

People and Fair Working Policy for Subcontractors and Employees

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FAIR WORK AND DEVELOPMENT

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Changing Footprint will treat people fairly, provide respectful working relationships and support competence and wellbeing. Conduct, equality and protection from harassment apply to employees, workers, applicants, associates and subcontractors as relevant to the relationship. Employee disciplinary and employment arrangements apply to employees; statutory protections may also apply to other people according to their actual legal status.

RECRUITMENT AND TERMS

Recruit on relevant skills, experience and ability to meet the role, using consistent criteria and reasonable adjustments. Verify the right to work where required and avoid unnecessary personal questions. Provide written terms and explain pay, hours, work location, leave and reporting arrangements. Do not use false self-employment, insecure arrangements or unpaid work to evade employment rights.

PAY AND WORKING TIME

Pay at least statutory entitlements and adopt the applicable Living Wage Foundation real Living Wage as our minimum for directly employed staff. Review rates when updated and meet the Foundation's implementation timetable without claiming accreditation. Check relevant suppliers' pay practices and seek equivalent fair-pay commitments. Agree genuine independent consultancy fees transparently. Respect working-time, rest and holiday rights and do not require unlawful or coercive overtime.

LEAVE FLEXIBILITY AND WELLBEING

Written terms and current law govern annual leave, sickness, family leave, flexible working and other entitlements. Employees request leave through Changing Footprint's Director and report absence promptly, allowing for emergencies or incapacity. Handle health information discreetly and consider reasonable adjustments, workload changes and return-to-work support. Assess flexible-working requests fairly under the applicable statutory process.

INDUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Provide role, policy, safety and information-security induction. Review competence and development needs at least annually and when work changes. Agree relevant learning, supervision and feedback. Consider apprenticeships where suitable work, funding, training and supervision can be provided; do not imply that an apprenticeship programme currently operates.

EQUALITY VOICE AND CONSULTATION

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

We prohibit unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Our standards cover age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, recognising the specific legal protection applying in each context. We explicitly oppose racism, anti-Black discrimination, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia and unfair treatment of marginalised groups.

PUTTING FAIRNESS INTO PRACTICE

Apply fair criteria to recruitment, pay, work allocation, development and advancement. Consider reasonable adjustments to recruitment, equipment, working arrangements and communications. Individuals may request adjustments through Changing Footprint's Director without having to disclose unnecessary medical details. Record agreed arrangements securely and review their effectiveness with the person concerned.

TRADE UNIONS AND REPRESENTATION

Respect freedom of association, membership of a trade union and lawful union activity. No one may interfere with union membership, discourage lawful organising, discriminate against representatives or compile or use blacklists. Consider recognition requests fairly through applicable voluntary or statutory procedures. This policy does not claim a formal recognition agreement.

CONSULTATION

Consult affected people on material changes to work, safety and relevant policies, directly or through appropriate representatives. Explain proposals, allow time for views, consider feedback and communicate decisions. Meet any statutory consultation and representation duties. Small organisational size does not remove legal obligations.

BULLYING AND OTHER HARASSMENT

Bullying includes intimidation, humiliation, persistent undermining, exclusion or misuse of power. Harassment may include unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Reasonable feedback given respectfully is not itself bullying. Report concerns through the process below; they do not have to be labelled correctly to be considered.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION AND REPORTING

CLEAR PROHIBITION

Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that violates dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Sexual comments, intrusive questions, unwanted touching, sexual images and coercion are prohibited. A single incident may be sufficient. These standards apply to digital communications, AI-generated content, travel, events and interactions with clients and other third parties.

PREVENTION

Changing Footprint's Director will assess risks from lone working, power imbalances, travel, social events, alcohol, online activity and third-party contact. Take all reasonable preventive steps, including clear expectations, induction, proportionate refresher training, safe reporting routes and review of incidents. Do not wait for a complaint before addressing known risks. Review the assessment at least annually and when working arrangements change.

REPORTING AND IMMEDIATE SUPPORT

Report to Changing Footprint's Director. If Changing Footprint's Director is implicated or the usual route is unsafe, follow the alternative reporting route described in the handbook. Accept verbal, written, witness and anonymous reports; explain that anonymity may limit investigation. A person is not required to confront the alleged harasser or attempt informal resolution. Discuss immediate safety, support, reasonable adjustments and preservation of evidence.

INVESTIGATION

Acknowledge promptly, normally within five working days. Appoint an impartial investigator, external where necessary, and agree a reasonable timetable with updates. Establish facts, interview relevant people, review evidence and allow a fair response. Keep records restricted; do not promise absolute secrecy. Interim separation or changed reporting arrangements must be proportionate and avoid penalising the complainant. Mediation is voluntary and must not replace investigation where inappropriate.

OUTCOME AND PROTECTION

Communicate findings and relevant actions while respecting others' privacy. Substantiated misconduct may lead to disciplinary action up to dismissal, or proportionate contractual action including removal or termination. Challenge third-party conduct and suspend unsafe contact where needed. Offer a review by an uninvolved person using the appeal procedure. Prohibit retaliation against complainants, witnesses or those rejecting harassment. An unsubstantiated report is not proof of bad faith.

GRIEVANCE DISCIPLINARY AND APPEAL PROCEDURES

GRIEVANCES

Employees may raise concerns informally where suitable, but may proceed directly to a written formal grievance stating the issue and desired resolution. Send it to Changing Footprint's Director or follow the alternative reporting route described in the handbook where appropriate. Arrange a meeting without unreasonable delay, investigate fairly and provide a reasoned written outcome. At a formal grievance hearing, allow the applicable right to be accompanied by a colleague or eligible trade union representative. Consider additional support or adjustments where appropriate.

DISCIPLINARY INVESTIGATION AND HEARING

Investigate allegations before deciding whether there is a case to answer. Where practicable, separate investigator and decision-maker. If proceeding, provide written allegations, relevant evidence, possible consequences and reasonable preparation time. Hold a hearing and allow the employee to answer, present evidence and identify relevant witnesses. Explain the applicable right to a colleague or eligible trade union companion. Investigatory meetings do not automatically carry the same statutory right, but reasonable support will be considered.

DECISIONS AND SANCTIONS

Do not prejudice the outcome. Consider evidence, consistency, mitigation and reasonable adjustments. Normally use a written warning, then a final warning, then dismissal if misconduct continues. State required improvement, support, review date, warning duration and consequences; normally warnings remain active for six and twelve months respectively, subject to justified variation. Serious misconduct may justify a final warning first. Gross misconduct may justify dismissal without notice only after a fair process; examples include serious violence, fraud, bribery or serious harassment.

SUSPENSION AND APPEALS

Paid suspension, where necessary, is a neutral precaution, used only after alternatives are considered and kept brief and under review. An employee may appeal a grievance or disciplinary outcome in writing within ten working days, identifying the grounds; consider reasonable late appeals. An uninvolved person, external where necessary, hears the appeal, allows applicable accompaniment and issues a written decision. Aim to arrange the appeal within ten working days and explain delays.

NON-EMPLOYEES AND RECORDS

Associates and subcontractors may use the reporting routes and receive a fair opportunity to respond. Resolve contractual concerns under the engagement terms, with an impartial review where possible. Maintain restricted case, training, adjustment and consultation records under CF POL 06. Internal procedures do not extend statutory claim deadlines or prevent external advice or protected disclosures. Review this policy annually and before relevant employment-law changes take effect.

REFERENCE GUIDANCE

Acas disciplinary and grievance Code — <https://www.acas.org.uk/acas-code-of-practice-on-disciplinary-and-grievance-procedures>

Acas sexual harassment guidance — <https://www.acas.org.uk/sexual-harassment>

Living Wage Foundation — <https://www.livingwage.org.uk/what-real-living-wage>

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