



Hope Church Network Employment Handbook

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Introduction

Welcome to Hope Church Network!

The purpose of this handbook is to set the working parameters of the charity and employee by supporting employees of the charity in their day to day work and fostering a healthy work culture.

It should be read alongside the employee's contract of employment where employment expectations, benefits and entitlements are detailed, together with the policies linked at the end of this document.

The guiding Biblical principle for Hope Church Network employment (and volunteers!) is found in Colossians 3:23-24:

Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

Background

The charity comprises of two churches which meet in Greatham village and Petersfield market town, Hampshire. The churches together comprise of approximately 170 people, ranging from ages 0 to over 100. Church members and regular attenders typically live in Greatham or Petersfield and the surrounding towns and villages of Bordon, Buriton, Haslemere, Liphook, Liss and Whitehill.

Hope Church Network helps support and facilitate the mission and values of the two churches.

The churches meet to foster and nurture people's faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The churches place active and whole-hearted emphasis on the following:

- The Lordship of Christ over every area of life, our salvation by God's sovereign grace, the work of the Holy Spirit, and our calling to be holy as he is holy.
- Love for one another through encouragement, discipleship, hospitality and service, and, where appropriate, admonition and discipline.
- The full inspiration and authority of the Bible, and its central place in the life and teaching of the churches.
- Its role as salt and light in the local and global community, seeking to be contemporary and outward-looking in evangelism, mission and service.
- Shared leadership and every-member ministry, encouraging and training all its members to use and develop their gifts and passions.
- Support for all at every stage of life – young and old, single and married; each valuing the other and benefiting from each other.
- Mutual respect and understanding over secondary issues, recognising that, although these are not addressed in the Statement of Faith, they are important and may be openly discussed as appropriate.

The churches support the charity in fulfilling its charitable objectives:

- to advance the Christian faith in accordance with the Statement of Faith in such ways and in such parts of the United Kingdom or the world as the Trustees from time to time may think fit;
- to relieve sickness and financial hardship and to promote and preserve good health by the provision of funds, goods or services of any kind, including through the provision of counselling and support in such parts of the United Kingdom or the world as the Trustees from time to time may think fit; and

- to advance education in such ways and in such parts of the United Kingdom or the world as the Trustees from time to time may think fit.

Employment Records

Churchsuite will hold for each employee:

- Employee full name
- Home address, emails and phone details
- Emergency contact
- Details of any absences: sick leave, authorised personal leave, holidays taken and holiday balance, unauthorised leave

Paper file will hold:

- Copy (certified as true copy of original by authorised person) of proof of right to work in the UK (copy of passport, visa, Biometric Residence permit)
- If applicable evidence of migrant's date of entry to the UK
- If applicable copy of evidence of migrant's NI number
- Job Description and skills, qualifications and experience required for the post
- Copies of required qualifications
- Signed copies of Contracts of employment
- Copies of any medical notes

DBS checks must be undertaken for all employees.

Annual diary reminders set up in Churchsuite for charity administrator to audit that all personal details are still correct, and removal of any data for GDPR purposes. (Historical data for any migrant should not be overwritten)

Visa Details

Spreadsheet to hold:

- Name of employee holding visa
- Type of visa
- Record of date of entry to UK and evidence source (eg boarding pass, travel tickets, immigration stamp)
- Note of DBS number if applicable (copy to be held on personal file)
- Details of residence permit, passport number
- Any necessary notification to Home office (change of role, unauthorised leave over 10 days)
- Date of expiry

Alert set up on Churchsuite for 6 months before expiry date of Visa

Employment Policies

Many employment policies and procedures are covered by law, and details of these can be found on www.acas.org.uk.

Absence and leave

The Employment Trustee is responsible for monitoring absence levels. All absences must be recorded on Churchsuite. Any unplanned leave needs to be reported to nominated line manager (Trustee) on first day of absence, and any future contact agreed.

Annual Leave

Annual leave is 25 days per year, excluding bank holidays (of which there are usually 8), pro-rata for part-time employees. The leave year runs from 1 April to 31 March each year. Annual leave requests need to be agreed with nominated line manager, and recorded on Churchsuite.

Annual leave requests must be mutually agreed, ensuring appropriate operational coverage at all times. Where bank holidays are worked, days off in lieu will be given. The Employer will normally expect the Employee to take all leave entitlement within the leave year but, by agreement with the Employment Trustee, up to five days annually can be carried forward.

Starters and Leavers during the holiday year will receive this entitlement pro-rata to the number of calendar months worked.

Sick Leave

Subject to certain statutory qualifying conditions (an employment contract, have done some work under their contract, earn an average of at least £125 per week, give notice and proof of illness when needed) employees are entitled to statutory sick pay after 4 days of sickness absence. This is paid for up to 28 weeks. Up to 5 working days can be self-certified, after which time a medical note must be obtained.

Entitlement to Occupational paid sick leave is related to length of service as follows:-

Length of Service	Entitlement to	
	Full Pay	Half Pay
During probation period (where applicable)	Nil	Nil
During first year of employment	1 month	1 month*
During second year	2 months	1 month
During third year	4 months	2 months
During fourth and fifth years	5 months	2 months
After five years	6 months	3 months

* after completing six months' service.

Payments for Occupational sick pay include any payment for Statutory Sick pay.

On or immediately before the day an individual returns to work, however long the period of sickness absence, they should have a 'return to work' discussion with their nominated line manager or Trustee. This should cover:

- reason for absence
- any support needed to assist return to work
- any treatment or activities individual needs to undertake to ensure full recovery

If an employee is returning from a long period of sick leave, the 'return to work' meeting should cover the following:

- Make sure the employee is ready to return to work
- Talk about any work updates that happened while they were off
- Look at any recommendations from the employee's doctor
- See if they need any support
- If the employee has a disability, see if changes are needed in the workplace to remove or reduce any disadvantages ('reasonable adjustments')
- Consider a referral to a medical service such as an occupational health provider
- Agree on a suitable return to work plan, for example a phased return to work

Dependents' Leave

Anyone classed as an employee has the right to time off for a 'dependent'.

This time off is for dealing with unexpected issues and emergencies involving the dependent, including leave to arrange or attend a funeral. This may be paid or unpaid depending on the circumstances.

Compassionate Leave

Compassionate leave may be taken for bereavement or serious illness of a close family member. Compassionate leave may be paid for up to 5 days, or more at the Trustees' discretion.

Parental Leave

Statutory rules apply for maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental leave and parental leave. For further details please see the ACAS website: <https://www.acas.org.uk/maternity-paternity-and-adoption-leave-and-pay>

Public Duties

Employees are permitted to time off to undertake jury service when they are called. Should jury service impact on significant calendar dates such as Easter or Christmas, employees should discuss with the Trustees the best time to carry out their jury duty as it may be possible to postpone the duty to a later date.

Employees will be paid for the time taken off to do jury service but should claim money from the court to recover their financial losses. If their salary is reimbursed, this should be paid back to Hope Church Network. For further details, please visit the Government website: [What you can claim if you're an employee - GOV.UK](#)

Sabbatical

Employees are permitted to request a sabbatical after 7 years' continuous service. Further

information is contained within the Sabbatical policy.

Display Screen Equipment

Where our employees regularly use computers daily, for continuous periods of an hour or more, they will be asked to fill in a Workstation Assessment Form. We will provide advice and/or equipment to address any issues identified. We will also provide information, training, reimbursement of the cost of eye/eyesight tests (on request) and special spectacles if needed for VDU use only. Current expenses reimbursed (upon production of a receipt) will be up to £30 for an eye test and up to £75 for VDU use glasses.

Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

Hope Church Network encourages equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace as they are good practice and support our core values. Refer to Equalities, diversity and inclusion policy for further information.

Expenses

All expenses reasonably incurred while on Hope Church business will be reimbursed. Expenses claims must be presented in good time and supported by receipts. If mileage is claimed, this will be reimbursed at the HMRC rate (currently 45p per mile). Employees should ensure that all possible effort is made to minimise the expense, such as using the most economical type of travel and accommodation.

Consumable items such as stationery, postage, resource material and phone calls will be reimbursed by the Employer periodically on production of receipts.

Motor mileage for necessary journeys will be reimbursed at the rate of 45p per mile. This rate will also form part of the annual salary review. Train or other public transport fares (standard class) will be reimbursed at cost on the production of receipts.

A book allowance will be agreed by the employment committee and will also be reviewed annually.

For further guidance on expenses, refer to the Expenses policy.

Intellectual Property

Content created by employees for the purpose of and use within Hope Church Network, will belong to Hope Church Network and must be made available to the charity. Intellectual property includes inventions, literary and artistic works, design and symbols.

An employee, on leaving employment with Hope Church Network, must ensure all content created as part of their employment is shared with the employment trustee.

Lone Working

See Health and Safety Policy.

Pay

Annual pay reviews are conducted in March each year, taking into account UK inflation, what other organisations in and beyond the sector are doing, and affordability. Benchmarking will track similar roles in other relevant organisations, for example UK state education.

Increases will usually be effective on 1 April each year and individuals will receive annual written notification of their salary.

Refer to the Pay Review policy for further information.

Social Media

Hope Church Network recognises the importance of social media as a powerful tool to engage with church members, supporters, raise awareness, and further our mission. Refer to the social media policy for further guidance.

Monitoring and Enforcement

- Hope Church Network reserves the right to monitor and audit technology resource usage to ensure compliance with this policy.
- Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including but not limited to, suspension of technology privileges, termination of employment, or legal action.

Technology and data security

Where it is deemed that an employee needs a particular type of equipment necessary to perform their role, and they do not already own something suitable, the Trustees' will approve this on consideration of the need and value for money. It is accepted that Employees may also use this equipment for personal use, but they should be aware that it must primarily be used for Hope Church Network business, or they may become liable for tax as a benefit in kind.

The guidance regarding acceptable use and security should be followed.

Acceptable Use

- All technology resources provided by or used for Hope Church Network are to be used for official charity purposes.
- Users are expected to respect and protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of data and information stored on Hope Church Network's systems.
- Personal use of technology resources should be non-disruptive and in compliance with this policy.
- Users must adhere to all applicable laws and regulations while using Hope Church Network 's technology resources.

Unacceptable Use

- Any use of technology resources for illegal, unethical, or fraudulent activities is strictly prohibited.
- Users are not allowed to install or use unauthorized software, hardware, or other devices that may compromise the security or performance of Hope Church Network's systems.
- Harassment, discrimination, or the creation and dissemination of offensive or inappropriate material using Hope Church Network 's technology resources is not allowed.
- Unauthorised access to, or attempts to access, confidential or sensitive information is strictly prohibited.

Data Security

- Users are responsible for protecting passwords, access credentials, and any other information related to the security of Hope Church Network's technology resources.
- They should remain alert to attempts to breach Cyber Security (e.g. phishing emails, links from

unknown sources, unsolicited requests for personal information, downloading apps from untrusted sources)

- Users should report any suspected security breaches, incidents, or vulnerabilities promptly to the Data Protection Lead.

Email and Communication

- Users should use Hope Church Network 's email system responsibly and refrain from sending confidential or sensitive information through unsecured channels.
- Users must not engage in the distribution of spam, phishing emails, or any other malicious communication.
- Content contained within emails are the property of Hope Church Network. Upon leaving employment, all departing employee's mailboxes will revert to the charity's control.

Travel

[Employees who use their car for work-related purposes must ensure they have business car insurance](#). This is a legal requirement in the UK, and having the correct insurance ensures that claims can be made in case of accidents or incidents while driving for business reasons. Work related purposes does not include travel to and from the designated work place / office but will include travel outside of this such as to pastoral visits, home visits, travel to conferences, etc.

Where public transport is used for business, refer to Expenses above.

Welfare and development

Feedback and Welfare reviews

Hope Church Network aims to create a culture where all employees and volunteers should be supported to grow and develop in their roles and in their spiritual lives. It is therefore important that individuals can both voice their thoughts and concerns and receive nurturing feedback from their peers and congregations (where relevant). Hope Church family will be encouraged at 6 monthly intervals to give nurturing feedback to employees and volunteers. This can be given directly to the individual, or via one of the Elders. Feedback must be framed positively ("what went well and why, what could be improved and how/why"). See also the Volunteer Policy.

For Elders: ongoing Feedback from other Elders

Elders should encourage each other through ongoing feedback and discussion throughout the year. Elders will take it in turns to receive feedback from all other Elders, on a regular, rotating basis.

For Deacons:

Elders will conduct Welfare and Feedback Reviews annually with each Deacon.

For all employees: Welfare Review

This will be held annually with all employees by the Trustees' employment Sub-Committee, and will cover:

- Look back at what was achieved and how this was done
- Which aspects of the role are most difficult or demanding
- Look to the future at what is coming up and are there any learning and development needs to be met to help fulfil future plans
- Discuss where appropriate employee's plans/aspirations for the future

Conduct and Ethics

Hope Church Network has mechanisms to address any grievance or disciplinary matters which may arise in the course of employment.

Refer to the Disciplinary policy or grievance policy for further information.

Hope Church Network has mechanisms to protect and safeguard against harassment and bullying in the workplace/charity and church. Refer to the Anti-Harassment and Bullying policy or [the ACAS advice on anti-bullying and harassment](#).

Exit interviews

The employment trustee will undertake an exit interview with a departing employee.

The interview will endeavour to ensure the employer and employee finish well together, to record the employee's reason for leaving and to provide space for the employee to feedback any observations or suggestions regarding the organisation and workplace.

The interview will also address any outstanding grievances which may remain unresolved (for whatever reason) at the time of leaving employment. For further information, refer to the Grievance policy.

Related policies

- Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy
- Expenses policy (this is included in the Financial Management Policy)
- Disciplinary policy
- Grievance policy
- Pay review policy
- Sabbatical policy
- Social Media policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Health and Safety Policy