Chapter 5: Managing people

5.1   OUTLINE OF CHAPTER

Good people management is far less simple or straightforward than is often thought. This chapter provides guidance on how to develop a human resources management policy that includes the essential elements of managing people effectively, ensuring that they perform to their best and develop personally through their jobs.

As with the financial procedures policy document, it is advisable to have a single **human resources management policy document** that brings together all the organisation's policies on the management and development of its people or human resources. The nine elements or main headings for this are presented in the diagram below.

NINE POLICY ELEMENTS

5.2   EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY

Most NGOs subscribe to principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination. These concepts are rooted in the commitment to ensure equality of opportunity in all matters relating to employment and conditions at work, and to a working environment and culture free from any form of discrimination. The idea of valuing diversity adds to these principles simply through a more active commitment towards the promotion of difference. In other words, an organisation that values diversity will not only seek a culture and ethos in which discrimination and inequalities of opportunity are not tolerated, but will strive to ensure that it embraces and celebrates difference.

A commitment to these principles can be written up in the form of a statement of good practice to be included, for example, in all employment contracts. It might read as follows:

> X organisation is an equal opportunity employer. It is publicly opposed to any form of discrimination on the grounds of disability, sex, marital or parental status, age, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religious belief and sexual orientation in all aspects of its work. It promotes and values the diversity of its staff and partners, and embraces this principle in its programme and organisational culture.

An organisation may wish to include other considerations in its definition of diversity.

> **For example**, if people living with HIV or AIDS suffer unfair treatment and undue discrimination in the country, an explicit provision relating to them may be included.

It is also important to consider the **purpose** of making an explicit policy commitment to equal opportunities, non-discrimination and the promotion of diversity. The following exercise may help with this.

EXERCISE: PURPOSE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Review some policies that national and international governmental bodies and other local and international NGOs in the country have developed and consider what aspects of these the organisation might emulate.

Discuss the benefits such a policy might bring to the organisation. For example, it could ensure that all employees receive the support they deserve to attain their full potential, to the benefit of the organisation and its mission.

Consider the importance of ensuring that staff members practise it in their behaviour at the office and in the communities they support.

The organisation may wish to state that it regards non-compliance with the policy gravely and that behaviour or actions against the spirit of the policy will be considered a serious disciplinary matter. In addition, the organisation may wish to consider the following aspects for inclusion in the policy document and programme of work.

ADDITIONAL FACTORS TO CONSIDER

Monitoring the composition of the staff body
Maintain confidential records of each employee and his or her racial or ethnic origin, gender, age and any disability, and continuously monitor this to ensure that the staff body comprises a good mix of people.

Setting targets
Some organisations set targets, for example for the number of women or people with disabilities whom they will seek to employ within a five-year period.

Advertising vacancies
- Simultaneously advertise all job vacancies externally and internally to ensure the broadest possible field of candidates.
- Take steps to ensure that information about any employment vacancy is available and accessible to under-represented groups inside and outside the organisation.
- All vacancy advertisements should state the organisation's commitment to equal opportunities, non-discrimination and diversity.

Selection and recruitment
Take steps to ensure that selection criteria (job description, employee specification, competencies required for each job) demonstrate a commitment to diversity.

Positive action
For example, if the organisation provides staff development and training opportunities, it might want to emphasise that under-represented groups within the organisation will be encouraged to apply for these.

Careful recording of the reasons why applicants for job vacancies are rejected or selected can also be an important tool for creating a transparent approach to the selection and recruitment of staff. Stating in the policy that recruitment to all jobs will be strictly on merit will also indicate the seriousness with which the organisation views these issues.

These principles can be incorporated into all employment contracts and into the organisation's mission statement. The contracts can specify that if the new employee believes that he or she is being discriminated against on any grounds related to the policy, these concerns can be raised with his or her line manager or with a trustee to whom the governing body has assigned special responsibility for human resource issues.

5.3   SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT

One of the most important processes for any organisation is the selection and recruitment of the right staff for the right jobs. Some issues in selection and recruitment that relate to equal opportunities, non-discrimination and diversity have been covered in the previous section of this chapter. However, other aspects also warrant careful consideration because the calibre, experience and commitment of the staff employed by any organisation are a key hallmark of its capacity to deliver its mission effectively.

There are a number of steps to take when developing the selection and recruitment procedures for employing a new member of staff. These can be written up as a section of the human resource management policy document. Below are some guidelines on the steps to follow.

STEP 1: ANALYSE ORGANISATIONAL NEEDS

The number and categories of staff that the organisation needs to employ will be largely determined by the strategic plan. This will usually contain:
- a section outlining in brief the number and types of staff needed for the organisation to realise its strategic objectives
- an assessment of any gaps between the staff needed and the existing staff contingent.

If there are mismatches between the staff the organisation already has and the staff it needs, the strategic plan may have suggested some priority areas for staff development or training to fill the gaps identified.

However, as any organisation develops and changes it will need from time to time to recruit new staff. It is important to remember that recruitment should be intimately linked to efficient programme delivery and effective management of financial and human resources. The greatest impact on the lives of beneficiaries or clients does not necessarily come from employing greater numbers of people, because each individual needs good management to perform effectively.

People management is a time consuming and complex business. Look carefully at what the organisation really needs in terms of skills and experience before planning to employ new staff. It is important to take any proposals for the employment of new staff to the governing body for approval before starting a selection and recruitment process. The trustees will need to assess the proposal against both the financial resources available to the organisation and its strategic aims.

STEP 2: DRAW UP A JOB DESCRIPTION

Once the governing body has agreed that the employment of a new staff member is affordable and necessary for the organisation to better deliver its mission and realise its strategic objectives, it will need to draw up a job description and **person specification**.

The more precisely the job description spells out the rationale for the new post; identifies its specific responsibilities; and defines the skills and

experience required, the easier it will be to ensure that the right person is found for the job. Below are some points to consider when designing a job description.

THE JOB DESCRIPTION
A job description might include the following elements:

Background and rationale of post
How does the post relate to the realisation of the organisation's mission statement and its strategic objectives?

Specific responsibilities
What precisely is the post holder expected to do?

Person specification
What are the specific competencies, skills and experience needed to deliver the specific responsibilities?

Contract period
Will the NGO offer the successful candidate a fixed term contract (eg two years subject to continued funding) **or** an open ended contract (eg permanent subject to satisfactory performance and appraisal outcomes)?

If the organisation already has a full staff complement and the strategic analysis shows that it does not, at this stage, need to employ any new staff, it will still be important to do the following:
• Draw up job descriptions for every person on the payroll regardless of the level of the post or the number of hours the post holder works (including, for example, an office cleaner who works only three hours a week).
• Review each person's job description annually to make sure that it continues to reflect accurately the work plans of the individuals concerned.

From time to time it may be necessary to modify or update a job description. If this is done during a contract period, care must be taken to ensure that the elements of the revised job description still add up to the same post. If they suggest a new type of post, it will be necessary to consider initiating a new selection and recruitment process and issuing a new contract of employment.

Any minor changes to a person's existing job description should be discussed and agreed with the employee concerned during his or her annual performance appraisal.

A good time to make more significant changes to a particular job description, or indeed post, is when the existing post holder leaves the organisation. Such changes may also be called for if the strategic planning process suggests the need for a more fundamental overhaul of the staff complement. However, a major restructuring process will place heavy demands on all concerned and should therefore be considered only with the full backing of the governing body.

STEP 3: ADVERTISE THE VACANCY

In most cases it is good practice to advertise a post widely both internally within the office, and externally within the wider stakeholder and partner community and beyond. It is not always essential, however, to advertise a vacancy externally if the vacancy offers an opportunity to promote an existing member of staff. However, the process should be open and transparent, whatever the post advertised.

To advertise a vacancy externally a job advertisement will be needed. This should provide a succinct summary of the job description and a brief statement about equal opportunities and diversity.

The tips below may help decide where and how best to advertise a vacancy.

ADVERTISING A VACANCY

- Advertise the post **within the organisation**, making it clear that the opportunity to apply is open to all employees who believe that they have the necessary competencies, skills and experience.
- Compile a **list of partner organisations**, other NGOs, international NGOs, etc and send a letter together with the advertisement and job description to the Director or person responsible for human resources in these organisations. Ask them to post the advertisement on their notice boards and make the vacancy known to others in their organisations.
- Consider the costs of placing a **job advertisement** in local magazines and newspapers, or in the national and possibly regional or international press. The more senior the post, the wider the field should be.
- Ask the staff and governing body members to share the **advertisement flyer** and job description with organisations and individuals who they think might be interested.

Be sure that everyone knows that the selection and recruitment process will be open and fair. If individuals are approached directly and encouraged to apply, it is particularly important to ensure that they know they enjoy no unfair advantage.

STEP 4: THE SELECTION PANEL
The selection panel needs to be of high quality if every applicant is to have the same consideration and opportunity. Some factors to consider are outlined below.

THE SELECTION PANEL

- Usually the governing body will be responsible for the selection and recruitment of the **Executive Director**.
- For most other **senior and middle level posts** it is important to invite at least one member of the governing body to sit on the panel together with the Executive Director. Some organisations do this regardless of the level of post they are seeking to fill.
- At least one other member of staff should be on the panel and this responsibility is best rotated, so that all employees have the opportunity to develop selection and recruitment skills.
- It can also be helpful to have the perspective that an external person can bring to the process. Such a person might be a representative of a partner organisation, an international or local NGO or another body.

The choice of panel members will be influenced by the nature of the post advertised. It is important to ensure that the selection panel represents a good mix of people in terms of gender, age, ethnic group and so on. If the selection panel itself is not diverse it will be more difficult to meet a commitment to promoting diversity.

STEP 5: SELECTION CRITERIA AND SHORTLISTING
If the skills and experience the organisation is looking for are clearly specified in the job description the task of the selection panel will be easier.

SHORTLISTING CANDIDATES

- It is advisable for the panel to discuss the **'essential'** and the **'desirable'** competencies, skills and experience together and compile a written list, so that as they go through each application individually they can score the results to share with other members of the panel.
- Once this has been done the scores each member of the panel has come up with can be compared to compile a list of between four and eight **shortlisted candidates**.
- Any disagreements among members of the panel need to be aired and discussed fully with a view to reaching **consensus,** but usually the **recruiting manager** has the final word.

STEP 6: INTERVIEWING

There are no hard and fast rules about how to design an **interview process**. This will be influenced by the nature of the post and the precise skills and experience needed. However, every shortlisted candidate should go through the same process, for the sake of fairness. It is good practice to inform candidates what form this will take before the interview date, so that they can prepare themselves.

EXAMPLE: POSSIBLE COMPONENTS OF AN INTERVIEW

- A **finance test** is a written exercise designed to test the candidates' financial aptitude and should be designed by someone with financial expertise.
- A **written test** can be an essay on a particular topic or in answer to a specific question. It is designed to test the candidates' skills in written communication, analysis and strategic thinking.
- In a **panel interview**, two or more panel members can use a pre-determined set of questions designed to test the relevance of the candidates' skills and experience to the post.
- An **individual interview** can be conducted by one person with each candidate to examine, for example, personnel issues such as willingness to travel if this is part of the job, etc.
- In a **group exercise**, all the candidates can be given a topic to discuss in a group. This can help the selection panel assess team working and group interaction skills.
- If the post requires communication with the public, candidates can be asked to make a five-minute **presentation** to the interview panel on a particular topic.

It is important to have a **grading system** for each test, so that the interview panel can assign marks to each candidate and select the person with the highest marks.

> **For example**, each test could be graded: excellent, average, and poor; or A, B, C; or 1, 2, 3. In tests which contain a number of questions, such as the panel interview, each question can be graded using the same system. It is easier if interviewers have a sheet on which to grade each candidate's marks.

It is best if each member of the selection panel fills out a sheet (like the one below) independently, during or directly after each candidate has been interviewed.

EXAMPLE: INTERVIEW GRADING SHEET		
CANDIDATE NUMBER OR NAME:		
TEST/EXERCISE	**GRADE/MARK**	**COMMENTS**
Presentation		
Panel interview *		
Finance test		
Overall mark/grade		
Overall comments/observations		

* grade given for each question

STEP 7: SELECTION

Once all the candidates have been through the interview process, the members of the panel should meet to compare the grades they have given each candidate and any comments or observations they have noted.

It is important to note any significant variations in the grades given by different panellists to each candidate.

> **For example**, Candidate 1 may have been given an overall grade of A/B by one panellist and C/D by another. This may simply be because one panellist tends to mark high and the other low. It may also be because the two panellists picked up different things from the interview process, in which case these differences need to be discussed.

It is not usually difficult for the panellists to reach consensus about which candidate performed best and should thus be offered the job. However, if it is difficult to reach a decision it may be advisable to have a preliminary discussion at the end of the process and then reconvene the following day to look at the assessments afresh. Ultimately, however, it is the **recruiting manager's** assessment that counts. So, for example, if the organisation is looking for a receptionist and the Office Administrator is the recruiting manager, the Office Administrator's view will win out.

STEP 8: INFORMING CANDIDATES

It is extremely important to give ALL the candidates who have participated in a selection process feedback on their performance, whether they have been successful or not. To do this, notes taken during the process will need to be written up clearly and kept on file for some months.

In most cases it will be possible to select the best candidate for the post and to make him or her an offer of employment. However, occasionally the process will result in a **failed recruitment** because none of the candidates performed well enough or seemed right for the post. The organisation will then have to consider re-advertising the post and going through another selection process.

STEP 9: EMPLOYMENT OFFER

It is quite common for an organisation to make a new employee an offer of employment that is subject to receipt of satisfactory **references**. Two references should normally be sought, at least one of which should be from the candidate's line manager in their previous job. Referees could be supplied with the appropriate job description and asked to comment on the candidate's suitability for the job.

Some of the terms and conditions considered below are specified in the **letter of appointment** which is usually sent to the new employee once he or she has accepted a verbal offer of employment, before he or she formally signs an employment contract.

LETTER OF APPOINTMENT

A letter of appointment usually:
- states the **rate of pay** and specifies when salaries are paid (eg monthly in arrears on the last day of each month) and how they will be paid (preferably by bank transfer)
- outlines any **tax** or other statutory requirements, etc
- gives details of the **probation** period
- provides details of any **increments** to be awarded (eg on the first of April each year, after six months' service) until the staff member has reached the maximum for the grade and provided he or she is NOT involved in any disciplinary procedure.

STEP 10: CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

An employment contract is an important document and the new employee should be advised to:
- read it carefully
- query anything that they do not fully understand with the recruiting manager
- keep a copy of the contract in a safe place.

In addition to an equal opportunities statement and any preconditions of employment, the contract will usually include information about terms and conditions of service. Some terms and conditions will be specified in the contract (see below for guidance on which ones). Others can be included in the organisation's human resources management policy document, which can then be referred to in the employment contract.

5.4   TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

Terms and conditions include a number of aspects:

- Induction and probation
- Hours of work and core hours
- Salary structure and remuneration
- Subsistence and travel expenses
- Sick leave and sick pay
- Maternity and paternity provisions
- Annual leave
- Compassionate leave
- Secondary employment
- Notice period

5.4.1   INDUCTION AND PROBATION

It is normal for an employment contract to specify the details of induction and a probationary period of employment.

It is important to ensure that new members of staff start off on the right footing. A well planned induction process can make all the difference. The more senior the post, the more time and thought will be required. However, ideally all new staff should receive the elements of induction outlined in the box below, although less senior staff will probably become acquainted with the programme on the ground only at a later stage.

DOCUMENTATION	• A copy of the job description and employment contract • Copies of the governing document, the strategic plan, the annual team work plan, the organisational chart, the latest annual review and any other documents relevant to the post • Copies of the financial procedures policy (see Chapter 4) and human resources policy document or relevant sections of these
BRIEFINGS	• A briefing session with the governing body Chair or another trustee • A briefing session with the Executive Director or another senior member of the team • Briefing sessions with staff members whose work is linked in some way to that of the new post holder • A briefing session with the persons responsible for human resources and finance
PROGRAMME VISITS	• For programme staff, a community visit to talk with beneficiaries and/or a briefing session with members of the organisation's target group

It is a good idea to allow new members of staff a set period of time, a probationary period, in which they can decide whether the post is right for them and the management can decide if the new staff member is up to the job. The details of the probationary period and its implications are normally spelled out in the employment contract. See the example below.

EXAMPLE: PROBATION PROVISIONS

- The first six months of employment are **probationary**.
- During this time the employee is expected to demonstrate his or her suitability for the job and to participate in an **interim performance appraisal.**
- A **performance review** will be conducted at the end of the six months. This will recommend one of three things:
    - that the appointment is confirmed and that the contract will continue, or
    - that the probationary period should be extended (for a maximum of another 8 weeks), or
    - that the employment should be terminated.

5.4.2 HOURS OF WORK AND CORE HOURS

Hours of work are also specified in the employment contract and should reflect the practice of other employers in the locality (for example, 38 hours a week, Monday to Friday, excluding one or two hours' break for lunch; or 40 hours a week, Monday to Saturday, with a half-day on Wednesday and Saturday, etc).

The box below outlines a number of options that the organisation may wish to consider.

FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS
- Assess the relative costs and benefits of flexible working hours.

OVERTIME WORKED
- Decide on a policy for additional hours worked by staff.

PART-TIME STAFF
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of employing part-time staff.

WORKING FROM HOME
- Decide the policy on staff working from home.

It is important to consider whether or not some **flexibility** will be allowed on core office hours.

> **For example**, some organisations require that all staff be in the office (unless they are on authorised travel) between the hours of X and Y; they can fit their remaining contract hours into the working day or week around this as they choose. For example, they can come into the office early and leave early. Other organisations expect all staff to work the same hours.

The relative costs and benefits of flexibility versus a more routine structure need to be carefully considered. If some flexibility is allowed as a matter of policy, it is essential to have clear guidelines about whose authorisation is required and how staff time will be recorded and monitored.

Another complex question is whether the organisation will pay members of staff who are required by their manager to work additional hours of **overtime** or give them **time off in lieu** (TOIL) in compensation for this. Think about how this additional pay or time off will be recorded and by whom.

In addition, the organisation will need to have a policy to deal with weekend (or Friday) work by members of staff who are required, for example, to undertake field trips. Are these individuals entitled to a rest and recuperation day on return from the trip? Consider also whether this time can be saved up or must be taken immediately after the person returns.

For any arrangements concerning time off in lieu or rest and recuperation, the policy will need to be clear about who decides what is appropriate in various circumstances. Some organisations have a rule that an agreement between the employee and line manager must be made in advance at a **monthly supervision meeting**, for example.

The organisation may also wish to specify that TOIL should not be unreasonably accumulated. For example, the maximum period taken as TOIL at any one time should not exceed more than one working week. Staff wishing to exceed this limit should first obtain the permission of their line manager or, in the case of the Executive Director, the Chair of the governing body. It can also be specified that all TOIL should be taken before the end of an employee's yearly contract date.

An organisation will need to provide some guidance about hours of work for **part-time** members of staff. It may also wish to stipulate the importance of flexibility, for example for participation in a meeting that demands the presence of all staff.

Last but not least it is sensible to have some rules about whether or not members of staff are permitted to **work from home** and whose authorisation is required for this.

It is important to bear in mind that the more flexibility the organisation allows over working hours, the more complex monitoring and record keeping will become.

5.4.3 SALARY STRUCTURE AND REMUNERATION

To ensure equity and transparency, it is advisable to design a salary structure which contains the following elements: job grade; starting salary; years of service; annual increment. Annual increment is a specified percentage per annum every year for up to five years of continuous employment, and a different percentage for every year after the employee has worked for more than five years.

5.4.4 SUBSISTENCE AND TRAVEL EXPENSES

Most NGOs have a number of staff members who are required to **travel** away from the office as part of their job description. At such times they will need cash to pay for vehicle fuel, meals and sometimes accommodation. Procedures for dealing with subsistence costs and travel expenses (see Chapter 4: Managing finances) should be summarised in the employment contract.

5.4.5 SICK LEAVE AND SICK PAY

When determining the organisation's policy towards sick leave and pay, it is important to consider both any local legislation and the practice of other employers with a good reputation in the sector. Absence owing to sickness can be a major drain on an organisation's resources, so it is important to ensure that it is only taken legitimately, disrupts the work of the organisation as little as possible and does not harm the employee. The box below outlines key procedures to consider for sick leave.

PROCEDURES: SICKNESS ABSENCE
- Notification of absence from work
- Recording sick leave taken
- Managing return to work after sick leave
- Documentary evidence of sickness

It is important to have some rules governing whom staff members must notify if they know that they are going to be absent from the office. Some organisations specify that notice must be given within a specified time frame. For example, this might be not later than three hours after the employee's normal start time. However, such a rule might be difficult to enforce when staff members do not have a telephone at home.

Some organisations use a **notification of sickness absence form** which the staff member concerned must complete and forward to his or her manager on return to work. This can be kept on file as a record.

Another question to consider is how the organisation will ensure that any sick leave taken was legitimate and that it will not continue to have adverse effects on either the staff member or her/his work once s/he has returned to the office.

> Some organisations have a policy that requires the person concerned to attend a return to work **after sickness interview** with their line manager to ensure that any necessary follow-up action is taken and that they are well enough to return to work.

Some organisations require **documentary evidence** of sickness when the leave taken exceeds a certain number of days.

> **For example,** some organisations require a medical certificate or official letter from the individual's doctor (or hospital) after an absence of, for example, seven days. In addition, if sickness continues, a final statement giving the date on which the employee will be fit to resume work may be required.

It is good practice to ensure that employees do not lose pay when they take absence from work owing to sickness or injury. The organisation will need to consider the issue of **sickness pay** from the perspective of both local legislation and good practice, and from the resources it has available. It is sensible to develop some basic scales to govern these payments. It is also essential to make sure that a contingency fund is planned in the annual budget (see Chapter 4: Managing finances).

EXAMPLE: SCALES FOR SICK PAY

YEAR OF SERVICE	FULL PAY	HALF PAY
One year	One month	Two months (after four months' service)
Two years	Two months	Two months
Three years	Three months	Three months
Four years	Four months	Four months
Five years	Five months	Five months
More than five years	Six months	Six months

5.4.6 MATERNITY AND PATERNITY PROVISIONS

Most organisations will have some maternity provisions in their human resource management policy document. However, while it is best practice to have a maternity policy, the precise content of it will be influenced by local legislation and the practice of other NGOs. Some of the procedures to consider are presented in the box below.

MATERNITY PROVISIONS

- Rules governing **when** a woman who becomes pregnant must inform the organisation and **whom** she should inform (for example, her line manager).
- A procedure for assessing that it is safe for the woman to continue with her normal duties and to discuss maternity provisions.
- Guidelines about how long the employee must have been in continuous employment with the organisation to qualify for maternity leave (both paid and unpaid) and time off for ante-natal care, etc.
- Rules outlining the maximum number of days or weeks of maternity leave that can be taken and, if it is paid, the rate of pay that the organisation gives.
- Rules concerning the earliest time at which maternity leave may be taken according to the baby's due date, and the advance notice required; similar rules about when the woman must return to work (if she intends to do so) and how much notice of this she must give.
- A woman who decides not to return to her post after the birth of the child would normally be expected to offer her resignation according to the standard procedure.

Some organisations include entitlements to leave and pay for a staff member who becomes an **adoptive parent**. A provision for this may be included in the policy. In addition, **paternity** or partner leave may be offered to a staff member whose partner has had a baby so that he can be present at the time of the child's birth and for some days afterwards. This leave is sometimes also paid, but any additional paternity leave is unpaid and considered on request.

It is good practice to make provision in the annual budget for at least one maternity and paternity leave package a year, more if the number of staff employed is large.

5.4.7 ANNUAL LEAVE

Some organisations calculate each employee's leave entitlement year from the date the contract started. Others define the same **leave year** for all staff as January to December or April to March. In the latter case, it will be necessary to give annual leave proportionally (pro rata) to members of staff who started or ended a contract with the organisation mid-way during the leave year. This is also usually done for staff who work part time or less than full time.

The number of national holidays additional to annual leave will also need to be decided, as will the basis on which these entitlements are calculated for part time staff on a pro rata basis.

In determining the annual holiday leave that members of staff are entitled to it is helpful to develop a scale that reflects the individual's **length of service** with the organisation.

EXAMPLE: ANNUAL LEAVE

Below five years of service		More than five and less than 10 years' service		More than 10 years of service	
Grades 1-3	22 days	Grades 1-3	25 days	Grades 1-3	30 days
Grades 4-6	20 days	Grades 4-6	23 days	Grades 4-6	26 days

To avoid a situation where staff accumulate large amounts of **backdated leave** it is wise to have a policy which states how many days of annual leave from one year may be carried over into the next and how quickly the balance must be rectified.

> **For example,** the organisation may say that up to 25 per cent of leave days can be carried over for up to three months of the next annual leave year. If they have not been taken by this time, they will be forfeited.

To ensure that the effectiveness of the programme, organisation and team work is not jeopardised by staff taking their annual leave at the same time or in a particularly busy period, the organisation will need a procedure to authorise leave. This is usually done through an **application for leave form** that is signed by the direct line manager and possibly also by the Executive Director or governing body Chair. It is helpful if staff plan and apply for their leave days with as much advance notice as possible, although this may not always be feasible.

5.4.8 COMPASSIONATE LEAVE

Many organisations have a policy to govern compassionate leave, which is time off work for special reasons. It is essential to define what this means clearly.

> **For example,** does it cover employees who suffer the death or serious illness of a partner or child? How will 'a partner' and 'a child' be defined in the policy?

5.4.9 SECONDARY EMPLOYMENT

Although part-time staff may have a second employer this practice is best discouraged among full time employees. The policy document and employment contract might state that staff must obtain the permission of their line manager and/or the Executive Director before taking up additional employment, even on a short term basis.

All employees should be clear about their contractual obligations and should not take external employment which:
- conflicts with the organisation's interests, or
- may bring the organisation into disrepute, or
- puts their health at risk.

5.4.10 NOTICE PERIOD

Inevitably in any organisation there will be employees who voluntarily decide to leave an organisation and circumstances in which the organisation will need to dismiss a person because of poor performance or for other reasons. The human resource management policy document should explain the procedures for resignation and dismissal from employment. It is important to consider the factors outlined in the box below.

RESIGNATION AND DISMISSAL

- What is the **procedure** an employee must follow if s/he wishes to resign from her/his post?
- How much **advance notice** does the **employee** need to give the employer so that the resignation does not leave a post vacant for longer than necessary and to ensure that there is no unnecessary loss of salary?
- How much **advance notice** does the **employer** need to give the employee so that s/he can make the necessary preparations to leave and the organisation can find a replacement?
- What is the **procedure for dismissing** an employee for reasons other than those resulting from a disciplinary procedure?
- What is the procedure for dismissing an employee as part of a **disciplinary process**?
- Under what circumstances does the employee have the right to a recommendation or **reference** when leaving the organisation?

For the smooth running of the organisation it is advisable to define as clearly as possible the period of notice required for members of staff who have satisfactorily completed their probationary period. It is fairest if the same period of notice is required from both parties (employer and employee), except in cases of dismissal for **gross misconduct** as part of a disciplinary procedure, where the process differs.

EXAMPLE: NOTICE PERIOD REQUIRED

JOB CATEGORIES	JOB GRADES	NOTICE PERIOD
Titles	1-3	Three months
Titles	3-6	One month in Year 1 of employment and two months thereafter
Titles	6-9	One month

5.5   PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

How employees are managed is one of the most important determinants of the organisation's success and programme impact. It is thus essential that the organisation discusses and agrees the **core elements** of the performance management system that will be used and documents them clearly in the human resource management policy document.

Principles

It is important to look at the **principles** of performance management that the organisation wishes to follow. The box below presents some questions to consider.

KEY PRINCIPLES

1. Assess the benefits for the organisation
- What are the main benefits of performance management for the organisation?
- What are the main benefits of performance management for the individuals the organisation employs?

2. Agree on key processes
- How will the organisation ensure that the performance management system adopted is fair, transparent and accountable?
- Who will be responsible for reviewing the performance of the Executive Director (for example, the Chair of the governing body)?
- Will the Executive Director delegate responsibility for reviewing the performance of more junior staff to others in the office? How will the line managers give feedback on junior staff performance to the Executive Director?

3. Agree on reviews
- When will annual performance reviews and interim reviews with staff take place?
- Will the agreed outcomes of all reviews be kept on the individual staff member's file or will the interim reviews simply be more informal than the annual review?

4. Discuss preparation
- How will staff prepare themselves for performance reviews?
- Does the organisation have the necessary skills to implement a performance review system or is training required?
- How might such training be acquired?

What is performance management?
Performance management can be defined in different ways, but it usually comprises three core elements:

- The **day-to-day management** of an individual's performance to ensure that what needs to be achieved is achieved effectively and on time. It requires good two-way communication between an individual employee and his or her line manager, and positive and critical feedback about how well the work is going.
- **Performance review or appraisal** to assess if each employee is performing in his or her job according to clearly defined objectives or an agreed work plan. These reviews are usually held once a year, with interim appraisals either monthly or quarterly.
- **Staff development** through which each employee's existing skills, knowledge and experience are developed so that he or she performs as effectively as possible in the job.

Addressing poor performance
Most individuals perform to their best in a management system that is supportive, fair, and transparent and open. But one of the most difficult issues to deal with is the poor performance or under-performance of a staff member.

ADDRESSING POOR PERFORMANCE
The line manager is responsible for making sure that the employee:
- knows what aspects of his or her performance must be improved, how and by when
- understands how achievement of the necessary improvement will be assessed and measured
- is clear about who will provide help or support
- agrees on a date on which to review progress.

In addition the line manager will:
- ensure that improvements are acknowledged (verbally and in writing)
- review the individual's work to ensure that progress is maintained.

If the line manager responsible notes any aspect of an individual's poor performance during day-to-day management of that person, the manager should raise these issues openly and frankly in the monthly or quarterly interim appraisal. There will then be few surprises for either party in the annual appraisal or review process.

What is an annual performance review?
Usually the annual performance appraisal or review includes the elements in the box below.

THE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL
- An assessment of the overall performance of the individual during the previous year in terms of his or her key responsibilities and agreed objectives or work plan.
- A review of each objective or of the different components of the individual's work plan.
- A discussion about the individual's performance highlighting areas of particular achievement or strength and those that need improvement or further development.
- An opportunity for the employee to give the line manager feedback on his or her management and support of the employee over the year and any areas of tension or potential difficulty.
- A discussion of the employee's development needs for the year ahead based on his or her new objectives or work plan.

How to deal with disagreement

Where there is open, transparent and honest communication on performance issues between an employee and her line manager throughout the year, there will usually be little disagreement over the points discussed during the annual performance review. However, this is not always the case.

It is important to invest some time and energy in resolving any disagreement by talking about where the difference of opinion lies and sharing information that 'proves' or 'disproves' the performance or behaviour around which the disagreement revolves. If this does not lead to greater consensus, then the employee should understand that she may take the issue to her line manager's manager. In the case of the Executive Director, this will be the governing body Chair.

Lastly, if all else fails the person who perceives himself to be the injured party may wish to use the **formal grievance procedure** outlined in section 5.7 below.

5.6   STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Staff development is one of the most effective tools for ensuring that the organisation can retain staff and that individuals perform to the best of their potential.

Staff development is all about strengthening each person's existing knowledge, skills and ways of working and helping them to acquire new skills, experience and knowledge so they can perform their jobs more effectively.

Developing people is not only about formal training, although this can play an important role. It is also about learning in different ways, both formal and less formal, through workshops and short courses; mentoring, coaching or shadowing others; on-the-job experience; sharing ideas, skills and experiences with colleagues, clients and partner organisations; self-reflection on mistakes and achievements, what works well and less well; using the internet (if this is an option); and from private study and reading. Some of these forms of learning can be planned.

> **For example**, if a new Programme Officer has little prior experience in developing a project proposal her manager could arrange for her to be mentored by a more experienced Programme Officer in the same or another organisation. The mentor would be a person whom the new Programme Officer could ask for special advice and assistance. The mentor could invite the new Programme Officer to be a shadow during the process of developing a project proposal. The mentor would also look out for useful events such as meetings and workshops that the new Programme Officer might participate in to help develop her skills and confidence.

Other forms of learning are either continuous or occur spontaneously as part of an individual's daily work practice or leisure. Much learning is based on an attitude of mind – the willingness and desire to learn more and to improve practice – and **organisational culture:** an environment which encourages 'no blame' and learning through sharing and doing. This is encouraged through team working, clear policies, robust performance management, and non-hierarchical structures.

5.7 RAISING CONCERNS AT WORK (GRIEVANCE)

In some cases performance and other issues cannot be resolved through dialogue, but require more **formal procedures**. It is important for an organisation to have a policy on how staff can raise concerns at work. Staff members need to understand how to use it if they need to.

In the past all the strands of such a policy fell under the title of a 'grievance policy'. In today's more complex and aware world, it is recognised that some issues, such as bullying and harassment at work, cause grievance of a particularly difficult nature. Hence a new and more innovative approach to employees' concerns in the workplace is developing in the public, private and 'not for profit' sectors.

Why is it important to have a grievance policy?
- Having a grievance policy enables employees to raise concerns at work more easily, whether these concerns are about their own employment or about other aspects of the organisation's operations.

- Such a policy reflects the organisation's commitment to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability. In line with that commitment employees with serious concerns about any aspect of the organisation's work are encouraged to come forward and express them.

To whom do employees air a grievance?
In the vast majority of cases employees who have concerns should be advised to share these with their line manager in the first instance. The employee concerned must be assured that the line manager will treat the concerns seriously and deal with them promptly. In special circumstances, however, this course of action may be inappropriate and therefore the policy should state that the employee may approach a member of the governing body.

When should an employee raise a concern?
It is important to promote good employee relations by encouraging employees to raise concerns about matters affecting their employment at an early stage.

It is also important to emphasise that the organisation will provide all reasonable protection for employees who raise genuine concerns in good faith. Staff must be assured that if they raise a concern in good faith that is not subsequently confirmed by investigation, no action will be taken against them. If, however, it is the considered view of the relevant manager or the governing body Chair that an employee has raised a concern frivolously, maliciously, or for personal gain, it must be emphasised that disciplinary action may be taken.

What is 'whistle blowing'?
Any serious concern an employee may have about any aspect of the organisation's work or about the conduct of other employees, trustees or others acting on behalf of the organisation, should be reported. It is important at a policy level to be very clear about what such concerns mean in practice. In the following example, a serious concern is seen to relate to one of three things.

EXAMPLE: DEFINITION OF A 'SERIOUS CONCERN'

- It is against the organisation's policies.
- It falls below established standards of practice.
- It amounts to improper conduct, including something that is believed to be:
  - against the law
  - a health and safety risk
  - damaging the environment
  - misuse of donated money
  - corruption or unethical conduct
  - abuse of clients or service users.

These concerns must be treated in confidence and every effort must be made to protect the identity of the employee raising the concern if he or she so wishes. However, the employee may be required at the appropriate time to provide a statement or act as a witness. Concerns expressed anonymously are normally NOT investigated unless the relevant manager and the governing body agree that there is sufficient evidence to proceed.

5.8   DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Employees of the organisation are expected to preserve its good reputation at all times and to show the highest standards of behaviour while in its employ. This is particularly important for organisations established to promote the rights and needs of those who are less fortunate in society. Here staff conduct must at all times be beyond reproach. Before starting work with the organisation all new employees should be urged to familiarise themselves with the disciplinary procedures. These should apply to all employees regardless of seniority or grade.

The questions in the box below provide a guide for discussion and decision making on disciplinary procedure.

A DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

What is the purpose of a disciplinary procedure?
It is designed to:
• Help an employee whose conduct or performance gives cause for dissatisfaction to improve the situation.
• Clarify the rights and responsibilities of managers and employees.
• Encourage effective managerial support, thereby reducing the need for formal disciplinary action.

When is the procedure used?
The main areas which might involve the use of the disciplinary procedure are:
• issues of competence
• misconduct
• gross misconduct.

How does a disciplinary procedure work?
• All stages of the procedure must be carried out as quickly and carefully as possible in the interests of all concerned.
• Employees may be suspended on full pay for purposes of investigation or for the protection of other individuals.
• Disciplinary measures might include any one or more of the following:
  ○ verbal warning
  ○ first written warning
  ○ final written warning
  ○ loss of pay
  ○ demotion
  ○ transfer
  ○ dismissal with or without notice.

What are the employee's rights?
At each stage in the procedure employees have the following rights:
• to be informed of the complaint against them
• to state their case and call witnesses if necessary
• to be accompanied by a friend, or work colleague
• to be given a written reason for any decision taken
• to have access to all relevant records and correspondence on file
• to use the appeals procedure.

Appeals
It is important that the disciplinary procedures policy allows employees a right of appeal against any disciplinary decision. Such appeals should be made in writing as promptly as possible (for example, within 10 working days of written notification of a disciplinary decision). If an employee's appeal is to receive a fair hearing it is also important to establish an **appeals panel** which the governing body can ask to review the case. The appeals panel should not have been involved in the disciplinary procedure and may be nominated from outside the organisation.

Disciplinary records
Following any disciplinary action a note should be kept on the employee's file for a specified period of time. Most organisations allow the **expiry time** to be determined by the disciplinary panel according to the gravity of the case.

5.9 HARASSMENT AND BULLYING AT WORK

An increasing number of NGOs are developing a policy to tackle bullying and harassment as part of their overall human resources management policy. Such a policy demonstrates the organisation's commitment to providing a healthy, safe and productive working environment for all its employees. It is based on the assumption that this cannot be achieved if harassment or bullying are tolerated in the workplace. Harassment and bullying are usually defined as coercive, offensive or intimidating behaviour which undermines the right of others to be treated with dignity at work. Examples of such behaviour are given in the box below.

SOME DEFINITIONS OF BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

1) The harassment of people who are perceived by another as being different and/or inferior because of their race, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability.

2) Harassment or bullying of one employee by another which can take a number of forms including the following:
   - physical aggression or intimidation
   - practical jokes which embarrass or humiliate
   - verbal abuse, including personal insults, offensive comments, taunts, threats, malicious gossip or innuendo
   - abuse of an individual's right to personal privacy, for example intrusion into another employee's personal property or into their private life
   - deliberate exclusion of an employee from normal social or professional contact at the workplace.

3) Harassment or bullying of employees by their manager which can include the following behaviours:
   - humiliation, for example reprimanding an employee in front of other employees when this could be done in private
   - verbal abuse, for example personal insults directed at an employee
   - victimisation, for example singling out an employee for unjustified criticism
   - intimidation, for example aggressive behaviour or threats directed at an employee
   - the persistent placing of excessive demands on employees, setting of unrealistic work targets or objectives, or the changing of targets or objectives without good reason
   - instructions or requests to employees to perform inappropriate tasks which are outside the remit of the job, for example personal errands.

Responsibilities

It is important that a policy to prevent harassment and bullying at work outlines clearly the responsibilities of both employees and managers. All employees should be aware that it is their responsibility to maintain appropriate standards of behaviour in the workplace and to ensure that they do not contribute to the creation of a work environment in which harassment or bullying is condoned or encouraged. They should also challenge harassment or bullying on the part of others where appropriate, and should report any incident to their line manager or to the governing body. Over and above this, it is the responsibility of all managers to prevent harassment and bullying wherever possible and to take appropriate action against such behaviour when necessary. In particular, the policy can specify the responsibilities of managers outlined in the example below.

EXAMPLE: MANAGERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

- As part of their normal responsibilities, managers should be alert to the possibility of harassment or bullying.
- Managers should correct any behaviour which could be seen as contrary to this policy and remind employees of the policy when appropriate.
- They should ensure that this policy is communicated to newly appointed employees during their induction and is reinforced at regular intervals in routine meetings, briefings, etc.
- They should provide a supportive framework for any employee with a complaint of harassment or bullying.
- They should take prompt action to deal with harassment or bullying as soon as it is identified, including disciplinary action where appropriate.
- They should keep records of any incidents of harassment or bullying reported or observed.
- They should treat all cases of harassment or bullying with appropriate confidentiality and consult the governing body for advice where appropriate.

Cases of harassment and bullying can be managed either **informally** or **formally**, as outlined in the example below.

EXAMPLE: INFORMAL AND FORMAL PROCEDURES

INFORMAL
- Employees who wish to raise an issue concerning harassment or bullying informally should approach their line manager or the Personnel Officer on the executive committee.

- In minor or isolated cases of harassment or bullying, it may be possible for the issue to be settled informally and confidentially between the parties themselves. For example, one employee could ask another to refrain from a particular type of intimidating behaviour.

FORMAL
- If an informal approach fails, or if harassment or bullying take a more serious form, the employee should bring the situation formally to the attention of her line manager. An employee who feels that she is being harassed or bullied by her line manager should bring the situation to the attention of a more senior manager or to the governing body.

- The employee may nominate someone else to raise the matter with an appropriate manager on her behalf.

- The manager to whom the incident is reported should arrange for an immediate and thorough investigation, and then take appropriate action. Managers should seek advice from the governing body on whether formal disciplinary action is appropriate.

- The manager should take steps to ensure confidentiality and fairness to both parties. It is particularly important that no-one should be victimised as a result of making a complaint or being the subject of a complaint of harassment or bullying.

If an employee is not satisfied that a complaint has been dealt with speedily and effectively, he or she should use the organisation's grievance procedure (see section 5.7 above).

5.10 HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

What is the purpose of a health and safety policy?
Some of the reasons for having a policy to ensure good standards of health and safety for the organisation are outlined in the box below. Consider additional ones that are specific to the organisation or its programme.

EXAMPLE: PURPOSE OF HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

- To provide healthy and safe working conditions, equipment and systems for all employees, volunteers and members.
- To facilitate sharing of information and training around health and safety issues.
- To demonstrate the organisation's commitment to the health, safety and welfare of all employees and other people who come into contact with it.
- To ensure compliance with any national legislation and local best practice.

Who is responsible?
It is advisable to nominate two people in the organisation, a member of staff AND a member of the governing body, to oversee health and safety. The governing body member might have prime responsibility for ensuring that the health and safety policy is adhered to; and the staff member might be responsible for ensuring that day-to-day arrangements on the office premises are appropriate and for undertaking an annual risk assessment.

However, it is important to stress that all employees of the organisation have the responsibility to work together with the management team to achieve a healthy and safe working environment, and to take reasonable care of themselves and others. Employees should be encouraged to refer any concerns they may have about health and safety to the nominated representatives so that they can initiate appropriate action.

5.11 CONCLUSION

After working through this chapter the organisation should have developed a clear human resources management policy that will help to make sure that its most valuable resources – people – are well managed, highly motivated and able to work in a creative yet safe and secure environment. The box below highlights some of the benefits such a policy can bring to an organisation and its staff team.

BENEFITS OF A HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT POLICY

Equal opportunities and diversity	The staff team, partner organisations, beneficiaries and funding agencies know that discrimination is not tolerated: rather, diversity is celebrated.
Selection and recruitment	The right staff are chosen for the right jobs through open and transparent processes.
Terms and conditions	All members of staff know what they are entitled to in terms of remuneration, leave and other benefits.
Performance management	Principles are agreed for managing individual performance and the team understands the annual review process, how to resolve disagreement and how poor performance will be handled.
Staff development	Team members are motivated to seek new knowledge and practice in a learning environment.
Grievance	Staff members understand what a grievance is and know what to do and expect should they air a grievance or 'blow the whistle'.
Disciplinary procedures	Everyone understands how seriously poor performance or misconduct are addressed and what rights and obligations they have.
Bullying and harassment	Staff members know that bullying and harassment are not tolerated and that their managers have special responsibilities to ensure a safe and secure working environment for all.
Health and safety	The purpose of health and safety procedures is understood and responsibilities for observing these are clearly defined.