

Employment Charter



Our Aims

Somer believes that there are a range of things that motivate us to come to work and do our job. Pay and benefits are important but we know that getting the simple things right can make us feel motivated and rewarded too.

For example, things like being managed effectively, ensuring that we have regular team meetings and one-to-one's with our managers, access to training opportunities or recognition for a job well done.

Somer wants to attract good people to come and work with us and wants to encourage good people to stay. To achieve this Somer needs to ensure that it delivers all that is expected as a good employer.

The Employment Charter sets out what we can expect from Somer, and equally, what Somer can expect from us. Everyone who signs up to the Employment Charter becomes eligible for **workplus** – the Somer reward and benefits scheme.

What Can You Expect From Somer As An Employer?

Support and effective management

This will include regularly scheduled one-to-one meetings with our line managers, regularly scheduled team meetings, annual meetings to set our objectives and look at our training needs, and an annual appraisal to see how well we have done.

Opportunities for flexible working

Somer recognises that our circumstances could change which may have an impact on the job that we do. If this happens, Somer will listen and consider requests for different ways of working.

To give everyone a say

We can expect to be consulted on key issues. Somer will run a colleague survey every two years and hold forums where we can discuss important policy issues that affect us. People who leave will also help Somer to improve through feedback from their exit interviews.

Opportunities to understand how others work

This will include an induction for new staff, shadowing opportunities and "back to the floor" initiatives. Somer hopes that this will help everyone have a better understanding of the day-to-day workings of the business.

To keep people informed

We all need to receive the right information, in the right way and at the right time. This will include being kept informed through AXIS (the Somer intranet), monthly communication through

"Somersault". Regular news briefings will be provided on developments throughout the Group and there will be access to briefings on key issues as they happen.

Training and personal development

This will include access to a range of opportunities to develop your skills and competencies, a comprehensive annual training programme, 'learn over lunch' events, team-building days and management skills training for aspiring and existing managers. Applications for professional qualifications will also be considered.

Promotion of equality and diversity

Somer will demonstrate its commitment to equal opportunity for all. It will recognise, support and celebrate the diversity of the communities where we work and the people we work with. Somer will continue to raise awareness of these issues and foster a culture that encourages colleagues to work positively to promote them.

To be valued

Everyone working for Somer can expect to be given a warm welcome and a fond farewell. We can expect to be thanked for a job well done and congratulated for significant achievements, and we can expect to be supported and advised in difficult times. Somer will continue to develop a flexible reward and benefit package that is built around benefits and rewards that we would like to see.

What Can Somer As Our Employer Expect From Us?

A high quality service

We will follow the Customer Care Charter, provide a service that not only represents value for money but also is approachable, friendly and responsive as we work to continuously improve what we do, whether we provide a frontline service to customers directly or whether we provide an internal service to our colleagues.

Teamwork

We will support our colleagues and work as part of a team to achieve our objectives. The team can mean a small team doing similar work, a department, organisation, or Somer as a whole. We will work together to develop our team strengths and overcome our team weaknesses. We will support colleagues to achieve their goals and targets, as well achieving our own.

To follow our policies and procedures

We need a consistent framework in place to ensure quality in the services we provide, honesty in the way we run our business, and openness about the decisions we make. To achieve this we will follow the policies and procedures we have in place. We will also work to develop them in line with best practice, legislation and regulation.

To be accountable for our actions

We are accountable to many different stakeholders. These include current and future residents, our local authority partners, the communities we serve, the many different partner organisations with whom we work, and our colleagues at Somer. We will be honest, open and accountable in what we do.

To behave with respect and courtesy

We will respect the culture, beliefs and values of others as it is an important part of the way we work and provide services to our customers. We will treat others with the same level of courtesy we would expect for ourselves.

To demonstrate equality and support diversity

This means ensuring that there is equal opportunity for all. We will acknowledge and embrace the differences that exist in people's ethnic origin, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender and beliefs. It also extends to tackling discrimination and challenging unacceptable behaviour when we see it.

To manage our time and our resources effectively

We can achieve more if we identify and prioritise what needs to be done and give consideration to the way we do it. We will identify possible savings or improvements in our services. We are all in a position to see if anything can be done more efficiently and effectively. It's our responsibility to say what it is and how it can be done.

To be professional

To our customers we are the public face of Somer. From the small things – like wearing a name badge or being punctual for meetings, to dealing with situations that are challenging or difficult – we should maintain a professional attitude, whether it's with customers or colleagues. Although we can sometimes take them for granted, these are the things that really do count.

Delivering the Charter

Somer is fully committed to this Charter but we all have a responsibility to ensure that it is delivered. Our feedback is important to let Somer know how its doing. We can do this in a number of ways:

- through one-to-one meetings with our managers
- at our annual appraisal meeting
- by talking to any manager
- by contacting Human Resources

As a Group we can also get external feedback on how we are all doing:

- through surveys with our customers
- by inspection and assessment by external bodies
- by comparing ourselves with other organisations

Maintaining the integrity of the Employment Charter is critical to achieving success as individuals, as organisations and as a Group.

If we, as colleagues, feel that the Charter is not being delivered then we all have a responsibility to ensure that any failings are raised and addressed.

This may mean looking at our own behaviour, it may mean taking feedback constructively, or it may mean giving feedback to others – whatever the method we all have the responsibility and opportunity to ensure the Charter is delivered.

