

# Good Practice Power Hour

## Summary Sheet

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|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Organisation Name:</b> | Social  |
| <b>Sector:</b>            | Creative  |
| <b>Size:</b>              | SME   |
| <b>Website:</b>           | <a href="https://www.social.co.uk/">https://www.social.co.uk/</a> |
| <b>Charter Status:</b>    | Member  |
| <b>Characteristic:</b>    | Flexible Work   |

### 1. What is your good practice?

Our good practice is our flexibility towards employees taking time off for life's 'unexpected emergencies'. We grant employees paid time off to resolve these issues so that they don't have to use annual leave.

We have one corporate value at Social. It is Life Happens. It is a commitment to our staff that they work for a company that fully appreciates that we are all different and we all have lives and pressures outside work. Things often happen beyond their control, and if it does, we've got their back and grant them paid time off whenever needed. From the mundane – childcare, broken boilers and flat tyres – to the once-in-a-lifetime crisis. And when these things happen, the business looks after you on full pay. It truly has got your back.

### 2. Why did you decide to implement this?

Our 'Life Happens' policy was created many years ago, after an employee asked to use a day's annual leave to attend a funeral. We realised that people require time off for all sorts of reasons, not just to go on holiday and we didn't want them to use up their allowance for things which are outside of their control.

We wanted to implement this policy to ensure we created the best working environment for our colleagues- where they felt truly supported. And we believe that a business has a duty and responsibility to place care for colleagues as an intrinsic and integral part of what it does.

### 3. How did you introduce this to the organisation?

We officially launched 'Life Happens' to our colleagues in 2016. Colleagues were told what the policy was and line managers were trained on how to apply this, so there was a consistent approach across all teams.

'Life Happens' is a value which is based on trust and is integrated into the business through regular 1-1 line manager discussions and 'check-ins' about individual circumstances and wellbeing.

We integrate our life happens ethos in a variety of ways:

1. Through supporting all types of flexible and remote working
2. Through offering enhanced sickness, compassionate, maternity, paternity and adoption leave
3. Through our employee health and wellbeing strategy, such as offering season ticket and cycle loans and regular team away days.
4. Through the creation of an interest free 'Life Happens' loan for colleagues to access if they fall on unexpected hard times or need access to a loan to support a 'Life Happens' moment.

#### **4. What has been the impact of the practice for employees and the organisation?**

'Life Happens' has had a huge and lasting positive impact on the business. Colleagues recognise that they are working for an organisation that truly cares and has their back. As a result, we believe that colleagues are committed and energised and have the support they need to deliver the best ever services for our clients.

We also believe it has had a positive impact during our recruitment process, as candidates want to know a prospective employer will support them and look after them.

#### **5. What advice would you give other organisations?**

'Life Happens' is a big commitment that can often have a short term impact on the bottom line – so it may not work or be viable for all organisations. If that is the case, think about what your 'Life Happens' equivalent could be and work with your colleagues to develop and implement it.