There are many things to consider to make your organisation an effective, flexible and efficient employer. These range from legal compliance (much of which is included in contracts and terms and conditions as outlined in *Factsheet 16: Contracts of Employment*) to effective management practices.

This factsheet looks at a range of issues from legal paperwork to effective supervision, to help you understand good practice in employment and balance this with the needs of the organisation. It covers a number of specific areas that you might want to think about but is not an exhaustive list of best practice or legal necessities and should be used only as a guide.

1. Insurance

It is a legal requirement for every employer to have employers' liability insurance (also called employers' compulsory liability insurance), even if staff are temporary or part-time. This insurance covers situations where a claim is brought against the organisation because an employee has become ill or injured or died because of the employer's negligence (failure to take reasonable care) or failure to comply with health and safety or other relevant legislation.

Claims by volunteers are not automatically covered under employers' liability insurance, so the insurer should be informed if the organisation has volunteers. Some insurers cover volunteers under employers' liability insurance, and some do it under public liability insurance.

It might also be sensible to consider other kinds of insurance such as professional liability insurance if your employees and volunteers are involved in activities such as advice giving or advocacy, or public liability insurance if they are involved in activities where a client/service user or member of the public could become ill or injured (for example, food poisoning at a lunch club) or could suffer property damage. Professional liability insurance protects employees, volunteers and the organisation in the event of a loss or problem due to incorrect information or advice being given out; public liability insurance protects them if a legal claim is made against the organisation for loss or damage caused by the organisation's activities.

For more information on types of Insurance and where to get further information, see *Factsheet 18: Insurance*.

2. Paperwork

As an employer you are required to keep PAYE (Pay As You Earn) and National Insurance contribution records. You should keep records of employee sickness and holiday leave. If you pay for overtime, offer Time Off in Lieu (TOIL) for overtime working or operate a flexible working scheme you should keep records of employees' hours. Even if you do not pay for overtime or operate TOIL or flexitime, it is good practice to keep records of employees' hours, as a way of ensuring employees are not working too much or too little. (see **Factsheet 23: Contracts of employment** for more information about working hours.)

3. Supervision

Employees need to be effectively and regularly supervised in order to ensure that their work is properly planned, carried out and monitored. You should make it clear who is responsible for supervising each position (this is usually the employee's line manager, or if they do not have a line manager, a named member of the management committee). Many organisations schedule regular supervision sessions (also called one-to-ones) to ensure there are regular opportunities to help staff feel supported in their work to highlight any issues and deal with any problems. It is useful for both the organisation and employee to keep records of supervision sessions, especially because these records are likely to be needed in case of disciplinary action or dismissal.

4. Organisational policies and procedures

These are the formal written documents that outline the processes by which the organisation is run, and will all have an impact on staff, their working conditions and the boundaries within which they work. The main policies and procedures you should consider having in your organisation are listed below.

Draft policies may be available from Manchester Community Central, PEACe and/or ACAS (details at the end of this Factsheet) or from other sources. A **policy** is generally a very short document setting out the organisation's commitment to comply with the law and good practice, reasons for having a policy, who is responsible for approving the policy (usually the Management
Committee), the Committee member or staff member with lead responsibility for implementing the policy, when the policy was approved and how often it should be reviewed by the Committee, and the procedure for approving changes in procedures related to the policy.

The **procedures** are generally longer and set out the detail of how the policy will be implemented. Especially in larger organisations, changes in procedures can often be approved at senior staff level rather than having to be approved by the Committee.

- *Health and safety*
  This policy gives details of working conditions, safety requirements and procedures. If the organisation has five or more employees, it is a statutory obligation to have a written health and safety policy. For more information on creating a health and safety policy see **Factsheet 20: Health and Safety**.

- *Bullying and harassment*
  The organisation's policy and procedures on bullying and harassment might be included with health and safety, or might be separate. These define harassment and bullying, and set out the procedures for dealing with or allegations that employees, volunteers, clients/service users or others have been bullied or harassed by someone within the organisation or as part of their work for the organisation.

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- *Substance use and abuse*

The organisation may want to have a policy on use or abuse of alcohol, drugs and other substances. This could include procedures for dealing with employees or volunteers who are under the influence while on work duties, or who are known to be drinking alcohol or using drugs or other substances while on work duties. It might also include how the organisation will deal with a situation where an employee is known to have a problem with alcohol or drugs, even if he or she does not use them at work and their work does not appear to be directly affected.

- *Safeguarding*

If the organisation regularly works with children or vulnerable adults, it should have a safeguarding policy (this used to be called child protection or vulnerable adults protection policies). This sets out the organisation's procedures for ensuring the safety of its clients/service users, and others the organisation comes into contact with who are under 18 or are vulnerable adults.

The policy will indicate employee and volunteer positions for which there is a statutory obligation to carry out criminal record checks, positions for which the organisation is entitled to carry out checks and how decisions are made about whether they are carried out, how to deal with difficult situations, what to do if abuse is suspected, etc. A policy framework specifically for community groups is available from Safe Network (see Further Help, below).

- *Equal opportunities (or Equality and diversity)*

All staff, whether paid or voluntary, and Management Committee members should have a good understanding of equal opportunities and how it might affect their work . For more information about equal opportunities, including how to create a policy for your organisation, see **Factsheet 27: Equality opportunities**

- *Grievance and disciplinary*

These are the procedures by which an organisation deals with problems between employees and the organisation. The disciplinary procedure outlines the steps that the organisation would take in the event of a complaint against an employee or in the case of poor performance by an employee. The grievance procedure covers the process that would be initiated should an employee have a complaint about any aspect of their employment. Model policies specifically designed for voluntary and community organisations are available from PEACe (see Further help, below).

- *Data protection and confidentiality*

This sets out the statutory data protection principles for the collection, use, storage and disposal of personal data (information about recognizable living individuals) and how the organisation will comply with them. It should also include the organisation's rules on confidentiality and privacy, which will go further than the data protection and will include other information (for example sensitive or confidential information about the

organisation itself, or information about deceased individuals). Information about data protection and privacy is available from the Information Commissioner's Office (see Further Help, below).

- ***Acceptable use policy***

An acceptable use policy sets out the organisation's rules on personal use of the organisation's internet, email and other electronic systems by employees, volunteers, clients/service users and others, and will state that the organisation may monitor emails or internet use. It may also include rules on what employees and volunteers can say about the organisation on facebook, Twitter and other social media. This is a constantly evolving area, and organisations who want to develop or review such a policy should get advice from Manchester Community Central (see Further help, below).

- ***Expenses and allowances***

This policy explains what expenses employees can claim if they incur expenditure in carrying out their duties, the procedure for getting expenditure authorised before it is incurred, and the process for claiming reimbursement. Some reimbursements are subject to tax and/or national insurance – the person dealing with PAYE should ensure they understand the rules relating to employee expenses and benefits.

- ***Redundancy***

Here you should cover the process the organisation will use in the event of the need for redundancies among the staff. It may also cover entitlements over and above the basic legal requirements, that the organisation might want to offer. It is important to get redundancy right, because failure to do so could lead to an employee bringing a claim of unfair dismissal against the organisation. Before doing anything about a redundancy situation, seek advice from the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) whose contact details are below in the Further Help section.

- ***Regrading***

It is not necessary to have a policy on regrading, and most small organisations do not. Regrading is the process of re-evaluating the role and job description of a specific staff member to determine whether the role has changed sufficiently to justify changing its salary or its position on the pay scale. This policy outlines the process when an organisation chooses to consider regrading or when a member of staff thinks it may be necessary. For more information on policies and procedures in this area contact ACAS.

- ***Representation***

This would relate to trade union and other representation of the employees individually and collectively in the workplace. If the employer has more than 20 employees, there is a legal process by which the employees may require the employer to recognise a trade union. ACAS has a guide to issues of representation for small employers.

5. Training and staff development

As well as providing day to day supervision and opportunities for one to one supervision sessions, the organisation should provide opportunities for training and development for paid staff and volunteers. This might include training and support provided by the organisation; a budget for external training courses, conferences etc; mentoring support, etc. You might want to set up specific systems for ensuring that staff training is prioritised in the organisation, budgets are allocated for it, and all staff, both paid and voluntary, get information about appropriate training.

6. Further help

Manchester Community Central – www.manchestercommunitycentral.org contact 0333 321 3021, or email: info@mcrcommunitycentral.org,

ACAS – www.acas.org.uk contact 0845 747 4747

PEACe HR Services – www.lvsc.org.uk/peace contact 020 7832 5880

HM Revenue and Customs employers helpline – www.hmrc.gov.uk/employers contact 0845 60 70 143

Safe Network – www.safenetwork.org.uk contact 0116 234 7217

Information Commissioner's Office – www.ico.org.uk contact 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545 745

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