People Policy

Summary of policy

This policy outlines our approach to attracting, developing, rewarding and supporting our people. We want VIVID to be a place where everyone can thrive, feel valued and have opportunities to grow and develop throughout their career. It sets out our commitments on talent attraction, learning and development, performance management, employee relations, pay and benefits, wellbeing, diversity and inclusion. It also explains how we support colleagues to build the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours needed to deliver great services for our customers, including completion of our Customer Advocate programme by all new employees, and to meet the requirements of the Competence and Conduct Standard for social housing. The policy is supported by a range of related procedures and is monitored through governance, compliance reporting, people data, employee feedback and assurance activities to ensure it remains effective, relevant and aligned to our values and regulatory obligations.

1. Aim of policy

To deliver a great service for our customers, we know we need talented people. That's why we're committed to creating a positive experience at work and building a vibrant culture where everyone can thrive. We want to support, develop and attract the best people by offering competitive salaries, benefits that matter at different stages of life, and a flexible approach to how and where we work.

We also invest in developing the *Skills, Knowledge, Experience and Behaviours* that enable all of us to deliver good quality, respectful services. Learning and development is a key part of how we grow our people and our organisation.

And because your contribution matters, we make sure people feel valued through meaningful recognition and a clear performance management process that helps everyone understand what's expected, reflect on progress and continue to develop.

This policy outlines our culture and employment policies that make VIVID a great place to work. It's in line with our values of:

- Delivering a great customer experience
- Encouraging challenge & change (to improve)
- Working as one team

2. Scope of policy

This policy applies to all employees. And relevant managers within **service providers and contractors** where they are responsible for delivering comprehensive housing management services on our behalf.

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3. Policy statement

Our people are our greatest asset. And we need high performing people who will enable us to be sector leaders through continual improvement of our business.

Our communication style is open and honest, and we work in a collaborative way wanting everyone to feel 'included' in the business. We value diversity and want everyone to feel comfortable to be themselves at work knowing that their difference will be welcomed.

We offer competitive salaries and an excellent benefits package and bring these together into a 'total reward' package which will be transparent to all. We're a **voluntary** living wage employer and all roles will be paid at least, at this level apart from apprentices who are paid at least the **national** living wage.

We want our people to be proud to work for us, fully engaged in our business and motivated to do the best they can. Fundamental to our achievement is excellent employee relations, promoting good communication between all staff and managers and by providing a fair and reasonable method of resolving differences.

We take personal development very seriously and offer training and development opportunities for everyone to be the best they can be and to achieve their career aspirations. We recruit apprentices each year and we encourage internal apprenticeships as a cost-effective way of developing skills and attaining qualifications.

We're committed to delivering the Competence and Conduct Standard for social housing. This Policy acts as our workforce policy.

4. Policy

4.1 Talent Attraction & Development

4.1.1 Talent Attraction

We'll consider the most appropriate advertising approach and platform for each vacant role, which is cost effective and ensures a diverse candidate pool. Where we believe that a vacant post provides an opportunity for existing employees we may advertise internally only.

We use a variety of talent attraction methods, dependent on role, across diverse job boards, publications, social media, via our partnership with the military re-settlement agencies, education providers and Job Centre plus. We also may use recruitment agencies as a last resort. We continually review our talent attraction methods to ensure they are open and available to all.

We believe in taking positive action to make sure we've diversity across all protected characteristics. We hold the 'disability confident employer' status and also give interviews to those people who meet the minimum role criteria

who state on their application that they are LGBTQIA+, neurodiverse or, from a minority background, and for our trade roles, to females as most of our trades are men.

4.1.2 Talent Selection

We ensure fair and consistent recruitment & selection with trained recruiting managers, and interview panels comprising of a mix of genders, where practical. We use various assessment tools to help us recruit the best people, such as online assessments to test general aptitude, numeracy and literacy. And a technical skill based and attitude & behavioural assessment as part of the interview process.

4.1.3 Onboarding & Induction

We want all employees to be fully engaged and this starts immediately following acceptance of a job offer. Whilst ensuring all employment verification checks are completed to enable the candidate to start with us, it's vital that all new starters are made to feel welcome and understand what they can expect from us and what we'll expect from them in their new job. We'll keep in touch with all new starters prior to joining to maintain consistent and effective communication in preparation, providing a welcoming and informative corporate induction and onboarding experience covering our values, rewards, systems, and procedures & policies.

People who are promoted internally and return from maternity leave or extended sick leave will also receive an appropriate 're-induction' to their role, if needed.

4.1.4 Probation period

All new directly employed employees are required to complete a probation period. This provides an opportunity for you and your manager to make sure you have the support, skills, knowledge and understanding needed to succeed in your role.

During probation, your manager will set clear expectations and hold regular check-ins to discuss your induction, performance, conduct, attendance, development and any support you may need. Successful completion will be confirmed once the required standards have been met. Further information, including the length of probation, review arrangements and possible outcomes, is set out in our Probation Period Procedure.

4.1.5 Customer Advocate programme

Delivering a great customer experience is central to our purpose and applies to everyone, whatever their role. All employees who are new to VIVID are expected to complete our Customer Advocate programme within their first 12 months of employment.

The programme supports employees to understand our customers, the standards of service we expect and how their individual role contributes to the customer experience. Employees are expected to participate fully in the programme and apply the learning in their day-to-day work. Managers are responsible for supporting attendance, completion and the application of learning.

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4.1.6 Performance Management

To deliver a first-class business it's important that our people perform to a high standard. We've a performance management framework in place to help achieve this ambition. It consists of a cascade of objectives from corporate plan to strategies to individual performance objectives.

Our framework consists of two-way discussion on performance, wellbeing, support needs, behaviours, living our values. And agreement of development plans to meet career aspirations. For housing management roles, these discussions will also cover professional competence and conduct, including how well we're delivering safe, decent homes and respectful, high-quality services in line with our values and the Competence and Conduct Standard. This includes honest conversations around levels of flexibility needed at different stages of life including planning for retirement.

Our framework includes quarterly reviews, a midyear review and an end of year review, supported by ongoing check ins with your manager. We use 'performance conclusions' to summarise how you have performed against your objectives and our behavioural expectations. These conclusions help you understand your overall contribution and are directly linked to our 'bonus schemes', ensuring that reward reflects performance in a fair and transparent way.

4.1.7 Professional competence for housing management roles

For roles involved in delivering housing management services (for example lettings, tenancy, neighbourhood and income management, antisocial behaviour, housing related health and safety, repairs and asset management where these affect customers, and housing customer service) we'll define the core competencies needed to do the job well. This will include the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours needed to deliver safe, decent homes and respectful, high-quality services, and to meet the diverse needs and vulnerabilities of our customers. These competence expectations will be reflected in job descriptions, recruitment and selection, induction, performance objectives and development plans.

4.1.8 Qualifications for senior housing roles

Certain senior housing roles must hold, or be working towards, a relevant housing qualification in line with the Competence and Conduct Standard for social housing. Ofqual -regulated Level 4 housing management qualification (or recognised equivalent) for middle managers, and an Ofqual regulated Level 5 housing / relevant degree-regulated Level 5 housing / relevant degree-level qualification (or recognised equivalent) for SLT level and above. Because these qualifications are a regulatory requirement, continuing employment in a senior housing role is dependent on meeting, or actively working towards, the relevant qualification.

4.1.9 Poor performance

Where performance falls below the required standard, managers will address this through coaching with the aim of improving performance. Following this, if performance doesn't reach the required standard, our formal performance management procedure will be followed. In all cases, performance management will be carried out respectfully and clear objectives will be set. The management of poor performance doesn't constitute bullying.

4.1.10 Learning & Development

We want you to develop their skills, knowledge and behaviours to be brilliant in your role and to prepare you for greater responsibility in the future.

L&D delivery is a shared responsibility between you, your line manager and the people team. Learning is obtained from various means including on the job training, e-learning, blended learning programmes such as apprenticeships, professional formal training courses, delivered in-house or attended externally, coaching and mentoring and attending conferences.

4.1.11 Succession planning

We plan 'successors' for critical roles with the aim of mitigating risk of not having key knowledge & skills in the business and of promoting internally where there is a suitable successor. Individuals career aspirations are discussed as part of our performance management framework.

4.2 Employee Relations

4.2.1 Communication

Communication is key for good employee relations. We'll be open and honest, in line with our values. We expect the same from all employees so that communication is bottom up, top down and across departments. We use a variety of media for corporate messaging including F2F events where staff have direct access to Executive Directors for answers to their questions. And managers hold regular team meetings and individual 'check-ins'.

We have three formal consultation bodies:
We recognise the GMB union for trade operatives. This means we negotiate pay and contractual terms with them. And we consult with them and our consultative body, Employee Voice on: Reward – pay and benefits, employee engagement, employment policies and procedures, process for restructures, corporate learning & development programmes, health, safety and wellbeing. We also have another consultative body, Trades Voice, which we use to consult on operational practices as well as some of the above.

'Working together' with our customers is key to our success. We expect staff to be committed to involving customers in the design and delivery of our services and look for opportunities to do this.

4.2.2 Organisational change

We'll continuously review our service delivery and the systems and processes that support this. We manage change pro-actively and aim to take everyone on the change journey with us. Staffing structures, including the content of jobs, are agreed by the Executive and senior leadership team, and changes are implemented positively and fairly. We seek the views of affected staff.

4.2.3 Redundancy & redeployment

Organisational change can bring about changes to staffing structures which may result in posts becoming redundant. We minimise redundancies by placing appropriate vacancies on hold at the time of restructuring, to enhance redeployment opportunities. We follow objective redundancy selection criteria informing those affected what this will be. Redundancy pay is calculated on statutory timeframes using the actual week's pay on leaving the organisation.

4.2.4 Grievances

When grievances are raised, we try to rectify the problem at an informal level. This means open communication between both parties to discuss the problem and find a mutually acceptable resolution. If this process fails to reach resolution, then our formal grievance procedure will be followed.

4.2.5 Disciplinary

The behaviour we expect is set out in our code of conduct and various policies and procedures. There are times when people don't follow our standards and the nature of this behaviour appears unacceptable. Where we believe this to be the case, we'll follow our disciplinary procedure to determine the facts, providing the individual with every opportunity to state their case fully before any decisions are taken. It's our policy to suspend on full pay if we believe it won't be helpful for you to be at work during the 'fact finding' period.

4.2.6 Speaking Up

It's important that any fraud, misconduct or wrongdoing by anyone who works for us, or on our behalf, is reported and managed appropriately. We encourage you to raise any concerns that you might have about the conduct of others in the business or the way in which the business is run. Where you raise genuine concerns, you won't suffer from any disadvantage or detriment.

Our 'Speak up' policy outlines the course of action to take and who to discuss your concerns with, in confidence.

4.3 Pay & Benefits

4.3.1 Salary

We benchmark all jobs when created against other housing associations and where appropriate private and public sector organisations. We re-benchmark periodically and particularly if the role or market changes substantially. Our salary ranges are 85-105% of the median benchmarked salary. This provides flexibility, if needed, to pay at the appropriate level at recruitment and to progress up to 100% as competence improves. Where someone is recruited below 100%, they will be given a development plan, with increments as appropriate, to bring them up to the median salary. We have the flexibility to pay 105% of the median for difficult to recruit roles.

Salaries are reviewed annually by the Executive, agreed by the Remuneration & Nominations committee and approved by the Board. We will negotiate with any relevant bodies where required.

4.3.2 Discretionary Bonus

We offer a discretionary, non-contractual bonus scheme for all employees, which will be reviewed periodically. The gateway for any bonus paid will be affordability. Bonus targets will be SMART and designed to improve business performance. Bonus payments will be linked to individual performance conclusions.

4.3.3 Pension / Life assurance

We offer a competitive auto-enrolment Defined Contribution flexible retirement plan (FRP) managed on our behalf by The Pensions Trust (TPT).

We review the value of our pension offer from time to time and if proposing any changes will consult with staff in line with pensions legislation. We consider requests for a payment in lieu of pension where individuals are at or close to the Annual or Lifetime Allowances. Payment will be at our minimum contribution level.

Life assurance is provided for all staff. This is through the pension scheme for those who are in it and by another provider for those not in the pension scheme.

4.3.4 Holiday

To keep our health and wellbeing good, it's important to have regular breaks away from work. Part of this is to have generous holiday entitlements and provide maximum flexibility for those who'd rather 'flex' some of their entitlement to buy other benefits or to have the cash.

Statutory holiday entitlement is 20 days plus bank holidays (usually 8 days). Our entitlements are:

- Exec & Senior Leadership Team - 30 days;
- Middle Managers – 27 days;
- other roles – 26 days

All are plus bank holidays.

Our holiday year runs with the calendar year – 1 January –31 December. Untaken holiday, up to a maximum of 5 days, can be carried forward to the following year and must then be taken by end of March.

We also provide flexibility with holiday entitlements through 'holiday trading'. Subject to line manager approval, this scheme allows 'flex up' – to buy up to a maximum entitlement of 30 days holiday per year and 'flex down' – to sell down to statutory of 20 days.

4.3.5 Flexible working

Another way we ensure good work/life balance is by having flexible working for those roles that lend themselves to it. Flexible working includes working hours, working from multiple locations, job sharing and part time working.

Our 'smart working' offers a hybrid approach to our contractually office-based people, giving flexibility to work at home or the office or any other location that suits. How this is worked is to be agreed between you and your line manager, but employees are expected to attend the office on a regular basis for team meetings, training, collaboration and general networking. This doesn't constitute a change to your contractual working.

Employment legislation states that everyone can request flexible working from day one of employment. This is a change to contractual terms set out in para 1 here. When reviewing a formal flexible working request, we consider the needs of the business as well as the individual when deciding if the request is feasible.

4.3.6 Enhanced maternity, adoption, parental and paternity pay

We enhance statutory pay for all the following:

- Those on Maternity / Adoption / Shared Parental pay receive an additional 20 weeks of 50% pay on top of statutory maternity pay after a qualifying service period
- Two weeks paternity leave is given at full pay, rather than statutory paternity pay

4.3.7 Parental leave

Parental Leave is a statutory entitlement which allows for unpaid leave to look after a child or make arrangements for their welfare. Parental leave is a maximum of 18 weeks that is usually taken in blocks of 1 week and can be taken up to a child's 18th birthday. This is unpaid. This shouldn't be confused with 'shared parental leave'.

4.3.8 Emergency Leave

We understand that sometimes emergencies happen in the course of our lives and this leave provides for this eventuality. The purpose of this leave is to handle emergency situations that includes caring for dependents (partner, vulnerable relative and child). As examples: It shouldn't be used to cover childcare during school holidays. It should be used when a child has been taken ill at school and you need to collect them and care for them that day allowing you to make arrangements for their care on subsequent days.

4.3.9 Bereavement Leave

We want to provide you with some time off work to grieve when a close relative dies and to attend the funeral. We offer a maximum of 5 days dependent on the relationship and whether or not you're the next of kin.

And where a child dies under the age of 18 or is stillborn after 24 weeks' pregnancy, we give the statutory 2 weeks leave but on full pay.

4.3.10 Wellbeing

We take wellbeing seriously and partner with specialist third parties where needed to offer various initiatives and support.

We offer **a cash plan** which reimburses healthcare (to cash limits) on dental, optical and various alternative therapies. We pay a standard level and there is the flexibility to increase the level of benefit and to include family members.

A wide range of voluntary **retail and leisure discounts** are available through this benefit including travel, groceries, eating out, gym membership, electronics, fashion, entertainment and much more.

Employee Assistance Programme – this is a 24-hour free and confidential helpline available for you and family members. The helpline covers a variety of areas including money advice, relationship advice, health and emotional support.

We have '**stigma busters'** – a group of people with an interest in mental wellbeing. The stigma busters share experience and information on our internal media channels to help others.

Financial wellbeing – we work with 'Salary Finance' who provide education on a host of financial issues including budgeting and dealing with debt. They offer loans at reasonable interest rates where repayments can be paid through salary deduction.

4.3.11 Private Healthcare

Private healthcare is offered to all staff as a contributory flexible benefit. That is the organisation pays for approximately 2/3 of the benefit and employees pay for 1/3. Again, there is flexibility to include family members at a cost to the employee.

This is a contractual benefit for members of the Executive and Senior Leadership Team.

4.3.12 Sick pay and support

We offer paid sickness benefit depending on length of service:

0-6 months	Nil
7 months – 2 years	1 month full pay / 1 month half pay
2-3 years	2 months full pay / 2 months half pay
3 years and over	3 months full pay / 3 months half pay

Where the sickness absence procedure hasn't been followed, we may withhold company sick pay. And we don't pay sick pay when someone has resigned and is working their notice.

For long-term or re-occurring illness we involve our Occupational Health provider to advise on how we can support at work.

4.3.13 Personal Protective Equipment

We will pay for all required PPE. The requirements will be based on role.

4.3.14 Work mileage

When driving on business, we reimburse for mileage that is over and above employee normal commuting home to work mileage. The exception to this is 'remote workers', that is those who are contractually based at an office, but their role requires them to be out in the community, where we reimburse for all mileage over the first 15 miles of the day. But please note, employees can't claim mileage for days when they travel directly from home to contracted office and return home without any additional business travel.

All business mileage, including that in electric cars, is reimbursed at HMRC approved rates:

Type of vehicle	Up to 10,000 miles	Above 10,000 miles
Cars	55p	25p
Motorcycles	24p	24p
Passenger	5p	5p

If an employee has purchased a Tusker car, they will be reimbursed at the standard HMRC rate for company electric vehicles. Please refer to the HMRC Advisory Fuel Rates page below for the standard rates as these can change. Advisory fuel rates – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

4.3.15 Relocation

We offer financial assistance if an employee usual place of work changes. This includes reimbursement for additional travelling costs and assistance with removal costs.

4.3.16 Long service awards

We recognise long service within the business with a financial award in the form of retail vouchers:
10 years £100: 15 years £150: 20 years £200: 25 years £250: 30 years & each 5-year interval above £300

4.3.17 Recognition

We recognise great work that is above and beyond what would normally be expected either with a task or behaviour to live our values. Financial reward in the form of retail vouchers is given in our monthly recognition awards.

4.3.18 Salary sacrifice

We want to help make salaries go further and salary sacrifice is a way of doing this. Salary sacrifice is when a proportion of salary that is equal to the cost of a benefit is subtracted from pre-tax salary. The benefit is the saving of tax and NI for you and the NI for the business. We currently offer salary sacrifice on pension contributions, electric cars, cycle to work scheme and remaining childcare vouchers pre 2018 scheme.

4.3.19 Payroll Giving

We offer a payroll giving scheme where you can opt to donate to our nominated charity from your pre-tax salary. This scheme can also be used to give to other charities of your choice.

4.3.20 Professional membership

We reimburse the cost of one professional membership subscription a year that's related to your role and the business.

4.3.21 Retiring

Deciding when to retire can be a difficult decision to make. And we want everyone considering retirement to be well informed about the financial and social elements. We offer retirement planning training and have a procedure that links through to our pensions administrator's information and support. At the time of retiring, we give a gift to the value of £150, and managers are expected to organise a celebratory event.

4.4 Diversity & Inclusion

4.4.1 We're committed to providing a working environment that is welcoming of diversity and where no-one feels excluded.

4.4.2 We expect all staff to respect each other, and we have a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment.

4.4.3 We aim to recruit and retain a workforce that reflects the diversity of our customer base and reduce the chance of discrimination. We'll make reasonable adjustments to working practices, terms and conditions and facilities to meet the needs of individual employees and groups of employees. We have recruitment and selection processes which are fair, transparent and enable us to target groups which are under-represented in our workforce (see 4.1.1).

4.4.4 In line with legislation, we'll monitor and report on our gender pay gap and we voluntarily choose to do the same for ethnicity.

4.4.5 We recognise people bring different skills and experiences and we work hard to ensure we offer opportunities and support all people including those who maybe neurodiverse or have other protected characteristics.

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4 Statutory requirements

This policy is written in accordance with ACAS best practice which adheres to relevant legislation:

- Employment Rights Act (1996) - covering statutory procedures for grievance and discipline
- Employment Relations Act (1999) – general rights on companions
- Protection from Harassment Act (1997) – harassment / bullying
- Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) – ref alcohol or drugs influence
- Human Rights Act (1998) - requirement to undergo alcohol or drug testing / right to a private life
- ACAS code of practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures
- The Equalities Act 2010
- Fixed term employees (prevention of less favourable treatment) Regulations 2002
- Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act (2006)
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

5 Related policies and procedures

Policy:

- Staff code of conduct and probity arrangements
- Speak up policy
- Competence and Conduct Standard – workforce and qualifications framework (housing management roles)

Procedures:

- Anti-bullying and harassment
- Performance management
- Disciplinary
- Grievance
- Equality, diversity & inclusion policy
- Drug and alcohol
- E-cars procedure and guides
- Sickness management
- Flexible working
- Speak up procedure
- Assimilation and redundancy procedure
- Performance management procedure and process
- Private medical insurance procedure and process
- Professional development guidelines
- Induction guidelines
- Retirement procedure
- Probation Period Procedure

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6 Monitor and review process

Members of the HR Team will monitor and review procedures and processes that apply to this policy. The HR/Payroll system (Cascade) will be programmed with the relevant entitlements. Line managers will ensure that the correct amounts of leave are taken and will authorise mileage claimed through expenses. We'll also monitor and report on our compliance with the Competence and Conduct Standard for social housing. The effectiveness of this policy will be reviewed through a range of monitoring and assurance activities to ensure compliance and adherence. Key findings will be considered through our governance arrangements, including oversight by the Remuneration and Nominations Committee (RNC).

Author	Owner	Date approved	Review date
Susan Noone – Director of People	Duncan Short – Group Resources Director	October 2026	October 2028