



# **Muscular Dystrophy Ireland**

## **Staff Handbook**

## Foreword

Welcome to the Muscular Dystrophy Ireland Staff Handbook. This handbook is intended to give general information to staff and new employees of Muscular Dystrophy Ireland. The handbook is to serve as a reference booklet during employment with the organisation. It does not aim to be a fully comprehensive guide, as the information given is not in detail. If further information is required about conditions of employment or if advice about a personal problem is required you should initially consult your line manager.

Muscular Dystrophy Ireland employees should observe high standards of integrity and comply with the best legal and ethical practices in their work. MDI promotes open communication between staff, management and the Executive and appreciates the collaborative effort given to the development of this handbook. MDI is committed to continue this involvement through an annual review of the handbook.

The National Executive of Muscular Dystrophy Ireland values the individuality, diversity and creative potential which every employee brings to the organisation. It is the aim of the organisation to treat all employees with respect and dignity and provide equal opportunities to them to develop their careers.

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Gary Toner  
Chairperson MDI  
May 2014

- *Review 1 April 2006 – V1*
- *Review 1 June 2008 – V2*
- *Review 1 July 2011 – V3*
- *Review July 2012 – V4*
- *Review August 2012 – V5*
- *Review May 2014 – V6*



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## PURPOSE OF THE HANDBOOK

This handbook serves several purposes:

- It will provide a useful guide for new staff joining Muscular Dystrophy Ireland and will form an important part of the organisation's induction programme.
- It explains the ethos, values, aims, objectives, structures and services of the organisation.
- It will serve as a useful reference tool for all staff throughout their employment with the organisation; containing information on their entitlements and on terms and conditions of employment.
- It sets out the roles and responsibilities of all involved in Muscular Dystrophy Ireland in working towards the goals of the organisation and in upholding the values of the organisation.

All staff are required to read this Handbook and its associated documents. It will be assumed that the terms and conditions contained herein have been accepted. They form part of the contract of employment with the organisation.

Changes in employment legislation and/or best practice may, from time to time, lead to changes in some conditions. The Handbook will be reviewed regularly and updates will be provided as necessary.

The policies, conditions of employment, procedures and regulations outlined in this Handbook form the conditions that staff accept as part of their contract of employment.

All staff are issued with individual contracts of employment. The information in this Handbook is of a general nature and in no way affects the specific conditions set out in an individual's contract of employment. If you have a query with regard to your own terms and conditions of employment you should discuss these with the HR & Administration Officer

If anything is unclear, you should consult with the HR & Administration Officer, as ignorance of these requirements cannot be accepted as a reason for not observing them.

Staff should keep this document safely. Additional policies and procedures will be provided for groups of staff working in specialist areas (e.g. childcare) and they should be added to this folder for ease of referral.

## Employee Acknowledgement

Once you are satisfied that you have read and understood the contents of this handbook, please sign and date below and return this page to your Manager. If you have any queries in relation to the content of this handbook, please bring these to the attention of your Manager in order that these queries may be addressed.

I wish to confirm that I have read and understood the content of this handbook, and agree to adhere to the policies and procedures as outlined in the document. Any queries which I had in relation to any section of the handbook have been addressed with my Manager, and answered to my satisfaction. I agree to be bound by the requirements set out in this handbook, and any future amendments which may be issued and notified to me during my employment.

Employee Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **BACKGROUND TO MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY IRELAND**

### **MISSION AND AIM**

Muscular Dystrophy Ireland (MDI) aims to provide information and support to people with neuromuscular conditions and their families through a range of support services.

This includes:

- Promotion, through practical empowerment, of independent living for people with the condition muscular dystrophy.
- Lobbying for change in policy and services to enable people with neuromuscular conditions to fully participate in society and to live a life of their own choosing.
- Support and funding of research into neuromuscular conditions.

### **PRIMARY OBJECTIVE**

Our primary objective is to provide support for persons and their families who are affected by muscular dystrophy and allied neuromuscular conditions. It does this through the provision of support services such as information, advice, respite breaks, home support, holidays, youth activities, provision of transport for members and publication of a newsletter.

### **HISTORY OF THE ORGANISATION**

The Muscular Dystrophy Society of Ireland (MDI) is a voluntary organisation which was founded in 1972 by a group of parents in Galway, whose children had muscular dystrophy. These parents met together in their homes to set up a support network for people with muscular dystrophy and their families.

In 1986, the first Dublin office was set up in Monkstown, Dublin. MDI then spent time in temporary accommodation at Christchurch Place. We were fortunate to acquire space in the Carmichael Centre, Carmichael House, North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7 in 1990, and in Coleraine House, Dublin 7. From 2005 to March 2011 MDI was based at 71/72 North Brunswick Street, D7. In April 2011 MDI moved to permanent office space at 75 Lucan Road, Chapelizod, Dublin 20.

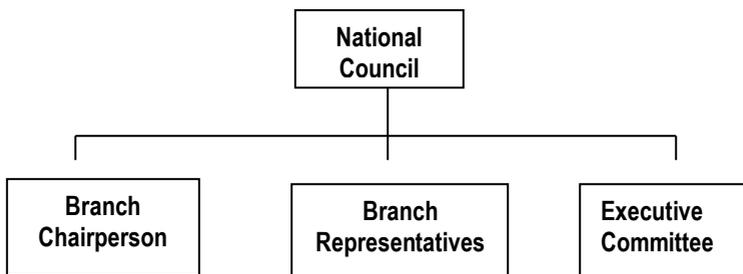
MDI has grown considerably and now has a membership of 600 individuals and families and a network of branches and offices throughout Ireland. Branches are represented on the National Council of MDI, which determines policy.

MDI has developed considerably, and now employs staff nationwide and offers national care services such as family support, youth services, transport, summer camps, respite and counselling services. All of these services are administered from the Dublin office.

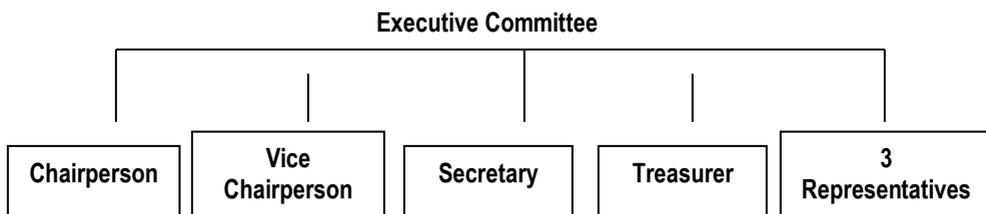
## **STRUCTURE**

MDI has a National Council which meets four times per year and its role is to determine policy. The members of the National Council are elected at the AGM. The Chairperson of each local branch is automatically a member of the National Council. The National Executive Members of MDI are elected at the AGM and sit on the National Council.

The Executive comprises a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary and there is allocation for a further three members. This committee meets once a month to determine the management of MDI. The CEO is responsible for the day-to-day management and operation of the organisation.



The Executive Committee comprises the following officers:



### **BRANCHES**

The MDI Branches have proved crucial in the successful development of MDI. They provide a network of support for members at local level. They participate in fundraising, both at local level and in support of national events. The branches work closely with members locally and so are in an ideal position to offer advice as to how MDI can move forward. Current branches include:

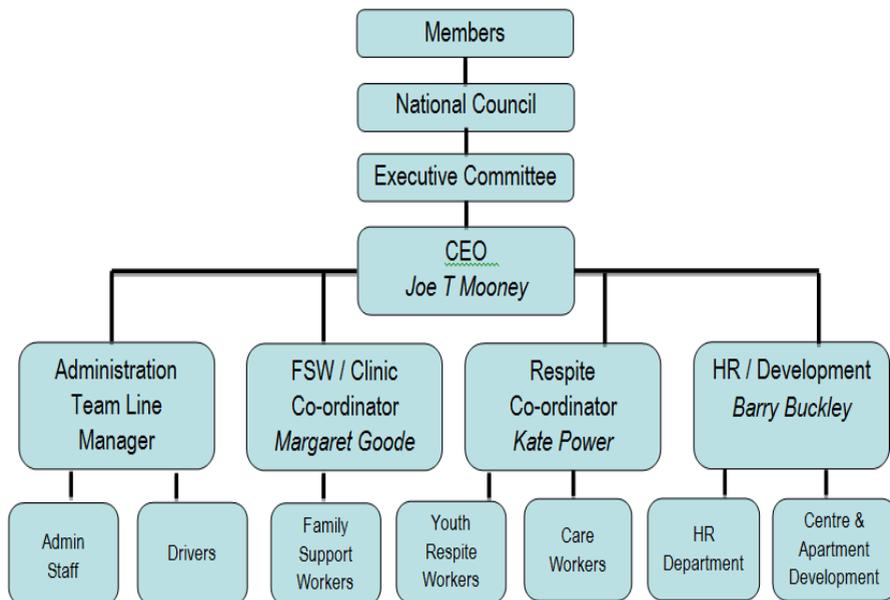
- South East Branch
- Donegal
- Galway/Mountbellow
- Kerry
- Midlands
- Dublin
- Dundalk

The new Branch Guidelines were ratified at the 2008 AGM. Please contact the CEO or your line manager if you require a copy. These guidelines cover topics such as the structure of the branches, how the branch fits into the overall structure of MDI, activities and supports, money matters and policies.

### **MEMO & ARTICLES 2008**

MDI is governed by its memo and articles which were reviewed in 2008.

## ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



## AFFILIATION AND LINKS

MDI is affiliated to several organisations both in Ireland and Europe, including:

- European Alliance of Neuromuscular Disorders Association
- European Organisation of Rare Disorders
- Disability Federation of Ireland
- Genetic and Rare Disorders Organisation
- Neurological Alliance of Ireland
- Centre for Independent Living
- Medical Research Charities Group

- IPPOSI
- TREAT-NMD
- IBEC
- Irish Charities Tax Reform
- UK Muscular Dystrophy Campaign

## **FUNDING**

The primary source of funding for MDI is the Health Executive Service. MDI also depends on voluntary donations, subscriptions, and fund raising events.

## **CORE SERVICES**

### **ADMINISTRATION**

The administration function is located at the organisation's head office at 75 Lucan Road, Chapelizod, Dublin 20. Here, the management of resources (human, capital and financial) takes place, national events are planned and co-ordinated, fundraising activities are arranged and general administration takes place. The CEO of MDI is based in head office and is supported by a management team, Respite Co-ordinator, Family Support/Clinic Co-ordinator and a Development & Human Resources Coordinator. Administration staff includes a full-time Receptionist, Information Officer, two part-time Administrators, a part-time Accounts person, and a full-time Fundraising Officer & Assistant Fundraising Officer.

### **INFORMATION SERVICES**

The Information Officer is based in the Dublin office and has access to a range of information about muscular dystrophy, research, entitlements, education etc. An information pack has been compiled for members, health care and educational professionals and other interested parties. The pack contains general information about the condition, genetics, entitlements, the services that MDI provides, and useful contact details.

Specific fact sheets are also available on all of the different types of muscular dystrophy. Information about care and management of the condition can be obtained from international muscular dystrophy associations. For example, the UK Muscular Dystrophy Campaign has a range of fact sheets on aids and adaptations, on medical issues such as anaesthetics, steroid treatment and spinal surgery and an education guide. They also have some publications for children and teenagers with muscular dystrophy, their siblings and school classmates.

Staff can request information, whether it is for themselves, members or their families, medical or educational personnel, by contacting the Information Officer.

Members contact the Information Officer in the Dublin Office by telephone, e-mail, letter or by calling into the office. The service is used by MDI members and staff, by educational and medical organisations, by the media and by organisations with which MDI is affiliated.

## **INFORMATION & DISPLAY LIBRARY**

An information and display library is located in MDI's Head Office in Dublin. A comprehensive range of booklets and leaflets are available, including MDI reports, newsletters and factsheets, information about neuromuscular conditions, standards of care, research, suppliers of aids and adaptations, accessible travel, policy information such as rare disease and neurological services policy and general health information such as dyslexia, diabetes, arthritis and coping with bereavement. MDI is working closely with suppliers of aids and adaptations to display samples of equipment to assist with daily living in order for members to determine if it is suitable for their own needs. Staff and members of MDI are very welcome to visit the information and display library.

## **TRANSPORT**

At present MDI have **12** buses available to its members. Two drivers are employed. A full-time driver is based in the Eastern HSE region and a part-time driver (24 hrs. per week) is based in the Southern HSE region. Members can avail of transport services by contacting the Drivers directly.

The MDI buses can also be loaned to members of MDI. To avail of this service, members should contact Head Office.

***The MDI Transport Handbook is located in all MDI Vehicles and a copy of this can be received from a member of the Health & Safety Team, MDI CEO or one of MDI's Driver / Fleet Coordinator.***

## **MDI Staff Driving Vehicles**

It is the policy of MDI that staff who drive MDI vehicles must

- Have a full, clean EU drivers license
- Have completed and passed the GLUAS driving course
- Adhere to all statutory rules of the road and relevant Road Traffic Acts

- Be over 25 years of age (*where under 25 years, special permission and insurance must be sought from the organisation to drive vehicles* )
- Notify the organisation if they receive any penalty points on their licence as it may have an effect on the company insurance
- Notify the organisation immediately if they lose their licence or are prohibited from driving. This may result in your contract being terminated if you are unable to carry out the duties of your role.

### **FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE**

Family Support Workers are based in each of the health service executive regions in Ireland. Their role is to support members and their families by regular phone contact and home visits. They provide information on MD and how the condition may affect an individual.

The role also involves liaising with service providers (e.g. all health care professionals) to ensure that members have access to clinical, para-medical, therapeutic, vocational, housing and social services.

The Family Support Workers also provide information on entitlements to members and advocates on their behalf. They promote quality of life by ensuring that members have access to equipment, respite, independent living options and social activities. They provide awareness of Muscular Dystrophy to teachers and health care professionals on request. They work alongside organisations in the disability field to lobby for services at a local level.

### **YOUTH PROGRAMME**

Muscular Dystrophy Ireland offers a wide range of services to people affected by neuromuscular conditions and their families. Among these services is the Youth Programme. Youth/Respite Workers have responsibility for the development, organisation and delivery of the youth activity programme in their respective areas. The youth service focuses on personal and social development; encouraging integration and independence. Youth/Respite Workers also work with other youth service providers to provide service to MDI members. They co-ordinate the holiday program for young people and develop MDI's volunteer base in the area. They also provide respite care to members and their families. YRWs fundraise to develop the youth activity program in their areas.

Youth activities include:

- Arts & Crafts
- Trips to the cinema
- Trips to Football Matches in the UK
- Disney on ice

- Youth Clubs
- Workshops
- Power soccer
- Christmas party, etc.
- Social Outings

## **RESPITE SERVICES**

### **DEFINITION OF RESPITE**

Respite care is short-term care that helps a family take a break from the daily routine and stress. Respite care can occur in the person's/family home or in a variety of out-of-home settings, and can occur for any length of time depending on the needs of the family and available resources.

### **AIMS OF MDI RESPITE SERVICES:**

MDI aims to provide short-term respite for members with muscular dystrophy and their families when required, in order to maintain physical and emotional wellbeing. The respite service provides a break for both carers and members of MDI, and may also provide opportunities for personal development and social interaction. Members' needs for respite vary from planned breaks and holidays to emergency intervention.

Muscular dystrophy is the collective name for a range of neuromuscular conditions, which are characterized by the progressive weakening and wasting of the muscles.

### **WHO CAN AVAIL OF MDI RESPITE SERVICES?**

1. MDI members with muscular dystrophy.
2. MDI family members of a person/child with muscular dystrophy who provide assistance and support to the member with the condition.
3. Individuals and family members referred to MDI with a diagnosis of muscular dystrophy.

MDI recognise that the person/child with muscular dystrophy and family members both need to avail of respite care services in order to maintain physical and emotional wellbeing.

### **CLASSIFICATION OF MDI RESPITE SERVICES:**

MDI provides respite care services through the following 4 categories:

1. Youth Respite Services
2. Emergency Respite Service
3. PA Respite Service
4. Financial Contribution Service.

### **1. YOUTH RESPITE SERVICES:**

MDI Youth Respite Workers provide respite under the following areas:

- Home Visits
- Youth Clubs
- Summer Camps

### **2. EMERGENCY RESPITE SERVICE:**

MDI will endeavour to provide respite cover due to emergency situations e.g. illness, hospitalisation, bereavement or social crisis. The following areas have been identified:

- Cover while parents/partner/guardian ill
- Cover while PA ill
- Child/member with MD attending hospital
- Bereavement or social crisis

### **3. PA RESPITE SERVICE:**

MDI will endeavour to provide PA respite service solely when all other PA service providers have been exhausted e.g. IWA, CIL, Home Help Service, Health Service Executive etc. The following PA respite service areas have been identified:

- In-home PA e.g. night-assistance
- Social PA
- Summer PA for children during the summer months.

Respite Guidelines are available from the Respite Co-ordinator.

### **FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION SERVICE**

MDI financial contribution service is aimed at supporting members and families during difficult financial circumstances. The financial contribution service is a small limited fund that is allocated to families prioritised as most at need. The following areas have been identified:

- Medical costs and equipment not funded by the H.S.E, the Government departments or other voluntary organisations.
- **The financial contribution support will be limited to aid & appliances within Ireland.**

### **MDI HOME FROM HOME CENTRE**

A three bed-roomed self catering apartment is available to members requiring respite support. The following services will be available to members, HSE and disability organisations;

1. Planned respite breaks.
2. Emergency respite breaks.
3. Available for carers and families when member is in hospital .
4. Clinic & hospital appointments

There is a standard contribution of €25 per room per night for booking.

## **ANNUAL EVENTS AND KEY DEVELOPMENTS**

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The AGM is held each year. The business carried out at the AGM includes the Chairperson's report, Accounts, election of auditors, election of Officers and Members of the National Council and Executive and research updates. Staff do not attend the AGM business meeting.

Occasionally another event, e.g. Information Workshops and/or Conference is organised in conjunction with the AGM, for these events staff are expected to attend and undertake specific roles as designated by the event's organiser.

### **NATIONAL AWARENESS DAY**

National Awareness Day is one of MDI's principal fundraising events. It is held on St. Valentine's Day (14<sup>th</sup> February) each year. MDI promotional product will be sold throughout major retail stores in Ireland. Radio and TV interviews and media articles promote the work of MDI. The purpose of the campaign is to:

- Raise awareness of the condition
- Raise awareness of the role that Muscular Dystrophy Ireland play in the lives of individuals & families affected by the condition
- Raise funds to support the services the organisation provides to over 600 members nationwide.
- All staff are expected to be available for work during the awareness campaign.

Other fundraising events held throughout the year

- The sale of Christmas cards – November & December
  - Flora Mini Marathon - June
  - Benefit Race Night - October
- Other event are held through out the year

***All Staff of MDI play a part in fundraising for the organisation.***

### **Adult Neurological and Respiratory Clinic**

The adult neurological clinic opened in Beaumont Hospital, Dublin, in September 2002. Adults from all over Ireland with a neuromuscular condition attend this clinic and avail of the services which includes referral to a cardiologist, respiratory services, a dietician, physiotherapists and occupational therapist. This clinic is now combined with the Respiratory clinic.

The adult respiratory clinic opened in Beaumont in February 2011. This clinic is facilitated by Professor Richard Costello respiratory consultant and his team. Adults with neuromuscular conditions attend this clinic.

### **Children's Clinic**

A muscle clinic for children is held in the Central Remedial Clinic. Children are seen by the multi-disciplinary team consisting of a neurologist, orthopaedic surgeon, physiotherapist, dietician, occupational therapist orthotics, and nurse. They can also be seen by the assistive technology specialist, psychologist, seating, speech and language

### **Children's Respiratory Clinic**

The children's respiratory clinic is held in Our Lady's Hospital Temple Street Dublin and is facilitated by Dr Slattery and her team. Children with neuromuscular conditions attend this clinic on a regular basis

The clinic Co-ordinator is in attendance at both of those clinics to assist members.

*For further information on the Clinics contact the Family Support Clinic Co-ordinator.*

Further information on MDI may be found on the organisation's web site [www.mdi.ie](http://www.mdi.ie)

# **POLICIES, TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT**

## **ATTENDANCE**

Staff are expected to attend for work during the hours specified in their contracts of employment.

Authorised absence may be granted in specific circumstances (please see section on Leave).

## **SEVERE WEATHER**

Due to the severe weather conditions that Ireland has experienced for the last two years MDI have some guidelines for staff in relation to this.

1. During severe weather conditions if staff can not make it into the office they may take annual leave, unpaid leave or time in lieu.
2. In severe weather conditions, all home visits and social outings should be cancelled for health and safety reasons. Home visits and social outings should be rescheduled as soon as practical when weather improves.
3. Where staff has no annual leave left, unpaid leave will be given in consultation with your line manager.
4. In consultation with your line manager, it may be agreed to work from home but this will only be up to a maximum of four hours, the other four hours will have to be taken as annual leave, time in lieu or unpaid leave.

## **POLICY FOR CARERS**

The Carer's Leave Act, 2001 protects the employment rights of staff who take unpaid carer's leave. The Act provides for the temporary absence from employment of staff who need to provide full-time care and attention to a person requiring it.

Carer's leave is available to staff who:

- Have been employed by MDI for at least twelve months;
- Have to look after a person who requires continual supervision and frequent assistance throughout the day – deciding officer of the Department of Social Protection will make the decision as to whether the person is a relevant person for the purposes of the Carer's Leave Act 2001
- Are required to provide full-time care for the person;
- Do not engage in any other employment during the period (Note exceptions to this include limited self-employment in the home, or employment outside the home of not more than ten hours per week (unless authorised by the Department of Social Protection))

In order to be eligible for carer's leave the employee must live with the care recipient or, under certain circumstances, in close proximity to them with a direct line of communication, e.g. telephone or alarm system.

### **How to apply for Carer's Leave**

Staff must apply to the Department of Social Protection at least 6 weeks in advance of the proposed commencement date of leave. The Department's Deciding Officer will assess the validity of the application. An application form (CARB1) and information leaflet (SW 49) may be obtained from the Department.

Staff must apply to the HR Department for Carer's Leave at the same time.

The document should include:

- The proposal to take Carer's Leave;
- The proposed date to start the leave;
- The manner in which it is intended to take the leave;
- Confirmation that an application has been sent to the Department of Social Protection.

Staff must also apply separately to the Department for the Carer's Benefit. Qualifying for Carer's Leave does not automatically mean that an applicant will receive the Carer's Benefit.

Once approval has been received for Carer's Leave from the Department, the staff member must inform the HR Department.

Not less than two weeks before the commencement of the leave the employee and the organisation must sign a confirmation document specifying:

- The date the leave will begin;
- Its duration;
- The manner in which it will be taken.

Once the confirmation document has been signed it can only be altered by agreement between the parties.

### **Duration of Carer's Leave**

Carer's Leave may be taken as a continuous block up to the maximum allowance of 104 weeks Or, by agreement with the CEO, in shorter periods of not less than 13 weeks. If the leave is broken up there must be at least 6 weeks between each leave period. The

organisation may refuse (on reasonable grounds) to permit the employee to take a period of leave shorter than 13 weeks by specifying (in writing) the reason for refusal.

The Act allows for variation, postponement and/or curtailment of the way in which Carer's Leave is taken, subject to agreement between the staff member and employer. Where the leave has been varied, postponed or curtailed it may be taken at another time.

A staff member must inform the CEO as soon as is possible about any changes in the circumstances of their leave.

### **Termination of Carer's Leave**

Carer's leave shall terminate on the pre-agreed date in the confirmation document, or in the following circumstances, whichever is the sooner:

- on an alternative date agreed between the Employee and Management,
- where the person in respect of whom carer's leave is taken ceases to qualify as a relevant person, or the Employee ceases to qualify as a carer,
- where a deciding officer from the Department of Social and Family Affairs determines that it should end,
- where the relevant person dies during a period of carer's leave. In such circumstances the Employee should return to work on the date within 6 weeks after the date of death, or as agreed in the initial confirmation document, whichever is the sooner.

### **Returning to Work from Carer's Leave**

A staff member who is on Carer's Leave shall notify the HR Department /HR Officer (in writing) of his/her intention to return to work at least 4 weeks in advance of the proposed date.

### **Staff on Temporary Contracts**

If a person is employed on a temporary basis, any leave (or any other benefit) will end when the contract ends.

### **Employment Rights**

While on Carer's Leave a staff member will be regarded as being in employment and so employment rights will not be affected, with the exception of payment, annual leave, public holidays, or any obligation to pay contributions in respect of employment.

A staff member will accrue annual leave for the first 13 weeks of absence on Carer's leave, and will be entitled to public holidays that occur during the same period. Carer's leave cannot be regarded as part of any other leave, including sick leave, adoptive leave, maternity leave, parental leave, annual leave or force majeure leave.

### **Records**

The organisation is obliged to keep records of Carer's leave periods taken by staff for up to 8 years.

### **Additional Note**

Additional conditions covering Carer's Leave should be obtained from the HR Department before making application.

## **CODE OF PRACTICE FOR THE PROTECTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS**

Muscular Dystrophy Ireland (MDI) is committed to protecting both adult and child members from harm in all of its activities, and to providing them with the highest quality of care. This includes an obligation to respond with due speed and competence to a disclosure relating to abuse, whether the allegation is within MDI or in the child's life outside the organisation.

Under the Child Care Act (1991) all Health Boards, parents and people working with children should regard the welfare of the child as the first and paramount consideration.

Management, staff and volunteers of MDI accept and recognise their responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which can cause children harm and to familiarise themselves with the organisation's **Policy and Code of Practice for the Protection of Young People and Adults**.

The Policy and Code of Practice provide guidelines for all persons working with MDI – agency care workers, staff on FAS schemes, those on student schemes, volunteers and all employees - to ensure that children, young people and members enjoy activities organised by MDI in an environment of optimum safety, which is free from the threat of abuse.

All persons working with MDI are required to follow the organisation's policy and guidelines for preventing, identifying and reporting abuse, MDI's Policy and Code of

Practice for the Protection of Young People. These guidelines are available from the Respite Co-ordinator.

## **MDI COMMUNICATIONS POLICY- Reviewed 2012**

In seeking to achieve its goals, MDI places an emphasis on communications.

MDI Communications Systems include computers (including laptops). Software, e mail facilities, telephones (including mobile phones) and communications hardware supplied to staff for work related activities.

MDI Communications Systems are provided to enable staff to carry out their work, facilitate research, education and administration.

The success of the organisation and the services it provides relies greatly on communicating its ideals, principles, objectives, actions and results to stakeholders (those who have an interest/stake in the organisation). These include:

- Members
- The local community and general public
- Funding bodies
- State agencies and voluntary/community groups

### **External Communications**

All correspondence with the media: Print Media, Radio, Television and public representative (Ministers, TD's, Senators, Councillors) is to be approved by MDI's PR Department & CEO. All approved letters to public representatives / media must also be co signed by the CEO before they are sent.

MDI encourages its staff to network with several stakeholder groups on a formal basis. It is important that staff collaborate with representatives of other organisations on joint initiatives.

### **Internal Communications**

MDI seeks to promote effective and efficient communications between the National Executive and staff, and between staff.

Communication is intended to be open in style. Where staff are unclear about projects, new initiatives and procedures they should in the first instance seek clarification from the relevant person. Where misunderstandings or problems arise it is in the interests of all concerned that every effort is made to resolve these difficulties promptly and without resource to external agencies.

For this reason procedures have been developed. It is hoped that most issues causing concern for staff can be resolved informally. However, it is necessary to have formal procedures (see *Discipline and grievance Procedures*) and it is important that these procedures are followed.

### **COMPUTERS & E MAIL SERVICES**

- All staff must ensure, in so far as practicable, that the computers in their office or under your control are not used for unauthorised purposes. Advice and practical help will be available to help you safeguard any computer equipment.
- All data stored on computers, including emails, is the property of MDI and subject to the Freedom of Information Act.
- Email is not guaranteed to be private & deletion of an email message does not remove all traces of it.
- In general, the computer resources of MDI may not be used for illegal acts, for activities in breach of MDI policies, or for personal commercial activity unless specifically authorised.
- All staff must take reasonable care to ensure that they do not transmit viruses or other malicious computer code to other users.
- It is not acceptable to view, download, transmit or store any offensive, indecent images or material.
- It is not acceptable to attempt to access any files, data or records for which you are not authorised.
- It is not acceptable to make any comments of a derogatory nature about any individual employed, contracted or volunteering for MDI.
- Staff who have access to, or are responsible for data stored on computer you must ensure that the integrity, accessibility, accuracy and confidentiality of such data are maintained.
- Where staff have personal data on others they must comply with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1988.
- All staff must be aware that The Freedom of Information Act applies to records held in electronic format.

- Computers are maintained by Unity. If you experience any difficulties with the operation of your computer you should contact MDI Head Office.

### USE OF MOBILE PHONES

It is the policy of MDI to supply Youth Respite Workers, Family Support Workers, Drivers and relevant support staff with mobile phones for use in the course of their work.

- Mobile phones are to be used for work purposes only.
- All texts sent and received must be work related and are subject to Data Protection & Freedom of Information Acts and as a result are the property of MDI.
- If a staff member receives inappropriate texts messages or phone calls from members, staff or external personnel please inform your line manager immediately.
- All costs associated with mobile phones are covered by the organisation.
- It is the responsibility of staff to ensure mobile phones are secure and safe.

Staff must set-up a voice-message as outlined in the **Administration Procedures 2006**. This message must be changed to inform callers of availability and leave.

### USING MOBILE PHONES IN VEHICLES

- Never use a hand-held mobile phone while driving. It is illegal and distracting.
- Mobile phones must be switched to silent mode when driving a vehicle.
- Use a message service. It is not necessary to always answer the phone when it rings. **SET UP** your voicemail so it can take messages for you while driving and call back at a more suitable time
- Stop in a safe place. If necessary, stop driving and park in a safe place to make or receive a mobile phone call.
- Concentration. Lack of concentration, even for a brief period, is dangerous and you could be breaking the law. In just one second, a vehicle travelling at 50km/h will travel 14 meters!
- NEVER send text or picture messages while driving even when stopped at the traffic lights.
- Staff are instructed to have a speed-dialled emergency number i.e. 999 /112 stored on their phone that they can access immediately in the case of an emergency.
- Car hands – free sets will-not be issued or replaced to MDI staff or Drivers, from this date forward.

- Switch off. If in doubt, switch off the phone.

### **DEALING WITH ABUSIVE PHONE CALLS**

- No member of staff should have to deal with threats or abuse from any caller.
- If abusive language is being used, explain to the caller that MDI does not accept calls from people who use abusive language.
- If the caller accepts this, or offers an apology, continue with the call. If the abuse continues, advise the caller that you will be terminating the call, and do so.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

During your employment with Muscular Dystrophy Ireland you may acquire certain confidential information. Information considered confidential includes:

- Information which has been specifically designated as confidential by the organisation and/or which comes under the Data Protection Amendment Act, 2003;
- Information relating to the current or planned activities of the organisation;
- Personal and/or private information relating to colleagues, individual members and groups/organisations – any person/group with whom the organisation has contact.

There may be certain situations where it is necessary to disclose information on a needs to know basis or to fulfil legal requirements e.g. child protection issues or Dignity and Respect. Such disclosure is not considered a breach of confidentiality. (Please refer to individual policies for further details)

This list is not exhaustive. Each staff member has the right to privacy. It is also expected that, in turn, staff will respect the right to privacy of others with whom they come into contact.

Confidential information must not be used for personal gain, nor made known to any person, firm, company or other organisation whatsoever, unless authorised by the CEO, or required by your duties under your employment contract.

All confidential records, documents and other papers, together with any copies or extracts thereof, shall be the property of the organisation and must be returned to the organisation on the termination of your employment. The requirement for confidentiality extends beyond the period of your contract with Muscular Dystrophy Ireland.

## **COMPUTERS & IT ISSUES**

Computers are maintained by Unity. If you experience any difficulties with the operation of your computer you should contact Hubert McCormack, Administrator or the Receptionist, in Head Office.

## **DISCIPLINARY POLICY & PROCEDURES**

Muscular Dystrophy Ireland is responsible for the promotion of consistent and agreed codes of conduct and standards of behaviour within the organisation. In accordance with the Unfair Dismissals Acts 1977-2007, the organisation has developed the following Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

Fair and transparent Disciplinary Policy and procedures are necessary to ensure the smooth operation and success of the company, and the fair treatment of all staff. The Disciplinary Procedure is designed to assist any staff whose conduct or performance is in question. The Procedures should be seen as providing an opportunity for staff to improve rather than as a first step in the process of sanctioning a dismissal.

Potential disciplinary matters require immediate intervention by management and can usually be corrected by an early approach to a staff member.

It is the responsibility of management:

- a) To resolve matters which have potential disciplinary implications at the informal level, if possible;
- b) To find out, if possible, any underlying reasons for disciplinary problems.
- c) To ensure that staff at any and all stages in the disciplinary procedure are given a fair hearing;

The disciplinary procedures will be fair and consistent. The following principles will apply:

- The procedure will be dealt with in such a way that it protects the dignity of staff.
- At every stage in the procedure the staff member will be informed of the nature of the complaint against him/her and will be given the opportunity to state his/her case before any decision is made.
- At all stages the staff member will have the right to be accompanied to meetings by a representative. The role of this representative is to provide support, to ensure that the procedures followed are fair, and, if appropriate, to help the Employee

present their case. However, it should be noted that the contractual relationship exists between the Employee and the Employer. Therefore, questioning will be directed to the Employee, and where possible the Employee must speak on their own behalf.

- No staff member will be dismissed for a first breach of discipline, except in the case of gross misconduct, when the penalty may be dismissal without notice, or payment in lieu of notice.

## **Investigation & Disciplinary Procedures**

The following disciplinary procedures are applicable to all staff. They set out the actions to be taken by management with staff who may be guilty of misconduct or gross misconduct. The procedure aims to balance justice for the individual with the need for discipline in the organisation.

Management is responsible for maintaining discipline in the organisation. However, when there is serious or persistent failure to meet terms of employment as outlined in contracts of employment, when there are serious and persistent cases of misconduct, or when unsatisfactory performance occurs over a protracted period, a disciplinary hearing will be convened.

The organisation reserves the right to enter the following procedure at any stage.

### **Informal Procedure**

In general, where there is an allegation of poor performance, attendance or conduct, the direct Manager of the Employee concerned will address the issue informally with him/her. This may be done by way of an informal meeting, or through the normal performance management process. The objective of the informal discussion is to correct the issue of concern in a frank and constructive manner.

The informal discussion will:

- focus on helping the Employee to understand how their performance/conduct/attendance has fallen short of the acceptable level; and
- suggest possible solutions and timeframes for improvement.

After the discussion, brief notes will be taken and held by the Manager who led the informal discussion. Provided the Employee achieves and sustains the necessary level of improvement, no further action will be taken. If the necessary improvements have not

been made within the agreed timeframe the formal disciplinary procedure will commence.

### **Formal Procedure**

In all cases where an Employee's standards of performance, attendance and/or conduct fall below those expected by the Organisation, the formal disciplinary procedure may be initiated. In all cases in which the Formal Procedure is initiated, a hearing will be held with the Employee to put the allegation to him/her, and to hear his/her responses to the issue. It may be necessary to formally investigate the facts surrounding a case and this may occur prior to the hearing, but in the majority of cases a hearing will suffice to ensure that the Employee is afforded a fair opportunity to respond. Where there is a dispute of the facts of a case, and an investigation is necessary, the investigation procedure will be explained to the Employee by Management.

### **Disciplinary Hearing Process**

Prior to any formal disciplinary sanction being decided upon and imposed a fair disciplinary hearing will be held with the Employee. The purpose of this meeting is to put the complaint to the Employee and to hear the reasons behind the issue from the Employee's perspective. An Employee will always be treated in a fair manner at a disciplinary hearing. The following principles will apply to a disciplinary hearing:

- Advance notification of the requirement to attend a disciplinary hearing will be provided together with the fact that the outcome of the meeting may be disciplinary action.
- Throughout the hearing, the Employee will be permitted to have a representative present.
- The Employee will be notified of the complaint in advance of the meeting in order to have an opportunity to prepare his/her responses.
- The Employee will be afforded an opportunity to respond to any allegations/evidence at the meeting, and to present any other relevant factors including any mitigating circumstances.
- Further meetings may be held with the Employee as necessary.
- Conclusions will only be formed following a fair hearing where the Employee is allowed to respond to complaints and these responses are considered in the given circumstances.
- An Employee may be suspended on full pay at any stage during the disciplinary process, even before any allegation is presented to the Employee. This is done with no inference of guilt or otherwise against the Employee. Suspension will be

for a reasonable period only and will often depend on the duration of the disciplinary investigation process.

- Due consideration will be given to all responses received. In order to ensure that Management have the time to fully consider the facts, there will always be an adjournment at the end of any disciplinary hearing in order to allow time to consider the facts of the case, and to make a fair decision on the next steps.
- The decision on what level of disciplinary sanction, if any, is to be imposed will be taken during the adjournment. A follow up disciplinary meeting will be held with the Employee where this decision will be communicated to the Employee. The Employee may have a representative present at this meeting. Formal disciplinary action will be confirmed in writing.

### **Disciplinary Sanctions**

Where the informal process fails to resolve an issue, or where it is deemed inappropriate given the particular circumstances of a situation, then the following sanctions may be imposed by Management. Disciplinary action, if required, will normally follow an incremental warning process as set out in this policy. However, in appropriate circumstances, the Organisation reserves the right to initiate the process at any particular stage, or to move to any particular stage in the process, where the matters of concern are deemed sufficiently serious. The decision on what level of sanction to be imposed will only be taken following a formal disciplinary hearing having considered the circumstances of the particular situation.

#### **Stage 1. Formal Verbal Warning**

Where the informal procedure fails to resolve an issue, or where more serious disciplinary action is deemed appropriate given the particular circumstances of the case, a formal disciplinary hearing will be arranged and held as outlined in this procedure.

Following the meeting a formal verbal warning may be issued by the Appropriate Manager. An action plan will also be agreed in order to attempt to resolve this issue in the future. A copy of the notes from the meeting, the agreed action plan and a copy of the verbal warning, along with any other relevant documentation, will be placed on the Employee file.

The verbal warning will expire following a period of satisfactory performance, conduct or attendance, as outlined in the formal verbal warning document. A formal verbal warning may be appealed through the appeals procedure outlined in this policy. Failure to achieve the requirements set out in the corrective action plan may result in further disciplinary action.

### **Stage 2. First Written Warning**

Where a formal verbal warning fails to resolve an issue, or where more serious disciplinary action is deemed appropriate given the particular circumstances of the case, a formal disciplinary hearing will be arranged and held as outlined in this procedure.

Following the meeting a first written warning may be issued by the Appropriate Manager. An action plan will also be agreed in order to attempt to resolve this issue in the future. A copy of the notes from the meeting, the agreed action plan and a copy of the first written warning, along with any other relevant documentation, will be placed on the Employee file.

The first written warning will expire following a period of satisfactory performance, conduct or attendance, as outlined in the first written warning document. A first written warning may be appealed through the appeals procedure outlined in this policy. Failure to achieve the requirements set out in the corrective action plan may result in further disciplinary action.

### **Stage 3. Final Written Warning**

Where a first written warning fails to resolve an issue, or where more serious disciplinary action is deemed appropriate given the particular circumstances of the case, a formal disciplinary hearing will be arranged and held as outlined in this procedure.

Following the meeting a final written warning may be issued by the Appropriate Manager. An action plan will also be agreed in order to attempt to resolve this issue in the future. A copy of the notes from the meeting, the agreed action plan and a copy of the final written warning, along with any other relevant documentation, will be placed on the Employee file.

The final written warning will expire following a period of satisfactory performance, conduct or attendance, as outlined in the final written warning document. A final written warning may be appealed through the appeals procedure outlined in this policy. Failure to achieve the requirements set out in the corrective action plan may result in further disciplinary action.

### **Stage 4. Dismissal**

There are two ways in which dismissal may occur. Generally, the Employee will have been notified of concerns and have been provided with an opportunity to improve through one or more stages of the disciplinary procedure.

The other form of dismissal is a summary dismissal, which normally results from an act of gross misconduct. An act of misconduct will be considered as gross misconduct where the act is so serious that the Organisation cannot reasonably be expected to retain the Employee in employment. Summary dismissal occurs without recourse to the earlier stages of the disciplinary procedure.

In all cases an appropriate and fair hearing, which adheres to the principles set out in this procedure, will be undertaken, and careful consideration given to the decision on whether or not dismissal is the appropriate sanction given the circumstances of the case. In cases of alleged gross misconduct, an in-depth investigation may be necessary, and an Employee will be suspended on pay pending the outcome of this investigation. Suspension on pay is not deemed a disciplinary sanction, and there will be no negative inference against an Employee as a consequence of any such suspension.

Where there is an allegation of gross misconduct or gross incompetence it may be appropriate after a formal investigation to initiate the procedure at stage 4. In such circumstances, there is no obligation on the Organisation to provide advance notice of dismissal. Decisions to dismiss in such circumstances may only be taken by a senior Manager in the Organisation, or a nominated officer, following a full and fair investigation and hearing process. The decision will be confirmed in writing to the Employee.

#### Alternative Disciplinary Sanctions

In addition to the sanctions outlined in stages 1 to 4 of the disciplinary procedure, the Organisation also retains the right to impose alternative disciplinary sanctions as outlined in this section. This will only occur where deemed appropriate. Such action is an optional stage of the procedure, rather than a required stage. Where deemed appropriate, alternative sanctions which may be imposed may include a transfer, demotion, suspension without pay, or withholding of a salary review for a period or removal of another benefit.

#### **Note on Probation**

During the period of an Employee's probation, including extended probation, the full rigours of the disciplinary process may not apply, and the Organisation retains the right not to exhaust the disciplinary procedure during probation.

## **Appeals**

All disciplinary sanctions may be appealed within five working days of being issued to an Employee. The details of whom the appeal should be made to will be included in the warning document, or letter of dismissal. A finding will be issued within a reasonable timeframe, generally 10 working days. This may be extended where necessary to facilitate a full and fair appeals process.

All timeframes in this policy assume Employees are attending work. If Employees have had time out of work, the duration of the disciplinary steps may be extended.

### **Stage 5: Dismissal**

If conduct or performance is still unsatisfactory and the employee still fails to reach the prescribed standards, dismissal will normally result. Only the Chairperson of the National Council may take the decision to dismiss. The employee will be provided, as soon as is reasonably practicable, with written reasons for dismissal and the date on which employment will terminate, as well as details of the right to appeal the decision.

## **Misconduct**

It is not possible to list in writing every possible act or omission which will constitute misconduct. Each staff member is required to behave in a manner which will not endanger or inconvenience members, colleagues or visitors, or bring discredit to the organisation. Some examples of misconduct which could lead to formal disciplinary procedures (if not resolved through informal proceedings) are as follows:

- Consistently poor time-keeping
- Negligence in the performance of one's duties
- Breach of confidentiality not amounting to gross misconduct
- Breach of regulations relating to information technology, e.g. breach of security or persistent access to internet for personal use.
- Absence without reasonable permission or reasonable excuse
- Deliberate breach of safety and/or security rules of the organisation, e.g. misuse of fire safety equipment or persistent failure to follow security procedures.
- Deliberate withholding of information, thus obstructing the organisation from carrying out its work
- Persistent non-cooperation with colleagues or management
- Repeated breach of the Organisation's policies and/or procedures
- Gambling or betting, excluding charity draws, pools or similar, on the premises

## **Gross Misconduct**

Gross Misconduct is an act of misconduct, which is considered serious enough to result in summary dismissal. Summary dismissal is dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice. If a staff member is suspected of an act of gross misconduct, s/he may be suspended from work on full pay while the organisation investigates the alleged offence. If, on completion of the investigation, management is satisfied that gross misconduct has occurred, the result will be summary dismissal without notice, or pay in lieu of notice. The following list of behaviours, which are regarded as gross misconduct, is neither exclusive nor exhaustive

- Theft, embezzlement or unlawful handling of Organisation funds
- Fraud
- Deliberate falsification of records or expense claims
- Deliberately bringing the organisation into disrepute
- Breach of the declaration of confidentiality in relation to the organisation's affairs and any documents, etc.
- Insubordinate behaviour and/or the refusal to carry out legitimate reasonable instructions
- Abusive language or behaviour towards colleagues, members, customers or members of the general public, whether during work hours or while representing MDI at functions outside work hours.
- Conducting a relationship with a member (refer to point 10.14 in the Policy and Code of Practice for the Protection of Young People)
- Serious harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, victimisation or other act of discrimination;
- Serious abuse of sick leave;
- Being under the influence of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs, or being in possession of drugs or alcohol on company premises whether such drugs or alcohol are for the person's own use or for the distribution or sale to others.
- Carrying out unauthorised work on company premises or with company materials.
- Serious breach of safety and/or security regulations relating to information technology
- Falsification of documents of the company for an unlawful purpose
- Malicious damage to the company's property or premises
- Serious breaches of safety and/or security regulations which could endanger colleagues or members of the general public.
- Violent or threatening behaviour towards a colleague, client, customer, or member of the general public

Gross misconduct may comprise instances where more than one of these areas has been transgressed.

### **Right of search clause**

It is a condition of employment that any employee may at any time be searched by a member of management. The company has the authority to search an employee, an employee's belongings, including their motor vehicle when they are entering or leaving the company's premises. An employee who refuses to co-operate fully with any search request or is found to be in possession of any property belonging to the company or to any party other than the employee being searched is liable to serious disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, following a full investigation. Any employee is entitled to have a witness in attendance during any such search. The company will draw all appropriate and reasonable inferences from any refusal to co-operate fully with any search request.

### **DRESS CODE**

MDI's dress code is that staff are required to dress smart / professional at all times. With the exception of Youth Services where casual dress is more appropriate to the delivery of this service type. All questions regarding the appropriateness of attire should be directed to your line manager who is responsible for ensuring standards relating to the dress code.

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY**

A core value of the organisation is to include Equality as an integral element of its strategies, employment practices and day-to-day work. Muscular Dystrophy Ireland is an equal opportunities employer.

### **Equality and Diversity within Muscular Dystrophy Ireland**

Muscular Dystrophy Ireland values the individuality, diversity and creative potential that every member of staff brings to its business, and is committed to the promotion of a work environment in which differences are respected and in which people – staff, members and visitors – are valued as individuals. Diversity of opinion will be respected and new ideas will be welcomed and encouraged.

The Employment Equality Acts 1998-2008, the Equal Status Acts 2000 -2008 serve to implement the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of any of the 9

grounds, equal treatment in employment and equal treatment in relation to access to employment and working conditions.

The Employment Equality Acts 1998 -2008, the Equal Status Acts 2000 -2008 serve to implement the principle of equal treatment in employment and equal treatment in relation to access to employment and working conditions.

**Specifically, the organisation will ensure:**

- equal access to employment, training and work experience on merit;
- equal treatment in relation to conditions of employment;
- the development of family-friendly/flexible work arrangements;
- a positive working environment which upholds the respect and dignity of the individual and is free of harassment, sexual harassment and bullying;
- fair and equal support and supervision of staff;
- equal opportunities of promotion;
- equal opportunities in relation to training and career development
- equal access to the services of MDI for members

The organisation is committed to providing all of its employees with an environment free from bullying/harassment/sexual harassment. All employees will be expected to comply with this policy and management will take appropriate measures to ensure that bullying/harassment/sexual harassment does not occur. Appropriate disciplinary action, including dismissal for serious offences, will be taken against any employee who violates this policy. The policy applies to employees both in the workplace and at work associated events such as meetings, conferences and office parties, whether on the premises or off site. The policy applies to bullying/harassment/sexual harassment not only by fellow employees but also by a client, customer or other business contact to which an employee might reasonably expect to come into contact within the course of their employment

**Responsibility of the organisation and Staff**

Management are responsible for developing and implementing equal opportunities policies and procedures and for promoting best practice across the activities and services of the organisation.

All staff have a responsibility to make themselves aware of the organisation's Equal Opportunities policies and procedures.

Each member of staff has a right to pursue his/her entitlements under the policy or existing legislation and will not be victimised for doing so.

The policy extends to members and outside agencies and suppliers in their interaction with staff (Please also refer to the organisation's policy on Dignity and Respect at Work)

### **Procedure**

#### Access to Employment:

- All recruitment and selection competitions will be open to all suitably qualified applicants.
- Recruitment decisions will be made against specified criteria as required for the particular vacancy.
- The Organisation will seek to ensure that the recruitment process is free from any direct or indirect discrimination on any of the nine grounds.
- Every applicant, external or internal, will be assessed against fair and consistent criteria relating to the job.
- Where an applicant indicates that they have special needs to facilitate their participation in the recruitment and selection process, reasonable accommodation will be provided, subject to this not imposing a disproportionate burden.

#### Access to Training and Experience:

- Training will be provided on the basis of individual needs and the requirements of the post held by the Employee.
- Selection for training will not be based on any of the nine grounds.
- Where an individual's disability impedes their ability to fully participate and engage in training activities, reasonable accommodation will be provided subject to this not imposing a disproportionate burden.
- Although every effort will be made to arrange training to facilitate attendance by part-time Employees, there is an expectation that part-time Employees will make themselves available, from time to time, to attend training outside their normal hours of work.

#### Conditions of Employment:

- Terms and conditions of employment will be applied fairly to all Employees, with no reference to any of the grounds in the Employment Equality Acts.
- The Organisation seeks to provide equal pay for like work.
- The Organisation endeavours to provide a work environment free from bullying, harassment or sexual harassment.

#### Promotion and Re-grading:

- There will be equality of opportunity at all stages of the promotions and/or re-grading process.
- Selection for promotion will be based on defined criteria related to the requirements of the post, and no reference will be made to the nine grounds in the selection process.

#### Classification of Posts:

- Gender neutral job titles will be used and no reference will be made to any of the other nine grounds in classifying positions.

#### Reasonable Accommodation:

- Reasonable accommodation shall be provided in order to facilitate a person with a disability to apply for positions with the Organisation, to attend for interview, to engage in employment and to participate in training activities as applicable.
- This commitment is subject to such reasonable accommodation not presenting a disproportionate burden on the Organisation, unless otherwise deemed appropriate.

#### Equal Status:

- No person will be discriminated against or treated adversely while availing of goods or services provided by this Organisation, except where this is legally permitted and undertaken with a legitimate aim. No person availing of goods or services should be subject to harassment or sexual harassment while availing of these.
- Any complaints in this respect should be brought to the attention of your Manager.

## **POLICY ON DIGNITY & RESPECT AT WORK**

Muscular Dystrophy Ireland is committed to promoting a workplace environment that encourages and supports the right to respect and dignity at work. All who work here are expected to honour the right of each individual to respect and dignity in their working life. Bullying, harassment or sexual harassment is regarded as a serious matter and will not be tolerated.

Muscular Dystrophy Ireland is legally bound to promote dignity & equality in the workplace. The nine grounds for discrimination are:

- Gender
- Civil status
- Family status
- Sexual orientation
- Religion
- Age (does not apply to a person under 16)
- Disability
- Race
- Membership of the Traveller community.

### **Introduction**

Muscular Dystrophy Ireland is committed to creating a work environment which upholds the dignity and respect of the individual and which supports each employee's right to work in an environment which is free from any form of harassment, sexual harassment or bullying.

### **To Whom Does this Policy Apply?**

Muscular Dystrophy Ireland requires all staff, members, business contacts and those working on behalf of the organisation, to recognise their responsibilities in promoting an environment based on Dignity and Respect.

All staff have the right to expect dignity and respect from one another and from members.

Any person working in conjunction with Muscular Dystrophy Ireland is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect by our employees. Equally, all individuals working in conjunction with the organisation are expected to uphold the principles of dignity and respect whilst working on behalf of MDI.

Instances of bullying, harassment and/or sexual harassment will not be tolerated. The policy outlines measures to prevent their occurrence, and to deal appropriately with any cases that might arise.

### **When and Where Does this Policy Apply?**

This policy applies to the behaviour of each member of staff in all situations related to work, including:

- The workplace of Muscular Dystrophy Ireland and any other place where staff are representing Muscular Dystrophy Ireland such as organised events, camps, outings with members;
- Work-related functions, e.g. training courses, social functions, meetings with other organisations or work related projects which relate to Muscular Dystrophy Ireland;
- In any activity relating to the work of, or representing Muscular Dystrophy Ireland whether by correspondence, on the telephone, etc.

### **Responsibilities**

Members of staff with responsibility for other staff (e.g. management) must ensure that they:

- Show good example in their behaviour towards all in the workplace by treating them with courtesy and respect;
- Make clear to staff, including all new staff, that certain behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated by Muscular Dystrophy Ireland.
- Promote awareness of the organisation's policy and complaints procedures;
- Be vigilant for signs of harassment/sexual harassment/bullying and take action before a problem escalates;
- Listen to complaints of unwanted behaviour and explain the procedures if a complaint is made;
- Monitor and follow up the situation after a complaint is made to ensure that the behaviour does not recur;
- Ensure that a staff member making a complaint is not victimised for doing so;
- Be aware that a person being subjected to unacceptable behaviour may feel unable to deal with the matter him/herself or to seek assistance;
- Ensure that any potentially offensive or unwelcome material is not displayed or circulated in the workplace;

As an employee your responsibility is to:

- Be aware of your role in creating a work environment which supports dignity and respect at work;
- Ensure that your own behaviour does not cause offence or misunderstanding;
- Be prepared to offer confidential and appropriate support to a colleague who may be bullied, harassed or sexually harassed by listening and showing empathy.

The Policy also extends to:

- members of the organisation in their interaction with staff and other members;
- suppliers, consultants and contracting agencies.

**The policy is communicated to all of these groups in a range of formats.**

### **What is Sexual Harassment?**

Sexual harassment is defined as any form of verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person. The unwanted conduct may consist of acts, requests, spoken words, gestures or the production, display, or circulation of written words, pictures or other material.

Examples of behaviour that could be considered to be sexual harassment:

- Unwanted physical contact such as unnecessary touching, patting, pinching or brushing against another employee, assault and coercive sexual intercourse.
- Unwelcome sexual advances, propositions or pressure for sexual activity, or continued suggestions for social activity outside the workplace once it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome, offensive flirtations, suggestive remarks, innuendos or lewd comments.
- Display of pornographic or sexually suggestive pictures, written materials, objects, e-mails, text-messages or faxes. It may also include leering, whistling or making sexually suggestive gestures.

- Any conduct that ridicules or is intimidatory or physically abusive of an employee because of his or her sex such as derogatory or degrading abuse or insults which are gender-related.

An essential characteristic of the type of behaviour which constitutes sexual harassment is that it is unwanted by the recipient. This distinguishes it from behaviour which is welcome or reciprocated.

Sexual harassment is unacceptable whether from superiors, peers, juniors, non-employees or by persons of the same sex.

It is important that all Employees understand that the Organisation is obliged to investigate all complaints of sexual harassment whether or not it was the intention of the alleged harasser to engage in such behaviour.

### **What is Harassment?**

Harassment is any unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person on any of the following nine discriminatory grounds: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and/or membership of the traveller community. The unwanted conduct may consist of acts, requests, spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material.

Examples of behaviour which could constitute harassment include:

- Verbal harassment such as jokes, comments, ridicule or songs
- Written harassment, including text messages, e-mails or notices
- Physical harassment, such as jostling, shoving or any form of assault. The production, display or circulation of offensive material e.g. ageist e-mails;
- Maliciously gossiping related to one of the discriminatory grounds;
- Racist jokes or comments;
- Offensive gestures;
- Excluding or omitting a person within the workplace e.g. because of their disability;
- Verbal threats motivated by one of the grounds listed.

## What is Bullying?

Bullying in the workplace constitutes a real threat to the safety, health and welfare of people in the workplace. Workplace bullying is regarded as:

“repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual’s right to dignity at work. An isolated incident of the behaviour described in this definition may be an affront to dignity at work as a once-off incident is not considered to be bullying.”

*(from Report of the Task Force on the Prevention of Workplace Bullying, 2001)*

The bullying/ harassment can include conduct offensive to a reasonable person, e.g. oral or written slurs, physical contact, gestures, jokes, displaying pictures, flags/emblems, graffiti or other material which state/imply prejudicial attitudes which are offensive to fellow employees.

The following are just examples of what could constitute bullying:

- Aggressive behaviour or shouting, sometimes over quite unimportant matters;
- Verbally abusing a person – whether colleague or member;
- Swearing or other forms of demeaning name-calling;
- Insulting or unnecessarily commenting on the appearance of another person;
- Making an individual’s beliefs or opinions the butt of jokes;
- Making uncomplimentary remarks which are likely to cause offence;
- Physically attacking, threatening to attack, or acting in a menacing way towards another person;
- Deliberately ignoring or excluding an individual on a persistent basis;
- Unwarranted or disproportionate criticism, unsupported by facts, about an individual’s work performance.

Other, less obvious forms of bullying, which are not always easily identifiable might include:

- Deliberately and maliciously withholding work-related information in order to undermine a colleague;

- Spreading malicious gossip;
- Subjecting an individual to unreasonable scrutiny;
- Undermining the authority of a colleague in the workplace;
- Setting unreasonable or impossible deadlines or impossible tasks.

It is important to note that in relation to each type of behaviour defined above, it is a person's right to decide what behaviour is unwelcome or unwanted, irrespective of the attitude or opinion of others.

### **What Do I Do if I Feel that I Am Not Being Treated with Dignity and Respect?**

The purpose of the following procedures is to ensure the resolution of problems in an efficient and effective manner. Most recipients of unwanted behaviour simply want the behaviour to stop.

#### Informal Procedure

It is often preferable for all concerned that complaints under this policy are dealt with and resolved informally between the parties whenever possible. This is likely to produce solutions which are speedy, effective and minimise embarrassment and the risk of breaching confidentiality, while also protecting the working relationship.

The objective of the informal approach is to stop the harassment or sexual harassment with the minimum conflict and stress for the individuals concerned.

In many cases the Employee whose behaviour is causing offence may be unaware that his or her actions are inappropriate, or it may be that his or her words or actions have been misinterpreted. In such cases every attempt should be made to clear up any misunderstanding quickly, on an informal basis.

The informal procedure consists of a low key and non-confrontational approach by the recipient of the behaviour to the party causing offence to advise him/her of the impact of their behaviour and to ask them to cease behaving in this manner.

The approach should be made in private, and should be non-confrontational. Advice in relation to this procedure should be sought from any Manager in the Organisation.

A mediation process may also be considered. This is a more structured approach which involves discussion of the problem between the complainant and a nominated mediator.

With the complainant's permission, discussions are then held with the other relevant party or parties. No detailed formal record will be maintained of this process although review meetings will be agreed. Counselling can be arranged for either party at any stage if required.

### Formal Complaints Procedure

The following formal procedures will be invoked where:

- A staff member making the complaint wishes it to be treated formally, or
- The alleged sexual harassment, harassment or bullying is considered too serious to be treated under the informal procedure, or
- Informal attempts at resolution have been unsatisfactory, or
- The sexual harassment, harassment or bullying continues after the informal procedure has been followed.

An investigation of any complaint will be handled with sensitivity and with due respect for the rights of both the complainant and the alleged harasser. The investigation will be objective. The purpose of the investigation is to investigate the allegations and will focus on the complaint. Those conducting the investigation will not be connected with the allegation in any way.

Where formal complaints have been made, then the employee should contact their supervisor/line manager as soon as possible.

- A formal complaint should be made in writing detailing the nature of the complaint. If you have been consulting with a Line Manager, s/he may assist you in writing up the complaint.
- The complaint should state:
  - ~ The name of the alleged perpetrator;
  - ~ The nature of alleged harassment i.e. the behaviours/conduct constituting harassment/sexual harassment;
  - ~ Dates/times and locations of where and when the alleged bullying/harassment / sexual harassment occurred;

- ~ Names of witnesses to any alleged incidents;
  - ~ Details of any action already taken to stop the bullying/harassment / sexual harassment.
  - ~ Consent to your identity and the facts of the allegation being disclosed to the alleged perpetrator. This is required in order to allow the Organisation to investigate and to take action in appropriate circumstances.
- In the interests of natural justice the alleged bully or harasser will be made aware of the nature of the complaint, his or her right to representation and will be given every opportunity to rebut the detailed allegations made.

### **Investigation Procedure**

- The investigation will be conducted by either an independent member of Management or, if deemed appropriate, an agreed third party. The investigation will be conducted thoroughly, objectively and with sensitivity. Utmost confidentiality will be protected in so far as reasonably practicable. Due respect will be had for the rights of the complainant, the alleged perpetrator(s) and any witnesses involved in the process.
- The investigator(s) will meet with the complainant in the first instance to learn more regarding the complaint and to put the alleged perpetrator's responses to the complainant. Next the alleged perpetrator will be invited to a meeting to explore their responses to the complaint and to put any relevant evidence to him/her. Evidence will be provided in advance of the meetings in order to allow the Employee to prepare their response to that evidence.
- Both parties may be suspended with pay, without any negative inference, pending the outcome of an investigation where deemed appropriate by Management. However, where this is not possible, the parties to the complaint will be expected to maintain a positive working relationship.
- The investigator will take responsibility for initiating an investigation and also, setting down a timetable for the investigation. Qualified and expert persons external to the organisation may be invited to assist in the fact finding investigation.

- Whilst it is desirable to maintain utmost confidentiality, once an investigation of an issue begins, it may be necessary to interview other staff. If this is so, the importance of confidentiality will be stressed to them. Any statements taken from witnesses will be circulated to the person making the complaint and the alleged harasser for their comments before any conclusion is reached in the investigation.
- The complainant, alleged harasser or bully and witnesses will be interviewed separately.
- A written record will be kept of all meetings and investigations.
- If a complaint is being made in relation to the CEO, the written complaint should be sent to the Chairperson of the National Council who will initiate an investigation and set down a timetable for the investigation. The investigation will be conducted by a person who is independent of the situation.
- For investigations of complaints alleging sexual harassment, one of the investigators will be of the same gender as the complainant.
- As with all internal procedures, both parties have the right to be accompanied by a representative whose role is to provide moral support, oversee the process and ensure that the Employee is afforded a fair opportunity to respond and provide evidence at any investigation meetings.
- When the investigation has been completed both parties will be informed as to whether or not the complaint has been upheld. Both parties will be given the opportunity to comment on the findings before any action is decided upon by management. All complaints received will be treated seriously, confidentially and dealt with as soon as is practicable.
- Both parties will be given an opportunity to comment on the conclusions of the investigation team. Both parties will be given a copy, in writing, of the conclusions reached by the investigating team.

## **Investigation Outcomes**

Where a complaint is upheld both parties will be informed of this outcome, and the relevant level of Management will also be advised. Management will take appropriate action based on the outcome of the investigation. This may include formal disciplinary action in line with the Organisation's disciplinary procedure, or training, or another appropriate intervention deemed necessary to prevent a recurrence of the behaviour.

The Organisation will also consider providing further supervision, reassignment or re-organisation of work. Prior to any disciplinary action being taken a fair disciplinary hearing will be held in line with the Organisation's disciplinary procedure. It is important that Employees are aware that certain acts of bullying, harassment or sexual harassment may be deemed gross misconduct by the Organisation and may result in summary dismissal.

Where an investigation is inconclusive and the complaint is not upheld, there will be no negative inference against any party to the complaint. All parties to the complaint will be expected to continue working as normal, and to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at work.

Where it is found that the complaint was malicious or vexatious, then a disciplinary hearing will be held with the complainant to explore this further. In this situation only may a disciplinary sanction be imposed on the complainant. Lodging a malicious or vexatious complaint is a serious disciplinary offence, and, depending on the seriousness of the issue, may be deemed gross misconduct by the Organisation and may result in summary dismissal.

In all cases, whether the complaint is upheld or otherwise, the workplace will be monitored to ensure that the parties to the complaint conduct themselves in an appropriate manner and do not engage in any improper conduct. The Organisation will take such action as is required to eliminate the risk of that behaviour recurring or continuing and will keep records of interventions used for this purpose.

### **Duties of the Employer When Formal Procedures are Followed**

In the course of investigating a complaint Muscular Dystrophy Ireland will make no assumptions about the guilt or otherwise of the alleged bully or harasser.

### **Confidentiality**

Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality throughout an investigation so that it remains a fair investigation.

## **Sanctions**

In the event of a complaint being upheld the disciplinary process will be invoked which may lead to disciplinary sanctions up to and including dismissal. Records of any warnings for bullying/harassment/sexual harassment will remain in the employee's file and will be used if any further allegations or offences of the same or similar nature occur in the future.

## **Appeal**

Either party may appeal the decision, outlining in writing to Management the reason for the appeal. Such appeals will be heard by a Manager not previously involved in the investigation and independent advice and support will be sought if required.

## **Victimisation**

Regular checks will be made by the Manager investigating the complaint to ensure that the bullying/harassment has stopped and that there is no victimisation. A staff member will not be victimised, or subject to sanction for making a complaint in good faith, or for giving evidence in proceedings, or by giving notice of his/her intention to do so. Retaliation of any kind against an employee for complaining or taking part in an investigation concerning bullying or harassment at work is a serious disciplinary offence.

## **Malicious Complaints**

Any complaint found to have been made maliciously will be treated seriously and will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

## **Third Party Harassment / Sexual Harassment**

The procedures outlined in this policy should be employed to deal with bullying harassment or sexual harassment by a third party. Sanctions which may be imposed on a third party may include exclusion from the premises, termination of a contract, or other measures to prevent the recurrence of the inappropriate behaviour.

## **Supports**

The following are some of the internal and external supports available to staff:

### Internal Supports

The person to whom you report  
The CEO  
Colleagues

### External Supports

The Equality Authority (concerning allegations of harassment or sexual harassment)  
The Health & Safety Authority (concerning allegations of bullying)  
The Dublin Rape Crisis Centre  
The Labour Relations Commission

### **Review**

Muscular Dystrophy Ireland has agreed that the implementation of the Policy and Procedures on Dignity and Respect will be monitored and kept under review on an annual basis.

## **EXTERNAL SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT**

MDI acknowledges that it is good practice for staff who engage in direct client work to receive external supervision. Staff work in isolation, deal with highly emotive issues and work in home settings. In order to maintain a professional, objective, quality standard of work it is important to receive regular, external supervision at a local level.

### **MDI Group Supervision:**

Group supervision will be available to Family Support Workers & Youth Respite Workers.

It will be facilitated by an external counsellor.

Issues in relation to the nature of the work, difficult situations, and experiences are to be work through with external facilitator and work colleagues.

Organisational issues are to be brought to the attention of the relevant line manager. Six external group supervision sessions will be facilitated per year.

### **MDI Individual Supervision:**

All staff will have access to individual one to one supervision. Individual one to one supervision will be provided by an external counsellor be delivered in the staff members area of work. Six individual one to one supervision sessions per year to alternate with the months that the external group supervision is held.

Staff are asked to discuss their external supervision needs with their Line Manager.

## **MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY IRELAND FUNDRAISING POLICY**

### **Introduction**

Muscular Dystrophy Ireland is proud of the high regard in which it is held by both the recipients of its services and its supporters. This policy and associated Code of Professional Conduct for Muscular Dystrophy Ireland fundraisers is intended to provide fund raisers with guidelines for raising money from all sources.

### **Scope**

This policy addresses general responsibilities in fund raising as well as specific responsibilities of fund raisers and donors and as related to the use of and accountability of funds.

### **Statement**

- Fund-raisers shall always act with fairness, honesty integrity and openness.
- Fund-raisers comply, in all of their activities with Muscular Dystrophy Ireland's practices and applicable laws and regulations.
- Fund-raisers hold themselves accountable to those from whom funds are received. They do not use messages or illustrations that make use of human misery or in any way compromise the dignity of any human being.
- Fund-raisers shall not exploit their position for personal gain.
- Fund-raisers shall adhere to Muscular Dystrophy Ireland's Code of Professional Conduct. Above all else, donors have the right to obtain complete and timely information on how their funds are used.
- All funds raised will be used for the purpose for which they were raised, and within a reasonable timeframe.
- Fund-raising costs shall at all times be held to a percentage of revenue which is generally acceptable within the fund-raising profession and by the public. There shall be a proper balance between costs, revenue and quality.
- A recognised accounting method shall be used to track and control donations (receipt books and spread sheets). Accurate and timely reports shall be available to the public, including the accounts raised, how it was spent, and the net proportion used for the purpose or cause.
- Money collected from fund-raising will be counted at all times by two people.
- Persons who raise funds for MDI and who would like the money to be allocated specifically towards a support service or for research, should state so in covering letter. If a fund-raiser wishes the money they raise to be used to buy a specific piece of equipment, a financial contribution, alternative service or PA service that directly impacts the individual with MD and the family, the MDI Respite Application form most be filled out, in order for the application to go through a decision process.

- Funds raised from a fundraising event that are specific to research will be placed in the MDI Research Fund.
- 10% of all money raised from fund-raising events will be allocated to the MDI Research Fund.
- Members of MDI who are fundraising for research cannot dictate what research they want the funds to be spent on. They can suggest to the Research Committee where they would like the funds to be spent and the Committee will then request a submission for funding. They will then decide whether to fund this research or not, as per the procedure outlined above.
- Branch Guidelines for Fundraising Local branches have a vital role to play in this and are requested to contribute to MDI's central funds. The money raised is used for the Trust Fund, research and administration. It is vital for accountability and transparency that branches engage in good practice when raising funds. New codes of practice under the "Charity Legislation Bill" have been drawn up by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Head office will update you on any new developments.
- There are three distinct types of fundraising that apply to local branches
  - Branches may raise funds from local sources for a specific project in their area, e.g. purchase of piece of equipment.
  - Branches may raise funds from local sources specifically for the running of the branch
  - Branches are encouraged to get involved in National Fundraising events.

### **Running the branch**

When fundraising for the running of the branch, all monies raised must be properly accounted for. At present 40% of any surplus of funds after expenditure at the end of the financial year must be submitted to head office by the end of February each year.

### **Responsibilities**

- This policy is applicable throughout Muscular Dystrophy Ireland branches and networks, to all individuals who raise funds from private, corporate, public or other sources.
- Those who are employed as fund-raisers are encouraged to sign the Code of Professional Conduct.

### **GIFTS**

From time to time staff may be offered gifts by clients or others in recognition of their work. In order to protect staff and the organisation, money should not be accepted as a gift. In the main, gifts of more than €30 value should not be accepted. If staff are in any doubt with regard to hospitality or small gifts they should discuss the matter with their line manager.

## **GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

It is agreed that it is in the mutual interest of all concerned to establish a clear procedure for the resolution of grievances.

Wherever possible, issues will be resolved at the earliest stage.

All grievances or disputes arising between a staff member and the organisation will follow these agreed grievance procedures:

- Staff will be given a fair hearing by their line manager or superior concerning any grievances they may wish to raise;
- Staff have the right to appeal to the CEO of the organisation against a decision made by their line manager or by the HR Department ;
- Staff have the right to be accompanied by a representative;

### **Grievance Procedure**

All complaints and grievances should be settled fairly and as soon as possible. Grievances must be raised within 3 months of the issue arising. The following are the main stages through which a grievance may be raised:

#### Informal Discussion

It is often preferable for all concerned that grievances are dealt with informally. This is likely to produce solutions, which are speedy and effective. The informal procedure for dealing with grievances is outlined below.

If an employee has a grievance they should approach their manager/supervisor who will discuss the matter with them.

Or

On the occasion when the employee feels that approaching their manager/supervisor would be inappropriate or cause them difficulty (e.g. the problem or dissatisfaction is with their immediate manager/supervisor), they should discuss the matter with **the HR Department**. The manager/supervisor or the alternative person will make every effort to resolve the matter informally by discussing the matter with the employee and facilitating an acceptable outcome. If discussing the issue informally does not result in an acceptable outcome, the employee should evoke the formal procedure as outlined below.

### Stage 1 Initial Formal Discussion

Staff are expected to make efforts to resolve grievances directly with the person/people concerned before making a formal grievance. The grievance procedure will be used when these efforts are ineffective, or where a staff member feels s/he cannot do this.

If a staff member has a grievance, s/he may raise this grievance in writing with the line manager. The line manager or another appropriate person will investigate the grievance and will do his/her best to resolve the matter as quickly as possible, and will hold a meeting with the staff member to discuss the outcome of the investigation. The outcome of the meeting will be communicated to the staff member in writing. If the matter is not resolved, or if the grievance is with the line manager the staff member may raise the issue with the CEO.

### Stage 2 Second Formal Discussion

If the matter is unresolved or, if the staff member's grievance is with his/her line manager, the staff member may raise the issue in writing with the CEO who will investigate the grievance and will do his/her best to resolve the matter as soon as possible.

The decision after Stage 2 will be binding on all parties in the dispute. If the Employee is dissatisfied with the response given to the grievance, he/she will have to accept that it cannot be resolved to his/her satisfaction, as the procedure has been exhausted.

### **Representation**

At any/all stage(s) of this process, a staff member may request that a colleague of his/her choice or representative attend the meetings. Representation should be either, a

trade union representative or a card carrying member of a trade union with experience in representation or as stated a colleague of his /her choice

## **HOURS OF WORK, REST PERIODS AND WORK BREAKS**

The normal hours of work for administrative staff are from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Hours of work for Family Support Workers, Youth Respite Workers, Drivers, Respite Care Workers may vary given the nature of their work. Hours of work for part-time staff are as stipulated in their contract of employment.

Staff are expected to start and finish work in accordance with the terms of their contracts. However, some flexibility may be required on occasion, and staff may be required to work in excess of these hours in order to fulfil the requirements of the post. Overtime is not payable in these instances but time in lieu may be agreed. (*see Time in Lieu*).

Breaks will be permitted as per each Employee's statement of terms and conditions of employment. It is the policy of this Organisation to ensure that all Employees are afforded their minimum entitlements to daily and weekly rest as per the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997.

## **TIME-KEEPING POLICY**

The organisation places great emphasis on punctuality and will monitor each employee's time-keeping record.

The appropriate stage of the disciplinary procedure will be instituted if an employee is persistently late. Persistent lateness is considered as meaning:

- More than 5 occasions late in a four week period and/or
- More than 150 minutes late in a four week period

If an employee requires some flexibility with their start and finish times, due to exceptional personal circumstances, this can be discussed with your line manager. If the request is agreed to it will be time bound i.e. the agreement will have a start and finish date.

Due to the flexible nature of the work of employees who work from home or in regional offices, it is expected that these employees respect and adhere to their agreed hours of work, as stipulated in their Contract of Employment.

## **INTELLECTUAL COPYRIGHT**

All material produced during the course of your employment, whether on paper or with the use of computerised technology, is the property of Muscular Dystrophy Ireland and will remain the property of the organisation on termination of your employment. Any and all copies of materials (both electronic and manual) must be retained by the organisation.

## **INTERNET (USE OF)**

There is limited access to Internet and e-mail facilities. Both are for business use only. Staff using the internet for personal reasons will be open to the disciplinary procedure. See Page 21 re 'Communications Policy'.

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

Job descriptions are prepared for all positions. Appointees will perform the duties as set out in the job description and as agreed with the CEO or his nominee. Job descriptions are only a guide, can be reviewed regularly and may be changed and updated in accordance with the goals of the organisation. Any such changes will be discussed with the staff member.

## **JURY SERVICE**

The Juries Act, 1976 provides that a person in employment is entitled to be released from work for the purpose of jury service. Where staff are called upon to do jury service, leave with pay will be given. However, during the period of your obligation to the court for jury service, you will be expected to attend work when you are not assigned to a case.

You should inform the HR Department immediately on receipt of the official notification.

Attendance in court on a personal matter does not qualify for paid leave. Staff are normally required to take annual leave or unpaid leave in such circumstances.

## LEAVE

Authorised leave is that which is agreed to by the organisation, normally through your line manager. A record of all leave is maintained by Head Office. If leave is not authorised it will be regarded as absence without permission; salary will be adjusted accordingly and disciplinary procedures may be followed.

The following are the types of leave which may be authorised:

### ADOPTIVE LEAVE

Under the Adoptive Leave Act, 1995 and 2005, adoptive leave will be available to all adopting mothers, sole male adopters and adopting fathers where the adopting mother has died.

Adoptive leave will consist of **24** consecutive weeks leave, plus the option to avail of **16** weeks additional Adoptive leave.

### Leave in advance of Foreign Adoptions

In the case of a foreign adoption, an adopting mother or sole male adopter may avail of some of their additional leave before the placement of the child for the purposes of familiarisation with the child in advance of the adoption. 4 weeks written notice of this intention must be provided, and a declaration of suitability and eligibility must also be supplied. This entitlement is in addition to the time permitted to attend classes and meetings in the state.

Under the Act, there is no statutory entitlement to salary for the 24 weeks Adoptive Leave. However, the Social Welfare Acts provide for a payment of an adoptive allowance for employees taking statutory adoptive leave. No benefit is payable during additional Adoptive Leave by the Organisation.

Employees must give:

- Four weeks written notice before the expected placement of the child
- A certificate of placement as soon as is reasonably practicable but not later than four weeks after the date of the child's placement
- Four weeks written notice of their intention to take additional Adoptive Leave
- Four weeks written notice of their intention to return to work

### Protection of Rights

An employee will maintain all of his or her employee rights while on adoptive leave. (Except remuneration and superannuation benefits)

### Returning to Work from Adoptive Leave

Employees are required to provide at least 4 weeks written notice of their intention to return to work following leave. This notice should confirm the intended return to work date. Where possible the Employee will return to the position held immediately prior to the commencement of leave (provided this was their normal position), however where this is not feasible, the Employee may return to work to suitable alternative employment that is no less favourable in terms and conditions.

### Annual Leave and Public Holidays

Annual leave and public holiday benefits will continue to accrue for the period of adoptive leave and additional adoptive leave.

### Adopting fathers entitlements

In the unfortunate event of an adopting mother's death, the adopting father will be entitled to leave. This leave will be 24 weeks if the mother dies before the date of placement. If the mother dies on or after the date of placement, the leave will be 24 weeks less the period that the mother is alive after the date of placement.

## **ANNUAL LEAVE**

In accordance with the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997, every member of staff, both permanent and temporary has a paid annual leave entitlement. Annual leave consists of 21 days for full-time staff and the pro-rata equivalent for part-time staff. After 5 years service full time staff receive 1 extra day's annual leave. This increases each year thereafter up to a maximum of 5 additional days. This is provided in the pro-rata equivalent for part-time staff. Details of annual leave entitlements are stipulated in individual contracts of employment.

The organisation closes for a period over Christmas. Staff are required to keep some days (usually 2 or 3) from their annual leave entitlement for this period and will be notified of the number of days at the beginning of each year.

Statutory Public Holidays are additional to this entitlement (see Public Holidays).

The leave year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December each year. Staff joining the organisation after 1<sup>st</sup> January in any year will be awarded holidays as a proportion of the annual entitlement, calculated to the nearest full day. Similarly, staff leaving before year end will have their remaining entitlement calculated on this basis.

All requests for annual leave must be submitted in writing and agreed with your line manager. No more than 10 working days may be taken as leave at any one time without prior agreement with your line manager. When taking 5 or more working days together, staff are normally required to give at least 4 weeks notice.

Due to the increased number of staff and the growing needs of the organisation requests for annual leave cannot be guaranteed. Annual leave will be given on a first come basis. Staff are advised to apply for annual leave as soon as is possible to ensure your request can be fulfilled.

The holiday entitlement should be taken within the year in which the entitlement occurs, at a time convenient to the organisation and agreed by your line manager.

In exceptional circumstances, and with the consent of your line manager, a maximum of 5 days may be carried forward but all such leave must be taken by the end of February of the following year. Annual leave during the week of the MDI Awareness Day campaign cannot be taken.

Holiday entitlement not taken on termination of employment will be paid at the normal daily rate, through the payroll. Holidays carried over from the previous year are not payable in lieu.

Annual leave records will be maintained by the organisation and it is recommended that a similar record is maintained by each staff member.

### **COMPASSIONATE LEAVE**

Compassionate leave may be granted to provide staff with time away from work at a time of personal or family need, especially when there is a death or critical illness in the family. Leave with pay will be available on the death of an immediate relative (partner, mother, father, sister, brother, child) for a maximum of 3 days. In the case of death of extended family members, time off will be granted on a discretionary basis.

All arrangements for compassionate leave should be agreed with the HR Department as soon as is reasonably practicable.

## **FORCE MAJEURE LEAVE FOR FAMILY EMERGENCIES**

The Parental Leave Act, 1998 and 2006 give all staff a right to limited time off for family emergencies caused by accident or illness ("*force majeure*" leave). *Force majeure* leave is paid leave and is limited to a maximum of 3 days in each 12 months, or 5 days in each 36 month period. An Employee who is on force majeure leave for part of a working day shall be deemed to have taken 1 force majeure day.

Force Majeure leave is short term paid leave for Employees where, due to the illness or injury of one of the following persons, the presence of the Employee at the location of that person is indispensable.

Force majeure leave is permitted in respect of the illness or injury of one the following persons:

- a child or adoptive child of the Employee;
- a spouse or partner of the Employee;
- a person to whom the Employee is acting in loco parentis;
- a brother or sister of the Employee;
- a parent or grandparent of the Employee;
- a person with whom the Employee is in a relationship of domestic dependency, including, but not limited to, same sex partners.

Entitlement to force majeure leave is limited to circumstances:

- where the immediate presence of the Employee is indispensable,
- where the Employee is present at the place where the ill or injured person is situated.

A staff member who takes Force Majeure leave is required to submit details of the circumstances of the leave to the employer as soon as is reasonably practicable. The organisation is required to keep records of Force Majeure taken by staff.

## **MATERNITY LEAVE**

The Maternity Protection Act, 1994 came into effect in January 1995. This and the Extension of Periods of Leave Order, 2001 and Maternity Protection (Amendment) Act, 2004 repealed earlier maternity legislation although retaining many of its provisions.

The Act covers all part-time, full-time and agency female employees who are:

- pregnant;
- within 14 weeks of having given birth;

- breastfeeding within 26 weeks of having given birth;

and have informed their employer. It also covers male employees in the event of the mother's death.

Under the Act, there is no statutory entitlement for staff to any pay for the 26 weeks Maternity Leave. Employees in employment with MDI before March 1st 2005 are paid full pay less maternity benefit by the organisation for the first 26 weeks on Maternity Leave. Employees who have joined the organisation after March 1st 2005, do not receive payment during their maternity leave.

In the case of staff employed under a fixed term contract where the contract is due to expire before the employee's last day of maternity leave, the contract will be deemed to end on the last day of the maternity leave and not before. Where a fixed term contract is due to expire during the maternity leave period, protection under the Act also expires on that date.

A pregnant employee is entitled to take 26 consecutive weeks Maternity Leave. 2 of these 26 weeks must be taken before the end of the week when the baby is due, and 4 weeks must be taken after the birth. You can decide how you would like to take the remaining 20 weeks. The Maternity Leave period may be extended by four weeks if the birth is delayed so significantly that there are fewer than the mandatory four weeks leave left before the mother is required to return to work.

The organisation understands that in the case of a premature birth, the employee's 26 weeks maternity leave begins immediately, and dates from, the day of the birth.

In the event of a miscarriage or still birth the employee will be entitled to the leave if her confinement occurred after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

#### Right to Time off for Ante-Natal Care

An employee is entitled to take time off for ante-natal appointments without loss of pay where she notifies the organisation two weeks prior to each appointment with the exception of the first appointment. She must produce her appointment card if so requested.

An employee is entitled to time off from work without loss of pay to attend one set of ante-natal classes (other than the last three classes). An expectant father is entitled on a once off basis to time off from work without loss of pay to attend the last two ante-

natal classes before the birth. This right is subject to giving the organisation at least two weeks notice before the first class or class concerned and appropriate documentation giving the dates and times of the classes.

#### Time off for post-natal care

The employee is entitled to time off for post-natal care for medical examinations/tests. Written notice of 2 weeks must be given along with evidence of the appointment if requested.

#### Annual Leave and Public Holidays

Annual leave and public holiday benefits will continue to accrue for the period of maternity leave and additional maternity leave.

#### Additional Maternity Leave

A period of 16 weeks additional unpaid leave may be taken immediately following the Maternity Leave period – whether a member of staff has taken extended Maternity Leave or not. No Social Welfare Benefit is payable during this period. In the event of illness the additional Maternity Leave may be terminated, subject to the agreement of the employer.

#### Returning to Work

Employees are required to provide at least 4 weeks written notice of their intention to return to work following leave. This notice should confirm the intended return to work date. Where possible the Employee will return to the position held immediately prior to the commencement of leave (provided this was their normal position), however where this is not feasible, the Employee may return to work to suitable alternative employment that is no less favourable in terms and conditions.

#### Breastfeeding

Should an Employee be breastfeeding on return to work, and their child is under 6 months old, the Organisation will facilitate a temporary reduction of working hours, without loss of pay, for the purposes of breastfeeding. The Employee must provide notification of her intention to avail of this entitlement at least 4 weeks before her proposed return to work date.

#### Public Holidays

Statutory Public Holidays and occasional organisation holidays which fall during Maternity Leave may be added on to Maternity Leave.

### Notification

An employee must give/inform their line manager:

- Written confirmation of their pregnancy confirming the expected date of arrival (Health & Safety)
- Four weeks' written notice of her intention to take Maternity Leave and produce a medical, or other appropriate certificate which confirms the pregnancy and gives the expected date of confinement.
- Four weeks' written notice of her intention to take additional Maternity Leave
- Four weeks' written notice of her intention to return to work

This is an outline of Maternity Leave entitlements. Full details should be obtained from the HR & Administration Officer.

### **ABSENCE FROM WORK**

In the event of absence from work due to illness staff are required to contact their line manager or alternatively the HR Department of the organisation by 10.30 a.m. on the first day of absence. On the third day of continuous absence through illness, and on a weekly basis thereafter, at the beginning of each week (unless agreed otherwise with the organisation CEO), a medical certificate from a qualified medical practitioner must be submitted. This must state the nature of the illness and the expected date of return to work. Before returning to work, staff may be required to produce a certificate from their medical doctor stating that they are fit to return to work.

The organisation reserves the right to have staff examined by its own independent medical practitioner for an independent medical assessment in cases of protracted periods of certified absence, or regular certified absence due to illness.

### ***Uncertified Sick leave***

- MDI staff are entitled to five paid uncertified sick days pro-rata in one calendar year i.e. January to December. Salary will be deducted for any uncertified sick days taken thereafter. Staff are also entitled to 10 paid certified sick days pro-rata. Salary will be deducted for any certified sick leave taken thereafter.

### ***Certified Sick Leave***

- On notifying the organisation of certified sick leave the employee must complete a Social Welfare Illness Benefit Form (MC1), ticking the section (box) for payment to be made directly to Muscular Dystrophy Ireland

- A completed Illness Benefit Form (MC1) along with a copy of the Dr's sick cert must be sent to their Co-ordinator or HR at MDI Dublin Office.
- Social Welfare Illness Benefit does not cover the first 6 days of certified sick leave. MDI will pay the first 6 days [pro-rata] of certified sick leave which will be included in your certified sick leave.
- MDI pay staff salaries as normal for a period of two working weeks [pro-rata] certified sick leave per annum.
- After the second week [pro-rata] of certified sick leave, employees will no longer receive pay from MDI until they return to work. MDI Staff are only entitled to a maximum of two weeks [pro-rata] total certified sick leave per annum.
- If staff have been absent from work through illness for 3 weeks or longer a GP's Cert certifying them fit to return to work is to be provided to their coordinator.

#### **What to do if you are unable to attend work due to Illness:**

- Phone your Coordinator by landline or mobile before 10am and inform them of your situation. In the event you cannot contact your Coordinator please contact Barry Buckley on 01-6236414
- Handover all relevant information regarding work plans meetings / visits arranged for the coming day(s) so they can be cancelled or re-arranged by your Coordinator
- Please note: It is understood by MDI that you will not engage in work when on sick leave. In the event of a staff member engaging in MDI related work while on sick leave MDI will not be responsible for any issues arising.

#### **To apply for Illness Benefit you should:**

1. Go to a GP and get a social welfare medical certificate (known as MC 1), which includes an application form,
2. Complete this medical certificate and application form, giving the PPS No. and where appropriate give details of your spouse or partner. Also provide PPS No. and details of any children in your family.
3. Sign the declaration on the MC1 form and post it to your Coordinator or HR at MDI Head Office 75 Lucan Road, Chapelizod, Dublin 20

An employee must apply for Illness Benefit within 7 days of becoming ill. A delay of more than 7 days may cause them to lose some or all of their payment. If there is a good reason for a delay in applying, your payment **may** be backdated. Please send subsequent certs direct to the Department of Social Protection as the department will then pay Illness Benefit directly to you after the first two weeks.

MDI must receive a copy of your medical certificate (known as MC 2) each week for as long as an employee is ill, unless this is otherwise prescribed by your GP. For further information on Illness Benefit please see [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie).

An employee who is out sick for more than three weeks certified sick leave must submit a final medical certificate certifying they are fit to return to work from their GP before they return to work.

### **MDI Office Procedure for staff sick leave**

- Each Co-ordinator on learning of a staff member being out sick must inform Mr Barry Buckley by email [barry@mdi.ie](mailto:barry@mdi.ie) and cc [accounts@mdi.ie](mailto:accounts@mdi.ie).
- On receipt of email notice Mr Buckley will record sick leave notification and update Co-ordinator and accounts by email of any prior certified / uncertified sick leave taken. Mr Barry Buckley will also advise on sick leave procedure.
- When the employee returns to work from sick leave the Co-ordinator will again email Mr Barry Buckley and cc accounts with the return to work date. The Co-ordinator will also ensure all relevant documentation is sent to the Dublin Office and submitted to Mr Buckley for processing and recording.
- The HR and accounts department will follow up on the illness benefit payment ensuring that it is received by the organisation.
- Mr Buckley will offer any support or guidance to Co-ordinators throughout the process.

### **PARENTAL LEAVE**

Parental leave provisions are governed by The Parental Leave Acts 1998 and 2006 as amended. Parental leave is generally only available to employees with one year's continuous service with Muscular Dystrophy Ireland.

The European Union (Parental Leave) Regulations (Statutory Instrument No 81 of 2013) came into force on 8 March 2013. The new Regulations increase the amount of parental leave from 14 working weeks to 18 working weeks per parent per child. The Regulations give employees returning to work the right to request changes to their working hours or

patterns for a set period on their return. An employer must consider this request but does not have to grant it.

To qualify for parental leave, the employee must be the natural or adopted parent of the child for whom the leave is taken or acting in loco parentis. The child must be under 8 or under 16 if disabled or suffering from a long term illness. Where a child is between 6 and 8 at the time of adoption, the leave must be taken within two years of the adoption order. The maximum period of entitlement to parental leave is 18 weeks.

The 18 weeks can be taken in one block of 18 weeks or in blocks of not less than six weeks with a gap of at least 10 weeks between each block. Any other combination requires the agreement of the employer. The purpose of parental leave is to take care of the child. It is not for the purpose of taking a sabbatical and if an employer has reasonable grounds to believe that the employee is not using the leave to take care of the child, the employer can terminate the leave.

An employee who is on parental leave will still be regarded as working by the employer and, apart from the employee's right to remuneration or superannuation benefits, all other employment rights are preserved. As with maternity leave, absence from employment on parental leave is not to be treated as part of any other leave including sick leave, annual leave or adoptive leave to which the employee would be entitled. If an employee is on probation at the time they go on parental leave, the probationary period may be suspended during the period of parental leave and be completed by the employee when they return to work.

An employee has the right to return to work after the expiry of their parental leave to their old job under the same terms and conditions as before. If there has been a change of employer, the employee has the right to return to work for the new employer in their old job under the same terms and conditions as before. If improvements were made to the employee's position whilst they were away on parental leave, those improvements should be incorporated into their terms and conditions.

Where it is not reasonably practicable for the employer to permit the employee to return to their old job, the employee is entitled to be offered suitable alternative employment. Suitable alternative employment has to be suitable and appropriate for the employee in the circumstances.

Parents employed by the same employer can, with the employer's consent, transfer 14 out of the 18 weeks of their parental leave to each other.

Muscular Dystrophy Ireland will maintain a record of Parental Leave taken by staff (a requirement by law). It is equally important for all staff to keep their own records.

### Sickness During Parental Leave

Should an Employee fall ill during parental leave, and as a result is unable to care for their child, they may suspend their parental leave and the time may be treated as certified sick leave. This is subject to the Employee complying with normal sick leave reporting procedures and submission of a doctors certificate confirming the illness irrespective of the number of days of sickness. This certificate should confirm that the Employee is incapable of caring for the child in respect of whom leave is being taken.

### Abuse of Leave

An Employee must use parental leave for the purpose of caring for the child in respect of whom it is taken. Employees may not work in alternative employment while on this leave. Abuse of parental leave may be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

### Returning to Work from Parental Leave

Following a period of Parental Leave a staff member will return to the position s/he held prior to taking Parental Leave whenever possible. If that position no longer exists, due to exceptional circumstances, s/he will be offered a similar position of equal status.

## **UNPAID LEAVE OF ABSENSE**

Consideration will be given to applications made for unpaid leave in exceptional circumstances, and on the recommendation of the CEO. The primary consideration in judging such a request will be the needs of the organisation. No more than one application for unpaid leave of absence at any given time will be considered. Application should be made in writing to the organisation CEO.

## **LOCATION**

The head office of Muscular Dystrophy Ireland is located at 75 Lucan Road, Chapelizod Dublin 20. Administrative staff are located here. However, given the regional aspect of some of the organisation's work, key groups of staff are required to locate in other areas of Ireland. The place of work for individual employees is specified in their individual contract of employment. Current locations for MDI offices are as follows:

MDI Midlands Office  
Offaly CIL  
Clonminch Road  
Tullamore  
Co. Offaly

MDI  
North Eastern Area Health Board  
Climber Hall  
Kells  
Co. Meath

Phone: 05793 28638

Phone 046 9280026

MDI Galway Office,  
Galway Technology Park,  
Tara Rock,  
Parkmore,  
Galway  
Phone: 091 395497

MDI Cork Office,  
c/o Irish guide dogs for the blind  
Model Farm Road,  
Cork.  
Phone: 086 3899266

MDI Offices North West  
C/O MS Ireland Offices  
28 Slieve Sneacht Close  
Glencar  
Letterkenny  
Donegal  
Mobile: 086 3899279

Location of the organisation's offices may change with due notice and consultation.

## NOTICE

If you resign from your employment with Muscular Dystrophy Ireland you are required to inform the CEO and to submit a letter of resignation to the CEO. You are then required to work the notice as per your contract of employment. Time in lieu or annual leave cannot be taken in lieu of your notice period. Notice periods may vary, depending on the specific position. When no reference is made to notice in your contract, the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Acts, 1973-2001 will apply, as follows:

Under the Act, a staff member and the organisation may come to a mutual agreement to waive the right to notice, or to payment in lieu of notice. The organisation may terminate a contract of employment without notice due to gross misconduct on the part the employee.

<b>Length of Service</b>	<b>Minimum Notice</b>
13 weeks to less than two years	1 week
2 years to less than 5 years	2 weeks
5 years to less than 10 years	4 weeks
10 years to less than 15 years	6 weeks

More than 15 years
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8 weeks
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## OFFICE EQUIPMENT AND PROPERTY

Every member of staff plays a role in maintaining a high level of security on the organisation's premises. This applies to property of the organisation and to personal property (see Personal Property).

It is important that each staff member takes responsibility for his/her work area, regional office and equipment and keeps it tidy at all times. Confidential material should be locked away securely.

Please refer to MDI's Data Protection Policy 2008.

## MOBILE PHONES

FSWs, YRWs, Drivers and some administration staff are issued with mobile phones to use for organisation business only. The following voice mail message must be recorded on your MDI mobile phone, it is organisation policy

### MDI TELEPHONE MESSAGE:

- *"Hi you have reached (name & job title) with M.D.I. I work (days & times). I am unavailable to take your call right now but please leave your name and a short message and I will get back to you as soon as possible. Alternatively you can contact the Head Office on free phone number which is 1800 245300. Thank You"*
- If you have difficulty recording this message, contact your Line Manager

## COMPUTERS

Employees who work from home are issued with laptops, printers, o2 Broadband cards (*accesses email*) and USB memory keys. On receipt of this equipment an *Equipment Contract* must be signed by staff.

It is the responsibility of staff to ensure regular back-ups of computer work are saved and updated, using the memory key supplied.

## **OPENING HOURS**

The opening hours of the organisation's administrative offices are from 9.00 a.m. until 1.00 p.m. and 2.00 p.m. until 5.00 p.m Monday-Friday.

## **LAY OFF / SHORT TIME**

The company reserves the right to lay you off from work or reduce your working hours where, through circumstances beyond its control, it is unable to maintain you in employment or maintain you in full-time employment. You will receive as much notice as is reasonably possible prior to such lay-off or short - time. No payment will be made for any period of layoff. Payment will only be made for hours actually worked during any period of short time.

## **OUTSIDE WORK**

Staff may not engage in any other trade, business, occupation or activities which might interfere with their work or present a conflict of interest with the work of the organisation. Prior permission must be sought from the CEO before undertaking outside work. If staff have additional employment to their MDI employment, they must inform the CEO of the organisation. Staff may not be engaged, concerned or interested either directly or indirectly in any capacity in any business or employment which is similar to or in competition with the business of the company or which may in the company's opinion prejudice your ability to act at all times in the company's best interest.

## **OVERTIME**

Overtime is not payable. Time in Lieu may be awarded subject to prior agreement with your line manager. (*See Time in Lieu*)

## **PAY POLICY**

Salaries will be in line with agreed salary scales and will be set out in individual contracts of employment. Salary increments will be based on a satisfactory annual review of performance (*see Performance Management and Review*).

## **PAYMENT (METHOD)**

Payment is made monthly, on the last Friday of every month, by credit transfer.

## **PENSION**

The terms of the Company's pension scheme states that 5% contribution by the Company matched by 5% from the employees annual salary will be paid into pension

scheme, which only applies to employees after probationary period is satisfactory completed. Employees at commencement of employment are entitled to join the MDI pension scheme and contribute 5% of salary to pension.

## **PERSONAL PROPERTY**

Each staff member should insure his/her own property. Personal property is brought onto the premises at individuals' own risk. The organisation does not accept liability for any loss of, or damage to, any personal property whilst on the organisation's premises.

Personal effects should be kept in a secured place.

## **PERSONAL RECORDS**

Staff are required to complete a Personal Data Form when taking up appointment. Before completing the form, your permission will be sought to hold certain information on file. In order to keep your Personal Record up to date, please notify in writing to the HR Department any relevant changes in personal circumstances, e.g. civil status, birth of children, change of address or next of kin.

Certain information about each individual may be retained on computer or on structured manual files for particular purposes. Under the Data Protection (Amendment) Act, 2003 each staff member is entitled access to such information within 40 days of the organisation receiving a request (in writing) to view same. The organisation undertakes to provide such information as soon as is reasonably practicable within the 40 day deadline. See MDI Data Protection Policy 2008.

## **PROBATIONARY PERIOD**

Each staff member will be required to complete a 6 month probationary period on commencement with Muscular Dystrophy Ireland. The probationary period may be extended at the organisation's discretion, but will not, in any case, exceed 11 months.

A probationary period applies to all new staff joining the organisation. It enables:

- the organisation to assess the performance of the member of staff in the job;
- the member of staff to fully understand the role and his/her responsibilities.

The first few months in a new organisation can be a very confusing and critical time for a new member of staff. A great deal of effort is needed to help that individual learn essential tasks and adapt to the environment of the organisation.

During this period, the CEO/their nominee and the member of staff will meet at regular intervals to discuss the requirements of the role. These meetings can also be used to evaluate the staff member's overall compatibility with the organisation's objectives.

Employment may be terminated during, or at the end of, the probationary period by either party by giving one week's notice.

## **PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

The organisation requires a high standard of integrity from its staff. Colleagues, MDI members, members of other organisations and the general public should be treated with dignity and respect (see Policies on Confidentiality and Dignity & Respect at Work).

## **PUBLIC HOLIDAYS**

The statutory public holidays recognised by the Muscular Dystrophy Ireland are:

- New Year's Day
- St Patrick's Day
- Easter Monday
- First Monday in May
- First Monday in June
- First Monday in August
- Last Monday in October
- Christmas Day
- St Stephen's Day

Staff, other than part-time staff, have an immediate entitlement to this additional leave.

Part-time employees who have worked at least 40 hours in the 5 weeks ending on the day before the public holiday will qualify for the same entitlement. Where the public holiday falls on a day on which the employee does not normally work, leave will be calculated in accordance with the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 – section 3.5).

## **DISCRETIONARY HOLIDAYS**

MDI discretionary days which staff are entitled to as leave are Good Friday and Christmas Eve.

## **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

Muscular Dystrophy Ireland's policy in relation to recruitment and selection is to provide equal access to employment for all and to ensure that the best person, in terms of knowledge, skills, experience and aptitude, is chosen for each position that arises.

The National Executive will approve the advertisement of positions.

An advertisement, job description and person specification will be prepared for each post by the CEO or their nominee and will reflect the skills, qualities, experience and attributes required for the post. They must be approved by the CEO and will be advertised as openly and as widely as possible. Advertisements for all positions will include the appropriate salary range or scale.

### **Application Procedure**

These details will be forwarded to any person who expresses an interest in the advertised position. Application will be by Curriculum Vitae and covering letter. Applicants will also be required to submit the names and contact details of two referees, one of whom must be their current or most recent employer. Photo identification must be presented at the interview stage, e.g. passport, drivers licence.

### **Selection Procedures**

Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that interview panels are representative (e.g. that they comprise male and female representatives).

Structured interviews will be held by at least two members of staff. Senior management and/or a member of the Executive Committee must be represented on the interviewing panel.

Interviewers will be appropriately qualified to conduct interviews and will be familiar with the organisation's Equal Opportunities Policy and Recruitment and Selection guidelines.

The assessment methods used for any competition will be designed to assess applicants objectively in relation to the agreed criteria for the post.

### **Offers of Employment**

Offers of employment will not be made without receipt of two satisfactory references and receipt of a satisfactory report following a medical examination. Garda clearance will be sought for all new appointees.

The selection will be approved by the CEO (by the National Executive in the case of senior appointments) before an offer is made.

An employment contract will be issued. The recruitment and selection process is final when the employment contract has been signed by the appointee and s/he has commenced the induction programme and probationary period.

## **RETIREMENT**

The normal retirement age is 65 years. Discussions with regard to early retirement, where appropriate, should be initiated with the CEO.

## **SAFETY, HEALTH & WELFARE POLICY**

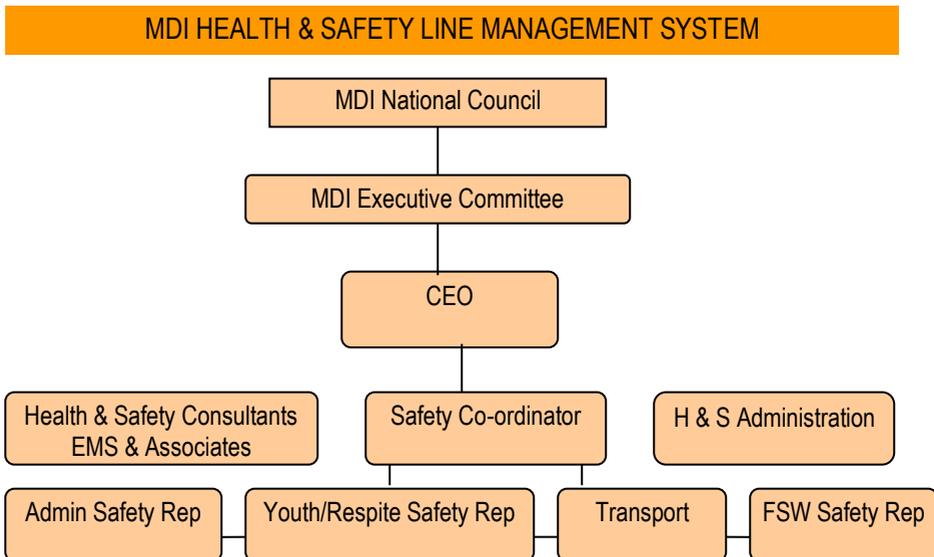
In accordance with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, it is the duty of Muscular Dystrophy Ireland to ensure, in so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare while at work of all staff, members and visitors to the premises. It is the policy of MDI to remind staff that Good Health and Safety is no accident.

The Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act makes it a legal obligation that every member of staff has a responsibility for the implementation of an effective Health, Safety and Welfare Policy and procedures.

In compliance with the above legislation and best practice that exists MDI have developed a Health and Safety Statement. Staff will be required to familiarise themselves with the *Safety Statement* and specific safety requirements which apply to their area of work. This policy statement will be reviewed based on the outcomes of the statement.

## SAFETY MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

The current Safety Management Structures are:-



### RESPONSIBILITIES & DUTIES

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 imposes a statutory duty on employers to ensure in so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare of their staff while at work. This duty also extends to others who may be affected by that work.

All staff have a statutory duty to take care of themselves and others who may be affected by their acts or omissions.

To enable these duties to be carried out, it is the intention of the National Council to ensure that responsibilities for health and safety matters are effectively assigned, accepted and fulfilled at all levels within the organisation.

#### Duties of the Employer

The National Council will, so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure:

- that adequate resources are provided so that proper provision can be made for health, safety and welfare measures;
- the design, provision and maintenance of safe machinery and equipment;
- the provision and maintenance of safe systems of work;
- that the working environment for all staff is safe and without risk to health, and that adequate provision is made with regard to the facilities and arrangements for their welfare at work;
- the provision of adequate emergency plans;
- the safe use of all substances and articles;
- the place of work is safe and that there is safe access to, and egress from the work place;
- monitoring activities are undertaken to maintain agreed standards;
- the provision of information and training as required, including manual handling, first aid and fire safety and other training which the organisation is deemed necessary to improve health and safety awareness
- where necessary, the services of a competent person defined under the Act.

In the final analysis the primary responsibility for health, safety and welfare rests with the National Council and management of the organisation.

### **Duties of Staff**

Under the 2005 Act staff have the following responsibilities:

- to take care of their own safety, health and welfare as well as that of others by their actions and omissions;
- to co-operate with the employer to comply with their legal duties;
- to use all Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as issued (as applicable);
- to report any potential risks to their employer or supervisor without delay;
- to report any accidents to their employer or supervisor without delay;
- not to interfere with anything or anybody in a way that might lead to injury or risk;
- not to attend for work or during the working time consume or abuse any intoxicant.

As part of the consultation process of Health and Safety, MDI staff have the right to elect a Safety Representative. The role of the safety representative is to represent you on issues of health and safety and to bring issues and items raised to the attention of

the Safety Team who will deal with the items in accordance with MDI's Policies and Procedures.

Staff should be aware that breaches of safety rules will result in graduated disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal (*see Disciplinary Policy and Procedures*).

### **ACCIDENTS AT WORK**

All accidents which require First Aid should be reported to the CEO or his nominee and recorded in the Accident Book. Where there is any doubt a First Aider will seek medical assistance or send the staff to the local Hospital's Accident & Emergency Department by ambulance if necessary.

Staff involved in an accident should notify one of the organisation's First Aiders. A report of the accident must be recorded in the Accident Book which is held by the Respite Coordinator.

It is the policy of MDI that Family Support Workers and Youth Respite Workers are trained in First Aid.

### **ALCOHOL & DRUGS**

Staff on duty must not consume alcohol or take any illegal drugs at any time.

Alcohol may not be brought onto, nor consumed on, the premises without the express permission of the CEO. Illegal drugs are not permitted on the premises at any time. Staff found on the premises under the influence of alcohol or substance abuse will be sent home immediately and will be disciplined (*see Disciplinary Procedures – Gross Misconduct*).

### **GENERAL SAFETY**

- Furniture should always be kept so as to provide sufficient space for drawers to be opened. When not in use these drawers should be kept closed.
- Floor areas, stairs and landings should be kept tidy and clean.
- All telephone and electrical appliances should be placed in such a manner that their cables do not constitute a hazard.
- Any cables that appear to form a potential danger should be reported to your support person at once.
- Broken, damaged and inoperative furniture, appliances and cables should be reported to your support person.

- Untrained personnel should not attempt to repair electrical apparatus such as personal computers and photocopiers. Even everyday small pieces of equipment can cause injury.
- All equipment should be used with care and particular care should be taken with electrical equipment, sockets and extensions.
- Items such as sellotape dispensers with sharp metal blades, scissors, guillotines, letter openers and staplers should be handled carefully.

## **FIRE SAFETY POLICY & PROCEDURES**

Fire safety is a critical ingredient in MDI's Safety Statement. We must protect our employees, members and others from the potential threat of fire.

The policy of MDI is to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable, all action is taken to minimise the risk of fire on premises we work at.

Every employee is responsible for maintaining fire safety by avoiding creating fire hazards with either flammable materials or sources of ignition.

Fire evacuation routes are displayed in each room of MDI's offices. It is the responsibility of staff to familiarise themselves with the evacuation routes and fire assembly point. Staff in shared offices should liaise with the Health and Safety Representative for the building to determine fire evacuation procedures.

Staff should ensure that Fire Exits are not blocked or locked. If there is a problem with your Fire Exits, notify your Health and Safety Representative.

Staff in MDI offices should nominate one member of staff to take responsibility for fire safety. They will be the Fire Warden for their office and will be responsible for running fire drills, sending certificates of fire equipment maintenance to Head Office and dealing with the Fire Brigade in the event of a fire. Each Warden will receive training from the MDI Fire Safety Manager to enable them to carry out these duties.

In the event of a fire occurring when the designated Fire Warden is out of the office, staff must ensure that one person takes responsibility for contacting the Fire Brigade and liaising with them on their arrival.

### **Minimising Risk of Fire**

- Under legislation, smoking is prohibited in all MDI offices and shared offices.

- Rubbish and waste paper can be ignited. Ensure that bins are emptied regularly.
- Electrical equipment must be used with care and properly maintained. Do not overload extension leads or multiple socket adaptors.
- Electrical equipment must not be left switched on overnight, with the exception of server, fax and telephone equipment. Appliances in the kitchen (kettles, toasters) should be unplugged when not in use.

### **Fire Equipment**

- To comply with Fire Regulations, Fire Extinguishers are located throughout the premises. The MDI Fire Safety Manager will provide training to ensure that all staff are aware of their location and use.
- Fire Extinguishers must be serviced annually. When serviced, you will be given a certificate to state that they have been serviced and comply with Fire Regulations. Display this certificate with the extinguishers in the reception / main office area, and forward a copy of the certificate to Head Office.
- Fire Blankets are located in the kitchen area of MDI offices and should be checked annually.
- If a Fire Extinguisher has been discharged, notify Head Office so it can be refilled. If a Fire Blanket has been used, discard it and contact Head Office to order a new one.
- The Dublin office has emergency lighting installed. Spare bulbs are located on the top shelf of the cabinet in the hall where Health and Safety information is stored. Bulbs should be replaced immediately.
- Do not cover or obstruct any fire safety signage or emergency lighting. Do not introduce any object that may jeopardise the safe operation of any fire doors, fire exits or prohibit the use of any escape routes.

### **Fire Drills**

- All MDI offices should hold fire drills every 6 months (3 months in the case of the Dublin office).
- Fire drills must be recorded on the MDI Fire Drills Record Form, recording the date, number of participants involved and time taken to evacuate. Record sheets must be sent to Head Office after each fire drill.

### **Procedures in the Event of a Fire**

- Fire spreads rapidly so immediate action is required by all staff. If you discover a fire, no matter how small, **raise the alarm**. If you are in a position to, use the Fire Extinguisher, but these are only effective against small fires. **Do not take risks and do not delay your own evacuation.**
- If the fire alarm is not connected to the fire services, the Fire Warden must ring the Fire Brigade.
- In the event of the fire alarm sounding, all staff must vacate the premises immediately and make their way to the fire assembly point. Do not stop to collect personal belongings.
- Personal Assistants should go immediately to their Leader to assist them to evacuate.
- If there are visitors on the premises, the staff member responsible for them should assist them in the evacuation procedure.
- As you leave, check any rooms you pass on your way out to ensure that they have been evacuated, but do not delay your own departure.
- It is the policy of MDI that all MDI offices and shared offices have a Sign In / Sign Out procedure in place. The staff member responsible for monitoring this procedure will take the folder with them and hold a roll call at the evacuation point to ensure that everyone signed in has evacuated the building.
- The Fire Warden should make themselves known to the Fire Brigade when they arrive to inform them of the nature of the fire, office layout and any persons who may still be inside the building.
- Remain at the fire assembly point until you are informed by the Fire Brigade that it is safe to re-enter the building.

## **GENERAL SECURITY**

Clear guidelines were developed by the Health & Safety team in 2007 regarding office procedures see below. Staff are requested to familiarize themselves with these guidelines.

## **OFFICE PROCEDURES**

### **Keyholders Policy**

It is the policy of Muscular Dystrophy Ireland that nominated staff and branch members can only hold office keys. Nominated staff and members hold keys relevant to their

local office. It is the responsibility of authorised key holders to make them selves aware and implement MDI's Health and Safety Office Policies and Procedures.

- Nominated staff and members are the only people that can hold keys for their local office and these names must be forwarded to the CEO and the MDI Health and Safety Committee.
- It is the responsibility of the line co-ordinators to give out keys during the induction period to new staff and inform them of the office health and safety policies and procedures.
- The CEO and Health and Safety Committee must be informed of all new key holders.
- A list of key holders is maintained by the Health and Safety Committee.
- On cessation of employment keys must be returned to your line co-ordinators.

Guidelines for nominated branch members and MDI members using their local MDI office.

It is the policy of MDI that branch members and members are welcome to use MDI offices for meetings and events. Members choosing to use an MDI office must follow the procedures outlined below:-

- Members or branches requesting to use MDI offices must notify head office by email, telephone or in writing.
- Members should notify head office as soon as a date has been decided for usage of office, ideally two weeks in advance of the event so that local staff worker can be informed.
- The notice must detail the type of event and name a designated person responsible for the event.
- MDI health and safety team will inform and train members and staff on the organisation's health and safety policies and procedures. In the event that training has not taken place, it is the responsibility that members and staff make themselves aware of the health and safety procedures and policies and implement them at the event.
- If members wish not to become a key holder MDI will endeavour to arrange a member of staff to open and close an office

### **Sign In / Sign Out**

It is the policy of Muscular Dystrophy Ireland that MDI offices and shared MDI offices have a Sign In / Sign Out procedure in place.

- Sign in/out sheets are distributed by head office.
- Staff, members and visitors must sign in/out when using the office.
- A staff member must take responsibility to ensure the sign in/out policy and procedures are followed.
- Completed sheets must be sent to head office every quarter. These are filed in head office for one year.

### **Housekeeping Rules-re Offices**

It is the policy of Muscular Dystrophy Ireland that the following Housekeeping Rules are gone through in advance of all MDI events/meetings either in-house or in an external venue.

- Fire evacuation procedures of the venue, highlighting fire exits
  - It is the responsibility of the organiser to ensure that all exits are clear and in working order
- Use of mobile phones
- Timing of the event
- Facilities available
- Any other safety procedures relating to the event

### **Opening and Closing Offices**

The following guidelines must be adhered to when staff / branch members are opening and closing an MDI office

- Staff entering an office must ensure the door is fully closed behind them.
- The first person entering an office is responsible for turning off the alarm and the last person leaving is responsible for turning on the alarm.
  - Staff must be aware of the alarm contact details and pass codes in the event of a false alarm.
- If an office has an external intercom system, it must be used.
- Where applicable
  - blinds/curtains must be drawn
  - shutters are pulled
  - internal doors are locked
  - alarm set
- Two members/staff/visitors should close up the office.

- Staff and visitors should be aware of the surrounding environment when leaving an office. If you feel uncomfortable for any reason, stay in the office and call for assistance.
- Members using an office must ensure that two members close up an office.

## **PERSONAL SAFETY AND STAFF PROTECTION**

All staff are responsible for their personal security and safety, and that of their colleagues at all times. If staff identify potential risks to their safety on the premises they should make this known to management. MDI provides mobile phones for Family Support Workers and Youth Respite Workers in order to ensure the personal safety of staff.

MDI Staff should be aware of potentially dangerous or threatening situations. When visiting members at home, they must be vigilant of the area they are visiting and the behaviour of the member or relatives/other people in the home.

### **Guidelines for Visiting Members**

When visiting members, staff should follow these guidelines:

- Initial contact should be made by telephone.
- The first meeting should be held in a public place and in open view.
- The staff member should invite a colleague/branch member to attend.
- The staff member should have a telephone number programmed into their mobile phone in case they need to call assistance.
- The meeting should be recorded (date, time, outcomes) and kept on file.
- Staff should not take members in their car for insurance reasons.

Staff should be aware of signs in members which indicate a possible threat to their personal safety, e.g.

- Raised voice
- Fixed gaze/eyes bulging
- Clenched fists
- Signs of tension
- Restlessness
- Change in colouring
- Change in behaviour due to alcohol or drug consumption

The following techniques may be used to dilute a potentially dangerous situation:

- Distraction
- Empathy
- Using a calm voice
- Using open gestures

If a particular issue is causing difficulty for a member and cannot be resolved by them, it should be referred to the CEO. The member should be assured that their grievance is being taken seriously and will be dealt with. If the staff member feels under threat they should end the meeting immediately.

If a staff member feels that they may be under threat but still need to visit a family or individual, they should invite a colleague or member of the local branch to accompany them. The member must be informed that a report will be written on the meeting and put on file.

If the member is insistent that the meeting should take place in private, or if the staff member is uncomfortable about the meeting taking place at all, s/he should report this to the CEO immediately.

### **Reporting Incidents**

In the event of a threatening or violent incident occurring, staff must:

- Seek medical treatment (if required).
- Report the matter to the police if they feel threatened, alarmed or if the member has shown violence towards them.
- Report the incident to the CEO, or the HR & Administration Officer in his absence, and complete an incident report as soon as possible.

Support and counselling will be made available to any staff member who requires it. This can be of an informal nature from colleagues, or more formalised counselling from professionals.

More information on this subject can be found in the *Health and Safety' Policy and Guidelines for the Protection of MDI Personnel* as outlined below

### **Policy and Guidelines for the Protection of MDI Personnel**

The policy and guidelines for the protection of MDI Personnel was developed in 2007 by the Health & Safety Team in MDI & reviewed 2010.

The Staff Protection Policy of MDI is also designed to protect staff from unacceptable behaviour on the part of staff, members or service users. A “service user” includes anyone who is receiving a service from the organisation, acts on behalf of a member or who contacts MDI in connection with a complaint. It targets actions of service users and staff whose actions or behaviour we consider unacceptable. This includes members, service users and staff who are aggressive, unreasonably demanding or persistent, resulting in unreasonable demands on the organisations office or staff. Fortunately this applies to the relatively few service users whose actions or behaviour we consider unacceptable.

This document sets out clear guidelines and procedures to ensure the safety of all personnel, including agency workers and volunteers, working for Muscular Dystrophy Ireland.

The document includes guidelines on:

- Lone working
- Contact with new & current members.
- Stress
- How to identify a potentially dangerous situation, including signs to be aware of which could suggest violent/threatening behaviour
- The procedures that a staff member must take if they have been involved in a dangerous or violent situation.

For a full copy of this policy please contact a member of the Health & Safety Team

***Health & Safety Team, October 2007***

### **Smoking**

Smoking is not permitted anywhere on MDI premises.

## **STAFF DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

Muscular Dystrophy Ireland recognises that its staff are its most important resource and is committed to the planned continuous development of staff for the mutual benefit of the individual and the organisation.

Staff will be encouraged to develop their skills and gain experience, both for their own benefit and that of the organisation. Training needs related to a staff member’s professional and personal development will be identified and opportunities and interventions to meet these needs will be made available on an equal basis.

Staff development opportunities will be:

- based on the strategic plans and objectives of the organisation; and
- identified through discussions between individual staff and their line manager.

## **Responsibilities**

The National Council acknowledges its responsibility to provide an environment which is conducive to effective performance, and to promote training and development opportunities for all employees.

Training needs will be identified on an annual basis and may be met, e.g. through on-the-job coaching, internal or external courses, project work or through work reviews.

Each employee is responsible for his/her own continuing personal and professional development. Ongoing development needs may be discussed with your Line Manager (as appropriate), and agreement reached as to the most appropriate means of meeting those needs.

## **Induction**

The purpose of induction is to help the new employee to integrate into the work environment and ethos of the organisation, and to settle into his/her new role; ensuring that s/he has all of the necessary information to enable him/her to carry out his/her role effectively.

All staff will be given appropriate training and development opportunities designed to build the skills required to meet the demands of their role. Sufficient time will be given to each individual for development and training to take place

A structured induction programme for new employees will commence on the first day of employment and will be run over a period of one week; regular meetings will take place during the following probation period.

The induction programme will include;

- Introduction to the organisation and the work of the organisation.
- Introduction to staff.
- A meeting with the HR Department to discuss and agree expectations, ensure clarity about the duties and responsibilities of the role. and to ensure understanding of the company's HR policies and procedures.
- Information on Internal and External Supervision available to staff

- Introduction and overview of MDI's Child Protection Policy and Child First Procedures
- Structured meetings over time with all Administration staff to inform the new employee of their roles and support
- A structured meeting with the Information Officer, with particular emphasis on the condition known as Muscular Dystrophy and disability entitlements and rights.
- A structured meeting with the FSW Support Person, the Respite Co-ordinator and a representative from the Youth/Respite Workers.
- Depending on the position being filled the new employee will shadow a colleague currently in the role.
- Each new staff member will be provided with an Induction Pack which will include:
  - The MDI Staff Handbook
  - The Child Protection Policy and Child First Procedures
  - Information Pack
  - Blank Forms-e.g. next of kin details
  - Contact details for staff-email addresses, phone numbers etc.
  - Employment Checklist
  - List of MDI Policies & Procedures
- A meeting will be held at the end of the Induction week to review the learning, Identify any gaps in the Induction Training and to schedule the next meeting.

## TRAINING

Staff will receive on-going training and support at regular intervals in response to identified needs. The following training has been identified as necessary and is required to be completed within the first **three months** of employment where possible.

### Administration Staff

- Clerical Skills-excel, word, PowerPoint & access (unless trained & certified prior to commencing employment)
- Freedom of Information Act and how to record
- Business Writing

For the different roles within the Administration team based in head office, specific training should be identified and sourced during quarterly appraisals with line manager.

### **Youth Respite Workers**

MiDAS Training  
 First Aid  
 Moving & Handling  
 Core Competency  
 Children First  
 Disability Awareness  
 Reporting & Freedom of Information Act

### **Drivers**

GLUAS Training  
 First Aid  
 Moving & Handling  
 Children First  
 Reporting & FOI Act  
 Disability Awareness

### **Core Respite Care Workers**

First Aid  
 Moving & Handling  
 Disability Awareness  
 Children First  
 Bereavement and Loss training  
 Reporting & FOI Act

### **Family Support Workers**

Bereavement and Loss Training  
 First Aid  
 Introduction to Advocacy  
 Disability Payments and Entitlements  
 Reporting & FOI ACT

## **MDI's POLICY ON CONTINUING PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Muscular Dystrophy Ireland wishes to encourage employees to continue learning and attain qualifications which are work related. During work/performance reviews, a formal opportunity exists for employees to outline how they would like to see their careers develop within the organisation and how the organisation can help in this regard. Such discussions on training and education plans are not however confined to the performance review and should be discussed with your line manager at an appropriate time.

If you are participating in an educational course, on a voluntary basis outside of working hours and wish to apply to the organisation for assistance, the following guidelines must be met.

Please note: The organisation is not in a position to provide financial assistance to fund courses. Support and assistance is given to staff through paid time off for study and examination leave, see below.

- the application for assistance must be submitted two months in advance of the course commencement date by completing the '*Continuing Professional Development Form*'. This form includes an outline of the course and how the course relates to and improves MDI service delivery.
- the proposed course must be approved by the organisation

- the course must be related to the employee's present responsibilities and/or possible advancement within the organisation
- to be eligible for educational assistance, you must be a permanent employee and have one years service with the organisation.
- courses must be applied for on an annual basis

### **Paid Time Off**

- full time staff are allocated one study day per subject/module
- part-time staff are allocated a half day (4 hrs) study leave
- all staff are allocated a half day to sit an exam.
- if the exam falls on a weekend *time in lieu* will not be given.
- time-off is not given to re-sit examinations
- a contract agreeing to these conditions must be agreed and signed by staff  
**(Please contact HR Department regarding accessing this form)**

### **Performance Management and Review**

The CEO and line managers will provide ongoing support to staff under their supervision. It is intended that supervision and support will also include formal performance reviews which will be held with individual staff at least once annually.

The purpose of performance management is to:

- ensure that the organisation has the most appropriate knowledge, skills and experience to achieve its objectives;
- involve staff in the continuous development of MDI;
- offer staff opportunities for development and growth in line with their career aspirations and ability where possible.

### Principles of Performance Management

The aim of Performance management is to encourage motivated performance towards achieving the objectives of the organisation. The process includes:

- goal setting;
- feedback on performance, including recognition of achievements and objective assessment;
- identification of training and support needs;

### **Promotion**

It is recognised that there are few promotional opportunities in a small organisation such as MDI. However, the CEO and line managers play a significant role in encouraging and

supporting staff to seek training and career development opportunities. It is also important that good work is acknowledged on a regular basis.

Support will include discussion and identification of potential career progression routes and appropriate training and development opportunities to enable staff to work towards their career goals on an equal basis.

Any promotions will follow the recruitment and selection procedures. Applicants for promotion will be assessed objectively against the agreed criteria for positions and appointments will be based on merit.

### **Study and Examination Leave**

See MDIs Policy on Continuing Professional Development.

## **TIME OFF IN LIEU/ UNSOCIAL HOURS**

### **Administration Staff**

In the case of administrative staff full time working hours are from 9.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. and 2.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. Staff in administrative positions are required to attend for work during these times, unless otherwise authorised by the HR & Administration Officer/Line Manager.

Employees are expected to prioritise and complete the work assigned to them during working hours. Any difficulties experienced with completing work on time should be discussed with the HR Department.

Before taking time off in lieu staff are required to give adequate notice and obtain the consent of the HR Department /Line Manager.

In the case of necessary additional work after 5pm (Mon-Fri) and over weekly hours (40, 39, 24 etc) staff will be entitled to time for time. Any additional work carried out on Saturdays will mean that time for time may be accrued. For necessary additional work carried out on Sundays and on Bank Holidays double-time is accrued.

For other staff teams (Youth Respite Worker/Family Support Worker & Drivers) who work irregular hours, time in lieu arrangements may vary somewhat and operate on a weekly/monthly basis in conjunction with Monthly Time-Monitoring Sheets.

Below is the MDI Time in Lieu Policy for all staff.

### **TIME IN LIEU:**

- Time in lieu requests must be submitted to your Line Manager in writing.
- Adequate notice must be given-one week at least for one day off in lieu.
- Time in lieu will be authorised- by your Line Manager
- If time in lieu is taken during a working week then additional lieu can not be built up in that same week.
- A maximum of 16 hours time in lieu can be carried forward to the following month for full time workers. *(16 hrs. is equivalent to 8 hours at double time (Sunday)*
- A maximum of 8 hours time in lieu can be carried forward to the following month for part time workers. *(8 hrs. is equivalent to 5 four hours at double time (Sunday)*
- Time in lieu is not accumulated to be carried forward for more than one consecutive month e.g. a maximum of 16 or 8 hours can only be carried forward to the following month and this carried forward must be taken the following month.
- Time in lieu will be reviewed on a quarterly basis with your Line Manager.
- Under no circumstances is payment made to compensate for time-in-lieu not taken
- It is the policy of the organisation that an employee's required notice period is worked through, i.e. time in lieu and/or annual leave can be not taken during the required notice period.
- In exceptional circumstances this may be extended with the agreement of the CEO
- Where staff are required to stay over one night, they are entitled to a half-day's time in lieu.
- Time in lieu cannot be taken for the duration of MDI's Awareness Campaign in February.

### **Time off in Lieu for Working at Camp**

The arrangements for staff who work at camp are as follows:

- One day paid Time off in lieu for every night worked from Monday to Saturday inclusive;
- Two days paid time off in lieu for working Sunday night.
- An extra weeks wages is also paid to staff for working on camp.

Terms and conditions for camps, overnight trips and any other special events, must be clarified and agreed in advance with your line manager and the agreement received in writing.

## TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE

The Department of Health mileage rates will apply. Current rates are available, below or from the Finance Administrator. Travel and Subsistence must be pre-approved before they are incurred.

Mileage Expenses as at 25<sup>th</sup> of March 2009

### Rate per mile

Official mileage in a calendar year	Engine capacity up to 1200cc	Engine capacity 1201cc to 1500cc	Engine capacity 1501cc and over
	cent	cent	cent
Up to 4,000	64.54	76.94	97.95
4,001 and over	34.91	39.14	47.36

### Rates per Kilometre

Official mileage in a calendar year	Engine capacity up to 1200cc	Engine capacity 1201cc to 1500cc	Engine capacity 1501cc and over
	cent	cent	cent
Up to 4,000	40.11	47.82	60.88
4,001 and over	21.70	24.33	29.43

Public transport expenses will be covered.

Meals covered when away from place of work (€10 for lunch and €20 for dinner).  
B&B allowance is maximum €35 euro with the exception of Dublin

Use of taxis is not allowed without prior consent

## MILEAGE & EXPENSES PROCEDURES:

- Mileage and Expense forms must be submitted to your line manager together, via email and receipts by post.
- A photocopy of receipts must be kept by staff in case they go missing in the post.
- Mileage & Expense sheets record data for 1 month. Refer to *Reporting Dates* for month end dates and submission dates.

- All forms are to be submitted via email.
- If the above forms are not submitted on time, **payment of expenses will not be processed until the next month.**
- Expenses and mileage will be approved and signed-off by your line manager and forwarded to accounts to be processed.
- Payment of expenses and mileage will be made within 10 working days of receipt of forms.

### **Use of your personal vehicle in the course of your employment:**

If an employee uses their car in the course of their work an Insurance Indemnity Certificate must be obtained from your insurers

- This certificate must be renewed and submitted to the organisation annually.
- If a cost is incurred this is subject to Benefit-In-Kind i.e. it's taxed

This handbook should be read in conjunction with each staff members Contract of Employment. The policies, conditions of employment, procedures and regulations outlined in this Handbook form the conditions that staff accept as part of their contract of employment.

### **Message from CEO Muscular Dystrophy Ireland**

Our staff handbook has been carefully prepared so as to ensure that all of our employment policies, practices and processes are in line with best possible practice and fully compliant with all relevant legislation. Having read through this handbook please keep it close by and use it as a reference point as the needs arises during your time with us.

We will strive to continually update it in order to keep us in line with current best practice. However, please let us know if there are improvements we can make and we will give them careful consideration.

I hope that we can help you to achieve your full potential while working with us here in Muscular Dystrophy Ireland.

