



Employee Handbook

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Welcome from the Chief Executive

Cheshire Ireland exists to provide services for people, mainly with physical disabilities and neurological conditions. We aspire to provide services that are of the highest quality, that are truly person-centred, that respect the dignity and integrity of those who use them and that are open and accountable. Trying to meet these aspirations is a significant challenge. The most important resource available to Cheshire Ireland to help achieve its aspirations is its staff.

To ensure that we can facilitate and support the people who use our services to get the best possible personal support; to live lives of their own choosing; to play active and valued roles in the lives of their family and community; to ensure that we can account appropriately for all funds we receive, Cheshire Ireland needs to retain and attract competent staff, with the highest ethics, who are committed to implement the organisation's mission, values and objectives and generally to do the right thing in the right manner. Cheshire Ireland aspires to being an employer for whom people want to work, an employer that provides opportunities for professional development and career advancement, an employer that listens to and encourages its employees to be innovative and creative in its efforts to achieve our Mission.

Sometimes the work carried out by Cheshire Ireland employees can seem under-valued in wider society. However, any work that facilitates people to live with choice and dignity, especially where people are unable to carry out some of the activities of daily living themselves without assistance, is in my view, among the most important work that anyone can do – especially, if it is done with the utmost respect, integrity and sensitivity.

Cheshire Ireland tries to promote the concept of "Right Relationship" throughout the organisation. The "Right Relationship" is essentially "do unto others as you would have them do unto you"; in other words behave towards others as you would want them to behave towards you. By treating people in a "Right Relationship" manner commits us to treat people who use Cheshire services, their family members and friends, our employee colleagues and other people who come into contact with the organisation and its services in a respectful, open and honest way.

Cheshire Ireland provides its services on behalf of the State and gets its funding from the taxpayer, through the HSE. This, in my view is an important fact to remember. We as taxpayers wish that the funds raised through the taxes we pay are used in such a way as to get the best value and to benefit people in the best possible way. This places a duty on all of us as employees to ensure that the funds we receive are used appropriately and to ensure that people get and expect the best possible service from us.

This employee handbook is one of a number of initiatives that we shall be introducing to show our commitment to people who work with Cheshire Ireland. I am confident that the employee handbook will be of value to existing members of staff, as well as people newly recruited to work for the organisation.

Mark Blake-Knox
Chief Executive

Cheshire Ireland's vision, mission & core values

Cheshire Ireland has been providing services in Ireland to adults with physical disabilities for over 40 years. Recent times have seen significant changes in the wishes and expectations of people with disabilities, in the types of services we provide, in how we are funded and in how the organisation is managed.

Why a vision & mission?

A forward-looking and challenging vision and mission helps give an organisation clarity as to where it wants to go. Likewise, a set of strong values underpins an organisation's mission and clearly indicates to all stakeholders how that organisation intends to go about its work.

Vision statement

Cheshire Ireland's vision statement is intended to present a challenge for the future.

Our Vision: *We will be a provider of quality, person-centred services which facilitate people with disabilities to live a life of their own choosing.*

Mission statement

Our mission statement is intended to define what we currently do and the ways in which we try to do our work.

Our Mission: *Working in partnership with people who use our services and with statutory and voluntary agencies, we provide quality accommodation and support services across Ireland to adults with, primarily, physical disabilities. We are committed to developing our staff, facilities and management processes to ensure we have the capability, knowledge and skills required to deliver cost effective, quality services in ways that respect every person's rights, personal choice and individuality.*

Core Values

Our work supporting people is influenced by our beliefs, values, attitudes and assumptions about people with disabilities. Many times we are acting upon our beliefs without fully being aware of what drives or influences us in our work.

We have developed a set of core values which underpin all of Cheshire Ireland's work. Each value is defined through a value statement which summarises how Cheshire puts its values into practice. These values should be evident in everything that Cheshire Ireland does, both within the organisation and its services, and where Cheshire Ireland interacts with other organisations and individuals.

It is essential that your values as an individual are compatible with the values of Cheshire Ireland outlined below:

Value	Value Statement
To be person-centred	<i>Cheshire Ireland works to a person-centred approach so that the expressed needs, choices and valued outcomes of individual service users are at the centre of service delivery, planning and evaluation.</i>
To listen & learn	<i>Cheshire Ireland recognises the importance of open and continuous communication with all stakeholders. In particular, we value the learning to be gained through listening to people who use, or who would wish to use, Cheshire Ireland services.</i>
To respect dignity & privacy	<i>Cheshire Ireland recognises and respects the right to dignity and privacy of all service users, staff and volunteers.</i>
To be accountable & effective	<i>Cheshire Ireland is committed to clear accountability and transparency concerning all of its actions and to providing services which deliver value-for-money.</i>
To be responsive & flexible	<i>Cheshire Ireland aims to be flexible, innovative and responsive to the changing needs of its service users and other stakeholders.</i>
To promote partnership	<i>Cheshire Ireland works in partnership with internal and external stakeholders to develop good practice and to achieve mutually agreed and beneficial outcomes.</i>
To improve continuously	<i>Cheshire Ireland is committed to developing and supporting a culture of continuous quality improvement.</i>
To value diversity & potential	<i>Cheshire Ireland believes in promoting an equal opportunities environment which welcomes difference and values diversity; an environment within which both service users and staff can maximise their potential and contribution.</i>

Introduction to Cheshire Ireland as a workplace

Cheshire Ireland is committed to developing our staff, facilities and management processes to ensure we have the capability, knowledge and skills required to deliver cost effective, quality services in ways that respect every person's rights, personal choice and individuality.

Cheshire Ireland aims to provide a workplace that:

- Is safe, free from abuse, discrimination or harassment of any kind
- Is respectful of all people
- Consistently applies its policies and procedures in a fair and equitable way with all employees
- Provides appropriate training, on the job management, guidance and mentorship to support employees in their role and to continuously develop their skills
- Complies with all laws and regulations.

Cheshire Ireland expects that all employees will:

- Treat all people using Cheshire services with dignity and respect
- Respect the rights and views of others (people receiving services, family members, advocates and colleagues)
- Perform their duties to the best of their ability and show high levels of personal commitment in providing quality person centred services
- Respect and put into practice the Cheshire visions, mission and values
- Comply with all Cheshire Ireland policies and procedures
- Comply with the law
- Exercise personal responsibility and personal integrity in relation to their role
- Take responsibility for their own behaviour
- Contribute to Cheshire Ireland's continuous improvement philosophy and practice.

Our Expectations with Regard to the People we serve

One person at a time:

'One person at a time' is the approach we are taking in Cheshire Ireland to support and facilitate people to live a life of their own choosing. In practice, this means that we will work in ways that demonstrate:

- That people are supported to imagine and pursue their own lifestyles and be treated as unique individuals
- A commitment to get to know and deeply understand the individual needs of each being served
- Support is provided to people using ordinary and typical means to ensure a balance of mainstream, informal and paid support
- The service response will ensure that people have a high degree of influence and authority over matters which affect their lives
- The service provided will be safe, quality assured and be continually reviewed to meet people's changing needs.

Confidentiality:

The nature of the work environment in Cheshire Ireland means we are all invited into the private and personal lives of those using our services. Therefore, discretion and confidentiality are vitally important not only for the dignity and respect of the people using Cheshire services, who have a right to expect that information about them, provided or discovered in the course of receiving a service, will be held in confidence, as outlined in the Cheshire Ireland Charter of Rights. Under normal circumstances, confidential information will not be divulged without the informed consent of the individual concerned or, in the case of those who cannot give this consent, his/her advocate or the Service Manager.

You are not authorised to disclose any information regarded as confidential to any third party or discuss private or intimate matters with any persons or organisations not directly connected with a service user or the organisation. If you are unsure about a particular request for information, you should immediately contact your Service Manager or Regional Manager.

You are not permitted to make a copy of any documentation belonging to Cheshire Ireland without first obtaining express permission from your Service Manager or Regional Manager.

Breaches of confidentiality will be dealt with under the Cheshire Ireland Disciplinary Procedure as gross misconduct and may result in summary dismissal.

Service User Property:

The nature of our work requires that we have access to the private residence or accommodation of service users and their families. Accordingly, the security and safety of our service users, their families and our fellow colleagues is paramount at all times.

To achieve this, allegations of theft, damage or misuse of a service user's property will be investigated as per the Adult Protection Framework. If, following an appropriate investigation, it is deemed necessary, an appropriate third party will be notified of the theft or abuse, for example, An Garda Síochána. Theft is regarded as gross misconduct and may result in dismissal.

Advocacy and Rights:

Cheshire Ireland is committed to promoting and protecting the human rights, personal choice, and individuality of the people it serves. It is the responsibility of all Cheshire Ireland employees to support people to express their needs, secure their rights and represent their interests. For further information see 'Supporting Advocacy in Cheshire Services: A Handbook for Staff' - available in Services and at www.cheshire.ie

Where can you find information about your benefits of employment and statutory entitlements?

All employees of Cheshire Ireland, whether part-time or full-time, are entitled to certain benefits and entitlements of employment, subject to qualifying criteria. Such benefits include the Cheshire Ireland occupational sick pay and pension schemes as well as enhanced annual leave entitlements.

This employee handbook provides information on where you can access full details about your own individual benefits and entitlements. A brief description of all your benefits of employment and statutory entitlements are contained in this booklet. If you require further advice on these benefits and entitlements you can contact your immediate Supervisor/Manager or your Regional Manager.

Full details on all Cheshire Ireland policies and procedures can be downloaded from the Cheshire Ireland website at www.cheshire.ie.

SECTION 1 GENERAL TERMS & CONDITIONS

1.1 Hours of work:

Details on your exact hours of work are contained in your contract of employment and are determined by the needs and demands of the service in which you work. Information on your rest break entitlements are also provided in your contract of employment and are given in accordance with the provisions of the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997.

Due to the nature of the service we provide, you are required to be flexible with regard to your working hours. Every effort will be made to inform you at least 24-hours in advance, where possible, of any necessary change to your rostered hours.

1.2 Rest Breaks:

Rest breaks will be given in accordance with the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997 – 2001 and subsequent Regulations. If you are unable to avail of your statutory rest break entitlements you are required to notify your immediate supervisor/manager. A suitable alternative rest break will then be arranged.

1.3 Time-keeping:

Prompt timekeeping is essential to the overall performance of Cheshire Ireland. Therefore, you are expected to act in line with the hours of work outlined in your contract of employment/roster.

If you cannot attend work on time due to an unforeseen event, please contact your line manager to inform him/her so that adequate cover can be assured until your arrival.

1.4 Time Sheets:

You are required under the terms of the Organisation of Working Time Regulations, 2001 to complete a timesheet each pay-run indicating your hours of work. Time-sheets must be signed and given to your immediate supervisor/line manager in order for payroll to process your salary.

1.5 Salary and pay information:

Depending on your position, you will be paid either monthly (*only Central Office staff*) or fortnightly (*all other staff*). Your salary will be paid directly into your bank account by electronic transfer, (PayPath). You will also receive a payslip showing your gross pay, all deductions and the net sum credited to your bank account.

Subject to satisfactory performance and performance appraisal, you may receive a salary increment upon the anniversary of your appointment to your current position.

In addition, in accordance with the general principles of national wage agreements (e.g., Towards 2016), all employees are required to participate in modernisation, change and flexibility initiatives in order to receive a pay award as per the particular national agreement in effect at that time.

Occasionally, you may be asked to work longer hours than your roster to cover for a colleague who is absent or if the needs of the service or service user require your presence. Depending on your role in the organisation you will be paid for any additional hours worked above your contracted hours or you will receive Time Off In Lieu (TOIL), this means paid time off within a reasonable period for every extra hour worked.

Further details on the Cheshire Ireland Time Off In Lieu Policy may be obtained from your Supervisor/Line Manager or Regional Manager or may be downloaded from www.cheshire.ie

Expense Claims: Cheshire meets the vouched costs of accommodation and other out-of-pocket expenses incurred by employees while engaged on Cheshire business. Cheshire pays car expenses to employees required to use their own transport on Cheshire business. The rate of expenses paid is based on car engine size and number of miles travelled annually. This is in line with the Revenue approved scheme which operates throughout the public health sector. All expense claims must be approved by your line manager.

1.6 Dress code:

Cheshire Ireland employees do not wear uniforms. However, you should present yourself for work in a clean, tidy and neat manner with no excessive jewellery or body piercings, which may harm or injure service

users or other members of staff during the course of your daily duties. Staff are also required to adhere to Cheshire Ireland Guidelines for Hand Hygiene in relation to length of nails, and wrist or hand jewellery.

Some employees, for example those involved in food preparation, are required to wear specific clothing to comply with food safety legislation, policies and procedures. There may also be a requirement for other employees to wear personal protective clothing or equipment as identified by risk assessment or prescribed by Health & Safety legislation and as per Cheshire Ireland Guidelines for the Use of Personal Protective Clothing. If you are required to wear any personal protective clothing or equipment in the course of your duties, this will be provided by Cheshire Ireland.

In relation to footwear, it is required for your own personal safety and comfort that flat shoes with toe cover are worn when engaged in care work, driving, catering and nursing duties. Safety shoes or boots must be worn for maintenance work and gardening.

If you are unsure as to what clothing is required, please contact your supervisor/line manager for advice.

1.7 Smoking in the workplace:

Cheshire Ireland operates a no smoking policy in all workplaces, including vehicles, as per the Public Health (Tobacco) Acts, 2002 - 2004.

Smoking is allowed only in approved external locations, during approved rest periods or breaks.

Further details on this issue are available from your supervisor/line manager or Regional Manager.

1.8 Equality Statement:

Cheshire Ireland is committed to equality of opportunity for all existing and potential employees. We promote a work environment that affirms our commitment to the personal dignity and worth of each employee.

Further details on the Cheshire Ireland Equality Statement can be obtained from your supervisor/line manager or Regional Manager.

1.9 Occupational Pension Scheme:

After completion of 6 months continuous service and subject to eligibility and qualifying criteria, you are required to join the Cheshire Ireland Occupational Pension Scheme. As a member of this Scheme, Cheshire Ireland will make a contribution of 7% of your gross PAYE earnings per month to a managed pension fund. In addition, you are also obliged to contribute 5% of your gross PAYE earnings to this pension fund.

Further details on this Scheme and the entry requirements are available from the HR Department in Central Office or you may download the Cheshire Ireland Occupational Pension Scheme Policy, (HR-001) from www.cheshire.ie.

1.10 PRSA: (Personal Retirement Savings Account)

During your probationary period or if you are not eligible to join the Cheshire Ireland Occupational Pension Scheme, you are entitled to avail of the Cheshire Ireland PRSA, which is administered by Irish Life.

Further details on the Cheshire Ireland PRSA are available from the HR Department in Central Office.

1.11 AVC's: (Additional Voluntary Contributions)

Additional Voluntary Contributions can also be made to the Occupational Pension Scheme by individuals who wish to do so.

1.12 Retirement:

The normal retiring age for employees of Cheshire Ireland is 65 years of age. This may be extended for one year with the express permission of the Chief Executive. However, due to current legislation, employees on an extended one year contract past the age of 65, are not entitled to continue in the Cheshire Ireland Occupational Pension Scheme and are also not covered by the Death-in-Service benefit of the Scheme.

1.13 Cheshire Ireland Property:

Cheshire Ireland property, including intellectual property, may not be used or utilised without the express permission of your Service Manager or Regional Manager. Incidents of theft, fraud or damage should be

reported to your Service Manager or Regional Manager immediately. This applies not only during the course of your employment, but also thereafter should you leave our employment.

Cheshire Ireland employees are responsible for the insurance of their own personal possessions and property.

1.14 IT Policy:

Telephone and Internet usage are necessary for the day-to-day activities of Cheshire Ireland. However, it is the policy of Cheshire Ireland that company Information Technology, (IT) systems and telephones are only used for business purposes. Any person found abusing IT systems, telephone systems or misusing company mobile phones may have the facility withdrawn and/or may face disciplinary action.

All information transmitted via Cheshire Ireland IT networks or stored on computer systems is subject to the legitimate oversight of the organisation and should not be regarded as confidential to any particular staff member. You should not use Cheshire Ireland computer equipment for personal communications.

With regard to personal mobile phones, limited use of personal mobile phones is permitted in special circumstances once appropriate permission has been sought from your Line Manager, Service Manager or Regional Manager. Otherwise, mobile phones should not be used during normal working hours.

Under no circumstances should mobile phones be used while driving or operating machinery.

All Cheshire Ireland Policies relating to harassment, discrimination and the misuse of confidential information apply to Text/E-mail messages and the use of the Internet.

Further details on the Cheshire Ireland IT Policy can be downloaded from www.cheshire.ie or may be obtained from your Supervisor/Line Manager or Regional Manager.

1.15 Independence and Choice for Service Users:

It is the policy of Cheshire Ireland to promote independence and choice for service users in all our services.

Independent living is defined as living like everyone else, having the right to self determination, to exert control over one's life, to have opportunities to make decisions, take responsibility and to pursue activities of one's own choosing regardless of disability.

(Report of the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities)

A Cheshire Ireland service should be a place of shelter physically and of encouragement spiritually; a place in which the service users can acquire a sense of belonging, and of ownership, by contributing in any way within their capabilities to its functioning and development; a place to share with others and from which to help others less fortunate; and a place in which to gain confidence and develop independence and interests; a place of hopeful endeavour not of passive disinterest.
(Singapore Declaration)

Further details on the Cheshire Ireland, Policy, Independence and Choice can be downloaded from www.cheshire.ie or may be obtained from your Service Manager or Regional Manager.

1.16 Harassment in the workplace:

Providing a safe and secure work environment is of paramount importance in Cheshire Ireland. You should feel safe and secure from intimidation, harassment, including sexual harassment and bullying at all times. Cheshire Ireland will not tolerate any infringement of your dignity and wellbeing in the workplace.

Cheshire Ireland has adopted and adheres to the Dignity at Work Policy, as issued by the Health Service Executive, (HSE). In addition, you are strongly urged to download and be familiar with the Cheshire Ireland Grievance Procedure, which details what steps you should take in the event that you feel harassed or intimidated in the workplace, or if you have any work related grievance.

Further details on the Cheshire Ireland Harassment in the Workplace Policy, (HR-007) can be downloaded from www.cheshire.ie or may be obtained from your supervisor/line manager or Regional Manager.

1.17 Training:

Cheshire Ireland is fully committed to improving and increasing the skill levels of all employees within the organisation in order to provide a quality and professional service.

As an employee of Cheshire Ireland you can expect to receive appropriate training and development. It is a legal requirement to attend training or undergo assessment as may be reasonably required by your supervisor/line manager. Attendance at such official training will be reckonable when considering any increment award on your salary.

1.18 Health & Safety:

As an organisation that provides care for persons with physical disabilities, Cheshire Ireland is acutely aware of its responsibility and of the importance of taking measures that minimise the incidence of injury and ill health to our service users, employees and volunteers.

There are a wide range of risks associated with the activities that Cheshire Ireland undertakes. Therefore, to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable the safety, health and welfare of the persons who use Cheshire Ireland services, our employees and others that may be affected by our activities, we will comply with the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 and all other relevant legislation.

Our objective is to manage health and safety through a Safety Management System. This system will be reviewed and audited to ensure a process of continual improvement.

On account of the complex range of services that Cheshire Ireland provides, the system has been developed and implemented with the involvement of persons who use Cheshire Ireland services and its employees.

It is the duty of employees to comply with health and safety policies and procedures and in particular with the duties set out in Chapter 2 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. Deliberate failure to observe safe working practices may be a disciplinary matter.

1.19 Employee Assistance Programme: (EAP)

In late 2008, Cheshire Ireland will introduce an EAP through VHI Healthcare. Our EAP provides employees with easy access to Specialised Information and Confidential Counselling Services. An EAP service can help with any of the following issues and more: Family, Work, Emotional, Relationships, General Information, Financial, Legal etc. For further information on the Cheshire Ireland EAP you may speak to your line manager or contact the HR Department.

1.20 Freedom of Information:

Since 21st October 2000, Cheshire Ireland is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, 1997. From this date, the public has the right to request access to records and information held by Cheshire Ireland about them.

Further details on the Cheshire Ireland Freedom of Information procedures can be downloaded from www.cheshire.ie or may be obtained from the Freedom of Information Officer in Central Office.

1.21 Policies, Procedures and Guidelines:

Cheshire Ireland Policies, Procedures and Guidelines are available from your line manager. Alternatively you may access them easily on the Cheshire Ireland website. Just go to www.cheshire.ie and click on 'Staff Information'. Policies, procedures and guidelines are available on the website under the 7 categories below:

- Service Quality
- Human Resources
- Financial Management
- Health & Safety
- Statutory & Regulatory
- Adult Protection
- Clinical Procedures & Guidelines

1.22 Employee Relations & Partnership with Trade Unions:

Cheshire Ireland recognises the right of employees to join registered Trade Unions and the right of employees to be represented by Trade Unions, either individually or collectively. The organisation's policy is to work in partnership with Trade Unions in the interests of developing and delivering quality services to people with disabilities through a well-trained and motivated workforce. Cheshire Ireland subscribes to the provisions of National agreements, such as *Towards 2016*, and seeks to work with Trade Unions within the spirit of these agreements.

Where disagreements or difficulties arise regarding employee or industrial relations, as will happen from time-to-time, it is the policy of the organisation to seek to resolve these amicably through recourse to

the labour relations institutions of the State – Rights Commissioner Service, Labour Relations Commission and Labour Court.

If you are a Trade Union member, Cheshire Ireland will facilitate the deduction of Union subscriptions from your salary and will forward these subs to the Union on your behalf.

Section 2

Absence from work

2.1 Statutory leave entitlements

All Cheshire Ireland employees, whether full-time or part-time, are entitled to statutory annual leave in each calendar year. Your exact leave entitlement is outlined in your contract of employment with a pro-rata adjustment for part-time employees.

In addition, depending on your grade, you may also be entitled to some additional ex gratia days, details of which are available from your supervisor/line manager.

You are also entitled to have paid leave on public holidays. *(However, one exception is part-time employees who have not worked at least 40 hours in total in the five (5) weeks before the relevant public holiday).*

There are nine (9) public holidays each year:

➤ New Year's Day	1 January
➤ St. Patrick's Day	17 March
➤ Easter Monday	<i>Variable</i>
➤ First Monday in May	<i>Variable</i>
➤ First Monday in June	<i>Variable</i>
➤ First Monday in August	<i>Variable</i>
➤ Last Monday in October	<i>Variable</i>
➤ Christmas Day	25 December
➤ St. Stephen's Day	26 December

Note: Good Friday is not a public holiday

If you qualify for public holiday benefit, you will be entitled to one of the following:

- 1/5 of your working week as a paid day off within a month of the public holiday
- 1/5 of your working week as an additional day's annual leave
- 1/5 of your working week as an additional day's pay

Note: It is the responsibility of Cheshire Ireland to decide which of the above each employee shall receive. You should contact your supervisor/line manager if this poses any difficulty for you.

Annual Leave entitlements

Your annual leave is determined by the total hours worked in any one calendar year, as provided for by the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997. The Cheshire Ireland leave year runs from January to December and all leave must be taken within that period.

There are three different ways in which your annual leave may be calculated:

- If you work a minimum of 1,365 hours in the leave year, you are entitled to a maximum of four (4) of your working weeks per annum; *or*
- If you work less than the above, but work at least 117 hours in a calendar month, you will be entitled to one-third (1/3) of your normal working week for each calendar month of the year; *or*
- If you work less than the above, you are entitled to 8% of the hours worked in the leave year, subject to a maximum of four (4) weeks.

2.2 Sick Leave Policy:

Cheshire Ireland operates an Occupational Sick Leave Policy for all employees, subject to eligibility and qualifying criteria.

The purpose of the Occupational Sick Leave Policy is to assist you to recuperate from any illness or injury that necessitates your absence from work and to assist your return to full and normal duties.

As per the Occupational Sick Leave Policy, it is your responsibility to liaise with the Department of Social and Family Affairs to claim Illness

Benefit, if applicable. Cheshire Ireland will pay you your gross salary, less your Illness Benefit entitlement.

To be eligible for paid leave during a certified illness you are required to submit weekly medical certificates and to undergo medical examination from Cheshire Ireland's occupational health professionals.

(CE Participants/Supervisors, Volunteers and Relief Panel personnel are not covered by this policy).

Details of the Occupational Sick Leave Policy, (HR-006) are available from your supervisor/line manager or may be downloaded from the Cheshire Ireland website at www.cheshire.ie.

2.3 Maternity Leave:

As of 1 March 2007, pregnant employees are entitled to twenty six (26) weeks maternity leave. At present, pregnant employees do not receive pay from Cheshire Ireland during their maternity leave. However, employees may be entitled to Maternity Benefit from the Department of Social & Family Affairs. In addition, employees are also entitled to an additional sixteen (16) weeks maternity leave on top of the initial 26. However, there is no Maternity Benefit paid during this additional leave period from the Department of Social & Family Affairs.

2.4 Adoptive Leave:

As of 1 March 2007, employees of Cheshire Ireland are entitled to a minimum of twenty four (24) weeks adoptive leave. An additional period of sixteen (16) weeks leave may be taken immediately following the initial adoptive leave period.

Employees are not paid by Cheshire Ireland during adoptive leave, but may be eligible for adoptive benefit from the Department of Social & Family Affairs.

Further details on the Cheshire Ireland Adoptive Leave Policy, (HR-003) can be downloaded from www.cheshire.ie

2.5 Parental Leave:

Since 18 May 2006, if you are a natural, adoptive parent or a person who is in loco parentis, you are entitled to 14 weeks unpaid parental leave to facilitate you to take care of your child. The child's date of

birth must be after 3rd June, 1996, and the child must be under 8 years of age, *(may be extended to 16 years in certain circumstances)*.

Parental leave may be taken as a continuous block of 14 weeks or by agreement with your Regional Manager, be taken in separate blocks of a minimum of six (6) weeks.

You must give written notice to your Regional Manager of your intention to take parental leave no later than 6 weeks before the proposed commencement of the leave.

2.6 Paternity Leave:

There is currently no statutory entitlement to paternity leave for the fathers of newborn children. However, Cheshire Ireland grants three (3) days paid leave for all eligible fathers on the birth of a child.

Further details on the Cheshire Ireland Paternity Policy, (HR-002) can be downloaded from www.cheshire.ie or may be obtained from your supervisor/line manager.

2.7 Force Majeure Leave:

From time to time, events may occur in the family that require our **immediate, indispensable** presence. Therefore, all employees are entitled to paid force majeure leave under the Parental Leave Act, 1998 and the Parental Leave (Amendment) Act 2006.

Employees are entitled to three (3) days paid leave in a twelve (12) month period and a total of five (5) days paid leave in a three (3) year period.

Force majeure is applicable to the following family members as of 18 May 2006:

- A child or adopted child of the employee
- The husband/wife/partner of the employee
- Parent or grandparent of the employee
- Brother or sister of the employee
- Person to whom the employee has a duty of care (that is, they are acting in loco parentis)
- A person in a relationship of domestic dependency with the employee, including a same-sex partner
- Persons of any other classes (if any) as may be prescribed.

2.8 Compassionate leave:

In the unfortunate event of a family bereavement you will receive three (3) days paid leave for an immediate family member, (i.e. parent, spouse, co-habiting partner, son, daughter, sibling) or two (2) days for an extended family member (i.e. grand-parent, mother/father in-law, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, son/daughter in-law).

You should notify your supervisor/line manager immediately to inform them of your absence and to indicate your likely date of return.

2.9 Carer's leave:

Under the Carer's Leave Act 2001, employees are entitled to leave their employment to provide full-time care for someone in need of such care and attention. The person in need of care does not have to be a family member, but may for example, be a colleague or friend.

As of 24 March 2006, employees are entitled to one hundred and four (104) weeks leave, with a minimum leave period of thirteen (13) weeks.

You may apply for carer's leave once you have completed twelve (12) months employment with Cheshire Ireland.

Further details on the Cheshire Ireland Carer's Leave may be obtained from your supervisor/line manager or downloaded from www.cheshire.ie.

2.10 Jury Duty:

If you are called for jury service you will be paid your normal rate for the duration of the time you are required by the court.

You must notify your supervisor/line manager as soon as you receive notification of your jury service.

You are expected to return to work during any portion of the day not spent on jury service.

Section 3

DISCIPLINARY & GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

3.1: Disciplinary Procedure:

Should an employee's performance fall below the expected standard or if there is a deliberate breach of any of the policies or procedures of Cheshire Ireland, that employee may face disciplinary action.

The Cheshire Ireland disciplinary procedure is intended to ensure fair and equitable treatment of all employees. In addition, depending on the nature of the transgression or infraction, this disciplinary action may also include dismissal.

You are advised read and be familiar with the Cheshire Ireland Disciplinary Procedure, which can be downloaded from www.cheshire.ie or may be obtained from your supervisor/line manager.

If an employee's performance or actions attract a disciplinary sanction, as per the Disciplinary Procedure, he/she, in addition to other sanctions, also may not receive a salary increment.

With regard to mandatory training, such as in health and safety, failure to attend or to properly participate in such training may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

3.2: Grievance Procedure

Cheshire Ireland is committed to promoting and maintaining good employee relations and fostering the commitment and morale of its staff. The purpose of this procedure is to enable you to raise any complaints concerning work-related matters so that the issue may be addressed promptly and as close as possible to the point of origin without disruption to patient care.

The grievance procedure is for you to use if you have any work place grievance and its purpose is to ensure that you have any such grievance dealt with in a fair and timely manner in order to reach a resolution.

You are advised read and be familiar with the Cheshire Ireland Grievance Procedure, which can be downloaded from www.cheshire.ie or may be obtained from your Service Manager or Regional Manager.

3.3: Appeals Procedure

If you wish to appeal against a disciplinary process decision up to and including dismissal you must do so within **seven** (7) working days of notification of the decision. The appeal must be in writing and state the ground(s) on which the appeal is being made.

An appeal hearing is not intended to repeat the investigation process but to address specific issues which the employee feels have received insufficient consideration, such as:

- Mitigating circumstances
- Procedural deficiencies
- Severity of the sanction imposed.

The appeals hearing will be held within ten working days of the appeal being lodged. The person to whom the appeal is to be made and who will conduct the appeal is as follows:

Appeals of disciplinary action at stages One to Four (1 to 4) must be made in writing to the HR Manager. An appropriate senior manager will then be appointed to hear the appeal.

Where an appeal against dismissal fails, the effective date of termination shall be the date on which the employee was originally dismissed. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of this appeal then in accordance with normal procedures, the matter may be referred to a relevant third party as appropriate. If you feel that you have been unfairly dismissed, you may refer a case under the Unfair Dismissals Act, 1977-2001 within 6 months of the date of dismissal.

DECLARATION

It is your responsibility to adhere to the standards, guiding principles, policies and procedures outlined in the Cheshire Ireland Employee Handbook.

You are required to read this staff handbook and return the signed declaration to the HR department within 10 working days following receipt of the handbook.

If you have not read or decide against signing the handbook, you must contact your line manager in writing within 10 working days following receipt of the handbook. Failure to read and sign the Handbook will be regarded as a serious matter.

I hereby declare that I have read, understand and agree to abide by the standards, guiding principles and policies and procedures outlined in the Cheshire Ireland Staff handbook.

Name (Please Print):

Date of Joining Cheshire Ireland:

Job Title:

Location:

Name of Line Manager:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Upon completion please detach this page and return to:

HR Department
Cheshire Ireland
Block 4
Bracken Business Park
Bracken Road
Sandyford Industrial Estate
Dublin 18