

New Starter Handbook

[Reviewed & updated July 2023]



Welcome

To Bluestones Medical

Write to us:

Bluestones Medical
Holden House
Chester Business Park
Chester, CH4 9QU

Call us:

North: 01244 555020
South: 01633 499689

Visit us online:

www.bluestonesmedical.co.uk
medical@bluestonesmedical.co.uk

Welcome to the Bluestones Medical team. We are delighted to have you with us and over the moon that you have chosen to become a Bluestones Medical Marvel! You are joining an amazing team of agency nurses and healthcare workers that our clients have consistently commented are of a high calibre.

We pride ourselves on having a strong reputation among candidates and clients alike for being a friendly, professional, and efficient recruitment agency. Your satisfaction from both a career and personal perspective is hugely important to us. Therefore, we want to build a strong working relationship with you right from the start, so you can quickly feel part of our valued team.

Our fulfilment team or your specialist consultant will be your main point of contact at Bluestones Medical from now on. They will keep in touch with you to see how you are, tell you about any opportunities you may be interested in and ensure you're feeling happy and content in your role.

Not only do we have an excellent reputation for consistently placing our marvels into the best shifts to suit them, but we can also support you if you decide you want a change of career, a relocation, or you decide temporary is no longer the right choice for you. Our team can talk you through our block bookings and long-term contracts. This handbook is intended to help you through your first few days and indeed, your career, at Bluestones Medical. This will serve as a reference for any queries you may have and we ask you to read through it and study carefully.

If you have any questions, please contact us on the above details.

We look forward to working with you and wish you every success in your career with Bluestones Medical.



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Our expectations of you

Code of conduct

When working for Bluestones Medical, our Marvels are expected to follow the below during all assignments:

1. You must abide by all policies, procedures, and codes of practice laid down by the company.
2. You must act with honesty, integrity, and show respect for client/patients' property.
3. You are expected to carry out duties that promote and safeguard the client/patient's/patient's health, wellbeing, and interests. This must include informing their immediate supervisor or manager of any perceived or suspected deterioration in a client/patient's physical, social, or mental condition.
4. It is always expected that respect and the safeguard of the privacy of client/patients and patients are shown. Confidential information must not be disclosed to any third party without the written consent of the client/patient or appointed advocate unless it is considered to be in the best interest of the patient's health and well-being or is required for compliance with the law. In these latter cases, matters must always be referred directly to Bluestones Medical management.
5. You must not be involved in any action that may prejudice the service or damage the reputation of Bluestones Medical.
6. You must respect the dignity and independence of the client/patient and patients to make informed choices regarding their care and welfare.
7. You must not discriminate on the grounds of age, race or ethnic origin, creed, colour, religion, political affiliation, disability or impairments, marital status, parenthood, sexual gender, or sexual orientation. The values, customs, and religious/spiritual beliefs of each client/patient must be respected.
8. You must act professionally with respect to the relationship with the client/patient. It is recognised that close relationships can develop between workers and client/patients but workers should be mindful of the need to preserve the professional nature of the relationship.
9. You have a duty to ensure that each client/patient is aware of the company's complaints procedure.

Our expectations of you

Code of conduct

10. Anyone who is not a qualified nurse, whatever their qualifications may be, **MUST NOT UNDERTAKE TASKS OF A NURSING NATURE** or any other task outside of the remit of the job description or the agreed care service plan for a client/patient.

Codes of Professional Conduct: You must NEVER:

- Be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or substances at any time at the start of a shift or whilst on duty.
- Smoke on duty. Please note that the smell from smoke on clothing may offend client/patients.
- Accept gifts, loans, or gratuities from client/patients, relatives, or other interested parties.
- Borrow money from a client/patient or become involved in lending money to a client/patient. You must not take any responsibility for looking after a client/patient's valuables, selling, or otherwise disposing of goods belonging to the client/patient, and must not become involved in betting syndicates (such as the lottery or football pools) with the client/patient.
- Give advice in relation to wills, investments, or financial matters generally.
- Directly accept keys to a client/patient's home.
- Use the client/patient's property, e.g. telephone, for their personal use. You should arrive for assignments at the requested time and carry out duties for the full time you have been allocated. If it is found that your attendance was not for the fully allotted time the company has the right to reduce your pay accordingly.
- Be on your phone for personal use whilst on duty.
- Take photos of patients.
- Take photos or videos whilst on duty for use on **ANY** form of social media
- Take photos or videos of/on hospital grounds or in a client/patient's home

Undertaking any of the prohibited actions within our code of conduct will be subject to investigation and could result in disciplinary action or dismissal.

Our expectations of you

Code of conduct

Codes of Professional Conduct

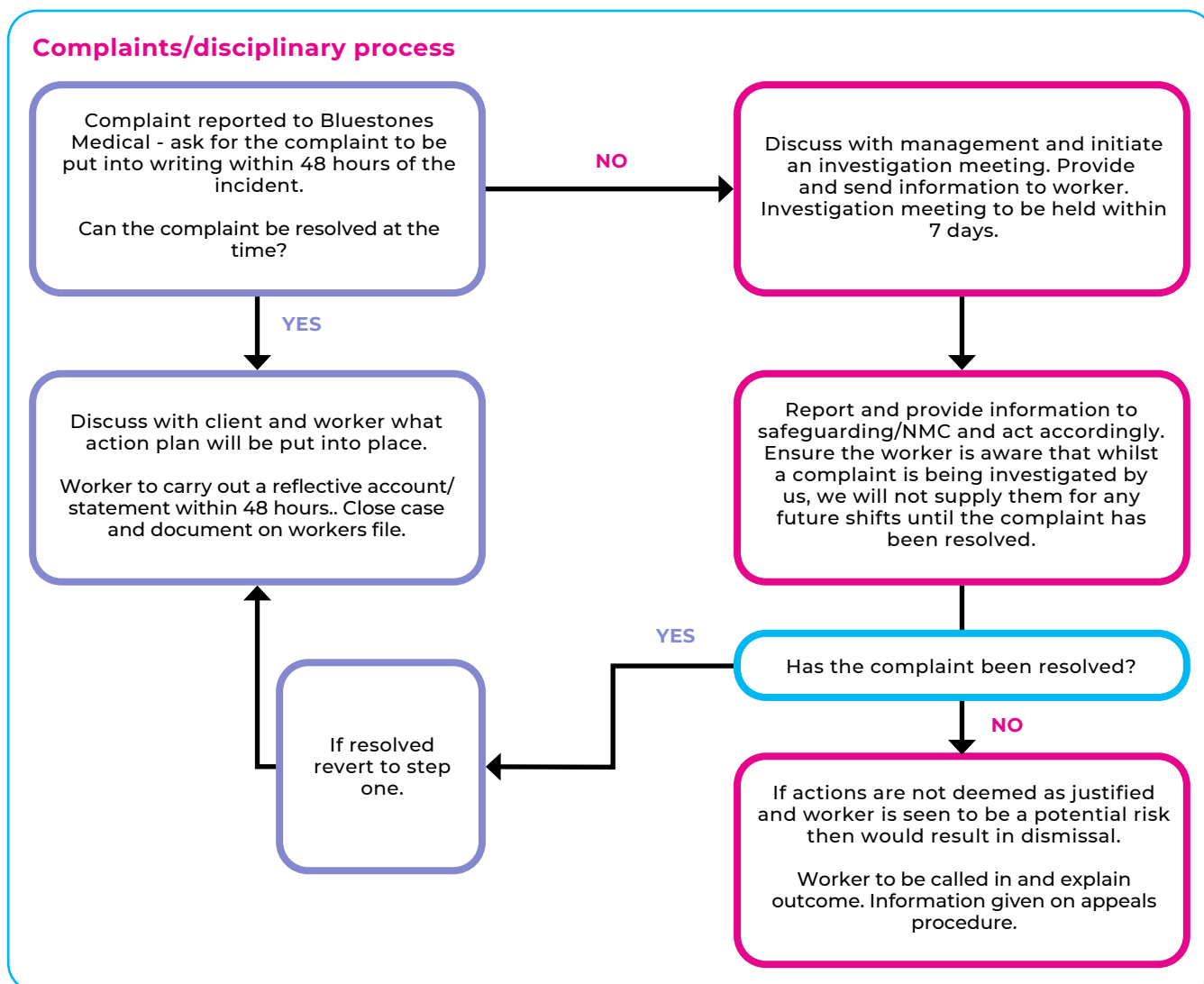
All registered nurses are professionally accountable to the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and the company will expect you to abide by the NMC's code of professional conduct.

You are reminded that each clause of the code starts with the phrase 'As a Registered Nurse, Midwife or Health Visitor, you are personally accountable for your practice...'. There is an expectation that other workers who are required by their occupation to be registered with a professional body.

A summary of circumstances that will lead to disciplinary action is as follows:

- Continual poor performance including but is not limited to poor timekeeping and performance.
- Serious breach of health and safety rules.
- Theft, fraud, and deliberate falsification of records including timesheets, statutory sick pay schemes and absence policies.
- Serious bullying, harassment, or discrimination of any kind.
- Any type of abuse.
- Failure to follow the company's or client's documented policies and procedures and guidelines.
- Failure to abide by the NMC or other applicable code of conduct.
- Unauthorised use of administration of medicines.
- Deliberate damage to property.
- Bringing the organisation into serious disrepute means your membership may be suspended while the circumstances of any complaint are investigated. You have the right to representation at any meetings to discuss the complaint. In cases that may

involve a criminal offense, the matter may be referred to the police. In all cases the client, and where appropriate social services, and your professional body may be kept informed about any investigation.



Disciplinary process

The disciplinary procedure provides warnings (and eventually dismissal) to be given for the failure to meet the Bluestones Medical's, or the client/patient's standards of job performance, inappropriate conduct, or breach of any terms and conditions of employment and codes of conduct.

Procedure

Bluestones Medical will inform the candidate about any complaint made against them that is relevant to their professional competence or conduct.

Bluestones Medical will investigate the complaint and will provide the candidate with all statements made against them. The candidate must comply with Bluestones Medical's



Disciplinary process

request for written statements of events within 48 hours from the date of request. The candidate may be required to attend a hearing held either by Bluestones Medical or by the client concerned. The candidate will have the right to have a Union representative in attendance at any hearing held.

Bluestones Medical, depending upon the nature of the complaint, has the right not to make use of the candidate's services until an outcome has been achieved.

The candidate will have the right to appeal any decision made, providing the appeal is made within seven days of the hearing. A complaint could result in permanent exclusion from the Bluestones Medical books and a report being sent to the NMC or NCSC.

The following are non-exhaustive examples of the types of offenses, which if committed, will normally lead to formal disciplinary action being taken:

Minor offences (oral warning)

Poor job performance involving sub-standard work, unpunctuality, absenteeism or any minor breach of the Employer's regulations.

Serious offences (written warning)

They may be:

- Acts of negligence resulting in minor loss.
- Damage or injury.
- Failure to comply with a specific instruction
- Irresponsibility in relation to the candidate's tasks for the client/patient, whether within working hours or not, which the client reasonably considers to be detrimental or conflicting with the interests of the patient or its patients or likely to affect the temporary worker's standard of work.
- Failure to disclose any personal relationships with patients which conflicts with any matter of a patient with which the candidate is engaged or any breach of confidence relating to the service user's or patient's affairs.

Disciplinary process

Gross misconduct (dismissal)

They may be:

- Negligence resulting in serious loss, damage, or injury.
- Theft.
- Malicious damage to property.
- Wilful disregard of duties or of instructions relating to the employment.
- Deliberate and serious breach of confidence relating to the client's affairs.
- The use for personal ends of confidential information obtained by the employee in the course of their employment.
- Falsification of records.
- Conduct violating common decency.
- A conviction on a criminal charge relevant to the candidate's employment.

In serious cases, dismissal will normally be without notice.

Behaviour towards Bluestones Medical staff

Internal issues, such as negative or threatening behaviour directed at Bluestones Medical employees, will be followed up with a call from management, and if not resolved will be subject to investigation.



ISO 9001 Audit

Bluestones Medical has an ISO 9001 audit certification, a globally recognised standard for quality management systems. This achievement showcases our commitment to excellence and reinforces our dedication to consistently meeting and exceeding expectations.

Implementing and maintaining ISO9001 is of upmost importance as it enhances our operational efficiency, ensures consistent product and service quality and fosters a culture of continuous improvement.



Compliance requirements

UK regulatory body registration and status

Bluestones Medical require your original statement of entry letter (NMC) or your HCPC letter. We will carry out monthly checks on your registration and inform you as soon as possible of any issues.

It is your responsibility to inform us of any changes to your registration status including, but not limited to:

- Registration expired.
- Undergoing any investigation.
- Regular updates will be expected.
- Nurse Revalidation.

All registered nurses are required to revalidate every three years with the NMC. The requirements are:

- 450 practice hours over the three years prior to the renewal of your registration.
- 35 hours of continuing professional development (CPD) – must be relevant to your practice as a nurse and over the three years prior to the renewal of your registration.
- 20 hours must be through participatory learning.
 - Five pieces of practice-related feedback (at least) – feedback can be informal/formal, written, or verbal, and from a number of sources including patients, service users, students, and colleagues.
- Five written reflections relating to your CPD and practice-related feedback.
- You must discuss these reflections with another NMC registered nurse. (Bluestones Medical can support you with this).
- Health and character declaration.

Compliance requirements

- Professional indemnity arrangement.
- Confirmation from a third party. An appropriate third-party confirmer is your line manager or an NMC registrant whom you work with.
- Bluestones Medical can assist regular agency workers with the revalidation process and if necessary can act as a confirmer.

We recommend you:

- Download a copy of the revalidation guide on the NMC revalidation website.
- Register your interest for your free RCN portfolio account where you will find a huge amount of support towards revalidation.
- For any questions, speak to our in-house clinical lead.

Right to work

You must have current eligibility to work in the UK. If you have a Visa or residency permit, we will contact you near the time of expiry for your renewed documents. You must inform us of any changes to the right to work status immediately.

Fitness to practice

It is important for your own health and of those in your care that you are fit to practice whenever you attend an assignment. You must declare your fitness to practice or otherwise when you accept an assignment. If you are concerned that your assignment involves unnecessary risks to your health or fitness, or that of your unborn child, please do not hesitate to contact us. You are required to supply Bluestones Medical with an update of your occupational health questionnaire whenever requested. We will contact you with the new forms when they are required.

Changes in health (including pregnancy)

Please inform us immediately of any changes in your health that may affect your work. Risk assessments will need to be carried out to protect both yourself and your patients.

Compliance requirements

Occupational health

When you received your application pack to join Bluestones Medical, you will have been asked to complete a health questionnaire from Healthier Business Ltd to ensure that you are fit to carry out the duties required. In line with current Department of Health guidelines, Bluestones Medical is required to conduct occupational health pre-employment screening prior to your first placement. This must also be updated on an annual basis.

Immunisations

Please keep the following immunisations up to date:

- Hepatitis B, Varicella, TB, Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR).

Any boosters or new vaccinations should be recorded on your immunisation record. You need to disclose details on your application form, and email or post proof of vaccination to us. Documented proof is required for Varicella, TB, and MMR. For exposure-prone procedures.

The following blood tests are required in addition to the above:

- Hepatitis C and HIV.

Covid-19

- As part of the compliance process, you will be asked to complete a Covid-19 risk assessment document.
- Upon a client's request, we will need to provide evidence of your covid vaccination status.

All public and private organisations request that an enhanced criminal records check is obtained for all health professionals. We can assist you through all stages and this must be updated annually. If you have any criminal convictions, you will be required to complete a risk assessment detailing the events.

Compliance requirements

Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975, applicants are not entitled to withhold information about convictions which for other purposes are 'spent'. Candidates are expected to provide Bluestones Medical with a statement of any criminal convictions, police investigations, or cautions and written permission to disclose this information to clients. Please note that having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working through Bluestones Medical.

Disclosure & Barring update service (DBS update service)

Upon receipt of your DBS criminal records check, you can apply to join the DBS Update Service. This allows you to save money and means you may never need to complete another DBS application. Please note that registration to the update service must be completed within 30 days of the certificate issue date. If you are already registered with the DBS Update Service, please send us a copy of your certificate (we will need to view the original certificate at your interview). You then won't need to apply for disclosure with Bluestones Medical.

Overseas police checks

If you have been living or working outside of the UK for a period of six months or more in the last five years prior to registering with us, we will require you to provide an overseas police certificate/certificate of good conduct from the relevant country (or countries) before you can work for us. If you are unsure how to obtain an overseas police check, then please contact us for advice.

For any UK resident where you continue to work for Bluestones Medical and then live or work outside the UK for a period of three months or more and then return to the UK, you will be required to provide a new overseas police check/certificate of good conduct.

Annual mandatory training updates is a legal requirement

To ensure your safety and the safety of patients and service users, you are required to complete the mandatory training below annually:

- Practical basic life support (as a minimum) – must be aligned to the UK resuscitation council guidelines (this must be stated on the certificate).
- Practical manual handling (online training may be accepted).

Compliance requirements

Online training (modules will be assigned based on your job role).

Your compliance officer will discuss any additional training requirements with you, usually on an annual basis. Please ensure that your training record is always kept up to date by bringing it into or sending it to our office. We currently offer free practical training sessions at our Chester and South Wales hubs. Certificates can be purchased at a cost of £50 each for BLS and Manual Handling, £18 for online training, or £100 for all three, to cover administration costs.

ID Badge and uniform

Once you are compliant you will receive:

- ID badge – You must always display your Bluestones Medical ID badge when on shift. Ensure you only wear your ID badge when working a shift for us.
- Uniform (non-theatre staff) – please ensure you always dress professionally and only wear your Bluestones Medical uniform when working a shift for us.

It is a mandatory requirement, and the workers responsibility, to return their ID card and uniform if they leave Bluestones Medical.



Working with Bluestones Medical

Changes to your personal and professional details

To ensure that your personal and professional details remain up to date, you must inform Bluestones Medical in writing of changes to any of the following:

- Name.
- Address.
- Bank details.
- Professional registration.
- Fitness to practice.
- Criminal convictions.
- Health status.
- Next of kin.
- Renewal of criminal records check.
- Health review documents completed.

Availability

The quickest and easiest way to provide your availability is via the Sirenum App on your smartphone. You can also provide your availability by calling the office, or over email. If your availability changes you need to inform us IMMEDIATELY. The booking consultants will match your availability with shifts and book you with the client, therefore it's imperative we are kept up to date to avoid cancellations.

Your bookings consultant will use the availability you give us to find you a shift relevant to your job role and competencies.

Working with Bluestones Medical

Direct client bookings

If a client approaches you to work more duties, please call the bookings consultants to advise of the hospital, date, and time of the bookings. Please do not attend any duties without receiving a confirmation text/email with booking reference numbers (if applicable). These shifts MUST be confirmed with the nurse bank and Bluestones Medical.

If you do not receive a confirmation from one of our consultants and you arrive on duty, there is a risk you will not be paid for the duty completed.

On arrival to shift

When you arrive for your shift please familiarize yourself with the local policies and procedures. These include, but are not limited to:

- Crash call procedure.
- How to alert security if needed.
- Administration of drugs.
- Complaint's handling.
- Fire evacuation procedure.

Time keeping

Please make every effort to ensure you arrive at and leave all bookings at the agreed time. If, for any reason, you arrive late, leave early, or leave late please ensure this is recorded accurately on your timesheet. Repeated lateness may lead to disciplinary.

Ward moves

Whilst we take every step to ensure when booking you for a shift it is for a ward that you are both happy and competent in, occasionally, you may be asked to move wards by the client. This could be for a variety of reasons. We expect you to move wards whenever

Working with Bluestones Medical

asked as you have a duty of care, however, we also know you need to protect your registration.

Please follow the below steps if you are asked to move wards:

- Highlight any concerns you have to the nurse in charge.
- If asked to perform any duties outside your competencies, escalate this to the nurse in charge with a full explanation and highlight any concerns.
- Inform your consultant at Bluestones Medical.

Cancellations

At Bluestones Medical, we strive each and every day to provide our candidates and clients with the highest standard of service. With this in mind, we hope that candidates can appreciate that when they accept a shift or work schedule, it is vital that they fulfil their obligation.

As per trust requirements, if you need to cancel a shift for any reason you need to advise a minimum of 4 hours before the start time of your shift.

With this in mind, we do have a 'three-strike policy' in place. Here are some examples of behaviours that we cannot accept and that strikes will be given for:

- Multiple cancellations within a short period of time.
- Not attending a shift without letting us know.
- Cancelling shifts at extremely short notice, leaving us no time to find a replacement worker.

Three strike policy process

First strike

You will receive your first strike for a shift cancellation or no-show without appropriate rationale or reasoning.

Working with Bluestones Medical

Second strike

You will receive your second strike for your second cancellation of this nature.

Third strike

If a third strike is issued- this will result in termination of employment.

We understand there are circumstances that arise which are out of your control, so all strikes will be given at the discretion of Bluestones Medical.

Termination of candidate's Contract for Services with Bluestones Medical.

- Candidate will be deleted from Sirenum by a Candidate Consultant or a Bluestones Medical Manager. Candidate will not receive any further work via or through Bluestones Medical.
- Candidate will be automatically P45'd.
- Candidate will be notified by a Manager within Bluestones Medical of the termination
- (Consultant will document all discussions on file.)

Working time regulations (WTR)

The Working Time Regulations 1998 require Bluestones Medical to limit your average weekly working time to 48 hours unless you agree with Bluestones Medical that the limit shall not apply to you. The opt-out agreement can be found on your registration form. Timesheets.

Timesheets

It is your responsibility to ensure the below is actioned. Payment may be delayed if this is not the case.

Working with Bluestones Medical

Timesheets MUST be:

- Fully filled out and fully legible
- Signed and dated by you.
- Signed and dated by an authorised signatory at the client.
- All details must be completed including any breaks taken.

To ensure smooth payments please follow our best practice advice below:

- Complete a separate timesheet for each shift –this stops any issues with it being unsigned if your last shift at that client is cancelled etc.
- Ensure you leave a copy with the client.
- Ensure you take a clear picture of your timesheet prior to sending it in. This includes no shadows, no blurring etc. You can download an app ‘CamScanner’ that ensures a quality picture.
 - If you work a shift at Leighton Hospital, please remember to send a completed clinical area induction checklist along with your timesheet. You can find this and download it from the timesheet page on our website.

Once you have completed your timesheet, please email to the following:

North candidates: timesheets@bluestonesmedical.co.uk

South candidates: southwalestimesheets@bluestonesmedical.co.uk

You can find both the north and south timesheets to download over on the timesheet page on our website.

Timesheets run from Monday to Sunday. Please submit your timesheet by 10 am the following Monday to receive a payment that week.

Missing timesheets may be chased; however, it is your responsibility to ensure we have received them. Any timesheets submitted after the deadline are at risk of not being paid due to deadlines, we must adhere to process your payments.

Working with Bluestones Medical

Submission deadlines may vary around bank holidays; however, we will always inform you of this via email.

Payment options

Payment will be made to you the following Friday after your week worked via your chosen method of payment.

- PAYE –T&Cs must be signed
- Limited company – only for private work. T&Cs must be signed
- Umbrella company –must be an approved provider on our PSL

For more information, please contact the office.

Holiday pay – PAYE

When you wish to take your holidays, you must inform payroll at least 1 week prior to expecting pay. Holiday pay entitlement may be claimed by PAYE workers only. This request should be made in writing or by email to either your recruitment consultant or the candidate payroll team.

Holiday hours are calculated at a rate of 12.07% of the hours you have worked e.g. for every 10 hours you work you accrue 1.21 hours holiday. The holiday pay rate is based on an average of your last 12 weeks' pay rates.

Sick pay – PAYE

If you are sick for more than three days, subject to certain conditions, you may be entitled to statutory sick pay (SSP). If you are sick for more than 4 days but less than 7 days please complete a statement of sickness form, which can be found on the HMRC website.

If your illness lasts longer than 7 days, you will need to provide a signed doctors note. These documents will need to be emailed to the candidate payroll team at:
payroll@bluestonesmedical.co.uk



Policies and procedures

An assessment will be undertaken to determine whether you qualify for SSP. If you do not qualify you will be sent an SSP1 form to take to your local Jobcentre.

Tax code queries

Whilst Bluestones Medical process your pay and deductions, we are not responsible for your tax affairs. Please contact HMRC directly.

Pay as you earn and self-assessment
HM Revenue and Customs
BX9 1AS

Referral bonus scheme

Bluestones Medical offers a very competitive referral scheme. We'll pay up to £300 for every candidate you refer to us if:

- They are not on our database already.
- Both you and your referral must have worked 3 shifts for us to be eligible for the bonus.
- Both you and your referral must have at least one month of your desired work pattern booked in at the time of referral payment.

Full terms and conditions can be found on our website.

Policies and procedures

Computer systems

Where our client's grant you access to their computer systems or paper-based systems, these must only be used as authorised and not to gain access to any other data or programs.

In general, please ensure that you:

- Keep any passwords safe and do not disclose to unauthorised personnel.
- Keep to the client's policies and procedures.
- Log off immediately after use.

Specifically, you must:

- Observe any local policies and procedures regarding passwords.
- Do not load or introduce any programs onto the computer.
- Do not access any information service or bulletin board including the internet without specific prior authorization from your line manager.
- Do not download any files or connect to any network or other computer equipment without prior authority as above.

Gratuities

It is essential you do not accept any gift, favour or hospitality from patients or clients in your care, which might be interpreted as seeking to exert influence to secure preferential consideration. Avoid any abuse of your privileged position with patients and clients, person, property, residence or workplace.

Medication policy

Medication should be kept in a safe place, known and accessible to the client or to relatives and other carers where appropriate. You should not make use of a client's

Policies and procedures

property (including, for example, their telephone) without their express permission. You should report any accident or emergency situations as soon as possible to the manager, to the relevant authorities, and to your consultant. All visits, incidents, observations, care and, where relevant, financial transactions should be logged on records kept securely in the client's home.

Records are kept for one month, or until the assignment is over, and are made available to the client, their relatives, and representatives. If you are unable to attend any specific appointment, please notify us immediately.

It is the aim of Bluestones Medical to ensure that the administration of all medicines by a healthcare professional is in accordance with current legislation, local rules and guidance issued by their professional body.

Primary legislation concerning the administration of medicines is included in the Medicines Act 1968 and the Misuse of Drugs 1971. Hospitals and nursing homes have their own system for administering drugs.

It is your responsibility to ensure you are familiar with the system used within the establishment to which you have been assigned.

General administration of medicines and controlled drugs

- You should be accompanied by a regular member of staff i.e., trained nurse, staff nurse or ward manager.
- You must check that the prescription shows the patients name and DOB, any known allergies, medicine name, dose, route of administration, the date and administration times.
- You must be able to read and fully understand the prescription, have knowledge of the medicine and be able to calculate the dose.
- The patient's identity must be agreed either verbally with the patient/carer or substantive staff member or a member of staff or checked against their identification band or photograph.

Policies and procedures

- Any contraindications or change in the patient's clinical condition that may require the drug to be withheld must be noted. If necessary, immediate advice must be sought.
- Ascertain that there is no previous history of sensitivity or allergies associated with the medicine to be given.
- Select the medicine; check that the date of the medicine has not expired.
- Check the dose, form and route of administration.
- Check that the patient has already not received the dose that is about to be administered.
- You must seek the appropriate consent from the patient before administering or assisting with the medication. If the patient withholds consent, follow the procedure enclosed in 'recording of drugs'. Administer the medicine and immediately record the date and time the dose is given.
- You should remain with the patient until the medicine has been taken.
- If you have any concerns about a patient, their health, or their medication you should inform the person in charge.

Administration of controlled drugs

Controlled drugs can be administered only if the witness to the procedure is present. Stock must be checked, the dosage removed, and the remaining stock recorded in the Controlled Drugs Book before administration of drugs. The patient's name, date, time, and dosage given, full legible signature of both the witness and the nurse who administer the drug should be recorded.

A controlled drug must be destroyed in the presence of the witness and a record made if it is wasted or partially used. Any problems encountered with the above must be reported to the person in charge and a written record made. Unqualified staff i.e., healthcare assistants will not administer medicines but only assist the patient in taking the prescribed medication.

Policies and procedures

Recording of drugs

The person administering the medicines responsible for completing the administration record in a clear, accurate manner. If the patient refuses to take the medication, clinical staff must assess if the refusal compromises the patient's condition or the effect of other medicines and contact the prescriber. A clear and accurate record of the refusal must be made on the drug chart and action taken by the clinical staff written in the nursing notes. The matter must be reported to the person in charge.

Drug errors

In case of drug error, you must make a record of the occurrence in the patient's notes and the person in charge must be informed immediately. 24-hour observation should be carried out and recorded in patient's notes any drug error must be reported to the person in charge of your shift with a written report of the incident.

Verbal orders

You must be aware of the local policy on verbal orders as some establishments do not permit taking the verbal orders over the phone. Good records are essential to safe and effective patient care and should be:

- Clear, legible, and indelible.
- Factual and accurate.
- Written as soon after the event as possible.
- Signed, timed, and dated.

Records should:

- Be written with involvement of the patient, client, or carer where possible.
- Be written in terms the patient or client can understand.
- Be consecutive.

Policies and procedures

- Identify problems that have arisen, and action taken to rectify them.
- Show care planned, decisions made, care delivered, and information shared.

Patient confidentiality

Any patient information obtained by you during your duties is confidential and should not be disclosed to any third party if it is not legitimately in connection with their treatment or any other official investigation. Please take care with patient records when on assignment to ensure that they are not in undue danger of being accessed by unauthorised individuals. Patients/clients information should only be shared with their consent –you should make sure patients/clients understand that their information may be shared with members of the multidisciplinary team. It is a patient's/client's decision what information should be shared with their family or others.

Discussing patient care/information outside of the workplace is a serious breach of confidentiality. You should act in accordance with local and national policies if there is an issue of child protection.

Consent

In accordance with HCPC and other relevant professional bodies, you must obtain the consent of a patient before giving any treatment or care.

Consent must be:

- Given by a legally competent person.
- Given voluntarily.
- Informed.

Patients/clients are assumed to be legally competent (that is they can understand and retain treatment information and use it to make an informed choice) unless otherwise assessed by a suitably qualified practitioner.

The exception to this rule is in the case of an emergency where treatment is necessary to preserve life and the patient/client is unable to give consent. In all cases, you must be able to demonstrate that you are acting in the patients' best interests.

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If a patient/client is no longer legally competent, decisions should be based on previous consent/ non-consent in a similar situation (providing there is no reason to believe they have changed their mind) or their known wishes. Otherwise, treatment should be in their best interests. Where a patient/client is considered incapable of giving consent, please consult relevant colleagues. Where a patient/client has withheld consent, disclosures of information may only be made if:

- They can be justified in the public interest (normally where the disclosure is essential to protect the patient/client or someone else from risk of significant harm).
- They are required by law or court order. In the case of children (those aged under 16 in England and Wales), involvement of those with parental responsibility is usually necessary. You should always be aware of legislation and local protocol. It is not usually acceptable to seek consent for a procedure that you will not be performing yourself unless you have been specifically instructed for that area of practice. All discussions and decisions relating to consent should be documented in the patient's/ client's records. Where consent is withheld, you should follow the policy in force at your assignment location.

Allegations of abuse

Bluestones Medical will take seriously any allegations of abuse by staff working through us. If we receive complaints of this sort against you, we may not be able to assign you whilst a full investigation is performed.

Ultimately, if allegations are well founded, we may not be able to offer you assignments in the future. Where allegations are sufficiently serious, we may need to report you to the relevant professional body and/or the police depending on the allegation. Appeals against any decisions made by our staff in these matters can be made to the Managing Director, whose decision will be final. Should you in the course of duty suspect that abuse is taking place, you should inform your line manager immediately. In the case of caring for service users in their own homes, you must report any suspicions of allegations of abuse immediately to your Recruitment Consultant.

There are strict guidelines to be followed in reporting abuse under the Department of Health guidance "no secrets" and a full report will need to be made prior to investigation.

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Whistleblowing

Bluestones Medical operates a “whistleblowing policy”, which encourages a culture of openness within our organisation and aims to prevent malpractice. With the introduction of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 all workers now have legal protection from any form of retribution, victimisation, or detriment as a result of publicly disclosing certain serious allegations of malpractice.

The policy will apply in cases where a temporary worker genuinely and in good faith believes that one of the following sets of circumstances is occurring, has occurred or may occur within their line of duty:

A criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed.

- A person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which he or she is subject.
- A miscarriage of justice has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur.
- The health and safety of any individual has been, is being, or is likely to be endangered.
- The environment has been, is being, or is likely to be damaged.

Anyone who wishes to raise or discuss any issues which might fall into the above categories should contact Bluestones Medical in the first instance that will treat the matter in confidence. It is likely that a further investigation will be necessary, and he/she may be required to attend a disciplinary or investigative hearing as a witness.

A copy of our full “whistleblowing policy” is available upon request. Everyone should be aware that if any disclosure is made in bad faith (for example, to cause disruption within the organisation), or concerns information which you do not substantially believe is true, or indeed if the disclosure is made for personal gain, then such a disclosure may constitute gross misconduct for which summary dismissal is the sanction.

Fraud

If you suspect fraud, it must be reported to the local counter fraud specialist (within England) or reported, in confidence, to the NHS Fraud and Corruption Reporting Line on

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0800 028 4060 (within England) or 0800 015 1628 (within Scotland).

Record keeping

Good record keeping is essential to your work as an agency healthcare professional. Bluestones Medical expects all healthcare professionals to abide by the following guidance as noted in the NMC code:

1. Keep clear and accurate records relevant to your practice.
2. This includes but is not limited to patient records. It includes all records that are relevant to your scope of practice.

To achieve this, you must:

- Complete all records at the time or as soon as possible after an event, recording if the notes are written sometime after the event.
- Identify any risks or problems that have arisen, and the steps taken to deal with them, so that colleagues who use the records have all the information they need.
- Complete all records accurately and without any falsification taking immediate and appropriate action if you become aware that someone has not kept to these requirements.
- Attribute any entries you make in any paper or electronic records to yourself, making sure they are clearly written, dated and timed and do not include unnecessary abbreviations, jargon, or speculation.
- Take all steps to make sure that all records are kept securely, and 10.6 collect, treat, and store all data and research findings appropriately.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

You are required to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679 and the data protection policy of the client during your assignment. Please ask the client for details of the relevant policy. Further information is available from the

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information commissioner's website at <http://ico.org.uk>

Below is a summary where all the patients/representatives are given access to all relevant health information. However, there are a few circumstances where it may not be appropriate:

- Any patient record should be compiled with the assumption that a patient may see the contents.
- Within the act there is no provision that prohibits informal voluntary arrangements to allow patients access to their records.
- Provisions within the act that refer to the formal access of records, a patient should be given the informal access arrangements literature.

A definition of records relates to the physical or mental well-being of a patient, who could be identified from the information in the file which has been made by or on behalf of a health professional in connection with the care of the patient. This includes independent clinical/departmental files as well as the central medical record. The holder of the record is the individual with whose care the record in connection has been made. The patient is the individual with whose care the record in connection has been made.

The health professional is a registered medical practitioner, dentist, optician, pharmaceutical chemist, nurse, midwife or health visitor, chiropodist, dietician, occupational therapist, orthoptist, physiotherapist, clinical psychologist, child psychotherapist, speech therapist, NHS art or music therapist and scientists who are head of departments.

The following have the right of access, the patient or if a patient is unable to access the information themselves, they must give an authorised person the right of access by a written letter with their signature, or any person appointed by the court to manage the affairs of a patient. If the patient has died, the patient's immediate next of kin or any person having a claim arising from the death.

There are a few exceptions where the applicant is entitled to inspect or to be supplied with a copy of the whole record or an extract of the record. Under the terms of the act, health professionals with two exceptions cannot withhold their consent to access the record. The exceptions to this are as follows:

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1. Where in the opinion of the health professional, giving access would disclose information likely to cause serious harm to the physical and mental well-being of the patient or any other individual.
2. Where giving access would in the opinion of the health professional disclose information relating to or provided by an individual other than the patient who could be identified from the information. However, access can be given where the individual who could be identified has consented to the disclosure. The rule does not apply if the individual who could be identified is a health professional involved in the care of the patient.

NB: the right of access is granted to a patient, or a person authorised in writing by the patient. The holder of the record may deny an applicant's request for access when the health Professional has formed the view that the patient authorising the access has not understood the meaning of the authorisation.

In addition, patients who are children (i.e. persons under 16 years of age) who in the view of the appropriate health professional are capable of understanding what the application is about may prevent a person having parental responsibility from having access to the record. Where in the view of the health professional the child patient is not capable of understanding the nature of the application, the holder of the record is entitled to deny access if it were not felt to be in the child's best interest.

Where the patient has died, the act enables such a patient before death to request that a note could be included in the record that he/she does not wish access to be given on application. If a record contains terminology that is not understood that is not understood by the patient, the health professional concerned must give an explanation. Although a lay administrator may supervise inspection of records that individual may not comment on or discuss the contents.

If an applicant required an explanation, the lay administrator would contact the health professional. If he/she is not available, the administrator will seek an appointment with the health professional for the patient.

If the applicant has a correction for their records he/she can ask for any inaccuracies in the record to be corrected. The health professional/lay administrator should either make the necessary correction or make a note in the relevant part of the record that is alleged to be inaccurate.

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There are statutory time limits to process the request. If the individual has previous notes that are older than 40 days, the holder has 40 days from receipt to process the request. If the individual is a new patient or previous notes are less than 40 days old, there is 40 days from receipt to process the request. For written applications there is a 14-day period during which time the trust must request any proof of credentials or identity. The time limit restarts from the date of receipt of further information.

NB All time limits are calendar days not working days.

Applicants have the right to apply to the High Court or County Court if the holder of the record appears to have failed to comply with the act.

Pregnancy and maternity (new and expectant mothers)

You must inform your recruitment consultant if you are pregnant as you will be required to undertake a risk assessment for your assignments. As a Bluestones Medical agency worker, you are entitled to participate in the Statutory Maternity Pay Scheme subject to satisfying the Government's qualifying requirements. On production of proof, you may be entitled to reasonable time off for attendance of antenatal appointments.

If you are pregnant and believe there may be a risk that your pregnancy could be adversely affected by you carrying out the duties of the post, we request that you inform Bluestones Medical as soon as possible.

An expectant mother or new mother risk assessment form should be completed through discussion between you and your supervisor/manager. The purpose of the assessment is twofold; firstly, so that, as an organisation, they ensure that you are not exposed to risks that could affect your health and safety or that of your child and secondly so that they can meet their legal obligations.

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974)

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974 is aimed at helping people who have been convicted of a criminal offence and who have not re-offended since. Under 1974 Act, following a specified period which varies according to the disposal administered or sentence passed, cautions and convictions (except those result in prison sentences of over a four-year period and all public protection sentences) may become spent.

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As a result, the offender is regarded as rehabilitated. For most purposes, the 1974 act treats a rehabilitated person as if he or she had never committed or been charged or prosecuted for or convicted of or sentenced for the offence and, as such, they are not required to declare their spent caution(s) or conviction(s), for example, when applying for most jobs or insurance, some educational courses and housing applications. Once a caution or conviction has become spent under the 1974 act, a person does not have to reveal it or admit its existence on most circumstances. Unless an exception applies, then spent cautions and convictions need to be disclosed when filling in a form, or at a job interview.

An employer cannot refuse to employ someone (or dismiss someone) because he or she has a spent caution or conviction unless an exception applies.

Safe use and disposal of sharps

Sharps must not be passed directly from hand to hand, and handling should be kept to a minimum. Needles must not be recapped, bent, broken, or disassembled before use or disposal. Used sharps must be discarded into a sharps container at the point of use by the user. These sharps containers must not be filled above the mark that indicates that they are full.

If a needle stick injury occurs, you should immediately:

- Encourage the wound to bleed.
- Wash under running water.
- Cover with a waterproof dressing.
- Report immediately to the supervisor in charge of the clinical area who will organise appropriate action.

Fill in an accident form. You are advised to keep a copy of your completed accident form for future reference. Follow up of any high-risk exposure is the responsibility of the employing trust. Report the accident also to your recruitment consultant.

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Complaints handling

During your work with Bluestones Medical, you may encounter complaints from patients, service users and their relatives or interested parties, colleagues, co-workers, referring hospitals/ care environments, the media or HR. Please advise your line manager of any complaints for the client to invoke their own complaints policy.

Depending on the nature and severity of the complaint you may be requested to put details of the complaint in writing on a complaint record form and/or attend an interview to investigate details further. To ensure that you deal with complaints effectively, it is important that you understand who may complain, common reasons for complaints and the process for dealing with complaints.

The main causes of complaints are:

- A lack of information.
- Withholding information.
- “Not my patient”.
- Constantly being referred to someone else for advice/resolution.
- Lack of explanations of procedures.
- Lack of fundamental care.
- Questioning judgement/ability/decisions of staff.

Dealing with a Complaint

An effective and efficient initial response to a complaint will often be all that is required for a local resolution. You should immediately acknowledge the complaint verbally. Give the complainant privacy and show that you have the time to listen. Identify the cause of concern and what the complainant wants. You should attempt to resolve issues local to the event. Not all complaints will be resolved locally, and it may need to be escalated upwards if local resolution is not achieved. This will depend on your role in the organisation.

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You must also inform Bluestones Medical at the earliest opportunity, even if the complaint has been resolved locally.

DO:

- Remain calm and actively listen.
- Isolate the situation.
- Be aware of the non-verbal.
- Be consistent.
- Report any level of complaint to your manager.

DO NOT:

- Overreact.
- Get into a power struggle.
- Make false promises.
- Be threatening.
- Use jargon as it can confuse or frustrate.

A typical example of our complaint's procedure would be:

- Acknowledged within.
- If the complaint can be fully answered to our satisfaction this should be within 5 days.
- Wherever possible a documented full response is provided to the complainant within 15 working days.
- Where a resolution cannot be agreed, and the investigation is still in progress then more time should be negotiated with the complainant.

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- Compliant submitted in writing to Bluestones Medical.
- Complaint is logged onto systems and all parties informed of process.
- If applicable, worker is suspended whilst investigation takes place.
- You may need to complete a statement/attend a meeting.
- Outcome report issued for review. Report submitted to all relevant parties.
- Depending upon the severity, the governing body is made aware of outcome.

Child protection policy

The child's welfare is paramount and should be safeguarded and promoted by all staff. It is the policy of Bluestones Medical:

- To ensure all children are treated as individuals and protect their right to be treated as individuals.
- To ensure each child encountered in the course of providing services is protected from all types of abuse and neglect.
- To ensure that Bluestones Medical does everything possible to prevent, report and tackle abuse wherever it is encountered.
- To comply with the Department of Health.

Guidance on multi-agency policies safeguarding children and young people, roles and competencies for health care staff safeguarding children and young people and roles and competencies for health care staff has been published by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health on behalf of several contributing organisations to clarify the competencies required by all health staff to safeguard children and supersedes the 2006 version.

To protect children and young people from harm, all health staff must have the competences to recognise child maltreatment and to take effective action as appropriate

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to their role. They must also clearly understand their responsibilities and should be supported by their employing organisation to fulfil their duties. Following every serious case of child abuse or neglect there is considerable consternation that greater progress has not been made to prevent such occurrences.

Reviews and enquiries across the UK, over the last three decades, often identify the same issues – among them, poor communication and information sharing between professionals and agencies, inadequate training and support for staff and a failure to listen to children. All staff who meet children and young people have a responsibility to safeguard and promote their welfare and should know what to do if they have any concerns about child protection.

This responsibility also applies to staff working primarily with adults who have dependent children that may be at risk because of their parent/carer's health or behaviour.

As a result, you should, as a minimum:

- Understand what constitutes child abuse.
- Know about the range of physical, emotional, neglect and sexual abuse.
- Be able to recognise the signs of child abuse.
- Know what to do when you are concerned that a child is being abused.
- Be able to seek advice and report concerns, ensuring that they are listened to.
- Know about local policies/procedures and understand the importance of sharing information, how it can help and the dangers of not sharing information.
- Know what to do if they experience barriers to referring a child/family.

Vulnerable adults protection policy

At all times, the safety of vulnerable adults is paramount. Associates are expected to report any concern about the abuse of a vulnerable adult immediately to their assignment manager. The associate must objectively record the nature of their concern and the date, time, and name of the person to whom it was reported.

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Associates must also:

- Co-operate fully with any official investigation.
- Maintain strict confidentiality and share information on a need-to-know basis initially only with the assignment manager and then with the authorised investigators.
- Comply fully with the policies and procedures of the customer organisation. Any action or behaviour by an associate which is believed to be a criminal offence will be reported to the police.
- Recognising the Signs of Abuse or Neglect You must always be alert to the signs of abuse, which can take many forms.
- Verbal/psychological abuse – such as using demeaning language or name calling, provoking, or frightening the service user or subjecting them to witness unpleasant acts. The person may appear frightened, nervous, irritable, or withdrawn.
- Physical abuse - such as rough handling, slapping, punching or burning. Look for marks and bruises that cannot be adequately explained. The person may wince or withdraw from you when you approach them.
- Sexual abuse - people who have been sexually or indecently assaulted may have soreness or bleeding in the genital area.
- Financial abuse - such as using someone's credit card or cheque book to steal money without them knowing or stealing valuable or sentimental items. The person may appear worried or withdrawn.
- Neglect/deprivation – such as the withholding of basic rights or comforts such as food, light, heating, medication, or personal hygiene. The person may appear dirty, or be inappropriately dressed for the time of year.

At each new client, please familiarize yourself with the any policies and procedures related to abuse and be aware of the signs that may indicate abuse or neglect. If you suspect any form of abuse or neglect is taking place, report it to Bluestones Medical immediately.

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Alcohol and substance misuse

The company has zero tolerance on alcohol and substance misuse and the company is entitled to terminate your employment if you are found to be consuming or distributing narcotics or alcoholic beverages on a client or company premises. This also extends to arriving at a client or company premises under the influence of alcohol or drugs. If you feel that you are suffering from a drug or alcohol problem, we can refer you to our occupational health company who can help you seek advice and support.

Smoking policy

You are not permitted to smoke except in places where it is expressly permitted. Smoking on duty is forbidden. Please remember that if you smoke the smell remains on your clothing which many people find offensive.

Ownership of rights and intellectual property

You are not permitted at any time whilst working with Bluestones Medical or at any time after you have ceased working with Bluestones Medical to disclose to any person, company or third party any confidential information obtained during any client assignment. For the purposes of this agreement, confidential information means information relating to Bluestones Medical or its clients including patents, trademarks, rights subsisting in domain names, registered designs, unregistered designs, copyrights, database rights; and all similar or equivalent rights protecting software programs, databases, data, methodologies, technical information, know-how, inventions, technological improvements or discoveries together with all applications and rights to apply for registration of any such rights and the right to enforce past infringements of the same.

To the extent permitted under any applicable laws, you now assign to Bluestones Medical or its nominee with full title guarantee all intellectual property arising in the course of your work with Bluestones Medical ("Company IP") capable of being assigned in advance of its creation in accordance with the laws of the applicable jurisdiction (whether by way of future assignment or automatic assignment upon creation); agree to assign to Bluestones Medical or its nominee with full title guarantee any Company IP that is not so capable of being assigned in advance of its creation; and unconditionally waive all moral rights that you may have in respect of any Company IP and shall promptly at Bluestones Medical's request and expense execute all such documents and carry out such acts as may be reasonably necessary or desirable in order to effect the provisions of this.

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Health and safety

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, it is your duty to

- Take reasonable care for the health and safety at work of yourself and any other people who might be affected by your acts or omissions.
- Co-operate with your employer and others to enable them to comply with statutory duties and requirements.
- Not intentionally or recklessly misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety, or welfare.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 further requires you to:

- Use any equipment, etc., provided in the interests of safety.
- Follow health and safety instructions.
- Report anything you consider to be a serious danger.
- Report shortcomings in the protection arrangements for health and safety.

When on assignment, it is the client's responsibility to familiarise you with their own health and safety policy and procedures, and with locations of fire escapes, first aid.

If requested by the service user, Bluestones Medical will undertake to train candidates to be supplied in standard workstation safety. We cannot, however, be held responsible for the suitability of workstations used by our clients. If you express concern over the health and safety arrangements of your client, we will ask the service user to investigate and, if possible, make improvements. If you refuse to work for a client on health and safety grounds, we will attempt to find you other employment without prejudice.

Equality opportunities

Bluestones Medical seeks to offer equality to all our candidates and will treat any allegations of discrimination seriously. In accordance with these principles, candidates may not discriminate on the grounds of:

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- Ethnic origin.
- Nationality.
- Religion or belief.
- Gender.
- Sexual orientation.
- Marital status.
- Disability.

Aids/HIV

Candidates should be aware of and abide by the requirements of HSC 1998/226 “Guidance on the Management of AIDS / HIV Infected Health Care Workers and Patient Notification.”

- If you believe you may have been exposed to HIV infection in any way you should seek medical advice from your GP or Occupational Health Department and, where appropriate, undergo diagnostic HIV antibody testing.
- If you are found to be infected, you must again seek guidance from your GP or Occupational Health Department.
- If you are found to be HIV positive and perform or assist with any invasive surgery procedures you must stop this immediately and seek advice from your GP or Occupational Health Department regarding what action, if any, should be taken.

Please be aware that it is the obligation of all health workers to notify their employer and, where appropriate, the relevant professional regulatory body, if they are aware of HIV positive individuals who have not heeded advice to modify their working practice. Please note that the above guidance does not supersede current Department of Health guidelines (in particular HSC 1998 / 226) or local practices and procedures.

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MRSA

Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) is the name given to a range of strains of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. MRSA exists on the hands of in the nose of around one third of the healthy population and is usually harmless. It can however prove fatal if it enters the bloodstream of an already weakened patient.

MRSA is usually transmitted by touch. The single most effective measure for preventing MRSA contamination is washing hands before and after every patient contact.

In addition, please:

- Use liquid soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub when washing hands & make sure it comes into contact with all areas.
- Remove wrist and hand jewellery at the beginning of each shift where you will be regularly decontaminating your hands. (One plain wedding band is permitted).
- Wear disposable gloves and aprons when attending to dressing or dealing with blood and body fluids (sterile gloves should only be worn when performing aseptic techniques).
- Dispose of gloves and aprons after use.
- Cover cuts or breaks in your skin or those of patients / clients with waterproof dressings.



Useful Links

Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC)

23 Portland Place, London, W1B 1PZ

Tel: 0207 333 9333

<http://www.nmc-uk.org/>

Health and Care Professions Councils (HCPC)

Park House, 184 Kennington Park Road, London, SE11 4BU

The HCPC (formerly the Health Professions Council)

Tel: 0845 300 4472

<http://www.HCPC-uk.org/>

General Medical Council (GMC)

3 Hardman Street, Manchester, M3 3AW

Tel: 0161 923 6602

<http://www.gmc-uk.org/>

Department of Health occupational health guidance

<http://immunisation.dh.gov.uk/category/the-green-book/>

NHS Employers – NHS employment check standards

<https://www.nhsemployers.org/>

Gov UK – Visa and immigration requirements

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>

Gov UK –Departments, agencies and public bodies

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations>

Handbook declaration

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this Bluestones Medical handbook.

I understand this handbook informs me of Bluestones Medical working conditions, policies, procedures, appeal processes and benefits. I also understand that this information is confidential and may not be distributed in any way, nor discussed with anyone who is not an employee of Bluestones Medical.

I understand that if I have any questions or concerns at any time about the handbook, I will consult a member of the Bluestones Medical team for clarification.

I can confirm that I am happy to have my compliance file reviewed by a 3rd party for audit purposes.

Finally, I understand that the contents of this handbook are simply policies and guidelines, not a contract or implied contract with any employees. The contents of the employee handbook may change at any time.

Signed:

Print name:

Date:



Bluestones Medical

New Starter Handbook

[Reviewed & updated July 2023]

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