

Right to Disconnect Policy

Status: APPROVED

Policy Lead:	Executive Director – Business Support
Owned By:	People & Culture Specialist
Date Approved:	02 December 2025
Approved By:	Executive Team
Review Date:	02 December 2028
Regulatory / Legislative Considerations/ References	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employment Rights Act 1996• Working Time Regulations 1998
Other Documents to be read in conjunction with this policy:	This policy should be read alongside BHA's associated policies on flexible working, health and safety precautions, risk assessments, working time requirements, safe use of equipment, remote work hazards, ergonomic use of equipment and any other policy that may become relevant.

Policy Title:	Right to Disconnect Policy
Purpose / Aim of policy:	To ensure BHA colleagues have an understanding of their right to disconnect from work communications when they are not at work and also their obligations when sending communications in order to facilitate a better balance between work and life commitments for all employees.
Scope of Policy:	To set out the guidance on when BHA employees can disconnect from work communications in an Agile Working environment.
Definitions:	What is the Right to Disconnect, how does Agile Working affect the Right to Disconnect and how this applies to different work styles.
Specific detail related to each strand in the scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer Obligations • Employee Obligations • Communications • Work/life balance
Approval Source:	Executive Team
Equality Impact Assessment:	The Right to Disconnect applies to all BHA roles and employees, irrespective of work style.
Sustainability Assessment:	Not applicable
Partnership Assessment:	Not applicable
Glossary of Terms	Hub – BHA Office or site Home – Employees home Roam – Roles which have a mobile element (e.g. Neighbourhood Managers)
Risk Implications:	As set out in the policy

1. Policy statement

The health and wellbeing of our employees is of the utmost importance to BHA and we encourage and support our employees to prioritise their own wellbeing.

Disconnecting from work is vital for your wellbeing, and to help you achieve a healthy and sustainable work-life balance. It refers to a period of time in which employees are expected to be conducting no work on behalf of the business, which includes being available for related communications such as receiving phone calls or emails.

The right to disconnect means that every employee is entitled to switch off outside of their normal working hours and enjoy their free time away from work without being disturbed, unless there is an emergency or agreement to do so, for example while 'on call'.

To encourage and support our employees in balancing their working and personal lives whether they work traditional hours in the workplace or work remotely or flexibly, this right to disconnect policy includes best practice guidance around wellbeing, working hours, the use of technology and more.

The right to disconnect policy forms part of BHA's overall approach to attracting and retaining employees by being able to offer suitable working patterns which facilitate a better balance between work and life commitments.

This policy demonstrates BHA's commitment to fostering long term careers at the Company and promoting equality in the workplace.

2. Associated policies

This policy should be read alongside BHA's associated policies on flexible working, health and safety precautions, risk assessments, working time requirements, safe use of equipment, remote work hazards, ergonomic use of equipment and any other policy that may become relevant.

3. Applicability

This policy applies to all employees, regardless of their work style, working pattern or place of work.

4. BHA obligations

BHA remains fully compliant with all statutory duties under employment working time legislation. We will always take steps to ensure that all employees, regardless of their place of work, are:

- informed of what their normal working hours are reasonably expected to be.
- not asked to exceed a 48-hour working week unless they have signed an opt out agreement.
- able to take relevant rest breaks and rest periods as specified in law/by contract.
- able to take annual leave as specified in law/by contract and not be asked to conduct work during this time.

5. Employee obligations

BHA expects all colleagues to comply with the following in the course of their work. They must:

- ensure that they manage their own working time and consider their obligation as an employee, while at work, to take reasonable care to protect their health and safety and that of co-workers.
- be mindful of colleagues', customers'/clients' working hours and styles e.g. by not routinely emailing or calling outside their normal working hours.
- speak with their manager if they feel their workload is preventing them being able to take the rest breaks/periods they are entitled to.

6. Working hours

Your normal working hours are set out in your contract of employment. As colleagues within the organisation work to different schedules, it is important to note all employees have the right to disconnect in the context of their own particular work pattern.

7. Communications

Where possible, e-mails should be checked or sent only during the normal working hours of Monday to Friday, 8.00 am to 6.00 pm. Due to differing/non-standard patterns of work in the organisation, some employees may send communications at times which are inopportune for other employees, e.g. weekends. The sender should give due consideration to the timing of their communication and potential for disturbance, and the recipient should understand that they will not be expected to respond until their working time recommences.

Management do not expect employees to respond to social communications from colleagues outside of their working hours and it is entirely down to them if they choose to do so. Communications on social media platforms are not an acceptable means of communication in our workplace.

If a manager sends communications outside agreed working hours, unless business and operational needs dictate that an immediate response is required, the employee does not need to respond.

Managers may speak to any team members if the managers notice that colleagues are sending emails at unusual hours or logging in excessively – this may be a sign that they are finding it difficult to manage their workload or 'switch-off'.

8. Meetings

We respect people's time by only inviting them to meetings where they play an active role and have something to contribute. Employees should be mindful of and manage how much virtual communication they have each day.

To assist with arranging meetings all colleagues should ensure that their diaries are kept visible and up to date and where possible try to avoid meetings during lunchtime.

9. Disconnecting

In order to respect the right of the Company's employees to enjoy a personal life, all employees have a right to switch off their BHA mobile communications device(s) outside of their working hours unless they are scheduled on the out of hours rota.

10. Automatic replies

Employees are encouraged to put an automatic email response in place to auto-reply to emails received outside normal working hours and confirming that the emails will be reviewed the next morning or business day.

The below are templates to use:

- 'My normal working hours are from X to Y. I will respond to you when I am back at work.'
- 'I am currently working flexibly so while it suits me to send this email now, I do not expect a response or action outside your own working hours.'

11. Work/life balance

BHA is committed to ensuring that employees enjoy both a personal life and a professional life. If employees have any concerns in relation to their workload or the work patterns required by their role or their ability to maintain a reasonable work/life balance, they should speak to their line manager.

12. Wellbeing

Employees working from home are encouraged to schedule activities either side of the working day, which creates a mental separation between home and work life. They also help to create time to process the events of the day and unwind. Colleagues, including those engaging in agile working are reminded to switch off from work.

13. Grievances

If any employee experiences difficulties in asserting their right to disconnect, they should first raise the matter with their manager and seek to resolve the matter informally. If they cannot reach a resolution, they will need to raise a formal grievance in line with the procedures set out in our grievance and disciplinary policy as set out in the Employee Handbook.