

PERSONAL AND WORKING RELATIONSHIPS IN THE CIVIL SERVICE
MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

The Public Services Commission has reviewed its policy on personal and working relationships. It recognises that, almost inevitably in a small community, family relatives and partners could find themselves working in the same Department, Board or Office. Managers, who are responsible for dealing with any problems that might arise from these situations and are accountable for the effective management of their staff, need to be encouraged and supported in this within a corporate framework which seeks to ensure a consistent approach, without removing their discretion and flexibility. Accordingly, in the interests of good management, the Commission has decided that managers should have available to them the following guidelines which are designed to ensure fairness and equality of treatment and to give them the confidence from knowing that the Commission will support them in their task.

1. All posts in the Civil Service should be filled in accordance with Government's stated [recruitment and selection policy](#).
2. In order to minimise the risk of potential difficulties arising, if family relatives and partners, whether married, civil partners or not, are recruited or promoted into positions where either one would have any role in relation to assessing the other's performance or dealing with disciplinary, grievance or capability issues, the Accounting Officer of the Department, Board or Office should ensure that when it becomes necessary to assess the other's performance or if a disciplinary, grievance or capability issue arises that an officer other than the relative, spouse or partner of the officer immediately concerned deals with the situation.
3. Where close personal relationships are formed as a result of two officers working closely together in the same Department, Board or Office, managers will be expected to handle such situations sensitively but the principle set out in paragraph 2 above should be applied.
4. In the interests of good staff morale, any officer who has a close relative or partner working in the same Department, Board or Office should declare that fact openly and ensure that staff are made aware that he or she will not be involved in taking any management decision about the other in accordance with the principle set out in paragraph 2.
5. Where family relations or partners find themselves working in the same Department, Board or Office and this leads to problems arising which impact on their work or the work of others, the Head of Department, Board or Office may consider a change of duties for both officers (subject to the NOTE which follows these guidelines) in order that the closeness of the working relationship might be removed. If such a change is not possible without a transfer to another Department, Board or Office, the Head of Department, Board or Office may ask the Public Services Commission to consider transferring the two officers concerned to another part of the Civil Service.

NOTE: If one of the two officers concerned volunteers to accept a change of duties or to transfer in order that the other might remain in his or her present post and this will remove the cause of the perceived problems, the Accounting Officer of the Department, Board or Office may agree to proceed accordingly. Otherwise, both officers should be treated in an even-handed manner.