



STAFF HANDBOOK

This handbook contains Flax Healthcare's processes, policies and procedures, as well as an outline of the guidelines and standards we adhere to in accordance with the NHS National Framework Agreement.

Welcome to Flax Healthcare

Introduction

The information contained in this handbook is designed to help you to better understand the duties and expectations required of you as an agency worker in the NHS, Care Home or Private Home and as a representative of Flax Healthcare to our all clients.

Please note that some topics are applicable only to Nurses.

We hope that you find this handbook useful.

Please read the contents carefully and if you have any queries, contact your Recruitment Consultant who will be happy to help you.

info@flaxhealthcare.com

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1. THE REGISTRATION PROCESS AND ROUTE TO COMPLIANCE

Before Flax Healthcare can offer you any temporary agency work, you are required to complete the Flax Healthcare registration process in order to meet the requirement of the NHS Framework Agreement. Below is an explanation regarding the documentation that you will be requested to produce (some of documents are only required once, whilst others are renewed annually). It is your responsibility to ensure that all requested documentation is provided to Flax Healthcare in a timely manner and that all documentation meets the following requirements.

Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)

You will be required to undertake an enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check on an annual basis. This is mandatory for all candidates regardless of the speciality in which you work. You must undertake a DBS check even if you already hold an existing DBS disclosure from another body, unless you have registered your DBS on the DBS Update Service, which means your DBS is portable (see information regarding portability).

The DBS Update Service is available for an annual fee of just £13, you can ensure your DBS certificate is up-to-date and take it with you from job to job where the same type and level of check is required. There is no need to pay for a new DBS in full.

You can join the update service online at www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service. You will need the DBS application number of your DBS certificate number in order to register and must be done so within 14 days of the date your certificate being issued.

As an organisation using the DBS service to assess candidates' suitability for positions of trust, Flax Healthcare conforms fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all candidates impartially for positions.

Further details regarding the DBS process can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service.

The DBS does not automatically issue a copy of your DBS certificate to the Registered Body who countersigned your DBS application form anymore. Employers and recruiting organisations will need to ask to see your current DBS certificate. This is to give you greater control over your information. The DBS will notify subscribers to the update service if their status changes on a certificate that is subject to update arrangements. The DBS advises that in these circumstances the individual should consider whether they are required to discuss the basis for the status change with their employer or organisation.

Renewing your DBS Disclosure

Flax Healthcare will inform you when your current disclosure is due for renewal. We may also need to ask you for an up-to-date proof of address documents.

Appraisals

Appraisals were introduced by the Department of Health to give Nurses regular feedback about their performance, monitor continuing progress and to identify any further professional development needs. The need for a formal appraisal started in 1998 with the introduction of Clinical Governance in the NHS.

Appraisal is based on the NMC's document 'NMC Code of Conduct' which describes the principles of NMC Code of Conduct, standards and competence, and care and conduct expected of Nurses in their everyday duties.

Appraisals cover clinical performance, training and education, audit, concerns raised and serious clinical complaints, application of relevant clinical guidelines, relationships with patients and colleagues, teaching and research activities, and personal and organisational effectiveness.

Your appraisal with Flax Healthcare will be conducted by our Director of Nursing. All newly hired members of staff are required to have an appraisal 6 months after commencement of the post.

Appraisals are carried out based on feedback received from clients and the candidate's self-assessment and covers the following areas:

- Clinical Skills and Competency
- Relationship with patients, relatives and other members of the multidisciplinary team.
- Timekeeping and management of workload
- Patient records and other records management
- Reliability
- Training
- Sickness / absence / cancellation records
- Personal objectives
- Other Problems / Issues / Concerns.

At the end of every assignment Flax Healthcare provides a Candidate Performance Report to the Client for completion. Clients are asked to supply feedback on the service they have received from Flax Healthcare staff. Both positive and negative feedback are actively encouraged so that Flax Healthcare can act upon them to improve the quality of service. It is greatly encouraged that the feedback form provided on your timesheet is completed at every opportunity. Appraisal also plays an important part in fulfilling the requirements set by the NMC for the revalidation of registered nurses.

Maintaining your Registration and Revalidation

Revalidation applies to all nurses and midwives in all scopes of practice. It is a process by which nurses and midwives are required to demonstrate to the Nursing and Midwifery Council that they are fit to practice.

Revalidation aims to protect the public and to help those on the register meet NMC standards and also by promoting continuous improvement in nursing & midwifery practice. Nurses who want to remain active in the professional register must present evidence to the NMC that they are competent in their chosen discipline and adheres to the guidelines set by the NMC for all its registrants and upholds public safety at all times.

The appraisal process of Flax Healthcare is contributory to show the evidence for reflective practice including feedback, and that our registered staff are adequately supported. For further reference please check the NMC Website: www.nmc-uk.org/revalidation.

It is your responsibility as a registered practitioner to ensure that all requirements are set to ensure that your registration remains effective. Our Direct of Nursing is our Responsible Officer and can assist you if you require further information regarding revalidation.

Staff Training & Development

Flax Healthcare actively encourages all employees to achieve their maximum potential. We provide opportunities for everyone to develop their skills and qualifications.

During the course of your engagement Flax Healthcare will provide you with the opportunity to attend a series of workshops / courses in addition to your Mandatory and Core skills training. Some of which will have to be paid for by the employee and some funded by the organisation. Staff will be expected to refund the cost of any paid for course for which they **do not attend** and fail to give adequate notice.

It is your responsibility to attend courses for which you have verbally agreed to attend and been booked on. And agree to give one week's notice if you are unable to attend. The workshops are to be held on an ad hoc basis and topics will depend on needs.

NMC Registration

To register with Flax Healthcare as a Registered Nurse, you must first be fully registered with the Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC) and hold a valid PIN number. You are required to present your NMC Statement of Entry as part of your registration.

Flax Healthcare also reserves the right to search the NMC database to gain information regarding your professional registration. The registration checks are also performed on a monthly basis as a compliant measure. Your placement will be suspended if your professional registration has not been renewed or you had been rendered unfit to practice either by failing to comply with your revalidation requirements or by recommendation of the NMC.

You must inform us of any pending clinical investigations, cautions or reprimands immediately or when they occur.

Professional Indemnity Cover

All Flax Healthcare temporary workers must ensure that they are sufficiently covered by professional indemnity insurance. Most Nursing unions will cover you within your subscriptions but please do check with your provider what your exact coverage is. The responsibility is on you to ensure that you have adequate cover for your practice and speciality. Agency workers who work PAYE through Flax Healthcare will be covered by Flax Healthcare's Professional Liability Insurance.

NB: Since July 2014 it has been compulsory for all Registered Nurses to hold Professional Indemnity Insurance as a pre-requisite to practising as a Registered Nurse.

All Midwives are required to hold a current and valid Intention to Practice certificate (ITP)

References

When registering with Flax Healthcare, all candidates must supply full contact details for Professional References covering a 3-year continuous period, including your latest employer. References will be updated annually. Candidate Feedback Forms will be sent out to our clients on a regular basis as part of your continuous referencing programme which will be included as part of your appraisal.

Mandatory Training

With the exception of holders of advanced life support courses that are valid for longer than 1 year, you will be required to undertake annual training and / or refresher courses in the following:

- Health and Safety at Work
- Basic Life Support
- Moving & Handling
- Infection Prevention and Control
- Food Hygiene
- Fire Protection & Prevention
- SOVA level 2
- SOCA level 2
- Handling of Complaints
- Lone Worker
- Information Governance
- Conflict Resolution
- Equality & Diversity

Additional Core / Care skills have now been introduced for all staff and all Flax Healthcare temporary workers whose job requires these core skills will be given online access for completion.

Basic Life Support and Moving & Handling must be undertaken as a practical module on a bi-annual basis. Flax Healthcare will be able to provide you with access to on-line training modules, or a one-day practical session for all the above listed mandatory training courses.

Occupational Health Requirements

As an Agency Registered Nurse or Midwife in the NHS, you will be regarded as a new entrant to the NHS (Band 5). This is due to the transient nature of agency work and the need to ensure that patients and workers alike are protected from any potential health hazards and risks are minimised. If you have Occupational Health clearance from the hospital where you were previously or are currently employed, you are still required to meet the requirements set below. You are required to present health reports proving immunisation against the following diseases by submitting the following evidence:

Varicella:

- Written declaration that you have had the disease, or
- A positive serology report, or
- A report evidencing the two-part vaccination (MMR).

Tuberculosis:

- Confirmation of a BCG scar issued by a medical professional trained in the reading of BCG scars, or
- Evidence of a positive Heaf test – Grade 2 or
- Evidence of a positive Mantoux test dated in the last 5 years – between 6 and 15mm.

Measles & Rubella:

- Evidence of having received 2 MMR vaccinations or
- Positive serology reports for both diseases.

Hepatitis B Antibody Levels:

- A pathology report showing titre levels of 100iu/ml or above dated within the past 5 years, or an older report along with evidence of a 5-year Hep B booster.
- Reports showing levels of less than 100iu/ml must be supported by evidence of a booster course.
- Non responders or candidates with levels of less than 10 iu/ml must be supported by a Hepatitis B surface antigen report and core antibody report.

Candidates who do not have these results available are offered blood tests by Flax Healthcare at their own expense and referred to our Occupational Health Provider for a Fitness to Work Certificate.

Candidates working with Exposure Prone Procedures (EPP) will additionally have to provide evidence of:

- Hepatitis B Surface Antigen,
- Hepatitis C and HIV immunisations – both should be Identity Validated Samples (IVS). This means that you are required to bring your passport or your driver's license before a blood sample will be taken from you.

You are obliged to report any changes in your health status immediately to Flax Healthcare Ltd.

Face to Face meeting and Document Check

To comply with the NHS Framework agreement, all Agency Nurses and Healthcare Assistants registering with Flax Healthcare are required to meet face-to-face with senior officials of the company. The aim is to allow you to get to know more about us, what we have to offer you and to help us better manage your expectations. During the meeting, the officials of Flax Healthcare would like to know your professional knowledge, skills and clinical experience through an informal chat.

We are obliged to ensure that all candidates we place, have been met and a conversation has been had with him / her with in order to know how well they communicate in writing and speaking English. Generally speaking, this meeting provides an opportunity to produce original documentation and will help in determining the suitability for placement.

Maintaining Your Compliance Once you have completed registration

Flax Healthcare will monitor your file to ensure you receive sufficient notification prior to expiry of any documents or training, thus ensuring both you and Flax Healthcare remain fully compliant whilst continuing to work unhindered.

Failure to maintain a compliant file may result in the suspension of work opportunities until you have provided the necessary documentation. Any shifts undertaken whilst non-compliant will not be paid, regardless of the circumstances.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you maintain your professional registration at all times and notify Flax Healthcare of any changes that may affect your ability to work.

Fitness to Practice

It is your responsibility to ensure you are well enough to carry out the assignments for which you have been booked. In particular please report immediately if you are suffering from vomiting, diarrhoea, an ear, nose or throat infection, or if you have any unidentified skin conditions/rashes. You must NOT work if you suffer from any of these conditions.

You must immediately inform a Consultant or Manager at Flax Healthcare if you are subject to any kind of investigation or prosecution relating to a conviction, or which could lead to a conviction, after the most recent Disclosure and Barring Service check was undertaken.

- If you are currently (or have been) subject to any kind of investigation by an organisation to whom you have provided equivalent services to that required of you by Flax Healthcare.
- If you are suspended by the relevant Professional and Regulatory Body.
- If your PIN has expired or you are subject to an investigation by the NMC.
- You are, or become, injured or diagnosed with any medical condition which physically and/or psychologically makes you incapable of doing the work proposed.
- You will be doing work on the Temporary Assignment which is unsuitable and/or unsafe for you.
- If you are or become pregnant, so Flax Healthcare can conduct a Pregnancy Risk Assessment to ensure you are not exposed to any working conditions which could cause risk to either yourself or your unborn child.

Direct Employment by a Client

You must notify Flax Healthcare of any offer of permanent employment made by a client as the direct result of being placed with that client by Flax Healthcare. You are required to do so as stated in our Terms and Conditions for temporary workers.

Agency Worker Induction & Reporting for Duty

Flax Healthcare does not provide a formal client induction upon registration as we work with many different organisations both within and outside the NHS. Whilst we endeavour to obtain formal induction packs from our clients, it is recommended that you ask for an induction upon arrival at your first assignment. Your Recruitment Consultant will ensure you are given any documentation the client has provided for you prior to the start of your engagement.

You will be sent a confirmation by Flax Healthcare either by text or email, prior to the start of your temporary assignment detailing the following information:

- The date and times of the shifts you are covering.
- The grade and speciality you will be covering.
- Details of the address, location and telephone numbers.
- Confirmation of pay rates and travel expenses if applicable.
- Reporting instructions (where no reporting instructions are given or if you arrive out of hours - report to switchboard or reception)
- Map/ travel details if required.

Wherever you are working for the first time, make sure you allow yourself extra time to find your way around.

At the start of your assignments, it is your responsibility to ensure you receive a comprehensive local induction to the assigned place where you are working. This should include information about:

- Health and Safety policies and procedures including Fire and Evacuation Protocols
- Resuscitation Procedures
- Any 'Hot Spots' and 'Violent Episodes' that you should be aware of and the necessary procedures to deal with these.
- Security procedures.
- Cross Infection and Notifiable Diseases policy.
- Any additional policies such as Confidentiality or Data Protection.

You are expected to demonstrate your clinical competence including using your skills, training and qualifications to meet the expectations of the assignment and of the client. This includes but is not limited to:

- Upholding public safety
- Arriving on time for your shift.
- Wearing your Flax Healthcare uniform and ID Badge.
- Do not take unauthorised breaks or take longer than your allocated break time.
- Having legible handwriting and a good telephone manner and reasonable IT Skills.
- Being helpful, courteous and polite at all times.
- Having good communication skills and communicating effectively with patients and other staff members.
- Ensure professionalism at all times.

2. FLAX HEALTHCARE - CODE OF CONDUCT AND WORKING PRACTICES

As a representative of Flax Healthcare, and in line with the relevant Professional and Regulatory Bodies, you must observe the following at all times:

- Do not use your personal phone or other personal portable electronic devices to make or receive personal telephone calls, personal emails or personal texts and / or share information with other persons through social media and other networking activities whilst on duty.
- Do not attend work under the influence of, or smelling of, alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Act with integrity and conduct yourself in an appropriate and professional manner at all times.
- Avoid inappropriate use of computer systems or property / resources and do not use the client's email or internet systems for personal use.
- Do not use or take any photographs or record videos whilst on duty for any purpose including sharing of such information with other persons including social media and other networking activities.
- Do not use foul, obscene or abusive language (either in the English language or other spoken language) or act aggressively at any times.
- Do not fall asleep whilst expected to perform your duties (unless authorised by your supervisor as part of the shift / Temporary Assignment).
- Do not smoke whilst on duty (hospitals and public places operate their own Smoking Policy).
- Ensure you keep confidential any information about patients/service users in the course of your normal duties.
- Raise any genuine concerns you have about wrongdoing within the Authority you are placed or the provision of the Services in accordance with that Authority's policy and/or procedure for raising Whistle blowing concerns.

- Comply with all relevant legislation, regulations, guidelines, voluntary arrangements and/or codes of practice required of you including Working Time Regulations 1998.
- Ensure that the care you give is of the highest standard and that you comply with professional, legal and ethical requirements at all times and that you follow all reasonable requests, policies, procedures, rules and instructions of the Hospital/Trust, Care Home or Private Home
- Be on time for all your assignments, and if running late, notify your recruitment consultant or place of work as soon as possible. If you are unable to attend an assignment notify your Recruitment Consultant immediately or, if it is outside office hours leave a voicemail explaining your situation. Always provide an explanation as to why you are unable to attend your assignment.
- Ensure that you are always suitably dressed; jeans and casual clothing should not be worn.
- Wear your ID badge at all times whilst on the premises of your placement and always take a photographic ID with you to present upon arrival at your assignment and if reasonably requested any time thereafter during your engagement.
- Fully complete and return your timesheet on time and do not falsify your timesheet or expenses or attempt to de-fraud the Client or Flax Healthcare in any way.
- Co-operate in the removal of discriminatory practice in service provision and do not engage in any act of discrimination.
- Report any act of verbal or physical abuse, threatening behaviour, bullying or harassment to your immediate supervisor and do not engage in this type of behaviour yourself.
- Do not attempt to undertake an assignment whilst under the influence of any drugs, alcohol or other substance that will impair your judgement and ability to perform your duties. Any employee found to be under the influence of alcohol whilst at work will be immediately suspended from work which may, after an investigation, lead to termination of employment. The taking or possession of illegal substances whilst on the premises of your placement is regarded as an act of gross misconduct and will be dealt with accordingly. In the event where illegal substances are discovered the police will be informed.
- You must not take anything that does not belong to you from the premises of your placement. If you are found to be guilty, you will be suspended immediately.
- You must not give any gifts or lend money to patients, service users or clients nor will you accept gifts, loans or gratuities from patients, service users, clients, relatives or other interested parties.
- You will comply with the client's policies for the safe handling of personal property, including money, belonging to patients and service providers. You must not agree to look after the property of a patient or service user.
- You must inform us of any disciplinary proceedings / suspensions immediately.

Keeping in touch with Flax Healthcare

- Keep Flax Healthcare informed of your availability so we can offer you shifts appropriately
- Inform Flax Healthcare if you have booked a shift directly with the Client and provide the relevant reference number.
- Inform Flax Healthcare as soon as you reasonably can if you are unable to attend a booked shift or if you are going to arrive later at the place of work than previously agreed. You must ensure that you speak to a representative of Flax Healthcare and take their name, it is not acceptable to leave voice messages or text messages if you are unable to complete a work assignment.

3. TIMESHEETS AND THE PAYMENT PROCESS

Flax Healthcare is dedicated to providing you with the best possible service at all times. This includes weekly payment. To ensure prompt payment you will need to complete a timesheet each week.

Methods of Payment

There are three ways in which you can choose to be paid:

- PAYE (Pay As You Earn)
- Through your own Limited Company registered with Companies House.
- Through an Umbrella Company (PSU).

The way you chose to be paid depends upon you; if appropriate, seek independent advice to ensure that you chose the most suitable option for you.

PAYE

If you chose to be paid as a PAYE Agency worker the following will be deducted from your salary:

- Income tax: this is calculated on your gross earnings after the deduction of pension contributions.
- National Insurance: NI is paid both by employees and employers.

The benefit of PAYE is that your tax and NI deductions will be automatically taken care of on a weekly basis and you will accrue holiday pay. You will however receive a lower hourly rate than those working as a Limited Company or through an Umbrella organisation.

Limited Company

As a Limited Company contractor, you are responsible for your own tax and NI contributions to HM Revenue & Customs. You will need to comply with tax legislation and other company requirements. This is an arrangement which is best suited to those earning a higher salary. You are required to provide the following documentation in order for Flax Healthcare to pay you through your Limited Company:

- Certificate of Incorporation.
- Proof of a business bank account.
- Proof of Directorship.
- VAT registration number (if VAT registered).
- Public Liability / Medical Malpractice insurance.

There are several advantages to be gained from being paid as a Limited Company:

- You can offset your business-related expenses against your taxable income.
- You have complete control over all transactions, both incoming and outgoing.
- You have full control of revenue, which will be paid into your business bank account.

Umbrella Company

By signing up with an Umbrella Company you become their employee and as such are paid by them.

The advantages of using an Umbrella Company are:

- You will receive a higher rate of pay than if you work PAYE as the NI and Holiday accrual are given back to you.
- It avoids the paperwork and accounting responsibilities of a Limited Company.
- Knowledge that your tax and NI deductions are being handled for you.

Completing Your Timesheet

A timesheet is required for every assignment you undertake. Each timesheet is for a period of one week and runs from Monday to Sunday. If your assignment is longer than a week you will be issued with multiple timesheets. All timesheets are individually numbered and cannot be claimed twice. There is an opportunity for the client to complete a feedback section regarding your performance; this can be found on the right-hand side of the timesheet.

Instructions for completing your timesheet

- Write the time you started your first assignment in the relevant day's column,
- If you have taken a lunch break, write the length of time taken in the appropriate box. Then write down the time you finished.
- Finally, calculate the total number of hours you worked that day minus the time taken for lunch breaks. Make sure you are aware of the Client's break policy.
- Do this every day you worked in that week. Total up the daily number of hours to give you the week's total.

Once you have completed the timesheet, it must be signed by an authorised member of staff e.g. Manager or a Senior Member of staff who can confirm your working hours.

Please ensure your timesheet is only signed by the authorised signatory at the client as failure to do so may result in your payment being delayed. We strongly advise that timesheets emailed rather than posted in order to ensure prompt processing and payment. The email is: timesheet@flaxhealthcare.com

Payment

Email your timesheet by 12.00 pm on Monday. It is recommended however that you send your timesheet to us as soon as it has been signed off to avoid any issues concerning payment. Payment You will be paid by BACS directly into your Bank or Building Society on a Friday, weekly in arrears.

Holiday Pay

If you opt to be paid via PAYE you may be entitled to holiday pay calculated in line with the Working Time Regulations from the first day of your placement. You can discuss your holiday entitlement at any time by contacting your Recruitment Consultant. If you work through a Limited Company or an Umbrella organisation, you will not be entitled to Company holiday pay.

Travel & Accommodation

Travel and accommodation allowances are not paid unless agreed in advance with our Client and must be confirmed in writing. Please ensure you are aware of the travel and accommodation policy for all your assignments, if any.

Introduction/ Refer A Colleague Bonus

We are pleased to inform you of our introduction bonus which is our way of thanking you for introducing good quality staff to us. For each registered Nurse, Midwife, Healthcare Assistant, Support Worker or Professional that you successfully introduce to us, you will receive high street shop vouchers after they have completed 80 hours of work. We will keep track of the hours the recommended person works and will inform you once they have completed the required 80 hours of work.

Contacting Payroll

Should you have a query regarding payment, please contact your consultant initially, or email to timesheet@flaxhealthcare.com

Agency Worker Regulations

What are the Agency Worker Regulations (AWR)? The Agency Workers Regulations (AWR) came into force on the 1st of October 2011 to ensure that Temporary Agency Workers receive treatment no less favourable, with regards to pay and certain working conditions, than their full time employed equivalents. These Regulations do not change your employment status but may entitle you to further rights. To qualify you must complete 12 weeks of service with the same Client, in the same role.

Further detail and guidance on the Agency Workers Regulations are available at: www.bis.gov.uk.

How do they affect you? There are 2 sets of rights available to you – “Day 1 rights” which are those which apply from Day 1 of an assignment and “Week 12 rights” which may apply if you have completed the “qualifying period” by working at a client on the same or a similar assignment for a period of 12 weeks or more.

Day 1 Rights

The regulations state that all hiring clients must provide all agency workers with:

- Information regarding relevant vacancies at the hirer.
- Access to collective facilities and amenities which may include onsite crèche and childcare facilities, car parking facilities.
- Access to a staff canteen and / or transport services

Please note that you are entitled to apply for such facilities / vacancies in the same manner as an equivalent directly engaged member of staff. You will therefore only be entitled where these facilities and / or vacancy information actually exists. You will also be limited by the same waiting lists and time in service requirement as employed staff.

Qualifying Period or Week 12 Rights

The Qualifying Period is denoted as being 12 weeks in the same or similar role with the client. This does not consider any natural breaks during this time such as holidays, sickness, maternity and other statutory reasons whilst the ‘clock’ for qualifying is paused. It is also prudent to note that the period is set out for a time worked with a particular client, meaning you could have already worked for the client before, and therefore may have qualified for equal treatment instantly. The qualifying ‘clock’ resets if there has been a break of more than 6 weeks from the previous client and where the agency worker has moved to a different client.

Your rights are in direct relation to an individual performing the same or similar role with the client, who is employed directly or hired directly by the client:

- Equal pay to the individual - including performance-related commissions, bonuses and benefits. Equal holiday entitlement - number of comparative days and pay levels. Rest breaks - the number of and the length of breaks during the working day.
- Opportunity to work different shifts and days where a comparator likewise has the same opportunities.
- Duration of working time - not being asked to work more or less hours than had been previously booked or confirmed.

Pregnant and “New Mother” Agency Workers

There are some additional provisions in the Regulations around pregnancy and childbirth. Please let your consultant know if you are pregnant or have recently given birth so we can make ensure you have the information relevant to you and adequate support is provided.

What do you need to do?

Before being booked into a Client for the first time, we will ask you questions about any recent assignments or shifts you have worked at the same Client. It is important that you answer the questions accurately in order that we are able to keep track of your 12-week Qualifying Period.

What if you believe you are not being treated in accordance with the Regulations?

Flax Healthcare endeavours to obtain all information required from the hiring client but cannot take responsibility for the time it takes the client to respond to our requests.

We take our responsibility under the regulations seriously and have endeavoured to implement the new regulations as efficiently as possible, requesting the information we consider necessary from clients. If you think that you are not being treated in accordance with the regulations, you can register your dispute by contacting your Consultant who will take details of your complaint.

4. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health and Safety Law applies to everyone, whether you are an employer, employee or self-employed. All Agency workers have a responsibility to ensure that their work does not endanger themselves or others. The Hospital/Trust or client also has a responsibility to ensure that you can carry out your duties in an environment which is free from any dangers to your health and safety. Please ensure you are familiar with our Health & Safety Policy a copy of which is available in our office.

Accident Reporting

If you are involved in an accident or dangerous occurrence, you must follow the policies and procedures of the workplace and notify Flax Healthcare within 24 hours of any accident or incident in the workplace.

Action to be taken by you

- Follow the procedure /policy of the workplace.
- Obtain any treatment required from your G.P. or Accident & Emergency Department.
- Accurately complete your part of the Flax Healthcare Personnel Accident Form.

Notifiable injuries

- Fracture of skull, spine or pelvis.
- Fracture of any bone in arm, wrist or leg etc.
- Amputation of hand, foot, finger, thumb, ankle or toe
- An eye injury, including the loss of sight in one or both eyes
- Injury, including burns arising from electric shock
- Loss of consciousness arising from lack of oxygen
- Decompression sickness.
- Acute illness, etc. arising from exposure to a pathogen or infected material
- Any injury which results in the injured person being admitted immediately into hospital for more than 24 hours.

For information on your nearest HSE office, contact:

- Tel: 08702 545 500
- Email: hseinformationservices@natbrit.com
- Website: www.hse.gov.uk

Moving and Handling

All healthcare providers have a responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 to ensure that:

- Agency staff are not exposed to risk of injury from manual handling.
- A safe and ergonomic environment is provided.
- All agency staff are familiar with the policy.

You MUST ensure that your Moving & Handling training is in date, failure to do so will result in suspension from work until a new valid training certificate is in place. Any work undertaken when non-compliant will not be paid. If you need to report or update this or any other mandatory training courses, do this by email to:

admin@flaxhealthcare.com

As an agency staff, you have a duty to ensure that you:

- Take reasonable care of your safety and your colleagues' safety when lifting and handling patients or equipment.
- Use all work equipment correctly in accordance with any training provided, or instructions given.
- Inform the client when a work situation presents a serious danger or if there are any concerns in the arrangements for manual handling.

This applies in particular to the need to report:

- Lack of staff or equipment
- Environmental hazards
- Defects in machinery or equipment
- Injuries and accidents
- Illness or disability affecting handling capacity

You must inform your Recruitment Consultant if any such action has been undertaken and confirm your report in writing.

Infection Control

Infection is a major source of concern for patients, healthcare providers and healthcare workers alike. Flax Healthcare is committed to ensuring compliance of our agency staff relating to infection control.

Application of the principles of infection control is a fundamental part of effective healthcare. Healthcare workers are bound by a Code of Professional Conduct to protect patients and colleagues from the risk of cross infection. They are also accountable through the Health and Safety at Work Act to ensure that the workplace is free from hazards.

You MUST ensure that your Infection Control training is in date, failure to do so will result in suspension from work until a new valid training certificate is in place.

Any work undertaken when non-compliant will not be paid. Please send an email to admin@flaxhealthcare.com if you need to update your Infection Control training. You will be contacted to let you know how to complete this.

Needle Sticks and Sharps Injuries

It is essential that you are aware of the Needle Sticks and Sharps injuries policy on assignment. However, should you be injured through needle sticks or sharps, please report the incident to the Manager or Senior Official on duty of the shift and follow the protocol for Needles sticks and sharps injury. You will need to attend Accident and Emergency immediately for prompt treatment and advice, as necessary. You must also inform Flax Healthcare immediately if you are involved in an incident with Needle sticks or sharps.

5. RECORD KEEPING

Maintaining good records is an essential practice to ensure safe and effective patient care. Records should always be:

- Legible
- Factual and accurate
- Clear and unambiguous.
- Clearly dated and time of entry is included
- Signed, with your full name clearly printed on each entry
- Written using commonly practiced terminology that other staff and the patient can understand
- Abbreviations should not be used; ☐ Clearly define any problems that have arisen and the action taken to rectify them
- Alterations should be clearly scored out and initialled.

It is essential that all client or patient records are kept up to date and are completed prior to leaving an assignment.

Confidentiality

Patient information that is disclosed during the course of an assignment is confidential and should not be disclosed to third parties if it is not in the patient's best interest or if it not deemed necessary as part of their care. Care should be taken to ensure that patient records are not left where they are accessible to unauthorised persons. When obtaining consent from a patient you must ensure that they are aware to whom their information will be shared with and why this is necessary. Each patient has a right to confidentiality in accordance with the Data protection Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998. It is the patient's right to decide whether their information is shared.

You are to exercise reasonable care to keep safe all documentary or other material containing confidential information and shall, at the completion of the assignment be returned and your handover sheet destroyed or disposed of in confidential waste bins.

Data Protection

The Data Protection Act 1998 is concerned with information about individuals (personal data) which is processed automatically (i.e. computer systems), with those that undertake the processing (data users) and with those individuals to whom the data relates.

Flax Healthcare is conversant with the legislation and will comply with the requirements. Anyone involved in the receipt or handling of personal data must ensure they abide by the eight Data Protection Act principles:

Personal data shall be processed fairly and lawfully and, in particular, shall not be processed unless:

- At least one of the conditions in Schedule 2 is met, and in the case of sensitive personal data, at least one of the conditions in Schedule 3 is also met.
- Personal data shall be obtained only for one or more specified and lawful purposes and shall not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose or those purposes.
- Personal data shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose or purposes for which they are processed.
- Personal data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date
- Personal data processed for any purpose or purposes shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes
- Personal data shall be processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects under this Act
- Appropriate technical and organisational measures shall be taken against unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data.

- Personal data shall not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of protection for the rights and freedoms of data subjects in relation to the processing of personal data.

Further information on data protection can be found at:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents>.

Computer Use

During some assignments you may need to have access to the client's computer systems. You must ensure that you:

- Do not disclose any passwords to unauthorised users.
- Abide by the policies and procedures of the client.
- Do not attempt to access programmes or data to which you do not require access.
- Use the computers for your own personal or recreational use unless you have gained permission to do so.
- Abide by data protection law at all times.

6. WHISTLEBLOWING

Flax Healthcare operates a "Whistleblowing Policy", which encourages a culture of transparency and abides with our duty of candour within our organisation and staff to prevent abuse and poor practice. With the introduction of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 all workers now have legal protection from any form of retribution, victimisation or detriment as a result of publicly disclosing certain serious allegations of malpractice.

What is Whistleblowing?

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) defined Whistleblowing is when staff and other workers bring information about a wrongdoing to the attention of their employers or a relevant organisation, they are protected in certain circumstances under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. This is commonly referred to as 'blowing the whistle'. The law that protects whistle-blowers is for the public interest - so people can speak out if they find malpractice in an organisation. Blowing the whistle is more formally known as 'making a disclosure in the public interest'.

The policy will apply in cases where a Temporary Worker genuinely and in good faith believes that one of the following sets of circumstances is occurring, has occurred or may occur within their line of duty:

- Financial malpractice or impropriety or fraud
- Failure to comply with a legal obligation or statutes
- Dangers to Health & safety or the environment
- Criminal activity
- Improper conduct or unethical behaviour
- Attempts to conceal any of these safeguards

Fraud is defined as a: false representation of a matter of fact whether by words or by conduct, by false or misleading allegations, or by concealment of what should have been disclosed that deceives and is intended to deceive another so that the individual will act upon it to her or his legal injury. (Clemency, 2002)

Common types of fraud within the NHS include:

- Professionals claiming money for shifts not worked (commonly known as ‘timesheet fraud’)
- Patients falsely claiming exemption from optical, dental or pharmaceutical charges (‘patient fraud’) and
- Staff working in unauthorised jobs whilst on sick leave.

Please visit <http://www.nhscounterfraud.nhs.uk> for more information.

The disclosure may relate to concerns regarding:

- The location in which you currently work or have worked
- A fellow Healthcare Professional
- A member of the Flax Healthcare Team
- Any other party e.g. a patient or service user’s relative

How Am I affected?

Where an individual discovers information which they believe shows serious malpractice or wrongdoing within the organisation then this information should be disclosed internally without fear of reprisal, and there should be arrangements to enable this to be done independently of line management (although in relatively minor instances the line manager would be the appropriate person to be told).

The Public interest disclosure Act, which came into effect in 1999, gives legal protection to employees against being dismissed or penalised by their employers as a result of publicly disclosing certain serious concerns. We have endorsed the provisions set out below so as to ensure that no members of staff or Agency Workers should feel at a disadvantage in raising legitimate concerns.

Protection: this policy is designed to offer protection to those employees of the Company who disclose such concerns.

Confidentiality: we will treat all such disclosures in a confidential and sensitive manner.

Anonymous Allegations: concerns expressed anonymously are much less credible.

Untrue Allegations: if an individual makes an allegation in good faith, which is not confirmed by subsequent investigation, no action will be taken against that individual.

7. DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE:

Good Practice in Dealing With Disclosures of Abuse

In all cases of suspected abuse, you should immediately follow the policies and procedures (for reporting) of the hospital/Trust or place where you are working. All cases of suspected abuse must be reported to your Senior Manager, who, in conjunction with the relevant department and other appropriate agencies, will instigate an investigation.

You should not attempt to directly question those involved in suspected abuse cases as this may jeopardise the scope of questions, under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE), which the authorities are able to ask later in an investigation. A properly coordinated joint investigation will achieve more than a series of separate investigations; it will ensure that evidence is shared; repeated interviewing is avoided and will cause less stress for the person who may have suffered abuse.

Procedure in relation to crime or suspected crime

Sexual, physical or psychological abuse, financial exploitation, theft and fraud constitute criminal offences and should be reported to the police in line with the hospital trusts policy. The Police have a duty to the victim to assist, support and obtain evidence of alleged abuse and a responsibility to investigate reported crimes as well as interview any identified suspects.

Confidentiality & Data Protection

In order to protect vulnerable individuals, in some circumstances, it will be necessary to share what might normally be regarded as confidential information.

In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to disclose personal information, which must be done in accordance with data protection principles, as laid down in the Data Protection Act 1998.

8. CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

Complaints Procedure

In accordance with the NMC Nursing and Midwifery Fitness to Practice Procedure (FTP) and in line with NHS Framework requirements, Flax Healthcare operates a formal procedure for the handling of complaints.

General Principles:

- All verbal and written complaints are managed and monitored by Senior Management and the Nurse Consultant adhering to the response times detailed in this policy
- Complaints are monitored for emerging patterns, as detailed in this policy
- Poor performance issues are addressed in the Policy for Training, Development and Appraisal.

Complaints raised by a client or patient in respect of an Agency worker:

- When a complaint is either taken verbally over the phone or is sent by email or post, a Complaints form is completed and signed by the employee who received the complaint
- A response is sent out to the Complainant (Trust /Care Home/Patient) immediately confirming receipt of the complaint by the Consultant
- The complaint will be passed immediately to the Nurse Consultant/General Manager, who will consider the complaint and respond to the necessary parties within 48 hours
- The Nurse Consultant / General Manager will contact the worker concerned to advise them of the alleged Complaint, and invite the worker to attend an investigative interview, the agency worker will be asked to submit of a statement regarding the circumstances of the incident / complaint. The worker will be contacted by e-mail or telephone or by letter
- In all instances the worker should be given the right to reply. This should be provided in writing within 7 days, copies will be submitted to all relevant parties
- Information regarding statement writing is sent out to candidate and /or the worker is advised where to obtain such information (RCN/NMC Website) by the Nurse Consultant / General Manager
- On receipt of written confirmation of the complaint from the client, Flax Healthcare in conjunction with the client will come to a decision as to the method by which the complaint should be handled.

Complaints raised by an Agency worker:

In the event of a complaint being raised by an agency worker in respect of a work-based problem or with other Agency Nurses, the following will be adhered to:

- In the first instance the worker may contact the relevant business Team Leader/Manager.
- A complaints form will be completed with the Agency worker.
- Advice will be given and depending on the nature of the complaint, a written submission of the complaint may be requested by the Team Leader along with the complaints form already completed
- A decision will be made in conjunction with the worker as to the next stage of the complaint as appropriate, for example if an investigation or further action is required.
- In all cases the complaint will be recorded on the client file.
- Where serious complaints are upheld, Flax Healthcare will take appropriate action in terms of reporting responsibilities.

In the event that a worker is not satisfied with the manner in which a complaint has been handled, Flax Healthcare would request that a senior person be contacted at: admin@flaxhealthcare.com

Monitoring of complaints

Flax Healthcare operates a system of monitoring complaints to identify patterns or trends as follows:

- Each time a verbal or written complaint is made about a worker or a client, a complaints form is completed and a record will be made against the relevant Client / Candidate.
- Senior Management will collate and check these forms on quarterly basis. Should any trends or patterns be noticed, Senior Management will take necessary action, depending on the nature of the problem to address the issue. If necessary, Flax Healthcare will seek guidance on how best to proceed from professional organizations and bodies such as:
 - Health Professional Council (HPC)
 - Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)
 - The Recruitment Employment Confederation (REC).

9. UNIFORM POLICY

All Flax Healthcare temporary workers are responsible for following the standards of uniform / dress and appearance laid down in this policy and should understand how this policy relates to their working environment, health and safety, infection control, particular roles and duties and contact with others during the course of their employment.

Any failure to adhere to Flax Healthcare's standards of dress and appearance may constitute misconduct and result in formal disciplinary proceedings. All employees are supplied with Flax Healthcare's identity badge that must be worn and visible at all times when on duty or acting in an official capacity representing Flax Healthcare Ltd. Staff must ensure that where uniforms are provided, they are clean, in good condition and worn in full. Staff must take reasonable care of uniforms provided and they must only be worn when on duty or undertaking official work assignments. Non-uniformed staff should wear appropriate clothing, bearing in mind the type of work undertaken and any health and safety requirements.

It is also required that uniforms are only worn once and washed appropriately at minimum 40 degrees Celsius as per infection prevention and control.

Principles of the Dress Code

In order to promote a professional image Flax Healthcare requires that all staff achieve certain standards of appearance. Clinical staff are required to achieve additional standards in order to reduce the risks of staff or patients being harmed, and to improve and assist cleanliness. Compliance with “Bare Below the Elbow” is required in all clinical areas at all times by all staff e.g. even if not delivering direct patient care and just visiting the ward or clinical area.

Flax Healthcare Registered Temporary Worker Uniform

- Light purple tunic with Flax Healthcare logo
- Navy or black trousers (not jeans or tracksuit bottoms)
- Black leather shoes with rubber soles
- Valid Flax Healthcare-issued ID Badge

10. FURTHER INFORMATION

Equal opportunities

- The Equality Act 2010 consolidated UK discrimination into a single piece of legislation. Under the Act, there are 9 protected characteristics including:
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Gender re-assignment
 - Pregnancy and Maternity
 - Race
 - Religion & Beliefs.

As an organisation Flax Healthcare is committed to equal opportunities and not discriminating on grounds of gender, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, race, nationality or religious belief by:

- Implementing an Equal Opportunities policy
- Ensuring that the policy is implemented and adhered to
- Ensuring good practice is developed and promoted in all aspects of Thames business activities
- Complying with all relevant legislation and supporting appropriate codes of practice
- Monitoring the recruitment process and employment decisions
- Ensuring that any grievances are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

Policy Statement on Sexual / Racial Harassment

Flax Healthcare’s Equal Opportunities Policy makes a firm commitment to the prevention and removal of discrimination on the basis of sex, marital status, race, religion, creed, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation or disability.

It is against the policies of Flax Healthcare for a Flax Healthcare worker to harass another worker, patient or client sexually or racially -such conduct is unacceptable and will not be tolerated; all Flax Healthcare workers are expected to comply with this policy.

Appropriate action for serious offences and violation of this policy will be taken against any our temporary worker working through an NHS framework agreement or with any other clients of Flax Healthcare. In any proven circumstances where an agency worker has engaged in sexual or racial harassment of another person whilst working for Flax Healthcare, they will be automatically dismissed and will be reported to the appropriate professional register or/and the police.

How to complain if you have been a victim of racial or sexual Harassment

Wherever possible, an Agency worker who believes that he or she has been the subject of sexual or racial harassment should raise a complaint with their Line Manager. If an Agency worker feels unable to approach the person responsible or where such a request does not work, the next step should be to raise a complaint with their Consultant at Flax Healthcare. All complaints will be handled urgently, seriously and confidentially.

If an investigation reveals that a complaint is valid, prompt action will be taken to stop the harassment immediately and prevent reoccurrence. This may be ensured through formal disciplinary action, up to dismissal for persistence or gross misconduct.

Agency workers shall be protected from intimidation, victimization, or discrimination for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation. Such retaliation is a serious offence. Making false allegations of harassment maliciously will also be subject to termination of contract if substantiated.

Agency staff have the right to seek redress for complaints through the Flax Healthcare formal Complaints Procedure and this should be exercised if the Agency worker feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved

Environmental Policy Statement

The Company recognises and understands the importance of protecting the environment in which we operate. We are fully committed to minimising the impact that running our business has on the environment and we encourage our clients, suppliers and other stakeholders to do the same. For further details, please request a copy of our Environmental Policy.

Fraud

If you provide false information or misrepresentation to Flax Healthcare, you may be liable for prosecution or referral to a governing body (e.g. the NMC, DBS etc.). The following lists common examples of fraud:

- Falsely claiming for hours not worked
- Claiming sick pay when you are not ill or travel expenses for journeys not undertaken
- Working whilst on long term sick leave
- Falsifying qualifications and work experience
- Failing to declare criminal convictions
- Falsifying records in order to steal NHS/ Client property
- Overcharging for contracted services.

Reporting Fraud

All Hospitals/Trusts have a nominated officer linked to a counter fraud team whom you can report to. If you suspect that a fraudulent act has been committed there are several ways in which it can be reported:

By contacting the Hospital/Trust's Counter Fraud Specialist Team

By calling the NHS Fraud and Corruption Reporting line: 08000 284 060 England and Wales 8000 963 396 Northern Ireland, 08000 151 628 Scotland

Online at www.reportnhsfraud.nhs.uk

Report to your Consultant at Flax Healthcare

Report to CQC via the Whistle Blowing Policy

Report to the Police.

11. USEFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

- Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC)
23 Portland Place, London, W1B 1PZ
Tel: 0207 333 9333
www.nmc-uk.org/
- Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)
Park House 184 Kennington Park Road
London, SE11 4BU
- The HCPC (formerly the Health Professions Council)
Tel: 0845 300 4472
www.HCPC-uk.org/
- Department of Health occupational health guidance, including 'The Green Book'-
<http://immunisation.dh.gov.uk/category/the-green-book/>
- NHS Employers- NHS Employment check standards from NHS Employers
<http://www.nhsemployers.org/Pages/home.aspx>
- UK Border Agency <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/>
- Disclosure and Barring Service Code of Practice <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service/about>

Any questions can be directed to: admin@flaxhealthcare.com