

# **Working with Relatives/Personal Relationships at Work Policy**



*Version 1*

*Owner: Employee Relations, HR*

*Date issued 20.10.2014*

*Approved by Richard Doyle, Director of HR*

## **1. Policy statement**

Network Rail proudly recognises that the rail industry is a large network with a heritage of employing generations of railway employees.

It is acknowledged that individuals who are related to existing employees or have close personal relationships with an existing employee may be recruited into the business and that employees may form personal relationships whilst at work.

The intention of this policy is to:-

- (a) encourage recruitment decisions that are based on merit and in line with our [Code of Business Ethics](#) and
- (b) create an environment that avoids favouritism and unprofessional behaviour and reduces the potential for conflicts of interest to arise

For the purposes of this policy a relative is defined as spouse, partner, child, mother, father, sister, brother, grandparent, aunt, uncle, cousin or an individual whose relationship with the employee is similar to that of persons related by blood or marriage.

## **2. Scope**

This policy covers candidates applying for jobs at Network Rail, all Network Rail employees and contractors.

## **3. Principles**

In line with our [Code of Business Ethics](#), we all need to behave in a way that is transparent and honest in all our dealings, whether with our colleagues, our suppliers, customers, passengers or neighbours.

The following principles shall apply:

### **Recruitment**

3.1 A Hiring Manager who is involved in a selection process (shortlisting or

interviewing) and is aware that a relative or someone with whom they have a close personal relationship has applied, must declare this to their line manager via [iEthics](#) and resourcing business partner at the earliest possible stage.

- 3.2 The hiring manager should then be withdrawn from the selection process and replaced by a suitable manager with whom there is no personal connection. If in exceptional circumstances this is not possible, the hiring manager must seek formal agreement to their participation in the selection process from their functional director, prior to any formal offer being made. This will protect the manager concerned, the candidate and Network Rail from any allegations that personal relationships influenced the selection decision.
- 3.3 Managers should not put forward for employment any relatives or individuals with whom they have a close personal relationship if upon appointment the individual would be directly managed by the manager or his/her direct reports.
- 3.4 Where managers recommend a relative or an individual with whom they have a close personal relationship for employment and **would not** directly line manage the individual, they should play no part in the eventual employment decision. The relationship must be declared to their line manager via [iEthics](#) prior to any recruitment activity.
- 3.5 **Work experience** - We recognise our employees value the opportunity to secure work experience for family and friends and conflicts of interests are unlikely to arise. Therefore the only exception to the above is unpaid work experience.

### **Personal relationships**

- 3.6 Where a personal relationship develops through the course of employment between a line manager and his/her direct or indirect report, the more senior individual must declare this as a potential conflict of interest to their line manager via [iEthics](#), as soon as possible.

### **Managerial Responsibilities**

- 3.7 Managers can influence decisions over safety, pay, recruitment, selection, promotion, career development and discipline. To avoid any potential division of loyalty or allegations of favouritism, where a manager has direct or indirect authority over a relative or an individual with whom they have a close personal relationship with the company reserves the right to put in place alternative management arrangements.

- 3.8 The line manager's manager and/or head of department will decide whether alternative management arrangements are necessary and these arrangements may include altering the reporting line, arranging for a third party to supervise the working relationship or transferring the manager and/or employee to another function or business area. Any arrangement that is considered by the line manager's manager and/or head of department will be discussed with the affected employees prior to any arrangement being finalised. Employees have the right to representation by a colleague or trade union representative at any such meetings.
- 3.9 Where a transfer is the only option, line management will consult with both employees and seek to reach a satisfactory agreement to transferring one or both of them.
- 3.10 Where no alternative management arrangements are possible, it is the line manager's manager responsibility to ensure that the employee is not advantaged or disadvantaged from decisions made by their line manager. These decisions could for example, relate to the areas of safety, pay, promotion, career development and discipline. The line manager's manager should also ensure that other members of the team are confident that they can raise issues where they have concerns that the relationship in question is having a detrimental effect on the working environment or on operational issues.

## General

- 3.11 The same principles apply to an employee who begins a personal relationship with, or who is a relative of, a client, customer, contractor or supplier. If the employee's job allows him/her authority over the client, customer, contractor or supplier the relationship must be declared to the employee's manager via [iEthics](#). In these circumstances, the organisation reserves the right to find another employee to liaise with the contractor or supplier.

## Links to other policies

- 3.12 This policy should be read in conjunction with Network Rail's [Code of Business Ethics](#) and its policy on Conflicts of Interest and Outside Activities [\[hyperlink forthcoming\]](#). Further guidance on how to use [iEthics](#) can be found on [Connect](#).
- 3.13 In the unlikely event that an employee does not follow the guidance in this policy, an investigation may become necessary. If an employee is found to have deliberately breached the spirit of this policy they may be subject to disciplinary action which could result in dismissal. In these circumstances the company's [Disciplinary Policy](#) will be followed.