i> <i>To support a positive and healthy working environment for all UHB employees.</i> <i>To ensure the fair, consistent and effective application of the processes around managing relationships at work.</i>	
Scope This procedure applies to all employees employed by the UHB including Volunteers, Bank Employees and Contractors.	
Equality and Health Impact Assessment	<i>An Equality and Health Impact Assessment has been completed. The Equality Impact Assessment completed for the policy found here to be a positive impact.</i>
Documents to read alongside this Procedure	• Standards of Behaviour Policy • Respect & Resolution Policy • Disciplinary Policy • Capability Policy • Social Media Policy

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	• Domestic Abuse, Gender Based Violence and Sexual Violence Procedure • Redeployment Procedure • UPSW Procedure • Safeguarding Allegations/Concerns About Practitioners and Those In Positions of Trust Procedure
Accountable Executive or Clinical Board Director	Executive Director of People and Culture
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Summary of reviews/amendments			
Version Number	Date Review Approved	Date Published	Summary of Amendments
1	22.11.2023	01.12.2023	NEW Procedure
1a	22.07.2026	01/09/2026	Rolled forward without amendment

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1	Principles
1.1	Employee's must be aware at all times of their behaviour in the work environment and must ensure that they behave appropriately at all times and act in accordance of the UHB's values and behaviours which are Kind and caring, Respectful, Trust and integrity and Personal responsibility.
1.2	Although the existence of a close personal relationship between employees does not necessarily constitute a bar to the employment or promotion of either party, employees must declare to their manager any close personal relationships which may give rise to an actual or perceived conflict of interest, breach of confidentiality or unfair advantage, in order for managers to consider the appropriate balance and put measures in place. In particular, relationships between employees and those in very senior positions within the Health Board may create such a perception with the public and thus it is imperative that such relationships are declared and managed with transparency.
1.3	Employees who have a close personal relationship outside of work must not be appointed / promoted to work in a direct reporting relationship at either first or second tier line management.
1.4	Employees who have a close personal relationship outside of work and who are working in the same team/department must declare the relationship to their line manager where it can have a bearing on their working environment.
1.5	In all circumstances, where employees have a close personal relationship to an Executive employee or Independent member of the Board, whether or not they work within the same department, both parties must declare this relationship.
1.6	Employees who have a personal relationship with a service user must disclose to their Line Manager.
1.7	Failure to declare a close personal relationship in accordance with the requirements of this procedure may result in action being taken in line with the Health Board's Disciplinary Policy. Overt displays of affection or personal disputes by any employee are not appropriate in the workplace and may result in disciplinary action
2	Responsibilities
2.1	Managers will: - Deal promptly and sensitively with issues involving close personal relationships in the workplace in order to resolve them. - Conduct matters involving close personal relationships at work in a fair and consistent way, ensuring dignity and respect.

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2.2	Employees will: • Maintain the confidentiality of the parties at all times and agree with the individuals what information others in the team may need to know. • Assess and manage risks associated with personal relationships to ensure they are managed appropriately. Ensure that employees are not involved in decisions relating to discipline, promotion or pay adjustments and signing expenses for any other employee where there is a close personal relationship. • Ensure that all employees feel confident of fair treatment without the fear that a close personal relationship will influence their or other employees' treatment or broader working relationships. • Ensure professionalism whilst in the workplace. • Bring to the attention of their manager any situations in which a close personal relationship exists or develops if they feel that it has a bearing on their work or team. • Work with their manager to identify suitable alternative working arrangements to ensure that their close personal relationship does not interfere with or compromise their employment. • Conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times and to avoid any adverse impact on employee or patients resulting from a potentially divisive situation. • To avoid any potential deterioration in individuals' job performance resulting from a relationship break down. • Inform their manager of any personal relationships with service users that are directly within their care are on the ward/department that they are working in. The People Services Team is responsible for advising all parties on the application of this procedure and for providing specific management and employee guidance as required. Advice can also be sought from Trade Union representatives.
3	Definitions
	This procedure will cover both Employee/Patient Close Personal Relationships and Employee to employee close personal relationships that are developed prior to employment, whilst in work or developed outside of work. It will also cover when relationships break down and the process that needs to be follow. In the context of this document, close personal relationships and team/department relationships include: • Employees who are married, in a civil partnership, or in a co-habiting arrangement • Immediate family members e.g. parents, son/daughter, sibling, grandparent/grandchild or who act as such e.g step parent

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	- Extended family such as aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews and in laws. - Friendships. - Emotion and physical relationships. Potential situations where a close personal relationship may expose employees to actual or perceived conflict of interest or bias include, but are not restricted to, the following: - Perceived or alleged breaches of probity. - Unfair advantage/favouritism. - Breach of confidentiality. - Harassment or bullying. - Employee relations issues. - Reputational damage to the organisations.
4	Existing Relationships between Employees
	Employees who are uncertain about whether they should disclose a close personal relationship either between colleagues or with a patient / service user, should speak to their Line Manager in the first instance, also guidance is available in confidence from the People Services Team or their Trade Union Representative. For guidance the Equity and Inclusion Team can signpost you to the relevant organisations that you can approach for additional support.
5	Pre Employment – Recruitment and Appointment
	Job applicants, including internal applicants, are required to declare if they are related to a Director, or have a relationship with a director or employee of an appointing organisation in line with Standards and Behaviour Policy. If during the recruitment and selection process for a post within Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, the recruiting manager realises that one of the applications received is from someone with whom they have a relationship with as defined in section 3 above, the recruiting manager employee must declare this to their line manager as soon as they become aware. The recruiting manager will then be withdrawn from the selection process and another appropriate recruitment manager will be appointed. An employee who has a close personal relationship with another employee must not act as a referee for that person for either internal or external positions.

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	Where an applicant, if appointed, would work in the same team with an employee with whom they have a close personal relationship, the implications of this must be considered and discussed during the selection process with the potential candidate and also with a Senior Manager if appropriate and a decision made on how to proceed with the recruitment This is to ensure that, assuming they are otherwise the most suitable candidate for the job, the appointment would also be appropriate taking into account operational issues and standards. The type of issues that must be explored will include: • General operational issues relating to shift or working patterns, annual leave requirements etc. The applicant would need to be clear as to the operational requirements of the job which may involve different shift patterns or working times to their partner and no guarantee that leave could always be authorised to coincide. • More specific operational issues, e.g. in relation to finance and procurement roles and responsibilities within a job which are governed by Financial Regulations. • Potential conflict of interest and confidentiality issues including the impact on relationships with employees within the team. • Potential conflict of interest and confidentiality issues including the impact on service users/patients.
6.1	During Employment
	When a manager is informed or becomes aware of a close personal relationship that has developed either: • involving the direct line manager, or the manager above, and a member of the team, • or between co-workers in the same team/department, • or involving an Independent Member, Executive Director or other senior member of employee. The appropriate senior manager within the team/service/department will, in consultation with People Services discuss with the employees involved the potential risks posed by and the implications of such a relationship and will do the following: Using a risk assessment approach, consider any operational issues that may occur and how these should be managed, and assess any impact on service users and the general public including issues relating to trust and confidence and the public image of the health board.

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	Any general operational issues relating to shift or working patterns, annual leave requirements etc, which may affect cover arrangements. You will make immediate alternative supervision/line management arrangements for issues involving a potential conflict of interest. These include matters related to pay, promotion, job opportunities, appraisals and disciplinary /capability matters. This will require the more junior employee to be supervised for these purposes by another manager with immediate effect. The day to day management of their work will remain unchanged until such time as suitable alternative arrangements can be made and this may include the transfer of one or other of the parties to another team/department in line with section 8.. Where it is necessary for one of the employee's to be moved into a different team/department this may result in a change of base or working arrangements. The decision about which employee will be moved will be based on service needs in conjunction with a discussion with the employees concerned. Please see Section 8 for process. Any potential conflict of interest or confidentiality issues including the impact on relationships with employee within the team. Communicate the agreed arrangements to other colleagues in the team/department as necessary after conversations with the parties involved have been had. Confidentiality and sensitivity should remain at all times. N.B The above list is not exhaustive and can include aspects that are not covered within this procedure
7	When a relationship breaks down
	There may be occasions when a close personal relationship/friendship breaks down and the individuals concerned remain in the same team, department or work area with a potential impact on team relationships and service delivery. If it is envisaged that the breakdown of the relationship/friendship is causing or will cause ongoing workplace issues, these must be addressed sensitively in discussion with the employees with a view to the issues being resolved, where possible. Managers and employees involved in a breakdown of a relationship/friendship should look to resolve matters through the Respect and Resolution Policy and follow the ethos this represents of resolving issues early and informally for the best resolution.
8	Redeployment due to a relationship breakdown
	If the Respect and Resolution process highlights that it is not possible to resolve the breakdown in relationship and instead redeployment has been identified in supporting employees moving forward, the UHB will consult with both members of staff to try and reach a voluntary agreement regarding the transfer.

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	In the event of such a move being identified, the UHB will consult with both members of employee to try and reach a voluntary agreement regarding the transfer. Compulsory redeployment will only be considered where voluntary agreement cannot be reached and when the situation cannot be satisfactorily addressed by less disruptive measures. When determining which employee should be redeployed, the factors to be taken into consideration will include: • The requirements of the service. • The redeployment opportunities available. • The personal circumstances involved. In these circumstances it is not appropriate to give notice, but all other elements of the Redeployment Procedure should be followed to ensure fairness and consistency. Short term pay protection, depending on the circumstances, will only be considered in cases where there has been a compulsory redeployment as a consequence of a personal relationship issue. The duration of the short term pay protection will be based on the individual's length of continuous NHS service and will be funded by the substantive (i.e. original) department.
9	Relationships between client/patient and an employee
	The UHB has a duty of care to all patients/service users. Employees must not enter into a close personal relationship (including via social media) with a service user/patient regardless if they are involved in their treatment or care. Regardless of how the employee may see the relationship, it leaves them open to the risk of allegations of exploitation, abuse of authority, unfairness, harassment or even sexual assault. It is the responsibility of the employee to maintain each relationship within its own appropriate boundary. Employees may experience vulnerable patients disclosing intimate or personal matters, which allow potential for these discussions to be misinterpreted. Employees are reminded to conduct themselves appropriately. It is essential that while employees may develop a close working relationship with a person they must never allow that to cloud their professional and clinical judgement. The UHB recognises that some employees may have pre-existing personal relationships with individuals who may at some point become patient/service users. It is the responsibility of the employee to inform their manager of the relationship, so that they are not directly involved in the assessment or provision of care, otherwise they may be perceived to be in a position leading to a conflict of interest. It is necessary to maintain a degree of objectivity in order to make appropriate care assessments and judgements, and to offer appropriate advice. If this objectivity is

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	compromised you must discuss this in supervision and arrange to transfer the work to a colleague if necessary. If a previous patient or service user contacts any employee for any other reason than their treatment or care, the employee must immediately inform their line manager and cease contact with the service user/patient until further advice is sought. If an employee becomes concerned that a personal relationship is developing between a colleague and a patient/service user, they have a responsibility to inform their line manager or more senior manager. Alternatively, they may formally raise matters under the UHB's policies and procedures such as Raising Concerns Procedure. N.B. Relationships between an employee and a patient may have serious consequences with the employee's Professional Code of Conduct and your Professional Bodies.
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