

THE SIGNS NOW STAFF HANDBOOK

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1 INTRODUCTION

This handbook is intended to provide you with an easy-to-read guide to your employment with Signs Now.

The terms of your contract of employment are contained in a separate document, which you should have a copy of. This handbook is non-contractual and is designed to be a useful guide to the company's approach on a range of matters.

We think it is vital that you know where you stand with your employer.

Once you have read this handbook we would ask you to sign below to show that this handbook has been provided to you, you have understood its contents, and any questions you may have, have been answered to your satisfaction.

I have read and understood the contents of this handbook and I agree to be bound by the policies explained herein.

..... Your signature

..... Date

..... Print your name here

2 THE COMPANY PHILOSOPHY

In any business there are 3 directly interested parties – the **owners** of the business, the **customers** of the business, and the **staff** employed in the business. All of these “stakeholders” have a vested interest in the successful development of the business and all of them are important to the business.

But, in our opinion, the most important person in our business is YOU – our employee.

Our philosophy is simple. If we take care of you, we expect you to take care of our customers and our business – and if you do that, the owners will be delighted with the results that are achieved.

We have high ambitions for the business but we can only realise those ambitions by developing our employees. We need you to grow with the business. As time goes on you need to become more experienced, more knowledgeable, more skilful, and more responsible. For our part we have to recognise this by rewarding you with a constantly improving remuneration and benefits package.

Signs Now is more interested in careers rather than jobs.

3 OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

SIGNS NOW UK believes that the key to success is to employ the best people and to get the best out of our people.

SIGNS NOW UK gives the following commitments to you, our employee.

YOU SHOULD ALWAYS BE FAIRLY TREATED

YOUR HEALTH AND SAFETY IS OUR TOP PRIORITY

YOU SHOULD KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE BUSINESS

**YOU SHOULD GET HONEST ANSWERS TO YOUR
QUESTIONS**

YOU SHOULD KNOW WHAT IS EXPECTED FROM YOU

YOU SHOULD KNOW HOW YOU ARE DOING

YOUR REMUNERATION FOR YOUR JOB SHOULD BE FAIR

There may be occasions where we fall short of these goals. If we do fall short, then talk to one of the owners about your concerns. We will always do our best to address those concerns.

4 YOUR COMMITMENT TO US

It may be the name SIGNS NOW which appears on your payslip, but in reality, it is the **CUSTOMER WHO PAYS ALL OUR WAGES.**

Our customers expect you

TO BE PROUD OF YOUR WORK

TO TREAT THEM FAIRLY AND WITH RESPECT

TO BE HONEST

TO BE HELPFUL

TO BE FUN TO DEAL WITH

TO BE RELIABLE

All of these commitments depend on **YOUR ATTITUDE.**

Look after your customers and they will look after you.

The owners of the business require you to look after the customers as described above. We also require you to **FOLLOW COMPANY SYSTEMS.** It is essential to our business that our carefully designed systems are adhered to. They are there to ensure your safety (Signs Now Health & Safety Policy), to ensure customer satisfaction (Signs Now Operating System), and to ensure the long term success of the business (Signs Now Sales & Marketing).

IT IS YOUR DUTY TO FOLLOW OUR SYSTEM

5 YOUR INDUCTION

There is so much to learn when you join a company. There is also a great deal of information to stay up-to-date with.

For that reason Signs Now aims to provide a full induction for every new employee in their first month of work, to go through this Handbook. It is vital for you to understand how our company works, what is expected of you, and what you should expect from us.

The attached Induction Form provides a ready checklist to ensure that all topics have been covered and that you understand them.

Completing the Induction Form is your responsibility.

Each year we will update the Staff Handbook. This will be presented to all staff and all staff are required to sign the Handbook.

When you join we will designate a more experienced and competent member of staff to manage your induction.

We would expect you to complete your induction within 6 weeks of joining the business.

6 THE SIGNS NOW BONUS PLAN

Your salary is what you get for doing your job. Your salary will depend upon your knowledge and experience of the job you are doing, it will depend on the annual rate of inflation, and it depends on conditions in the local job market.

Signs Now operates an incentive scheme to encourage you to take a more active interest in the efficient running of our business. This incentive scheme is reviewed on an annual basis. Signs Now reserves the right to amend or cancel an incentive scheme at any time.

THE SIGNS NOW BONUS PLAN

Each year Signs Now sets financial targets to be achieved on a monthly basis. These targets and the method of bonus calculation will be communicated to you before the year starts. A weekly newsletter will keep you abreast of your store performance against those targets. A copy of this year's bonus scheme can be found attached to this handbook.

The scheme applies only to those employees who actively influence all of the financial targets we set. In some cases your job may be so specialised that you will not be a member of the scheme.

The bonus is paid one month in arrears. It will not be paid in respect of a month where notice of termination of your employment is given – either by you or the company.

If your offer letter (or subsequent agreement or practice) states that your remuneration arrangements are subject to a commission, profit bonus or some other agreement, please note that these are non contractual. The Company reserves the right to terminate or amend the terms of these arrangements as appropriate.

7 COMMISSION SCHEME

Signs Now operates a commission scheme for sales employees.

Your offer letter of employment will confirm your membership of the commission scheme.

It is paid a month in arrears.

It is based on sales achieved by the sales person less any credit notes that have to be issued. This figure is then multiplied by 1.8%.

The 1.8% payment is based on an assumption that the monthly sales figure will yield a gross margin equal to at least 70% of sales. If the gross margin is considered to be considerably less the sales figure would be recalculated as shown:-

Sales £20,000 Gross Margin 72% (£14400)

Commission = £20,000 x 1.8% = £360

Sales £20,000 Gross Margin 60% (£12000)

Recalculate Sales as £12000 Margin divided by 70%

Recalculated Sales would be £17142

So Commission would be £17142 x 1.8% = £308.56

It is subject to all the normal payroll taxes and will be included in your monthly payslip.

Commission is forfeit in the month when you give your resignation.

This scheme can be changed at any time at Signs Now's discretion.

8 MATERNITY & PATERNITY LEAVE

The payroll person can provide advice on Maternity and Paternity leave. The current legislation which Signs Now operates is available at www.dti.gov.uk/er/workingparents.htm

9 SPECIAL LEAVE

There may be occasions where you need to take time off work to deal with a personal issue.

In the case of doctor appointments, dental appointment, clinic visits, etc we would allow you the time to attend to these matters but would ask you to make up this time by agreement with the Store Manager.

Employees are entitled to take a reasonable amount of time off during working hours in order to take action which is necessary

- when a dependant falls ill, or is injured or assaulted
- when a dependant is having a baby
- to make longer term care arrangements for a dependant who is ill or injured
- to deal with the death of a dependant
- because of the unexpected disruption or termination of arrangements for the care of a dependant
- to deal with an unexpected incident involving the employee's child during school hours

A "dependant" is defined as the employee's wife, husband, child, parent or someone who lives in the same household as the employee – but who is not a tenant, lodger, or boarder.

You must tell your Store Manager as soon as you can. The amount of time off is limited to "reasonable" – normally a couple of days would suffice.

Time off to care for dependants will be unpaid.

10 YOUR PERFORMANCE REVIEW

It is our policy to review your performance on an annual basis, at the end of your probationary period, or as required where there is a concern about your performance.

You will find a Performance Review Form included in this handbook.

Our objective is to ensure that all staff are highly motivated to do their best for the company.

We would ask you to complete the Employee Assessment. Your manager is required to complete the Manager Assessment.

You are also required to complete the Performance Review section.

Once you have completed the form, give a copy to your manager. Your manager must give you a copy of the Manager Assessment that he has completed. At this time you need to agree a date and time for you and the manager to sit down and discuss the matter

At the end of the discussion the Action Notes needs to be completed. This is a set of actions to be undertaken by the Manager and the Employee to enhance your performance.

11 STAFF APPEARANCE

We are all affected by our first impressions of people and businesses. We aim to create a positive impression of you and Signs Now. We want customers to think that we are smart and professional. Our corporate uniform shows customers that we are part of a team and we are proud of our company.

To this end we spend a considerable amount of money on corporate uniforms and, therefore, we insist that our staff wear this uniform, that the uniform is kept clean, and the uniform is replaced when it fades and wears.

Designers, Sales People, Customer Services

Polo Shirt with Signs Now logo
Sweat Shirt with Signs Now logo
Fleece with Signs Now logo
Black sweater with Signs Now logo
Shirt with Signs Now logo
Black Trousers
Black Skirt
Black shoes

Fitters, Production Staff

Polo Shirt with Signs Now logo
Sweat Shirt with Signs Now logo
Fleece with Signs Now logo
Black Trousers
Safety boots
Black coverall (when installing)
White tee shirt (only on hot days)

Telesales & Accounts

Own clothes may be worn but they should be of smart appearance
no jeans

The company will provide you with a limited amount of uniform – you can purchase more if you wish at company discounted prices.

Signs Now insists that employees do not wear body jewellery (other than rings and earrings), that employees keep their hair clean and tidy.

12 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES & DIVERSITY POLICY

Signs Now is committed to establishing and maintaining equality of opportunity for all existing and potential staff and will adopt processes in all aspects of employment which will ensure this equality of opportunity irrespective of sex, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, marital status, age, religion, belief, disability, or sexual orientation.

Signs Now fully accepts all of its statutory obligations to eliminate both direct and indirect discrimination and also the role of the Equal Opportunities Commission, The Commission for Racial Equality and The Disability Rights Commission.

The Signs Now policy has the active support of all Directors, with overall responsibility being held by the Managing Director.

What does equal opportunities actually mean?

When recruiting we will use open recruitment methods, these will include job centres, careers services, press advertisements, recruitment agencies. Our adverts will be worded so as not to place unfair restrictions or requirements on any particular group. That is, for example specifying length of residence in the UK, requesting specific qualifications which are not necessary for the effective performance of the job. Our advertising will include wording which demonstrates our commitment to equality of opportunity and how we wish to encourage applications from under represented groups to work for our business.

In order that Signs Now can make sure that we follow the above criteria and make sure we monitor the fairness of our recruitment procedures as per our Equal Opportunities Policy we will include a question as to whether special help is needed and also a section on identifying cultural/ethnic origin on our application forms (recent forebears/country of origin/cultural identity) as:

White	Chinese or other ethnic group
British <input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese <input type="checkbox"/>
Irish <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>
Any other White background <input type="checkbox"/>	

Mixed		Asian or Asian British	
White & Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>
White & Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>
White & Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other mixed background	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other	Asian <input type="checkbox"/>
background			

Black or Black British
 Caribbean
 African
 Any other Black background

Please tick box

We also include a section on our Application forms which requests information as to whether special help or equipment modification would be required for an individual to carry out the job we are advertising.

- Equal opportunity for all staff to know about and compete for job vacancies when they arise, with the knowledge that the selection processes are fair and impartial, and that selection will only be made on the basis of someone's ability to do the job. Selection in Signs Now will be based solely on relevant job criteria and will not involve subjective judgements or stereotyping.
- Equal opportunities also means that all staff will have the same opportunity for training and development, benefits, entitlements, decisions about dismissal, short-time working and redundancy.
- No member of staff will face, be threatened with or receive disciplinary action on the grounds of sex, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, marital status, religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation.
- Disabled members of staff (or potential members of staff) have the right to expect Signs Now to make adjustments wherever possible to accommodate them.

- All staff have the right to be protected against various types of harassment including racial and sexual harassment and bullying of all types.
- Equal opportunity does not mean equal outcome, as all of us have different abilities, skills and qualifications.

Equal opportunities focus

Although not exhaustive, Signs Now's Equal Opportunities Policy is designed to focus on the following areas:

Ethnic minorities

Our policy is to aim to eliminate incidents of racial discrimination in employment. Signs Now recognises that equality of opportunity regardless of race, colour, religion, ethnic or national origin is vital, both to give individuals a fair and equal chance of developing their abilities and realising their expectations, and also from us as an employer to make the best use of all staff.

Sex discrimination

Working patterns have changed in recent years and are continuing to do so at an increasing rate. Traditional social attitudes may deprive women (and sometimes men) of opportunities to realise their abilities and may in some cases cause them to lower their expectations. There are few *male* or *female* jobs anymore and gender is not a valid reason to differentiate between one person and the next.

Our aim is to improve the opportunities available to women and Signs Now also acknowledges that it is in its best interests to recruit and retain the services of trained and experienced staff, irrespective of their gender.

Sexual orientation

Signs Now staff shall not be discriminated against for any reason which is related to their sexual orientation. The sexual orientation of staff is a personal and private matter which has no bearing on work activities. Signs Now will not discriminate on the basis of gender reassignment.

Disability

Signs Now recognises the positive skills and attributes of the disabled person rather than concentrating on what he/she cannot do, and will give the disabled members of staff (or potential members of staff where appropriate) the same opportunities for selection and career progression as all other staff. If a disabled candidate is the most suitable, then Signs Now will discuss with him/her what adjustments to the job or premises might be necessary and agree the best course of action.

Should a member of staff become disabled, the priority will be to allow the member of staff to continue working, wherever possible, based on medical opinion and possibly involving appropriate adjustments to the job, physical environment or transfer.

Diversity

Signs Now are committed to respecting diversity within the workplace. We will endeavour to ensure that your gender, age, colour, ethnicity or national origin, culture, religion, disability, political affiliation or sexual orientation are respected by all members of staff to promote a balanced and diverse workplace.

Age

Signs Now is committed to all staff regardless of age.

Religion

Signs Now is committed to all staff regardless of religion.

Marital status

Marital status is a matter of a personal and private nature that has no bearing on work activities.

Harassment and bullying

Harassment and bullying at work for any reason is unlawful and unreasonable. Signs Now will not tolerate harassment of any type and will use The Disciplinary Procedure as appropriate.

Signs Now's responsibility

Signs Now has a number of responsibilities which include:

- The development and implementation of the employment policies and practices which promote equality at work and do not result in discrimination whether intentionally or unintentionally.
- The training of staff and management to fully understand the spirit and aim of the policies, practical implications of what is expected of them and compliance with the guidelines and rules.
- To protect all staff, job applicants, clients and suppliers from discrimination, bullying, harassment and victimisation and to take appropriate action against any breaches of the policy.

Your role

As well as Signs Now's management, individual members of staff all have an important part to play. This includes you! Please remember that the Equal Opportunities Policy is designed for your protection and you have a responsibility to support its implementation.

The basic rules

- Don't discriminate against, bully or harass another member of staff, client or supplier.
- Don't assist others or put pressure on colleagues to do so.
- Don't victimise a member of staff who has made a complaint of discrimination, harassment or bullying.
- If you know that someone is on the receiving end of unacceptable behaviour, you must report it immediately.
- Refuse to get involved with any action or behaviour which you believe to be inappropriate and report the matter immediately.
- Do make your opposition known to discrimination and bullying.
- Co-operate with Signs Now in any measures intended to promote equal opportunities.
- Don't cause offence to others at work.
- Don't use bad language.
- Do treat others as they would wish to be treated!

Harassment

Harassment can take many forms, some more obvious than others. There is not a really precise definition, but in general terms it may be described as unwanted or unwelcome conduct which results in the creation of a stressful or intimidating environment for the subject.

Some examples of harassment are:

- Graffiti
- The display of offensive material.
- Embarrassing comments, lewd remarks or sexual suggestions.
- Touching of any kind.
- Pestering and unwanted advances.
- Threat of dismissal to pressure the individual into sexual favours.
- Assault or threat of violence.
- Ridicule.
- Deliberate isolation and non-co-operation.
- Racist jokes, using derogatory terms or slang to describe an ethnic or racist group.
- Inappropriate jokes of any type.
- Suggestive taunts.
- Any form of bullying or victimisation.
- Cruel practical jokes.
- Generally making life difficult either as manager, Director or colleague

Action to be taken

If you become aware of, or feel that you are the victim of, any discriminatory or inappropriate conduct, you should report it immediately to a manager or Director. Provided that in making your allegation in good faith, you will be protected from any adverse consequences. If it is found that you have acted maliciously, you may be subject to disciplinary action.

You will be interviewed to ascertain the nature of the issue. Although your wishes regarding confidentiality will be taken into account, Signs Now may feel that it has no option but to involve

you in an investigation or that it can take no action without your support.

If you are unhappy with any of the steps taken in relation to your complaint, you may use the Grievance Procedure.

Flexible Working

If you have children under the age of six (18 if disabled) and have completed six months service, you have the legal right to request flexible working arrangements. This might include a change in hours, change in the time of working and term working plus many other options!

Signs Now has a duty to seriously consider any requests, but is not obliged to grant them. This will depend on the arrangements requested and the impact on the operation of the business. You should remember that, if granted, any change in working arrangements will be permanent.

13 SIGNS NOW PENSION SCHEME

Signs Now have introduced a new Pension Scheme from 1/1/2008. This replaces the previous scheme, employees who were members of the previous scheme with Standard Life can remain in that scheme or opt to transfer to the new HSBC scheme.

The new scheme will be set up by HSBC and Signs Now will contribute to the scheme on your behalf, providing you can meet the eligibility criteria.

You must have worked for Signs Now for a year. You must be willing to contribute at least 1% of your salary to the scheme. Signs Now will contribute 1% of your salary to the scheme in the calendar year 2008. This amount may be reviewed.

In 2009 Signs Now added a Tier 2 for the scheme. If you have at least 2 years service and you are willing to pay at least 2% of your salary into your pension – Signs Now will match your contribution and pay 2% of your salary into your pension.

As this is a Stakeholder scheme it is an individual pension and may be transferred if you leave Signs Now. Signs Now are not responsible for the performance of the scheme and can not be held accountable for any investment decisions. Employees do not have to become members of the scheme but Signs Now will only contribute to the HSBC scheme.

Further information is available from the payroll person.

14 OTHER POLICIES

MOBILE PHONES PERSONAL

At Signs Now we are at the customer's service from 8.30 when we open through to 5.00. We do not allow our staff to leave their personal mobile switched on during the working day. Taking a personal phone call is an interruption to our work and rudeness to the customer. In exceptional circumstances your Manager may allow you to keep your personal mobile phone on – to receive emergency calls or texts. In your breaks you can make calls on your mobile away from the premises.

MOBILE PHONES BUSINESS

Signs Now employees who have a company mobile phone should note that they are for business use only. Detailed records of numbers called are shown on a monthly invoice. They should be used as per the handbook and any loss or damage reported to the payroll person immediately. Employees who are required to drive a company vehicle are provided with a hands-free kit. They should not make phone calls or text whilst driving but can receive calls.

LIFE ASSURANCE

Signs Now will from 1/1/2008 provide Life Assurance for all employees who have worked for the company for a year. This will be at a rate of 2%. The cover extends to out of working hours.

PAYCARE

Paycare cover is available to all employees who have been at Signs Now for a year. It provides health cover for a variety of treatments. Signs Now will increase your level of cover from the basic level by one level each year up to the maximum level of cover. You will be required to contribute, each month, to that level of cover as follows.

Year 1	£2.00
Year 2	£3.00
Year 3	£4.00
Year 5	£5.00

Should you wish to increase your level of cover, but have not completed the necessary time in service you can make a personal contribution. You can also include your spouse/partner but you will then be responsible for their entire contribution. Dependent children up to 18 years of age are covered at no extra cost.

These are as follows

Level 1	£3.90
Level 2	£7.80
Level 3	£15.60
Level 4	£23.40

Application forms detailing the full cover and terms and conditions are available from the payroll person.

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Signs Now will make every endeavour to ensure that employees' personal use of either alcohol or drugs does not impair the safe and efficient running of the organisation or the health of its employees.

Partaking of alcohol or drugs on company premises or during lunchtime is forbidden as this may constitute a Health and Safety hazard and may cause offence to our customers and/or fellow employees. Employees attending for work under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be asked to leave the Company premises and will be subject to a disciplinary hearing. Employees must not drive company vehicles if under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

SMOKING

Signs Now operates, for health and safety reasons, a non smoking policy on its premise in its vehicles and on customer's premises. With the managers permission you will be allowed to smoke away from the premises.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

The Company will not be considered liable for loss or damage occasioned to any employee's property, unless caused by proven Company negligence.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Employees are not permitted to copy any computer records belonging to Signs Now, or any other confidential information belonging to or about Signs Now, nor to disclose any such information to any third party in the future.

UNAUTHORISED WORK

The Company's time, materials, or equipment must not be used for any work not authorised by the Company

STRESS

The Company philosophy is for all employees to enjoy their time working for the business. From time to time, for reasons inside or outside work, you may feel stress and this may affect your enjoyment of the job. In such cases we would ask you to discuss the situation with your Store Manager and for your manager to agree a plan of action with you to alleviate your sense of stress.

To ensure that we always have correct and up-to-date information about you, make sure you inform your Manager of any changes to your personal circumstances e.g. marriage, bank details, change of address, contact numbers, etc. This is important, as if we do not have your current details on file, it may delay any information or benefits reaching you on time.

E-mail AND INTERNET SECURITY

All company systems should be used for business purposes only and we reserve the right to monitor your e-mail at any time.

Misuse of our computer systems, including forwarding or encouraging e-mail chain letters, the distribution of derogatory, offensive, indecent, obscene, pornographic, libellous and/or unauthorised Company confidential material and material that attempts to harass anyone – will be formally investigated and will result in disciplinary action which may include dismissal.

If you receive any material of this nature, you should report the incident to your manager immediately.

ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

You are not permitted to accept personal gifts from customers or suppliers. Failure to disclose any gifts received to your manager may result in disciplinary procedures being taken against you.

COMPANY VEHICLES

This applies to employees who are provided with a company vehicle. Vehicles may not be modified in any way. It is the employee's responsibility to monitor the condition of the vehicle and ensure that service and MOT's are carried out as required. The vehicle should be kept clean and in good condition. It is a condition of employment that the driver has a clean driving license. Any endorsements made on the driver's license must be reported immediately to your Manager. Any parking tickets, speeding fines, or other avoidable costs incurred whilst driving a company vehicle will be paid by the employee. In some cases the vehicle may be available for private use. No one other than the employee should then drive the vehicle unless this has been authorised by a director of the company. The vehicle may be used for holidays abroad but this should also be approved by a director. Any costs incurred by fines or other avoidable costs whilst using the vehicle for private use are the employee's responsibility.

If your vehicle is involved in an accident you should inform head office administration. They will advise you how to proceed. If you are deemed to be responsible for the accident (this will be decided on the basis of the claim) then 50% of the excess will be due from the employee.

An amount of £150 will be retained from the employees final pay packet for a period of six weeks as a deposit against any driving offence incurred during the last weeks of employment or any unreported damage to the vehicle. This £150 will be paid via a cheque at the end of six weeks. On termination of your employment, your company car will be inspected. We may hold you liable for any damage found on the vehicle which has not previously been reported to the Company.

Fuel costs for business mileage will be reimbursed (for the current figure contact the payroll person) these should be submitted on an

expense form by the 10th of the following month. Expenses will be paid with your salary and shown on your payslip.

THEFT OF COMPANY PROPERTY

In the event of a theft of company property, the employee who discovers the theft should in the first instance contact one of the directors, who can then ensure that the correct procedure is followed in reporting the crime.

AMENDMENT TO COMPANY VEHICLES

Company vehicles that are kept overnight at employee's homes must not contain any tools. Our vehicles are not insured to carry company property outside of the hours of 8.00am to 6.00pm unless they are in a locked compound or garage. If the vehicle is in transit before 8.00am or after 6.00pm then we are insured but the vehicle must not be left unattended - e.g. to stop for breakfast.