



FSB Legal Advice

Staff Handbooks



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Legal Protection
Scheme

in association with Markel Law LLP

Why have a staff handbook?

Unlike the legal requirement to provide a written statement of terms (employment contract) to staff – no legal requirement to have a staff handbook

Benefits:

- Reduce legal risk e.g. equal opportunities/dignity at work police (“reasonable steps defence”).
- Consistency.
- Understand expectations/entitlements/procedures/employer’s values.
- Source for managers.

Which policies are required by law?

Mandatory policies

Disciplinary procedures and rules (if not in the contract of employment/written statement).

This is annexed to our template contract of employment.

Grievance procedures (if not in the contract of employment/written statement)

This is annexed to our template contract of employment.

Information about pensions (if not in the contract of employment or statement of terms and conditions).

This information is included in our template contracts on the Hub.

Health and safety policy (if 5 or more employees - in writing)

We have a template policy available on the Health and Safety Hub.

* **Whistleblowing** but only for a few employers, such as regulated financial firms

Recommended policies

Strongly recommended policies:

- **Equal Opportunities/Dignity at Work** ('reasonable steps' defence).
- **Data Protection & Privacy Notice** (if not attached to contract).
- **Absence from work:** holidays, sickness absence, parental/family friendly leave
- **Consider policies relevant to industry/ employer** – we have 61 different template policies available on the FSB Legal Hub that can be incorporated into a staff handbook:

<https://www.fsblegalhub.co.uk/legal/employment/contracts-and-policies>

See factsheet on FSB Legal Hub: 'How to Create a Staff Handbook'.

Structure of Staff Handbook



Introduction to Handbook

- Brief overview of handbook which reflects employer's values/ethos.
- Introductory statement (see factsheet on 'How to Create a Staff Handbook' on Hub for e.g. statement).



Body of Handbook

- Policies can be grouped by contractual/non-contractual status or by topic/type. Each policy should state whether contractual/non-contractual – or any part which is contractual.



Employee Acknowledgement

- Employee should indicate they have read and agreed to the handbook – e.g. ticking a box, or confirming electronic receipt, or by signature.

Decide format of handbook



Electronically – e.g. PDF copies sent to employees



Hard copy – employees sign hard copy



Via intranet or other online portal



Whichever format used, ensure employees have access to this, including to any updates/amendments.

Review handbook regularly?

At least once a year, or if refer to statutory rates in any of policies, review in April and October each year. Remember that amending contractual policies will require employee consultation and (in general) consent to the changes. Non-contractual policies allow adjustments to be made without staff consultation.

How can we help?

- Template contracts on FSB Legal employment hub are reviewed regularly & updated in accordance with any legal changes: www.fsblegalhub.co.uk/legal/employment/contracts-and-policies
- Employment law advice on the FSB Legal Advice line
- If require tailored contract, or would like your contracts reviewed, consultancy service which offers competitive fixed fee packages for this. Visit the FSB Legal Hub for details: www.fsblegalhub.co.uk/Instruct-Markel-Law//employment



We're here to help.
Thank you for listening

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