Policy:

HR012 Personal Relationships at Work (Employees)

Executive Director Lead	Executive Director of People
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Policy Author	HR Adviser
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Summary of policy Policy and guidance for managing personal relationships at work. This policy corresponds with the Trust policy 'Relationships between staff and service users/carers'.	
Target audience	All SHSC Staff
Keywords	Relationships, Employees, Service Users.
Storage & Version Control Version 4 of this policy is stored and available through the SHSC intranet/internet. This version of the policy supersedes the previous version (3 May 2021). Any copies of the previous policy held separately should be destroyed and replaced with this version. The previous version will be removed from the Intranet and SHSC Intranet/Internet (where applicable) and archived.	

Version Control and Amendment Log

Version No.	Type of Change	Date	Description of change(s)
1.0	New Policy	September 2014	New Policy
2.0	Policy Reviewed	January 2018	
2.1	Not applicable as an administrative change only	January 2021	
2.1	Review date extended	January 2021	Review date extended by Policy Governance Group/People Committee
3	Review of policy following extension	April 2021	Full review completed as per schedule
4	Review of policy	April 2024	Full review completed as per schedule, updated with minor policy enhancements (i.e. Title to Executive Director of People), dates amended accordingly to ensure the policy reflects current dates. JCF has been consulted.

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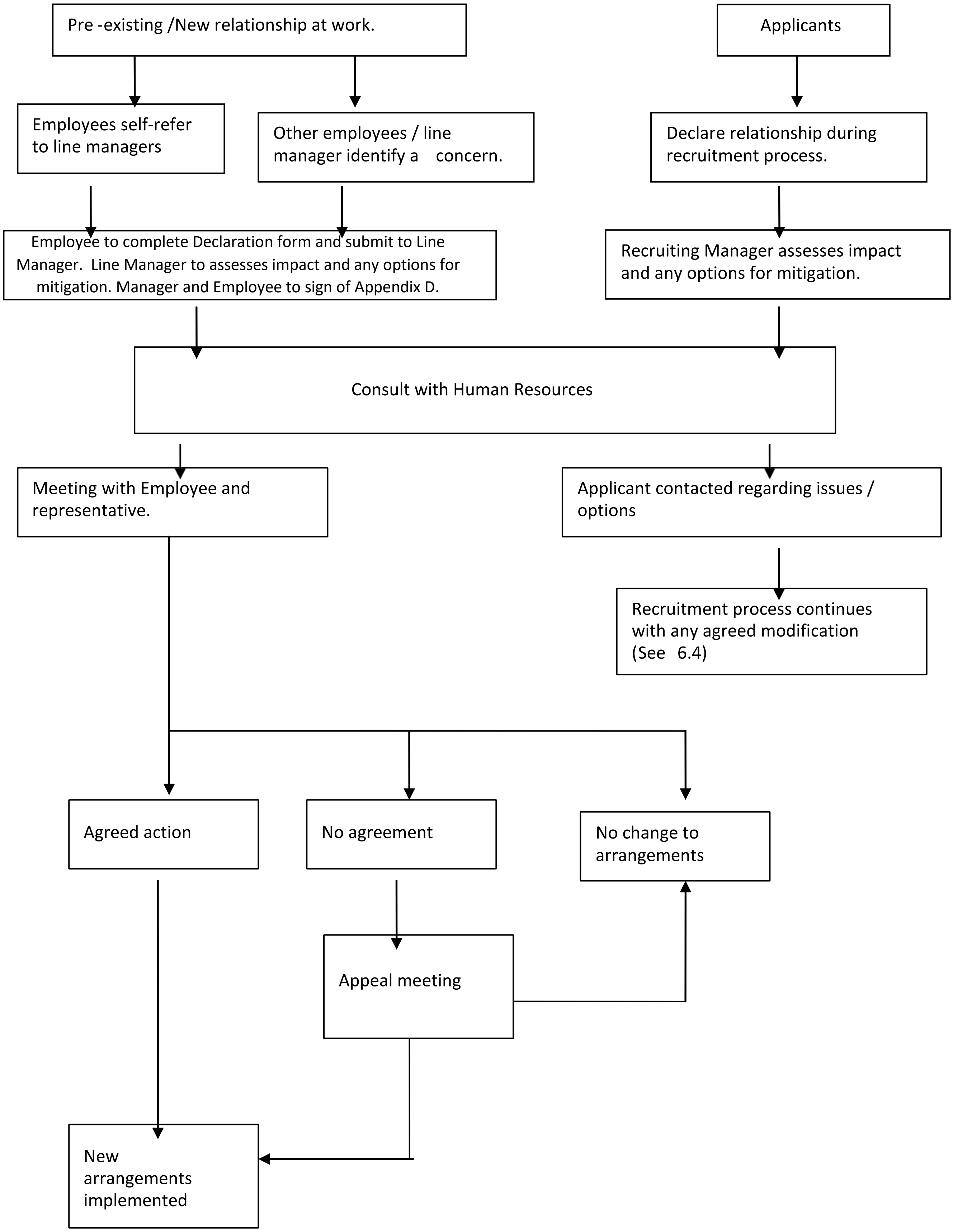
Flowchart


Pre -existing /New relationship at work.
Applicants
Employees self-refer to line managers
Other employees / line manager identify a concern.
Declare relationship during recruitment process.
Employee to complete Declaration form and submit to Line Manager. Line Manager to assesses impact and any options for mitigation. Manager and Employee to sign of Appendix D.
Recruiting Manager assesses impact and any options for mitigation.
Consult with Human Resources
Meeting with Employee and representative.
Applicant contacted regarding issues / options
Recruitment process continues with any agreed modification (See 6.4)
Agreed action
No agreement
No change to arrangements
Appeal meeting
New arrangements implemented

1. Introduction

The existence or development of personal relationships between individuals within the same team or work location is generally a private matter. However, where it can have an impact on the effectiveness of the service we provide or give rise to an actual or perceived conflict of interest, there is a need for transparency. Whilst the Trust will not discriminate against individuals who have relationships with other Trust colleagues, working arrangements may need to be reviewed. For example, it will not be possible for individuals to continue to manage one another in areas relating to HR policies and procedures. Wherever such a situation arises, the Trust will seek to handle the matter sensitively and minimise any disruption to those concerned.

It is therefore a requirement of the Trust that individuals declare any personal relationships to their manager which might affect their ability to carry out their role properly or which otherwise could adversely affect the working of the team and/or service provision.

Employees may know from their own experience that it is harder to use your skills effectively with a friend, relative or partner where there is an emotional involvement. This can apply to other members of staff as well as service users.

This policy does not address perceptions, which can be a very difficult and important aspects of managing personal relationships however, it is very difficult to evidence and therefore should be managed with great sensitivity and based on fact.

This policy provides guidance to all Trust employees on the process of declaring a personal relationship and the on-going management of the individuals concerned.

2. Aims and Objectives

2.1 To ensure that staff members are aware of the Trust expectations regarding the existence and development of close personal relationships with other staff and/or patients with whom they have contact, protecting both the interests of both staff and patients.

2.2 To provide guidance as to what constitutes safe and acceptable practice in the building of positive and supportive therapeutic relationships with service users.

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy and procedure are applicable to all SHSC employees (Temporary or Permanent) including trainees, staff on honorary contracts.

It also applies to job applicants in the recruitment process. Job applicants will be required to declare on their application any personal relationships relating to the proposed employment.

4. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy the term personal ‘relationship’ will refer to:

- Any existing or new family relationship, including the family of a new or existing partner.

- Any other personal relationship, either past or present, between employees (or prospective employees) either at the same site or a different site within the Trust which might affect an employee’s ability to carry out their role properly or which otherwise could adversely affect the working of the team and/or service provision

(Personal relationships can encompass friendships as well as romantic attachments).

5. Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this policy is to set the standard within the Trust for managing personal relationships between work colleagues and help staff maintain a professional relationship at all times.

It also describes the process that is to be followed by employees for notifying their manager of either a new or existing personal relationship and by managers when considering the needs of the team, service users and the Trust.

6. Duties

6.1 Duties of the employees

It is a requirement of the Trust that all SHSC employees need to adhere to this Policy and declare any personal relationships to their manager which might affect their ability to carry out their role properly or which otherwise could adversely affect the working of the team and/or service provision. They must do this in writing and should state the nature of the relationship and any impact they believe it has or will have on their team or the service by completing **Appendix D – Part A** and submitting this to their line manager. Where the relationship involves an employee’s manager, the next level of management should be notified. Alongside the **Part A (Appendix D)**, the manager will complete **Part B of Appendix D** – Relationship Risk Matrix.

As a general rule of thumb, if there is any doubt as to whether a relationship might affect an employee’s ability to carry out their role effectively, they should declare it to an appropriate manager. Examples of the type of issues which may arise are given in Appendix G. Failure to comply with this policy may result in formal disciplinary action.

6.2 Duties of the manager

The manager of the employee has the responsibility to review existing working practices, team dynamics and the service provided to determine the possible risks or impact on their role, the team, service users and other staff in the organisation. The manager is expected to carry a review at least once a year. Once a review has been completed the manager will arrange to meet the individuals concerned to discuss any areas of concern and this should be formally recorded. At all times the manager must treat the information received in the strictest of confidence.

To assist with this consideration Managers should use the attached Relationship Risk Matrix **(Appendix D)** and a copy of the completed form should be placed on the relevant Personal Files.

Managers cannot authorise the personal expenses of or commitments of expenditure on behalf of the Trust, for a person with which they have a personal relationship unless this has been approved by a more senior manager and this approval is recorded in accordance with **Appendix D**.

7. PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH COLLEAGUES

7.1 This policy sets out some standards of conduct to assist and protect staff whilst at work and these are set out below:

7.2 In any large organisation it is likely that some employees will be related to one another or develop a personal and/or sexual relationship, and, if they are in a close working relationship in the same workplace, the potential for conflict between personal/family loyalty and work responsibilities may arise.

7.3 The Trust requires that a high standard of care and skill is achieved and in doing so requires staff to conduct themselves in a manner which will ensure this. Whilst it is not the Trust's intention to infringe upon the private lives of its staff, it does expect staff to conduct themselves in a professional manner and/or in which they do not bring the Trust and its work into disrepute.

8. Specific details – the process of developing or revising a policy

This policy has been created in response to the needs of the Trust and in order to ensure fair and consistent treatment of employees across the Trust's locations.

8.1 Informal Feedback Meeting

The employees concerned will attend a meeting with their manager, at which they have the right to be accompanied by either a work colleague or Trade Union representative. At the meeting the manager will have an open discussion of the findings of the review, paying special attention to the following;

- Impact the relationship may have on the team dynamics and the service provided.
- Impact the relationship may have on service users.

8.2 Management of Situation

Every attempt will be made to take into account the wishes of the individuals concerned with regard to any form of management action. Ideally an agreement will be reached which suits the relevant employees and the Trust. However, in some situations where it has been identified there is an issue around relationships it may be necessary for management to enforce a change in order to mitigate a concern or risk. These may include but are not limited to:

- No Action necessary
- Change in shift pattern for one or both of the employees in the relationship
- Change in work duties to ensure both parties are not working side by side
- Change to the reporting structure to ensure one party does not directly report to the other for HR policies and procedures.
- Change of work base for one or both employees in the relationship
- Change of role/directorate for one or both employees in the relationship
- Change any mentor/trainee
- Transfer to another team/role

8.2.1 If Redeployment is considered the two members of staff affected by the personal/work relationship will be consulted about who should transfer but the Trust reserves the right to make the final decision in the event that agreement cannot be reached or if service needs are put at risk.

8.2.2 There may be situations in which the relationship is deemed to have a detrimental effect on either service user care or working relationships or when an employee does not declare the relationship to the Trust. Options for managing this will be explored which may be informal or via disciplinary processes if appropriate.

8.2.3 An employee should not be involved in any formal procedures, such as investigation panels, that involve a colleague with whom they have a personal relationship.

8.2.4 Any employee who is engaged in a close personal relationship with a colleague working in the same department or ward must declare the relationship to their manager. If the relationship is between a manager/supervisor and an employee or trainee whom he/she supervises, the relationship should be declared to a senior manager. The information declared will be recorded on the personal files of both employees and treated in strict confidence.

8.2.5 Where a manager is informed of a close personal relationship between employees they should work with all individuals concerned to identify any potential risks and conflicts of interest from both the individuals and Trust perspective. It is advised that any delivery of care that involves two people should not exclusively be conducted by staff engaged in a relationship e.g. joint visits in the community, joint administration of medication and joint assessments.

8.2.6 If an employee has a personal/intimate relationship with a colleague, s/he should not display any obvious signs of familiarity or affection in the presence of third parties. Staff must not let their relationships impact their professional life and must maintain clear boundaries and present a professional image with service users and staff at all times.

8.2.7 The Trust appreciates that difficulties can occur and recognises that personal relationships can be complicated. Any breach of the standards of conduct outlined in this policy will be examined on a case-by-case basis in determining the appropriate action it may take.

8.2.8 The Trust will attempt to resolve matters informally where possible. However, the Trust reserves the right to invoke the disciplinary policy if there is a breach of any of these standards.

8.3 Appeal Process

If an employee wishes to appeal a decision made by management to enforce a change in order to mitigate a concern or risk, they are able to do this in writing to the next appropriate level of management giving reasons for their appeal.

A meeting should then be convened, chaired by the appeal manager, where the original manager who made the decision presents justification for his or her decision. The employee will then have chance to put forward their concerns, a decision will then be made by the chair.

In principle, the process for this meeting should follow that of the Trust's grievance procedure.

8.4 Recruitment Process

For all future appointments and promotions after the implementation of the policy, a person will not be appointed to any role which would result in a direct line management relationship of someone for HR policies and procedures where there is a personal relationship, unless there has been written confirmation by the Executive Director (or as necessary, the Chief Executive).

Recruiting managers and/or other employees on the interview panel should declare to their line manager and HR(Recruitment) where there is a personal relationship with a candidate so that any appropriate modifications can be made to the recruitment process.

8.4.1 An employee should not be involved in any aspect of the recruitment and selection process if they have a personal relationship with any candidate (see Trust's Recruitment and Selection Policy for further details).

8.4.2 Once appointed, if an employee is found to have failed to declare a relationship on their application form or with whom they now have a line management or subordinate working relationship, this may be investigated under the Trust's Disciplinary Policy and may lead to disciplinary action.

9. Development, Consultation and Approval

Version 4: This is a Policy review as per the schedule, updated with minor policy enhancements (i.e. Title to Executive Director of People), dates amended accordingly to ensure the policy reflects current dates and transfer to new policy format.

JCF has been consulted. See version control and amendment log for full details of consultation, review, and approval dates.

10. Audit, Monitoring and Review

Monitoring Compliance Template						
Minimum Requirement	Process for Monitoring	Responsible Individual/ group/committee	Frequency of Monitoring	Review of Results process (e.g. who does this?)	Responsible Individual/group/ committee for action plan development	Responsible Individual/group/ committee for action plan monitoring and implementation
The whole policy	Review and audit every four years by HR team	HR Team	Review every 3 years	HR Team	HR SMT	People Committee

Policy documents should be reviewed every four years or earlier where legislation dictates or practices change.

The policy review: *30 April 2028*

11. Implementation Plan

Action / Task	Responsible Person	Deadline	Progress update
Upload new policy onto intranet and remove old version	*HR Advisor*	May 2024	May 2024
Make team aware of new policy and SHSC Managers via intranet and meetings.	*HR BPs, Senior HR Advisors and HR Advisors*	May 2024	May 2024

12. Dissemination, Storage and Archiving (Control)

Version	Date added to intranet	Date added to internet	Date of inclusion in Connect	Any other promotion/ dissemination (include dates)
1.0		September 2014	New Policy	
2.0		January 2018	December 2018 communications	Cascade through HRBP/HRA

			Digest	
3	May 2021	May 2021	May 2021	
4	May 2024	May 2024	May 2024	Cascade through HRBP/SHRAHRAs/HAs

This is Version 4 and is stored and available through the SHSC Intranet/Internet.

This version supersedes the previous Version 3 – April 2021.

Any copies of the previous policy held separately should be destroyed and replaced with this version.

All versions of HR policies are stored on the HR Shared Drive by the policy author and the PA to the Executive Director of People.

Archived copies – stored by Human Resources Department. Final versions of policies can be obtained from Policy Governance via the PA to the Executive Director of People.

13. Training and Other Resource Implications

There are no additional training and development requirements required to implement this policy and procedure.

There are no additional resource implications in implementing this policy.

14. Links to Other Policies, Standards (Associated Documents)

Redeployment Policy
Grievance Procedure
Disciplinary Policy
Unacceptable Behaviours Policy

15. Contact Details

Title	***Name***	***Phone***	***Email***
Executive Director of People	Caroline Parry	0114 22 63301	Caroline.parry@shsc.nhs.uk
HR Business Partners	Emily Seville	0114 22 63301	Emily.seville@shsc.nhs.uk
HR Advisers	N/A	0114 22 63301	HRAdvisors@shsc.nhs.uk

16. References

There are no references

Appendix A

Equality Impact Assessment Process and Record for Written Policies

Stage 1 – Relevance - Is the policy potentially relevant to equality i.e. will this policy potentially impact on staff, patients or the public? This should be considered as part of the Case of Need for new policies.

NO – I confirm that this policy does not impact on staff, patients or the public.	***I confirm that this policy does not impact on staff, patients or the public.*** Name/Date: Melva Robinson April 2024	**YES,** Go to **Stage 2**

Stage 2 Policy Screening and Drafting Policy - Public authorities are legally required to have 'due regard' to eliminating discrimination, advancing equal opportunity and fostering good relations in relation to people who share certain 'protected characteristics' and those that do not. The following table should be used to consider this and inform changes to the policy (indicate yes/no/ don't know and note reasons). Please see the SHSC Guidance and Flow Chart.

Stage 3 – Policy Revision - Make amendments to the policy or identify any remedial action required and record any action planned in the policy implementation plan section

SCREENING RECORD	Does any aspect of this policy or potentially discriminate against this group?	Can equality of opportunity for this group be improved through this policy or changes to this policy?	Can this policy be amended so that it works to enhance relations between people in this group and people not in this group?
Age	**No**	**No**	**No**
Disability	**No**	**No**	**No**
Gender Reassignment	**No**	**No**	**No**

Pregnancy and Maternity	**No**	**No**	**No**
Race	**No**	**No**	**No**
Religion or Belief	**No**	**No**	**No**
Sex	**No**	**No**	**No**
Sexual Orientation	**No**	**No**	**No**
Marriage or Civil Partnership	**No**		

Please delete as appropriate: - No changes made. – except for changing appropriate dates

Impact Assessment Completed by:Name
Date: Melva Robinson April, 2024

Appendix B

Review/New Policy Checklist

This checklist to be used as part of the development or review of a policy and presented to the Policy Governance Group (PGG) with the revised policy.

		Tick to confirm
	Engagement	
1.	Is the Executive Lead sighted on the development/review of the policy?	Yes
2.	Is the local Policy Champion member sighted on the development/review of the policy?	Yes
	Development and Consultation	
3.	If the policy is a new policy, has the development of the policy been approved through the Case for Need approval process?	N/A
4.	Is there evidence of consultation with all relevant services, partners and other relevant bodies?	Yes
5.	Has the policy been discussed and agreed by the local governance groups?	Will be People Committee
6.	Have any relevant recommendations from Internal Audit or other relevant bodies been taken into account in preparing the policy?	Yes
	Template Compliance	
7.	Has the version control/storage section been updated?	Yes
8.	Is the policy title clear and unambiguous?	Yes
9.	Is the policy in Arial font 12?	Yes
10.	Have page numbers been inserted?	Yes
11.	Has the policy been quality checked for spelling errors, links, accuracy?	Yes
	Policy Content	
12.	Is the purpose of the policy clear?	Yes
13.	Does the policy comply with requirements of the CQC or other relevant bodies? (where appropriate)	Yes
14.	Does the policy reflect changes as a result of lessons identified from incidents, complaints, near misses, etc.?	Yes
15.	Where appropriate, does the policy contain a list of definitions of terms used?	Yes
16.	Does the policy include any references to other associated policies and key documents?	Yes
17.	Has the EIA Form been completed (Appendix 1)?	Yes
	Dissemination, Implementation, Review and Audit Compliance	
18.	Does the dissemination plan identify how the policy will be implemented?	Yes
19.	Does the dissemination plan include the necessary training/support to ensure compliance?	Yes
20.	Is there a plan to i. review ii. audit compliance with the document?	Yes
21.	Is the review date identified, and is it appropriate and justifiable?	Yes

Appendix C

Examples of Personal Relationship Issues

A. Line Management Relationship

- The line manager does not manage the employee fairly (e.g. appraisal, grievance, discipline, job opportunities, training, flexible working)

- Other staff assume / perceive that there is more favourable treatment which affects the team dynamics and morale.

B. No Line Management Relationship

- Putting personal circumstance ahead of service user needs.
- Communicating confidential information to each other.
- Behaving in a way which may cause difficulty or embarrassment to others (e.g. domestic argument in the workplace)
- Not communicating with one another because of a personal disagreement.
- Not raising concerns relating to the other party.

C. Financial Governance

- Approving expenditure without due diligence (e.g. authorising of travel expenses, timesheets).
- Not raising concerns about potential poor practice / malpractice.
- Raising concerns amongst others about transparency in financial matter.

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Personal Relationship at Work
Declaration and Relationship Risk Matrix

Part A: Declaration of a Personal Relationship at Work

I declare that I have a Personal Relationship at Work with (*Please use the back of this form if necessary):*

Name of Individual(s): …………………………………………. **Position: …………………………………..**

Nature of your relationship:……………………………………. **Work in the same team/site/Area: YES/ NO**

Your Job Title: ……………………………………….…………… **Area/Place of Work:……………………………………**

Your Full Name (Please Print): ………………………………………………………………………………………..

Your Signature:……………………………………………………………… **Date: …………………………………**

Once you have completed the above, you need to present it to your line manager. Your line manager will arrange to meet with you, to complete Part B of this document. You are entitled to have a representative, in line with the Trust Policy

Part B: Relationship Risk Matrix

To be completed by your line manager

Description of Risk	Presence / Significance of Risk	Options available to control risk	Action Proposed	Action taken
Line Management (e.g. Appraisal, Disciplinary)				
Patient Care (e.g. Safeguarding)				
Teamworking (e.g. allocation of work)				
Financial / Governance e.g. sign-off expenditure				
Other (to be specified)				

A copy of the completed form should be signed by the employee and line manager. A copy of this form will be placed on your (employee's) personal file. A separate form should be completed for each employee concerned.

Signed (employee):…………………………………… **Print (employee):…………………………………………………**

Signed (line manager):……………………………….. **Print (line manager:……………………………………………**