



Scottish  
Environment  
LINK

## **Staff Handbook**

**January 2023**

Revised and updated

June 2007, Mar 2013, Mar 2014, Jan 2016, Feb 2018, June 2018, June 2020, Sept 2021, Feb 22

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## **Documents included:**

Self-certification form  
Special leave application form  
Eye Test Report  
Full LINK policy list

## **1 Introduction**

This handbook contains important information about the employment relationship between you and Scottish Environment Link (hereafter referred to as LINK).

It sets out LINK's policies and procedures and gives some important details about your rights and responsibilities, i.e. what is expected of you.

If you have any questions about matters in the handbook, then please ask your line manager. Details will be updated from time to time and you are invited to suggest any changes or additions that you think would be helpful, or would improve the quality of the information contained in the handbook.

## **2 Organisation Charts**

The following chart illustrates the general organisation of LINK.

The Board is elected by the LINK members to oversee the day-to-day running of the organisation on their behalf. The Board consists of the Chair, who represents LINK at the highest level, and the Vice Chair and Treasurer, and other elected trustees. The board also makes recommendations to members on appointment of the LINK President. Additional members may be co-opted to the Board from time to time. The Board, in turn, appoints the staff, who are responsible to the Board, either directly or through their line manager. The Board appoints sub-groups, as appropriate and there is one subgroup dealing with employment and human resources matters.

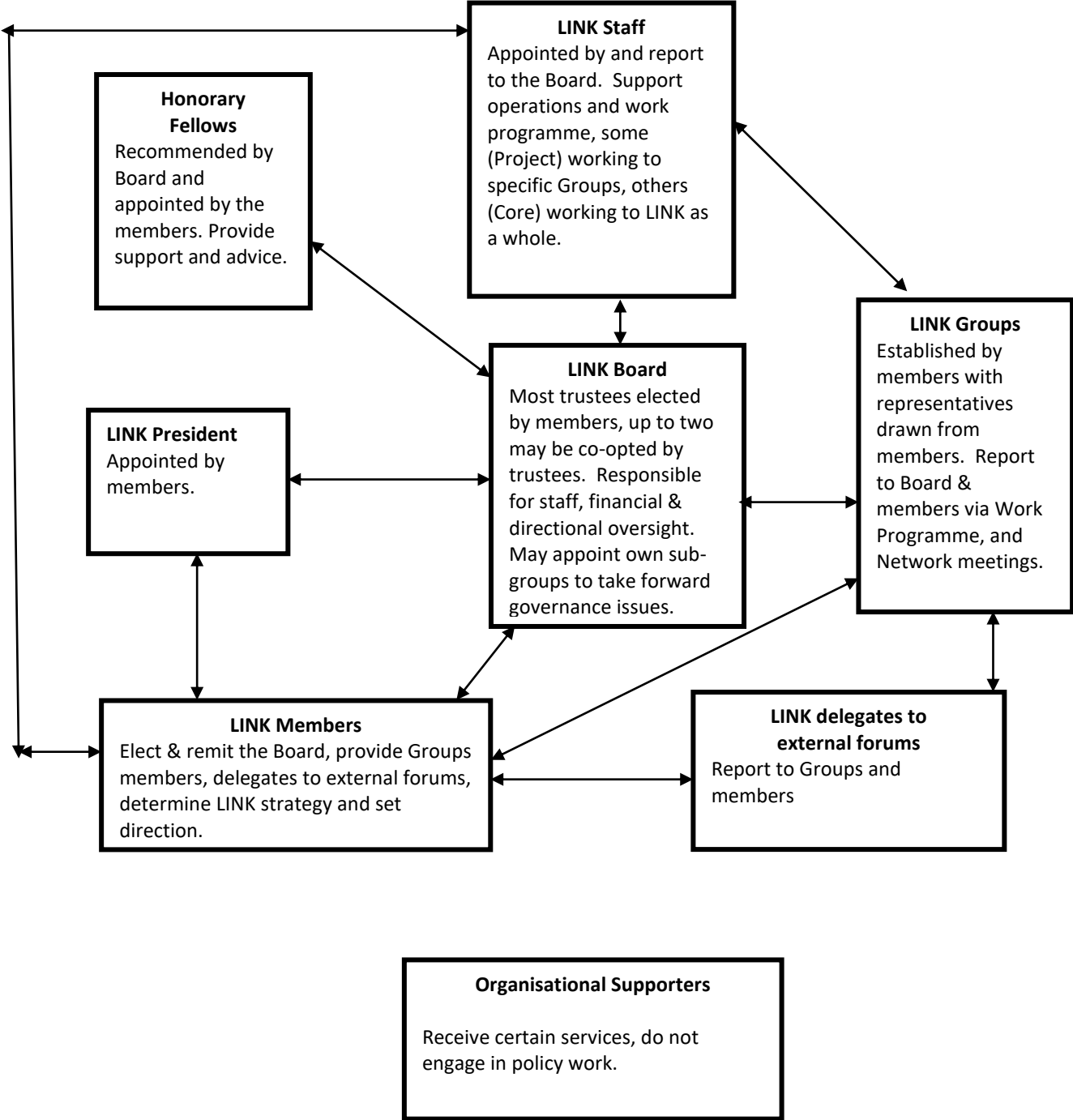
LINK Groups (including Forums and other Groups) are sanctioned by the members and are formed as needed and on member demand to consider matters of current importance. They are facilitated according to protocols agreed by the Board. Each Group has a convener who is the main contact with LINK staff. Groups may also have some direct staff involvement, but most operate without day-to-day staff support.

Delegates represent LINK on external stakeholder forums relevant to LINK's work as a whole, or to the focus areas of particular Groups. Delegates are usually drawn from the membership, but some are staff members.

Honorary fellows are recommended for appointment by the Board to members.

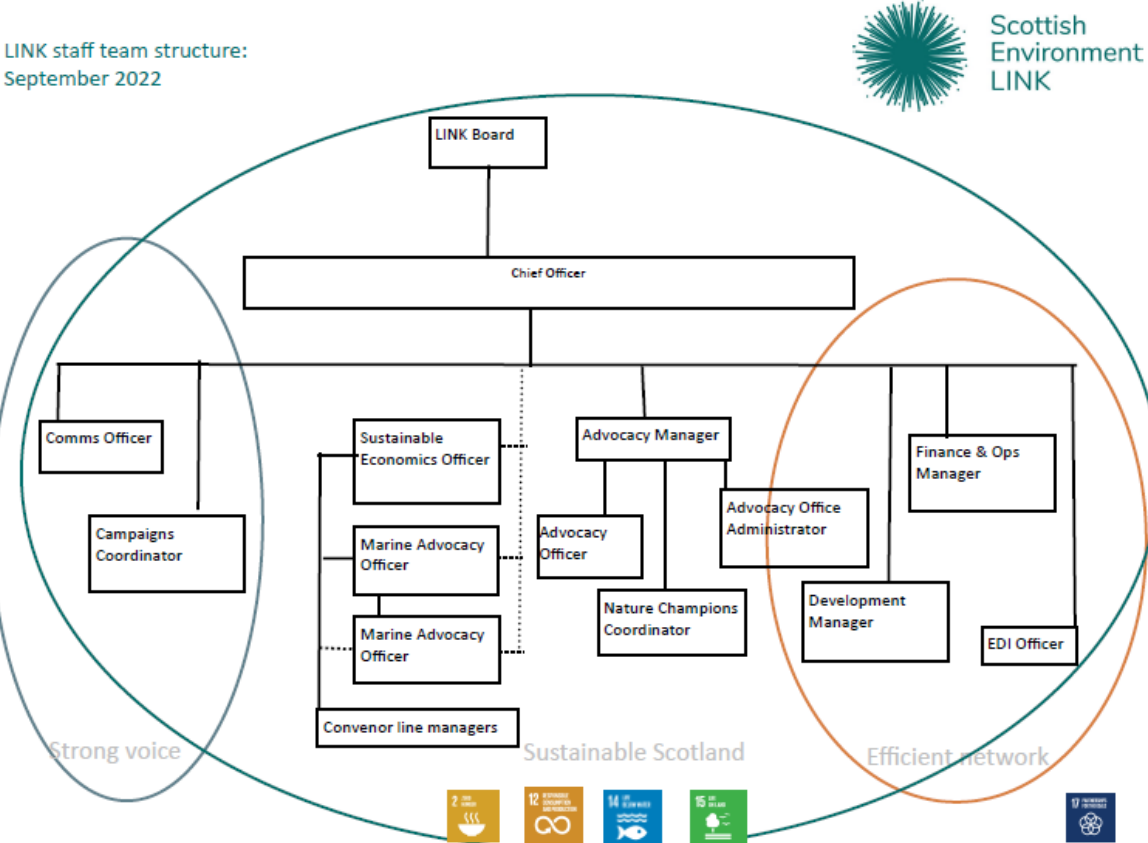
As well as members of LINK who participate in the Groups, projects and wider work of LINK, there is also a category of Organisational Supporter – these are organisations and businesses not eligible for membership, which may not engage in LINK policy work and are offered no influence on the network, but may receive information about LINK's activities and may attend LINK receptions and events.

# LINK Organisational Chart



# LINK Office Organisation Chart

The following chart illustrates the organisation of core staff within LINK.



NB: Project Staff, working to funded projects under the auspices of LINK are line managed by Conveners of the Groups responsible for running these projects. Recruitment, ongoing HR support, liaison with host organisations and all financial management is handled by LINK staff. Project staff are part of the wider LINK staff team and take part in network meetings, Congress, receptions and regular meetings of the staff team.

### **3 Probationary period**

A probation period is a trial period for a new employee. It allows both the line manager and the employee to assess objectively whether or not the new recruit is suitable for the role, taking into account the individual's overall capability, skills, performance and general conduct in relation to the job in question.

All probationary periods for core staff last for six months. Project staff contracts have a probationary period of three months.

Everyone who is new to us has a probationary period. During your probationary period you are not allowed to apply for any other vacancies arising in LINK.

You will work closely with your manager in your probationary period as both you and your manager will want to know that you are doing a good job. Your manager will monitor your progress providing you feedback regularly. They will have 1:1 meetings with you, usually monthly (but they may be more regular). These are an opportunity to give you support, guidance or coaching but they may also use them to relay any concerns they have if applicable.

If you are unclear about any of these areas please speak to your manager as soon as possible.

Before the end of your probationary period your manager will meet with you to inform you whether you have passed your probation or whether it is to be extended, usually up to a maximum of three months. It is possible that you may also be dismissed if you have not met the requirements expected. However your manager will have already relayed their concerns to you before this point.

### **4 Hours of work**

Normal office hours (for full time staff) are from 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday, with a one-hour unpaid lunch break. Your hours will normally fall within this period, but full details of your hours of work are included in the principal statement of the main terms and conditions of your employment.

LINK aims to help all staff balance the responsibilities of work and home, which may include flexible working hours in certain circumstances. Any changes to your hours are, however, subject to the requirements for efficient working of LINK and must first be agreed with your line manager, please see section [Flexible Working](#) and section [Time off in Lieu](#).

For health and safety reasons, you are also encouraged to take periodic breaks from work. In addition, staff using display screen equipment should take more frequent short breaks from the screen by, for example, changing to another activity for five minutes each hour, for further information please refer to 'Guidance for users of Display Screen Equipment' provided at induction, and see the Health and Safety section 15 of this handbook.

### **5 Time off in lieu (TOIL)**

You may, on occasion, be asked to work outside your normal hours, for example in the evenings and/or at weekends. LINK does not offer overtime payments, but significant periods of extra time worked at the request of your line manager may be taken as time off in lieu (TOIL).

As a general rule, the first half an hour of any extra time worked will be disregarded. (Please also see the Travel section of this Handbook.)

All such TOIL is subject to prior agreement with your line manager. You may, at the discretion and with the prior agreement of your line manager, aggregate time off in lieu for short periods, but it may not be carried over from one calendar month to the next, unless this should occur within the last week of the month.

Please note that this policy of time off in lieu does not extend to any extra time worked without the prior agreement of your line manager.

If you feel that you need to work additional time in order to complete your normal duties, please discuss this with your line manager, who will consider if there is a genuine occupational requirement for a review of your job role.

## **6 Absence through illness**

If you are ill and cannot attend work you should let your line manager and/or the LINK office know by telephone as soon as possible. This notification should preferably be by 10.00am on the first day of absence. Please also give some indication of the cause of your absence and how long you expect to be away. This will help your colleagues to plan work appropriately. Where it is not possible for you to make personal contact, a close relative or friend may be permitted to do this for you. Under no circumstances should absence from work be reported by SMS text message or email, or by leaving a message on a telephone answering service.

If you are ill for 7 days or less, (including weekends and any other non-working days), you are required to produce a self-certificate of absence to cover the period of absence. The appropriate forms are available from the LINK office and a copy is also included at the back of this Handbook. If you are ill for more than 7 days, (including weekends and any other non-working days), you will need to produce a Fitness for Work Note (FFWN). This can be obtained from your General Practitioner. All certificates should be given to your line manager when you return to work, or in the event of longer term absence from work (more than 14 days), should be forwarded to your line manager by post, marked 'In confidence'. Employees are expected to keep in touch with their Line Manager by phone (where possible) at regular intervals during any periods of absence.

Where periods of absence extend past 14 days a return-to-work interview will be scheduled with your Line Manager, this will be an opportunity to –

- catch up on any new developments within the organisation,
- highlight any training on new equipment or new processes/procedures
- And in general, to have a friendly chat about what's been going on at work. This is also the opportunity to discuss any changes that may be required to your work pattern/duties to accommodate any changes in your health.

Please also bear in mind that if you have been in contact with a serious infectious or contagious illness it may be prudent to take precautions to avoid passing it to colleagues at work. If you have any doubts about such issues, please consult your General Practitioner.

In exceptional cases of either absence for a long period or frequent short-term absences (12 or more working days of absence, or six or more episodes of absence, during any rolling 12-month period or a single absence of 4 or more weeks long-term sickness absence) LINK may ask you to undergo a medical examination. You will be entitled to see any medical report completed by your General Practitioner or an occupational health provider.

## **Payment during absence due to illness**

Payment during periods of illness absence is related to length of service with LINK.

Provided that you have produced the required certificates, (as detailed above), you will be entitled to payment of sick pay. This is made up of statutory sick pay (SSP) and occupational sick pay from LINK (OSP), as follows:

- up to 2 years' service- 4 weeks full pay, followed by 4 weeks at half pay.
- over 2 years' service- 8 weeks full pay, followed by 8 weeks at half pay.

Sick leave for all staff is calculated on the basis of a rolling year, therefore the period during which the allowance is payable in respect of any period of absence is determined by deducting from the employee's entitlement any periods of paid absence during the 12 months immediately preceding the first day of Absence. An example can be found below –

Employee J commences with LINK 1/1/2014, J has 2 weeks sick leave from 15/6/2014, then a further 7 weeks from 14/4/15. For the first 2 weeks (in June 2014) J receives 2 weeks full pay, for the second period of absence (April 2015) J receives 2 weeks full pay, 4 weeks half pay, 1 week SSP.

The use of the term 'week' reflects the normal working pattern and the contracted hours of individual members of LINK staff. For example a member of staff working 3 days per week, with more than 2 years' service would expect to be paid full pay (i.e. the equivalent of 3 days per week) for a period of 8 weeks.

Where an absence continues beyond the point at which the above occupational sick pay is payable, the statutory sick pay regulations only will apply and only SSP will be payable. For more details on SSP, including eligibility and current rates refer to [SSP Eligibility and guidance](#)

## **7 LINK IT Environment**

**IT Access** - LINK utilises Office 365 to store and access all Office applications, this also includes other services that are enabled over the Internet (cloud services), such as Zoom conferencing and additional online storage with OneDrive for Business (see later note). LINK's Office 365 includes the latest version of the Office applications, including: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote, Outlook, Publisher, and Access.

LINK's Office 365 plans are online and each LINK employee will be assigned an individual licence. Staff are then required to sign in (over the internet) to Office365 to access files and applications listed above. In the unlikely event that your normal internet service is unavailable (and is likely to remain so for most of the working day), staff are encouraged to find a temporary suitable alternate workplace, however when this is not possible and your location has mobile 4G coverage, staff are authorised to purchase a pre-loaded 4G dongle to enable internet access until normal service has been resumed (if this continues for more than 24 hours please alert the Office Manager).

**File Storage and Sharing** - Within Office365 LINK has 'Sharepoint' which is used to store, track, and manage electronic documents and assets, giving a centralised location for storing, versioning, and collaborating on documents. All staff are required to store their work on Sharepoint in order that files are accessible by others during periods of absence or joint working. Staff are **strongly discouraged** from storing items on their individual desktops or outwith Office365 as these files will be not available when accessing your work from another work station, they will not be backed up and this also makes



accessing files when a person is absent from work extremely difficult. Specifically, files which contain personal details e.g. names, addresses, emails etc. of staff, members or anyone involved in LINK work **MUST NOT** be stored on an individual's desktop and must be stored on Sharepoint (Sharepoint is a much secure environment and lessens the risk of a data breach, supporting LINK to be compliant with GDPR regulations).

Certain users (for example the Chief Officer) will additionally have access to OneDrive for business which gives them secure personal storage which is not available to other users. For those who do not have a OneDrive additional security measures are available for files shared on Sharepoint, for example password protection – further support is available from the LINK Office Manager.

**LINK Database** - LINK has created in Outlook – 'LINK Shared Contacts' which is LINK's database of current contacts. All LINK staff have access to this folder and it is the responsibility of each member of staff to ensure this information is kept up to date and accurate. This also contains information on Groups and Subgroups. Additionally, staff are also responsible for ensuring any contacts they make during the course of their work are included in LINK Shared Contacts **after appropriate consent has been obtained if the contact is using a personal email address** – see LINK [Privacy Policy](#). Careful consideration must be given when sharing any of this information to anyone outwith the LINK staff team and must be done in accordance with our policy - Data Protection LINK and its employees and LINK Privacy Policy. Further guidance on the use of Outlook can be found in Sharepoint – Admin/Outlook Database.

**Security** – Employees are responsible for ensuring the security of confidential information at home and when travelling to and from the allocated office. You must not use personal computer equipment for storing any confidential information.

Each employee will be provided with their individual login to Office365 and they will be responsible for setting their own password. It is the employee's responsibility for ensuring this password remains secure - *staff are encouraged to ensure at least one other member of LINK staff is aware of their password in order that important information required for the ongoing operation of LINK, can be accessed during periods of absence – for example access to email.*

Files must not be downloaded from removable media, (such as flash drive or floppy discs), onto a LINK PC unless they have been checked for viruses. Employees must not download or distribute copyrighted materials without permission from the copyright holder. Contact details (such as email addresses) must never be downloaded on to removable media.

**When working from home**, employees must undertake to:

1. (a) comply with our instructions relating to password security;
- (b) use our designated multi-factor authentication;
- (d) comply with our instructions relating to software security and to implement all updates to equipment as soon as you are requested to do so;
- (g) send work-related emails and messages through our designated communication facilities;
- (h) share data only through our designated online document sharing system;
- (i) make all work-related calls through our designated video-conferencing software or dedicated work phones;
- (j) maintain a private space for confidential work calls;
- (k) ensure that any display screen equipment is positioned so that only you can see it or a privacy screen is used;
- (l) lock your computer terminal whenever it is left unattended;
- (m) ensure no one else in your home has access to confidential information stored on your computer or other devices;
- (n) ensure any wireless network used is secure;
- (o) ensure that your wireless network router has software security updates applied;

(p) do not print out papers for work

(q) shred or otherwise dispose securely of confidential information when it is no longer required and at all times comply with our instructions on document retention.

2. To comply with data protection obligations, employees will only store or process company data or personal data on equipment which has been provided by or authorised by us.

3. To comply with data protection legislation, we retain the right to conduct a data protection impact assessment (DPIA) to assess the risks involved with data processing in the home. Where this is necessary, we will contact employees to arrange the DPIA.

4. Read and understand our Data Protection Policy, Data Retention Policy, IT Environment Policy and other relevant policies from time to time in force regarding the retention of personal data, electronic communications and data security and that employees will regularly keep themselves informed of the most current version of these policies. Employees will also attend any training on data protection and confidentiality whether online or in person when requested to do so.

5. If employees discover or suspect that there has been a data breach or an incident involving the security of information relating to us, our members or anyone working with or for us, they must report it immediately to your line manager.

**IT Support** - LINK's IT infrastructure is supported by an external IT support provider, (current details available from the Office Manager). Our contract with the provider is to provide ongoing IT support and **it is the responsibility of each individual employee to ensure that any IT issues are flagged to the provider as soon as reasonably possible** to ensure the smooth running of the LINK operation. Any ongoing issues which are not resolved in a timely manner or to an acceptable outcome by the provider should be flagged to the Office Manager for further support.

**Updates/Back-ups** – Our IT provider will complete weekly virus, security and general updates on all LINK PCs and details will be provided to staff on when this will take place (ordinarily this will be in the evening and staff will be required to leave their PC switched on overnight). All information is now stored in the Microsoft Cloud in addition to all LINK files (on Sharepoint) being backed up to an external hard drive once per week.

## **8 Email, Internet, and Social Media Policy**

LINK uses email, access to web sites, social media networks as well as electronic publications, databases and newsgroups,. Staff are asked to following this guidance when using any of the above -

### **Email -**

- All emails addressed to third parties must contain LINK's standard email signature (which includes - name, job title, address, contact information, Facebook and twitter link and charity registration number). Your emails must also contain our confidentiality and privacy policy information.

This email and any attachments may contain material that is confidential, subject to copyright and intended for the addressee only. If you are not the named recipient you must not use, disclose, reproduce, copy or distribute the contents of this communication. If you have received this in error, please contact the sender and then delete this email from your system. LINK is a Scottish Charity (SC000296) and a Scottish Company Limited by guarantee and without a share capital (SC250899)

LINK is committed to maintaining your data privacy. We promise to keep your details safe and will never sell them on to third parties. To find out more about how we use your information please read our [online Privacy Policy:](#)

- 'Out of Office' replies must be activated during periods of absence.
- It is the responsibility of each employee to ensure their Inbox is kept up to date, emails have been read and either stored, forwarded or deleted as appropriate.
- LINK's Equal Opportunities Policy applies to e-mail communications.
- LINK reserves the right, without employees' permission to read and disclose the content of any e-mail and other material sent or received.
- Individuals must never transmit material which may be defamatory, abusive, intimidating, hostile, humiliating or likely to cause distress or offence.
- Staff must be vigilant when forwarding on an email received from a third party **if it contains a personal email address**. To ensure compliance with GDPR we must first seek consent from the owner of the personal address before sharing with the wider LINK network - alternatively their email address can be removed before forwarding on/sharing.

Access to the internet can expose LINK and its employees to some legal risks. In order to minimise these risks all employees are expected to observe the following:

#### **Internet -**

- Use of the Internet for accessing (which includes sending, receiving or displaying) obscene material such as Pornography, and accessing any other material likely to give offence, including any material that could be deemed sexist, racist, offensive or defamatory is strictly prohibited. Contravention of this term will be considered a disciplinary offence.
- No software will be downloaded from the internet without prior permission from the IT supervisor.
- Internet access is provided as a business tool for business-related purposes. Personal use of the internet should be kept to a minimum, and restricted to use during lunch break.
- When dealing with confidential information, employees must remember that the internet is not a secure environment. In particular, the intended recipients may share mailboxes with others.
- Any accessing of newsgroups, bulletin boards or on-line forums must be clearly work-related and comply with the e-mail policy
- The use of any resources for an illegal activity will be regarded as gross misconduct and grounds for immediate dismissal.

#### **Social Media**

- The use of Social Networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. should be restricted to appropriate business use only at all times.
- LINK's Social Networking Protocols must be observed by all staff, see the fully guidelines contained within the [LINK Social Media Guidance](#).

If you have any questions regarding any of the above, please contact your line manager.

## **9 Public Statements, including Media and Social Networking**

At all times you are expected to behave and to make any statements in such a way that you maintain the existing reputation and good name of LINK. All employees, in common with all the members of LINK, are bound by the LINK Operating Principles relating to public statements including media and other comment. (Please refer to LINK's Operating Principles which can be found on Sharepoint and the LINK website).

## **10 Environment policy**

It is LINK strategy to ensure that all its operations as LINK are carried out in an environmentally sustainable way as part of the network's commitment to being an effective, efficient and accountable network.

All engaged in working under the LINK name are encouraged to keep abreast of relevant environmental issues and to take an active role in the application and future development of this policy. Please refer to the bullet points listed below.

The network is also committed to developing and implementing procedures for acting as far as possible towards our aspiration of a sustainable Scotland and to encourage all members to do this within their own organisations and work programmes.

The LINK Board will have overall responsibility for reviewing progress of the network in relation to LINK's strategic objectives.

LINK is working to minimise the adverse impact of its activities on the environment. This includes a preference for renewable resources of all kinds, keeping waste production to a minimum, placing emphasis on its responsible disposal and ensuring travel is conducted in such a way that minimises environmental impact.

This policy applies to initiatives of members working together including both LINK organised events and events organised by others working under the LINK name (such as members, convenors, delegates, Board etc).

The policy includes:

- promoting sustainable procurement policies
- using recycled office and other supplies whenever practicable,
- sourcing equipment, consumables and printed material from suppliers which operate sound environmental policies themselves.
- Purchasing refurbished equipment (including both electronic and electrical equipment and office furniture) where practicable
- using distance travelled as part of the selection criteria when purchasing goods for catered events, assuming that, except where dietary needs dictate –
  - all catering will be 100% vegetarian, (however if demand dictates the inclusion of meat dishes) then consideration will be made to include meat from sustainable, locally sourced and extensively reared suppliers
- all tableware is reusable (i.e. no plastic cutlery, plates etc)
- When sourcing a supplier consideration should also be given to using local social enterprises/charitable providers.
- Offering staff and members the opportunity to make use of video/tele- conferencing where practicable to afford access to participants who might otherwise not be able to attend and to reduce travel.
- minimising business travel, and choosing venues and times which allow participants to travel by public transport
- making all reasonable use of public transport and cycling or walking when travelling on business, and car-sharing as much as possible where private car must be used
- making careful use of energy of all kinds, in the daily running of offices and in choosing and refurbishing offices
- taking care that LINK activities are carried out in such a way that damage to the natural

- environment is minimised and commitment to environmental sustainability is maximised
- ensuring that carbon accounting is annually published (in LINK annual report and accounts) in relation to business travel (members, staff and others to LINK events), energy and waste (LINK offices), and commuting (LINK staff)

LINK's environmental policy is based on the principle of the "3 Rs" - Reducing consumption of energy and other resources, Re-using resources as much as possible and Recycling where possible. To achieve this, LINK staff, Groups and Subgroups, Board, and member representatives should recognise that they also have an individual responsibility in implementing LINK's environmental policy.

In addition LINK also has a Green Office Policy (a copy of which will be provided at induction and is available on Sharepoint - LINK's internal file server) which outlines in further detail how LINK activities can be carried out in such a way that damage to the natural environment is minimised. In keeping with its strategic objective as a network to tread sustainably, guidance for the network has been developed in relation to travel, office accommodation, procurement and other areas. Network awareness of the policy will be promoted and the policy will be formally reviewed once a year by the Board (or sooner if circumstances dictate).

LINK will keep its staff and membership informed of progress made, new green office initiatives etc., and welcomes suggestions as to further initiatives that could be adopted.

## **11 Equal opportunities policy**

LINK aims to be an equal opportunities employer and undertakes that staff and prospective employees will be treated equally, fairly and consistently on recruitment and throughout their employment with LINK. Unlawful discrimination would take place if someone is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic (see below) compared to the treatment of others. This replaces the previous description of discrimination 'on the grounds of...(e.g. sex)'. Only maternity and pregnancy discrimination have a different basic definition. Discrimination can occur in various ways.

Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic. Direct discrimination by association and perception is a new definition. It occurs where a person is treated less favourably because they are linked or associated with a person who has a protected characteristic. Direct discrimination can also occur where a person is wrongly thought to have a particular protected characteristic. This definition is now much wider and where previously this only applied to race, it now applies to all protected characteristics listed below -

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Indirect discrimination occurs when there is a rule, or a policy or even a practice that applies to everyone, but which particularly disadvantages people who share a particular protected characteristic. Indirect discrimination is not always necessarily unfair, and can on occasions be justified where it can be shown that the rule, policy or practice is intended to meet a legitimate objective in a fair, balanced and reasonable way.

Discrimination arising from disability occurs when a disabled person is treated less favourably because of something connected with their disability, and this treatment cannot be justified. This new form of protection replaces different protection in disability discrimination legislation that was not fully effective. Dual Discrimination has been introduced to ensure that a person on the receiving end of less favourable treatment because of a combination of protected characteristics, is now able to raise a claim in that way. Previously a claim required to be for an individual act of discrimination and often led to individuals having to choose on which ground to raise their claim. LINK has therefore put in place the following measures:

- Ensuring that no job applicant, employee, member or volunteer suffers unfair discrimination because, for example, of their sex, marital status, race, ethnic origin, colour, religion, beliefs, age, sexual orientation, age or disability, or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be relevant to performance.
- Ensuring that all employees are valued for their contribution and given the opportunity to realise their potential within the organisation.

LINK regards this as a commitment to make full use of the talents and resources of all its employees and to provide a healthy environment which will encourage good and productive working relations within the organisation. Specific responsibility for the implementation of the policy lies with the LINK Board, the manager, and staff or others involved in recruitment, employee administration and training. In addition, all employees have a responsibility to accept their personal involvement in the practical application of this policy. An employee found to be practising discrimination will face disciplinary proceedings.

LINK seeks to fulfil its aim of offering equality of opportunity by striving to ensure that:

- advertising, recruitment and selection are free from bias and open to all who are suitably qualified, refer to 'Recruitment and Induction of LINK Employees' which can be found on Sharepoint, LINK's internal file server.
- employment practices and procedures are developed which maintain equitable treatment for everyone
- training opportunities are available where needed for all employees and that everyone is encouraged to develop their potential
- employees doing jobs of equal value are treated equally with respect to pay and other conditions of employment

Any employee who feels that this policy has not been effectively applied is encouraged to approach their line manager, or a member of the LINK Board. In this first instance this can be on an informal basis. Matters can be raised formally through the grievance procedure.

A full copy of LINK's Equal Opportunities policy will be provided at induction and is available on Sharepoint – LINK's internal file server.

## **12 Data Protection**

LINK's vision is an organisation where accurate and reliable information is readily available to support the LINK network and policy making; where employees understand the importance of good information management and where our member organisations, associated bodies and the public have confidence that information is held and processed securely. LINK has three policies on Data Protection; 'Data Protection, LINK Employees and Volunteers' and 'LINK Data Protection Privacy Statement

LINK Members, Supporters and Others' and 'LINK Privacy Policy'. Staff have specific responsibilities when handling data and they should read through all the policies to ensure they are adhering to both LINKs and the relevant UK legislations in place to protect the use of individual's data. Copies of the

policies are available on Sharepoint – LINK's internal file server.

## **13 Disciplinary Procedure**

### **Purpose and Scope**

These disciplinary rules and procedures are designed to help and encourage everyone to achieve and maintain appropriate standards of conduct, attendance and job performance. They apply to all employees and aim to ensure fair and consistent treatment for everyone. LINK will seek to ensure that any employees who show signs of failing to meet expected standards are given the support and guidance before any formal procedures are invoked.

### **Principles**

- The LINK disciplinary procedure seeks to observe the rules of natural justice.
- No disciplinary action will be taken against a member of staff until the case has been fully investigated.
- At every stage of the procedure, the individual will be advised of the nature of the complaint against him/her and will be given the opportunity to state his/her case before any decision is made.
- Where standards are not being achieved, it could be due to ill health, or another reason such as insufficient training. In such circumstances, the disciplinary procedure may not be appropriate and the matter will be handled as an issue of capability, rather than one of conduct. (See next section of this procedure).
- At every stage of the formal procedure employees have the right to be accompanied by a person of their choice from the following group, a work colleague, a union representative or a person from an advice agency.
- No member of staff will be dismissed for a first breach of discipline except in the case of gross misconduct when dismissal will be without notice, payment in lieu of notice or accrued holiday pay.
- A member of staff will have the right to appeal against any disciplinary decision.
- The procedure may be implemented at any stage if the individual's alleged misconduct warrants such action.
- The immediate manager and LINK Board, or sub-group nominated are responsible for the administration of the disciplinary procedure.
- Any dismissal will be carried out by the LINK Board.
- Any appeal against disciplinary action will be heard by the LINK Board or a sub group nominated by the Board for that purpose, previously not involved.
- In appropriate circumstances, LINK reserves the right to take such additional action as it sees fit. In serious cases this could include police involvement and/or other proceedings.

### **Capability**

Where the reason for poor standards of attendance and/or job performance is considered to be an issue of capability, LINK will:

- Arrange an initial meeting to establish the cause of the underlying problem.
- Conduct a full investigation and carefully consider each case on its merits.
- Discuss with the member of staff what improvements are required and how these can be achieved.
- Determine through discussion whether action such as training or referral to an occupational health provider is appropriate.
- Set a reasonable time limit for the member of staff to reach the required level, and confirm in writing the probable outcome if the required level of performance cannot be achieved and sustained

- Consider the possibility of suitable alternative work.
- Only after all these alternatives have been explored will the termination of employment be considered.
- In this case, the member of staff will be informed in writing that, as all other alternatives have been explored, termination of employment may follow.

## **The Disciplinary Procedure**

### **Stage 1 – Informal First Level Warning (Oral)**

If conduct or job performance does not meet acceptable standards, an informal disciplinary interview will be held between the member of staff and immediate manager. The employee will be given full details of the complaint and the opportunity to respond and to discuss ways in which improvement can be achieved. This is generally regarded as an informal counselling meeting, but this may, where considered appropriate be followed by a first level informal warning by the manager giving the reason for the warning, that it is the first stage of the disciplinary procedure and the right to appeal. A brief note of the verbal warning will normally be retained by the manager issuing the warning, but any informal or first level warning should be confirmed with the employee in writing (by e-mail).

### **Stage 2 - Second Level Warning (Written)**

If the offence is a serious one, or if a further offence occurs within a specified period, or there is insufficient improvement in standards, a Written Warning will be given to the member of staff by the manager, after authorisation from the LINK Board. This will give details of the offence, the improvement required and the timescale. It will warn that action under Stage 3 will be considered if there is no satisfactory improvement and will advise of the right to appeal. A copy of this written warning will be kept on the personal file, but it will normally be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after 12 months, subject to satisfactory conduct and job performance.

### **Stage 3 - Final (Written) Warning**

If there is still a failure to improve, due to unsatisfactory conduct and/or job performance, or alternatively if the misconduct is sufficiently serious to warrant only one written warning but insufficiently serious to justify dismissal, a final written warning will normally be given to the individual by the manager in the presence of a member of the LINK Board. This will give details of the complaint, will warn that dismissal will result if there is no satisfactory improvement within a given timescale, and will advise of the right of appeal. A copy of this final written warning will be kept on the personal file but will normally be disregarded for disciplinary purposes after 12 months subject to satisfactory conduct and job performance.

### **Stage 4 - Action Short of Dismissal**

At any stage in the procedure action short of dismissal may be taken by LINK. Such action will be taken only after discussion between the member of staff and a member of the LINK Board. It may involve any of the following:

- suspension with or without pay,
- removal of certain benefits,
- reduction in salary,
- demotion or a change in job duties,
- the with-holding of salary increases.



A member of staff in receipt of such a decision will have the right of appeal against that decision to the LINK Board, or to a sub group nominated by the Board for that purpose.

## **Stage 5 – Dismissal**

If conduct or job performance remains unsatisfactory and the member of staff still fails to reach the prescribed standards, dismissal will normally result. This stage of the procedure will be carried out by the LINK Board. The dismissal will be given with notice. The member of staff will be provided, as soon as reasonable and practicable, with written reasons for dismissal, the date on which employment terminates and information about the appeal procedure.

## **Gross Misconduct**

If, on completion of an investigation, LINK is satisfied that gross misconduct has occurred, the result will normally be summary dismissal without notice, payment in lieu of notice, or payment of accrued holiday pay.

The following are examples of offences which LINK will normally regard as Gross Misconduct. This list is not exhaustive, and any other conduct of a sufficiently serious nature may lead to disciplinary action up to and including the possibility of dismissal.

1. Serious breach of Link's procedures or policies, including the equal opportunities policy.
2. Theft, fraud, deceit or dishonesty, in the course of employment and in some circumstances outside.
3. Deliberate falsification of records.
4. Unauthorised possession or deliberate damage of LINK property.
5. Fighting, bullying, threatening or actual assault on another person in the workplace.
6. Serious omission or neglect of the Health and Safety Policy or of proper precautions for the security, safety or health of any persons at LINK.
7. Incapability through the misuse of alcohol, legal or illegal drugs, or other substances.
8. A serious act of insubordination.
9. Bringing the name of Scottish Environment LINK into disrepute.
10. A serious breach of confidentiality.

## **Suspension**

The proper investigation of a complaint may take time to complete. For this and other reasons, (for example, where it is felt that the continued presence of the member of staff might inhibit a frank investigation or might not be conducive to good staff relations pending the outcome of such investigations), the member of staff may be suspended with pay until the outcome of any disciplinary action has been determined. Normally, this will be for no longer than 10 working days.

## **Appeals**

A member of staff who wishes to appeal against a disciplinary penalty imposed, including dismissal should inform the LINK Chief Officer in writing within 5 working days, stating the reasons for the appeal. The LINK Board or a sub group nominated by it (and not previously involved) for that purpose will hear the appeal and their decision is final. At the appeal, any disciplinary penalty imposed will be reviewed, but cannot be increased. The outcome of the appeal hearing will be confirmed by LINK in writing.

## **14 Grievance Procedure**

### **Policy**

This grievance procedure is designed to provide a fair, consistent and speedy way of resolving any grievance which may arise at work. Grievances are concerns, problems or complaints that employees raise with their employers, LINK aims to deal with any grievances so that all staff:

- \* are given a fair hearing by their immediate manager concerning any grievance they may wish to raise (or by another manager if their immediate is the subject of the grievance)
- \* have the right of appeal to the LINK Board against a decision made by their immediate manager
- \* have the right to be accompanied by the person of their choice from the following group - a work colleague, a union representative or a person from an advice agency when raising a grievance or appealing against a decision.

### **The Procedure is as follows:**

- 1** If it is not possible to resolve a grievance informally he/she should raise the matter with their immediate manager without unreasonable delay. If their immediate manager is the subject of the grievance, they should raise this with another - in exceptional circumstances the matter may be raised directly with a member of the LINK Board. An employee's grievance should be made in writing and should set out the nature of the grievance.
- 2** LINK will then arrange a formal meeting to be held with the employee to discuss the grievance, where he/she can choose to be accompanied by a person of their choice (see list above). At the meeting they will be given the opportunity to explain their grievance and how they think it should be resolved, the meeting may be adjourned for any investigation that may be necessary.
- 3** Following the meeting LINK will decide on what action, if any, to take. The decisions will then be communicated to the employee, in writing, and, where appropriate will set out what action LINK intends to take to resolve the grievance. This will also contain details of how to appeal if the employee is not satisfied with the decision.
- 4** If the employee is not satisfied with the decision, he or she may appeal in writing, to a Board Member (who has not previously been involved in the case). This meeting will take place within ten working days of the request and the employee may be accompanied as before. The decision reached at this meeting is final and will be confirmed in writing by the Chair or designate.

Where an employee raises a grievance during a disciplinary process the disciplinary process may be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the grievance. Where the grievance and disciplinary cases are related it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently.

## **15 Smoking Policy**

In line with current legislation, LINK operates a no-smoking policy in order to provide a smoke-free environment in all parts of its premises, at meetings, conferences, seminars and other work venues. Most people prefer a smoke-free environment and there is mounting evidence of the adverse health effects of passive smoking for non-smokers. More serious and immediate problems can be caused for susceptible people, for example those with poor respiratory health, or pregnant women and their unborn babies. In addition, smoking increases fire risk.

All employees, visitors, contractors and participants in events are expected to comply with this policy and to refrain from smoking whilst on work premises, this includes the use of electronic cigarettes. Employees are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure that visitors are aware of the policy and that they comply. In case of any difficulty, please refer to your line manager or other appropriate person, for example a LINK Board member at a LINK event.

Any smoking on work premises will be regarded not only as a criminal offence, but also as a breach of the health and safety policy and will be the subject of normal disciplinary procedures. LINK also bans the use of electronic cigarettes in any of its offices, or work environments (see the section on [Disciplinary Procedures](#) in this Handbook.) If you find it difficult to comply with this no-smoking policy, you are advised to approach your line manager for details of support available for dealing with smoking restrictions.

## **16 Alcohol, drug and substance misuse policy**

The effects of excessive or inappropriate alcohol consumption, or the misuse of drugs or other substances, can have a detrimental effect on a person's performance at work. Even in small quantities, such substances can impair functional capacity and the ability to ensure the safety of self and others. For these reasons, the misuse of:

- \* alcohol,
- \* legal, illegal or prescribed drugs,
- \* solvents,
- \* or other substances which affect an employee's performance or conduct at work,

will be regarded as a serious matter.

This policy also applies to visitors, contractors and participants in LINK events. Employees are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure that visitors are aware of the policy and that they are in a position to comply with it. In case of any difficulty, please refer to your line manager or other appropriate person, for example a LINK Board member at a LINK event.

LINK will strive to offer a positive and supportive environment for any employees who are affected by alcohol, drug or substance misuse. In the first instance individuals will be encouraged to consult a specialist external agency. All such matters will be regarded as strictly confidential and individuals will be offered appropriate support in the workplace.

If, after a period of support, an employee's work or conduct continues to be adversely affected by alcohol, drug or substance misuse, then consideration may be given to further action, including the possibility of disciplinary action. In addition, any serious, isolated incidents resulting from an employee being under the influence of alcohol or drug or substance misuse may be regarded as gross misconduct under the LINK disciplinary procedure (see the [Disciplinary Procedure](#) section in this Handbook).

## **17 Health and Safety Matters**

LINK aims to maintain safe and healthy working conditions for all staff including those hosted in other organisations' offices, and for visitors to LINK's premises. This includes the aim to manage effectively all risks to health and safety which may arise at work. All staff are required to read and comply with the Health and Safety Policy and Procedures. In line with normal practice, the Health and Safety Policy will be reviewed from time to time. Any breach of Health and Safety rules and obligations will be regarded as serious and may involve disciplinary action. In the case of a serious breach this could involve dismissal for gross misconduct.

### **General Principles**

Under the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (1974) and subsequent legislation, employers are required to take reasonable care to ensure the health and safety of their employees. Similarly, it is the duty of every employee at work (whether paid employee, trainee, intern or volunteer) to take care for the health and safety of themselves and of any person who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions. These obligations extend to time spent working away from LINK's premises, including any work at home, LINK events and external meetings (see the section on Home Working in this Handbook and Lone Working).

## **Responsibilities**

Responsibilities of trustees, staff and volunteers in the organisation and of the arrangements for ensuring full compliance with both the legal requirements and with LINK policy are described. The Policy and arrangements for its application will be reviewed (and up-dated if necessary) regularly or whenever a significant change in organisation or in mode of operation occurs.

The prime responsibility for Health and Safety matters lies with the Trustees who will take all reasonable action to ensure that these responsibilities are delegated as appropriate and are properly discharged. The Trustees will ensure that adequate resources are made available to meet the organisation's legal duties. A statement of specific responsibilities can be found within the full policy document which every employee will be provided with, along with their Principal Statement of Main Terms and Conditions of Employment. This is also available to view at any time on Sharepoint, LINK's shared file server.

If you have any concerns about health and safety matters, please discuss these with your line manager without delay.

## **Lone Working**

Staff are encouraged to keep their electronic diary up to date, and advise the office staff if they are not going to return to the office at the expected time. Staff are also encouraged to let someone (this may be a family member) know of when they are expected to return home so any concerns can be raised.

Staff are strongly discouraged from working in the offices very early in the morning (i.e. before 8am) and late at night (i.e. after 8pm) as this may pose additional personal safety issues on accessing and departing the office.

Any member of staff with a known health condition is strongly encouraged to let the Chief Officer know of their situation to ensure that if required, any additional measures can be put in place should their health suddenly deteriorate, especially if lone working is likely.

The Perth and Edinburgh office have a buzzer entry and the main entrance should be kept locked at all times and entry only given to known callers.

## **18 Working with Children**

The majority of LINK staff and volunteers do not, in the normal course of their duties have direct contact with children. However, there may be circumstances where children and young people from local education facilities and groups are asked to participate in a specific piece of work or project; a child is defined for this purposes as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. When this occasion arises, staff must operate within the LINK guidelines as set out in our policy – 'Guidance for Safeguarding Children when involved with LINK work'. This includes the requirement for relevant staff to obtain a basic Disclosure Scotland check and our Policy statement on the secure storage, handling,

use, retention and disposal of Disclosures and Disclosure information, full policy is available on Sharepoint.

## **19 Eye Screening**

In terms of the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992, a DSE user is defined as an employee who habitually uses display screen equipment as a significant part of their normal employment. A full copy of LINK's Guidance for Users of DSE will be provided at induction and is available on Sharepoint, LINK's internal server.

In general terms, eye tests are now provided free of charge by opticians in Scotland.

If, following an eye test, an optician or optometrist certifies that a LINK employee requires prescription spectacles solely for computer use, LINK will contribute up to £50 towards the cost of frames and lenses. Where prescription lenses are required generally for reading or close work, a partial contribution of up to £30 will be made. A form for completion by the optician / optometrist in such circumstances can be found at Appendix C.

A prescription for standard long or short sight, with no additional elements relating to the use of display screen equipment will not be eligible for any contribution towards the cost of lenses and frames.

## **20 Manual Handling**

Whilst LINK is a low risk office environment, there may be occasions where items, such as a box of paper, or display equipment may require to be moved. A LINK Manual Handling sheet has been prepared to ensure all staff are able to undertake any such tasks safely, a copy of which is available at each LINK office and on Sharepoint, LINK's shared file system. If employees have any concerns regarding undertaking any handling task they should refrain from doing so until further advice can be sought.

## **21 Travel, Subsistence and Expenses**

**Travel:** In accordance with its environment policy, LINK seeks to limit travelling as far as is reasonable and to encourage the use of more sustainable forms of public transport, cycling and walking, wherever possible and practicable. When planning to travel on LINK business employees are expected (and members encouraged) to follow this policy, bearing in mind the efficient fulfilment of duties and any issues of personal safety.

Everyone engaged with LINK is also asked to minimise travel costs by making the best possible use of discounted fares including booking tickets as early as possible, giving consideration to combining different modes of transport (eg rail travel with cycling) and to make use of car-sharing. Please note that employees must ensure that their car insurance covers use of the vehicle on employer's business and that LINK's mileage rates include an allowance for any additional insurance costs. If employees are required to use their own car or bicycle on LINK business, where there is no practicable public transport available, employees may claim reimbursement at a higher rate for essential use currently agreed at 40p per mile (as of November 2015). However, if you chose to use your own vehicle even when a reasonable alternative, (such as public transport or car sharing) is available, this will be classed as non-essential use and paid at a lower rate, currently 25p per mile. If you are in any doubt as to whether mileage is classed as essential or non-essential, please consult your line manager before travelling.

Employees may be eligible to claim time off in lieu if it is necessary for them to travel outside their

normal working hours. In this case, the first half an hour after leaving home and the last half an hour before arriving home will be disregarded for the purposes of claiming time off in lieu.

**Air travel** – Any flight must be pre-authorized by the Chief Officer before being booked. Where possible, flights should be booked well in advance to benefit from any discounts for early booking. Flying on LINK business within the UK is strongly discouraged

DEFRA's Environmental Reporting guidelines for company reporting on greenhouse gas emissions states that:

“It has been calculated (in 2015) that the average emission per person is:

In an aircraft, on a domestic flight 297g of CO<sub>2</sub> for each kilometre it travels

In a standard commuter train 45g of CO<sub>2</sub> per kilometre

In a medium petrol motor car 199g of CO<sub>2</sub> per kilometre

**Expenses:** LINK recognises that to effectively undertake their duties some employees will regularly incur expenses. In a bid to ensure no LINK employee be out of pocket, LINK provides key staff with a Float on commencement with the organisation. This money will be paid directly to their nominated bank account for use exclusively for expenses in line with the guidance provided below.

In addition, reasonable out-of-pocket expenses which are necessarily incurred including accommodation (if away overnight), subsistence, including meals and any other necessary costs of travelling, eg parking charges incurred during the course of your employment at LINK will be reimbursed at cost, see guide below.

**Accommodation** - As a guideline for business travel, you should book accommodation equivalent to three-star standard or less. You may book hotel accommodation of up to £80 maximum in a major city and £65 elsewhere

**Meals** - As a general rule LINK does not cover the purchase of alcoholic beverages, and the maximum agreed amount for meals will be £10 for lunch, £20 for evening meal. If you are required to be away from home on company business, you may claim up to:

- £10 for breakfast (if this is not included in the hotel room rate);
- £15 for lunch;
- £25 for dinner

The maximum amounts above are inclusive of drinks. You may not claim for alcohol.

LINK has also developed a policy 'Hospitality, Gifts and Donations', a brief outline of which is detailed in the following section – a full copy is available on Sharepoint, LINK's internal file server and this should be read before any expenses are incurred which could fall in to this category. This policy also provides specific guidance on expenses which may be incurred by staff members (for example policy advocacy activity) when providing hospitality to Special Advisors/Political Party representatives, etc.

All claims should be returned in a timely manner, accompanied by a breakdown of costs, including receipts where available and be signed off by those claiming in addition to being authorised by your line manager. Any single expense of **Seventy five** pounds or more requires pre-authorization by your line manager. Please see the section above on travel and discuss any points of uncertainty with your line manager, before expenses are incurred.

For further guidance on completing an expense form or for an electronic copy please contact the LINK Office Manager.

## **22 Hospitality, Gifts and Donations**

It is envisaged that certain LINK staff (most notably Advocacy and Project staff) may, on occasion, be required to provide hospitality to individuals to further the work of LINK and they should follow the guidelines set out in the full policy 'Hospitality, Gifts and Donations' available on Sharepoint – LINK's internal file service - the guidelines also provide guidance to staff on receiving gifts and hospitality.

As a brief summary, staff must undertake the provision and receipt of hospitality in a way that is appropriate to LINK's position; he/she must not risk any damage to LINK's reputation, in particular its status as a charity in receipt of public funds.

Staff must always consider their personal position, LINK's position and should always consider how a situation, however well intended, would appear to external scrutiny. Hospitality is a sensitive area and staff are asked to observe the spirit as well as the letter of the policy.

## **23 Salary reviews**

All salaries at LINK will be reviewed, (though not necessarily changed), by the LINK Board at least annually.

When reviewing salary levels the LINK Board will consider the LINK budget and background information, which may include, for example, the rate of inflation, the cost of living, market trends and comparable pay rates elsewhere.

In the case of individual jobs they will consider:

- \* the characteristics of the work,
- \* the skills, competencies and knowledge required for efficient performance,
- \* the outcomes of each job.

All staff are invited to contribute to this process either through their line manager, especially at the time of their performance and development reviews, or directly with the LINK Board.

## **24 Salary structure & Job evaluation**

LINK's salary structure is based on a detailed analysis of the job role through the process of job evaluation and a broad-banded pay framework.

It aims to provide:

- a fair and consistent basis for rewarding employees
- clarification of the internal pay opportunities
- recognition of effective performance
- scope to reward higher level achievements and exceptional contributions
- the opportunity to establish and maintain external competitiveness
- the flexibility required by a developing organization, and
- the need for budgeting and financial control

### **Job Evaluation**

The LINK salary structure has been based on a job evaluation process, which seeks to measure the

relative contribution that each job role makes in relation to the success of the organisation. The process considers each job on the basis of the skills and competencies required to achieve an acceptable level of job performance. The aim is to provide a fair and consistent assessment of each role and the contribution it makes. A comparative review with other relevant organisations in Scotland's voluntary sector will be carried out every 3 to 4 years. Even when, as at LINK, the set of responsibilities for each job is subject to frequent change, the system aims to allow for dynamic roles and for progression that is people-, rather than job-oriented. Your job description can be discussed with your line manager at your job review and may be revised after agreement.

### **The Job Evaluation Process**

After discussions with the job-holders and line manager, the content of each job is considered in terms of:

- \* the level and quality of the knowledge and skills required, ie the depth and range of technical know-how and experience necessary
- \* degree of accountability, ie how much independent action is required, how important is the area of activity and what is the impact of the job on LINK's objectives
- \* the complexity of the duties, ie how much of the job is routine, the extent to which originality and problem-solving is required
- \* the quality and complexity of the relationships, ie how much of the job is concerned with influencing and motivating people and with controlling and co-ordinating activities

It should always be borne in mind that job evaluation is concerned with the assessment of the job role, and is not influenced by the individual job holder, their skills, abilities, knowledge or performance.

### **The LINK Salary Scale**

Following formal review by an independent consultant of the LINK jobs, through a structured job evaluation process at 2007, each post was allocated a salary scale range, and this was reviewed at 2011/12, and again in 2018. Within each 'range' there are a number of salary scale points. In general terms you will be permitted to increment by one point on your salary scale, annually, upon satisfactory outcome at your annual staff development review. This of course is subject to your not having previously reached the upper point on your relevant salary scale, and is also subject to the Board's judgement about LINK's financial circumstances. In exceptional circumstances and where LINK's funding may prohibit further advancement on the salary scale, the LINK Board will have the power to consider an alternative form of remuneration.

In addition, LINK is fully committed to the paying, at all times, of at least the Minimum Living Wage for all its staff. The minimum living wage is a voluntary rate that employers can choose to commit to paying; it is set by the Living Wage Foundation and based on the cost of living and the "Minimum Income Standards" required for a basic, but adequate standard of living. Whilst this will apply across all employees of LINK it is envisaged this will specifically (but not exclusively) be the recognised rate when LINK employs Interns, when the current rate (as set out by the Living Wage Foundation) will be the minimum hourly rate paid.

## **25 Performance and Development Review (PDR)**

A review of the conditions relating to your job and progress and achievements since any previous review will be carried out at least annually. This will be in the form of a meeting with your line manager and will include an assessment of your current duties and discussion of future plans, including development and training needs. A brief record of the meeting will be made, agreed and held by both parties for future reference. (See the Performance and Development Review Process, and PDR Form,



accompanying this Handbook).

The discussion will be pre-arranged, so that you will be able to consider the topics you would like to discuss, including the various headings on the form. It will also be useful to refer to previous PDRs to check previously agreed plans and to refer to a copy of your current job description.

## **26 Training and Development**

LINK seeks to encourage all employees to achieve their potential at work and to support them in developing relevant skills and knowledge. The LINK Board will set an appropriate budget for staff training annually.

You can discuss your own training and development needs with your line manager at the regular performance and development reviews and informally at other times. You are encouraged to take advantage of suitable training opportunities and to take an active part in planning your own training and development programme.

Depending on circumstances, training may be available internally from other LINK staff, through member organisations or from external providers, including for example the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations. Whenever possible, funds will be made available from the training budget for courses which are approved by LINK.

## **27 Pension**

LINK operate an autoenrolment pension scheme with the Peoples Pension. All eligible job holders will automatically be enrolled into the scheme after 3 months' service; those employees not eligible for automatic enrolment will be offered the opportunity to opt in, should they wish. Further details of which job holders are classified as eligible for auto enrolment and those which are not, can be found below. In line with regulations, if, after you have been placed in the workplace pension scheme you decide it's not the right time to remain a member, you have the opportunity to leave, known as 'opting out'. Once joined you have one month during which you can 'opt out' and receive a full refund of your contributions.

LINK will offer an Employer contribution of double the employee's contribution up to a maximum of 4% employee: 8% employer. The minimum contribution required by the employee is –

- 1 October 2018 onwards 3%

Employees can of course choose to contribute more of their salary in to their pension scheme (up to 100%, subject to the maximum allowance, see [here](#) for current details) however the maximum LINK will contribute is 8%.

LINK will provide details of the enrolment information including sufficient information about the effect of the enrolment so staff can make an informed choice about whether to opt out. LINK would encourage all staff to participate in the scheme, and in line with current legislation any member of staff who has previously opted out will automatically be re-enrolled on the three-yearly re-enrolment date

**Eligible jobholders** - the current criteria for automatic enrolment into a pension scheme are –

- aged at least 22 but under state pension age
- are working or ordinarily work in the UK under their contract

- have qualifying earnings payable by the employer in the relevant pay reference period that are above the earnings trigger for automatic enrolment

**Non-eligible jobholders** (but can choose to opt in to a pension scheme), are workers who either:

- are aged between 16 and 74
- are working or ordinarily work in the UK under their contract
- have qualifying earnings payable by the employer in the relevant pay reference period but below the earnings trigger for automatic enrolment

More information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/workplace-pensions/about-workplace-pensions>

## **28 Holidays**

Full details of your holiday entitlement are given in the principal statement of the main terms and conditions of your employment. In general staff are entitled to 25 days paid holiday per annum (calculated pro rata for part-time employees). In addition, you are entitled to paid public holidays up to a maximum of 10 days per annum (again calculated pro rata for part-time employees); generally, these days are flexible and are not required to be taken on the actual public holiday date, with the exception of Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year & 2<sup>nd</sup> January – *or appointed date if any of these fall at the weekend.*

The LINK holiday year runs from 1st January to 31st December. LINK encourages all employees to utilise their full entitlement during the holiday year. If it is not possible in an individual year to do so, you may discuss with your Line Manager carrying forward a maximum of **one week's** holiday beyond that point. This carry forward **must** be taken within two months of the New Year commencing – i.e. by the end of February; any carry forward not taken by this date will be lost.

You are requested to give as much notice as possible of leave you wish to take and to agree periods of leave with your line manager prior to making holiday arrangements. LINK will endeavour to satisfy your holiday requirements, but there may be circumstances when you will be unable to take your first choice of leave.

It is customary for the LINK Board, entirely at its own discretion, to close the LINK office for at least some of the time between Christmas and Hogmanay. Such discretionary leave days will be granted in addition to the above holiday entitlement and may be subject to change from time to time.

## **29 Flexible working**

LINK recognises the importance to employees of maintaining a balance between work, home life and, where appropriate, may agree to an employee having a flexible working pattern, provided that such an arrangement is suitable for both parties and is likely to facilitate effective and efficient working whilst also taking account of the needs of the organisation. This covers both occasional flexible working (to respond to specific circumstances or to complete particular tasks) and in some cases, on a regular (full or part time basis).

All employees have the legal right to request flexible working - not just parents and carers. Current legislation notes that employees must have worked for LINK for at least 26 weeks to be eligible and can only make a statutory request once in any 12-month period (additional requests may be considered at the discretion of your Line Manager).

Employees may require a flexible working pattern at short notice to cover a temporary change in circumstances, where this would not last for more than 8 weeks. In these occasions it may be possible

to agree a temporary change verbally with the Line Manager. However, if this continues for more than 8 weeks a formal application would be required.

For full details of LINK's flexible working please refer to LINK Flexible Working Policy available on Sharepoint.

### **30 Working from Home**

As part of flexible working an employee may also wish to be considered for home working, either on an occasional or permanent basis, provided that such an arrangement is suitable for both parties and is likely to facilitate effective and efficient working whilst also taking account of the needs of the organisation. For full details, including how to apply please refer to the policy LINK Home Working available in Sharepoint.

Please note occasional and permanent and home working can only be undertaken with the prior agreement of your line manager.

### **31 Retirement**

The removal of the Default Retirement Age (DRA) means that LINK employees now have the option of choosing how long they wish to continue to work, and the right to choose when they retire. The LINK appraisal / staff development review process will continue to be applied to all employees in post, regardless of their age, and any performance not meeting the requirements of the job role will continue to be addressed in the normal manner.

### **32 Carer's and Parental Leave**

**Carers Leave:** LINK recognises the importance of helping staff to develop an appropriate balance between home and work responsibilities. In the event of family emergencies, concerning an elderly parent, partner, child, or other person living as part of the family, employees may be entitled to reasonable time off. This may be either paid or unpaid, depending on the particular circumstances, and will be subject to prior agreement with your line manager.

**Parental Leave:** Eligible employees can take unpaid parental leave to look after their child's welfare, eg., to:

- spend more time with their children
- look at new schools
- settle children into new childcare arrangements
- spend more time with family, such as visiting grandparents

Your employment rights (like the right to pay, holidays and returning to a job) are protected during parental leave. Parental leave is unpaid and you're entitled to a maximum of 18 weeks' leave for each child and adopted child over the period to when the child reaches their 18th birthday. The limit on how much parental leave each parent can take in a year is 4 weeks for each child (unless LINK agrees otherwise).

You must take parental leave as whole weeks (eg 1 week or 2 weeks) rather than individual days, unless LINK agrees otherwise or if your child is disabled. You don't have to take all the leave at once.

To be eligible for this leave an employee must -

- have been in the company for more than a year

- be named on the child's birth or adoption certificate or they have, or expect to have parental responsibility

A 'week' equals the length of time an employee normally works over 7 days. Please note this information is based on the current legislation as of November 2015 and subject to change without prior notification, for full details including eligibility etc. please see – <https://www.gov.uk/parental-leave/overview>

LINK recognises the importance of supporting employees and their families and is fully committed to supporting all its staff to afford the maximum statutory entitlement with regard to carer and parental leave (please also refer to section Maternity, Paternity and Shared Parental Leave for details).

### **33 Maternity, Paternity and Shared Parental Leave**

LINK is fully committed to meeting all of its obligations in regard to Maternity, Paternity and Shared Parental leave, and to take reasonable steps to adjust the workplace and job content to the requirements of an employee who is pregnant or has recently given birth. As legislation is subject to change we refer you below to the appropriate Government websites which will provide you with the most up to date information on Maternity, Paternity and Shared Paternal/Maternal leave.

<https://www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave>

<https://www.gov.uk/paternity-pay-leave>

<https://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay>

You may also wish to refer to the ACAS webpage Maternity rights

<http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1753>

LINK would encourage any employee who is pregnant to let their Line Manager know (in confidence) as soon as possible in order that LINK is able to fully support you and ensure you are in receipt of all the relevant information. This will also allow us, if need be to ensure that any adjustments (that are required) can be made - for example time of for anti-natal appointments etc.

### **34 Special leave**

Employees may be entitled to additional paid or unpaid leave in certain circumstances. A Special Leave request form can be found at the back of this Handbook which should be completed by you and signed off by your line manager in advance of taking special leave.

Compassionate leave of this nature will normally be granted in the case of a bereavement involving an employee's partner, or immediate family, or in other cases of severe domestic crisis. The amount of leave granted will depend on the circumstances, but will not normally exceed five days in total in any one year.

Reasonable amounts of special leave will also be granted for trade union activities and for public duties including jury service. In such cases employees should claim all available compensation for loss of earnings. In general, salary payments will be made after deduction of compensation amounts.

There are also rights to maternity leave, parental leave, shared parental leave and leave to care for dependents. Details are given in the relevant sections of this Handbook and can be discussed with

your line manager. You are requested to give as much notice as possible of all leave you may wish to take.

**Documents to familiarise yourself with:**

- LINK Memorandum & Articles (web)
- LINK Operating Principles (web)
- Health and Safety Policy (separately provided)
- Self-certificate for absence through illness (see overleaf)
- Special Leave request form (see overleaf)
- Personal development review process (separately provided)
- Personal development review form (separately provided)
- Expenses claim form (separately provided)
- LINK Data Protection Privacy Statement LINK Members, Supporters and Others
- Data Protection, LINK Employees and Volunteers
- LINK Privacy Policy
- Guidance for Safeguarding Children when involved with LINK work

A full list of all LINK policies is also available in Appendix D

## Appendix A

### Scottish Environment LINK: Self-certification form

To be completed by members of staff to cover periods of illness of between three and seven days duration.

Name.....

Job Title.....

I certify that my absence from work from ..... (date) to  
.....(date), inclusive, was due to illness.

Reason for absence: .....

I did / did not\* consult a doctor. [delete as appropriate)

Signed .....

Date .....

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND FORWARD TO YOUR LINE MANAGER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO COVER ABSENCE FROM YOUR THIRD DAY OF SICKNESS.

**Appendix B**  
**Scottish Environment Link - Special Leave Application**

NAME: ..... LOCATION: .....
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<b>TYPE OF LEAVE REQUESTED</b>	
Paternity Leave	Jury Service
Medical Appointment	Wedding Leave
Emergency Time Off to Care for Dependant	Time off in Lieu – please give reason below: <i>Reason for TOIL:</i>
Compassionate Leave	
Study Leave	

<b>PERIOD OF LEAVE</b>	
DATE : ...../...../.....	TO: ...../...../.....
Day    Month    Year	Day    Month    Year
TIME FROM: .....AM/PM	TO: .....AM/PM
TOTAL    NUMBER    OF    HOURS    /    DAYS    TO    BE    TAKEN: .....	

<b>MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION</b>	
TO BE COMPLETED BY LINE MANAGER/DIRECTOR FOR AUTHORISATION	
I agree to the above Special Leave Request:	
SIGNED: .....	DATE: .....
JOB .....	TITLE: .....

THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED IN FULL, AUTHORISED BY YOUR MANAGER AND FORWARDED TO YOUR LEAVE ADMINISTRATOR BEFORE ANY SPECIAL LEAVE IS TAKEN. IF THIS PROCEDURE IS NOT FOLLOWED, YOU WILL NOT BE ENTITLED TO THE SPECIAL LEAVE AND MAY NOT BE PAID FOR THIS ABSENCE.

Scottish Environment Link – Eye Test Report

Part 1 - For completion by LINK employee

Name	
------	--

Job Role	
----------	--

Approx number of hours on average you spend per day, using display screen equipment	
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

When was your last eye test carried out	
-----------------------------------------	--

Please specify any particular eye strain / dry eyes / headaches experienced whilst working on your computer recently	
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

Signature: ..... Date : .....

Part 2 - For completion by optician / optometrist

I certify that the above employee attended for an eye test on (insert date) .....

Please tick the appropriate box :

Employee requires lenses solely for use or in connection with DSE.

































































Employee requires lenses for reading / close work as well as in connection with the use of DSE.

Employee requires lenses for standard or short sight that is not connected with the use of DSE.

Signature: ..... Date : .....  
(Append business stamp)



LINK Policies

-  Code of conduct and guidance for trustees
-  Data protection for LINK Members, supporters and others issue 2
-  Data protection for LINK Members, supporters and others\_draft issue 2
-  Data protection LINK and its employees\_issue 2
-  Data retention policy
-  Declaration of Interests final updated 11Apr19
-  DPF After action review prompts
-  DPF Project-funding-application-form 2019 v1
-  Draft safeguarding policy
-  Environment Plicy issue 2 revised Mar19
-  Environment Policy issue 2
-  Equal Opportunities\_issue 2
-  Equality and Diversity Monitoring Form
-  Event Risk Assessment Form\_2
-  Financial Reserve\_issue 2
-  Financial Reserve\_issue 2
-  Float
-  General Policy And Procedure On Fire\_Edinburgh
-  General Policy And Procedure On Fire\_Perth
-  Green Office\_update Mar 19
-  Green Office\_update Mar 19
-  Guidance for Safeguarding Children when involved in LINK work\_final
-  Guidance for users of DSE
-  guide to cutting carbon
-  Health Safety Issue 2
-  Health Safety\_Oct 18 review
-  Home Working RISK ASSESSMENT
-  Hospitality gifts and donations
-  Internal Financial controls Issue 4
-  LINK Flexible working policy
-  LINK home working policy
-  LINK IT Environment issue 03
-  LINK Nomination Form with GDPR
-  LINK Organisation chart
-  LINK Procurement Policy
-  LINK Safeguarding policy
-  LINK Social Media Guidelines APRIL 2020
-  LINK Style Guide updated December 2020
-  LINK Subscriptions policy for Web\_issue 2
-  LINK Trustee Declaration final
-  LINKMemberApplicationForm updated Dec 19
-  Manual handling sheet
-  Master Policy List for Scottish Environment Link Dec
-  Monthly salaries processing
-  Planning a LINK event\_issue 2
-  Policy and Guidance on Project Management
-  Policy and Guidance on Project Management\_draft 2
-  Privacy Policy Issue 2
-  Privacy Policy Issue 2
-  Project policy - templates
-  Protocols for LINK Board Members\_issue 3
-  Recruitment and induction of LINK employees issue 2
-  Recruitment and induction of trustees
-  Recruitment and induction of trustees\_issue 2 draft
-  Risk Assessment Record\_Updated Jan 18\_Marshall place
-  Risk Assessment Record\_Updated Jan 20\_Marshall place
-  Travel and subsistence policy\_Issue 2
-  Travel and subsistence policy\_Issue 2
-  Volunteering agreement
-  Volunteering policy
-  whistleblowing
-  whistleblowing\_issue 2 draft
-  whistleblowing\_issue 2
-  working at home