

big wide talk

## Staff Handbook

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## Introduction

Big Wide Talk is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee which wants:

- parents whatever their income or relative status to be able to influence the services their children need.
- parents whatever their income or relative status to have the time they want with their children.
- parents to believe that everyone can gain a fair distribution of resources.
- children to go to school knowing that they can make themselves understood and confident that people around them will want to know what they are thinking and feeling.
- to create new economic relationships that sustain and draw strength from the love between parents and children.

The organisation is striving to achieve these aims through a process of participative partnership with individuals, parents and professionals, and organisations in particular local authorities, schools and children's centres at the most local level. The participative nature of the methods and tools developed and used within Big Wide Talk are reflected in the conditions of employment and governance arrangements.

## **Equal Opportunities Policy**

Big Wide Talk is striving to be an equal opportunity employer. Therefore we will aim to treat all workers and job applicants equally. There will be no discrimination in respect of marital status, gender, sexuality, disability, age, colour, race, religion, nationality, ethnic or national origins. There will be no discrimination on these grounds in the terms and conditions offered to workers or job applicants. The policy also covers recruitment, induction, conduct at work and the disciplinary and grievance procedure. The only basis for promotion or selection is the Chief Executive's considered opinion of the applicant's suitability for the job. All workers have a legal and moral obligation not to discriminate and to report incidents of discrimination against any individual or group of individuals. Any worker found to be discriminating will face disciplinary proceedings. These policies and principles are carried into the work of the network of Big Wide Talk local groups and the specific partnerships within which the organisation is engaged.

## **Staff and organisational development**

Big Wide Talk is committed to the training and development of its entire network so that everyone will gain the necessary skills to reach their full potential. This will assist in enabling Big Wide Talk to achieve its aims. By increasing the skills and knowledge of its staff Big Wide Talk will produce confident, highly qualified staff working as an effective and efficient team.

Individual training and development needs will be identified within the participative approach of the national network, ongoing research and the system of co-ordination.

All staff and other participants will be continuously asked to record their own learning within a system of reflection and the explicit use of learning journals. Development is part of the ongoing process and *raison d'être* of Big Wide Talk. Individual learning will be identified and addressed both in house and using external programmes in line with the emerging development of Big Wide Talk methods and tools.

## **Grievance**

### **Grievance procedure**

This procedure should be used to settle all disputes and grievances you wish to raise. The purpose is to settle any grievance fairly, simply and quickly.

1. You should first discuss your grievance with the person involved
2. If this does not resolve the matter you should talk to the Chief Executive and make a verbal complaint.
3. If the matter remains unresolved it will be referred to a meeting of the employer or a subcommittee of it which you will be entitled to attend and address, either yourself, or through and with a representative. The decision will be given to you in writing.
4. If you are unsatisfied with the decision, you have the right of appeal.
5. You should ensure that there is no unreasonable delay in the implementation of this procedure

## **Disciplinary Procedure**

### **Purpose and scope**

Big Wide Talk's aim is to encourage improvement in individual conduct. This procedure sets out the action, which will be taken when disciplinary rules are breached.

### **Principles**

Minor faults may be dealt with informally. However, if the informal discussion does not lead to an improvement or where the matter is more serious the following procedure is to be used.

The procedure is designed to establish the facts quickly and to deal consistently with disciplinary issues. No disciplinary action will be taken until the matter has been fully investigated.

You should ensure that there is no unreasonable delay in the implementation of this procedure.

You must take all reasonable steps to attend any hearing.

At every stage you will have the opportunity to state your case and be accompanied, if you wish, at the hearing by a trade union representative or by a fellow employee at any disciplinary interview.

Prior to a disciplinary hearing the employer will send you a written statement explaining:

- your alleged conduct or characteristics, or other circumstances which have led the employer to contemplate dismissing or taking disciplinary action against you;
- the basis for the complaint and the nature of the evidence;
- that you have the right to be accompanied;
- the range of possible outcomes; and
- inviting you to attend a disciplinary hearing.

You have the right to appeal against any disciplinary penalty or decision and to be accompanied by a trade union official or fellow employee at any appeal hearing.

A warning will usually contain a date after which it will be disregarded in any further disciplinary hearing. This will generally be 12 months but in appropriate cases, the right is reserved to extend this period. Expired warnings may be taken into account if dismissal is considered.

The procedure may be implemented at any stage where in the opinion of the senior management or trustees the circumstances justify such a course of action.

## **Disciplinary Procedure *cont***

### **Sanctions**

Stage 1 – First written warning

If there are concerns about standards of conduct or work performance, A WRITTEN WARNING will be given which will include the reason for the warning and a note that, if there is no improvement or a repeat of the offence A FINAL WRITTEN WARNING will be given

Stage 2 - Final written warning

If the offence is very serious or if conduct, performance or attendance is still unsatisfactory, A FINAL WRITTEN WARNING will be given making it clear that any recurrence of the offence or other serious misconduct will result in dismissal. The warning will also include details of the complaint and the length of any period over which the employee's performance or conduct will be reviewed.

Stage 3 - Dismissal

If there is no satisfactory improvement or if further misconduct occurs, the employee will be DISMISSED with appropriate notice.

### **Gross misconduct**

If, after investigation, it is confirmed that you have committed gross misconduct, examples being (the list is not exhaustive) – theft, damage to company property, fraud, incapacity for work due to being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, physical assault and gross insubordination, conduct endangering any person or causing serious damage to the business or reputation of the company, misuse of our electronic communication system or computer equipment, accessing information on our computer database which you have no authority to access, gross negligence, breach of professional ethics or good conduct the normal consequence will be dismissed without notice or pay in lieu of notice.

### **Suspension**

While the alleged misconduct is being investigated you may be suspended, during which time you will be paid your normal salary. Such suspension, which does not imply guilt or blame, will be for as short a period as possible. In cases of alleged gross misconduct the suspension may be without pay or at reduced pay.

### **Appeals**

If you wish to appeal against any disciplinary decision including dismissal you must notify the employer in writing within five working days. The notice must specify the issues you wish to appeal or contest. The employer will hear the appeal and decide the case as impartially as possible.

## **Leave for family responsibilities and other reasons**

The following statutory entitlements are addressed in this section:

Maternity Leave,  
Paternity Leave,  
Adoptive Leave,  
Parental Leave,  
Dependant Care Leave  
Flexible Working.

Also addressed in this section:

Compassionate Leave  
Other Time Off Given at the Discretion of Big Wide Talk

### **Maternity**

#### **Time off for antenatal care**

Employees are entitled to take reasonable time off during their normal working hours to receive antenatal care, although whenever it is possible to do so you should arrange your appointments at the start or end of your working day. Antenatal care includes appointments with your GP, midwife, health visitor, hospital clinics and relaxation and parent craft classes.

You should advise your manager/supervisor that you will be absent as far in advance of your appointment as possible. You may be asked to produce your appointment card, or some other confirmation of your appointment.

There will be no deduction from your salary for attendance at authorised antenatal appointments, including any time spent travelling to and waiting for the appointment.

#### **Maternity leave**

All employees will be entitled to take 26 weeks of ordinary maternity leave, irrespective of your length of service or the number of hours worked each week.

If you have completed 26 weeks of service by the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the expected week of the birth of your child, you will be able to take additional maternity leave of up to 26 weeks immediately following the end of ordinary maternity leave.

Legislation prohibits you from returning to work during the two weeks immediately after the birth of your child. This is known as compulsory maternity leave.

## **Leave for family responsibilities and other reasons *cont***

You can start your maternity leave at any time after the 11<sup>th</sup> week before the week in which your child is due up until the birth of your child.

### **Maternity pay**

If you have at least 26 weeks service by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> week before your child is expected to be born, subject to your National Insurance contributions, you are entitled to Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) regardless of whether or not you intend to return to work.

SMP is payable for a maximum of 26 weeks. For the first six weeks, SMP will be paid at 90% of your average weekly earnings. For the remaining 20 weeks, SMP will be paid at the standard rate, which is prescribed by regulations and is adjusted from time to time. We will inform you of the current applicable rate. If your average weekly earnings fall below the standard rate, SMP will be paid at 90% of your average weekly earnings.

SMP is subject to tax and National Insurance contributions.

It is very important that you work up to the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the week in which your baby is expected. If you do not, you will lose your right to payment of SMP unless you are certified as incapable of work.

If you do not qualify for SMP, you may be able to claim Maternity Allowance. This is payable by the Benefits Agency and is based on your recent National Insurance contribution record. If you are not entitled to SMP, we will supply you with a form to take to the DSS to enable you to claim Maternity Allowance.

If your contract of employment provides for enhanced maternity pay, you will be entitled to such pay in accordance with the terms set out in your contract.

### **Procedure**

If you wish to take maternity leave and claim SMP, you must provide notification in writing addressed to the Line manager no later than the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the expected week of your child's birth. The notice must state the following:

- confirmation that you are pregnant
- the week in which your child is due
- the date you are intending to start your maternity leave (this date must not be earlier than the 11<sup>th</sup> week before the expected week of birth)

## **Leave for family responsibilities and other reasons *cont***

- the date from which you will be claiming SMP
- Along with the written notice, you should enclose a MAT B1 certificate signed by your GP or midwife confirming the expected week of confinement.

If you would like to change the start date of your maternity leave, you must give notice in writing at least 28 days in advance of your original date for starting leave or 28 days before the new start date whichever is earlier. If it is not reasonably practicable to give 28 days notice in writing, you must give written notice as soon as it is reasonably practicable.

Within 28 days of receiving your notice, we shall notify you in writing of the date when your maternity leave will end.

In certain circumstances your ordinary maternity leave may automatically start earlier than the date you notify as your start date for maternity leave. This applies where you are absent from work wholly or partly because of pregnancy four weeks before the expected week of confinement or if you give birth before that date.

### **Contractual benefits**

You will continue to receive your contractual benefits and your normal terms and conditions will apply except for those terms relating to wages and salary during your ordinary maternity leave period and during a period of compulsory maternity leave. This includes the accrual of holiday entitlement. Please note that holiday must be taken in the year it is earned. Your period of ordinary maternity leave will count towards your period of continuous service and will therefore also count towards the assessment of your seniority and pension rights.

During additional maternity leave, the rights and obligations under your contract of employment are reduced. You must still give notice in accordance with your contract if you want to leave. In addition, you will continue to be bound by your obligations of confidentiality and loyalty. Only statutory holiday will accrue. Throughout the period of additional maternity leave, your service is continuous but will not count for seniority or pensionable service. You will therefore return with the seniority and pension rights, as they would have been if your employment prior to additional maternity leave was continuous with the employment following it.

In relation to any period of *paid* ordinary maternity or additional maternity leave, our pension contributions, if applicable, will be

## **Leave for family responsibilities and other reasons *cont***

calculated as if you were working normally and receiving normal remuneration. In relation to any period of *unpaid* ordinary maternity leave your occupational pension rights will continue as if you were working normally but the level of contributions will depend on the rules of the relevant pension scheme. In relation to any period of *unpaid* additional maternity leave, whether or not your occupational pension rights will continue and the level of contributions will depend on the rules of the relevant pension scheme.

### **Health and Safety**

All employees should notify Big Wide Talk as soon as they are pregnant so any risks posed to the health of the expectant mother or the unborn child can be identified and addressed promptly. This risk assessment should be reviewed and revisited throughout the pregnancy and also whilst breast-feeding and/or who have given birth within the last 6 months. This risk assessment will be informed by guidelines published by HSE and specific medical information which may have been supplied by the employee's midwife or doctor.

If you have any concerns about your own health and safety at any time you should consult your line manager immediately. If any employees are employed in positions which have been identified as posing a risk to their health or that of their unborn child they will be notified immediately and arrangements will be made to eliminate that risk.

### **Returning to work**

You do not have to notify us separately of your return date. It will be assumed that you will come back to work on the date we have notified you is the end of your leave period. However, if you are entitled to additional maternity leave and you only wish to take ordinary maternity leave, you must give us at least 28 days notice in advance of the date you intend to return to work. Likewise, if you wish to return before the end of either your ordinary maternity leave or additional maternity leave, you must give us at least 28 days notice in advance of the date you intend to return to work. We have the right to defer your return until 28 days notice has been given if you have not given us 28 days notice, but not beyond the date on which your maternity leave ends.

If you return to work immediately after a period of ordinary maternity leave you will return to work in the same job that you left before you started your maternity leave. If for health and safety reasons you were doing a different job from your usual one while you were pregnant you

## **Leave for family responsibilities and other reasons *cont***

may be required to return to that different job for a short time if you are still at risk when you return to work.

If you return to work from a period of additional maternity leave, you will return to the same job you were employed to do or if this is not reasonably practicable, you will be offered a similar job on equally favourable terms and conditions. If you decide not to return to work after all, please confirm this in writing giving the requisite notice period, which is required by your contract of employment.

It may, at our discretion, be possible for you to return to work on a part-time or job share basis and you should consider our policy on applying to work flexibly.

### **Paternity**

#### **Paternity leave**

If you have at least 26 weeks continuous service by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> week before your child is due, you will be entitled to take one week or two consecutive weeks of paternity leave in order to care for your child and support the child's mother. You must be the biological father of the child and/or the husband or partner of the child's mother and you must have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing in order to be entitled to paternity leave.

Paternity leave cannot be taken as odd days and must be taken as either one or two consecutive weeks (not 2 separate weeks). Paternity leave can be taken following the birth of your child but must be completed within 56 days of the child's birth or the child's expected birth if the child is born early.

#### **Paternity pay**

If you qualify for paternity leave, you will be entitled to Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP) for the duration of your paternity leave, subject to your National Insurance contributions.

SPP is a standard rate, which is prescribed by regulations and is adjusted from time to time. We will inform you of the current applicable rate. If your average weekly earnings are below the standard rate, SPP will be 90% of your normal weekly earnings.

If your contract of employment provides for enhanced paternity pay, you will be entitled to such pay in accordance with the terms set out in your contract.

## **Leave for family responsibilities and other reasons *cont***

### **Procedure**

If you would like to take paternity leave and claim SPP, you must give notice in writing addressed to the Line manager by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> week before your child is due. The notice must state:  
whether you intend to take one or two weeks of leave;  
the week in which your child is due.

- when you want your paternity leave to start;
- that you are taking leave to care for your child or to support your child's mother or both;
- that you have or expect to have responsibility for the upbringing of your child;

that you are the father of the child and/or the partner or husband of the child's mother.

We can supply you with a pre-printed form on which you can confirm your entitlement to and intention to take paternity leave and pay.

If you need to change the start date of your paternity leave, you must submit a request in writing at least 28 days in advance of the date you wish your leave to begin unless it is not reasonably practicable to do so.

### **Contractual benefits**

Throughout your period of paternity leave, you will continue to receive your contractual benefits and your normal terms and conditions will apply, except for the terms relating to pay and wages.

### **Returning to work**

When you return to work from paternity leave, you will return to the same job.

### **Adoption**

#### **General**

If you are adopting a child on your own or are a member of a couple who is jointly adopting a child, you may be entitled to adoption leave and pay.

If your partner is an individual who is adopting a child on his/her own or you are one of couple who are adopting a child jointly but your partner has decided to take adoption leave, you may be entitled to paternity leave and pay and you should consult our policy on adoptive paternity.

## **Leave for family responsibilities and other reasons *cont***

### **Adoption leave**

If you have at least 26 weeks continuous service leading into the week that you are notified of being matched with a child for adoption by an approved adoption agency, you will be entitled to adoption leave. In order to qualify for adoption leave, you must be *newly* matched with a child for adoption. This means that if for example, you are a stepparent and you are adopting your partner's child, you will not be considered newly matched with a child for adoption and will not qualify for adoption leave.

You will be entitled to 26 weeks ordinary adoption leave and 26 weeks additional adoption leave, giving a total of 52 weeks leave.

### **Adoption pay**

You will be entitled to Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) which is payable for a maximum of 26 weeks.

SAP is a standard rate, which is prescribed by regulations and is adjusted from time to time. We will inform you of the current applicable rate. If your average weekly earnings are below the standard rate, SAP will be 90% of your average weekly earnings.

If you do not qualify for SAP, you may be entitled to other state benefits and you should contact your local Benefits Agency for further information.

If your contract of employment provides for enhanced adoption pay, you will be entitled to such pay in accordance with the terms of your contract.

### **Procedure**

If you wish to take adoption leave and claim SAP, you must within 7 days of being notified that you have been matched with a child for adoption, provide notice in writing addressed to the Line manager. The notice must state the following:

that you have been newly matched with a child for adoption  
the date when it is expected that the child will be placed with you  
the date when you wish to begin your adoption leave  
the date on which you expect SAP to begin

Along with the written notice, you should enclose a matching certificate from the adoption agency confirming the matching of a child with you and the expected date of placement.

## **Leave for family responsibilities and other reasons *cont***

If you would like to change the start date of your adoption leave, you must give notice in writing at least 28 days in advance of the date on which you would like your leave to begin. If it is not reasonably practicable to give 28 days notice in writing, you must give written notice as soon as it is reasonably practicable.

Within 28 days of receiving your notice, we shall notify you in writing with confirmation of the date when your adoption leave will end.

### **Contractual benefits**

You will continue to receive your contractual benefits and your normal terms and conditions will apply except for those terms relating to wages and salary during your ordinary adoption leave period. This

includes the accrual of holiday entitlement. Please note that holiday must be taken in the year it is earned. Your period of ordinary adoption leave will count towards your period of continuous service and will therefore also count towards the assessment of your seniority and pension rights.

During additional adoption leave, the rights and obligations under your contract of employment are reduced. You must still give notice in accordance with your contract if you want to leave. In addition, you will continue to be bound by your obligations of confidentiality and loyalty. Only statutory holiday will accrue. Throughout the period of additional adoption leave, your service is continuous but will not count for seniority or pensionable service. You will therefore return with the seniority and pension rights as they would have been if your employment prior to additional adoption leave was continuous with employment following it.

### **Returning to work**

You do not have to notify us separately of your return date. It will be assumed that you will come back to work on the date we have notified you is the end of your leave period. If you wish to return before the end of your leave period, you must give us at least 28 days notice. We have the right to defer your return by 28 days if you have not given us 28 days notice but not beyond the date on which your leave ends.

If you return to work immediately after a period of ordinary adoption leave, you will return to work in the same job that you were employed to do prior to your leave.

## **Leave for family responsibilities and other reasons *cont***

If you return to work from a period of additional adoption leave, you will return to the same job you were employed to do or if this is not reasonably practicable, you will be offered a suitable alternative job.

It may at our discretion be possible for you to return to work on a part-time or job share basis and you should consider our policy on applying to work flexibly.

### **Adoptive Paternity Leave**

If you are part of a couple jointly adopting a child and your partner is taking adoption leave or you are the spouse or partner of a person adopting a child you may be eligible for adoptive paternity leave. You must have 26 weeks continuous service leading into the week in which the adopter is notified of being matched with a child, expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing and be the adopter's spouse or partner.

Adoptive paternity leave cannot be taken as odd days and must be taken as either one or two consecutive weeks (not 2 separate weeks). Adoptive paternity leave can start following the placement of your child, from a chosen number of days or weeks after the date of the child's placement or from a chosen date. Adoptive paternity leave must be completed within 56 days of the child's placement. Only one period of leave is available irrespective of whether more than one child is placed.

### **Adoptive paternity pay**

If you qualify for adoptive paternity leave, you will be entitled to Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP) for the duration of your paternity leave, subject to your National Insurance contributions.

SPP is a standard rate, which is prescribed by regulations and is adjusted from time to time. We will inform you of the current applicable rate. If your average weekly earnings are below the standard rate, SPP will be 90% of your normal weekly earnings.

If your contract of employment provides for enhanced paternity pay, you will be entitled to such pay in accordance with the terms set out in your contract.

### **Procedure**

If you would like to take adoptive paternity leave and claim SPP, you must give notice in writing addressed to the Line manager within 7 days of the adopter being notified by their adoption agency that they have

## **Leave for family responsibilities and other reasons *cont***

been matched with a child unless this is not reasonably practicable. The notice must state:  
the date on which the adopter was notified of having been matched with the child;  
when the child is expected to be placed;  
whether you intend to take one or two weeks of leave and pay;  
when you want your adoptive paternity leave to start;  
that you have chosen to take SPP and not SAP; and  
the date on which you expect SPP to begin.

We can supply you with a pre-printed form on which you can confirm your entitlement to and intention to take adoptive paternity leave and pay.

If we request it, you must provide a signed declaration stating that:  
you are taking leave to care for the child and/or to support the child's adopter;  
you are married to or the partner of the child's adopter; and

you have, or expect to have, the main responsibility (apart from the adopter's responsibility) for the upbringing of the child.

If you need to change the start date of your adoptive paternity leave, you must submit a request in writing at least 28 days in advance of the date you wish your leave to begin unless it is not reasonably practicable to do so.

You must notify us 28 days in advance of the date you expect your SPP to start, unless it is not reasonably practicable to do so.

### **Contractual benefits**

Throughout your period of adoptive paternity leave, you will continue to receive your contractual benefits and your normal terms and conditions will apply, except for the terms relating to pay and wages.

### **Returning to work**

When you return to work from adoptive paternity leave, you will return to the same job.

### **Parental Leave**

#### **Right to parental leave**

Unpaid parental leave is available to all employees who have completed one year's service. The employee must be the parent and be named on the birth certificate or have acquired formal parental responsibility under the Children Act 1989.

## **Leave for family responsibilities and other reasons *cont***

On recruitment, where it is known that there is a child or children under age 5, the employee must declare how much, if any, parental leave has already been taken in respect of each child. This will be checked with previous employers because the right to 13 weeks unpaid leave is a total with all employers.

### **Amount of leave and when it can be taken**

Subject to the production of documentation (e.g. birth certificate) evidencing both the birth date and the parents' names, a maximum of 13 weeks' unpaid leave can be taken between the date of birth and the child's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.

This leave may be taken at any time within the year but must not exceed a total of 4 weeks (part weeks counting as a whole week) in each year. (E.g. Leave must be taken in blocks of one week with part of a week (single day) counting as a complete week. Thus an employee, other than in respect of a disabled child, taking 4 individual days in 4 or more separate weeks will use their whole year's entitlement).

For adopted children (subject to the production of documentation) the leave may be taken within the first 5 years after the date of adoption (or until the child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday if sooner).

For disabled children the leave may be taken in days that will count only as individual days, and can be taken up until the child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

### **Notice period**

At least 21 days' notice of the required dates must be given. We have the right to postpone the leave for up to 6 months for operational reasons although we will endeavour to be as flexible as possible. Notice of postponement will be given within 7 days of receipt of your notice.

Expectant or adopting fathers may 'book' up to 4 weeks' parental leave to follow the birth or adoptions of their babies by providing 21 days' notice of the dates required. We will not postpone such leave.

### **Evidence of Entitlement**

Big Wide Talk reserves the right to request sight of evidence that an employee is the parent of a child or has parental responsibility for the

## **Leave for family responsibilities and other reasons *cont***

child and that the service requirements with previous employers have been met. Examples of what might be suitable evidence are:

Information contained on the child's birth certificate

Papers confirming a child's adoption or the date of placement in adoption cases

In the case of a disabled child, the award of disability living allowance for the child.

**Right to Return to the Same or Similar Job**

At the end of any Parental Leave of up to 4 weeks duration an employee is guaranteed the right to return to the same job as before.

If the leave is for a longer period than 4 weeks, the employee is entitled to return to the same job, or if that is not reasonably practicable, to a similar job, with similar or better conditions.

If Parental Leave follows additional Maternity Leave and it would not have been reasonably practicable for the woman to return to her previous job, and it is still not reasonably practicable at the end of Parental Leave, she is entitled to return to a similar job which has the same or better status, terms and conditions as the old job.

## **Dependant Care Leave**

### **Right to dependant care leave**

All employees are entitled to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off during working hours in order to take emergency action that is necessary in unforeseen situations:

to provide assistance when a dependant falls ill, gives birth or is injured or assaulted

to make long term arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured

in consequence of the death of a dependant

to deal with an unexpected disruption or breakdown of care arrangements for a dependant

to deal with an unexpected incident involving a child of an employee during school hours.

A dependant includes an employee's wife, husband, child, parent or someone who lives in the same household as the employee but is not his or her employee, tenant, lodger or boarder. It is also any person who reasonably relies on you for assistance when he or she falls ill or is injured or assaulted or who relies on you to make arrangements for the provision of care in the event of illness or injury.

## **Leave for family responsibilities and other reasons *cont***

### **Amount of time to which employee is entitled**

There is no express limitation on the amount of time off that an employee can take but it must be reasonable in the circumstances. The Government has given the example that if a child falls sick with chickenpox, the leave should be enough to help the employee cope with the crisis and to make longer term care arrangements, but not to take two weeks off to look after the child. The right is essentially for an emergency and in order to be able to make arrangements for longer term care. If more time is needed it should be taken either as parental leave or annual leave.

The essence of this right is that it is likely to arise in an emergency.

However, employees are requested to notify us at the earliest possible opportunity of a necessary absence.

Please note that the abuse of any family leave rights will be treated as unauthorised absence and dealt with under the disciplinary policy.

### **Flexible Working**

#### **Right to apply for flexible working**

If you have parental responsibility for a child who is under the age of 6 or if disabled, under the age of 18, you are entitled to apply to work flexibly in order to care for your child.

You can make an application to work flexibly if you have completed at least 26 weeks' service at the time of making your application.

You can make an application only once in every 12 month period.

#### **Procedure**

Your application should be submitted in writing to the Line manager no later than 2 weeks before your child's 6<sup>th</sup> birthday or 18<sup>th</sup> birthday if your child is disabled.

In your application, you should set out the changes to your working pattern which you consider will best enable you to care for your child, the financial implications which your proposed changes may have for you, the effects that you think the changes may have on the business and how you consider your proposed changes may best be accommodated. You should note that we cannot agree to working patterns that breach the Working Time Regulations.

## **Leave for family responsibilities and other reasons *cont***

Within 28 days of receiving your application, a meeting will be arranged to discuss the working pattern, which you have put forward. Further alternative working patterns may be considered at the meeting. You may bring a colleague or a trade union representative to the meeting.

Within 14 days of the above meeting, you will be informed of our decision in writing. If we are able to agree to a new working pattern, you will be advised of the start date for the new pattern. If we are unable to agree to a new working pattern, we will explain the business grounds and the reasons why your application for flexible working cannot be accepted.

Within 14 days of receiving our decision, you may request an appeal. Your appeal should be made in writing setting out the grounds upon which you rely.

Within 15 days of receiving your written notification that you wish to appeal, a further meeting will be arranged to discuss the appeal. You may bring a colleague or a trade union representative to the meeting.

Within 14 days of the appeal meeting, you will be informed of our decision in writing as set out in paragraph 2.4 above.

If you need further advice on your own specific circumstances please contact the Line manager.

## **Other Time Off Compassionate Leave**

Each request for compassionate leave will be considered on its merits without creating a precedent.

## **Other Time Off Given at the Discretion of Big Wide Talk**

Requests for all other time off, either paid or unpaid will be considered at the discretion of BWT without creating a precedent.

Apart from the family leave detailed above and leave for public duties, there is no general statutory right to extended leave without pay and it is a matter for agreement between BWT and the employee. Failure to return on the agreed date without explanation satisfactory to BWT could be classed as unauthorised absence and may result in dismissal. It may also be classed as a breach of contract, which means you may lose your right to notice, or a payment on lieu of notice.

## Data Protection and Privacy

### Responsibilities

Any employee keeping staff records within their service will be responsible for ensuring compliance with the Data Protection Act.

### The Processing Principles

All processing of personal data must comply with eight principles of good practice. They say that data must be:

- fairly and lawfully processed
- processed for limited purposes
- adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate
- not kept longer than necessary
- processed in accordance with the data subject's rights
- secure
- not transferred to countries without adequate protection.

A number of definitions are set out in the act. Two key definitions are set out in broad outline below:

*Personal Data* - information including facts and statements of opinion, relating to a living individual who can be

*Processing* - this includes the collection, storage or retrieval of data by an employer or other organisation.

Information used for future planning such as pay review or other management forecasting is generally excluded.

### Sensitive Data

Sensitive data may not be held about a staff member without their express permission unless it is in compliance with our legal obligations e.g. health and safety, or to protect the employees vital interests. Such information may also be retained as long as necessary for defending a complaint of unlawful discrimination or as a means of monitoring, promoting or maintaining our Equal Opportunities Policy.

Sensitive data is defined as data relating to:

- racial or ethnic origins;
- political opinions;
- religious beliefs;
- Trade Union membership;
- physical or mental health or condition;
- sex life or sexual orientation;
- criminal or alleged criminal activities;
- criminal proceedings or convictions.

## **Data Protection and Privacy *cont***

### **Employees Rights**

If a member of staff has concerns about the nature, content, accuracy or relevance of personal data held about them they might write asking to provide:

- A description of the data
- An explanation of the purpose for which the data is being held
- The names of persons in the organisation to whom the data is routinely or occasionally disclosed.

If you receive such a request you must provide this information within 40 days.

If you receive a second request shortly after the first then the response need not be so prompt depending on the nature or purpose for which the information is required and the frequency with which such data is updated.

Employees have the right to see any reference received by the present employer from one or other of the previous employers. However, if the reference has been given in confidence (this will be stated on the reference) then a request should be made of the author regarding permission to disclose the contents. If permission is refused Big Wide Talk then has a responsibility to review the reference with a view to ensuring the anonymity of the author. If this is not possible, and it is quite likely that this will be the case, then Big Wide Talk has the right to refuse access to the reference.

Employees do not have the right to see any reference provided by Big Wide Talk to a prospective employer or for education or training purposes.

Employees can request in writing that certain information be deleted from their personal data files on the basis that retention or processing such information could lead to substantial and unwarranted damage or distress. Unless the information is necessary for contractual or legal reasons or to protect Big Wide Talk's vital interest then the you must respond within 21 days confirming the removal of the data or giving reasons why it considers the request to be unjustified.

In addition to the above rights Big Wide Talk encourages its managers to be as open as possible with staff allowing them reasonable access to their personal data.

## **Data Protection and Privacy *cont***

### **Housekeeping Procedures**

Employees must undertake a regular 'spring clean' of files for which they are responsible to ensure that the data they contain is:

- adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate
- not kept longer than necessary.

Employees must check the contents of files for which they are responsible for 'sensitive' data. If sensitive information is found then it should be removed or the employee must be advised and given an explanation, if necessary, for the reasons for keeping such information. Written permission must be given by the employee to continue to keep such information.

Employees must be sure that adequate measures are taken to ensure the security of files for which they are responsible.

Employees should ensure that they understand their rights under the Data Protection Act.

In order to manage reasonable freedom of access to personal data employees are required to ensure their housekeeping is undertaken on a regular basis to ensure that through a wish to be open Big Wide Talk is not compromised under the Act.

### **Privacy**

#### **Personal Information**

As someone taking part in Big Wide Talk you may at times be asked to supply personal information to your Animateur-local or via the Big Wide Talk website. Personal information is anything, which enables us to identify you or your children in some way, such as names, dates of birth and an email address or phone number. If you supply such information, we are legally bound by the Data Protection Act 1998 to ensure that such information is only used for the purpose for which it was requested and also to ensure that the data is held securely.

#### **General**

We may collect and record information in order for us to keep statistical information about those involved in Big Wide Talk, and the names and ages of the children taking part and to make it simple to contact you regarding the work of the Project. We do not capture and store any personal information about you, except that which you give us voluntarily. We will not pass any of your personal data to outside organisations and/or individuals unless you give your express consent.

## **Data Protection and Privacy *cont***

### **Security**

The Big Wide Talk website and network are secure website and you or your Animateur-local leave any personal details by using secure personal logins. No paper copies are maintained.

### **Access to your information**

Currently you can see and alter your personal information by working with your Animateur-local to log in to the Big Wide Talk network of databases. In the future you will be able to see and alter your personal information directly on the private sections of the website using your personal login. Alternately we can supply you with a paper copy of your record on our database on request.

### **Notification of change of Privacy Policy**

Any changes to this policy will be notified on the Big Wide Talk website.

## **Finance**

### **Big Wide Talk Children's Project: Financial systems and procedures**

#### **Aims:**

With regard to financial systems and procedures, the project is committed to meet or exceed the requirements of Charity and Company registration, and aims, in addition to ensure that:

- The project's financial activities are fully documented and transparent
- Staff and suppliers are paid promptly and accurately
- Financial and related information is recorded, stored and retrieved in ways that maximise the value of this data as information critical to the effective use of the project's resources.

Salaries, Payroll and payments for services to persons not registered as companies.

#### **Salaries.**

All staff salaries are paid monthly, by Bank Transfer, on or before the 18<sup>th</sup> of the month for days worked in that calendar month i.e. 18 days in arrears and 10-13 days in advance.

#### **Under and over payments**

All are required, as a condition of employment, to notify the Chief Executive of any under or overpayment of salary (or other payment) made. Underpayments will be corrected as soon as possible and usually within 3 working days. Arrangements to recover any overpayments made will be agreed with the individual concerned.

#### **Pay scales**

The project currently operates a system of pay scales, (see attached), which are detailed in the Contract of Employment. Any consequent changes to the contracts of any member of staff would only be implemented with the agreement of that member of staff. The Project will review these on the basis of a survey of similar organisational roles from time to time.

#### **Increments and Cost of Living Awards**

The Project currently pays a 5% uplift each year, on the anniversary of first appointment, in respect of both incremental advancement and inflation.

## **Finance (cont)**

### **Employers Pension contribution**

The project contributes an additional 9% of gross pay to the pension scheme of permanent employees. This payment is not conditional on any level of contribution from the employee, but all staff are advised to consider their pension arrangements and to seek independent advice if appropriate. The project is able to offer information and application forms for the Friends Provident Stakeholder Pension scheme (organised through the National Association of Voluntary Organisations)

### **Payments for services to persons not registered as companies**

Where payments are made to persons not on the project 's payroll and not registered as companies, the project requires that they must complete and sign a PAYE declaration form before any payment is made. In the interests of transparency, non-payroll payments for services will not normally be made in cash, and where there are pressing reasons to make an exception, these reasons must be recorded and signed by the Chief Executive (or nominated representative).

### **Travel & Subsistence Expenses**

The project will reimburse staff for the reasonable costs of travel, overnight accommodation, meals and refreshments when travelling on the project's business, subject to the following:

#### **Travel costs:**

1. are not payable for journeys between the employee's home and usual place of employment unless a very early start, a very late finish, the need to convey equipment or materials or some other requirement makes impractical the employee's usual mode of travel and this arrangement is authorised, in advance by the Director (or nominated representative).
2. staff are required to find the most economical form of transport that is compatible with the efficient use of their time. Rail tickets should always be booked in advance, using the project's access to the Association of Train Operators Discount scheme where relevant. Cars should be shared where possible and consideration given to the costs of a hire car for long journeys.

### **Overnight accommodation**

The project is currently exploring the possibility of arranging a discount with one or more national chains.

### **Meals and refreshments**

The Inland Revenue determines that you can claim the (reasonable) costs of a meal taken:

## Finance (Cont)

- away from your usual place of work and/or home, if travelling on your employer's business
- when working 'late' (some sources suggest after 9pm) at your usual place of work
  
- Lunches at Hills Road

If you pay for a meal for other people at the same time, you need to make clear on your claim, the split between named members of staff and non-staff who you are legitimately entertaining.

You will know about and may have paid for ingredients for working lunches organised at Hills Road. The Inland Revenue says that an employer may provide free or subsidised meals (on a reasonable scale) on their premises (or a designated canteen) without this being a taxable benefit, providing that the meal is open to all staff working at those premises.

Buying ingredients for such a meal is not a subsistence claim and does not need to be recorded as such. This must be authorised by the Director in advance.

### Claiming Travel & Subsistence Expenses

1. All claims for travel and subsistence must be detailed on the current claim form (available from Hills Road), signed and supported with original or good photocopies of receipts. Payments will generally not be made without receipts. In exceptional circumstances, the project may accept a detailed and signed explanation of why a receipt is not available, countersigned by the Chief Executive (or nominated representative.)
2. Claims will usually take up to three weeks to process to payment, which will usually be made by Bank Transfer. Where an individual has incurred an unusual level of expense and this timescale would cause hardship, it will usually be possible, on request, to 'fast-track' the payment. Alternatively, for staff with regular high levels of expenses, the project will consider paying an 'expenses float' to be topped up on receipt of claims and returned at the end of the period of employment.
3. Petty Cash should not generally be used for Travel & Subsistence claims as that system is not geared to recording the details required by HM Revenue & Customs. Where, necessary, the separate Petty Cash Travel & Subsistence Expenses Form must be used.

## Finance (Cont)

4. Frequency of claims. Staff are encouraged to claim at least once every two months and not more often than once a month. Claims relating to the previous Financial Year – before 31<sup>st</sup> March – must be submitted by 30<sup>th</sup> April.

### **Travel & Subsistence Expenses and HM Revenue & Customs**

The project is required to track travel and subsistence payments made to employees and to report these payments to the Inland Revenue (so they can satisfy themselves that staff are not receiving taxable benefits in kind). Staff may receive a self-assessment Tax Return as a result of these reports on which they will need to list the reimbursement received and the spending they have incurred. No tax liability will arise, as the project only pays out for legitimate spending.

### **Ordering Goods and Services**

All orders for goods and services must be authorised by the Chief Executive (or nominated representative) and a network system (accessible to staff operating outside of Hills Road) for this purpose is under development.

### **Project Management Database**

BWT currently uses a project management database, which allows for the recording and retrieval of:

- Projects
- Objectives
- Outputs (including Lead Responsibility and a Notes field to record progress etc)

The database also provides for the storage of:

- Planned Spending and
- Calendar Events for each Output

These last two elements are used to generate

- A range of calendar views
- Schedules of committed spending

The next phase of the development of this database will provide closer integration between these functions and the project's finance systems.

Key elements of the revised system will include:

- Integration of the 'projects' used in the database with the finance 'Cost Centre Codes'
- Viewable 'Actual Spending' and 'Committed Spending' within the Project Management Database at summary and detail levels

## **Finance cont**

- More user friendly screens for:
  - Entering all committed spending
  - a. Tracking the status of Planned Spending Items from 'Estimate' through, 'Quotation', 'Awaiting Authorisation', 'Authorised', 'Ordered', 'Goods/services received' to 'Invoice entered on Sage'
  - Reconciling incoming invoices to commitments
- The capacity to request receive and record authorisation on-line
- The capacity to generate order numbers and purchase orders for print or email delivery

Committing the project to unauthorised spending may leave an individual open to disciplinary action and/or action to recover costs incurred.

### **Use of Company Barclaycard and Supplier Credit Accounts**

All orders for goods and services using these facilities must be authorised, in writing, by the Chief Executive (or nominated representative) An additional authorisation stage will be a feature of the network system.

### **General Financial Systems**

In addition to independent external audit and compliance with the requirements of charity and company registration, the project operates the following internal financial controls:

1. All payments are authorised in writing at Directorate level and all bank activity requires Directorate/Trustee authorisation.
2. All income and expenditure is recorded using Sage Line 50 software, which provides a 'bullet-proof' audit trail of all recorded activity.
3. Current, deposit and petty cash accounts are reconciled monthly.
4. The payroll is managed with the Revenue & Customs approved Sage payroll software, integrated with the Line 50 Accounts programme.
5. The project maintains a Budget Monitoring database which stores the profiled budget at cost-centre and spend-type ('nominal code') level and which has a passive ('read-only') electronic link to the Sage data.

## **Finance (Cont)**

6. A budget monitoring report is produced for the director each month, showing the current month and cumulative spending against the profiled budget and highlighting significant variations. This report includes and is reconciled to the Sage Line 50 Balance Sheet report. Spending plans, including, where appropriate, the budget profile, are revised in the light of identified variations.
7. A Financial Statement and Budget Monitoring report is presented to the Project's Trustees year on year.

# Health and Safety

## Part 1: General Statement of Policy

This document is the health and safety policy of the Big Wide Talk Children's Project.

Our policy is to provide healthy and safe working conditions, equipment and systems of work for all our employees, volunteers and members, and to provide all such training and information as is necessary. We also accept responsibility for all other people who may be affected by our activities.

Health and safety procedures will be discussed, reviewed and agreed as a staff team in the light of experience as part of the ongoing development of the work of the project, and at least once a year. This policy will be kept up to date, particularly as the organisation changes in nature and size.

Overall and final responsibility is vested in:  
J.A.M. Jamieson  
Chief Executive

The Health and Safety Policy - contents

Part 1 General Statement of Policy

Part 2 Organisation of Health and Safety

Part 3 Procedures: i) Everyday Health and Safety in the Workplace

- Includes: Workstations
- Physical health
- Driving
- Personal protective equipment
- Electricity and electrical equipment
- Hazardous substances
- Asbestos
- Alcohol/Drugs
- Bullying and Harassment
- ii) Risk Assessments
- iii) General Fire Safety for 2 Hills Road
  - includes: Fire Risk Assessment
  - Fire Safety equipment
  - Fire procedure
- iv) Fire Risk Assessments for other workplaces used by Big Wide Talk personnel
- v) Insurance

## **Health and Safety *cont***

### **Part 2: Organisation of health and safety**

The person with overall responsibility for health and safety in this organisation is: J.A.M. Jamieson

The activity at 2 Hills Road was registered with **South Cambridgeshire District Council** on **15<sup>th</sup> April 2005** and form **OSR1** was completed and sent.

Signed:

Date:

### **Insurance**

The person responsible for insuring the activity of the organisation is: J.A.M. Jamieson

### **First aid**

- a. The persons responsible for first aid assessment in the organisation:  
Kate Gandee  
Peter Buncombe
  
- b. Appointed persons are:  
Kate Gandee  
Peter Buncombe
  
- c. The first aid kit at 2 Hills Road is located:  
First floor kitchen

First aid assessment is evaluated on the basis of the general risk assessment for the organisation and reviewed for each unique exhibition, expedition or similar activity of Big Wide Talk.

Home workers and staff based in partner offices should identify the most appropriate first aid support for their needs.

Staff trained for specific activities will meet all first aid training requirements agreed by the assessing body and in line with the activities regulatory body.

Big Wide Talk supports staff in developing their first aid skills so that the assessed needs of the workplace and the Big Wide Talk network are met using the Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1981 as a minimum standard.

## **Health and Safety cont**

### **Recording and reporting of accidents and incidents**

The person responsible for investigating, recording and reporting accidents and incidents (including violence), near misses including those covered by the RIDDOR 1995 are:

J.A.M. Jamieson  
Kate Gandee

The accident report book at Big Wide Talk's premises at 2 Hills Road is located:

First floor kitchen with first aid kit

Records of Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 will be archived for a minimum of 3 years. RIDDOR regulations require reports for:

deaths  
major injuries  
accidents resulting in over 3 day injury  
diseases  
dangerous occurrences  
gas incidents

### **Risk Assessment**

Person responsible for commissioning risk assessment and agreeing proposed risk management and risk controls: **J.A.M. Jamieson**

Person responsible for initial risk assessments: **J.A.M Jamieson**

Person responsible for initial method statements as required: **J.A.M Jamieson**

### **Fire precautions**

The person with overall responsibility for fire precautions is: **J.A.M. Jamieson**

### **Specific responsibilities**

- a. Initial risk assessment and contact with Fire Brigade: **J.A.M Jamieson**
- b. Obtaining and organising the maintenance and testing of fire equipment and keeping records: **J.A.M Jamieson or other equivalent at other sites used by Big Wide Talk personnel**
- c. Completing the fire drill procedure: **J.A.M Jamieson**
- d. Compiling the fire notices: **J.A.M Jamison**
- e. Preparing the emergency evacuation procedure: **J.A.M. Jamieson**
- f. Responsible for the fire register: **J.A.M Jamieson**
- g. Making sure drill is carried out on a regular basis: **J.A.M. Jamieson**

## **Health and Safety *cont***

### **Part 3 Procedures**

#### **i) Everyday Health and Safety in the Workplace**

Big Wide Talk is committed to maintaining a healthy and safe workplace in keeping with HSE regulations and recommendations by providing comfortable workspaces appropriately equipped for the work required and recognising individual needs. Equally staff are to use the workplace and workplace equipment in a way that does not compromise their own health and safety or that of others, and in line with agreed protocols arising from team discussions of the work and associated risk assessments.

#### **Workstations**

Big Wide Talk supplies all employees with the equipment necessary to carry out their work and in accordance to their ergonomic and health needs. Information communication technologies are important tools integrated into the day-to-day work and delivery of the project. Big Wide Talk acknowledges the complexities of these systems and co-ordinates regular in-house training to support staff in developing their understanding and skills in using these technologies, and makes available on demand support to help individuals over-come specific problems.

Appropriate equipment is supplied on the basis of the responsibilities of each position, specific needs of the individual and in line with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992, amended 2002.

Big Wide Talk encourages staff to establish healthy systems for using this equipment, including taking regular breaks to reduce eye strain and the risk of repetitive strain injury through using a mouse, or similar equipment; to set up the workstation to be comfortable for the individual and colleagues working nearby. Big Wide Talk will support staff in getting further advice regarding setting up a workstation that is fit for purpose.

This scrutiny applies to all workstations, whether they are intended for permanent use by an individual employee or intended to support a specific field of work such as the edit suite.

From time to time the work of Big Wide Talk will require staff to work on projects at temporary work sites sometimes in very different conditions from their usual workplace: for example, camping in a Country Park, holding an exhibition in an old warehouse, or new theatre, or facilitating workshops in schools or community centres. Project planning meetings and the projects database are the critical forums for agreeing issues of everyday health and safety for the team with reference to the relevant risk assessments.

## **Health and Safety *cont***

### **Physical health**

From time to time the work of Big Wide Talk can be physically demanding, and can require people to spend long periods outdoors, or walking considerable distances leading groups of children and adults, or setting up exhibitions, expeditions or similar, including manual handling. It is important that people are able to work to their full capabilities and not beyond their physical capacity, Big Wide Talk will establish systems that supports this through team meetings, planning meetings, relevant training and with the knowledge of their staff's abilities as far as they understand them at the time.

### **Driving**

The very nature of the Big Wide Talk network requires staff to travel to meet with local groups, to monthly amateur meetings, to seminars and conferences, to summer meetings, exhibitions and expeditions. People are recommended to use the most suitable, time efficient and economic transport solution to manage this, often this requires driving. Driving long distances should ideally be shared with another experienced driver. No driver should drive for longer than 2hrs30mins without a break. Any driver driving longer than 3hours should share the driving with a second person.

The onus is on these employees to make sure their motor insurance covers them for this activity. Big Wide Talk will assist in meeting the added cost to the annual insurance cover.

### **Personal protective equipment**

Big Wide Talk does not supply 'workwear' for its staff, where necessary for specific risk assessed tasks personal protective equipment will be supplied.

### **Electricity and electrical equipment**

Big Wide Talk will only agree the use of equipment that is fit for purpose. Electrical equipment that is damaged increases the risk of fire or electrocution. Some electrical equipment is intended to be portable and is consequently used on many sites, to prolong the safe use of this equipment it is recommended that all electrical appliances are transported in protective packaging, ideally the packaging intended for that purpose. Each time equipment is installed visual checks should be made for any damage to wires, to plugs or to the overall body or casing of the equipment, and staff should be vigilant to possible signs of overheating.

Concerns should be reported immediately to: **J.A.M Jamieson**

## **Health and Safety *cont***

### **Hazardous Substances**

There may be cause to use substances and chemicals which have been classified as being dangerous to health or you believe present a danger to health. In such cases, if no alternative is available, safety data should be sourced, along with further independent information about the substance. Best practice guidelines to remove or barrier the danger should be followed. This should be recorded following COSHH guidelines (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health).

### **Asbestos**

Big Wide Talk takes seriously its duty to manage asbestos in its premises at 2 Hills Road as outlined in Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002. An asbestos survey of the premises was conducted 10<sup>th</sup> December 2003.

Big Wide Talk always seeks advice about asbestos in sites used for exhibitions or similar activities as part of the overall risk assessment. Where personnel are based in offices managed by partner authorities or organisations, asbestos control falls to the relevant local authority or organisation, concerns should be presented to them and Big Wide Talk should be alerted.

### **Alcohol/Drugs**

Big Wide Talk recognises that alcohol and drug abuse problems can have a detrimental effect on work performance and behaviour, and safe operating of equipment, and recognises its responsibility to reduce this risk. The consumption of alcohol whilst on Big Wide Talk business is not permitted without prior approval of management. The consumption of alcohol at work could result in compromising your safety or that of others, and in compromising the reputation of Big Wide Talk. Any member of staff considered to be under the adverse influence of drink may be suspended from work without pay and subject to disciplinary action.

## **Health and Safety *cont***

The misuse of drugs and controlled substances whilst at work or outside working hours, and especially when it interferes with working practices or your ability to perform your duties is not permitted in line with the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and could result in disciplinary action being taken.

Big Wide Talk recognises that alcohol and drug abuse may be a long-term health problem, and will support individuals in seeking help as appropriate to each incident. Staff with concerns about a colleague should report these immediately to the Chief Executive.

### **Bullying and Harassment**

Big Wide Talk recognises that bullying and harassment are sensitive issues, which can affect an employee's health and welfare. The Big Wide Talk Equal Opportunities Policy outlines the right for all staff to fulfil their work duties free of any discrimination; this discrimination may manifest itself as bullying or harassment. Primarily this is an employee relations issue and the Big Wide Talk grievance procedure supports the informal and formal addressing and reporting of bullying and harassment. The HSE and DTI recommend referring to ACAS, Amicus and other specialist organisations for further advice on identifying and addressing bullying and harassment in the workplace.

### **ii) Risk Assessments**

Big Wide Talk completes risk assessments for all exhibitions, expeditions, children's meetings and similar activities which consider the health, safety and welfare of personnel and participants. These serve as working documents, and resulting procedures are reviewed regularly at team briefing sessions and talk times.

For each new use to which a site is used a portfolio of documents will be drafted and should include:

- General Risk Assessment (excluding fire)

- Fire Risk Assessment

- Annotated site plans

It may also include:

- General Risk Assessment and Fire Risk Assessment supplied by management of site used for exhibition, expedition or other time specific Big Wide Talk activity

- Method statements for specific construction tasks; and installation of certain exhibition or exhibition installations or equipment.

- CARE forms for documenting the on-site review and revision of installation method.

## **Health and Safety *cont***

External contractors installing equipment on our behalf or delivering a service will be required to supply evidence to demonstrate that they are trained and qualified to the appropriate industry standard.

Risk assessments for exhibitions, expeditions or similar are made available to visiting settings as an aid for planning their own risk assessment for participation, in conjunction with the other tools we supply: maps, scripts and timetables and their own knowledge of the characteristics of their attending group.

### **iii) General fire safety for BWT premises at 2 Hills Road**

Fire Risk Assessment

Fire Risk Assessment for premises at 2 Hills Road is revised and reviewed with each new use of part or all of the premises. Any necessary changes to ensure safe practice are discussed and agreed as a team with reference to relevant regulation and recommendations from HSE and equivalent bodies.

Latest Fire Risk Assessment for 2 Hills Road  
24/8/06

Company hired to check, maintain and service fire safety equipment at 2 Hills Road:

Fire alarm:  
Global Fire Services  
61 Corey Way  
Lakenheath  
Suffolk  
IP27 9HL  
01842 862611

Fire extinguishers:  
CamFire  
10 Hythe Close  
Burwell  
Cambridgeshire  
CB5 0EZ  
01638 741894

## Health and Safety *cont*

List of equipment and its location at 2 Hills Road:

Item	Location	Service Date
<b>Fire extinguishers:</b>		Last Service: 21/11/07
Water & Foam	Ground floor hallway (H1)	
Water & CO2	Lower ground floor hallway (H3)	Serviced yearly
CO2	Mezzanine (C2)	
Water & CO2	1 <sup>st</sup> floor landing (H5)	
Powder & Fire	Kitchen	
Blanket		
Water	Attic landing to office (S4)	
Fire extinguishers in storage:		
Water x 3	Storage: Hills Road garage	
CO2 x 2	Storage: Hills Road garage	
<b>Addressable fire alarm system</b>		Twice yearly: October & April
Smoke detection units	Every room and passageway	
Alarm call points	Front door (H1) Print room (B1) Back door (A10) Mezzanine landing (H6) 1 <sup>st</sup> floor landing (H5) Attic office landing (S4) Attic storage landing (S5)	
Fire alarm panel	Front door (H1)	
Fire alarms in storage: 6 x Klaxalarm boxers	Storage: Hills Road store room	Used off site at exhibitions. Serviced before each use.

## **Health and Safety *cont***

Previous to Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) 2005 Fire Certificate issued by:  
Cambridge Fire Service

Renewal date: N/A

Local Fire Brigade contact name: Alan Pilsworth Tel no: 01223 376283

### **Notice of procedure in case of fire at 2 Hills Road**

If you discover a fire:

1. Operate the fire alarm without putting yourself in danger
2. Go to the assembly point: Bay 1, car park
3. Fire steward to call the Fire Brigade on 999 (J.A.M. Jamieson, Kate Gandee)

On hearing the fire alarm:

1. Leave the building by the quickest available route
2. Got to the assembly point: Bay 1, car park

Do not leave the assembly point until told to do so by the attending fire steward.

Do not return to the building until told to do so by the fire brigade or attending fire steward.

Location of fire exists:

Front door and back door

Extinguishers

Extinguishers are positioned in each hallway for each level, type appropriate to equipment in vicinity

Escape routes

All stair ways and hall ways lead to front or rear exit doors

Assembly point

Bay 1 adjacent car park

## Health and Safety *cont*

### iv) Fire Risk Assessments for other workplaces used by Big Wide Talk personnel

Home workers should assess for fire risk as part of their general risk assessment of their working environment and take reasonable measures to reduce and manage the risk.

Workers occupying offices in premises managed by partner organisations should familiarise themselves with fire evacuation and fire prevention procedures agreed for that site.

Premises or other locations used for the purpose of Big Wide Talk business (e.g. exhibitions, summer meetings or expeditions) are assessed for fire risk according to the use intended by Big Wide Talk. Procedures for risk management to be agreed in accordance to regulations governing each site informed by the specifics of our usage.

### v) Insurance

#### Employer's liability insurance

Big Wide Talk has employers liability, public liability and professional indemnity insurance. The details are below:

	Employers Liability	Public Liability	Professional Indemnity
Insurer	Markel UK Ltd	Markel UK Ltd	Markel UK Ltd
Policy number	SC2100F070YR/71	SC2100F070YR/71	SC2100F070YR/71
Amount of Cover	£10,000,000	£5,000,000	£1,000,000
Expiry Date	31/07/08	31/07/08	31/07/08

# Child Protection Policy and Action Plan

## Introduction

This child protection policy is intended to give project workers clear guidance about what is expected of them if they become concerned about the well being of any child they meet within the project. The policy also aims to raise awareness of workers to the possibility of concerns about child well being. The policy relies heavily on government guidance as set out in 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused. Children's Services Guidance.' Department of Health Publications. Crown copyright 2003.

## What is abuse?

What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused, *Children's Services Guidance, Department of Health, 2003* states:

"A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children and young people may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

- **Physical abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child, including by fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, ill health to a child.
- **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person, age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children, causing children frequently to feel frightened, or the exploitation or corruption of children.
- **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development, such as failing to provide adequate

## **Child Protection Policy and Action Plan *cont***

food, shelter and clothing, or neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

All those who come into contact with children and families in their everyday work, including practitioners who do not have a specific role in relation to child protection have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. You are likely to be involved in two main ways:

- you may have concerns about a child, and refer those concerns to social services or the police (via your designated teacher in the case of staff in schools);
- you may be approached by social services and asked to provide information about a child or family or to be involved in an assessment. This may happen regardless of who made the referral to social services..."

### **Raising Awareness**

It is understandable that people who are highly motivated and committed to making life better for all children can be reluctant to believe that children may be suffering harm at home or in a children's services setting. It may be difficult to accept that children could be at risk because of the way an organisation or its events are run. Levels of awareness need to be raised without creating an atmosphere of anxiety or suspicion. However a basic principle should be: If you become aware of anything which causes you to feel uncomfortable or perplexed, you should speak to either the Chief Executive or the Chair of Directors without delay. In the event of not being able to access any of these designated Officers then you should speak with the relevant Animateur-Local. Big Wide Talk staff will always work with local practitioners when children are present. One of the three designated BWT officers will always be available during working hours and at all other times on an emergency basis.

If a child behaves in a way that gives rise to concern then this may be an indicator of a problem. There may well be a perfectly acceptable explanation for this behaviour. It is however important to act on a concern and ascertain that this is the case. If it is still felt there may be a problem it is important to seek further help. BWT routinely focuses on detailed analysis of the communication between children and adults or children and children. Workers will have extensive contact with children either when analysing film and still images or when working directly with children and their parents. BWT always works with children with their parents or carers.

## **Child Protection Policy and Action Plan *cont***

**If there is a concern about a child's welfare, or the behaviour of an adult the one thing not to do is do nothing.**

### **How to Respond to a Disclosure, Suspicion or Allegation**

In the course of our work, children may say things or do things which cause concern. Disclosure is the word used to describe what a child tells you directly but we also know that children have many different ways of communicating even when, for example, they do not use speech. It is important to carefully consider ANY concerns about a child however you have become aware of them.

Whatever the means of receiving the information on receiving this information you should:

- React calmly - do not rush into inappropriate action. What you are told or what you see may be very shocking but it is important to continue to listen and to reassure the child that you are listening and taking their communication seriously;
- Only ask questions which help you to clarify what the child is saying. Do not question any more than is strictly necessary. The law is very strict when it suspects a child has been led or ideas have been suggested;
- Do not make promises you cannot keep. Explain that you may have to tell other people in order to stop what is happening but that you will endeavour to keep the incident as confidential as possible;
- Make a full record of what has been said, heard or seen as soon as possible detailing the context in which you spoke with or observed the child.
- If you are concerned that a parent or carer is causing immediate harm by striking or other physical behaviour seek assistance and/or tell the parent/carer that you are concerned and that you will call for assistance.

### **Do Not:**

- Take sole responsibility for further action
- Approach or try to contact the alleged abuser
- Ignore what has happened
- Make promises you cannot keep

## **Child Protection Policy and Action Plan *cont***

### **Recording information**

It is important to record:

- The nature of the incident;
- A description of any visible injuries;
- The child's account;
- Times, dates or other relevant information;
- A clear account of any other contextual information (this might include: how other people and other children were behaving, who was there, what happened immediately before the incident, what happened immediately afterwards)

### **Allegations of previous abuse**

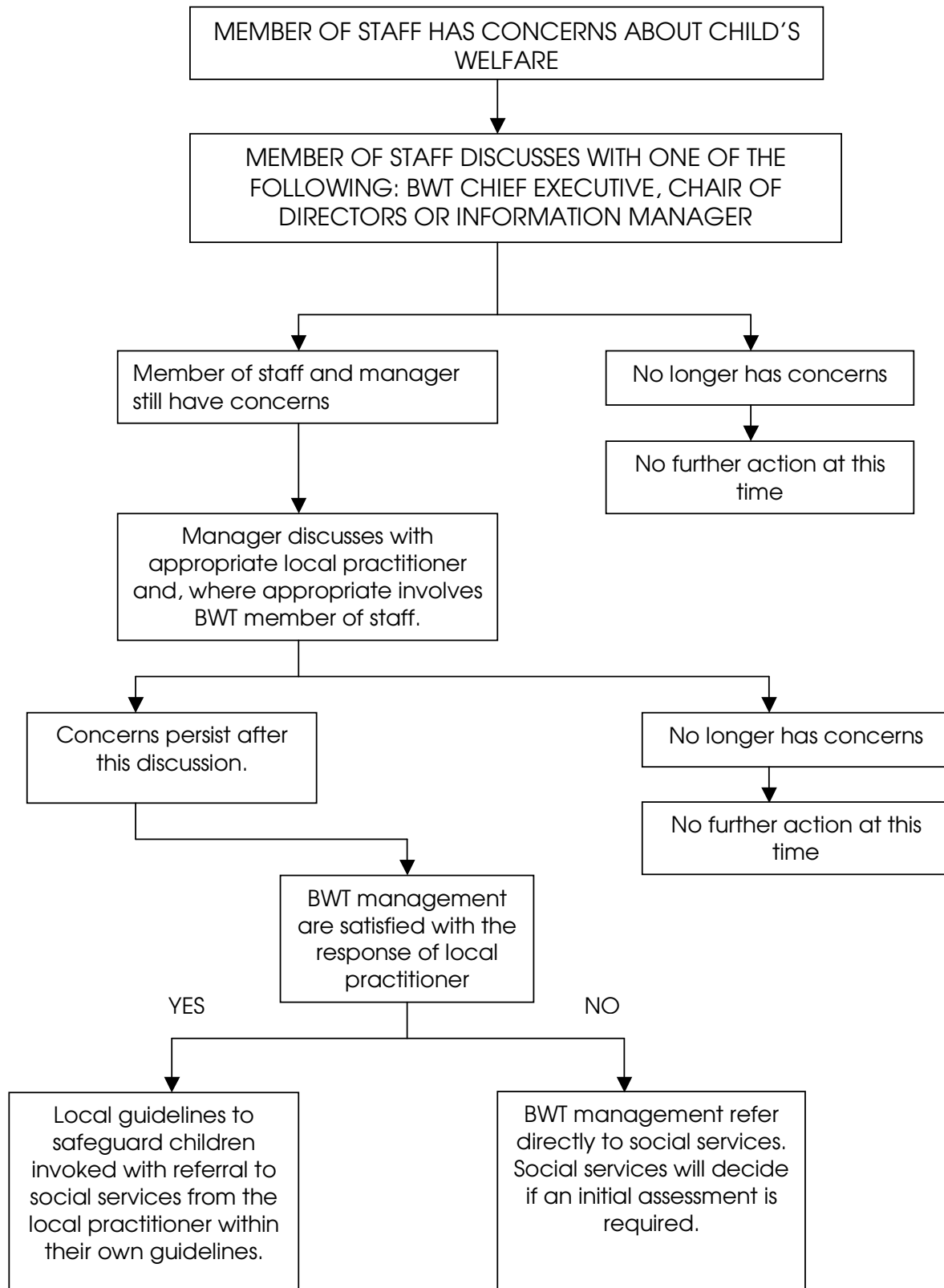
Allegations of abuse may be made a long time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child or by a member of staff who is still currently working with children). Whenever the abuse has taken place you must follow these procedures.

### **Allegations or observations about colleagues or volunteers.**

You must follow these procedures irrespective of the adults or children involved. The named officers (see Raising Awareness above) in Big Wide Talk will be responsible for bringing in the statutory services. Disciplinary procedures will be followed which may include suspension during investigation.

In the event of you believing that Big Wide Talk has not acted on your concerns appropriately, individuals should seek advice from the statutory services. Normally this should be the police or social services. Individuals must however have acted in accordance with these guidelines.

## Child Protection Policy and Action Plan *cont*



## Child Protection Policy and Action Plan *cont*

### What happens if you are accused of an abusive action?

In the event of an accusation:

- Make notes of all your actions/contacts with the child in question as soon as possible.
- Seek access to professional and legal advice.
- Ensure that you are no longer working with the child/children making the allegation
- Follow the procedures laid out in this and supporting documents.
- Accept that colleagues may not be in a position to discuss the matter with you while the investigation is underway.
- Accept that you may be suspended from working with any young people.

Such events are difficult for all concerned. BWT will do its utmost to remain impartial in all matters relating to an accusation. The main concern with any incident is the child's welfare. For an individual, against whom an allegation has been made this will be a difficult time. There are no easy ways to deal with such a situation, it is important that you seek help and support.

### Good Practice Procedures

**Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks are mandatory for all Big Wide Talk members of staff and for volunteers taking part in events such as BWT summer and winter meetings.** Normally neither members of the BWT staff team nor volunteers have unsupervised access to children. However there may be occasions when children detach themselves from their parents on an expedition or other event. Children taking part in BWT must always be in the care of their parent or carer whilst taking part.

All staff employed by the Big Wide Talk Children's Project are required to adhere to the policies and framework adopted by the project, which includes this child protection policy. Local Animateurs seconded to the Big Wide Talk Children's Project are CRB checked by their line-managing local service provider.

All staff are required to follow principles of good practice to ensure that all children are listened to and taken seriously.

BWT has clear ideas about how to work with children and their parents and practitioners:

- Language and thinking develop in contexts: in the love between a parent and child; in the joy of playing with a friend; in the thrill of seeing how things work; and in the excitement of being able to take action. Big Wide Talk works in these contexts and many more.
- Language and thinking develop in the places and communities where we lead our everyday lives. Big Wide Talk works in these places and communities with the people who live and work there.

## Child Protection Policy and Action Plan *cont*

- All children are rich communicators and thinkers. Big Wide Talk works with all children to give them space to participate and reaches out to include children with speech and language issues.
- All children constantly strive to make sense of their worlds. To do this they need people, time, space, money and ideas. Big Wide Talk works with these dimensions, giving parents and practitioners ideas and resources to make the space and time they need to explore meaning with their children.
- Children, parents and practitioners live in shared physical, social, political and economic contexts, which determine the money, time and space available to them. Big Wide Talk works in ways that require people to acknowledge these contexts and to act in ways that change the relationships between them to the advantage of children.

This means that all of our work is shared and highly contextualised delivering transparent information which is accessed by both parents and practitioners. The principles, which underpin our working methods, therefore provide a robust basis for good practice in safeguarding children.

Additionally BWT acts to:

- promote the safety of children in all aspects of the project's work,
- raise awareness of best practice in how to protect children from harm of all kinds,
- minimise opportunities for children to suffer harm,
- make safety the responsibility of all participants in the project,
- establish effective and open procedures in responding to accidents, complaints or concerns so that they can be shared and dealt with promptly,
- apply safe recruitment practices for all staff,

All children, their parents/carers, and all workers in the project are aware of what is expected of them and what will happen if abuse is suspected.

Our statement is openly available to all those taking part in the project and is reproduced on our website at [www.bigwidetalk.org](http://www.bigwidetalk.org)