



Employee Handbook

Weymouth Town Council

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Introduction

Welcome to our team.

Weymouth Town Council wishes you every success in your employment with the Council and hope you will find your experience here positive and rewarding.

This Handbook contains information, rules, policies and procedures concerning your employment and should be read in conjunction with your contract of employment Main Terms of Employment (“contract”) provided to you. Additional, new or revised rules, policies and procedures may be issued at any time separate to this Handbook and it is your responsibility to observe and adhere to these.

Unless contained within your contract or stated otherwise, the contents of this Handbook are included within your terms and conditions on a non-contractual basis. The Council may make changes to the contents from time to time with no advance notice.

If you have any queries or have not been provided with a contract for any reason, you should have no hesitation in raising this matter.

Joining our Organisation

Induction

At the start of your employment with our Council you are required to complete an induction programme, during which all of our policies and procedures will be explained to you. Information relating to these will be given to you at the induction.

You will also be given a team induction, and you will be required to carry out induction training. Failure to carry out mandatory training may result in the termination of your employment.

Job Description

You will be provided with a job description relating to your role. This job description is a non-contractual document and therefore The Council may make amendments to it from time to time in relation to the needs of the business.

Performance and Review

Our policy is to monitor your work performance on a continuous basis so that the Council can maximise your strengths, and help you address overcome any possible weaknesses. This includes an appraisal scheme which will help monitor staff performance levels with a view to maximising the effectiveness of individuals through shared dialog and agreed commitments. Your appraisal dates will be agreed between you and your line manager.

Job Flexibility

It is an express condition of employment that you are prepared, whenever necessary, to transfer to alternative departments or duties within our business. During holiday periods etc., it may be necessary for you to take over some duties normally performed by colleagues. This flexibility is essential for operational efficiency as the type and volume of work is always subject to change.

In addition, it is a condition of your employment that you are prepared, whenever applicable, to transfer to any other of our sites. This mobility is essential to the smooth running of our business.

Equality, Inclusion and Diversity

The Council is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in employment.

The terms equality, inclusion and diversity are at the heart of this policy. Equality means ensuring everyone has the same opportunities to fulfil their potential free from discrimination. Inclusion means ensuring everyone feels comfortable to be themselves at work and feels the worth of their contribution. Diversity means the celebration of individual differences amongst the workforce. The Council will actively support diversity and inclusion and ensure that all our employees are valued and treated with dignity and respect. The Council want to encourage everyone in our business to reach their potential.

The Council value people as individuals with diverse opinions, cultures, lifestyles and circumstances. All job applicants, employees and workers, including agency workers, are covered by this policy and it applies to all areas of employment including recruitment, selection, training, career development, and promotion. These areas are monitored and policies and practices are amended if necessary to ensure that no unfair or unlawful discrimination, intentional, unintentional, direct or indirect, overt or latent exists.

Equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and compliance with the law is to the benefit of all individuals in our Council as it seeks to develop the skills and abilities of its people. While specific responsibility for eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity lies with managers and supervisors, individuals at all levels have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect. The personal commitment of every employee to this policy and application of its principles are essential to eliminate discrimination and provide equality throughout the Council.

Management will ensure that recruitment, selection, training, development and promotion procedures result in no job applicant, employee, or worker receiving less favourable treatment because of a protected characteristic within the Equality Act 2010 which are race, including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin and caste; religion or belief; disability; sex; sexual orientation; pregnancy or maternity; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; and age. In accordance with our overarching equal treatment ethos, The Council will also ensure that no one is treated less favourably on account of their trade union membership or non-membership, or on the basis of being a part-time worker or fixed-term employee. The Council's objective is to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted, and otherwise treated solely on the basis of their relevant aptitudes, skills and abilities.

The Council will ensure that the policy is circulated to any agencies responsible for our recruitment and a copy of the policy will be made available for all employees and made known to all applicants for employment.

The policy will be communicated to all private contractors reminding them of their responsibilities towards the equality of opportunity.

The policy will be implemented in accordance with the appropriate statutory requirements and full account will be taken of all available guidance and in particular any relevant Codes of Practice.

Management has the primary responsibility for successfully meeting these objectives by:

- not discriminating in the course of engagement against employees, workers or job applicants;
- not inducing or attempting to induce others to practise unlawful discrimination;
- bringing to the attention of our workforce that they may be subject to action under the disciplinary procedure, or other appropriate action, for unlawful discrimination of any kind.

You can contribute by:

- not discriminating against fellow employees, workers, customers, members of the public, suppliers or members of the public with whom you come into contact during the course of your duties;
- not inducing or attempting to induce others to practise unlawful discrimination;
- reporting any discriminatory action to Management.

The successful achievement of these objectives necessitates a contribution from everyone and you have an obligation to report any act of discrimination known to you.

If you consider that you are a victim of unlawful discrimination you may raise the issue through the grievance procedure.

Positive Work Environment

Statement of the Policy

The Council is committed to creating a harmonious and safe working environment, which is free from harassment and bullying and in which every employee is treated with respect and dignity. The Council strives to ensure that the different experiences, abilities and skills of each individual are valued by others. Inappropriate behaviour should be challenged. It is the Council's intention to encourage everyone to behave in a proper manner at all times.

Harassment or bullying causes stress, anxiety and unhappiness to individuals, creates an unpleasant environment in which to work and may be unlawful. This can reduce efficiency and may ultimately have an impact on the way in which services are delivered to our customers. For these reasons, it is important that the Council, as an employer, and individual employees strive to achieve a working environment which is free from this type of behaviour.

You may be an individual or part of a group that receives the unwanted attention. The harassment, bullying or victimisation may be a one-off incident or it may be a series of incidents. Your dignity at work can be affected by inappropriate behaviour, which causes offence, whether it is intentional, or not.

The Council is committed to ensuring that individuals do not feel apprehensive because of their race, religion or belief, disability, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, age, or as a result of being subjected to any inappropriate behaviour.

All employees can expect to:

- be treated with dignity, respect and courtesy;
- be able to work, free from unfair treatment, bullying, harassment or victimisation;
- be valued for their skills, abilities and experiences.

All employees are expected to:

- familiarise themselves with the content of this policy;
- treat all employees with dignity, respect and courtesy;
- contribute towards a positive working culture;
- challenge or report unacceptable behaviour;
- be mindful of others when expressing views;
- cooperate with investigations into harassment and bullying.

Breaches of this policy will be considered unacceptable behaviour and will be treated as misconduct, which may include gross misconduct warranting dismissal. All employees must comply with this policy.

The Council is committed to dealing with any issues quickly, positively and confidentially when and if they occur.

It is important to remember that while you may make comments outside of work, for example on social networking sites, the Council may use such evidence in investigations on bullying and harassment matters.

Definition of Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct, related to a relevant characteristic set out in the Equality Act 2010 that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. The protected characteristics are race, religion or belief, disability, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, and age.

Harassment may take many forms. It can range from extreme forms such as violence to less obvious actions such as persistently ignoring someone. The following, though not an exhaustive list, may constitute harassment:

- physical contact ranging from touching to serious assault;
- verbal and written harassment, including via email or letters, through jokes, teasing or banter, offensive language, gossip or slander;
- sharing inappropriate images or videos;
- using racist slang, phrases, or nicknames;

- isolation, non-cooperation, or exclusion from social activities;
- intrusion by pestering, spying, or following etc.

Employees may also be subject to harassment from third parties such as members of the public, customers, suppliers, or the general public etc. where interaction with those third parties is a part of their role.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is repeated inappropriate, offensive behaviour, which is often an abuse of power or position. It can be direct or indirect, either verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others in the course of employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity at work.

The following examples may constitute bullying:

- threats, abuse, teasing, gossip, or practical jokes;
- humiliation and ridicule either in private, at meetings or in front of customers/members of the public ;
- name calling, banter, insults, or devaluing with reference to age or physical appearance;
- setting impossible deadlines;
- imposing excessive workloads;
- making unjustified criticisms;
- excessive monitoring;
- removing responsibilities;
- allocating menial or pointless tasks;
- withholding information;
- refusing requests for leave, holiday or training.

It should be noted that it is the impact of the behaviour which is relevant and not the motive or intent behind it.

Employees' Responsibilities

All employees have a responsibility to help create and maintain a working environment that respects the dignity of employees. You should be aware of the serious and genuine problems which harassment and bullying can cause, and ensure that your behaviour is beyond question and could not be considered in any way to be harassment or bullying. No one should practise or encourage such behaviour and should make it clear to all concerned that you find it unacceptable. You should also support colleagues if they are experiencing harassment or bullying and are considering making a complaint. You should alert a Manager or Supervisor to any incidents to enable the Council to deal with the matter.

Managerial Responsibility

Managers and supervisors have a responsibility to ensure that harassment or bullying does not occur in work areas for which they are responsible. They are committed to the elimination of bullying and harassment and must be vigilant in preventing acts wherever possible.

Managers and supervisors also have a particular duty to set a proper example by treating everyone with dignity and respect and ensure that their behaviour is beyond question.

Managers also have a responsibility to explain the Council's policy to their staff and take steps to promote it positively. They will be responsive and supportive to any member of staff who makes a complaint, provide full and clear advice on the procedure to be adopted, maintain confidentiality in all cases and ensure that there are no further problems or any victimisation after a complaint has been raised or resolved.

The Council will provide training to ensure that all managers, supervisors and other staff are fully aware of this policy and the procedures for dealing with harassment and bullying.

Procedure for Dealing with Alleged Harassment or Bullying

Complaints can be made both formally and informally. Whichever route you decide to take, and the decision will always be yours, you will be offered guidance and assistance at every stage to help you resolve the problem as soon as possible and to stop the harassment.

If you are comfortable doing so you should, in the first instance, ask the person responsible to stop the behaviour, explaining that you feel uncomfortable in the way they are acting towards you. Speaking directly to the person at an early stage will often be sufficient to stop the behaviour.

If you feel unable to do this, you may be able to ask your Manager or a colleague to do this on your behalf.

If it is a serious informal allegation The Council may seek to take further action using the information provided, all steps will be discussed with you before this is done.

If you decide to make a formal complaint you should do so through the grievance procedure as soon as possible after the incident has occurred. All complaints will be handled in a timely and confidential manner. You will be guaranteed a fair and impartial hearing and the matter will be investigated thoroughly. If the investigation reveals that your complaint is valid, prompt attention and action will be taken, designed to stop the behaviour immediately and prevent its recurrence. In such circumstances, if relocation proves necessary, every effort will be made to relocate the harasser or bully rather than you as the victim, however, the Council will endeavour to relocate you if this is your preference.

You will be protected from intimidation, victimisation or discrimination for filing a complaint or assisting in an investigation. Retaliating against an employee for complaining about harassment or bullying is a disciplinary offence.

Whilst this procedure is designed to assist genuine victims of harassment or bullying, you should be aware that if you raise complaints which are proven to be deliberately vexatious, you may become subject to proceedings under the disciplinary procedure.

Procedure for Dealing with Alleged Harassment or Bullying from a Third Party

Any form of harassment towards you from third parties during your dealings with them will not be tolerated by the Council.

The Council appreciates that a decision to report harassment from a third party may be difficult, particularly if the third party is a member of the public or customer or has a long-standing business relationship with the Council. However, The Council encourages you to report any instance of harassment from a third party so that the Council can take appropriate action.

You should follow the procedure set out above if you experience harassment from a third party, after which a meeting with you will be arranged and an investigation undertaken.

Our action, where a complaint is substantiated, will depend on the circumstances of the case and may include:

- speaking with the harasser and warning them that any future occurrence of harassment will result in the Council withdrawing provision of its services to the harasser;
- contacting the business for whom the harasser works and making a complaint against them. The Council will explicitly ask for this conduct to stop and The Council may require that the harasser is removed from our account;
- refusing to continue to provide our services to the harasser;
- reassigning the provision of the Council's services to the harasser to another employee.

Timekeeping and Time Off

Working Hours

Your normal hours of work are detailed in your contract. It is your responsibility to ensure that you attend punctually for work and follow all timekeeping and absence procedures. In order to help the Council to maintain optimum service levels, you may be required to work additional hours from time to time. Further details are contained in your contract.

If you are unable to attend work for any reason or are going to be late you are required to telephone Line Manager as soon as reasonably practicable, stating why you are absent or late and when you expect to arrive at work.

Persistent lateness, unacceptable levels of absence and/or unauthorised absence may result in a disciplinary warning or dismissal, depending on the circumstances.

Clocking In

If you are required to clock in, you must ensure that you clock in using the agreed process on arrival, and clock out on departure from the premises, using the same clock location.

You must never complete entries on clock cards for yourself without express authority from Management, obtaining an authorisation signature at the time.

If you falsify your clock card, complete entries without express authority, clock in for another employee, or allow another employee to clock in for you, you may be liable to summary dismissal.

Please note: The Council reserves the right to change the way it monitors/tracks hours, you will be given at least 1 weeks' notice of any changes.

Variable Hour Sheets

It is expected that employees working variable hours will accurately record their working hours and variable leave hours in respect to each normal working day using a variable sheet or the agreed process e.g. Blip.

Where required to complete a Variable Hours sheet this must be completed accurately with all the relevant information about hours worked, and when.

If you falsify your variable hour sheet you may be liable to summary dismissal.

Please note: The Council reserves the right to change the way it monitors/tracks hours, you will be given at least 1 weeks' notice of any changes.

Variable hours

As far as practicable, the Council permits its employees to work variable hours. It acknowledges however that:

- Some departments may be unable to work variable hours owing to the nature of their duties or working arrangements.
- The decision on participation lies with Senior Management.
- The work of the department must not be compromised to accommodate flexitime and managers of departments participating are responsible for adapting it to fit their operational needs.

The Council reserves the right in respect of any individual employee or generally in respect of all employees to place such temporary or permanent restriction on the operation of variable hours as it deems to be necessary for the proper conduct of its business.

If you have variable hours contract the core hours are 10am-3pm, your hours can otherwise be worked variably as defined in your contract. For a full time employee this must be done over 5 days between Monday to Friday.

If you wish to work a different working pattern, please submit a flexible working request as per the flexible working policy.

Time off in lieu (TOIL)

Time off in lieu (TOIL) may be provided at the discretion of the Council for time worked in addition to your normal hours of work. TOIL will only be permitted with the prior agreement of Management and in the following circumstances:

- hours worked above your contractual hours
- weekend working
- working at events where there is a business requirement

You must agree with your Manager in advance any time to be worked outside of your normal working hours and all hours worked must be recorded on the agreed system e.g. BrightHR, which must be approved by your Manager. The time off must be equal to the time worked.

You should not accrue more than 15 hours in TOIL in each month, except in exceptional circumstances, and with the prior written agreement of your manager. Such agreement must include a plan and timescales for bringing the balance back to 15 hours or less.

Managers are asked to discuss all requests to accrue more than 15 hours with the most appropriate senior manager. Where there are repeated requests, managers should work with team members to address capacity issues.

The Council seeks to protect the wellbeing of its staff and does not expect staff to routinely work additional hours to meet the needs of their roles.

TOIL must be taken within a month of being accrued unless specific agreement has been provided by your manager. TOIL built up and not taken within the required period will be lost, unless agreed by your manager.

You must obtain approval before taking TOIL in the same way that annual leave is approved.

The Council reserves the right to notify you of when TOIL must be taken.

Upon termination of employment all accrued but untaken TOIL will be lost.

Providing false or inaccurate TOIL hours may result in a disciplinary warning or dismissal, depending on the circumstances.

Flexible Working Agreement

All employees who have a minimum of 26 weeks' continuous service at the time of making an application are entitled to request a flexible working arrangement. A request could, for example, relate to the total number of hours worked, the times at which you work, or the place of work.

All requests for flexible working will be seriously considered but there is no automatic right to be granted a request.

Your application must be made in writing to your manager who will discuss the request with a member of the senior management team. You should state whether you have made any previous request and, if so, when. You are limited to one statutory request in any 12 month period. You should provide details of the flexible working arrangement you are proposing, when you would like the change to take effect, and how you think any impact on the Council, your job and/or work colleagues may be dealt with.

You will be contacted to discuss your request as soon as is reasonably practicable. If there is likely to be an undue delay, you will be notified of this in writing.

You should be aware that if your request is accepted this will normally mean a permanent change to your terms and conditions of employment and there is no automatic right to revert to your original working arrangements at a later date. Alternatively, if the Council is unsure about the impact of your request and/or whether this may be sustainable, a temporary or trial period may be agreed.

The Council's decision in relation to your request will be confirmed in writing.

A request will only be refused for one of the following business reasons:

- burden of additional costs;
- inability to reorganise work among existing staff;
- inability to recruit additional staff;
- detrimental impact on quality;
- detrimental impact on performance;
- detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand;
- insufficient work for the periods you are proposing to work;
- planned structural change to the business.

If your request is refused, you may appeal against the decision. Your appeal must be made in writing.

You are entitled to be accompanied by a work colleague at any discussion, meeting or appeal hearing in relation to your request.

You are entitled to be accompanied by a work colleague at any discussion, meeting or appeal hearing in relation to your request. Please note that the consideration period for dealing with flexible working requests, including any appeal, can take up to 3 months. Where necessary, this timeframe may be extended by mutual agreement.

Requests will be considered in the order in which they are received. Each case will be considered on its own merits taking into consideration the business case, possible impact, and the current business context.

Policy on Hybrid Working

Hybrid working is a term used to describe employees conducting their usual job role from varied locations which can include but are not limited to the usual place of work. The council expects that, with this added degree of flexibility, employees will be better equipped to respond to, and manage, the demands of everyday working life. Qualifying employees are permitted to work up to a maximum of two working days at home, with the rest in their main place of work as specified in their contract. The council holds the right to request employee work in their main location of work at any point.

To be eligible to be considered for hybrid working, employees generally need to meet the following:

- they must have successfully completed the probationary period attached to their job role
- their role must not involve supervisory duties that require undertaking in person alongside the team members involved that would be adversely affected by hybrid working
- their home environment must be deemed suitable
- their recent appraisal must not have been marked as unsatisfactory
- their disciplinary record must be clean
- they must not be being managed for performance issues

The work of days that are remote requires approval of the department head in advance.

You are not permitted to have more than 2 remote days per week and The Council hold the right to choose compulsory site working days. This is currently a Tuesday. If this is changed the council will provide 2 weeks notice.

It should be understood that the nature of hybrid working will depend upon the specific role of the employee concerned. All forms of hybrid working must be cost effective and not serve to increase the workloads of other members of staff. Considerations of its implementation will consider business need and the specific requirements of its customers/clients.

Where employees meet the above eligibility requirements and fall into the same team, or are undertaking work on the same project, they will be treated consistently to ensure they have the same entitlements.

Ultimately, the final decision on whether hybrid working will be permitted in any given situation will rest with the council.

Work activities will generally be carried out in the council's normal workplace, which can be found at the address as outlined within the statement of main terms and conditions.

It is important to maintain communication with hybrid employees while they are working from home. This can be achieved by holding regular weekly/daily meetings with them either in person or remotely. Most importantly, to determine the effectiveness of the arrangement, employees should be given clear targets to work towards which can be evaluated during these regular meetings.

Health and Safety Provisions

The council will work to ensure that usual health and safety provisions are adhered to in all locations involved in hybrid working. This will include conducting risk assessments of the proposed working environments where necessary to comply with legal provisions, such as undertaking a Home Working Viability Check to ensure the employee has the ability to work safe from home and any equipment issued by the council can be set up and used in a safe manner. inspecting the home set-up.

If an employee's health condition or impairment is likely to be within scope of the Equality Act 2020, management will ensure that a Personal Risk Assessment is undertaken in a sensitive manner to identify and implement any reasonable adjustments necessary that will assist them in carrying out their role.

Employee Responsibility

Employees who are working remotely may not be as regularly observed by management, meaning that an element of trust will need to be maintained between all parties for the hybrid working arrangement to work.

It is the responsibility of employees to make sure any hybrid working arrangement does not impact upon their productivity and output. If it is found that this is the case, the council will review the effectiveness of the arrangement and further disciplinary action may be taken. Employees must also ensure that they comply with usual policies on absence and sickness.

Employees must ensure that they take rest breaks during the working shifts in line with the council's usual policies. This is to ensure their continued wellbeing and continued compliance with government Regulations. Again, if it is found that appropriate rest breaks are not being taken, the effectiveness of the hybrid working arrangement may be reviewed.

Employees working from home need to ensure a safe working environment that complies with the council's policies on health and safety. This includes adherence to Display Screen Equipment (DSE) standards.

Employees who are working from other buildings separate to the usual workplace are expected to leave their workspace clean and tidy following use and remove all personal items. Standards of hygiene will be expected to be maintained throughout their period of working in this environment.

Hybrid workers need to remain fully contactable by management during their working hours.

Additionally, all confidential information relating to the council needs to be kept secure in line with its data protection policies. If it is found that the hybrid working arrangement has resulted, or has the potential to result in, a data breach, the arrangement may be terminated and those responsible could face disciplinary action.

Equipment Provided

All employees will be provided with equipment that can be removed from the usual workplace for the purposes of hybrid working. This equipment is as follows:

- Laptop

Home Working

Working from home is not a requirement and as such the working from home allowance is not payable.

Risk assessments of the home working environment, in line with legal requirements, must be undertaken by the employee. Self-assessment forms are available from your manager and must be completed by the employee and agreed by your manager before home working can commence.

When working from home employees are responsible for ensuring they are contactable during normal working hours. This should be via Teams, a Council mobile telephone (where provided) or the employee's home or mobile telephone numbers. Details of personal telephone numbers will remain confidential within the Council.

As a general rule it is not considered necessary for those working from home to require supplies of stationery etc. Large volumes of printing and collating of documents should be carried out on Town Council premises.

Home working should not be used as an alternative method of meeting carer requirements. Employees are expected to be fully available when working from home as they would be in the office.

Home working agreements will be reviewed in light of any change of circumstances, whether relating to employee, work they are required to undertake, or the working environment.

Appointments

You are normally expected to ensure that appointments to visit the doctor, dentist, hospital, etc. are made in your own time and outside normal working hours. In the event that this is not reasonably practicable, unpaid time off work will be permitted to attend such appointments, providing that the appointment is substantiated with an appointment card, if requested, and the timing of the appointment causes as little disruption as possible, i.e. at the beginning or end of the working day.

However, you will not be paid for this time off.

Time off for Dependants

You are entitled to reasonable unpaid time off, for urgent or unexpected incidents of real need involving a dependant, who is a member of your immediate family, or someone who reasonably relies on you for help when they are ill or injured, or for making arrangements for them to be cared for in the event of illness or injury.

The entitlement to time off in such circumstances is limited to what is reasonable for you to deal with the immediate problem and to organise any longer term arrangements.

If you are unable to attend work due to unforeseen family circumstances such as the death of a dependant, breakdown of childcare arrangements, or illness of a dependant, you may be entitled to reasonable time off work.

Bereavement Leave

For further information on bereavement leave please speak to Management or refer to the Green Book. A copy of the Green Book is available from your manager on request and is available at Crookhill, The Beach Office, and at The New Town Hall.

Compassionate Leave

For further information on compassionate leave please speak to Management or refer to the Green Book. A copy of the Green Book is available from your manager on request and is available at Crookhill, The Beach Office, and at The New Town Hall.

Adverse Weather and Public Transport Disruption

The Council recognises that there are occasions when you may have difficulty in travelling to work due to severe weather conditions or disruptions to transport.

While the Council expects employees to make every effort to come to work, you should under no circumstances travel if it is dangerous to do so and you should have due regard for your health and safety.

Procedure

Severe weather or disruptions to transport may make travelling to work slower or more difficult. Where you find that your journey to work is delayed you should, where possible, contact your Line Manager at the earliest opportunity.

You are expected to make every effort to arrive for work on time.

If poor weather conditions or disruptions to transport result in you arriving for work late, you are expected to make up the time lost.

On occasions, for example in the event of road closures due to severe weather, or the total shut down of public transport, it may be impossible for you to attend work. On such occasions you will normally be required to take annual leave in respect of that day. If you have exhausted your annual leave entitlement, the time away from work will be unpaid.

If unexpected weather conditions that will make travel difficult occur during the working day, employees will, at management discretion, be allowed to leave work early in order to travel home.

Certain employees may be able to work from home in such circumstances. You may only work from home if authorised to do so in advance by Management.

Employees who abuse the above procedure may be subject to action under the disciplinary procedure.

This policy will be applied in a spirit of common sense and reasonableness, balancing the needs of the business, its customers, and the safety of employees.

Jury Service

You have the right to unpaid time off in you are called up for jury service, hold certain public offices or are a reservist. Paid leave of absence will be granted for employees undertaking jury service or serving on public bodies or undertaking public duties. Where an allowance is claimable for loss of earnings the employee should claim and pay the allowance to the employing authority

Pay

Payment

The methods of pay and payment intervals are set out in your contract.

An itemised pay statement will be issued to you at each pay period. If at any time you have any queries you should raise them with Line Manager.

On termination of employment, your final payment may be made in a different form to that stated in your contract.

Deductions from Pay

The Council will make deductions from your pay in certain circumstances, for example, where a deduction is legally required such as income tax and National Insurance. You will receive a form P60 on an annual basis explaining deductions made for income tax and National Insurance. Where you receive non-salary benefits from us, you will also receive a form P11D.

If you are overpaid for any reason, The Council will normally seek to deduct the amount of overpayment at your next payday. However, if the amount to be deducted would cause hardship, the Council may arrange for repayment over a longer period.

The Council may also make other deductions from pay as permitted by relevant sections in this Handbook and our other policies.

The right to deduct wages, either as a result of this clause or any other clause within your contract or this Handbook is an express term of your contract of employment.

Expenses

The Council will reimburse you for pre-approved expenses wholly and necessarily incurred in the course of your work.

It is not the purpose of the payment for expenses to provide you with an incentive or reward for non-standard duties. The amount of any payment for expenses will be the additional costs incurred as a result of you undertaking a work assignment.

Expenses will be paid in accordance with the regulations and interpretation of HM Revenue & Customs or suspended, if necessary, at its instruction.

Any special ad hoc arrangements made to suit particular circumstances will not be considered to set any form of precedent.

You are expected to use the most cost-effective transport, methods, and routes when travelling to carry out your duties.

You will be entitled to claim the following providing they are reasonable, the appropriate documentation has been completed, and supporting receipts (including VAT receipts) have been submitted:

- accommodation – where required this will be booked by the business support team.
- Meals – only provided for overnight stays and to a maximum of £25 per day.

Payment of your expense claims will be delayed or withheld if you are unable to provide appropriate evidence of the cost incurred. Fraudulent claims may result in your dismissal.

Shortage of Work

In the event that the Council is faced with a shortage of work, or is unable to provide you with work for any other reason, then you agree that the Council may temporarily:

- assign you other duties commensurate with your role to make up your time; or
- place you on short-time working, in which case you will be paid for those hours worked; or
- lay you off from work, in which case you will be paid in accordance with the statutory guarantee pay provisions in place at that time; or
- designate you as a furloughed (or similar) worker, in accordance with the terms of any Government furlough (or similar) scheme in place from time to time, in which case during such period, if required, you agree to a reduction in your hours or will cease to carry out any work for the Council. (For this purpose you agree that the Council may adjust your hours, salary and benefits by an appropriate amount to reflect the needs of the business at that time and ensure that it receives reimbursement of salary and benefits under the said scheme to the fullest extent possible)

The entirety of this section entitled “Shortage of work” forms part of your contractual terms and conditions.

Annual Leave

Entitlement

Your annual leave entitlement, including that relating to bank and public holidays, is detailed in your contract.

The holiday year runs from 1st April to 31st March.

New starters will accrue annual holidays on the basis of 1/12th of the annual entitlement for each month of service in the holiday year.

Booking Annual Leave

This procedure makes up part of your contractual terms and conditions. All annual leave must have prior approval and authorisation. The Council will respond as soon as possible to your request for annual leave. No responsibility will be accepted for monies lost as a consequence of your failure to follow this procedure.

Requests for annual leave should be submitted for approval via the agreed system e.g. BrightHR.

Generally, you will only be permitted to take a maximum of 2 weeks' annual leave at any one time.

Where too many employees require the same leave period, which if granted would impair the efficiency of the business, annual leave will be granted on the basis of first come, first served.

At least 6 weeks' notice should be given for annual leave requests of up to two weeks.

If you wish to request an annual leave period of over 2 weeks, then you must provide at least 3 months' notice. This must be approved by the Senior Leadership Team.

A maximum of 5 days unused holiday above the statutory minimum entitlement may only be carried forward into the next leave year.

Should you fall sick prior to or during pre-booked annual leave there is no entitlement to take those leave days on another occasion unless the Sickness Notification Procedure has been followed and a Statement of Fitness for Work or a medical certificate is provided.

Annual Leave entitlement will continue to accrue during periods of Maternity, Adoption, Paternity, Shared Parental and Parental leave.

During your notice period the Council reserves the right to decide on the dates on which some or all of your outstanding annual leave entitlement may be taken.

The content of these clauses does not affect your statutory annual leave entitlement under the Working Time Regulations 1998 (as amended).

Sickness

Notification Procedure

You are required, wherever possible, to telephone at least one hour prior to your start time on the first day of sickness absence, stating why you are absent, and when you expect to return.

If you are on a variable hours contract, you are required wherever possible to telephone before 10am or before any meetings you have scheduled, whichever is earlier.

If your absence continues, you must contact the Council before each shift to update on your continuing absence, either until you return to work or the Council receives a self-certificate for absence or a statement of fitness for work.

You must provide the appropriate documents as referred to below at the relevant times and complete any absence recording documentation as required on your return to work.

Please note that personal contact is always required when contacting the Council. The sending of text messages, WhatsApp messages, email or notification by social media will not be accepted as valid notification.

Failure to notify the Council as set out may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Notification of Infectious Diseases

You must notify the Council if you are suffering from or have symptoms of a notifiable infectious disease, e.g. coronavirus, mumps, measles, or food poisoning, or where you have been in close contact with someone with such an illness. Where you have been off work with this type of illness, you must contact the Council and your G.P. prior to returning to work to ensure that it is safe to do so.

Documenting Periods of Absence

You should produce the following written evidence of absence and ensure that appropriate documents are provided for the whole of your absence:

- Self-Certificate -
 - for absence of up to and including 7 calendar days.
- Statement of Fitness for Work -
 - for absence of more than 7 calendar days; or,

- when requested, where more than 3 periods of self-certificated absence occur in any 12 month period (this may have to be obtained at your own expense); or,
- for absence before or following an annual or bank or public holiday.

You should forward the relevant documents and any correspondence to your Line Manager as soon as possible. Failure to do so may result in sick pay being delayed or withheld, and action under the Disciplinary Procedure being taken.

Where your G.P. or medical advisor has issued a Statement of Fitness for Work indicating you may be fit for some work, you must notify your Line Manager at the earliest opportunity so that a return to work may be considered.

The Council reserves the right to require you to undertake a medical examination by a medical practitioner and/or specialist of the Council's choice, and/or to seek a report from your G.P.

Where the Council wishes to seek a report from your G.P., you have rights under legislation. A summary of these rights is included later in this Handbook, under 'Access to Medical Reports'.

Activity During Sickness Absence

If you have been absent due to sickness and are found not to have been genuinely ill, you may be subject to action under the disciplinary procedure, which could include dismissal. In addition, the Council will take a serious view if you are found to be undertaking any activity during sickness absence which the Council reasonably believe is inconsistent with being incapable of work at that time despite the presence of an illness, injury or medical condition. Disciplinary action will be taken in this instance.

Payments during Sickness Absence

For absence due to sickness, the Council provides an additional benefit over and above any entitlement to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). The Green Book details the remuneration to which you may be entitled during periods of sickness.

The scheme is intended to supplement Statutory Sick Pay and Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance or equivalent social security benefit so as to maintain normal pay during defined periods of absence on account of sickness, disease, accident or assault.

Absence in respect of normal sickness is entirely separate from absence through industrial disease, accident or assault arising out of or in the course of employment with a local authority. Periods of absence in respect of one shall not be set off against the other for the purpose of calculating entitlements under the scheme. Employees are entitled to receive sick pay for the following periods:

- During 1st year of service 1 month's full pay
- after completing 4 months' service, 1 month's full pay, 2 months' half pay
- During 2nd year of service 2 months' full pay and 2 months' half pay
- During 3rd year of service 4 months' full pay and 4 months' half pay
- During 4th and 5th year of service 5 months' full pay and 5 months' half pay
- After 5 years' service 6 months' full pay and 6 months' half pay

The period during which sick pay shall be paid, and the rate of sick pay, in respect of any period of absence shall be calculated by deducting from the employee's entitlement on the first day the aggregate of periods of paid absence during the twelve months immediately preceding the first day of absence.

In the case of full pay periods sick pay will be an amount which when added to Statutory Sick Pay and Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance or equivalent social security benefit receivable will secure the equivalent of normal pay.

In the case of half pay periods sick pay will be an amount equal to half normal earnings plus an amount equivalent to Statutory Sick Pay and Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance or equivalent social security benefit receivable, so long as the total sum does not exceed normal pay.

Normal pay includes all earnings that would be paid during a period of normal working, but excluding any payments not made on a regular basis.

The Employment and Support Allowance or equivalent social security benefits to be taken into account for the calculation of sick pay are those to which an employee is entitled on the basis that the employee has satisfied so far as is possible:

- (i) the conditions for the reporting of sickness as required by the authority;
- (ii) the claiming of benefits
- (iii) the obligation to declare any entitlement to benefits and any subsequent changes in circumstances affecting such entitlement.

An employee who is prevented from attending work because of contact with infectious disease shall be entitled to receive normal pay. The period of absence on this account shall not be reckoned against the employee's entitlements under this scheme.

If an employee abuses the sickness scheme or is absent on account of sickness due or attributable to deliberate conduct prejudicial to recovery or the employee's own misconduct or neglect or active participation in professional sport or injury while working in the employee's own time on their own account for private gain or for another employer sick pay may be suspended. The authority shall advise the employee of the grounds for suspension and the employee shall have a right of appeal to the appropriate committee of the authority. If the authority decide that the grounds were justified, then the employee shall forfeit the right to any further payment in respect of that period of absence. Repeated abuse of the sickness scheme should be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

Statutory Sick Pay

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) is available as detailed above, and may be available if you are not eligible for the Council's enhanced scheme. SSP will be paid when you are absent from work due to sickness, provided that you have complied with the requirements and conditions attached to its payment.

When SSP is Payable

SSP cannot be paid for the first 3 days of sickness. Therefore, payment usually starts on the 4th day of absence and continues for as long as you are absent, up to a maximum of 28 weeks in any one period of sickness. SSP will be paid from the first day of absence where the periods are linked.

SSP is paid at the rate currently applicable, via the same method as normal earnings.

The qualifying days for Statutory Sick Pay purposes are your normal working days.

When SSP is not Payable

SSP is not payable in certain circumstances, the principal ones being:

if your average weekly earnings are less than the figure set by the Government for the payment of National Insurance Contributions;

for absence of less than 4 days (unless a linked period);

if you have failed to follow the sickness notification procedure;

if your employment has terminated;

where Statutory Maternity, Adoption, Paternity or Shared Parental Pay is being paid to you;

for days on which you do not normally work, for example if you work Monday to Friday and not at weekends, SSP will normally apply to those 5 days only.

The rules on SSP are very complex and you should not hesitate to raise any query you may have with the Council.

Return to Work Interviews

Having regard to its duty of care to its employees, the Council will complete a return to work interview after any sickness absence. This will ensure that you are fit for work and will explore whether you anticipate any further absence relating to your illness. This will also give you an opportunity to discuss any concerns you may have regarding your illness with your Manager.

Please note: Any forms completed as part of your return-to-work interview will be kept on your HR file for future reference.

Long term or ongoing absence:

The manager must hold a Sickness Absence Review Meeting with the employee when the sickness absence record falls into one of the following categories: -

- 10 cumulative days sickness absence in a rolling 12 month period
- 4 periods of sickness absence in a rolling 12 month period
- Patterns of sickness absence (for example, regular Friday/Monday absence)

The trigger point for considering action for part time employees is calculated pro-rata to the number of days on which the employee is expected to attend work.

Absence Trigger Points

To ensure the consistent and timely management of sickness absence across the workforce, the Council uses 'trigger points', which alert the manager that an individual's absence levels have reached a point of concern.

An attendance review meeting will be triggered if you have:

- 10 cumulative days sickness absence in a rolling 12 month period
- 4 periods of sickness absence in a rolling 12 month period
- Patterns of sickness absence (for example, regular Friday/Monday absence)
- An identified pattern of absence e.g. regular absences occur on the same day, around weekends, directly before or after a bank/public holiday or pre-booked annual leave, during school holidays or following specific work being allocated to you.

The purpose of the review is to:

- Review your attendance record
- Give you the opportunity to provide an explanation, discuss any problems or raise any concerns
- Decide whether any further action is required such as whether it is necessary to obtain your consent for a confidential medical report from your GP or refer you to Occupational Health for assessment.
- Set targets for improvements and the period in which your absence levels will be closely monitored over and warn you that if this is not achieved or sustained then formal action may be taken.
- Discuss whether you believe you need any additional support or adjustments in order to achieve the required improvements
- Discuss the way forward/next steps.

A note of the attendance review will be retained on your HR file and you will receive a copy of your attendance action plan within an informal warning letter.

The review meeting will mark a point in time in which the Councils discussed concerns regarding your level of absence.

If your absence levels fail to improve or the improvement is not sustained then, following a further attendance review meeting with you to identify and consider any contributory factors, formal action may be considered.

Formal Attendance Review:

Where there has been insufficient improvement during the review period or the required improvement in your attendance has not been maintained, you will be invited to attend a formal attendance review meeting. You will receive reasonable notice of the meeting and be permitted to be accompanied by a work colleague or an accredited trade union representative.

The outcome of the review will be determined on a case by case basis taking into account the individual circumstances. The following is for guidance only;

First Formal Attendance Review - a Verbal Warning may be issued. The duration of the warning will be confirmed to you and will ordinarily be for a minimum period of 6 months. You will be informed of the improvement required and the timescales. If your attendance does not improve to a satisfactory standard or this is not maintained you will be invited to attend a further review meeting.

Second Formal Attendance Review - a Written Warning may be issued. The duration of the warning will be confirmed to you and will ordinarily be for a minimum period of 12 months. You will be informed of the improvement required and the timescales. If your attendance does not improve to a satisfactory standard or this is not maintained you will be invited to attend a further review meeting.

Third Formal Attendance Review - a Final Written Warning may be issued. The duration of the warning will be confirmed to you and will ordinarily be for a minimum period of 3 months. You will be informed of the improvement required and the timescales. If your attendance does not improve to a satisfactory standard or this is not maintained you will be invited to attend a further review meeting.

Fourth Formal Attendance Review – Where an employee has a current final written warning already on file then the review may result in Dismissal.

Access to Medical Reports

In certain circumstances it may be necessary for the Council to obtain a medical report from your Doctor, Specialist or Occupational Health Provider in order to establish:

- the reason for and likely duration of absence;
- when you will be able to return to work, and whether the problem will recur;
- what, if any, treatment is being prescribed;
- whether you can carry out all the duties of the job, and;
- what, if any, reasonable adjustments are recommended.

This will enable the Council to plan workloads. It is in the interests of both yourself and the Council to establish, with the benefit of expert medical opinion, your ability to work. You have certain rights under the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988.

Your Doctor, Specialist or Occupational Health Provider cannot submit the report to the Council without your consent. You may withhold consent to the report being sought or can request to see the report prior to it being forwarded to the Council.

If you indicate that you wish to see the report in advance, the Council will inform you when the Doctor, Specialist or Occupational Health Provider has been written to, and the Doctor, Specialist or Occupational Health Provider will also be notified that you wish to see the report. You then have 21 days to contact the Doctor, Specialist or Occupational Health Provider regarding arrangements to see the report.

Should you indicate that you do not wish to see the report before the Council, you still have the right to write to the Doctor, Specialist or Occupational Health Provider if the report has not been provided to the Council, and you have 21 days to contact the Doctor, Specialist or Occupational Health Provider regarding arrangements to see the report. You have the right to ask the Doctor, Specialist or Occupational Health Provider for a copy of the report for up to 6 months after it has been supplied. There may be a charge for this.

You may ask the Doctor, Specialist or Occupational Health Provider to amend any part of the report which you consider to be incorrect or misleading. If the Doctor, Specialist or Occupational Health Provider is not in agreement, you may attach a statement of your views with the report. If the Doctor, Specialist or Occupational Health Provider thinks that you or others would be harmed by the report, or any part of the report, it can be withheld from you.

No decision will be made that could affect your employment without careful consideration of all the circumstances.

Where the Council wishes to obtain a medical report, you will be asked for your written consent. Should you withhold such consent the Council will take a decision regarding your continuing employment without the benefit of medical opinion.

Benefits

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

The Council recognises that employees may face and need help with a variety of issues throughout their lives, and as part of the commitment to employee wellbeing the Council provides an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

Support is available on a range of issues including legal, financial, emotional, health issues and work-related concerns.

Call the free 24hour confidential helpline on: 0800 032 7097

As part of our Employee Assistance Programme, you also have access to an online wellbeing tool, Wisdom AI, which you can use to find fast answers to any wellbeing questions you have. You can access Wisdom AI at any time via the Health Assured portal. The link in the menu bar will take you directly to the Wisdom AI homepage, where you can ask your question.

To find out more visit: healthassuredeap.com

Username: Croner

Password: EAP

Employee Counselling

If you are subjected to harassment or bullying, you may seek advice, support and counselling in total confidence without any obligation to take a complaint further. The Employee Assistance Programme is available to provide advice and assistance covering the following functions:

- offering guidance on resolving problems;
- counselling as to future conduct where a problem has been resolved without recourse to formal procedures.

For further information on the support available contact Management.

General Terms and Conditions

Personal Details

At the commencement of your employment you will have provided the Council with various personal details. You must notify the Council immediately of any change, e.g. name, address, telephone number, next of kin, bank details etc.

It is in your interest to notify the Council of any such changes. The Council will not be responsible for any issues arising out of your failure to notify changes in your personal details.

You are required to provide a personal contact number which the Council can contact you on during working hours. It is your responsibility to ensure that your mobile phone is kept charged and switched on while you are working in order for the Council to contact you when necessary, in line with business needs.

Other Employment

You are expected to devote the whole of your time and attention during working hours to our business. If you propose taking up employment with an employer or pursuing separate business interests or any similar venture, you must discuss the proposal with your Line Manager in order to establish the likely impact of these activities on both yourself and the Council. You will be asked to give full details of the proposal and consideration will be given to:

- Working hours;
- Competition, reputation and credibility;
- Conflict of Interest;

- Health, safety and welfare.

You will be notified in writing of the Council's decision. The Council may refuse to consent to your request. If you work without consent this could result in the termination of your employment.

If you are unhappy with the decision, you may appeal using the Grievance Procedure.

Employees' Property and Lost Property

The Council do not accept liability for any loss of, or damage to, property that you bring onto the premises. You are requested not to bring personal items of value onto the premises and, in particular, not to leave any items overnight. Articles of lost property should be handed to a manager who will retain them whilst attempts are made to discover the owner.

Partner Relations

Our work may involve the provision of services to members of the public and some of our employees are employed to perform work on behalf of those members of the public sometimes on their own premises. Due to this relationship, our members of the public may, on rare occasions, require that such an employee be removed from a job in accordance with their contract with us. In such circumstances the Council will investigate the reasons for such requests. However, if our partner maintains their stance, the Council will take all reasonable steps to ensure that alternative work is provided. If this is not possible we may have no alternative but to terminate such an individual's employment. This procedure is separate from any concurrent disciplinary matter that may need to be addressed.

Behaviour at Work

You should behave with civility towards fellow employees, and no rudeness will be permitted towards members staff or members of the public. Objectionable or insulting behaviour or bad language will render you liable to disciplinary action.

You should use your best endeavours to promote the interests of the Council and shall, during normal working hours, devote the whole of your time, attention and abilities to the council and its affairs.

Any involvement in activities which could be construed as being in competition with the Council is not allowed.

Confidentiality

You must not disclose any trade secrets or other information of a confidential nature relating to the Council or its business, or in respect of any obligation of confidence which the Council owes to any third party, during or after your employment, except in the proper course of your employment or as required by law.

Any documents or tangible items which belong to the Council, or which contain any confidential information must not be removed from the Council's premises at any time without proper authorisation, and must be returned to the Council upon request and, in any event, upon the termination of your employment.

If requested by the Council, all confidential information, other documents and tangible items which contain or refer to any confidential information, and which are in your possession or under your control, must be deleted or destroyed.

The above makes up part of your contractual terms and conditions.

Clear Desks

You must clear your desk of all personal, sensitive or confidential information at the end of each working day. Files and removable media containing personal, sensitive or confidential information must be locked away securely in desk pedestals, lockers or filing cabinets at all times, other than when in use by employees. You must make all efforts to keep this information secure and to ensure it is not readily accessible to non-authorised staff. You must dispose of personal, sensitive or confidential information securely using the confidential waste bins.

There is no automatic right to use a particular desk without management agreement, although the Council appreciates that employees may have a regular, preferred workspace. Such workspaces should be available for others to use when you are not using it e.g. during periods of annual leave.

Council Property and Copyright

All written material, whether held on paper, electronically or magnetically which was made or acquired by you during the course of your employment with us, is our property and, where appropriate, our copyright. At the time of termination of your employment with us, or at any other time upon demand, you shall return to the Council any such material in your possession.

Statements to the Media

Any statements to reporters from newspapers, radio, television, etc. in relation to our business must be given only by the Communications Team.

Please refer to our media policy.

Inventions and Discovery

An invention or discovery made by you will normally belong to you. However, an invention or discovery made by you will become our property if it was made:

- in the course of your normal duties under such circumstances that an invention might reasonably be expected to result from those duties;
- outside the course of your normal duties, but during duties specifically assigned to you, when an invention might reasonably be expected to result from these; and,
- during the course of any of your duties, and at the time you had a special obligation to further our interests arising from the nature of those duties, and your particular responsibilities.

Pregnancy and Maternity Rights

You have certain statutory rights if you are pregnant. These are addressed below.

The rules on pregnancy and maternity are very complex and any query should be raised with the Council.

Antenatal Care

You are entitled to reasonable time off work with pay to attend antenatal appointments made on the advice of a registered medical practitioner, registered midwife or registered health worker. If requested, you must provide a certificate of pregnancy and an appointment card.

Maternity Risk Assessment

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR) require employers to carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments when considering the health and safety of all employees at work, and then to take steps to ensure that those risks are avoided. However, there are more specific regulations that need to be taken into account for new or expectant mothers. The purpose of an initial assessment is to identify:

- the presence of any females of potential child-bearing age (these females will usually be employees but may also be visitors, contractors (e.g. cleaners) or volunteers);
- which work activities and/or areas of the workplace may pose a risk of harm to female employees and therefore warrant a full risk assessment.

These activities, and any actions taken, should be recorded.

Employers are only required to take action specifically to protect a pregnant worker when they have been advised in writing that the employee is pregnant, has given birth in the last six months, or is breastfeeding.

Maternity Leave

If you stop work no earlier than the 11th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC), and you meet the following conditions, you are entitled to 52 weeks' Maternity Leave. To comply, you must notify the Council in writing as soon as possible or by the 15th week before the EWC, unless that is not reasonably practicable, of the following:

- that you are pregnant, by submitting a MAT B1 form;
- the EWC;
- the date on which you intend your Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML) to start, and;
- if requested, provide medical evidence of the EWC.

The Council will confirm to you in writing the date upon which your 52 week Maternity Leave period will end.

You are legally prohibited from working during the two weeks immediately after the birth. This is known as the Compulsory Maternity Leave period and is considered part of the Maternity Leave period.

If you give birth before your intended Maternity Leave start date, your Maternity Leave will start automatically on the day after the birth of the child.

During the 52 week Maternity Leave period all contractual benefits except for your pay will be maintained as if you were not absent.

If you wish to return to work before the end of the 52 week period of Maternity Leave you must give at least 8 weeks' notice of your intended date of return.

If you decide to return to work early, and this is at the end of the first 26 week period known as Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML), you are entitled to return to the job you were in before your absence. If you return to work either during or at the end of the second period of 26 weeks' known as Additional Maternity Leave (AML), you may be able to return to your original job, or another job which is suitable and appropriate.

The above information is given for guidance purposes only and confers no extra rights to you beyond those provided by statute.

Keeping in Touch (KIT) Days

During Maternity Leave, you are entitled to up to 10 Keeping in Touch (KIT) Days. These are days when you may work for the Council without bringing your Maternity Leave to an end. Work can be any work under your contract of employment and may include any training or activity undertaken with the purpose of keeping in touch in the workplace. Working up to 10 KIT days will have no effect on any entitlement to Statutory Maternity Pay. KIT days do not act to extend your period of Maternity Leave.

Any payment for these days will depend on the type of work, training or activity and will be agreed between you and the Council. For further details please refer to management.

Holidays

Holiday entitlement will be accrued throughout your maternity leave at your normal rate. If you return to work after Maternity Leave, your holiday entitlement will continue to accrue as normal.

Annual leave can be taken either before Maternity Leave starts, at the end of your Maternity Leave, or within the annual leave year once you have returned to work, wherever possible.

You must have prior approval and authorisation for when these holidays can be taken.

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)

You will receive Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) during your Maternity Leave in accordance with the statutory provisions, provided you meet the qualifying criteria. You must therefore:

- have been continuously employed for at least 26 weeks ending with the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC);
- have average weekly earnings of not less than the figure set by the Government for the payment of National Insurance contributions;
- still be pregnant at the 11th week before the EWC or have given birth by that time;
- give at least 28 days' notice in writing of the date that you intend to start your maternity leave;
- provide medical evidence of the EWC.

For the first six weeks SMP is payable at the earnings related rate, equivalent to 90% of earnings, and for the remaining 33 weeks of the pay period at the statutory rate as set by the Government, or 90% of average weekly earnings if this is less than the standard rate. The final 13 weeks of the maximum Maternity Leave period are unpaid.

Further information

For further information please refer to the Green Book. All benefits will be aligned with the Green Book.

Paternity Leave and Pay

Right to Time Off to Accompany a Pregnant Woman

If you have a qualifying relationship with an expectant mother or her expected child, you may be entitled to unpaid time off to accompany her to an antenatal appointment on up to 2 occasions, to a maximum of 6.5 hours per appointment.

Time off to accompany a pregnant woman to an antenatal appointment will be unpaid.

The Council may allow additional time off work to attend further appointments at its absolute discretion. You will not receive payment for this time off.

For further details on this entitlement please refer to management.

Paternity Leave

If you are eligible you may be entitled to choose to take either one week or two consecutive weeks' Paternity Leave, not odd days, if you:

- have been continuously employed for at least 26 weeks by the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC) or by the week in which an approved adoption agency matches you with a child;
- have given notice of your intention to take the leave in or before the 15th week before the EWC specifying the EWC, length of period you have chosen to take and the date you have chosen the leave to begin, and;
- take the leave within 56 days of the birth, or the date on which the child is placed for adoption, or if the child is born early, within a period from the actual date of birth up to 56 days of the first day of the EWC.

Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP)

You will receive Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP) if you meet the qualifying criteria. You must:

- have been continuously employed for at least 26 weeks ending with the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC);
- still be employed by the Council up to the date of the birth;
- have average weekly earnings of not less than the figure set by the Government for the payment of National Insurance contributions; and,
- have met the notification requirements set out above in relation to taking Paternity Leave.

You will be paid for this leave at the current statutory rate.

The above information is given for guidance purposes only and confers no extra rights to you beyond those provided by statute.

Adoption Leave and Pay

Adoption Appointments

If you have been notified by an approved adoption agency that a child is being or is expected to be placed with you for adoption, you may take paid time off work to attend up to 5 adoption appointments arranged or requested by the agency ahead of the placement of the child.

If you are jointly adopting a child, the primary/main adopter (i.e. the employee electing to take Adoption Leave) may take paid time off work to attend up to 5 appointments and the secondary adopter may take unpaid time off work to attend up to 2 appointments.

If you are the secondary adopter, you will not receive payment for this time off.

The purpose of the appointment must be to have contact with the child or for any other purpose connected to the adoption.

The maximum time off work permitted per appointment is 6.5 hours.

The Council may allow additional time off work to attend further appointments at its absolute discretion. You will not receive payment for this time off.

If requested, you must provide a declaration confirming the appointment is in connection with the adoption, has been arranged or requested by the adoption agency, and an appointment card.

Adoption Leave

If you are adopting a child and you meet certain qualifying conditions you have the right to take 52 weeks' Adoption Leave.

Employees may be eligible for Adoption Leave if they:

- have been notified by an approved adoption agency that they have been matched with a child and have confirmed the placement with the agency; or,
- are or expect to be the parent of a child under a parental order; or,
- are local authority parents who are prospective adopters.

You must notify the Council of your intention to take Adoption Leave within 7 days of being notified that you have been matched with a child for adoption. Your notification should include the date on which the child is expected to be placed with you for adoption, when you wish your adoption leave to start and how much leave you wish to take. You may be asked to provide documentary evidence of the match from the adoption agency.

You may commence your Adoption Leave from the date of the placement of the child or at any time within 14 days prior to the placement. You can change the start date by giving 28 days' notice prior to the original commencement date. Adoption Leave cannot start after the date on which the child is placed with you for adoption.

The qualifying conditions are slightly different if you are adopting a child from abroad. If you are considering adopting a child from abroad please seek further information from your Line Manager.

During the 52 week Adoption Leave period all contractual benefits except for your pay will be maintained as if you were not absent.

If you wish to return to work before the end of the 52 week period of Adoption Leave you must give at least 8 weeks' notice of your intended date of return.

If you decide to return to work early and this is at the end of the first 26 week period known as Ordinary Adoption Leave you are entitled to return to the job you were in before your absence. If you return to work either during or at the end of the second period of 26 weeks known as Additional Adoption Leave, you may be able to return to your original job, or another job which is suitable and appropriate.

Keeping in Touch (KIT) Days

During Adoption Leave, you are entitled to up to 10 Keeping in Touch (KIT) Days. These are days when you may work for the Council without bringing your Adoption Leave to an end. Work can be any work under your contract of employment and may include any training or activity undertaken with the purpose of keeping in touch in the workplace. Working up to 10 KIT days will have no effect on any entitlement to Statutory Adoption Pay. KIT days do not act to extend your period of Adoption Leave.

Any payment for these days will depend on the type of work, training or activity and will be agreed between you and the Council. For further details please refer to management.

Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP)

You will receive Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) during your Adoption Leave in accordance with the statutory provisions provided you meet the qualifying criteria. You must therefore:

- have been continuously employed for at least 26 weeks ending with the date you are matched with a child;
- have average weekly earnings of not less than the figure set by the Government for the payment of National Insurance contributions;
- have met the notification requirements set out above in relation to taking Adoption Leave;
- have provided the Council with evidence of the adoption.

SAP is payable for up to 39 weeks. For the first six weeks SAP is payable at the earnings related rate, equivalent to 90% of earnings, and for the remaining 33 weeks at the statutory rate as set by the Government, or 90% of average weekly earnings if this is less than the standard rate. The final 13 weeks of the maximum Adoption Leave period are unpaid.

The above information is given for guidance purposes only and confers no extra rights to you beyond those provided by statute.

Shared Parental Leave and Pay

You and your spouse, partner or child's other parent may be eligible to share up to 50 weeks' Shared Parental Leave (SPL) provided you both meet certain eligibility criteria.

SPL allows working parents to take up to 50 weeks' leave between them in order to care for their child. They may take leave at the same or different times, once the mother or primary adopter has notified their employer of their intention to end their Maternity or Adoption Leave period.

Leave can be taken in a continuous block or over a number of discontinuous periods.

You may also be eligible to receive Shared Parental Pay for the remainder of the Maternity or Adoption pay period to a maximum of 37 weeks provided you meet the qualifying criteria.

The rules on Shared Parental Leave are very complex. If you are considering requesting Shared Parental Leave you should discuss this with Line Manager in order for the rules on eligibility, notification and your entitlements to be discussed in more detail.

The above information is given for guidance purposes only and confers no extra rights to you beyond those provided by statute.

Shared Parental Leave in Touch (SPLIT) days

During Shared Parental Leave, you are entitled to up to 20 Shared Parental Leave in Touch (SPLIT) days. These are days when you may work for the Council without bringing your Shared Parental Leave to an end. Work can be any work under your contract of employment and may include any training or activity undertaken with the purpose of keeping in touch in the workplace. Working up to 20 SPLIT days will have no effect on any entitlement to Statutory Shared Parental Pay. SPLIT days do not act to extend your period of Shared Parental Leave.

Any payment for these days will depend on the type of work, training or activity and will be agreed between you and the Council. For further details please refer to management.

Parental Leave and Pay

If you are the parent or adoptive parent of a child or have or expect to have parental responsibility for a child, provided you have 1 year's continuous service with the Council, you are entitled to take up to 18 weeks' unpaid Ordinary Parental Leave for the purpose of caring for a child, up to the child's 18th birthday.

Leave must be taken in a minimum of 1 week blocks, except for where a child is disabled, then leave may be taken as single days or multiples of 1 day. Parental Leave is limited to a maximum of 4 weeks in any year for each child.

At least 21 days' notice must be provided and leave may be postponed apart from leave taken immediately after the birth or adoption, depending on the needs of the Council.

The above information is given for guidance purposes only and confers no extra rights to you beyond those provided by statute.

Parental Bereavement Leave

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to set out the Council's stance on employee entitlements to Parental Bereavement Leave. The Council acknowledges that the death of a child, or a stillbirth, can be one of the most harrowing experiences of someone's life. This policy explains the rights to time off, pay during time off and other support offered.

Eligibility

Parental Bereavement Leave is available from day one of employment. It is available to employees on the death of a child under the age of 18. You may take Parental Bereavement Leave if you fall into any one of the following categories:

- a 'natural' parent;
- an adoptive parent, and those with whom a child has been placed under the 'foster to adopt' scheme, provided the placement is ongoing;
- a 'natural' parent where the child has been adopted but a Court Order exists to allow the 'natural' parent to have contact with the child;
- an employee who is living with a child who has entered Great Britain from overseas in relation to whom has received official notification that they are eligible to adopt;
- an intended parent under a surrogacy arrangement where it was expected that a parental order would be made;
- a 'parent in fact', which is someone in whose home the child has been living for a period of at least four weeks before the death and has had day to day responsibility for the child, subject to exceptions. This category includes guardians and foster parents but does not include paid carers;
- the partner of anyone who falls into the above categories, where they live in an enduring family relationship with the child and their parent.

In addition, parents who suffer a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy are entitled to take parental bereavement leave.

Taking Leave

A total of two weeks may be taken as Parental Bereavement Leave and you may choose to take leave as:

- a single block of one week;
- a single block of two weeks;
- two separate blocks of one week.

Leave may start on any day of the week and must be taken in whole weeks. It may be taken at any time in the 56 week period following the death.

If you have suffered a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy, you are still entitled to take your full entitlement to Maternity and Paternity Leave, provided you were eligible to take Maternity or Paternity Leave in the first place, in addition to Parental Bereavement Leave. Parental Bereavement Leave cannot be taken at the same time as Maternity or Paternity Leave.

Where more than one child dies or is stillborn, you are entitled to two weeks of Parental Bereavement Leave in relation to each child.

Notification Requirements

Leave to be taken within the first 56 days of the death

You do not need to give any advance notice of taking Parental Bereavement Leave. The Council asks that you contact your manager by telephone by the time you were due to start work on the day you wish leave to begin, or if this is not possible, as soon as is reasonably practicable, giving the date of the death, the date on which leave will start and whether one or two weeks is to be taken.

Leave to be taken later than the first 56 days since the death

You need to give one week's advance notice of taking Parental Bereavement Leave to your manager by telephone giving the date of the death, the date on which leave will start and whether one or two weeks is to be taken.

Cancelling or Changes to Dates of Leave

You can cancel a period of leave that you have already told the Council about, as long as the period of leave has not already started. If you wish to cancel a period of leave which was to begin within the first 56 days of the death, you can cancel it by letting the Council know by your normal start time on the day that leave was originally due to start.

To cancel leave which was to begin later than 56 days after the death, you should let the Council know no later than one week prior to the intended start date.

You can also change the start date of leave by following the notice requirements above.

Payment during Leave

You will qualify for Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay during leave if you meet the following criteria:

- you have been continuously employed with the Council for at least 26 weeks by the week prior to the week in which the child dies;
- your normal average weekly earnings are not less than the lower earnings limit relevant for national insurance purposes;
- you are still employed by the Council on the date the child dies.

Payment will be made at the rate set by the Government each year or 90% of your average weekly earnings (whichever is lower).

In order to receive Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay, you must provide the Council with notice of this and the following information within 28 days, or as soon as is reasonably practicable, of the first day of parental bereavement leave:

- the child's name;
- the date of the death or stillbirth;
- a declaration that you fall into the one of the categories listed under 'Eligibility' above.

Terms and Conditions during Leave

During Parental Bereavement Leave, you remain entitled to receive your normal contractual terms and conditions of employment that you would have received had you not taken this leave, with the exception of remuneration. This will include contractual benefits, subject to the terms of these benefits.

Right to Return

Upon your return to work, you are entitled to return to the same job, with the same terms and conditions, in which you were employed before your absence unless:

- the period of leave you have taken is more than 26 weeks when added to any other period of statutory leave including Maternity, Paternity, Adoption Leave etc. in relation to the same child; and,
- it is not reasonably practicable for you to return to the same job.

On your first day back to work, your manager will set time aside to hold an informal meeting with you to discuss any arrangements regarding your return to work and any additional support the Council may be able to offer you.

The Council would like to remind you that you have access to a 24 hour telephone counselling service and the Council would like to encourage you to use it if you feel like you would like to talk to someone about your loss.

Standards

Dress Code

During the course of your employment you may come into contact with customers/members of the public and/or visitors to the premises. It is important that you present a professional image with regard to appearance and standards of dress. It is a requirement of the Council that you wear clothes and footwear that are appropriate for the work that you perform, and which present a neat, clean and professional appearance.

The Council operates a business casual dress code except for public facing events, meetings or formal gathering where the Council expects you to present yourself in formal business attire.

The requirements of particular faiths to wear specific types of clothing or to dress modestly will be respected so long as the item of clothing does not pose a hazard to the health and safety of employees, does not contravene any reasonable and legitimate requirements of the Council, and does not have a negative impact on any other person.

If you have been issued with a uniform, overalls or any attire by the Council this must be worn at all times, as appropriate.

If you have any queries regarding the dress code, you should seek advice from your Manager.

Uniform

The Council will provide you with a uniform, which you must wear at all times whilst carrying out your working duties. The Council will replace uniforms damaged due to normal wear and tear free of charge. You will be responsible for the cost of replacement should replacement be necessary as a result of your own negligence.

You agree that on termination of your employment, should you not return your uniform, or should your uniform be returned in an unsatisfactory condition, the cost of replacement or a proportionate amount of this, as decided by the Council, will be deducted from any final monies owing to you, or you will otherwise reimburse the Council.

Overall

If required the Council will provide you with an overall, which you must wear at all times whilst carrying out your working duties. The Council will replace overalls damaged due to normal wear and tear free of charge. You will be responsible for the cost of replacement should replacement be necessary as a result of your own negligence.

You agree that on termination of your employment, should you not return your overall, or should your overall be returned in an unsatisfactory condition, the cost of replacement or a proportionate amount of this, as decided by the Council, will be deducted from any final monies owing to you, or you will otherwise reimburse the Council.

Wastage

The Council maintains a policy of minimum waste which is essential to the cost-effective and efficient running of our Council.

You are able to promote this policy by taking extra care during your normal duties by avoiding unnecessary or extravagant use of services, time, energy, etc. The following points are illustrations of this:

- handle machines, equipment and stock with care;
- turn off any unnecessary lighting and heating;
- keep doors closed whenever possible;
- ask for other work if your job has come to a standstill; and,
- start with the minimum of delay after arriving for work and after breaks.

The following provisions are an express written term of your contract of employment:

- any damage to vehicles, stock or property belonging to the Council or to that of customers/members of the public, other employees or the general public that is the result of your carelessness, negligence or deliberate vandalism will render you liable to pay the full or part of the cost of repair or replacement; and,
- any loss to the Council that is the result of your failure to observe rules, procedures or instruction, or is as a result of your negligent behaviour or your unsatisfactory standards of work will render you liable to reimburse to the Council the full or part of the cost of the loss.

In the event of failure to pay, the Council has the contractual right to deduct such costs from your pay.

Anti-Bribery

Policy Statement

The Council is committed to the prevention of bribery by those employed and associated with it and is committed to carrying out its business fairly, honestly and openly, with zero-tolerance towards bribery.

All employees have a responsibility to prevent, detect and report all instances of bribery.

Procedure

The Council will:

- carry out a risk assessment to ascertain the risk of bribery;
- instigate procedures proportionate to that risk;
- have good internal controls and record-keeping;
- secure the commitment of all employees to the prevention and detection of bribery;
- develop a culture in which bribery is unacceptable;
- undertake due diligence procedures proportionate to the assessed risk of bribery;
- effectively communicate the Anti-Bribery Policy to all employees;
- train all employees to recognise bribery so that they can avoid it and be alert to possible instances of bribery;
- have clear procedures on what to do should bribery be suspected;
- train all employees so that they are aware of what to do should they discover a possible instance of bribery;
- monitor and review the effectiveness of the bribery procedures and update them as necessary to ensure that they remain effective.

Anyone who has concerns regarding acts or potential acts of bribery should speak to their Manager in the first instance. If for any reason you are not able to speak to your Manager, you should contact the Town Clerk .

All reports will be treated in confidence, however if appropriate concerns can be reported anonymously.

The Council expressly prohibits employees from offering, promising, giving, or requesting, agreeing to receive or receiving any financial or other advantage to another person or business with the intention of gaining an improper financial or other advantage.

The Council expressly prohibits the bribing of a UK or foreign public official in order to obtain or retain business or an advantage in the conduct of business.

Hospitality and Business Gifts

Reasonable and proportionate hospitality, advertising, sponsorship and promotional or other similar business expenditure is recognised as an established and important part of doing business. However, hospitality, promotional and similar business expenditure can be used as bribes.

The Council expressly prohibits the giving and receiving of hospitality or business gifts and similar where the intention in doing so is to receive or confer an advantage in return for giving or receiving the hospitality or business gift or similar.

The following rules must be followed in relation to hospitality and business gifts:

- all offers of business gifts should be referred to and agreed to by a more senior member of management;
- business gifts should not be made without the permission of a more senior member of management;
- a record of all business gifts made and received and the reason for the gift should be retained;
- all hospitality must be proportionate and reasonable and in line with the Council's hospitality policy; guidance should be sought from a more senior member of management as to whether the planned hospitality is proportionate and reasonable;
- records should be maintained of all hospitality provided and accepted, including cost and reason for providing or accepting the hospitality;
- quid pro quo arrangements are expressly prohibited;
- cash gifts are expressly prohibited;
- the provision or acceptance of entertainment of a sexual nature is expressly prohibited;
- acceptable hospitality and entertaining may include modest meals with people with whom the Council do business, such as providing a modest lunch after a meeting, or the occasional provision of or attendance at sporting or cultural events, provided that the intention is to build business relationships rather than to receive or confer an advantage;
- the provision of small promotional gifts, such as diaries, pens or similar, will generally be regarded as acceptable;
- employees reviewing expense claims should be alert to the provision of hospitality or business gifts that may be construed as a bribe;
- all concerns should be reported.

Where you develop or seek to develop new avenues for business or new contracts, or where the nature of the business changes, you should inform your Manager of this in order that due diligence and a risk assessment of the circumstances can be undertaken.

Where a business relationship with an external party is sought or newly established, or the nature of the relationship is changed, appropriate due diligence must be exercised to ensure that there are no circumstances giving rise to a concern. That external party must also be made aware of this Anti-Bribery Policy.

The Council expressly prohibits facilitation payments of any sort. Any employee placed under pressure to make a facilitation payment should refer the matter to a more senior member of management immediately.

The Council expressly prohibits the giving of donations to political parties.

Any charitable donation must be consistent with the Council's policy on charitable giving and with the knowledge and consent of a more senior member of management.

Penalties

The penalties for breaching the provisions of the Bribery Act 2010 include unlimited fines for the Council, imprisonment and unlimited fines for individuals.

Failure to follow these procedures may result in formal disciplinary action being taken against you, as set out in our Disciplinary Procedure.

Anti-Facilitation of Tax Evasion

Introduction

Integrity and transparency are of utmost importance to the Council and so the Council conducts our business to the highest legal and ethical standards. The Council are aware of the laws in place relating to tax evasion, including the Criminal Finances Act 2017, and take our responsibilities seriously. The Council understands that failure to prevent the facilitation of tax evasion undertaken by representatives of the Council renders the Council liable to criminal sanctions including an unlimited fine.

This policy applies to our entire direct workforce and also those who work on behalf of the Council or provide services to our business including employees, workers including agency workers, volunteers, contractors, consultants, and any other party with whom the Council does business.

What is Tax Evasion?

Tax evasion is the practice of using illegal methods to avoid paying tax. It involves deliberate and dishonest conduct and is not the same as tax avoidance. It frequently involves contrived; artificial transactions that serve no purpose other than to reduce tax liability.

Indicators of tax evasion are below. This list is not exhaustive:

- request for payment by cash;
- overly-complex payment mechanisms;
- transactions involving overly complex supply chains;
- transactions involving private banking facilities;
- incomplete or non-standard invoices or other records relating to the payment of tax;
- making false statements in relation to the payment of tax or failure to register with relevant bodies tasked with ensuring tax compliance;
- failure to register for VAT;
- any individual or supplier asking to be paid gross when they should be paid net.

Our Stance on the Facilitation of Tax Evasion

Tax evasion and facilitating the evasion of tax are criminal offences. Both acts will damage our reputation and the confidence of our customers, suppliers and business partners.

The Council will not be party to tax evasion or the facilitation of tax evasion of any form. The Council takes a zero-tolerance approach to the facilitation of tax evasion. The Council is committed to:

- rejecting the facilitation of tax evasion; and,
- not recommending the services of others who do not have reasonable prevention procedures in place.

Your Responsibilities

It is strictly prohibited for any employee or person working on our behalf or in connection with the Council to take part in any activity, directly or indirectly, relating to tax evasion or its facilitation.

You must not:

- undertake any action which facilitates tax evasion;
- aid or abet any action of tax evasion.

You are required to report any behaviour which reasonably leads you to believe that tax evasion or the facilitation of tax evasion is occurring in any way which is connected to the Council.

If the Council has reason to believe that you have breached any obligation placed upon you by this policy, action will be taken which is appropriate to our relationship with you. This includes the instigation of a Disciplinary Procedure, or the termination of our business arrangement with you.

Reporting Concerns

You must notify your Manager at the earliest stage if you suspect that tax evasion or the facilitation of tax evasion may be occurring. The failure to report a suspicion, of itself, may constitute an offence of facilitation of tax evasion and therefore the Council strongly encourages the reporting of concerns.

Any concerns should be reported to Management. An investigation will then be carried out and you may need to give an account of your suspicions including names, dates and any other pertinent information.

You may also report a concern via the Council's Whistleblowing Policy which is available in this Handbook, or upon request.

Detriment

No individual who reports a concern relating to tax evasion under this policy, or the Whistleblowing Policy, will be subject to detriment because of their actions.

Additionally, no individual will be subject to detriment because they have refused to take part in any behaviour which is prohibited by this policy.

Training and Review

The Council will ensure that it gives all relevant training for staff in relation to financial crime detection and prevention. It will ensure it monitors and enforces compliance with the prevention procedures and regularly review the effectiveness of prevention procedures.

The Council reserves the right to make amendments to this policy at any time without notice.

Data Protection

The Council is fully committed to compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and all other data protection legislation currently in force. The Regulation applies to anyone processing personal data and sets out principles which should be followed and gives rights to those whose data is being processed.

To this end, the Council endorses fully and adheres to the Data Protection Principles listed below. When processing data the Council will ensure that it is:

- processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent way ('lawfulness, fairness and transparency');
- processed no further than the legitimate purposes for which that data was collected ('purpose limitation');
- limited to what is necessary in relation to the purpose ('data minimisation');
- accurate and kept up to date ('accuracy');
- kept in a form which permits identification of the data subject for no longer than is necessary ('storage limitation');
- processed in a manner that ensures security of that personal data ('integrity and confidentiality');
- processed by a controller who can demonstrate compliance with the principles ('accountability').

These rights must be observed at all times when processing or using personal information. Therefore, through appropriate management and strict application of criteria and controls, the Council will:

- observe fully the conditions regarding having a lawful basis to process personal information;
- meet its legal obligations to specify the purposes for which information is used;
- collect and process appropriate information only to the extent that it is necessary to fulfil operational needs or to comply with any legal requirements;
- ensure the information held is accurate and up to date;
- ensure that the information is held for no longer than is necessary;
- ensure that the rights of people about whom information is held can be fully exercised under the Data Protection Act 2018 (i.e. the right to be informed that processing is being undertaken, to access personal information on request; to prevent processing in certain circumstances, and to correct, rectify, block or erase information that is regarded as wrong information);
- take appropriate technical and organisational security measures to safeguard personal information;
- ensure that personal information is not transferred outside the EU, to other countries or international organisations without an adequate level of protection.

Employees' Personal Information

Throughout employment and for as long as is necessary after the termination of employment, the Council will need to process data about you. The kind of data that the Council will process includes:

- any references obtained during recruitment;
- details of terms of employment;
- payroll details;
- tax and national insurance information;
- details of job duties;
- details of health and sickness absence records;
- details of holiday records;
- information about performance;
- details of any disciplinary and grievance investigations and proceedings;
- training records;
- contact names and addresses;
- correspondence with the Council and other information that you have given the Council.

The Council believes that those records used are consistent with the employment relationship between the Council and yourself and with the data protection principles. The data the Council holds will be for management and administrative use only but the Council may, from time to time, need to disclose some data it holds about you to relevant third parties, for example where legally obliged to do so by HM Revenue & Customs, where requested to do so by yourself for the purpose of giving a reference or in relation to maintenance support, and/or the hosting of data in relation to the provision of insurance.

In some cases the Council may hold sensitive data, which is defined by the legislation as special categories of personal data, about you. For example, this could be information about health, racial or ethnic origin, criminal convictions, trade union membership, or religious beliefs. This information may be processed not only to meet the Council's legal responsibilities but, for example, for purposes of personnel management and administration, suitability for employment, and to comply with equal opportunity legislation. Since this information is considered sensitive, the processing of which may cause concern or distress, you will be asked to give express consent for this information to be processed, unless the Council has a specific legal requirement to process such data.

[Access to Data](#)

You may, within a period of one month of a written request, inspect and/or have a copy, subject to the requirements of the legislation, of information in your own personnel file and/or other specified personal data and, if necessary, require corrections should such records be faulty. If you wish to do so you must make a written request to your Manager. The Council is entitled to change the above provisions at any time at its discretion, in line with current GDPR legislation.

[Data Security](#)

You are responsible for ensuring that any personal data that you hold and process as part of your job role is stored securely.

You must ensure that personal information is not disclosed orally, in writing, via web pages, or by any other means, accidentally or otherwise, to any unauthorised third party.

You should note that unauthorised disclosure may result in action under the Disciplinary Procedure, which may include dismissal for gross misconduct. Personal information should be kept in a locked filing cabinet, drawer, or safe. Electronic data should be coded, encrypted, or password protected both on a local hard drive and on a network drive that is regularly backed up. If a copy is kept on removable storage media, that media must itself be kept in a locked filing cabinet, drawer, or safe.

When travelling with a device containing personal data, you must ensure both the device and data is password protected. The device should be kept secure and, where possible, it should be locked away out of sight, for example in the boot of a car. You should avoid travelling with hard copies of personal data where there is secure electronic storage available. When it is essential to travel with hard copies of personal data this should be kept securely in a bag and where possible locked away out of sight, for example in the boot of a car.

Notifying Breaches

A personal data breach is a breach of security leading to the accidental or unlawful destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data transmitted, stored or processed.

The following are examples of data breaches

- access by an unauthorised third party;
- deliberate or accidental action (or inaction) by a data controller or data processor;
- sending personal data to an incorrect recipient;
- computing devices containing personal data being lost or stolen;
- alteration of personal data without permission;
- loss of availability of personal data.

Investigation and Notification

In the event that the Council becomes aware of a breach, or a potential breach, an investigation will be carried out. This investigation will be carried out by Management.

The Council will undertake to notify the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) of a breach which is likely to pose a risk to people's rights and freedoms without undue delay and at the latest within 72 hours of discovery. If the Council is unable to report in full within this timescale, The Council will make an initial report to the ICO, and then provide a full report in more than one instalment if so required.

The Council will undertake to notify the individual whose data is the subject of a breach if there is a high risk to people's rights and freedoms without undue delay and may, dependent on the circumstances, be made before the supervisory authority is notified.

Record of Breaches

The Council records all personal data breaches regardless of whether they are notifiable or not as part of its general accountability requirement under the Data Protection Act 2018. It records the facts relating to the breach, its effects and the remedial action taken.

IT and Communications

The Council reserves the right to access and monitor the use of all Council owned digital devices, including monitoring internet, telephone and email use. The Council also monitors access to its networks via private devices.

You must take the appropriate steps to guard against unauthorised access to, alteration, accidental loss, disclosure or destruction of data.

Under no circumstances should you divulge your password to anyone else nor should you gain access or attempt to gain access to information stored electronically which is beyond the scope of your authorised access level.

You are responsible for any activity which occurs within your accounts.

Failure to comply with any aspect of this procedure may result in a disciplinary warning or dismissal, depending on the circumstances.

Reasonable personal use of computer and telephone systems is permitted provided it does not impact on your performance.

Storage of personal files, images, software, or Apps should be kept to a minimum and must not impact on the performance of the network or device.

You must not use the Council internet connections or devices to access content that is illegal, pornographic, or supports hate and/or discrimination.

You must not send communications via any Council or personal device that could be deemed to be offensive.

The use of any device to photograph or film fellow employees, customers, members of the public, visitors, or any member of the public without their consent may breach an individual's right to privacy and could in certain circumstances constitute harassment.

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other Council policies and rules, including policies on equality and positive work environment.

As with other written communication, email is a legally binding method of communication. Other forms of communication via the internet may also be legally binding. All forms of communication whether verbal or written represent the Council and should therefore meet the standard and style expected of all communications.

Because of potential virus infection and consequent damage to the business, you must not download or load any software into any computer via any source, including memory sticks, flash drives, pen drives, any portable memory devices, or mobile phones without the prior approval of management. Approval will only be given after virus checking.

Downloading free software or Apps is permitted where there is a valid business reason and the software or App is considered to be from a reputable source.

You must not make pirate copies of Council owned software for use by other persons either inside or outside the Council. This not only breaks Council rules, but it is also an illegal practice.

Council devices may contain tracking facilities. The Council may use these as follows:

- for the prevention and detection of theft of devices;

- to protect the health and safety of our employees;
- as a method of checking the accuracy of Council records, such as timesheets.

You must not tamper with any tracking facility or device. Tampering with tracking may lead to action under the Disciplinary Procedure up to and including summary dismissal.

Personally Issued Computer and Mobile Electronic Devices

The Council will provide you with the necessary items of equipment to aid you in carrying out your working duties.

Where a device has been issued, it is for business use only, and at all times will remain the property of the Council. A device is provided primarily to enable you to do your job. It is your responsibility therefore to ensure that the device is kept charged and switched on while you are working.

If you have been issued with a mobile phone or other device, you are responsible for the safekeeping and condition of the device at all times. You will be responsible for any cost of repair or replacement other than fair wear and tear. The Council will arrange for any repair or replacement. In the event that the device is lost or stolen the Council must be notified immediately in order to cancel the number. You agree that upon termination of your employment should you not return your device, or should your device be returned in an unsatisfactory condition, the cost of replacement or a proportionate amount of this, as decided by the Council, will be deducted from any final monies owing to you, or you will otherwise reimburse the Council.

Where you have been issued with a mobile phone or device with internet access, you should where possible connect to a secure and free Wi-Fi network in order to access the internet.

Lost or Stolen Mobile Phones

You are responsible at all times for the security of the mobile phone, and it should never be left unattended. A PIN or pattern lock should be used on the mobile to enable voicemails to be picked up. If unsure how to do this, please contact your Manager.

If the phone is lost or stolen, this must be reported to the Council immediately to ensure that the account is stopped and there is no unauthorised usage.

In the event of loss or theft of a mobile phone, the incident must also be reported to the police within 24 hours and an incident number obtained. Please provide this number when reporting the loss to the Council.

You will be responsible for any insurance excess for loss or damage to phones.

The Council reserves the right to claim reimbursement for the cost of the phone, or excess usage charges should the correct procedures not be followed, a user reports repeated loss of their mobile, it is deemed that you have not taken appropriate measures to safeguard the equipment, or reported the loss thereof, which will be investigated by the Council and judged at its absolute discretion.

Monitoring of Mobile Phone Usage and Costs

The Council receives itemised billing for all Council mobile phones, and this is monitored on a monthly basis. The billing system identifies all calls, texts, and data usage, if appropriate, and the costs related to this, by user, destination, duration, and frequency. High or clear personal usage will be investigated. High usage is defined as usage which falls outside of the normal usage pattern for the individual, or outside of the usage pattern in comparison to other similar users.

This monitoring will allow the Council to identify any areas of potential misuse or training that may be required, or to negotiate with suppliers any necessary changes in tariffs to ensure cost efficiency.

If it is found the mobile has been misused, the Council may act under the Disciplinary Procedure.

Making Personal Calls from Council Mobile Phones

The Council recognises that you may have to make personal calls during working hours or outside normal working hours.

The Council permits reasonable use of internet and email communications for personal use.

Where it is deemed that an unreasonable amount of personal calls or text messages have been made, or where data usage is excessive, the Council reserves the right to recover these costs, either through deduction from pay or otherwise as agreed.

Downloading Apps is permitted where the App is considered to be from a reputable source. You are responsible for the cost of Apps for personal use.

The Council may, after formal investigation, take action under the Disciplinary Procedure if such use is deemed excessive.

Personal Mobiles

You are permitted reasonable use of your personal mobile phone providing this does not interfere with the performance of your duties or cause any disruption to others.

Photos or recordings of The Council's or property must not be shared with members of the public without the permission of the communication team or your line manager.

You must not use mobile phones whilst undertaking any task where safety is a consideration, and the use of the phone might interfere with the level of concentration required to undertake the task safely.

Monitoring of Personal Communications

As stated above, the Council may monitor, intercept or record all communications received or made via the Council's telephone system or any other system including email and internet usage. If you wish to make a call that cannot be monitored you should discuss this with your Manager. Monitoring may be conducted by any member of management but will be for work-related purposes only. This makes up part of your contractual terms and conditions.

CCTV

It is brought to your attention that the Council operates CCTV for security and monitoring purposes.

The Council may view and monitor CCTV footage for work-related purposes.

This makes up part of your contractual terms and conditions.

Social Media

The Council recognises that some employees will have personal social media accounts. Such accounts must only be used to express personal views, and care should be exercised in all cases where you are identifiable as someone employed by the Council.

In any event, you must identify yourself as an employee of the Council when referencing our products or services.

The Council requires employees using social media sites to refrain from making any comments or engage in discussions which could adversely affect the Council or the Council's reputation, or that of our Councillors, residents, visitors, partners or contractors, customers and suppliers. It is also prohibited to breach discrimination legislation, harass or bully an employee, or damage working relationships between fellow employees.

You must not share any confidential or sensitive Council information on social networks.

You are personally responsible for all content posted on your accounts. All passwords must remain secure, and you must never leave accounts open whilst you are away from your device or computer.

You are reminded that regardless of the social network used, or privacy settings activated, everything posted on the internet has the potential to become public and widespread. All social media posts should therefore be carefully considered to ensure they fit with the image you and the Council want to share online.

Any information posted on the internet may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal if it breaches this policy or any other expected levels of conduct. This includes posts on a personal account with inappropriate privacy settings, posts made outside of working hours, and those posts made not using the Council computers or equipment. You may also be required to remove content created or shared by you if the Council consider such posts to be a breach of this policy.

All Council rules and policies apply in respect of social media posts. This policy therefore should be read in conjunction with all other policies, in particular your attention is drawn to the Council's policies on equality and positive work environment.

Rules for Driving on Council Business

Information for Vehicle Drivers

The following general rules apply if you drive on Council business. They make up part of your contractual terms and conditions.

This section should be read in conjunction with the Expenses Policy.

You will need to produce your driving licence each year, or as otherwise requested, so that a copy can be kept on file. You are also required to comply with the Council's driving licence check process as and when requested, to enable the Council to check the details of your driver record held by the DVLA. You must inform the Council immediately if you are no longer entitled to drive for any reason.

The consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs prior to or during the course of driving is strictly prohibited and infringement of this rule may result in your summary dismissal.

You must ensure that the vehicle is kept in good condition. This includes keeping it clean and ensuring that the tyre pressure, lights, oil, water etc. are up to the required standard. You must not drive the vehicle in an unroadworthy condition. Any defects must be reported immediately to management. The vehicle must not be driven without the fault being rectified or prior approval given for its use.

Where any journey requires you to travel through any congestion or charge zone, you must ensure that the applicable charge has been paid prior to you travelling. You will be responsible for the payment of any charges not settled prior to travelling through a congestion or charge zone. If these sums remain unpaid the appropriate deductions may be made from your pay.

You and any passengers must comply with all legal requirements, including wearing seatbelts at all times when the vehicle is in motion.

If you incur any fines for parking or other motoring offences whilst on Council business you will be personally liable for the payment of such fines.

You must plan journeys sufficiently to ensure safe arrival. This means that enough time must be allocated for the journey, allowing for delays and rest breaks on long journeys. You must ensure that you are fit to drive and that you are not tired before setting off on long journeys.

To make long journeys safer, you should not drive for more than two hours without a break. The use of overnight stays for long journeys may be permitted with prior management approval.

You should check weather forecasts and road traffic conditions before setting out on journeys. In the event of adverse weather or road conditions you should carry out all necessary driver checks, and adjust your journey times or routes, or reschedule your journey if necessary.

You must pay full attention to your driving at all times and avoid distractions, which can be caused by technology such as phones, satellite navigation devices, or audio equipment, eating or drinking, or others in the car. You should familiarise yourself with the rules regarding mobile phones within this handbook.

Drivers of Council Vehicles

The information set out below applies if you drive any kind of Council vehicle.

Please note that the Council operates a tracking system – all vehicles are tracked and monitored.

A vehicle is only available if you hold a current and valid driving licence.

You are reminded that the vehicle provided to you is a costly item. In order to safeguard it and to ensure it is used correctly, you must adhere to the following at all times.

As all vehicles are insured through the Council and any conviction for driving offences, driving endorsements or any fines incurred must be reported immediately. You are personally responsible for the payment of any fine or fixed penalty incurred whilst in charge of the vehicle.

If you are considered to be acting carelessly or recklessly in your use of the vehicle, you may be subject to action under the Disciplinary Procedure, which may involve the withdrawal of the vehicle where appropriate. If you are prosecuted or convicted of a driving offence which results in a period of disqualification, and the holding of a licence is an essential requirement of the job, this may result in your dismissal.

You must immediately report any and every accident or incident in which a vehicle in your charge becomes involved, regardless of fault and whether or not persons or property are affected.

The appropriate documentation must be carried at all times (e.g. insurance details), and you must ensure that all security devices are activated when the vehicle is left unattended.

Where you are responsible for any damage or loss to the vehicle, the Council reserves the right to insist on you rectifying the damage at your own expense or paying the excess part of any claim on the insurers. You will be responsible for any fines incurred. If these sums remain unpaid the appropriate deductions will be made from your pay in such circumstances.

When you are travelling in any Council vehicle you must not smoke, including the use of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) or electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), and you must not allow others to smoke under any circumstances. The only exception will be if you are using your own vehicle on Council business, and you will be the only occupant.

If a telephone is installed in your vehicle, it may only be used in accordance with the law, and for business purposes or in an emergency, unless prior authorisation to do so has been given.

You must not have modifications made or extras fitted to the vehicle without prior permission from the Council. Where the reversal of the modification or the removal of the extra would result in the value of the vehicle being less than had they not been made or fitted, then the modification and/or extra will become the property of the Council.

Personal use of Council vehicles is strictly prohibited.

Upon termination of employment you must return the vehicle to the Council's premises in a clean and tidy state. If it is not returned in a satisfactory condition a charge may be made for recovery and/or valeting costs which will be deducted from any outstanding salary.

Use of Mobile Devices Whilst Driving

You must ensure that you have proper control of any vehicle that you are driving at all times.

It is an offence to use handheld mobile device whilst driving. You will be liable for prosecution if you are holding a mobile phone or any other type of handheld device to send or receive any sort of data, be it voice, text or pictorial image. You are regarded to be driving if you are in charge of a vehicle with its engine running on a public road, even if the vehicle is stationary. It is therefore strictly forbidden for you to use handheld mobile device whilst driving.

A mobile phone may only be used where there is an incoming call or an outgoing voice activated call through a hands-free device that is activated without a need to hold the phone at any time. The call should be kept to the shortest possible time and only to effect essential communications. When you need to operate the mobile phone or make or deal with a call through the hands-free device for longer than receiving or giving a short communication, before doing so you must stop and park the vehicle where it is safe and lawful to do so and with the engine switched off. Whilst driving, you must not use the text message facility on the mobile phone, or if available through such a phone, an image facility or the internet.

You are personally responsible for the payment of any fine or fixed penalty incurred whilst in charge of the vehicle. Any conviction for driving offences, any driving endorsements or any fines incurred must be reported immediately as this may affect the Council's insurance.

You are liable for the payment of any fines or penalties incurred as a result of being caught misusing a mobile device.

You should note carefully that a breach of the Council's rules on the use of a mobile devices whilst driving may render you liable to action under the Disciplinary Procedure, up to and including dismissal dependent upon the circumstances.

Grievance Procedure

Where you have a grievance relating to any aspect of your employment you should have no hesitation in raising the matter informally. Your contract details the person with whom a grievance should be raised. If you wish to make a formal grievance it must be set out in writing.

It is the Council's intention to consider all grievances as soon as possible, and a meeting will be held usually within 5 working days of you raising a grievance. The meeting will enable you to give full details of your grievance.

You are entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee or accredited trade union official at the grievance meeting.

If your grievance is about the person to whom your contract advises you should raise a grievance, you should raise it with a more senior member of management, or, if not possible, another member of management at the same level.

After the meeting the Manager will inform you of their decision in writing in response to the grievance. You have the right to appeal against this decision.

If you wish to appeal, you must inform the Town Clerk in writing within 5 working days working days. You will then be invited to attend another meeting, after which you will be informed of the final decision in writing.

It is not permissible to record, whether audio and/or visual, any meetings which take place as part of this procedure, without our express written authorisation. You should note that unauthorised recording may result in action under the Disciplinary Procedure, which may include dismissal for gross misconduct.

Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing)

The Council recognises that effective and honest communication is essential if concerns about breaches or failures are to be effectively dealt with and the Council's success ensured.

This policy is designed to provide guidance to all those who work with or within the Council, including casual and temporary staff, who may from time to time feel that they need to raise certain issues relating to the Council with someone in confidence.

Any person who in the public interest raises genuine concerns under this policy will not under any circumstances be subjected to any form of detriment or disadvantage as a result of having raised their concerns. The victimisation or harassment of an individual making a protected disclosure is a disciplinary offence.

This policy applies where you reasonably believe that one of the following sets of circumstances is occurring, has occurred, or may occur within the Council and that your disclosure is in the public interest:

- 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;
- information tending to show any matter falling within any one of the preceding paragraphs has been, is being or is likely to be deliberately concealed.

It is not necessary that you prove the breach or failure that you are alleging has occurred or is likely to occur, you may simply raise a reasonable suspicion. However, you should note that you will not be protected from the consequences of making such a disclosure if, by doing so, you commit a criminal offence.

Procedure

If you believe that any of the above practices are happening in the Council the following procedure should be followed:

- you should initially raise the issues within 5 working days, The Council will treat the matter in confidence;
- if it is not appropriate to raise the issues with 5 working days, you should raise the issue with a more senior member of management or, if not possible, another member of management at the same level;
- it is likely that an investigation will be necessary and you may be required to attend an investigatory meeting as a witness;
- at the investigation meeting you will need to explain fully the nature and extent of what you believe is the problem. You may bring a colleague to help you explain the situation more clearly if you wish.

Depending on the nature of your complaint, it may not be possible to find an immediate solution, but your concerns will be investigated as quickly as is reasonably possible, and, where possible, providing such disclosure does not breach confidentiality, you will be advised of the outcome of the investigation in due course. As a minimum you will be advised when any investigation has been completed and that appropriate action has been taken, although you may not be informed of the specific details of the action that has been taken.

Where it is necessary for your disclosure and the investigative meeting minutes to be supplied to an employee as part of the evidence supporting disciplinary action, appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that your working environment and/or working relationships are not prejudiced by the fact of the disclosure.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of this procedure you may raise the matter within 5 working days. If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome you have the right to express your concerns to the relevant Prescribed Person designated by the Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) Order 2014, or any statute or statutory instrument which subsequently supersedes this legislation.

If you reasonably believe that the relevant failure as listed in any of the above practices relates wholly or mainly to the conduct of a person other than someone in the Council, or any other matter for which a person other than the Council has legal responsibility, then you should make that disclosure to that other person.

Also, you may make such a disclosure to Protect, (www.protect-advice.org.uk) the leading authority on public interest whistleblowing, if you consider that it has an interest in the matter and, despite the best efforts of the Council, you believe that disclosure within the Council is inappropriate or as noted previously has been unsuccessful. Disclosures made to legal advisors in the course of obtaining legal advice will be protected.

If any disclosure concerns information which you do not substantially believe is true or is made in bad faith, for instance in order to cause disruption within the Council, or indeed if the disclosure is made for personal gain, then you may become subject to action under the Disciplinary Procedure, which could include dismissal.

While the Council hopes that such disclosures will never be necessary, it also recognises that it may find itself in circumstances which are new to it. Each case will be treated on its own facts.

Health, Safety and Hygiene

Safety

The Council is committed to ensuring your health, safety, and welfare whilst at work. If you become aware of any potential hazard or unsafe working conditions, you should have no hesitation in raising them with the Council.

You are required to take all reasonable steps to safeguard your health and safety, and that of any other person who may be affected by your actions, and to observe at all times the published health, safety and fire rules and procedures. All accidents must be reported to management and entered into the Accident Book as necessary.

Smoke Free Workplace

The Council has a legal duty to provide a smokefree workplace. Failure to adhere to this legal requirement may result in formal disciplinary action being taken against you, as set out in the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.

You should be aware that enforcement authorities can issue penalties and fines if you are found guilty of smoking in a smoke-free place. You will be personally liable for any fine or fixed penalty imposed for non-compliance.

Smoking, including the use of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) or electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), is prohibited throughout the entire workplace with no exceptions.

You are only permitted to smoke during authorised breaks.

Hygiene

Any exposed cut or burn must be covered with a first-aid dressing.

If you are suffering from an infectious or contagious disease or illness such as rubella or hepatitis you must not report for work without clearance from your own G.P. Contact with any person suffering from an infectious or contagious disease must be reported before commencing work.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Where required, the Council will provide you with PPE, which you must wear at all appropriate times whilst carrying out working duties. This equipment is issued for your own protection.

You are responsible for the safekeeping and proper use of the PPE.

If you become aware that the equipment may be faulty, it is your responsibility to immediately notify the Council in order that it may be replaced.

The Council will replace equipment damaged due to normal wear and tear free of charge and will ensure that it meets current safety standards. However, you will be responsible for the cost of replacement should replacement be necessary as a result of your own negligence.

You agree that on termination of your employment, should you not return your PPE or should your PPE be returned in an unsatisfactory condition, the cost of replacement or a proportionate amount of this, as decided by the Council, will be deducted from any final monies owing to you, or you will otherwise reimburse the Council.

Failure to follow these procedures may also, after formal investigation, lead to the Council taking action against you under the disciplinary procedure.

Alcohol and Substance Abuse

Alcohol and substance misuse can have a detrimental effect upon your health, can adversely influence your work performance, and can adversely affect your relationships with colleagues and customers. It can also result in reduced efficiency and increased absenteeism.

The Council has a duty towards, and is concerned about, the health and welfare of all employees. It is therefore Council policy to:

- promote healthy lifestyles in general

- promote a responsible attitude to the consumption of alcohol amongst employees;
- offer assistance to those employees who require it;
- treat alcohol and substance abuse as a health problem and arrange for employees to seek professional assistance.

The Council will treat any absence due to alcohol and substance abuse in the same way as sickness absence on the condition that you obtain professional treatment and maintain regular contact with the appropriate Occupational Health Department.

The Council will treat all relevant discussions in strict confidence.

If inadequate work performance or unacceptable behaviour, including poor work relationships, occur or persist, the matter may be dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure. Careful consideration will be given if you have acknowledged the existence of a problem and/or have agreed to obtain medical help for the condition. However, any incident which amounts to gross misconduct would be considered a dismissible offence. If you fail to complete a prescribed course of treatment or have a relapse following treatment, the matter may be dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.

Supporting Positive Mental Health

The Council understands the positive impact that healthy and engaged employees make to the success of the business. As such, the Council pledges to provide initial and ongoing support and help for employees going through mental health problems. The Council wishes to create an open and honest workplace where managers and employees can discuss mental health problems, and to ensure the necessary support is known and offered to employees when needed.

The Council understands the role it has in ensuring that health and safety legislation is adhered to. The Council undertakes to create a safe workplace where risks to mental health and wellbeing are limited as far as possible. Additionally, the Council understands the protection employees with a disability have against discrimination under the Equality Act 2010, including the obligation for employers to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees.

When a Manager identifies that an employee may be suffering from a mental health problem, early intervention will be undertaken. The Manager will speak with the employee, in a series of meetings if required, and encourage the employee to speak openly and honestly about their situation. The meetings will be used to ascertain how the employee may be supported by the Council and whether any adjustments are to be made. Adjustments may be made on a temporary basis. Meetings will be held in complete confidence, save for where information needs to be shared with HR or other managers regarding any adjustments made. The employee will be consulted regarding the detail of the information shared.

Telephone counselling service provided via our Employee Assistance Programme for the opportunity to talk to a trained expert on any issues that are concerning them.

Disciplinary Rules

It is necessary to have a minimum number of rules in the interests of the whole organisation.

The rules set standards of performance and behaviour, whilst the procedures are designed to help promote fairness and order in the treatment of individuals. It is our aim that the rules and procedures should emphasise and encourage improvement in the conduct of individuals where they are failing to meet the required standards, and not be seen merely as a means of punishment.

It is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with the following rules and procedures. Any breaches may result in action being taken in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedure. If you have any concerns or require clarification on any issue, please raise them with management.

The Council may need to change the rules from time to time and any such changes will be notified to you as appropriate.

It is not practicable to specify all disciplinary rules or offences that may result in disciplinary action, as they may vary depending on the nature of the work. In addition to the general rules and rules on gross misconduct shown in this handbook, a breach of other specific conditions, procedures or rules that are contained within this Handbook or that have otherwise been made known to you, will also result in the Disciplinary Procedure being used to deal with such matters.

General Rules

This list is not exhaustive.

- You must conduct yourself and perform your work at all times in a manner that is in the interests of the Council. Any conduct detrimental to its interests or its relations with any third party, or damaging to its public image, shall be considered to be a breach of the Council's rules.
- You are expected to achieve and maintain a good standard of work and to show a conscientious approach to the job or to the detail of that job to a standard that may reasonably be expected.
- You must maintain acceptable attendance at work and timekeeping.
- You are expected to read and observe all authorised notices that are displayed by the Council.
- You are engaged on the basis that you must be prepared to undertake reasonable duties other than those for which you have been specifically engaged to ensure maximum efficiency.
- You must not make use of telephones, email or postal facilities or any other communication mode for personal purposes without the prior permission of management. You must adhere to the Council's policy with regard to the use of mobile phones and other devices.
- You are not permitted to remove material or equipment of any kind from the Council without prior permission.
- You must notify the Council immediately of any incident causing damage to property belonging to the Council (e.g. building, machinery and equipment), or to the property of fellow employees, visitors or customers/members of the public.
- Working time and/or the Council's material or equipment must not be used for any unauthorised work.

- You must act in accordance with the Council's working procedures.
- Personal hygiene and appearance must be of an acceptable standard.
- Visitors are not allowed onto the premises at any time without prior authority.
- An orderly and courteous manner must be maintained at all times.
- Socialising is not permitted on the premises without prior authorisation.
- You are required to submit your person or property, including vehicles, to being searched whilst on the Council's premises, or at any time at the reasonable requirement of the Council.
- You must comply with the Council's rules on no smoking, including no smoking in the Council's vehicles or visible uniform.
- You are required to comply with the Council's policy of not permitting the display of flags, emblems, posters, graffiti, etc. or the circulation of literature which is likely to give offence or cause apprehension among particular groups of employees.
- Unofficial references or opinions about current or ex-employees must not be made or given to third parties under any circumstances.

Gross Misconduct

The following acts are examples of gross misconduct offences and as such may render you liable to summary dismissal without notice and without previous warnings. It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of examples of gross misconduct. However, any behaviour or negligence resulting in a fundamental breach of contractual terms that irrevocably destroys the trust and confidence necessary to continue the employment relationship will constitute gross misconduct. Illustrative examples of offences that will normally be deemed as gross misconduct include serious instances of:

- Fighting, physical assault or dangerous horseplay.
- Serious cases of bullying, offensive, aggressive, threatening or intimidating behaviour or excessive bad language.
- Theft or misappropriation of the Council's property or property belonging to another employee, or fraud.
- Drinking alcohol or being under the influence of alcohol/drugs and/or drug abuse whilst attending work.
- Being in possession of or dealing in illegal drugs whilst at work.
- Breach of safety rules and/or any action, which seriously endangers the health or safety of an employee or any other person whilst at work.
- Unlawful discrimination, harassment and/or bullying.

- Breach of any of the Council's policies.
- Deliberate damage to property.
- Unauthorised recording of any workplace meeting, including but not limited to disciplinary meetings.

Disciplinary Procedure

The Disciplinary Procedure does not form part of your contract of employment.

The Council retains discretion in respect of the Disciplinary Procedure to take account of your length of service and to vary the procedures accordingly. If you have a short amount of service, you may not be in receipt of any warnings before dismissal.

If appropriate, informal action will be taken by the Council to resolve problems relating to conduct, capability, or other circumstances.

Before considering a warning or dismissal, steps will be taken by the Council to establish the facts.

At any stage of the Disciplinary Procedure, you may be suspended, on full pay, whilst investigations are carried out. Suspension is a holding measure and is not to be taken as an indication that any allegations against you will be substantiated. In the event that you become unfit for work or unable to attend any necessary meetings due to sickness during the period of suspension, the Council will review the decision to keep you on suspension and, following this review, your suspension may be lifted. If your suspension is lifted, you may no longer be entitled to full pay but will be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay in accordance with the Council's rules and procedures.

If you are prevented from attending your place of work and/or performing your duties as a result of Police bail conditions, or because of an order or direction given by a court or relevant regulatory body, then the duration of any such period will be without pay.

If it is necessary for the Council to take action under the Disciplinary Procedure you will be issued with a written statement setting out the nature of the conduct or other circumstances that may result in a disciplinary warning or dismissal. You will only be issued with a disciplinary warning or dismissed following a formal disciplinary meeting, at which you will have been given the right to be accompanied by a fellow employee or an accredited trade union official. You should make every effort to attend the meeting. Throughout the Disciplinary Procedure you will be given the opportunity to respond to any complaint before any decision on a disciplinary warning or dismissal is taken.

It is not permissible to record, whether audio and/or visual, any meetings which take place as part of this procedure, without our express written authorisation. You should note that unauthorised recording may result in action under the Disciplinary Procedure, which may include dismissal for gross misconduct.

The Council may commence the Disciplinary Procedure, depending on the circumstances, at any of the following levels:

Written warning

A written warning will be issued and a copy placed on your personnel file for 6 months after which it will be disregarded.

Final written warning

A final written warning will be issued and a copy placed on your personnel file for 12 months after which it will be disregarded.

Dismissal

Dismissal may be with or without notice, depending on the circumstances, and may occur whether or not warnings have been issued.

You will be entitled to appeal against any disciplinary or dismissal decision taken, such appeal being held in accordance with the Appeal Procedure, which is outlined below.

Capability Procedure

Introduction

The Council recognises that during your employment with the Council your capability to carry out your duties may deteriorate. This can be for a number of reasons, the most common ones being that either the job changes over a period of time and you fail to keep pace with the changes, or you change (most commonly because of health reasons) and you can no longer cope with the work.

The Council retains discretion in respect of the Capability Procedure to take account of your length of service and to vary the procedure accordingly. If you have a short amount of service, you may not be in receipt of any warnings before dismissal.

Job Changes and General Capability Issues

If the nature of your job changes or if the Council has general concerns about your ability to perform your job the Council will try to ensure that you understand the level of performance expected of you and that you receive adequate training and supervision. Concerns regarding your capability will normally first be discussed in an informal manner and you will be given time to improve.

If your standard of performance is still not adequate you will be warned in writing that a failure to improve and to maintain the performance required could lead to your dismissal. The Council will also consider the possibility of a transfer to more suitable work if possible.

If there is still no improvement after a reasonable time and the Council cannot transfer you to more suitable work, or if your level of performance has a serious or substantial effect on our business or reputation, you will be issued with a final warning that you will be dismissed unless the required standard of performance is achieved and maintained.

If such improvement is not forthcoming after a reasonable period of time, you will be dismissed with the appropriate notice.

Personal Circumstances and Health Issues

Personal circumstances may arise which do not prevent you from attending for work but which prevent you from carrying out your normal duties (e.g. a lack of dexterity or general ill health). If such a situation arises, The Council will normally need to have details of your medical diagnosis and prognosis so that the Council has the benefit of expert advice. Under normal circumstances this can be most easily obtained by asking your own G.P. for a medical report. Your permission is needed before the Council can obtain such a report and the Council will expect you to cooperate in this matter should the need arise. When the Council has obtained as much information as possible regarding your condition and after consultation with you, a decision will be made about your future employment with the Council in your current role or, where circumstances permit, in a more suitable role.

There may also be personal circumstances which prevent you from attending work, either for a prolonged period or for frequent short absences. Under these circumstances the Council will need to know when the Council can expect your attendance record to reach an acceptable level. This may again mean asking your own G.P. for a medical report or by making whatever investigations are appropriate in the circumstances. When the Council has obtained as much information as possible regarding your condition, and after consultation with you, a decision will be made about your future employment with the Council in your current role or, where circumstances permit, in a more suitable role.

Procedure

You will only be issued with a capability warning or dismissed following a formal capability meeting, at which you will have been given the right to be accompanied by a fellow employee or an accredited trade union official. You should make every effort to attend the meeting. Throughout the Capability Procedure you will be given the opportunity to respond to any concerns before any decision on a capability warning or dismissal is taken.

It is not permissible to record, whether audio and/or visual, any meetings which take place as part of this procedure, without our express written authorisation. You should note that unauthorised recording may result in action under the Disciplinary Procedure, which may include dismissal for gross misconduct.

The Council may commence the Capability Procedure, depending on the circumstances, at any of the following levels:

Written warning

A written warning will be issued and a copy placed on your personnel file for 6 months after which it will be disregarded.

Final written warning

A final written warning will be issued and a copy placed on your personnel file for 12 months after which it will be disregarded.

Dismissal

Dismissal may be with or without notice, depending on the circumstances, and may occur whether or not warnings have been issued.

You will be entitled to appeal against any disciplinary or dismissal decision taken, such appeal being held in accordance with the Appeal Procedure, which is outlined below.

Disciplinary and Capability Appeal Procedure

The Appeal Procedure does not form part of your contract of employment.

If you wish to appeal against any disciplinary or capability decision, you should apply in writing within 5 working days. You will be invited to attend a meeting and you should take all reasonable steps to attend.

After the appeal meeting you will be informed of the final decision.

You should address your appeal to the person stated in your contract.

You will be given the opportunity to be accompanied at the meeting by a fellow employee or accredited trade union official.

It is not permissible to record, whether audio and/or visual, any meetings which take place as part of this procedure, without our express written authorisation. You should note that unauthorised recording may result in action under the Disciplinary Procedure, which may include dismissal for gross misconduct.

Termination of Employment

Notice of Termination

If you wish to resign, you should do so in writing giving such notice as is specified in your contract.

If your employment is terminated by the Council, you will be entitled to receive the notice as is specified in your contract.

Gross Misconduct

You may be summarily dismissed without notice if there has been an act of gross misconduct. Examples are contained in the Gross Misconduct section of Disciplinary Rules above.

Notice during Probationary Period

During a probationary period, your notice period may be different, so you should refer to your contract for this information.

When Dismissal Notice takes Effect

If you are given notice of dismissal verbally, it is deemed to take effect immediately. If notice is sent via post, it is deemed to take effect according to the schedule below:

- sent by email – the day after the email is sent;
- sent by recorded/special delivery – two days after letter sent;
- sent by first class – three days after letter sent.

Terminating Employment without giving Notice

If you terminate your employment without giving or working the required period of notice, as indicated in your individual contract, you will have an amount equal to any additional cost of covering your duties during the notice period not worked deducted from any termination pay due to you. This is an express written term of your contract of employment. You will also forfeit any contractual accrued holiday pay due to you over and above your statutory holiday pay if you fail to give or work the required period of notice.

Return of our Property

On the termination of your employment, you must return all our property which is in your possession or for which you have responsibility. Failure to return such items will result in the cost of the items being deducted from any monies outstanding to you. This is an express written term of your contract of employment.

Pay in Lieu of Notice

At the absolute discretion of the Council, payment in lieu of working notice may be made, and all benefits owing are paid as accrued at the actual date of termination. This is an express written term of your contract of employment.

Garden Leave

If either you or the Council serves notice on the other to terminate your employment the Council may require you to take garden leave for all or part of the remaining period of your employment. During any period of garden leave you will continue to receive your full salary and any other contractual benefits. This is an express written term of your contract of employment.