

A meeting of the **EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE** will be held in **THE CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER/STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN** on **WEDNESDAY, 20TH NOVEMBER 2024** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

AGENDA

APOLOGIES

1. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 8)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18th September 2024.

Contact Officer: A Roberts - 388015

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To receive from Members declarations as to disclosable pecuniary, other registerable and non-registerable interests in relation to any Agenda item. See Notes below.

Contact Officer: Democratic Services - 388169

3. WORKFORCE INFORMATION REPORT (QUARTER 2) (Pages 9 - 26)

To consider an update on HR matters impacting on the performance of the organisation.

Contact Officer: L Harfield - 388569

4. WORKFORCE STRATEGY UPDATE

To receive an oral update on the Workforce Strategy.

Contact Officer: K Hans - 388329

5. POLICY UPDATES - DISCIPLINARY AND RAISING CONCERNS POLICIES AND EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK (Pages 27 - 154)

To consider and comment on a report by the Human Resources Manager on the outcome of reviews of the Disciplinary and Raising Concerns policies and of the Employee Handbook.

Contact Officer: L Harfield - 388569

6. REPRESENTATIVES OF EMPLOYEES

At the request of representatives of employees to consider a range of issues.

11th day of November 2024

Michelle Sacks

Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests.

Further information on [Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and other Registerable and Non-Registerable Interests is available in the Council's Constitution](#)

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Please contact Anthony Roberts ,Democratic Services, Tel: 01480 388169 / email Anthony.Roberts@huntingdonshire.gov.uk if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Committee/Panel.

Specific enquiries with regard to items on the Agenda should be directed towards the Contact Officer.

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting as observers except during consideration of confidential or exempt items of business.

Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the [District Council's website](#).

Emergency Procedure

In the event of the fire alarm being sounded and on the instruction of the Meeting Administrator, all attendees are requested to vacate the building via the closest emergency exit.

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HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE held in THE CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER/STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 18 September 2024

PRESENT: Councillor A Blackwell – Chair.

Councillors L Davenport-Ray, S A Howell, P A Jordan, P Kadewere, D N Keane and C Lowe.

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor S Cawley.

11 MINUTES

Subject to the deletion from the first line of Minute No 4 of the word “Many” to be replaced by the word “May” and to the deletion from the second line of the second paragraph of Minute No 6 of the word “free” and the inclusion of the words “at a reduced rate” at the end of the sentence, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 26th June 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

12 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interests were received.

13 WORKFORCE INFORMATION REPORT - QUARTER 1

The Committee received and noted a report on Human Resources matters impacting on the performance of the Council during the period 1st July to 30th June 2024. The report included the latest position and trends relating to employee numbers, salary costs and sickness absence. A copy of the report is appended in the Minute Book.

The Committee was informed that the total number of employees at the end of the last quarter was slightly higher than at the end of the previous quarter and that the total spend on pay costs for employees in 2024/25 was forecasted to be £415,000 higher than the year's budget. The expected overspend on contractors and agency staff meant there was likely to be an overall overspend of £1,167,000 against the staffing budget.

The report indicated that four employees had retired in the quarter. Members recognised the employees' achievements and asked that their congratulations be passed on.

Having been acquainted with the benefits of listing recruitment opportunities via various mediums, the Committee congratulated Officers for being nominated for a workforce award and endorsed the upgrade to the Learning Management System. In response to a question from Councillor Davenport-Ray about the pay

bill, Members were informed that the increase reflected the fact that the Council benefitted from higher levels of external funding. Furthermore, approval to fill all vacancies was required from the Senior Leadership Team, with the decision being subject to the Team being satisfied with what was being done to transform the service.

Following further questions by Councillors Jordan and Kadeware, it was stated that apprenticeships lasted between one and three years and that while there were some transfers within the Council, most promotions were through career pathways.

Councillor Davenport-Ray enquired about how the Council mitigated the risk of falls from height. The Strategic HR Manager explained that the incident referred to in the report had been investigated and it had been established that all the measures required of the Council were in place. On a more general point raised by Councillor Keane whether the Council had sufficiently robust arrangements in place to enable employees to deal with serious medical episodes, Members were assured that One Leisure were aware of what the Council offered including individual and group counselling.

In summing up the report the Chief Executive drew attention to the fact that receiving ICARE nominations on an ongoing basis meant that actions early in the year were not forgotten, that it was recognised that traditional recruitment avenues had been replaced by modern ones such as LinkedIn and the Council had developed a strong brand. She also emphasised that steps were taken to establish a network for apprentices.

RESOLVED

- a) that the contents of the report be noted, and
- b) that the Council place on record its recognition of and gratitude for the excellent contribution made by the employees who have recently retired from employment in the local government service and pass on its best wishes for a long and happy retirement.

14 WORKFORCE PROFILE AND ACTION PLAN

Pursuant to Minute No 8/24, the Committee received an updated report on the Workforce Profile (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which now included the results of analysis of the workforce profile compared with Census data. The aim of the process was to identify where the Council was succeeding and where it might improve. Following a comment at the last meeting the terminology used had been amended to “gender identity”.

In introducing the report, Kiran Hans, HR Manager, reported that a significant amount of work had been done on menopause, including the identification of an organisation to provide sessions on related subjects and speakers for Menopause Awareness Day in October. She then referred to the fact that the Council had a higher proportion of people who had a disability than the local position. The Council would be exploring a dyslexia friendly font standard and the Mindful Employer Charter. On sexual orientation, the results matched the local demographic, but it was considered necessary to provide training on the

categories and definitions because the data was limited. Overall, the Council workforce did not differ significantly from the local demographic. The HR Manager concluded by outlining the Council's performance against the previous year's Action Plan. Of the 28 Actions, 20 had been completed and eight had been carried over. The latter had strong links to the Workforce Strategy. In addition, four new actions had been added to the Plan. Work also would continue on the overarching data capture action. Furthermore, a new raising concerns policy would be introduced, which would incorporate the Grievance and the Bullying and Harassment Policy.

The Chief Executive then outlined her expectations for significant changes nationally, including evaluation of the equal pay framework especially regarding ethnicity. The Council was already carrying out work in these areas and would be in a strong position to respond. It was likely this would be recognised in the employment market and act as an attraction for new recruits. Following a question by Councillor Howell, the Chief Executive confirmed the Council would be focussing on equity as well as equality.

In response to a question by Councillor Kadeware the Chief Executive informed the Committee that the Council had a positive relationship with the Employee Representative Group and the Union. Meetings were held bi-monthly at which discussion topics included the Workforce Strategy.

RESOLVED

that the report be received and noted.

At 7.30 pm Councillor Davenport-Ray left the meeting.

15 WORKFORCE STRATEGY UPDATE

Kiran Hans, HR Manager – Project Delivery, updated the Committee on progress of the Workforce Strategy. Following employees' comments during consultation, resources had been made available to support this work, including the appointment of Chloe George as HR Coordinator – Project Delivery. The Action Plan encompassed 49 overarching actions, which had been broken down into 110 individual actions. Eleven actions were already in progress and Priorities were being developed. A copy of the Action Plan would be circulated to Members.

The HR Manager went on to report that a "Staff Temperature Check" survey had been distributed to employees to gauge their views on working for the Council and the results were being analysed. In addition, a Communications Plan was being developed to bring the Strategy to life and employees had been asked to identify which initiatives under the Strategy they wanted to be involved in.

Other initiatives being pursued included holding a pensions awareness week, receiving ICARE nominations throughout the year, establishing a system for donating to local charities, investigating options for employee support, promoting menopause awareness, providing flu vaccinations, introducing a new Employee

Handbook and Code of Conduct and developing a Raising Concerns Policy. It was stressed that a team approach had been adopted.

The Committee welcomed the planned activity and made particular reference to making donations to local charities. The Chief Executive assured Members that the views expressed at the last full Council meeting on resourcing the Strategy had been taken on board and acted on. There was an expectation that the Strategy would deliver results very quickly. Two examples of the latter were offered up, which were internal promotion and agile external recruitment to key positions.

Members expressed their appreciation of the work being undertaken and of the efforts being made.

16 REPRESENTATIVES OF EMPLOYEES

No matters were identified for consideration.

Chair

Workforce Report Quarter Two 2024-25

Report Highlights

Report Section	Measure	Trend	Q1 2024/25	Q2 2024/25
1.1	Headcount	↓	653	650
1.1	FTE	↓	597.62	592.46
1.2	Variable Employees	↑	465	482
1.4	High Earners	↓	56	53
1.5	Leavers	↑	30	35
1.6	Turnover	↑	13.4%	15.9%
1.7	Employment Offers Made	↑	69	98
2.0	Sickness Days Lost per FTE	↑	8.6	8.9
2.3	Sickness Absence – Long-Term	↓	65.6%	59.3%
3.0	HR Caseload	↓	95	82
3.1	HR Caseload – Sickness Absence Management	↓	58%	53.6%
			2024/25 Budget	Q2 Forecast
1.3	Pay bill – Total	↑	£30.7m	£32.1m
1.3	Pay bill – Employees	↑	£30.4m	£30.7m
1.3	Pay bill – Contract & Agency Staff	↑	£0.3m	£1.3m

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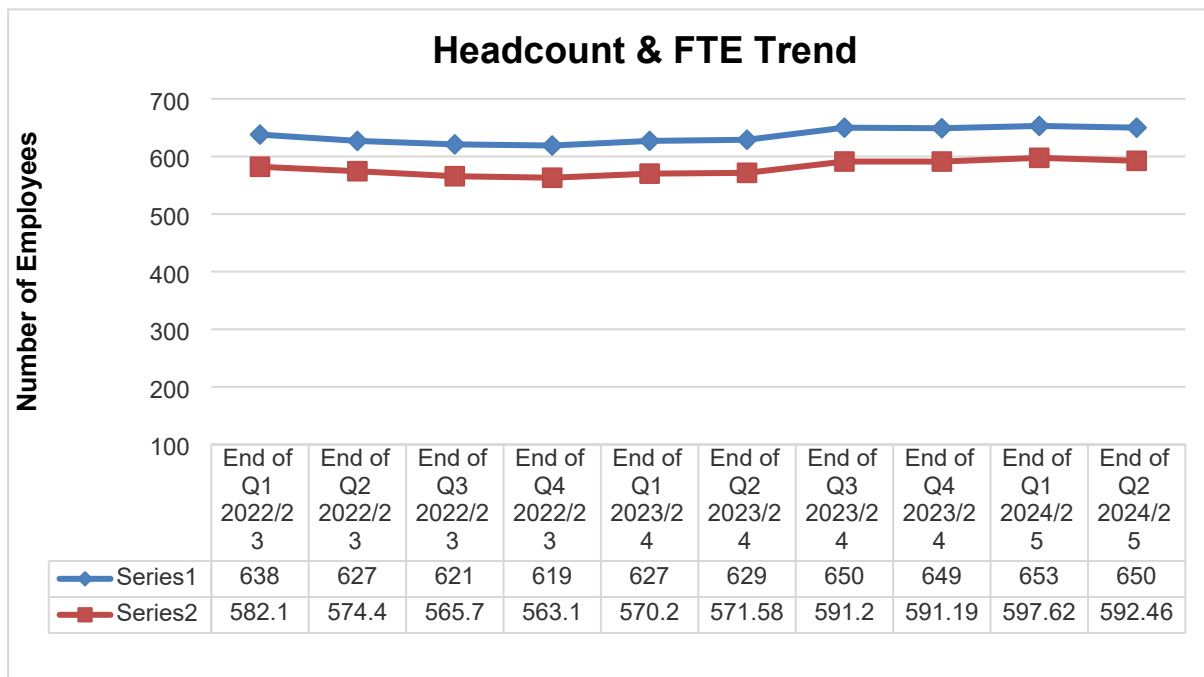
1.0 EMPLOYEE PROFILE

Definition: Headcount is the number of employees working within the Council, counting primary roles only.

A **full time equivalent** (referred to as FTE) is a measure of an employee's workload to make the position comparable across the workforce based on a 37-hour full-time working week. For example, an FTE of 0.5 indicates that the employee works half of a full-time working week (18.5 hours).

1.1 HEADCOUNT AND FTE

At the end of Quarter Two (30 September 2024), the total number of permanent and Fixed term employees employed by Huntingdonshire District Council was 650 (excluding those employed on a variable or casual hour basis) with the number of full-time equivalent posts at 592.46

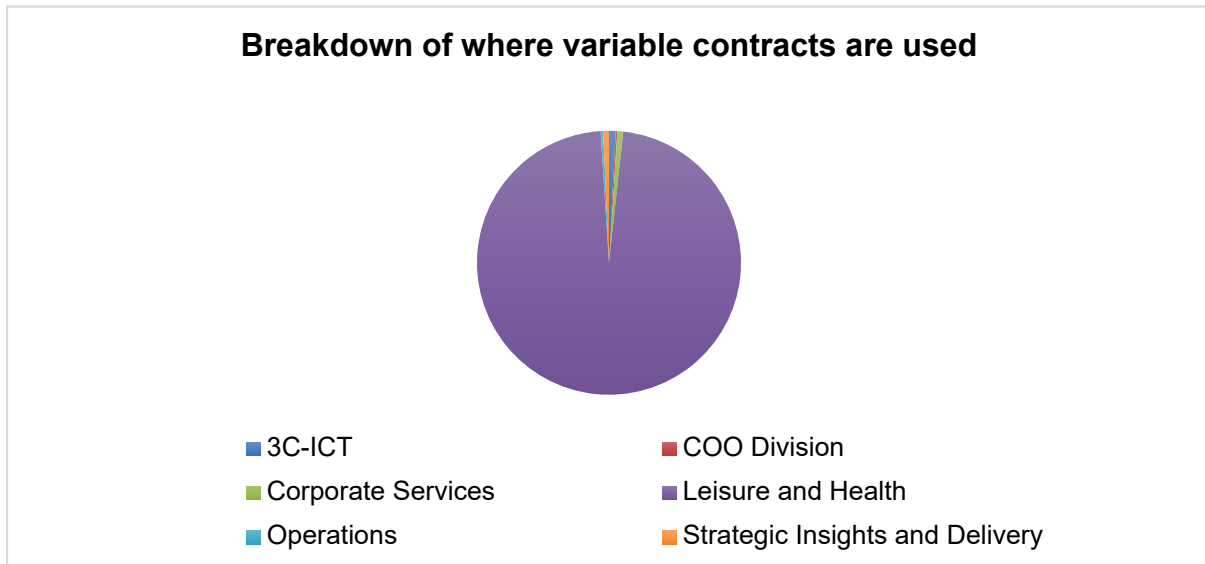


1.2 WORKFORCE BY CONTRACT TYPE

Data on Variable employees (zero hours basis contracts) is included in the below table. However, data on Variables are not included in the other areas of the workforce reporting. Variables are typically employed in multiple positions across Leisure services; though a small number of Variables are employed in Operations, Recovery Services, and ICT. At the end of Q2 HDC had 481 individuals employed in 982 posts. This is an increase from quarter one.

Below table numbers may vary as includes employees with multiple contracts/positions.

Employment Type	Q1 2024/25	Q2 2024/25
Fixed Term	41	44
Permanent	588	579
Apprentice	2	2
Secondment/Acting Up	22	30
Grand Total	653	655
Variable employees	465 (948)	481 (982)



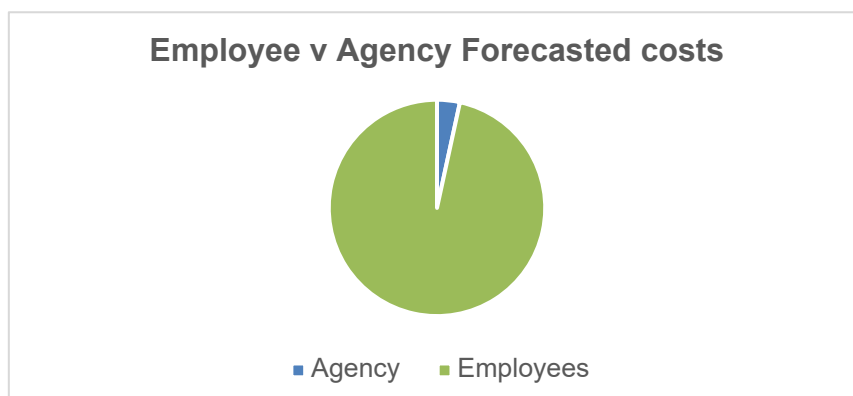
1.3 PAYBILL

The following table shows the Council's budget and forecasted spend on pay costs (including National Insurance and pension contributions) for all employees but excluding hired staff (contractors and agency staff). Forecasted spend on pay costs for employees is estimated to be £361,000 (1.1%) higher than budget. There is an estimated overspend of £1,049,000 on contractors and agency staff compared to a budget of £337,335. Netting out at an overspend of £1,411,000 against the staffing budget.

The Government has announced an increase on employers national insurance contributions. Later in the year we will have more details on how this will affect our staff costs and what tools central government might provide to local authorities to dampen this increased burden.

Year	Employee Paybill Budget (£)	Employee Paybill Actual (£)	Employee Paybill Forecast (£)
2017/18	24,591,631	23,536,053	
2018/19	25,230,515	23,192,646	
2019/20	24,871,268	23,941,696	
2020/21	25,679,601	24,240,402	
2021/22	25,377,310	25,421,307	

2022/23	27,330,175	26,467,958	
2023/24	27,848,427	27,157,627	
2024/25	30,414,245		30,774,982



1.4 HIGH EARNERS

Definition: High earners are classified as employees who are paid at £50,000 or above. This information is already published annually in line with the Government's commitment to improve transparency across the public sector and the target hasn't changed since it was introduced. The Councils pay policy distinguishes authorisation of salaries over £75,000 per annum.

At the end of Quarter Two 53 employees were paid at FTE salaries of £50,000 or above, representing 8.1% of the total workforce. 0.9% of the workforce are paid salaries over £75,000. The total number of employees classed as high earners has decreased since the previous Quarter (56).

1.5 LEAVERS

During Quarter Two, 35 full-time/part-time employees on permanent or fixed-term contracts left the organisation, which is higher than the total leaving in the previous Quarter (28).

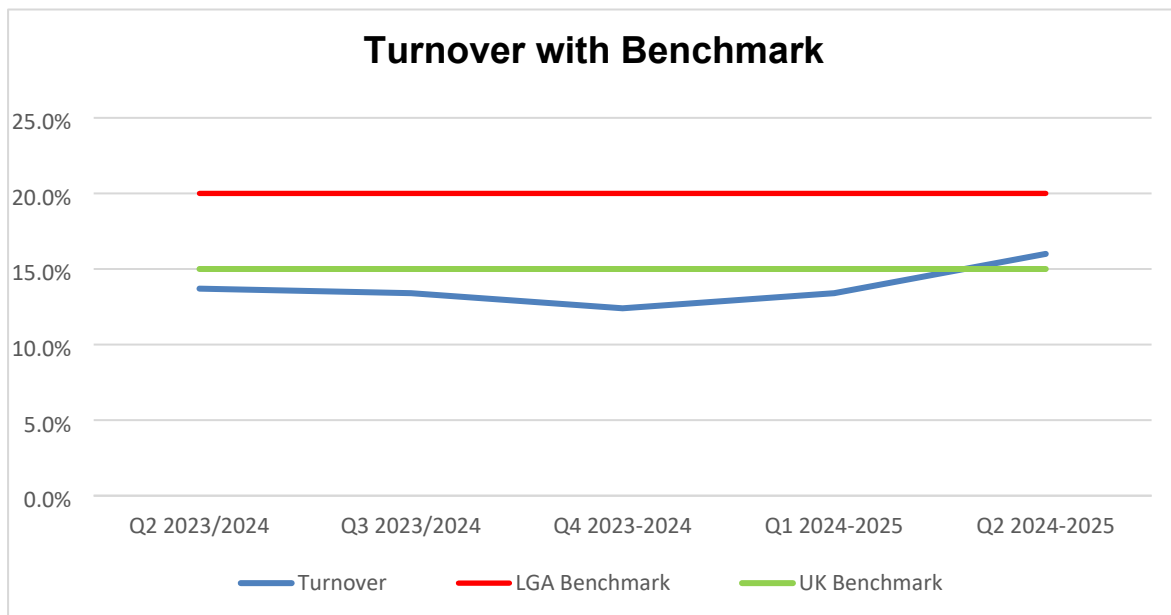
10 of the leavers from Q2, resigned to take up other posts with either commercial or public sector employers, this is an increase from the 7 in last quarters report. There were 3 individuals who retired that had a combined Service with local government of 73 years.

Leaving Reason	Permanent	Fixed-term
Death in Service	1	0
End of Contract	0	2
Failed Probation	1	0
Redundancy	1	0
Retirement	3	0

Settlement Agreement	3	0
Voluntary Resignation	22	2
Total	31	4

1.6 TURNOVER

In the 12 months to 30 September 2024, 104 employees left the Council. As a proportion of the average number of permanent/Fixed Term employees over this period, the overall annual turnover rate for employees is 16%, which is higher than the previous quarter. We are analysing data from exit interviews to see if we can ascertain a pattern or common reason for this increase so that work can be done to return this to closer to the UK benchmark. We are also introducing exit conversations as well as form based exit interviews to enable us to capture more detailed information.



1.7 RECRUITMENT METRICS

Recruitment activity has remained exceptionally busy, reflecting the dynamic and competitive nature of the current job market.

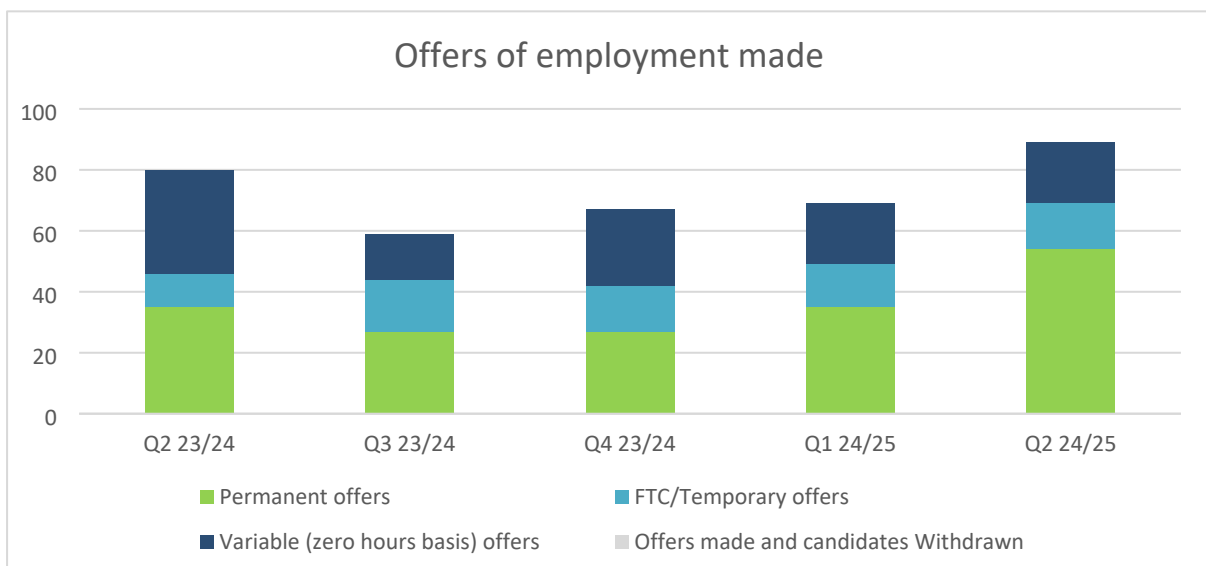
Of the 98 offers made through core recruitment activities, 21 were existing HDC staff, promoted or moving into other positions around the council which is an increase on the previous quarter. The HR team will continue to support the business with creating opportunities to grow and develop our workforce, careers, and mobility around services.

Advertised Roles	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/24	Q2 24/24
	65	41	46	83	83

Advertised Roles per business area	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25
ICT	5	5	7	6	1
Corporate Services (HR, Finance, Facilities, Dem Services)	6	4	15	8	10
COO (Development/Planning, Community, Revs & Bens, Customer Services)	11	5	2	9	17
Strategic Housing & Growth	1	0	2	2	4
One Leisure	11	12	6	36*	21
Recovery Services (Car parking; Countryside, Parks & Open Spaces)	9	0	3	1	6
Operations (Waste, CCTV, Grounds Maintenance, Street Cleaning)	22	12	11	17	17
Executive/Transformation/Communications	0	3	0	4	7

*see refers to One Leisure review.

Number of candidates applied	Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25
	341	322	362	604	1129



1.8 RECRUITMENT CHALLENGES/SUCSESSES

We have continued the trend of heightened recruitment activity this quarter and although the number of campaigns has remained the same, we would have expected this to reduce due to the summer months. One explanation for this is the number of internal moves, which increased from 17 last quarter to 21 this quarter. This is a good news story which demonstrates our commitment to developing internal talent to aid in retention.

Very encouragingly, the data continues to demonstrate a real success in our reach of candidates with an outstanding 1129 applications compared to 604 in the previous quarter – a huge 86.92% increase. The number of advertised roles remained the same as the previous quarter but the increase is a result of the recruitment team working tirelessly to attract, engage, and ultimately secure the best candidates for HDC.

As reported last quarter we have been closely monitoring our new LinkedIn advertisements which showed early promise. I'm delighted to report that over the last six months we achieved 340,000+ impressions, 15,200+ job views and 1,300+ total apply clicks. This is very encouraging, and we will continue to use all the tools at our disposal to grow our LinkedIn network.

We are delighted to report that the planning recruitment campaign which launched in January this year has been shortlisted for an LGC Workforce 2024 award for the 'best innovation in recruitment' category. The awards take place on 5 November where representatives from the recruitment, communications and planning team will be in attendance.

1.9 EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Activities that have taken place in the last quarter to help support employee engagement and aid in retention the following activities have taken place:

- The 4 Industrial Placement students from Cambridge Regional College (CRC), including 2 returners from last year, have completed their placements with us. The placements were successful in that the managers are working with two students with a view to offering apprenticeship opportunities for at least one student within the 3C ICT service area.
Due to the changes in Education and in particular placements, these will now be in the format of work experience for one week during the summer months. Learning and Development are working with CRC to talent spot with a view to offering longer placements. These placements allow college students the opportunity to gain valuable work experience while bringing new ideas to HDC and allowing us to be showcased at CRC as a potential place of work for their students in the future.

- The Project Team is now up and running for the Workforce Strategy. The Team consists of Kiran Hans, HR Manager – Projects, and Chloe George, HR Co-Ordinator who are delivering the first 5 priorities, these are the Employee Value Proposition (EVP), Pay, 1-2-1 framework, Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and a Management Development Programme
- We launched the tender process for a new Employee Assistance programme and have sourced a new provider who provides a wider range of services, including counselling support for staff's family members, additional support for Managers and an additional discount platform for staff to utilise
- A second cohort of level 3 leadership and management apprentices launched in September, there are 8 staff members embarking on this programme.
- We launched a 'temperature check' engagement survey off the back of the launch of the Workforce Strategy and received the same number of responses as the previous survey which was very encouraging. These results are currently being collated and

Planned future activities are:

- Workforce Strategy Project Team will be feeding the action plan back to staff via 'Roadshows' at each of the sites.
- There are 3 staff who have received unconditional offers of acceptance for their chosen University apprenticeships. I am thrilled to report that two embarked on their journey in September. The apprenticeships are Chartered town planner (degree) L7 and Chartered Surveyor (Commercial Real Estate) L6 degree.
- A second cohort of level 5 leadership and management apprenticeships is in the pipeline.
- Continue to work with managers and individuals to explore apprenticeship opportunities and to provide up to date apprenticeship information when required.

Apprenticeships

At the end of Quarter Two (30 September 2024), there were 38 live apprentices, during that time Learning and Development signed up 8 new apprentices and they are undertaking a Diploma in Management apprenticeship. All 37 apprentices are existing employees and 1 has an apprentice contract, all are keen to develop and excel in their chosen careers.

The figures shown in the table below are as at the end of September 2024.

Live apprentices	Complete	Withdraw	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Signed up during Q2
38	2	1	13	9	8	1	7	8

2.0 SICKNESS ABSENCE

Definition: Long term sickness is classified as a continuous period of absence of 28 or more calendar days. All other periods of absence are defined as **short term**.

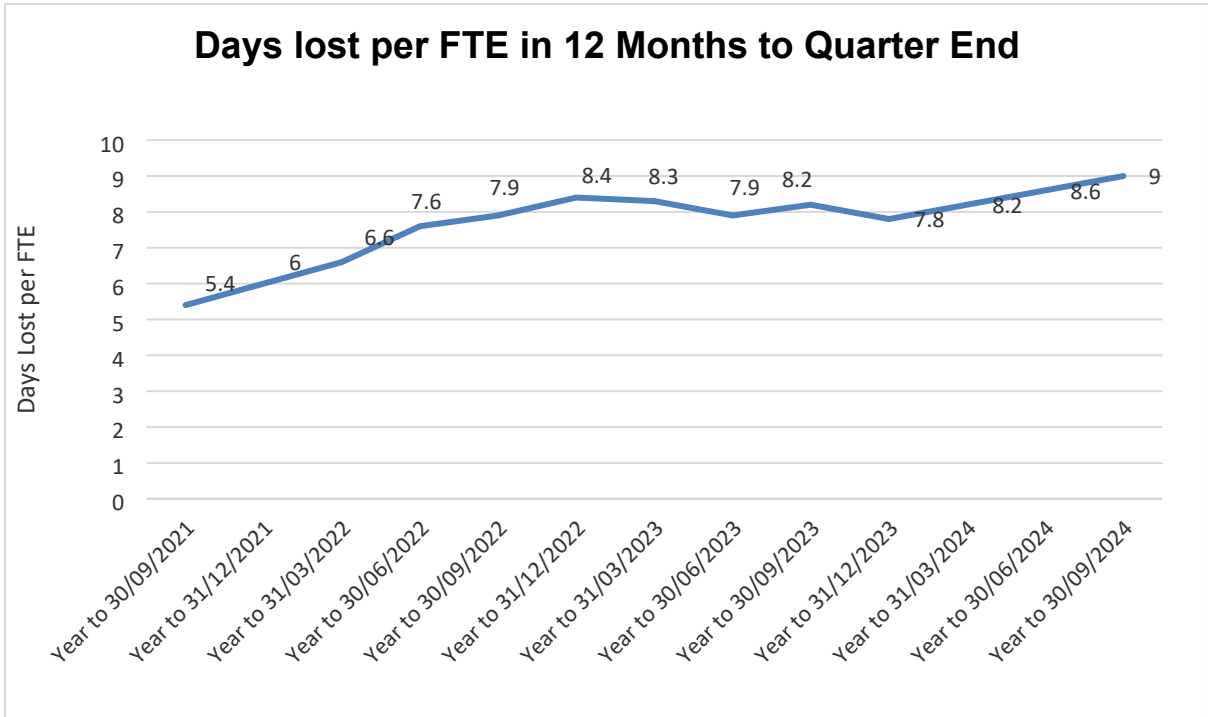
The absence data is calculated per full-time equivalent (FTE) as per the guidelines set out in the previous Best Value Performance Indicators (former statutory dataset) for sickness to account for adjustments in working hours.

Trigger points for management action under HDC policy are as follows:

- 3 or more periods of absence in a rolling 3-month period
- 6 or more periods of absence in a rolling 12-month period
- 8 working days or more in a rolling 12-month period
- Long term absence of 28 calendar days or more
- Pattern of absence (e.g., regular Friday and/or Monday; repeated absences linked to holidays)

2.1 TREND OF WORKING DAYS LOST ACROSS HDC

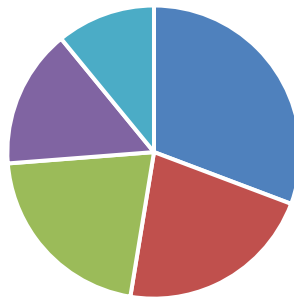
The graph shows the trend in sickness absence per FTE employee over a rolling period to the end of each Quarter since September 2021. It shows that sickness absence to the end of Quarter Two has increased, to 9.0 days per FTE.



2.2 REASONS FOR SICKNESS ABSENCE

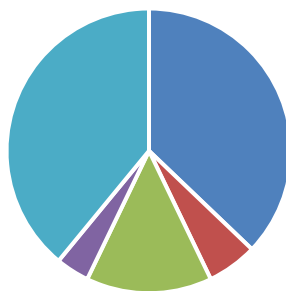
Please see the top 5 reasons for sickness absence by category below: -

Top 5 Reasons - Days Lost



- Gastrointestinal - abdominal pain vomiting diarrhoea gastroenteritis
- Medical Operation Procedure & Recovery
- Musculoskeletal problems inc back and neck
- Stress Anxiety Depression (Work and Personal)
- Cough cold flu influenza eye ear nose and throat problems (including infec

Top 5 Reasons - No of employees of per reason



- Gastrointestinal - abdominal pain vomiting diarrhoea gastroenteritis
- Medical Operation Procedure & Recovery
- Musculoskeletal problems inc back and neck
- Stress Anxiety Depression (Work and Personal)
- Cough cold flu influenza eye ear nose and throat problems (including infec

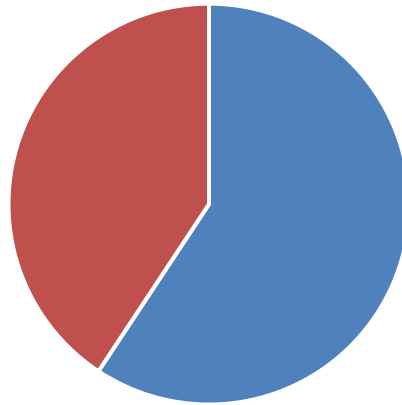
2.3 SICKNESS ABSENCE BREAKDOWN

Days lost due to long-term sickness has reduced in Q2 compared to the previous Quarter. This is due to a number of complex sickness absence cases being resolved

Quarter	Total days of long-term sickness	Total Working days lost (Short term sickness)	% of total absence long-term	% of total absence short-term
Q2 2022/23	647 (11)	441.5	59.40%	40.60%
Q3 2022/23	771 (15)	635.5	54.82%	45.18%
Q4 2022/23	348 (8)	752	31.6%	68.4%
Q1 2023/24	590 (11)	411	58.9%	41.1%
Q2 2023/24	820 (20)	379	68.3%	31.7%
Q3 2023/24	878 (24)	541	61.8%	38.2%
Q4 2023/24	859 (29)	472	64.5%	35.5%
Q1 2024/25	859 (22)	449.5	65.6%	34.4%
Q2 2024/2025	823 (18)	566.01	59.3%	40.7%

*Brackets denotes number of employees absent.

Q2 2024/2025

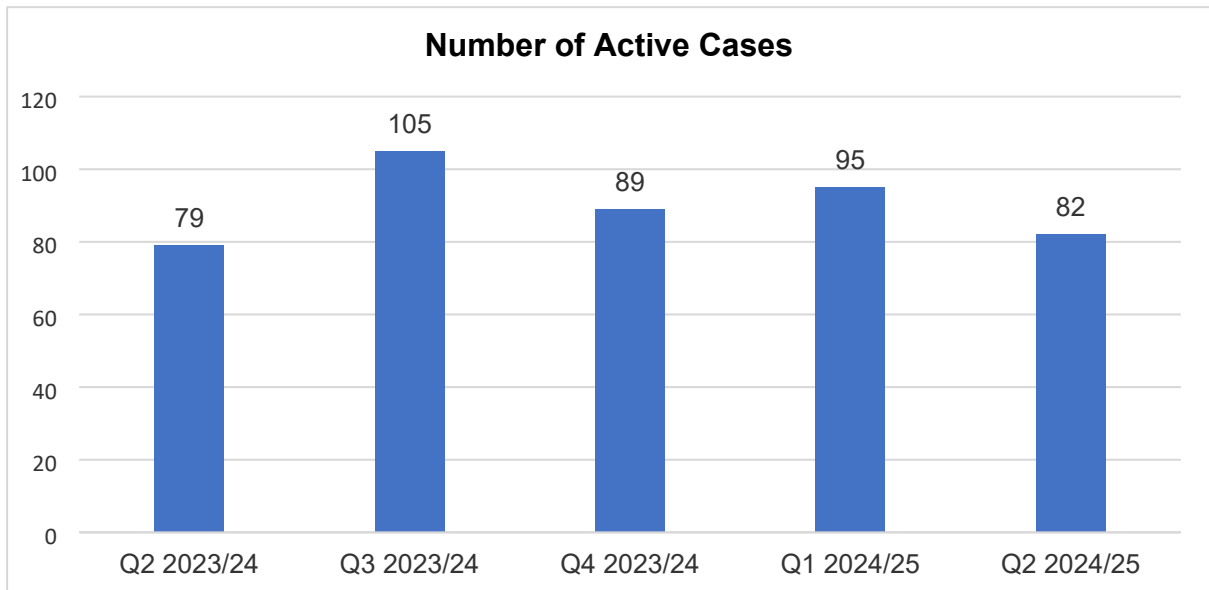


■ % of total absence - long term ■ % of total absence - short term

3.0 HR CASELOAD

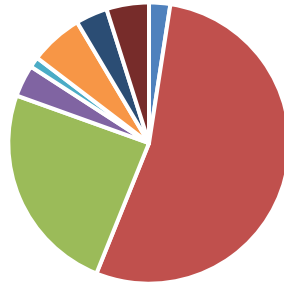
The HR Team's caseload is recorded to provide an indicator of the type of HR issues that the organisation has been dealing with over the last 12 months.

3.1 BREAKDOWN OF HR CASES BY TYPE



During Quarter two there were 82 cases in progress, of which 10 were dealt with under formal procedures. The Overall total was lower than in the previous Quarter.

Q2



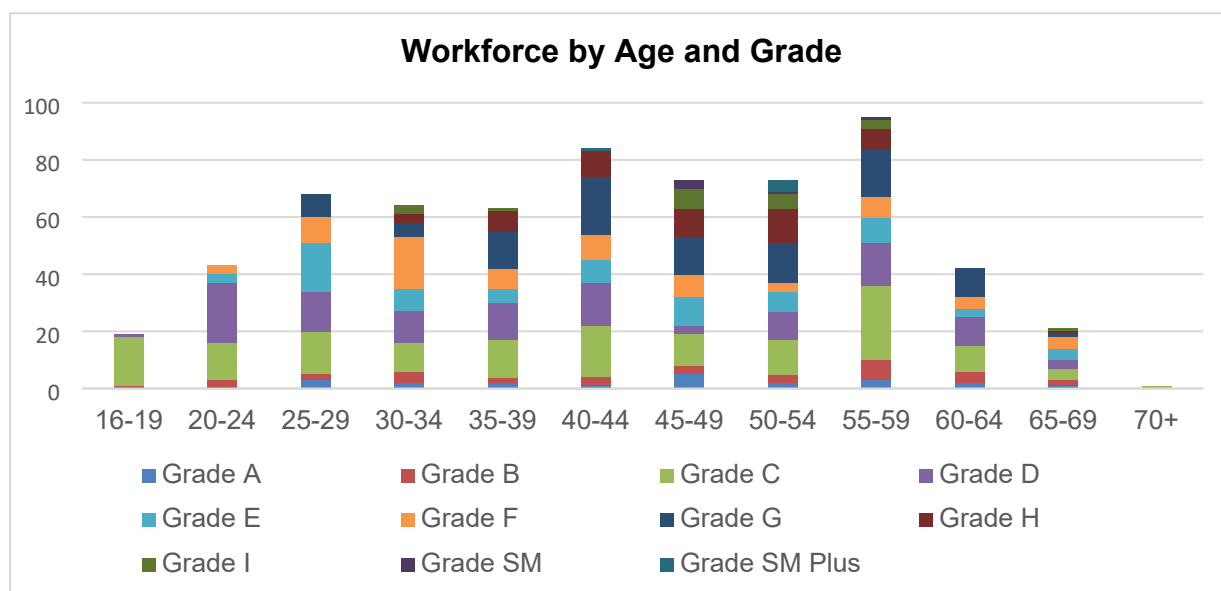
- Consultation
- HDC - Absence Management
- HDC - Disciplinary
- HDC - Flexible Working Request
- HDC - Grievance
- HDC - Performance Management
- HDC - Probation
- HDC - Stress Management

4.0 EQUALITIES DATA

Equality Data may be presented using percentages and not specific numbers as in some cases the sharing of specific numbers would mean that a small group of people could be easily identified.

4.1 WORKFORCE BY AGE AND GRADE

The number of employees by 5-year age band is depicted below by pay grade. Please note that where an employee has two jobs on different grades, they have been counted within their age band against both grades.



For the purposes of simplifying this graph, employees who have transferred into the Council on existing terms and conditions have been linked to Huntingdonshire District Council pay grades based on their current salary levels.

4.2 WORKFORCE BY GENDER

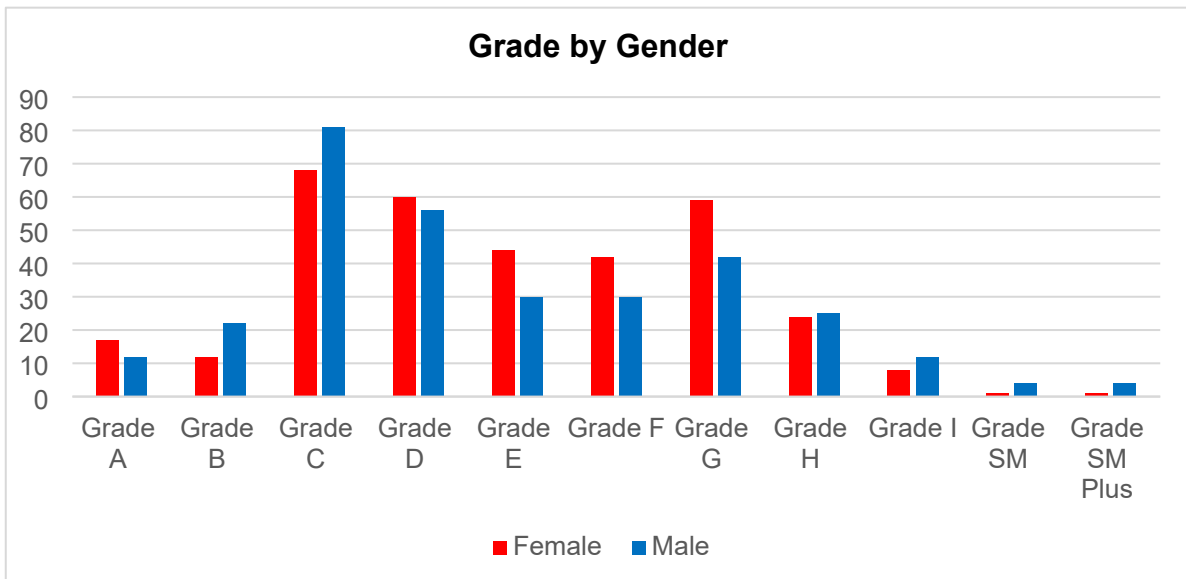


331



319

4.3 EMPLOYEES BY GRADE AND GENDER



4.4 WORKFORCE BY ETHNICITY

Ethnicity	% of workforce
Asian	2.31%
Black	1.54%
Mixed	1.38%
Other	0.31%
White	81.69%
Not Declared	12.77%

4.5 DISABILITY DATA

Disability Status	% of work force
No	72.62%
Yes	11.23%
Not Declared	14.92%
Not Known	1.23%

5.0 ACCIDENT / INCIDENT REPORTS

This section reports on the number and nature of accidents and incidents occurring in owned, managed and occupied premises or associated with work activities undertaken by the Council's employees, during the period 1st July to 30 September 2024.

Definition: Accidents reported to the Incident Control Centre under the requirements of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations are referred to as RIDDOR accidents.

5.1 OPERATIONS SERVICES

There were no RIDDOR accidents reported.

There were four non-RIDDOR accidents relating to employees recorded.

The table below summarises these by nature and severity:

Type	Category	Severity	No of cases
Non-RIDDOR accident	Slips, trips or falls on same level	No First Aid	1
Non-RIDDOR accident	Injured while handling, lifting or carrying	No First Aid	3

There was one accident recorded that involved a non-employee. They tripped whilst taking part in a park run

5.2 OFFICE-BASED PREMISES

There were no RIDDOR or non-RIDDOR accidents reported.

There was one non-RIDDOR accident relating to a contractor recorded.

5.3 ONE LEISURE AND ONE LEISURE ACTIVE LIFESTYLES

There were no RIDDOR accidents reported.

There were five non-RIDDOR accidents relating to an employee recorded. The following table summarises these by nature and severity:

Type	Category	Severity	No of cases
Non-RIDDOR accident	Injured while handling, lifting or carrying	First Aid	2
Non-RIDDOR accident	Slips, trips or falls on same level	First Aid	2
Non-RIDDOR accident	Strike against something fixed or stationary	First Aid	1

A total of sixty-five accidents were recorded involving non-employees.

There were no RIDDOR reportable accidents involving non-employees recorded.

There were twelve recommendations to seek further medical attention, and one ambulance was called.

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Public
Key Decision - No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: HR Policy Update

Meeting/Date: Employment Committee – 20 November 2024

Executive Portfolio: Cllr Lara Davenport Ray (LDR)

Report by: Acting Strategic HR Manager (LH)

Ward(s) affected: N/A

Executive Summary:

As noted in the November 2022 committee meeting HR are undertaking a programme of reviewing and refreshing our current policies to ensure that they are accurate, legally compliant and reflect current practice within HDC. We are therefore bringing the next set of policies we have reviewed to you.

The policies reviewed in this period are:

- Disciplinary Policy
- Raising Concerns Policy
- Employee Handbook

Summary of the changes:

Policy	Amendments
Disciplinary Policy	Have reviewed and updated examples of Misconduct/Gross Misconduct following discussions with Unison and ERG, reduced notice for hearing to 7 days to bring in line with other policies, have updated wording
Raising Concerns Policy	The Grievance and Bullying and Harassment Policy have been combined to create one policy. Have made the process clearer and more streamlined
Employee Handbook	This is a new document due to the old one being out of date

Full copies of the policies are included in the appendices for your information.

Recommendation(s):

The Committee is asked to consider and endorse the updated policies.

2.1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The report draws Committee attention to the revised policies and that we are seeking endorsement to use the new format.

2.2 WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND

- a. The main reason for these policies being updated is to ensure that we have legally compliant, up to date and in line with current processes policies that are accessible for all to use.
- b. It also ensures we have correct version control on the document to reflect any changes as we move forward.
- c. Finally, this will ensure that all policies going forward will reflect the correct employee representative groups.

2.3 KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

- a. Having up to date policies that are regularly reviewed ensure that we are legally compliant and that our processes are robust by following them, reducing any risks of potential future claims.

2.4 WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- a. The updated policies will replace the current policies on our employment policy section of the intranet.

2.5 LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

[\(See Corporate Plan\)](#)

- a. To have an engaged and motivated workforce, as part of being a more efficient and effective council – through updated, clear employment policies.

2.6 CONSULTATION

- a. Senior Leadership Team, the Employee Representative Group and UNISON have been briefed and given the opportunity to review the proposed policy changes and support them.

2.7 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- a. Adoption of the revised policies will ensure that HDC is legally compliant and has a clear trail of policy amendments.

2.8 LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

- Disciplinary Policy
- Raising Concerns Policy
- Employee Handbook

CONTACT OFFICER

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Email: leanne.harfield@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Disability at Work Policy

1.2

Version Control			
Version	Author	Date	Changes
1.1	Kiran Hans	March 2023	Updated to reflect what HDC currently have in place and taken out services that have changed. Added health conditions that are considered a Disability from day 1. Taken out info that is not essential to policy to streamline. Paragraph on hospital appointments are worded to make clearer and added to Appendix 1.
1.2	Kiran Hans	February 2024	Reasonable adjustments appendix 1 time off wording amended to make clearer and in line with the sickness absence policy Information on Access to work added.

Name of Policy	Disability at Work Policy
Person/posts responsible	Strategic HR Manager
Date approved/adopted	Reviewed February 2024 for Approval in April 2024
Approved by	Employment Committee
Review Date	June 2026

Disability at Work Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) is committed to equality of opportunity. This policy sets out our commitment to ensuring people with a disability are treated equitably and with respect consistently throughout the Council.
- 1.2 HDC is required under the Equality Act 2010 to annually monitor and publish information relating to the protected characteristics and to have an action plan to ensure HDC are an equal opportunity employer.

2 Definition

- 2.1 The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as, “someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities (long-term means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last, for at least 12 months)”. Certain health conditions are classified as a disability from day one e.g. cancer, being certified blind, Multiple Sclerosis, or being diagnosed as HIV Positive.
- 2.2 The ability of a disabled person to carry out normal day-to-day activities can be adversely affected in one or more of the following ways:
 - a) mobility;
 - b) manual dexterity;
 - c) physical co-ordination;
 - d) ability to lift or otherwise move everyday objects;
 - e) speech, hearing or eyesight;
 - f) memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; or
 - g) understanding the risk of physical danger
- 2.3 It is not always obvious if someone has a disability. Generally, you will not know if a person has a "hidden" impairment, such as a heart condition or diabetes when you first meet them. Some people who do not consider themselves disabled may also be covered by the Equality Act.
- 2.4 Disability discrimination occurs, although not exclusively, when:
 - 2.4.1 a disabled person is treated less favourably than a person without a disability; or

- 2.4.2 if they are treated less favourably for a reason relating to their disability and the treatment is not justified; or
- 2.4.3 if they are treated less favourably on the basis of their association with a disabled person; or
- 2.4.4 where the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments.

3 Aims

3.1 This policy aims to:

- ⇒ provide managers and employees with guidance on the reasonableness of a range of adjustments that HDC can consider to ensure employees with a disability are supported at work;
- ⇒ enable, so far as is reasonably possible, equity in access to the full range of recruitment, training and career development opportunities for all job applicants and employees in line with the Equality Act 2010;
- ⇒ ensure that there is no unfair discrimination or harassment on the grounds of disability and that access to employment and promotion in HDC is based on skills, qualifications and suitability for work; and
- ⇒ identify ways to monitor diversity and adopt targets for improvements.

4 Advice and Support

- 4.1 Advice, support and guidance is available from Human Resources (HR). Managers should contact HR at the earliest opportunity to consider reasonable adjustments for an employee.
- 4.2 If an employee believes they have been discriminated against for a reason relating to their disability, this should be raised immediately with a member of the HR team or their manager where appropriate. It may be appropriate to use HDC's Grievance Policy.
- 4.3 A management referral can be made via HR to the Occupational Health service, for a medical opinion and guidance as to if an employee may have a condition recognised under the Equality Act and any reasonable adjustments that could be considered.
- 4.4 HDC provides an Employee Assistance Programme that provides external professional counselling service to employees who wish to discuss work related or personal problems with professional counsellors.
- 4.5 Managers can seek Specialist advice and support on the modification of duties from the Department of Work and Pensions Access to Work Scheme. It may be possible to apply for funding to support reasonable adjustments via the scheme. This scheme is also available for employees to contact to apply for support and

potential funding. Information on how to apply for support can be found here - [Access to Work Support Information and Application](#)

5 Reasonable Adjustments

- 5.1 HDC will make reasonable adjustments to working practices, equipment and premises to ensure that disabled employees are not placed at a substantial disadvantage because of their disability. Managers should liaise with Occupational Health, HR and the employee who is affected by the disability when considering reasonable adjustments (see appendix 1). HDC will look to make reasonable adjustments where practicable but will discuss with employees on a case by case basis.
- 5.2 The Equality Act places positive duties on employers to think carefully about the needs of people with a disability and failure to do so could result in legal action being taken.
- 5.3 When reviewing possible reasonable adjustments a manager should, with the support from HR, consider:
 - a) the adjustment options available;
 - b) how effective the adjustment is in preventing disadvantage;
 - c) how practical the adjustment is;
 - d) the cost of making the adjustment;
 - e) the potential disruption caused in making the adjustment;
 - f) the time, effort and resources involved in making the adjustment;
 - g) the amount of resources already spent on making other adjustments; and
 - h) the availability of financial or other help;

This is to ensure that fair and balanced decisions are made.

6 Facilities

- 6.1 HDC will endeavour to ensure that all its facilities are accessible to employees with a disability by:
 - 6.1.1 ensuring, as far as reasonably possible, that the work location for HDC employees is fully accessible and will make reasonable adjustments to existing premises where possible.
 - 6.1.2 providing car parking near to the work location for blue badge holders. Where a staff member has a mobility issue in conjunction with advice from the Occupational Health service alternative options will be considered. Decisions will be reviewed regularly and where car park passes are granted these will need to be paid for by the staff member;
 - 6.1.3 compiling a Personal Employee Evacuation Plan (PEEP) for employees with a disability or impaired mobility.

7 Recruitment

- 7.1 HDC aims to have a workforce which reflects the community and to ensure that disabled people have access to employment opportunities across the whole organisation ensuring inclusivity. This will be done through the Disability Confident Scheme.

8 Employment

- 8.1 HDC will support employees as far as reasonably possible, whose disability worsens or who acquire an impairment during their employment with HDC.
- 8.2 Wherever possible HDC will ensure that disabled employees are able to remain in employment and maintain their existing career paths by providing reasonable adjustments or suitable alternative employment appropriate to their experience and abilities.
- 8.3 Reasonable adjustments could include changes to working hours or environment. (see Appendix 1 for examples of adjustments that could be made).

9 Learning and Development

- 9.1 E Learning is provided by HDC to raise managers' and employees' awareness on the importance of equality.
- 9.2 Training and guidance is available to managers from the HR Team on managing sickness absence, which includes the process for making reasonable adjustments to the role and workplace for disabled employees.
- 9.3 Equality impact assessments are to be carried out on all policies to ensure they are inclusive.

10 Engagement/Support Services

- 10.1 HDC promotes equality by engaging and understanding the needs, aspirations and priorities of people with a disability. It will therefore:
- 10.1.1 ensure people with a disability have the opportunity to discuss any issues relating to their work, which are affected by their impairment through their manager, HR and/or, Employee Representatives Group,
 - 10.1.2 provide an Adjustment Passport which is designed to support employees in the work place, where they have a disability, health condition or need temporary adjustments to enable them to carry out

their role. The document is designed to facilitate conversations between employees and their line manager to capture the adjustments agreed. The passport is owned by employees and is optional to use and share with managers if this would be helpful (see Appendix 2 and 3)

- 10.1.3 offer support services through Mental Health First Aiders, Employee Assistance Programme and Occupational Health;

11 Responsibilities

- 11.1 All employees are responsible for complying with this policy and ensuring everyone is treated equitably.
- 11.2 The employee has a responsibility to inform the organisation if they have a disability, especially where this may affect their day to day work activities. This can be done through their manager, iTrent and/or HR. Where the manager becomes aware that the employee has a disability, they should encourage the individual to update their HR record to reflect this and discuss any adjustments and impact on their role. Where an employee has a health condition that impacts on their day to day activities and you are unsure whether this falls under the definition of the Equality Act for a Disability, please contact a member of the HR Team.
- 11.3 If an employee is believed to have committed an act of discrimination, they will be investigated under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure and this may be treated as gross misconduct.

Reasonable Adjustments

There are a number of reasonable adjustments that can be made to support people with a disability to ensure they receive equality of opportunity in every aspect of their pre and post employment dealings with HDC. Reasonable adjustments could include:

- making adjustment to premises;
- allocating some of the disabled person's duties to another person;
- altering hours of work;
- specific training;
- providing a reader or interpreter;
- providing regular one to one;
- agreeing to a different place of work;
- acquiring or modifying equipment;
- transferring the person to fill an existing vacancy;

1 Examples of reasonable adjustments

- 1.1 Changing the working hours, pattern, working from home or an alternative base. This may include facilitating flexible hours to enable additional breaks to overcome fatigue or accommodating the hours to fit in with the availability of a carer or driver;
- 1.2 Considering all elements of the role and looking at alternative ways that the role could be done. For example transferring the duties to another person or reviewing the core elements of the role;
- 1.3 Organising a phased return to the role with Occupational Health to rebuild confidence and ensure the reasonable adjustments that have been put in place are effective;
- 1.4 Providing a programme on HDC computers, which can assist in altering the size of the Font, the way the document is viewed to magnify it, vary the colour of the screen and colour of the arrow;
- 1.5 Providing voice activated software and electronic palm held devices that can be used away from the computer and converted into word;
- 1.6 Acquiring or modifying equipment including electronic or specialist aids and adaptations, for example, providing a specially adapted keyboard for a visually impaired employee or someone with arthritis;

- 1.7 All sickness absence will be monitored, however it maybe appropriate to adjust sickness triggers in relation to disability related absences specifically (this will not preclude an employee from the sickness absence stages process).
- 1.8 Reasonable time away from work to attend medical appointments related to a disability are to be agreed in advance with your manager. Where an employee is off work i.e absence (sickness, maternity) e time, for the appointments can not be reclaimed. Time required to travel to and from appointments should usually be taken as part of the employees own time i.e use of flexi time

Any reasonable adjustments need to take in to account the points outlined in 5.3, which include the cost of the reasonable adjustment to the organisation. This may also require discussions with the budget holder and looking at comparators from other areas of HDC.

Adjustment Passport

The Adjustment Passport is designed to facilitate conversations around support in the workplace, and to document adjustments agreed between an employee and their line manager. For further guidance around completing the form please refer to the Adjustment Passport guidance document which can be found on SharePoint.

Employee Name:	
Name of Line Manager:	
Business Unit and Department:	
Date of Initial Completion:	
Date of last review:	

Section A: To be completed by the employee

Please use these questions to help you to think about what supports your health at work and what adjustments would be helpful. This tool is to capture adjustments for any health condition, physical and/or mental (please note that you do not require a medical diagnosis in order to implement an Adjustment Passport).

Description of your health condition(s), disability or impairment

Please provide a brief description of your health condition(s), disability or impairment. Things to consider:

- On a 'good day' what impact does this have on your working day?
- On a 'not so good day' what impact does this have on your working day?

For example, impacted coordination, dexterity or mobility, effect on hearing, speech or visual impairment, impacted ability to focus or ability to interact with colleagues

Staying well at work

Please reflect and provide details on the following:

- What helps you to stay well at work? (For example a full lunch break, keeping a clear to-do/priorities list)
- What can your manager do to support you to stay healthy at work? (For example regular feedback and supervision, providing clear written instructions)
- Are there any situations at work that can negatively impact your health? (For example, movement between meeting rooms, being put on the spot, conflict at work, organisational change)

If you become unwell at work

(Please ensure that your emergency contact details are up to date)

- What steps can you take if you start to feel unwell at work? For example, take a break and go for a short walk, make use of the onsite quiet space/wellbeing room, ask manager for support (if your manager is unavailable what process will you follow?)
- How would you, your manager, or people around you notice that you are not well enough to be at work or that you need to adjust your tasks? What action should your colleagues/manager take? For example, talk to you discreetly about it, contact someone that you have asked to be contacted, contact a Mental health First Aider.
- Is there information about your condition which you would like to share with the team?

Is there anything else you feel would be useful to discuss and record? If a PEEP (personal emergency evacuation plan) is required then please follow the PEEP guidance available on SharePoint [here](#)

If your condition may result in you taking time off work what would your 'keep in touch' preferences be during periods of sickness absence?

- For example, being contacted via email vs being contacted by phone, the frequency of contact during a period of sickness absence.

Huntingdonshire District Council Adjustment Passport Guidelines

An Adjustment Passport is a living record of adjustments agreed between an employee and their line manager. Some organisations refer to these as 'Plans' or 'Agreements'.

The purpose of this living record is to:

- Ensure that the employee and line manager have a record of what has been agreed.
- Provide employees and their line managers with a structure to use when regularly reviewing and updating information about workplace adjustments.
- Act as a starting point for discussion when an employee changes jobs, is relocated, or assigned a new manager within the organisation.
- Plan for when an employee is unwell and needs additional support because of their disability or condition. This particularly applies to employees with fluctuating or progressive conditions.

The term 'Passport' suggests that all adjustments are portable and are automatically transferred across to an employee's new role without the need for discussion. In reality, not every team in the organisation works in the same way and an employee may require different adjustments to carry out a new role. It may also be beneficial for a new manager to discuss the adjustment passport with the employee, to help them gain a better understanding of how they can best support the individual.

A living record

The key purpose of an Adjustment Passport is to be a living record. This means that the plan should be reviewed and updated regularly as appropriate and with the agreement of the employee and their line manager:

- At any regular one-to-one meeting.
- At a return-to-work meeting following a period of sickness absence.
- Before a change of job or duties or introduction of new technology or ways of working.
- Before or after any change in circumstances for either the organisation or the employee e.g. a change to working location or after a period of time in a new role or working with a new manager.

The employee should inform the line manager if there are changes to their condition which have an effect on their work and/or if the agreed adjustments are not working. They should then meet privately to discuss any further reasonable adjustments or changes that should be made.

If the line manager notices a change in the employee's performance at work or feels these adjustments are not working, the employee and the line manager should meet to discuss alternatives.

An up-to-date copy of Adjustment Passport will be retained by employee who will share this with their line manager.

A copy of this form may also be given to a new or prospective line manager with the prior consent of the employee.

Use of Adjustment Passport

An Adjustments Passport is a really useful tool when used correctly. To be most effective, an Adjustment Passport should be:

- Introduced into the discussion about adjustments early on.
- Owned by the employee and shared only with their consent.
- Supported by the line manager.
- Viewed as a living document, which is regularly reviewed and updated.
- Seen as a tool to support positive discussion around adjustments.

Notes for managers

An Adjustment Passport allows managers to:

- Understand how a particular employee's disability or condition affects them at work.
- Explain the needs of the business or organisation.
- Explain the organisation's sickness absence and attendance policy.
- Recognise signs that an employee might be unwell and know what the employee wants you to do in these circumstances – including who to contact for help.
- Know how and when to stay in touch if the employee is off sick.
- Consider whether the employee needs to be referred for an assessment by an occupational health or another adviser to help both parties understand what adjustments could be effective.
- Review the effectiveness of the adjustments already agreed.
- Explain any change in the employer's circumstances.

The plan should be regularly reviewed and updated. Remember, however, that expert advice from third parties (such as occupational health advisers or Access to Work) may be needed before changes can be agreed and implemented.

Notes for employees

An Adjustment Passport allows employees to:

- Explain the impact of a disability or condition at work.
- Suggest adjustments that will make it easier for the employee to do their job.
- Supporting discussion around occupational health or Access to Work.
- Review the effectiveness of the adjustments agreed.
- Explain any change in the employee's circumstances.
- Be reassured that the manager knows what to do if the employee becomes unwell at work and who to contact if necessary.

- Know how and when the line manager will keep in touch if the employee is absent from work because of illness or a disability-related reason.

Leave Arrangements Policy
1.2

Version Control			
<u>Version</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Changes</u>
1.1	Kiran Hans	28/04/13	Version control front page added Typos amended New link added to annual leave calculator
1.2	Kiran Hans	07/02/2024	Updates in line with Unpaid Carers Leave legislation Addition of birthday leave guidance Domestic Abuse reference for leave added

Name of Policy	Leave Arrangements Policy
Person/posts responsible	Strategic HR Manager
Date approved/adopted	Reviewed in March 2024 for approval at April 2024 Employment Committee
Approved by	Employment Committee
Review Date	April 2026

Leave Arrangement Policy

1.0 Policy Statement

- 1.1 HDC recognises the importance of employee wellbeing and that employees need to balance their home and work life. To assist with this, HDC offer a number of different types of leave that afford flexibility in a range of circumstances.
- 1.2 This policy intends to provide guidance for employees and managers on all types of leave arrangements including:

2.0	Annual Leave (including Birthday Leave Day)
3.0	Bank Holidays
4.0	Unpaid Leave
5.0	Time off for Dependents
6.0	Employment Break/Sabbaticals
7.0	Unpaid Leave, Considerations for Employees
8.0	Compassionate Leave and Parental Bereavement Leave
9.0	Adverse Weather
10.0	Jury Service
11.0	Public Duties
12.0	Reservist
13.0	Election Duties

There are separate policies for guidance on leave through Flexible Working, Maternity, Paternity, Adoption; Shared Parental Leave and Unpaid Parental Leave.

- 1.3 In line with our organisational values, HDC expects employees and managers to be accountable for their individuals' responsibilities under this policy, and through respect for each other the provision of leave can be managed fairly, taking into account individual circumstances and organisational needs.

2.0 Annual Leave

2 Annual leave entitlements

The entitlement to annual leave for all posts up to Corporate Director, increases with service.

	Length of service	Annual leave entitlement, full time equivalent – days/ hours leave per year
Employees up to Corporate Directors/Managing Director	Less than 5 years local government continuous service	24 days (177.6 hours)
	Entitlement to annual leave will increase on the 5 th anniversary of an employee's start date (pro rata)	30 days (222 hours)
Managing Director and Corporate Directors		34 days (251.6 hours)

- 2.1 The annual leave year runs from 1st April to 31st March.
- 2.2 Annual leave in the HR system will be allocated in hours and minutes rather than days, a standard 7.4 hours is applied to a days entitlement, except for employees who work in CCTV whose standard FTE is greater than the council norm and is calculated on 8.8 hours.
- 2.3 Annual leave entitlement is pro rata for part time employees and for staff that work annualised hours, annual leave entitlement will be pro rata'd based on the average weekly hours of the contract
- 2.4 The annual leave calculator is available on the HR page or by clicking the link below: [Annual Leave Calculator](#).

2.5 **Birthday leave**

Employees are entitled to a day's leave for their birthday (pro rata for part time employees). The day can be taken on their birthday, or a designated day usually within a month either side of their birthday. Birthday leave is not to be paid and only to be carried forward in to the next leave year in exceptional circumstances.

Where an employee is on sick leave or maternity leave, the birthday day can be taken within two months of returning back to work or tagged on to the end of maternity leave.

For new starters birthday leave will be given where the birthday occurs after the start date (and will not be backdated if the birthday was prior to commencement of employment). If an employee leaves HDC's employment prior to their birthday, the birthday leave will not apply

When booking the leave on iTrent, this is to be done by selecting the separate option i.e birthday leave.

2.6 First Aiders

Designated first aiders, will receive 2 extra days leave per year (pro rata for part time employees). Where an employee becomes a first aider part way through the leave year, the entitlement would need to be pro rata for the months completed within the year.

2.7 Leave for term-time only employees

Employees working term-time only are entitled to leave within usual school holiday time. Because full allowance has been made for the leave entitlement (and all statutory and non-statutory holidays) in the formula for the calculation of their salary, leave may not be taken during term time. If, exceptionally, special leave is granted during term time it will be without pay.

2.8 Booking annual leave

Employees are responsible for keeping an up to date record of annual leave taken and leave remaining in a given year via the HR system or by card where this is not available.

Staff that work compressed hours (which is full time hours over fewer days), are required to book their normal working day as leave, e.g. if on compressed hours I work a 9 day fortnight and my working day is 8.2 hours instead of normal full time equivalent of 7.4, I would need to book 8.2 whenever I took holiday.

Managers must authorise all leave in advance, and employees should try to provide as much notice as possible, especially where the leave is for a longer period. Local arrangements are in place, in some areas, which detail how far in advance annual leave needs to be booked and any specific local rules around the taking of annual leave. Where travel arrangements are booked prior to authorisation, HDC will not recompense any costs incurred.

HDC recognises the importance of employees taking rest periods from work, and so would only in exceptional circumstances, and with good business reason, withdraw authorisation of leave already granted. This will be discussed with the affected employee on an individual basis.

2.9 Carrying over annual leave

All annual leave should be taken within the leave year. Managers should encourage all employees to take their entitlement to leave within the current leave year therefore avoiding the need to carry over leave. However, in exceptional circumstances, e.g. needs of the service, a manager may authorise in advance the carry forward of maximum of 5 days' annual leave (pro rata for part time employees) into the next annual leave year.

Manager should send confirmation of the employee name and amount of leave agreed to be carried over to Humanresources@huntingdonshire.gov.uk by the end of the holiday year. Carry over will be applied in the HR system as soon as possible, but by end of April at latest.

In circumstances when an employee has been on long term sick and has been

unable to use their annual leave for that year, annual leave shall be accrued and carried over to the next leave year if applicable.

2.10 Annual leave on termination

Employees should take any outstanding leave (pro rata to the end date) prior to their last date of employment.

Any leave accrued up to last day of employment and not taken will be paid in their final salary and if employees have taken holiday in excess of their accrued entitlement, this will be deducted from final salary. For annualised hours contracts, the leave entitlement on termination will be calculated based on the hours actually worked during the leave period and up to their last day of employment.

Leave will be calculated in the HR system for leavers, where the system has an accurate work pattern and the system has been used to book and take holiday. If a local system is used, it is the managers responsibility to calculate the accrued leave and provide accurate information to payroll on remaining or overtaken holiday for final pay period.

2.11 Buying Annual leave

The option to buy additional Annual Leave is open to all employees (subject to earnings levels and will be subject to manager approval) with consideration to business needs. There is no requirement for employees to participate in the scheme and buying

annual leave is not an automatic right – by applying for this, employees are agreeing to the amount to be deducted from their net pay.

A maximum of 5 days can be requested to be bought, pro rata'd for part time individuals and pro rata'd for fixed term contracts to match the duration of the contract end. E.g. if 6 months of the new leave year is left on fixed term contract, half the amount of leave a permanent employee can request who will work the full year, e.g. 2.5 days if full time. If the contract is extended this will not affect the payment arrangement i.e. the final payment date will remain as their original contract end date.

The option to buy additional annual leave, will be open to employees to request only once a year, and in advance of the leave year. All leave including purchased annual leave must be used within the leave year, there will be no option to sell back; and there will be no guarantee that additional leave can be carried over. Further requests to book and take the bought annual leave are in line with normal policies, and subject to manager approval.

All applications will be assessed on its merits; manager should give consideration to (but not limited to):

Role of individual and how easy to allow additional leave,

Where any required backfill would be impractical

Amount of leave requesting to buy
Impacts on customer, colleagues, team, budgets, service delivery
Amount of leave individual already has
Number of other applications within the service to buy leave
The reasons behind applications request for additional leave – e.g. extended family holiday
If they are already allowing to carry over leave

The buying of annual leave will be considered prior to the start of the leave year; the window to buy leave will be open to all staff annually around February and shared through staff communications. Employees should complete the buying annual leave form and email or share with their manager by the deadline. Manager should consider their teams applications together; Managers should feedback their decision and share all approvals with HR.

All requests to buy leave will be given full consideration by Managers. Managers may decline, approve or partially approve – e.g. Manager may feel they can accommodate 2 days' but not more.

Where it is not possible to accommodate the request, a response detailing why the application has not been successful will be provided by the line manager. Advice can be sought from HR where rejection is being considered.

The approved additional holiday will be added to the HR system by the HR team, as Adjusted holiday (reason bought leave) by end of April at the latest.

The buying of annual leave will be considered a Salary Sacrifice and may affect pension benefit. Payroll will take deductions for bought leave directly from pay as 1/12th of the cost of annual leave, commencing in the April payroll, through to March.

By law employees cannot enter into a salary sacrifice arrangement where this will take their gross salary below the national minimum wage – Payroll will check that employees are not entering into an arrangement that will take them below national minimum wage'. If the deduction for additional annual leave results in the employees salary falling below the National Minimum Wage or below the Lower Earnings Limit for National Insurance purposes then the request will be declined, even if their manager approves this. If employees are unsure about their circumstances, please check with HR or Payroll before applying.

In the situation that an employee is absent from work for a period of time and their salary reduces deductions will continue to be taken as long as the employee's income allows this. In the event that payments are suspended due to the employees income reducing or ceasing, payments will resume when the employee returns to work or deducted from their final salary where appropriate (therefore the term of repayments could run in to the next leave year).

The Cost of Annual leave will be calculated as at the time of application and will not change if there are changes to the individuals salary to go either up

or down in the period deductions are taken.

Salary sacrifice for holiday purchase will affect pension benefits, and it would be the employees choice to top this back up, this includes staff on maternity and sick pay.

Individuals who leave employment during the leave year - Where an employee leaves part way through the leave year, their annual leave allowance will be calculated on a pro-rata basis up until their last employed day, plus any additional bought leave. Any debit in the amount of leave taken or balance of monies to be repaid in respect of days bought will be recovered automatically from the employee's final pay. Any outstanding leave should normally be taken in the notice period.

2.12 Selling Annual

Leave Eligibility

Criteria:

- This will be limited to employees who work in roles that require a backfill when leave is taken – such as Operations or roles on a rota, including Leisure.
- It applies to employees who have contracted hours, so will not apply to Variable staff.
- It does not apply to fixed term employees whose contract is due to finish within the leave period and selling of leave may reduce entitlement lower than the working time regulations.
- These roles do not qualify for flexi leave

As with buying leave, there is no requirement for employees to participate in the scheme, but employees must meet eligibility criteria set out above if they wish to consider selling annual leave back to HDC.

To comply with working time regulations, those employees with less than 5 years Local government continuous service (holiday entitlement of 24 days – 177.6 hours) will only be permitted to sell up to 4 days leave (pro rata'd for part time staff); and those employees with more than 5 years service (30 days 222 hours of entitlement) are permitted to sell up to 5 days.

The option to sell annual leave, will be open to eligible employees to request only once a year, and in advance of the leave year.

All applications will be assessed on its merits; manager should give consideration to (but not limited to):

Role of individual and whether meets the eligibility criteria
Impact on budgets and if service can afford
Amount of leave requesting to sell

The selling of annual leave will be considered prior to the start of the leave year; The window to sell leave will be open to eligible staff annually in February and shared through staff communications. Employees should complete the selling

annual leave form and email or share with their manager by the deadline. Managers should consider their teams applications together and they have until end of March to consider. Managers should feedback their decision and share all approvals with HR.

All requests to sell leave will be given full consideration by managers. Managers may decline, approve or partially approve – e.g. manager may feel they can accommodate 2 days' but not more.

Where it is not possible to accommodate the request, a response detailing why the application has not been successful will be provided by the line manager. Advice can be sought from HR where rejection is being considered.

The approved sold holiday will be added to the HR system by the HR team, as negative Adjusted holiday (reason sold leave) by end of April at the latest.

Payroll will make payments for sold leave directly from pay as 1/12th of the cost of annual leave, commencing in the April payroll, through to March. This ensures that leave not yet accrued is not sold, should the employee leave. The payment for annual leave sold is income and therefore subject to the appropriate income tax and NI deductions.

The Cost of Annual leave will be calculated as at the time of application and will not change if there are changes to the individuals salary to go either up or down in the period deductions are taken.

Pension contributions will remain unchanged as both the employer and employee contributions will continue to be made on normal pay i.e. prior to the deduction for sold leave being made.

Individuals who leave employment during the leave year - Where an employee leaves part way through the leave year, their annual leave allowance will be calculated on a pro rata basis up until their last day of employment on their adjusted leave (e.g. 177.6 hours, sold 28 hours, leave calculated on 149.6 hours balance). Any debit in the amount of leave taken will be recovered automatically from the employee's final pay. Any outstanding leave should normally be taken in the notice period but will be paid if untaken by leave date.

3.0 Bank holidays

- 3.1 There are generally 8 bank holidays in each year (though on occasion the government may grant extra bank holidays, on those occasions the HR system will be updated to reflect any additional bank holidays.)
- 3.2 Bank Holiday entitlement will be allocated within the HR system at the beginning of the leave year (Part time employees, or on a flexible working pattern will have a pro rata bank holiday allowance – based on contractual working hours) and bank holidays that fall on working patterns will be deducted from entitlement based on working hours for that day. Which means staff that work part time and on Monday's may find they take more leave for bank holidays than they are allocated and this is accounted for in their annual leave balance at the start of the year.

If individuals work a bank holiday, the system will automatically deduct this leave, and this may need adjusting, managers should send an email to Humanresources@huntingdonshire.gov.uk confirming the name of employee and hours and date they worked a bank holiday and the HR team will add an adjustment to the holiday entitlement, which effectively adds the hours back into their holiday entitlement to book.

4.0 Types of Unpaid and Compassionate

- 4.1 The council identifies the following types of unpaid leave an employee may wish to request:
- Unpaid leave (up to 2 weeks)
 - Time off for Dependents (statutory right)
 - Employment Breaks (1 to 12 months)
 - Compassionate Leave, Bereavement and Serious Illness
 - Unpaid Compassionate Leave
 - Unpaid Carer's Leave (statutory right, up to 1 week)
 - Unless otherwise stated, employees are eligible to apply for any of the above types of leave from the first day of employment

5.0 Unpaid Leave

- 5.1 In situations where short periods of unpaid leave is required by individuals, leave may be requested by employees and managers will consider individual needs against operational requirements. Unpaid leave can be used for short term leave i.e. up to a period of 2 weeks.

During periods of unpaid leave all council policies and procedures and contractual rights continue to apply, e.g. an employee will retain their ID card and will be able to access their normal work base and periods of approved unpaid leave will count when calculating local government continuous service.

- 5.2 **Notification – requesting and approving short periods of Unpaid leave**
Employees should submit unpaid leave requests in writing to their managers via Appendix 2: HDC Employee Unpaid Leave Form. Managers should add this unpaid absence in MSS and send the approved requests by email to HumanResources@huntingdonshire.gov.uk as soon as they can and at least by the payroll deadline of the month to avoid under or over payments.

- 5.3 For any periods of unpaid leave, resulting in a reduction in salary, employees should consider the following:

5.3.1 Payments/Deductions

An employee should discuss with the payroll team, the effect that any period of unpaid leave will have on other payments/deductions made via salary.

5.3.2 Pensions Contributions - Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

The period of unpaid leave will not count for pension purposes unless employee select to pay Additional Pension Contributions (APC's), to purchase the amount of pension lost during that period of absence. Where an employee elects to

purchase an APC within 30 days of returning to work, then the cost is split between employees and the employer, with the Council paying 2/3rds of the cost. If an employee elects to buy an APC after this 30 day period, the full cost must be met by the employee.

Employees should contact the Pension's Service to arrange the purchase of an APC and for further information on the impacts of unpaid leave on their pension.

6.0 Time Off for Dependants (emergency leave)

- 6.1 As an employee you're allowed 'reasonable' time off to deal with an **emergency** involving a dependant. For example (not exhaustive);
1. To provide assistance when a dependant falls ill, gives birth, is injured or assaulted.
 2. To make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured.
 4. To deal with the unexpected disruption of arrangements for the care of a dependant.
- 6.2 A dependant could be a spouse, partner, child, grandchild, parent, or someone who depends on them for care.
- 6.3 There is no set amount of time for 'time off for dependents' each request will be considered on the situation. Employees should tell their manager as soon as possible how much time they will need.
- 6.4 **Time off for dependents is for emergency situations only**, where employees did not know about the situation before or where other types of leave could not have been planned for. In those situations, please consider Parental Leave policy, Carer's Leave or compassionate leave (below).

If an employee is a parent, they can take up to 18 weeks' leave to look after their child, please see the Parental Leave Policy.

6.5 Notification – requesting and approving Time off for Dependents

Employees should submit requests in writing to their managers via 'Appendix 2: HDC Employee Unpaid Leave Form' Managers should add this unpaid absence in MSS and send approved requests by email to Humanresources@huntingdonshire.gov.uk as soon as they can and at least by the payroll deadline of the month to avoid under or over payments.

7.0 Employment Breaks/Sabbaticals

- 7.1 HDC recognises that there are times when employees may wish to take a longer period of time away from work and the Council provides **employment breaks** (sometimes called a sabbatical) to enable employees to take time out for any reason other than to pursue other employment. Examples may include: extended holiday; to go travelling; To fulfil domestic commitments (e.g. bringing up children or caring for a dependant); To undertake voluntary work; and / or to pursue non-work related training / further education.

7.2 Employment Breaks - Qualifying conditions

To be eligible employees must have been employed on a permanent contract, for at least 12 months and at the time of requesting not be subject to disciplinary or formal performance procedures.

7.3 Requesting & approving Employment Break:

Employees must put their request in writing to their manager using the 'Unpaid Leave form'; outlining the period of leave requested and the reasoning, and providing the same notice as in their contract of employment i.e. at least one month, up to a period of three months.

All employment breaks are subject to a line manager's authorisation. Managers should use their discretion when agreeing to an employment break, considering the needs of the service at the time of the application; the needs of the employee; the ability to recruit a temporary replacement or manage without a replacement and the number of employment breaks already taken, by the individual, together with the anticipated duration of the break.

Managers must ensure when considering requests that the maximum entitlement to employment break, is not exceeded i.e. 12 months in a 5 year period. Managers should check with HR if they are unsure, what previous breaks may have been taken.

Managers should send Appendix 2: HDC Employee Unpaid Leave Form by email to Humanresources@huntingdonshire.gov.uk as soon as they can and at least by the payroll deadline of the month in which the employment break is to commence. A member of the HR Department will confirm the employment break with the employee in writing.

7.4 Length of Employment Break

Employment breaks can be agreed for a minimum of one month and up to a maximum of 12 months. An employee may take a maximum employment break of 12 months for every 5 years continuous employment with HDC. This means that an employee could take a number of months unpaid break each year, *provided that* the total of the breaks does not exceed 12 months in a 5 year period.

7.5 Contractual Rights during an Employment Break

Employment breaks are unpaid. An employee's salary scale point, annual leave and bank holiday entitlement, sick leave, occupational maternity leave and redundancy entitlement are frozen until an employee returns from an employment break. An employment break cannot be recognised for performance related pay reviews.

During an employment break an individual remains an employee of HDC and all other terms and conditions of employment (as stated in the employee's contract of employment) will continue to apply. For example:

7.5.1 Employees cannot take up paid employment with another organisation without prior agreement from a manager.

7.5.2 Employees may be able to work in a self-employed capacity or undertake some relief work for HDC (on an appropriate relief contract) – employees should discuss this with their manager before the commencement of the employment break.

- 7.5.3 All HDC policies and procedures e.g. continuous service, disciplinary policy and procedure, code of conduct, grievance procedure and the requirement to maintain confidentiality will apply during the employment break.
- 7.5.4 The employees notice period to terminate employment.
- 7.5.5 The employee will retain their ID although this may be suspended for the duration of the employment break.

The period of the employment break does not count as a break in service and will be regarded as continuous employment for statutory purposes under the Employment Rights Act 1996, as amended. However, as outlined above some contractual rights are frozen for the duration of the employment break.

7.6 Conditions during the Employment Break

Employees will be expected to fulfil certain requirements and maintain their right to return to work, the purpose of which is to maintain their skills, knowledge and expertise in an up to date state, thus ultimately enabling a smooth transition back into employment.

An employee may be required to maintain their professional subscriptions/membership where this is required for employment purposes.

An employee will be required to provide a contact address and notify HDC of any changes to their circumstances.

An agreement between the manager and employee will be made on how they will be kept updated, if possible, on any developments within HDC.

7.7 Right to return following an Employment Break

At the end of an employment break an employee will have the right to return to their original post or one on a similar grade, depending on the circumstances at the time.

If an employee wishes to return at an earlier date than that originally agreed, they must provide their manager with at least one month's notice of the intention to return early. Where sufficient notice is not provided HDC reserves the right to delay the return to the date originally agreed.

If an employee does not return to work on the agreed return date, without good reason or notice, they will be considered to be absent without leave (AWOL) and this will be dealt according to the relevant policy.

7.8 Redundancy during an Employment Break

If a job role gets identified as at risk of redundancy during an employee's employment break, the Council will follow its normal redundancy and consultation obligations.

8.0 Compassionate Leave

8.1 **Compassionate Leave**

To support our employees at one of the most difficult times , HDC provides up to

5 days in total (pro rata) in a 12 month rolling period, paid compassionate leave where it is required in relation to the death or serious illness of a spouse; civil partner; partner; son; daughter; parent; guardian; grandparent; sibling; or close relative. This will also be applied in cases of Domestic Abuse where emergency leave is required.

This paid time off includes the time needed to make preparations or attend a funeral. These provisions support consistency across HDC. Managers should consider the precedent that is set by giving compassionate leave above these provisions and where this is being considered HR advice should be sought.

8.1.2 Parental bereavement leave

The right to Statutory Bereavement Leave will apply to the biological parent; adoptive parent (if the child was living with them); person who lived with the child and had responsibility for them, for at least 4 weeks before they died; 'intended parent' – due to become the legal parent through surrogacy; Partner of the child's parent, if they live with the child and child's parent in an enduring family relationship.

Parents have a right to take 2 weeks' Statutory Parental Bereavement Leave for each child who has died (under the age of 18) or who was stillborn after 24 weeks' of pregnancy.

Parental Bereavement Leave can be taken as 2 weeks together (a week being the same number of days that are normally work in a week), or 2 separate weeks of leave and can be taken in any period up to 56 weeks from the date of death or stillbirth. To request Parental Bereavement leave an individual will check they meet the eligibility due to relationship to the child or baby and will discuss with their manager the dates of the leave required and will confirm for processing the date of the death or stillbirth.

8.2.1 Parental Bereavement Pay

1 week 90% of average weekly earnings and 1 week at appropriate statutory pay rate.

8.3 Managers may approve period of paid compassionate leave, as well as Statutory Parental Bereavement leave where necessary. Managers should add this leave in MSS.

8.4 Return to work following compassionate leave

In certain circumstances an immediate full return to work may not be possible for an employee, following the death of an immediate relative – for example, when the employee's grief is likely to impact on their ability to properly perform their role, or where new childcare arrangements have to be sourced or responsibility for the care of an elderly parent has transferred to the employee. In this situation a request to work temporarily on a part-time or reduced hours basis, or alternative duties may be considered (where practicable), subject to line managers approval; and would be for an agreed maximum period of time and managed in line with flexible working/part-time working, as such employees would be paid only for hours they worked, and options like taking annual leave to top up pay may be considered.

8.5 Compassionate leave – Unpaid

Where paid compassionate leave is exhausted and/or not appropriate unpaid compassionate leave may be granted.

Compassionate leave required in relation to a sick or injured dependent may be accommodated by a temporary alteration of working arrangements. Where this is not possible and Time off for Dependents Leave is not appropriate a manager may grant a reasonable amount of unpaid leave in line with service needs.

8.6 Notification Procedures – Compassionate Leave

Managers should add the compassionate leave absence in MSS (no form is required)

9.0 Carer's Leave

Employees are entitled to unpaid leave to give or arrange care for a 'dependant' who has:

- a physical or mental illness or injury that means they're expected to need care for more than 3 months
- a disability (as defined in the Equality Act 2010)
- care needs because of their old age

The dependant does not have to be a family member, it can be anyone who relies on them for care.

Employees can take up to one week of leave every 12 months (pro rata). A 'week' means the length of time they usually work over 7 days. For example, if someone usually works 3 days a week, they can take 3 days of carer's leave.

They can either take a whole week off or take individual days or half days throughout the year.

If an employee needs to care for more than one person, they cannot take a week of carer's leave for each dependant. They can only take one week every 12 months. They can use the week of leave on more than one dependant.

It is preferable to have the request in writing and this can be done using the 'Unpaid Parental/Carer's Leave form', appendix 3.

Employees need to give notice before they want their leave to start, if the request is for half a day or a day, the notice period must be at least 3 days. If the request is for more than one day, the notice period must be at least twice as long as the requested leave. For example, if the request is for 2 days, the notice period must be at least 4 days. The notice period needs to be in full days, even if the request includes half day amounts.

Carers leave will not be refused but employees may be asked to take it at a different time. This can only be asked if the employees absence will cause serious disruption to HDC. Where employees are asked to delay it, the line manager will:

- agree another date within one month of the requested date for the leave
- put the reason for the delay and new date in writing to employees within 7 days of the original request, and before the requested start date of the leave

10.0 Adverse Weather

10.1 In incidents of adverse weather employees who are able to attend work safely should do so. However, the Council does not expect any employee to put themselves at risk by travelling to work in adverse weather. Employees should telephone their manager or another appropriate manager as soon as possible if they cannot attend their normal place of work. Where possible employees should work flexibly during periods of severe weather e.g. work from home or another HDC location.

10.2 During adverse weather conditions employees should consider their means of travel and potential for shared transport. Employees should regularly check for updates and discuss any concerns with their manager. The Council will consider the needs of employees to leave early to avoid getting stranded on the way home and/or to take extra time to complete journeys.

10.3 Employees who cannot attend work, or who are unable to work from home, should take a day's flexi leave, annual leave or unpaid leave. There is no automatic right of payment for lost time due to adverse weather conditions, however, employees who have been instructed not to attend work due to adverse weather will receive pay as normal for that day. Instruction to stay at home will follow a corporate decision.

10.4 If there are increased absence levels in critical service areas, the Council may ask individuals who are able to get to work, to cover different roles or to complete additional hours in order to maintain Council services.

11.0 Jury Service

10.1 Jury service is a public duty that an individual is legally required to undertake. If an employee is called for jury service, they must tell their manager immediately. Notice from the appropriate court will summons an individual to attend as a juror.

10.2 The Council will provide paid time off for an employee to undertake jury service. The Court Service will reimburse an individual for travelling/subsistence expenses and other 'financial' loss, which includes loss of earnings, loss of benefits and additional childcare/dependant carer costs.

10.3 An employee must claim loss of earnings from the court. Once this has been completed a copy of the statement is to be provided to the Payroll department for the deduction from salary to be made. The employee may keep any travel and subsistence allowances paid by the court.

12.0 Public Duties

- 11.1 The Council encourages employees to play an active part in the life of the community. However, before committing to undertake public duties an employee must seek the approval of their manager and give a clear indication of what level of commitment is likely to be required.

In accordance with the Employment Rights Act HDC defines public duties as those where an employee acts as a:

- Justice of the peace
- Member of a local authority
- Member of the police and crime panel
- Member of a relevant education body (e.g. school governor)
- Member of the General Teaching Councils for England and Wales
- Member of the Environment Agency
- Member of a relevant health body (e.g. NHS Trust or PCT)
- Member of a statutory tribunal
- Member of a board of prison visitors or a visiting committee
- Member of the Service Authority for the National Criminal Intelligence Service or the Service Authority for the National Crime Squad

Factors for managers to take into account when considering requests will include:

- How much time off is required for the general performance of the public duties
- Whether there would be potential benefits for the people of Huntingdonshire
- Effect of the absence and the needs of the service

- 11.2 Where an employee holds a public office or public position then they are entitled to reasonable unpaid time off during working hours up to a maximum of 16 days per year (pro rata for part time employees). Requests for time off should be made at least one week in advance and if safety or staffing levels are compromised by the leave, it may be necessary to reduce the agreed amount of time.

- 11.3 In addition, HDC recognises On-Call Firefighters operational duties as a public duty. When work is commenced with a Fire Service, the working hours should be agreed outside of HDC working time, wherever possible. In exceptional circumstances where unpaid time off is needed this is to be agreed with the line manager in advance. Every effort should be made to plan the hours to allow enough time to finish the fire duties before starting work, with consideration to Working Time Regulations and appropriate rest breaks.

13.0 Reservists

- 12.1 Reservists are individuals who volunteer their services, in their spare time, to train to serve alongside the regular armed forces (the Territorial Army is now known as the Army reserve). A reservist is expected to meet minimum training requirements as follows:
- Weekly training (2¹/₂ hours each week during the evening)
 - Occasional training days (weekends spread through the year)
 - Continuous training period (undertaken on an annual basis over a continuous

period of 15 days)

HDC provides reservists with additional unpaid time off to undertake these training commitments up to a maximum of 16 days per leave year.

- 12.2 Mobilisation is the process of calling reservists into full-time service with the regular armed forces to undertake military operations. Mobilisation can last for several months, depending on the operation. An employee should notify their manager in case of mobilisation, as the employer's consent is required. There is no specified warning period prior to mobilisation however the reservist and the employer should generally have at least two weeks' notice. A reservist would not receive pay for the period of mobilisation.
- 12.3 Employers may seek exemption from, or deferral of, mobilisation if the loss of the employee will cause serious harm to HDC. An employee's mobilisation may result in additional costs, however, HDC can apply for financial assistance to meet these costs. The Reserve Forces (Safeguard of Employment) Act provides a mobilised reservist with the right to be re-employed by their former employer after demobilisation and provides dismissal protection for reservists.

14.0 Election Duties

- 14.1 Employees must have permission from their line manager to take time off to undertake election duties. Time off is with full pay and there is not a requirement to take annual leave for these purposes.

Appendix 1: Summary Types of leave

Type of leave	Definition	Entitlement	Paid/Unpaid
Annual Leave	As per 2.1	24/30/34 days	Paid
Bank Holidays	As per 3.0	8 days pro rata	Paid
Unpaid Leave	Where it is necessary or desirable to extend a period of absence it is subject to operational approval.	Up to 2 weeks	Unpaid
Time Off For Dependents	Where it is necessary to help someone who depends on them in an unexpected event or emergency.		Unpaid
Employment Break	This allows an employee time off work, which could be for a number of reasons; travelling, family commitments, volunteering or studying as examples.	Minimum 1 month Maximum 12 months	Unpaid
Compassionate Leave	Serious illness or bereavement of close relative, partners, dependants.	Up to 5 days	Paid
Compassionate Leave Unpaid	Compassionate leave beyond the 5 days paid leave		Unpaid
Parental Bereavement Leave	Statutory leave if a child dies before they turn 18, or if a pregnancy results in a stillbirth after 24 weeks.	2 weeks	Paid 1 week 90% 1 week statutory pay
Carers's Leave	Statutory leave to arrange care for a 'dependent'	1 week in 12 months	Unpaid

Appendix 2: HDC Employee Unpaid Leave Form

Employee Details			
Employee Number		Employee Name	
Post Title		Department	
Category Unpaid Leave (Please select)			
Unpaid leave		Time off for dependents	
Employment Break (1-12 months)		Other (please type in reason for unpaid leave)	
Details of Unpaid Leave			
Unpaid Leave Start Date		Unpaid Leave End Date	
Reason for Unpaid Leave			
Any other comments/notes Employee wishes to share ‘			
<p>In submitting this form the employee, has read and understands the Leave policy and agrees that the period of leave requested, will be unpaid and deducted from the next available pay period.</p>			
Date of application for unpaid leave		Employee Signature	
Approval			
Manager approval	Yes / No		
If no, please provide reason for not approving			
Manager Name		Date	

Please email this form to humanresources@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Appendix 3: HDC Employee Application for Unpaid Carer's Leave

Employee Details			
Employee Number		Employee Name	
Post Title		Department	
Unpaid Leave Start Date			
		Unpaid Leave End Date	
Total amount of days/weeks taken:			
Relationship to dependent:			
<p>In submitting this form the employee, has read and understands the Leave policy and agrees that the period of leave requested, will be unpaid and deducted from the next available pay period.</p>			
Date of application for unpaid leave		Employee Signature	
Approval			
Manager approval	Yes / No		
If no, please provide reason postponing leave			
Dates when postponed leave may be taken			
Manager Name		Date	

Please email this form to humanresources@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Appendix 4: Application to buy/sell Annual Leave for the Period 01 April to 31 March

The Line Manager should return this form by the **28 February 20xx** to humanresources@huntingdonshire.gov.uk so that arrangements can be in place (e.g. for deduction or payments over the coming financial year to be made).

Employee Part: Employee to complete first part of the application and share with manager for consideration	
Employee Name	
Employee/Payroll Number	
Job Title	
Service	
Name of Line Manager	
I have discussed this with my manager and I wish to buy an additional xxx days/hours annual leave	<input type="checkbox"/> I understand that this will be a salary sacrifice scheme and therefore by law that my gross pay (after the deduction for holiday bought must be greater than the national minimum wage). I agree that appropriate deductions are made from my salary. I agree that, should I leave HDC before 31st March any outstanding amounts owed in respect of this leave will be deducted from my final salary payment.
I have discussed this with my manager and checked I'm eligible and I wish to sell xxx days/hours annual leave	<input type="checkbox"/> I understand that the payment will be made as 1/11 th payments in my payroll and will be subject to income tax and NI deductions.
I understand it is my responsibility in applying to buy or sell leave: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To read and understand the policy • To consider the impact that buying or selling leave may have on my own finances, including tax liabilities, tax credits etc • to consider the impact of reducing or increasing my annual leave entitlement on my ability to take leave during the leave year. 	<input type="checkbox"/> I have read and agree with each of the responsibilities.
Employee Print Name	

Employee Sign Name (if submitting electronically, use E-signature or print name and email)	
Dated:	

Line Manager part:	
I've considered the request to buy or sell leave in line with the policy and the outcome of my decision is:	<input type="checkbox"/> Approve Full number of days requested to buy or sell <input type="checkbox"/> Approved partial number of days requested to buy or sell. Insert new number of days approved: <input type="checkbox"/> Decline days requested to buy or sell. Reason for rejection is:
	Where my decision is to reject either the full request or part of the request I have provided this feedback to the individual direct. <input type="checkbox"/>
Manager Name	
Date:	

Please send to Humanresources@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Paternity Leave Policy

Version 1.1

<u>Version Control</u>			
<u>Version</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Changes</u>
1.1	Kiran Hans	March 2024	Added front cover and version control. Changed name to Paternity Leave. Added legal updates for 2024 and updated Paternity Leave Application form.

Name of Policy	Paternity Leave Policy
Person/posts responsible	Strategic HR Manager
Date approved/adopted	Reviewed March 2024 for Approval in April 2024
Approved by	Employment Committee
Review Date	June 2026

Paternity Leave

1.0 Introduction

The Council grants Paternity Leave to a member of staff whose partner is pregnant or who plans to adopt a baby.

1.1 Who is Eligible for the Leave?

All staff employed by Huntingdonshire District Council are entitled to a block of 5 days Paternity Leave payable at 90% of weekly wage (including Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP) if applicable).

You can take unpaid leave to accompany a partner to 2 antenatal appointments if you meet any of the following criteria:

- the baby's father
- the husband or partner of the mother (or adopter) - this includes same-sex partners
- in a long-term relationship with the expectant mother
- the child's adopter
- the intended parent (if you're having a baby through a surrogacy arrangement)

You cannot get Paternity Pay and time off for appointments Leave if you've already taken the time off through the Adoption Leave Policy.

All staff who have been employed within Local Government for a period of not less than 26 weeks ending with the week immediately preceding the 14th week before the expected week of the child's birth are eligible to a block of 10 days Paternity Leave which includes 5 days payable at 90% of weekly wage (including SPP if applicable) plus 5 days payable at SPP (the entitlement is the same if you are having more than one child e.g. twins).

1.2 When can leave be taken?

Partners can choose to split their leave and pay into two non-consecutive periods of leave of a week each, it is up to you whether you wish to take one or two weeks leave. Leave cannot start before the child has been born and partners will be able to take their leave and pay at any time during the first 52 weeks of the birth or the placement of the child for adoption.

1.3 Requesting Leave

It is recognised that in many cases it will be difficult to predict exactly when the leave is required, but staff wishing to take Paternity Leave should inform their line manager as soon as possible of the likely dates of their absence. Applications for leave should be made at least 15 weeks before the expected date of childbirth or adoption, however, employees will only need to give 28 days' notice of the dates they wish to take. You will need to complete a Paternity Leave application form.

You are also able to take annual or flexi leave from your entitlement and have the option to take unpaid parental leave or Shared Parental Leave, details are available from the Human Resources Team.

The notice requirement for claiming SPP is 28 days before the expected date of childbirth or adoption, or if this is not reasonably practicable, as soon as possible.

1.4 Time off for Antenatal appointments

You can take unpaid leave to accompany a pregnant woman to 2 antenatal appointments. You can take up to 6 and a half hours per appointment, where additional time is required please speak to your manager. There is no minimum length of service required to take time off for Antenatal appointments for employees.

You should make your manager aware as soon as possible of any antenatal appointments. Where possible, a minimum of two weeks notice should be given except in exceptional circumstances.

Evidence of the appointment is not a requirement, however the unpaid leave form will need to be completed giving dates and times of appointment.

1.5 Premature births

If your child is born prematurely, Paternity Leave can be taken at any point between the actual date of birth and 52 weeks following the birth. You would still qualify for Paternity Leave and Pay even if you have not been continuously employed by HDC for 26 weeks when the child is born, provided that you would have had the relevant length of service by the Expected Qualifying Week.

1.6 Miscarriage, stillbirths or loss

You will be entitled to Paternity Leave and Pay if a child was miscarried or stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy, or later died. If a miscarriage or stillbirth occurs before the end of the 24 weeks of pregnancy, you will not be entitled to Paternity Leave or SPP.

2.0 Notification for Paternity Leave and Pay

In order to request Paternity Leave, an indicative date of leave should be given 28 days prior to the due date, in line with section 1.3 by completing the Paternity Leave application form.

You may choose to begin this period of leave on:

- The date on which the baby is born (This is a movable day)
- A predetermined date - this date must be later than the first day of the expected week of birth. If you have chosen a predetermined date and the baby is not born on or before that date, you must change your choice to another later predetermined date or you can choose to take leave from the actual date of birth or a specified number of days after the date of birth.

Appendix 1: HDC Paternity Leave Application Form

Please complete this form, ask your manager to sign it and return it to Human.resources@huntingdonshire.gov.uk at least 28 days before the intended start of the Paternity Leave.

Employee Details			
Employee Number		Employee Name	
Post Title		Department	
Baby Due Date:			
To take the leave as one block please complete below (First week is paid at 90% of salary and second week is paid at Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP):			
Paternity Leave Start Date		Paternity Leave End Date	
To take the leave as two blocks please complete below (First week is paid at 90% of salary and second week is paid at Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP):			
Week 1 - Paternity Leave Start Date		Paternity Leave End Date	
Week 2 - Paternity Leave Start Date		Paternity Leave End Date	
Relationship to dependent:			
Continuous Service Date:			
Under 26 weeks service <input type="checkbox"/>		Over 26 weeks service <input type="checkbox"/>	
Confirmation/Acknowledgment (In submitting this form the employee, has read and understands the Paternity Leave policy and the rates at which this will be paid):			
Employee Signature		Date of application	
Manager Name			
		Date	

Probation Policy

Version 1.1

Version Control			
Version	Author	Date	Changes
1.1	Nicki Bane	March 2024	Added front cover for version control Rep Groups Amended Action plan wording taken out so that all objective/actions can be kept on one document.

Name of Policy:	Probation Policy
Person/posts responsible:	Strategic HR Manager
Date approved/adopted:	April 2024
Approved by:	Employment Committee
Review Date:	June 2026

PROBATION POLICY

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 This policy provides a framework to enable managers to monitor and support the progress of new starters in the initial stages of their appointment and to deal promptly and fairly with any apparent shortcomings in a probationers' work performance or conduct in accordance with the procedure outlined below.
- 1.2 The policy sets out the responsibilities of managers and employees during the probation period and outlines the process to be followed. The policy is not a substitute for a thorough selection procedure, every effort should be made at recruitment stage to ensure the right candidate is appointed.

2. Employees covered by this Policy

- 2.1 All new employees to Huntingdonshire District Council will go through a probationary period upon appointment. Existing employees who transfer from other jobs within the Council do not have a formal probationary period. However, they should still have a full induction to make sure they are able to achieve acceptable standards of conduct and work performance.
- 2.2 The length of the probationary period is 6 months for all employees, except those as stated in 2.3.
- 2.3 Employees on fixed term contracts are also covered by this policy, however, the length of probation period may be reduced in line with the length of contract i.e. a 6 month contract could have a 3 month probation period - please contact the HR team for further advice.

3. Principles of Policy

- 3.1 All issues with sickness absence, work performance or misconduct for new HDC employees during their probation period will be dealt with using the probation procedure rather than through the sickness absence, disciplinary or capability procedures, with the exception of gross misconduct or gross incompetence.

4. Manager's responsibilities

- 4.1 The manager must explain the Probation Policy to all newly appointed employees.

- 4.2 At the beginning of the probation period it is crucial that the manager clearly defines with the employee what is required of them and how their performance will be assessed. Performance standards should clearly state the skills, performance and attendance levels that are required. Throughout the probation period an employee's progress will be measured and evidenced against these performance standards.
- 4.3 The manager must carry out probation review meetings within the required timescale, or more frequently if required.
- 4.4 Where an employee has successfully completed the probation period it is the manager's responsibility to confirm the employee in post.

5. Employee responsibilities

- 5.1 It is the employee's responsibility to:
- attend and participate in all induction sessions and mandatory training;
 - ensure that they fully understand the standards of performance required throughout the probation period and ask for clarification if unsure;
 - participate fully in probation review meetings and undertake any agreed actions within the specified timescales;
 - take responsibility for their development and the quality of their work;
 - comply with the Council's Code of Conduct, Disciplinary Rules and any local rules and procedures applied in their work area (which will be explained by the manager); and
 - attend work if they are fit to do so

6. Probation Review meetings

- 6.1 Probation review meetings will be held throughout the probation period between the manager and the employee as set out below. **A Probation Hearing will be convened where the required performance, conduct or attendance has not been achieved:**

Timing of Meeting	Purpose of Meeting	Outcome of meeting
Week 1	Outline expectations of performance and explain how progress will be assessed.	
8 weeks	<p>To check that an employee is settling into the role and has an understanding of the basics required to do the job.</p> <p>To check the progress of an employee's induction.</p> <p>Any performance or attendance issues identified are discussed at this meeting with specific examples given.</p>	<p>If necessary, actions to address any emerging issues are to be discussed by the manager and employee (the probation review notes can be used to document this).</p> <p>Copy provided to employee.</p>
16 weeks	<p>To check that an employee is progressing sufficiently in the role and to discuss any training or development issues.</p> <p>If there are performance or attendance issues these should be discussed and progress/improvement against actions reviewed.</p>	<p>Progress to be noted.</p> <p>Probation Review notes to be updated to address outstanding issues agreed and signed by manager and employee.</p> <p>Copy provided to employee.</p>
Final Review 26 weeks	<p>No outstanding issues or concerns</p> <p>The manager will inform the employee they have met the standards expected and that they will be confirmed in post subject to levels of performance being sustained.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>---</p> <p>Outstanding issues remain</p> <p>If there are outstanding concerns the manager decides at this point if a probation hearing is required. The</p>	<p>No outstanding issues or concerns</p> <p>Manager prepares a confirmation in post letter and issues this to the employee.</p> <p>-----</p> <p>---</p> <p>Outstanding issues</p> <p>Manager informs HR and their Service Manager that a probation hearing is required. Letter sent by HR convening probation hearing.</p>

	manager will inform the employee that a probation hearing will be held	
No later than 30 weeks*	Probation Hearing chaired by a Service Manager.	Service Manager decides that employee should be confirmed in post; or Service Manager decides that the employee should not be confirmed in post and terminates employment contract.
*In exceptional circumstances, where the manager has followed and documented the probation process and there is sufficient evidence to support this approach, a Probation Hearing may be held at any point during the probation period		

- 6.2 Probation review meetings can form part of 1:1 meetings in line with the above timescales or be held as separate meetings. It is important that there are regular feedback and 1:1 sessions throughout the probation period so that any issues can be identified and addressed quickly. The manager should seek guidance from HR as soon as issues are identified.

7. Record keeping

- 7.1 Records should be kept of probation review meetings using the standard record form. These records should document discussions, induction and training given, agreed actions and performance measurements. The records will be used as evidence at a Probation Hearing if necessary.

8. Extending the Probation Period

- 8.1 Normally the probation period should not be extended, as six months should be sufficient time to assess an employee's suitability for a role.
- 8.2 In exceptional circumstances a maximum one-month extension may be agreed by the manager to see if improvements in attendance, performance and/or, conduct will be sustained or to allow for completion of mandatory training. Advice should be sought from HR before a probation period is extended. No further extensions will be agreed in any circumstances by the manager.
- 8.3 If an employee is absent during the probation period for any significant period (e.g. long term absence, maternity/paternity or adoption leave) it may be

appropriate to suspend the application of the Probation Policy until they have returned.

- 8.4 Where issues have arisen at a later stage in the probation period or hearing a Service Manager may deem it appropriate to grant a final extension period of a maximum of 3 month extension – please see section 16.

9. Criteria and process for confirming in post

- 9.1 An employee will be confirmed in post by letter if their manager is satisfied that by the end of the probation period they have met the required standards that have been set in terms of skills, knowledge, behaviour, and attendance. This letter will be issued by the manager and a copy sent to HR.

10. Employee Decision

- 10.0 During the probation period the employee may decide that the role is not suited to them. An employee should have been provided with sufficient induction and training in order to fully understand the role and to come to this decision. In this situation the employee may choose to resign and will be required to work their notice period (this decision is purely voluntary).

11. Criteria and process for “Not” confirming in post

- 11.1 An employee who does not meet the performance standards that have been set in terms of skills, knowledge, behaviour and attendance levels by the end of the probation period may have their contract terminated, a Service Manager will take this decision.
- 11.2 Appropriate grounds to consider termination of employment under the probationary procedure may include the following, but this is not an exhaustive list:

- Intermittent Sickness Absence

Unacceptable levels of intermittent sickness absence could be defined as:

Over 4 days sickness absence in 6 months; OR
3 periods of absence in any 3 month period; OR

Unacceptable patterns of absence are identified e.g. Mondays, Fridays, extra days linked to holidays; OR

Absences linked to the avoidance of particular work tasks.

- **Work Performance Issues**

Despite reasonable levels of induction/training/support the employee:

- Is not producing work to the required standard
- Is making repeated mistakes after efforts have been made to address these
- Does not have an understanding of the core areas of work
- Does not have the experience/skills that are required to perform the requirements of the role
- Requires excessive additional training/support to address work performance issues
- Has not been able to demonstrate the experience/skills/behaviours that they referred to at the interview.
- Has not met mandatory training requirements or has refused to participate in mandatory training.

- **Misconduct**

The main rules and standards of conduct (behaviour) expected of employees are set out in the Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

- **Gross Incompetence**

The actions and/or omissions of an employee during their probation period may be considered as gross incapability/incompetence. This would occur where the actual/potential consequences of any action/omission are considered so serious as to render the continued employment of the employee impossible, e.g. where others are put at risk of serious injury or death, or the Council's finances or reputation are put at serious risk.

- **Gross Misconduct**

Gross misconduct constitutes a fundamental breach of the contract of employment between the employer and the employee and makes any further trust and working relationship impossible. Full details are set out in the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.

12. Probation Report

- 12.1 Where a Probationary Hearing is required, the manager, with guidance from HR, will prepare a summary report of the concerns that have arisen during the probation period. This will outline the performance expectations that were set,

evidence of how performance has been monitored, details of actions /meetings and copies of any written notes and communications. It is necessary to evidence in this report that an employee has been given reasonable levels of induction, training and support with regular reviews.

13. Written Notice of Probation Hearing

- 13.1 The employee must be given at least 7 calendar days notice of this hearing and has the right to be accompanied by a work colleague, trade union representative or Employee Representative Group member.
- 13.2 The employee must provide HR with the name of their representative or work colleague and provide copies of any papers, as applicable, to be referred to three days prior to the hearing.
- 13.3 Employees are expected to take all reasonable steps to attend the probation hearing.
- 13.4 In the event that the employee is too ill to attend, their representative or work colleague is unavailable or other circumstances beyond the employee's control prevent them from attending the meeting, one alternative date normally within 7 calendar days of the original meeting will be arranged. If the employee, their representative or work colleague is unable to attend on the revised date, the meeting will take place as scheduled.

14. Probation Hearing

- 14.1 The Service Manager will chair the probation hearing, supported by an HR representative and will start by outlining the purpose of the meeting.
- 14.2 The manager will then be required to evidence how;
 - the employee has been assessed
 - the employee has not met the required performance expectations in terms of skills, knowledge, behaviour and attendance (with examples);
 - induction, training and support that has been given during the probation period; and
 - explain any actions that were agreed and the outcome of these actions.
- 14.3 The Service Manager will give the employee every opportunity to respond to the points made by the manager and to put forward any mitigating circumstances.

15. Probation Hearing Decision

- 15.1 Following the discussions the Service Manager will adjourn the hearing to consider the evidence provided and make a decision whether to;

- confirm the employee in post; or
 - not to confirm the employee in post and to terminate their employment.
 - extend probation where for example the individual has not been able to undertake training or training/support was not put in place as agreed (see 16. below).
- 15.2 If the decision at the probation hearing is to confirm the employee in post, the Service Manager will inform the employee and their representative either at the hearing, or as soon as possible thereafter. The Service Manager will write to confirm the employee in post within 7 calendar days from the date of the hearing.
- 15.3 If the decision at the Probation Hearing is to not confirm the employee in post, the Service Manager will inform the employee and their representative that the employee is dismissed, with pay in lieu of notice i.e. they will not be required to work their notice. Adjustments in pay will also be made for any outstanding annual leave due or any taken above the allowance.
- 15.4 The Service Manager will confirm in writing, to the employee within 7 calendar days from the date of the hearing;
- that the employee has been dismissed
 - the grounds for dismissal and the reasons; and
 - the date the dismissal will be effective
- 15.5 Following dismissal, the manager is responsible for advising payroll of the termination date, and any leave adjustments and for ensuring that appropriate departments are advised such as ICT for systems access, Facilities Management for buildings access, and that the return of Council equipment is pursued.

16. Final Extension

- 16.1 The Service Manager may decide that a final extension is required up to a maximum of 3 months.
- 16.2 An extension may only be given in exceptional circumstances if:
- an employee has already demonstrated an improvement during the probationary period – a final extension period can be used to show that this improvement can be sustained; or.
 - an issue is identified relatively late in the probationary period and it is deemed that a final extension would provide an opportunity to address this and could realistically be achieved during this time period.
- 16.3 The manager is responsible for evidencing performance during the final extension period and producing/updating the probation summary report (where a hearing is required). After the final extension period if performance has not improved a probation hearing should be convened.

- 16.4 The employee must be given 7 calendar days notice of this hearing.
- 16.5 Based on the evidence presented at the hearing the Service Manager will decide:
- to confirm the employee in post - no further action will be taken under the procedure; or
 - not to confirm the employee in post and to terminate their employment
- 16.6 No further extensions of the probationary period can be given in any circumstances.

17. Review and Policy Monitoring

- 17.1 This policy and procedure will be reviewed and its effectiveness evaluated periodically. The Council retains the discretion to review it at any time and consult as appropriate.

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Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

Version 1.2

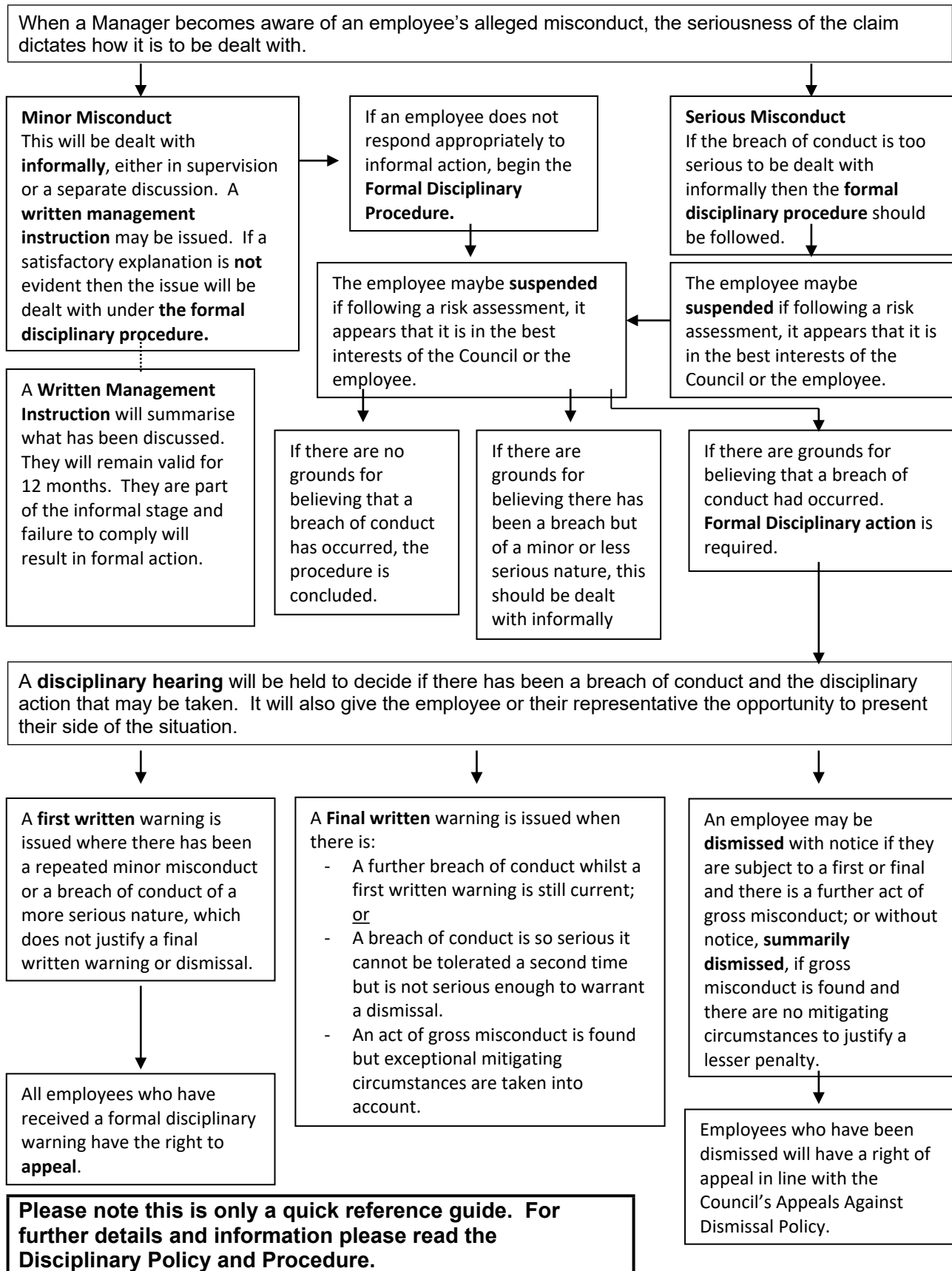
Version Control			
Version	Author	Date	Changes
1.1	Shaistha Shah	August 2022	Added front cover for version control – minor typos/sentence clarity, clarification that right to representation is not a legal right but allowed by HDC, changing staff council to ERG, title of First & final Written Warning changed to Final Written Warning, appeals against warning to be made within 7 calendar days, section added on EAP/Support Services and First Contact removed
1.2	Kiran Hans	October 2023	Updated contents page, flow chart re suspensions. Changed Senior Management and Corporate Management to Leadership Team. Streamlined to reflect current practice and taken out counselling as this is done through EAP.
1.3	Leanne Harfield	October 2024	Updated timelines for notice for hearings in line with other policies. Amended wording around misconduct/gross misconduct following meeting with ERG/Unison Amended some wording for clarity
Name of Policy		Disciplinary Policy & Procedure	
Person/posts responsible		Strategic HR Manager	
Date approved/adopted		November 2023	
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Review Date		November 2025	

Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

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A separate document is available on the HR Intranet page – Managers Disciplinary Policy and Procedure Toolkit.

Disciplinary Procedure Quick Reference Flowchart



1 Policy Statement

- 1.1 Huntingdonshire District Council is committed to the effective management of conduct at work to ensure the efficient provision of services and the safety and well-being of employees and the general public.
- 1.2 The disciplinary procedure provides managers with a framework to address alleged breaches of expected standards of conduct as detailed in the Disciplinary Rules. See Appendix One for the Disciplinary Rules

2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all Council employees, except Statutory Officers (Head of Paid Service, Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer), where separate arrangements apply as detailed in the Chief Officers constitution.
- 2.2 For employees subject to the probation period, this policy does not apply, unless in cases of gross misconduct or gross incompetence. Other incidents of misconduct that arise during the probation period will be addressed using the probation policy.

3 Principles

- 3.1 This policy is based on the concepts of 'natural justice' meaning all staff will be treated fairly and without bias.

Employees can expect:

- To be informed of the complaint against them, as soon as is practicable, and to be given an opportunity to state their case before decisions are reached;
- No disciplinary action to be taken until reasonable efforts have been taken to establish the facts;
- To be notified of their right to be accompanied and/or represented at all formal stages of the process (except when being suspended);
- This procedure to be applied fairly in all instances and for all disciplinary matters to be heard in a calm and objective manner with the outcome being both fair and equitable.
- References to 7 calendar days include weekends.

4 Responsibilities

4.1 **Managers must**

- Ensure all employees are made aware of the expected standards of behaviour as specified in the Disciplinary Rules. To do this a manager must provide appropriate induction, supervision and training.
- Ensure all employees are made aware of any service specific rules or practices, for example sickness reporting deadlines for shift workers.
- Ensure service specific rules are reviewed regularly and any necessary changes communicated.

4.2 **Employees must**

- Comply with the Disciplinary Rules. Any local rules that apply to their role will be explained to the employee by his/her line manager.
- Ask for clarification if unsure what standards of conduct are expected.
- Co-operate fully in any disciplinary investigation.

5 Informal disciplinary procedure

5.1 Cases of minor misconduct should be dealt with informally. A line manager should discuss the issue informally with the employee as it arises either in a supervision session or a separate discussion. This is part of the normal day-to-day management and does not form part of the formal disciplinary procedure.

The manager needs to set out the concerns, outline how the expected standards are not being met, and remind the employee of the standard of conduct required. The manager should explain that if a satisfactory explanation is not evident the issue is likely to be considered under the formal disciplinary procedure.

5.2 **Written management instructions**

To avoid any differences in interpretation the manager should consider issuing the employee with a written management instruction, this summarises what has been discussed. Management instructions do not constitute a formal written warning and are not part of the formal disciplinary procedure. Where a written management instruction is issued, this should be following a face-to-face conversation with the employee. Management instructions should be set out in writing. An email is acceptable providing it clearly states that it is a written management instruction. All management instructions should state that the letter/email constitutes the informal stage of the disciplinary procedure and that failure to comply may result in formal disciplinary action.

The employee will be sent a copy of the management instruction and a copy should be shared with HR for the employee's file. Copies of written management instructions or notes of informal discussions may be referred to in a subsequent disciplinary hearing, but only if they are relevant and current i.e. they have been written in the 12 months prior to an issue recurring.

6 Formal disciplinary procedure

6.1 This will be applied where the employee does not respond appropriately to informal action or the line manager believes that a breach of conduct may have occurred that is too serious to be dealt with informally.

The table below outlines details about conducting disciplinary meetings in line with the procedure:

Employee Group	Investigations	Disciplinary Hearings	Appeal (excluding dismissal)	Appeal against dismissal
Grades A – F	The employee's Line Manager or designated officer *	A Manager** or Senior Leadership Team	Senior Leadership Team	As outlined in the Appeals Against Dismissal Policy
Employee	Investigations	Disciplinary	Appeal	Appeal against

Group		Hearings	(excluding dismissal)	dismissal
Grades G-I	Member of Senior Leadership Team or designated officer *	Member of Corporate Leadership Team or designated officer*	Member of Corporate Leadership Team	As outlined in the Appeals Against Dismissal Policy
Grade SM	A member of Corporate Leadership Team or designated officer**	Member of Corporate Leadership Team	Appeals Panel as detailed in the Council's Constitution	Appeals Panel as detailed in the Council's Constitution
Grades AD & MD	As detailed in the Council's Constitution			

* A Designated Officer is an employee who will be requested to carry out investigations on behalf of a member of Senior Leadership Team

** A Manager defined in this instance is responsible for an activity and employees and reports directly to a member of Senior Leadership Team.

7 Suspension

7.1 In certain situations, it will be necessary to suspend an employee from duty on full pay. A decision to suspend will be taken following appropriate consideration of the nature of the allegation, appropriate consideration of the risks involved, consideration of alternatives where appropriate and consultation with HR where possible. Suspension is not disciplinary action, but a precautionary measure designed to protect the Council's interests and the employee, whilst allowing time for a thorough investigation to be undertaken. Suspension is not, and will not be, seen as an assumption of guilt or a disciplinary sanction.

7.2 An employee will be suspended from work at the earliest opportunity in cases where:

- It is considered to be in the best interests of the Council and/or the employee for him/her not to be at work during an investigation;

7.3 An employee does not have the right to prior notice that they are to be suspended, to be represented/ accompanied when being suspended or to appeal against the decision to suspend.

7.4 The decision to suspend should be taken and carried out as follows:

Employee Group	Responsible for Suspension
Grades A – F	Member of Senior Leadership Team or Duty Officer, if out of hours
Grades G – I	Member of the Corporate Leadership Team or Duty Officer, if out of hours
Senior Leadership Team and Statutory Officers	Senior Officers Panel***

*** Senior Officers Panel is a member body as defined in the Constitution

With the exception of members of Senior Leadership Team and Statutory Officers, or in situations where the level of management is not available, suspension may be carried out by the most senior manager on duty at the site when the allegation is

reported/comes to light, or by a member of the relevant service management team but only after the decision to suspend has been taken by a member of the Corporate or Senior Leadership Team or Duty Officer, if out of hours. Please see Manager's Toolkit for further details of how to contact the Duty Officer.

- 7.5 A suspension will only be carried out after careful consideration. Every effort will be made to conduct an investigation as soon as possible and minimise the length of the suspension. The details of the suspension will be confirmed in writing within 7 calendar days of the suspension meeting. Further information on suspensions is available in the toolkit.
- 7.6 If the matter is subject to a police investigation, the Council reserves the right to continue with the disciplinary process and not await the outcome of the police investigation.

8 Investigation

The investigation will be confined to establishing the facts of the case with the employee concerned and other persons as felt appropriate. The purpose of the investigations is to gather information to help substantiate those facts and ultimately to determine whether there are sufficient grounds to hold a disciplinary hearing.

8.1 Investigation process

- 8.1.1 The investigation should be carried out by the employee's line manager or another Manager or Designated Officer (as outlined in section 6.1). Written records of the investigation will be kept for later reference.
- 8.1.2 The employee will be given at least 24 hours verbal notice of an investigation meeting and will be informed of the allegations against him/her. Although there is no legal right to representation at the investigation stage, HDC allows employees to be accompanied by a member of the Employee Representative Group (ERG), a Union representative or work colleague. In most cases the investigation meeting will go ahead if a representative is unavailable. The investigation is not a disciplinary hearing. In certain cases, there may have to be more than one investigation, e.g. to follow up on evidence obtained from other witnesses or to clarify certain points.
- 8.1.3 Employees are required to attend investigations and hearings and to co-operate with the fact finding process.
- 8.1.4 The investigating manager may be assisted by a member of the HR team in an investigation. In certain cases more than one person may need to assist the investigating manager e.g. financial, legal, IT cases where specialist knowledge is required.
- 8.1.5 All parties will ensure that confidentiality is maintained at all times, and that the name of the employee involved will remain anonymous wherever possible. Any breaches of confidentiality may lead to disciplinary action.
- 8.1.6 Witnesses may be employees or non-employees. In exceptional circumstances, with the prior agreement of the investigation manager, a witness may be accompanied by a member of the ERG, Union representative or work colleague who will provide moral support only. An employee is responsible for arranging his/her own witnesses and meeting any associated costs.

8.2 Outcome of investigation

8.2.1 The investigating manager may conclude, after consultation with a member of the HR team, that there are:

- No grounds for believing that a breach of conduct has occurred, therefore the disciplinary procedure will be concluded; OR
- Grounds for believing that a breach of conduct has occurred but that it is of a minor or less serious nature than originally believed, in which case the formal disciplinary process will end and the matter dealt with by informal action, i.e. day to day management and/or by issuing a written management instruction; OR
- Grounds for believing that a breach of conduct has occurred and that formal disciplinary action may be necessary, therefore a disciplinary hearing should be arranged.

8.2.2 Guidance on how to undertake an investigation is available in the toolkit.

9 Right to be accompanied

9.1 The employee has the right to be accompanied and/or represented at any stage of the formal disciplinary procedure, except when being suspended. Employees may be accompanied by a member of the ERG, a trade union representative, or a work colleague of their choosing. The employee must decide whether their companion will act as a representative or if they will act as a companion.

9.2 A representative is allowed to address the hearing to make the employee's case, sum up that case and respond on the employee's behalf. They can also confer with the employee during the hearing. However a representative is not permitted to answer questions on behalf of the employee and must not prevent the employer from explaining their case or prevent any party making their contribution

9.3 The choice of companion should be reasonable given the circumstances of the case - it would not be reasonable to be accompanied by a colleague whose presence would prejudice the hearing or who might have a conflict of interest and this will not be permitted. It is the responsibility of the employee to arrange his/her companion and to meet any associated costs.

9.4 At least 4 calendar days before the hearing, the employee should inform HR of who they have chosen as a representative/companion.

10 Prior to the disciplinary hearing

10.1 The employee will be given a minimum of 7 calendar days written notice of the hearing. This may be varied by mutual agreement.

10.2 Details of any evidence to be relied upon/witnesses to be called will be sent to the employee.

10.3 The employee has the right to refer to written information and call witnesses at the hearing, details must be submitted by the employee at least four calendar days before the hearing.

11 Disciplinary hearing

- 11.1 Process: The disciplinary hearing will be conducted by an authorised manager who has not played any part in the investigation. The chair will be supported by a member of the HR team.
- 11.2 Witnesses: Witnesses may be employees or non-employees. In exceptional circumstances, with the prior agreement of the chair, a witness may be accompanied by an independent person of his/her choice who will provide moral support only. An employee is responsible for arranging his/her own witnesses and meeting any associated costs
- 11.3 New evidence: If new evidence (written information and/or witnesses) is introduced at the disciplinary hearing the reasons why the details were not submitted in advance of the hearing must be explained. If new evidence is presented, the chair conducting the hearing will take a view on whether to allow it and an adjournment may be necessary to allow time for consideration and/or further investigation.
- 11.4 Employees are expected to attend a disciplinary hearing. If the employee is unable to attend the disciplinary hearing, they must inform the relevant investigating manager.
- 11.5 Where an employee has unavoidably been unable to attend the disciplinary hearing the employee will be given reasonable notice of a second hearing date. Hearings will also be rearranged in situations where the reason for the failure to attend was unforeseeable e.g. sudden illness.
- 11.6 If the employee is unable to attend the reconvened hearing it will normally proceed in his/her absence but with his/her representative being given the opportunity to present the employee's case on his/her behalf. In such cases it will also be possible for the chair to accept for consideration a written statement from the employee or his/her representative.
- 11.7 The only time when the above process will not apply is where an employee confirms to the investigating manager that they have no intention of attending any disciplinary hearing. In this situation, the hearing will proceed in the employee's absence.
- 11.8 If the employee's representative/companion cannot attend on a proposed date a further date, no more than 10 calendar days after the date originally proposed will be suggested. A hearing will usually only be rescheduled once.

12 Decision

- 12.1 The chair of the hearing will consider all of the evidence presented and then decide if there has been:
- No breach of conduct and that the disciplinary procedure should be concluded; OR
 - A breach of conduct, but it is not serious enough to warrant formal disciplinary action and/or mitigating circumstances have been taken into account and it can be dealt with appropriately by informal action, e.g. by day to day management and/or by issuing written management instructions; OR
 - A breach of conduct which is sufficiently serious to warrant formal disciplinary action.

12.2 The decision of the Chair conducting the hearing will normally be given to the employee verbally at the end of the hearing – they will confirm the outcome of the disciplinary hearing in writing within 7 calendar days of the hearing.

13 Disciplinary action

13.1 There are three levels of disciplinary action. The level of disciplinary action issued will depend on the seriousness of the misconduct and whether the employee is subject to a current warning for misconduct.

13.2 **First written warning**

Issued where there has been a repeated minor misconduct OR a breach of conduct of a more serious nature, which does not justify a final written warning or dismissal.

13.3 **Final written warning**

Issued where:

- There is a further breach of conduct whilst a first written warning is still current; OR
- A breach of conduct is found to be of such a serious nature that it cannot be tolerated a second time, but is not serious enough to be categorised as gross misconduct; OR
- An act of gross misconduct is found, but exceptional mitigating circumstances are taken into account

13.4 **Dismissal**

An employee may be dismissed:

- With notice if they are subject to a final or first written warning and a further act of misconduct is found (contractual notice may be paid in lieu); OR
- Without notice (summarily) if gross misconduct is found and there are no mitigating circumstances to justify a lesser penalty.

13.4.1 Where an employee has been dismissed from a post working with children or vulnerable adults, the dismissal letter will also confirm whether HR will convey the details of the employee's dismissal to the appropriate authorities, e.g. for possible inclusion on the Children's or Adults Barred Lists as appropriate, or other statutory bodies such as Health and Care Professions Council. The decision to convey information will be made after full consideration of the facts.

13.5 **Other action**

HDC reserve the right to take other action in conjunction with formal disciplinary action, e.g. to transfer the employee to another post. This must be in consultation with a member of the HR team to ensure that any action taken is reasonable and will be reflected in the disciplinary outcome letter.

14 Time limits for warnings

14.1 Written Management Instructions do not constitute a formal written warning and are not part of the formal disciplinary procedure. They are relevant and current for a period of 12 months.

- 14.1.1 Copies of written management instructions or notes of informal discussions may be referred to in a subsequent disciplinary hearing, but only if they are relevant and current i.e. they have been written in the 12 months prior to an issue recurring.
- 14.2 Formal warnings (first and final written warnings) remain current for 12 months. Any disciplinary action taken should be disregarded after the specified period of satisfactory conduct.
- 14.2.1 There may be occasions where an employee's conduct is satisfactory throughout the period the warning is in force, only to lapse very soon thereafter. Where a pattern emerges and/or there is evidence of abuse, the employee's disciplinary record should be borne in mind.

15 Appeals

- 15.1 All employees who have received a formal disciplinary warning have a right of appeal to the relevant person as detailed in the outcome letter. This appeal must be made in writing within 7 calendar days after receiving the written outcome of the disciplinary hearing.
- 15.2 Employees who have been dismissed will have a right of appeal in line with the Appeals against Dismissal Policy.
- 15.3 The appeal must state in detail the grounds for appeal i.e. the basis on which they say the result of the disciplinary was wrong or that the sanction as a result was inappropriate. This information is required for an appeal meeting to be arranged.
- 15.4 As far as is reasonably practicable, an appeal meeting will be held by the next level of management not involved in the original hearing, within 14 calendar days or a mutually agreed date following the receipt of the appeal in writing.
- 15.5 At the appeal hearing the grounds of appeal will be discussed and the manager hearing the appeal will make a decision based on all representations, together with any subsequent facts that have come to light.
- 15.6 The person dealing with the appeal has the authority to:
- The appeal is upheld, i.e. to find the case not proven;
 - Issue a lesser level of disciplinary action; or
 - The appeal is not upheld, i.e. the original disciplinary warning remains in force.

16 Special circumstances

- 16.1 Some disciplinary issues need to be treated in a particular way, for example:
- AWOL (Absent without authorised leave)
 - Internet/IT cases
 - Financial irregularities or potential fraud
 - Child protection cases
 - Allegations relating to vulnerable adults
 - Cases involving a partner organisation
 - Where several employees are involved
 - Multiple contracts

- Offences outside of work

Further guidance can be found in the Managers' Disciplinary Toolkit. In all these cases advice should be sought from the HR Team.

17 Consideration of expired disciplinary warnings

- 17.1 All written warnings expire after 12 months;. If a further breach of conduct occurs while a disciplinary warning is still current the disciplinary procedure may be escalated to the next stage.

18 Links to other procedures

- 18.1 Work performance: It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between misconduct and work performance issues. Cases of misconduct are dealt with under the disciplinary procedure, and cases of genuine lack of capability should be dealt with under the Improving Performance Policy. If it is not clear whether an issue is one of conduct or capability, the investigation process should establish this. Managers may also wish to discuss this with a member of the HR team.
- 18.2 Ill health: The disciplinary procedure and sickness absence policies can run in parallel i.e. one does not take precedence over the other. Advice should be sought from the HR Team in these situations.
- 18.3 Raising a Concern (Grievance): If an employee raises a concern during the disciplinary process, HR advice should be sought to determine whether the disciplinary process should be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the concern. However, in the majority of situations, the raising of the concern will not postpone any disciplinary action and therefore it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently.

19 Records

- 19.1 The HR Team will maintain on an employee's personal file brief details of any disciplinary investigation and the letter confirming any formal disciplinary action. They will also keep on file a record of any management instructions issued.

20 Advice and Support

- 20.1 The Disciplinary Toolkit will support managers to proactively manage conduct issues. Additional advice for managers is available from the HR Team.
- 20.2 There is also support available through an Employee Assistance Programme, (EAP) service to ensure the welfare of an employee is supported in a positive manner. If you need further information on the r support services available please contact the HR Team. The details of your referral will remain confidential to the HR team.
- 20.3 It may be appropriate for certain matters to be dealt with by way of mediation, depending on the nature of the disciplinary. This involves the appointment of a third-party mediator arranged by the HR Team, after the investigating manager has discussed the disciplinary matter with all those involved and sought to facilitate an outcome. Mediation will only be used if all parties involved in the disciplinary agree.
- 20.4 Should any aspect of the disciplinary process cause difficulty because of a disability, language barriers or other difficulties, the Council will aim to support with the necessary help or assistance. Please contact the HR Team if additional support is required.

Disciplinary Rules

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The Council has Key Values and Behaviours in which all employees should adhere to. In circumstances where these are breached disciplinary action will be taken. The following rules are set out to guide employees on the areas deemed as misconduct or gross misconduct.
- 1.2 The lists of behaviour that may be seen as misconduct or gross misconduct set out below are neither exclusive nor exhaustive, there may be other matters of a similar nature which will constitute either misconduct or gross misconduct. There may be occasions where matters listed as misconduct may be regarded as gross misconduct depending upon the nature and seniority of the post or the frequency, impact or severity of the breach.

2.0 Misconduct

- 2.1 Misconduct is of a degree less serious than that warranting dismissal on the first occasion or without previous warning but that will nevertheless lead to dismissal if persistent. Some serious acts of Misconduct might justify omitting the first stage (management instruction) moving directly to issuing a written/final warning in the first instance if there is not a satisfactory explanation. Only when the disciplinary procedure has been exhausted will Misconduct lead to dismissal unless there are mitigating circumstances.
- 2.2 Matters that the Council views as amounting to Misconduct include (but are not limited to):
- 2.2.1 Absenteesim and Lateness (excluding AWOL):
- Failure to remain at work during working hours without permission or sufficient cause for absence.
 - Frequent failure to attend work punctually (or in accordance with the flexitime scheme, where appropriate).
 - Failure to notify your Line Manager immediately or as soon as reasonably practicable, when absent due to sickness.
 - Failure to provide medical certificates for absence longer than seven days or when requested by management.
 - Failure to comply with the rules of the Sickness Absence Policy.
- 2.2.2 Neglect of duty:
- Negligent use of Council property in such a way as is likely to cause serious damage, loss or harm.
 - Failure to discharge, without sufficient cause, the obligations which the statute of the contract of employment places on the employee.
 - Insubordination.
 - Failure to follow the Council's agreed policies and procedures (e.g. accounting instructions).
 - Failure to work to acceptable standards of conduct or performance.
 - Neglect of health i.e. when an employee, without sufficient cause, neglects to carry out any instructions of a medical officer appointed by the Council or, while absent from duty on account of sickness commits any act or adopts any conduct calculated to delay a return to duty.

- 2.2.3 Making unauthorised use of the Council's communication network and electronic systems.
- 2.2.4 Smoking in a smoke free premises or vehicle (as defined by legislation).
- 2.2.5 Failure to report any loss or damage to any property issued to or used by the employee or to notify the appropriate officer of accidents occurring while driving a Council maintained vehicle.
- 2.2.6 Abusive behaviour and/or offensive language which arises directly out of or in connection with work and which is directed at Councillors, Senior Officers, managers, colleagues or members of the public.
- 2.2.7 Victimisation of other employees in the course of employment.
- 2.2.8 Knowingly aiding and abetting an act of Misconduct.

3.0 Gross Misconduct

- 3.1 Rules under the heading Gross Misconduct are matters that will be viewed very seriously by the Council and, if the allegation(s) are found on the balance of probability proven, may lead to dismissal.
- 3.2 Gross Misconduct is the commission of an act of such a serious and fundamental nature which renders it inadvisable for an employee to be allowed to remain at work. If an employee is suspected of committing an act of Gross Misconduct, suspension from work on full pay pending investigation will be considered.
- 3.3 If after full investigation it is decided that an employee has committed an act of gross misconduct or if the act is admitted by an employee, the Council will be entitled to terminate their contract of employment without notice or pay in lieu of notice unless there are mitigating circumstances.
- 3.4 Matters that the Council views as amounting to Gross Misconduct include (but are not limited to):
 - 3.4.1 Dishonesty associated with the place of work or job being undertaken:
 - Theft of Council, Council Contractor, client or employee property or deliberate damage to such property.
 - Deliberate falsification of timesheets, expense claims or other records for financial gain or to gain advantage to others.
 - Demanding or accepting monies or other consideration as a bribe for the use of Council property, provision of Council services, placing of Council orders/contracts or the showing of favour on behalf of the Council.
 - Acceptance of any valuable gift or reward, other than the proper remuneration for the performance of official duties unless specifically approved by the Monitoring Officer or authorised representative or regarded as appropriate in the circumstances.
 - Falsification of qualifications which are a stated requirement of employment or which results in financial gain.
 - Misuse of the Council's property or the Council's name or bringing the name into serious disrepute.

- Undertaking additional employment outside normal working hours which would be in conflict with the functions of the Council or detrimental to the work to be performed as an employee of the Council.
- 3.4.2 Deliberate refusal to carry out reasonable, lawful and safe instructions or the normal agreed duties of an employee's job.
- Failure to wear protective clothing or use protective equipment
 - Failure to adopt safe working practices where required to by the law or management such as using a mobile device whilst driving or failure to wear a seatbelt
- 3.4.3 Gross negligence in failing to attend to, or carry out, the normal duties of the job.
- 3.4.4 Serious breach of the Council's rules:
- Wilful serious infringements of safety rules or other wilfully negligent actions which seriously place the health and safety of the employee, other employees or other persons / public in danger.
 - Driving a Council vehicle whilst on Council business in a reckless manner leading to otherwise avoidable serious injury or death of other persons.
 - Breaches of the Council's IT, E-Mail and Internet policies and procedures.
 - Breaches of the Code of Procurement and Financial Management rules.
 - Breaches of the Drug and Alcohol Policy.
- 3.4.5 Wilful unauthorised disclosure or misuse of information classified as strictly confidential which could be harmful to the Council, its clients or employees who in the course of duty have access to information e.g. personal information on employees/failure to safeguard confidential information.
- 3.4.6 Acts of violence whether verbal, physical or vandalism in the course of employment causing:
- Malicious damage to Council, Council contractor, client or employee property.
 - Use of physical force against Council members, employees or members of the public other than in self-defence.
 - Abusive or threatening behaviour or use of offensive language directed at another employee, Council Member or a member of the public.
- 3.4.7 Sexual misconduct at work whether criminal or not.
- 3.4.8 Off duty misconduct – the conviction for, or admission of offences that will have a direct bearing on the employee's ability to carry out their duties.
- 3.4.9 Knowingly aiding and abetting an act of Gross Misconduct.
- 3.4.10 Unlawful discrimination against other employees or members of the public in the course of employment on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, race, age, disability, religion or belief, including any behaviour that may be classed as bullying and harassment, against any person whilst at work.
- 3.4.11 The displaying, circulation or copying of material deemed to be offensive, either electronically or otherwise.
- 3.4.12 Persistent unauthorised absence from work, including frequent lateness without acceptable explanation or persistent failure to comply with the Council's Policies.

3.4.13 Serious insubordination.

Raising Concerns Policy

1.1

Version Control			
<u>Version</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Changes</u>
1.1	Kiran Hans	September 2024	NEW Policy incorporates the worker protection (amendment of Equality Act 2010).

Name of Policy	Raising Concerns Policy
Person/posts responsible	Strategic HR Manager
Date approved/adopted	Reviewed July 2024 for Approval in November 2024
Approved by	Employment Committee
Review Date	November 2026

Raising Concerns Policy

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) has a duty of care to all workers and aims to provide a safe and harmonious working environment.
- 1.2 Workers have the right to be treated with respect and not to be discriminated, harassed, bullied, stalked or victimised, this is not acceptable behaviour within the workplace and such behaviours will not be tolerated. All concerns will be taken seriously and where these behaviours are proven, disciplinary action will be taken.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all employees as well as variable workers, volunteers, contractors and agency workers.
- 2.2 Concerns regarding Councillors should be raised through the Members Code of Conduct.
- 2.3 Sexual harassment complaints regarding members of the public should be raised using this policy.
- 2.4 All other complaints regarding members of the public should be raised through Huntingdonshire District Council's Complaints Procedure.
- 2.5 Employees are able to use this procedure in relation to matters that arise from their employment, which directly affect them as individuals/as a group of individuals.

The Raising Concerns policy cannot be used:

- to deal with matters which have been addressed through another Policy/procedure.
 - To complain about the actions of others that are not employed by the Council (In these situations, the Whistleblowing Procedure and/or the Complaints Procedure would apply).
 - To raise issues about a councillor's conduct
 - To dispute the performance management procedure if this is being applied fairly and professionally.
- 2.6 All concerns must be raised within 3 months of the incident/concern occurring, unless there are exceptional circumstances preventing this. The same/related concern cannot be raised within 12 months of the resolution, outcome or withdrawal of the same concern – however an employee may ask for a concern to be revisited if specific follow up actions agreed or repeated behaviours as part of the original concern have not been carried out

3. Definitions

- 3.1 Grievance concerns are problems or complaints that employees raise with their employers about their employment. This could include concerns about terms and conditions of employment,
- 3.2 Bullying is characterised by ACAS as “offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power that undermines, humiliates or causes physical or emotional harm to someone.” In addition, bullying can be defined as ‘an attack on someone else’s dignity by persecution, oppression, physically or morally by (threat of) superior force’. Appendix 1 outlines the types of Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination.
- 3.3 Harassment is defined under the section 26 of the Equality Act (2010) as “Unwanted conduct relating to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person”.
- 3.4 Bullying and Harassment ‘At work’ includes any place where the occasion can be identified within the requirements of employment, including social events that are linked with or associated with HDC.
- 3.5 Protected characteristics - the Equality Act (2010) defines protected characteristics as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership (in employment only), pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

4. Principles

- 4.1 The Council encourages its employees to raise concerns as they arise so that they can be resolved quickly and effectively, preventing these from developing into more serious concerns that have a negative impact on service delivery. Employees and managers should strive, at all stages of the procedure, to constructively resolve the issue raised.
- 4.2 Every effort must be made by all parties to resolve the concern in a timely manner to avoid undue stress and concern to those involved and to limit any negative impact on service delivery.

The following principles should be adhered to whilst working to this policy:

- 4.2.1 An employee must always attempt to resolve an issue via the informal stage in the first instance. An issue should not be raised as a formal concern until the informal stage has been exhausted.
- 4.2.2 Managers dealing with concerns must be impartial and listen carefully to the concern with an open mind. It is not appropriate for a manager to consider a concern/complaint if it is against him or her, or there is a conflict of interest.
- 4.2.3 Where the concern/complaint relates to the conduct/behaviour of another employee they have the right to be told the details and to respond to any allegations made. In certain circumstances, however, (for example criminal investigations) information may be withheld.

- 4.2.4 Confidentiality will be maintained at all times. Information will be shared only with those necessary to resolve the concern/complaint.
- 4.2.5 If an employee raises a concern that proves to be vexatious or malicious he/she may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 4.2.6 It is not appropriate to make an audio recording of any of the meetings during the raising concerns process due to GDPR.
- 4.2.7 Where the concern/complaint affects a group of employees, the group should nominate a spokesperson. This spokesperson can be one of the affected employees or a jointly chosen colleague, member of Employee Representative Group or a Trade Union Representative. Where the concerns are in relation to bullying and harassment all individuals may need to be spoken to.

5. Responsibilities

There are several things that all employees can do that help prevent bullying, harassment and discrimination such as:

- set a positive example by treating others with dignity and respect at all times
- be aware of the contents of HDC's policy and comply with it at all times
- consider carefully the impact of personal comments, actions and behaviour on others
- take positive and constructive action to challenge any unacceptable behaviours that may cause offense to you or to others
- recognise that failure to comply and adhere to this policy may constitute a disciplinary offence.

5.1 Responsibility of Employees

- 5.1.1 To raise any concerns immediately with their line manager with a view to resolve informally.
- 5.1.2 To follow this policy in lodging a concern (including ensuring all forms are fully completed prior to submission).
- 5.1.3 To not engage in behaviour that could cause offence and if you witness these behaviours to raise them in an appropriate and professional manner.
- 5.1.4 To adhere to the iCARE values.
- 5.1.5 Ensure all mandatory training and refresher courses are completed on time.
- 5.1.6 Employees should report to a Manager, HR, an Employee Representative Group or Trade Union Representative any incidents of bullying, harassment, victimisation or discrimination that comes to their attention.

5.2 Responsibility of the Manager

- 5.2.1 Managers are responsible for ensuring that this policy is applied fairly and consistently.
- 5.2.2 Have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with the protected characteristics.
- 5.2.3 Ensure that all staff are aware of the policy and understand the process for raising concerns.
- 5.2.4 Lead by example by treating others with dignity and respect and setting standards of acceptable behaviour, also promote a working environment where bullying, harassment, victimisation or discrimination is unacceptable and will be challenged.
- 5.2.5 Act before waiting for a complaint to be lodged.
- 5.2.6 Consult with HR for advice and support as and when required.
- 5.2.7 Employee wellbeing should be considered throughout the application of this policy. Employees should be made aware of the support available to them including the Employee Assistance programme – please refer to section 15 below.
- 5.2.8 Ensure all mandatory training and refresher courses are completed on time.
- 5.2.9 Demonstrate acceptable behaviours in line with HDC iCARE Values.
- 5.2.10 Challenge and act (where necessary) on any unacceptable behaviour.

5.3 Responsibility of Human Resources

- 5.3.1 Support managers and employees on the application on this policy.
- 5.3.2 The Human Resources Team will ensure that the policy is applied fairly and consistently.

6. The Right to Representation

- 6.1 At the formal stage of the Raising Concerns policy employees have the right to be accompanied and/or represented. Employees may be accompanied by an Employee Representative Group representative, a trade union representative, or a work colleague of their choosing. It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that the chosen representative is available to attend the meeting, and to meet any associated costs.
- 6.2 A representative is allowed to address the hearing to put the employee's case, sum up that case and respond on the employee's behalf. They can also confer with the employee during the hearing. However, a representative is not permitted to answer questions on behalf of the employee, and must not prevent the employer from explaining their case or prevent any party making their contribution.
- 6.3 The choice of companion should be reasonable given the circumstances of the case - it would not be reasonable to be accompanied by a colleague whose presence would

prejudice the hearing or who might have a conflict of interest, and this will not be permitted.

- 6.4 At least 3 calendar days before the hearing, the employee should inform the HR representative of who they have chosen as a representative/companion.
- 6.5 When the chosen representative is unavailable on the day scheduled for the meeting or appeal hearing, the meeting may be rescheduled.

7. Raising a Concern

- 7.1 Employees are encouraged to raise their concerns as soon as possible after an incident directly to either their Line Manager or Service Manager if their Line Manager is causing the concern.
- 7.2 Contractors and agency workers should raise any issues in line with their own company procedures.
- 7.3 The following Informal and Formal Procedure applies to employees only.
- 7.4 The outcomes of informal concerns should be documented by the relevant manager.
- 7.5 Duty of Care to employees is paramount and there may be occasions where information provided is deemed so serious it may need to be shared to help manage/resolve the concern.

Should this become apparent management will ensure that issues of confidentiality are clarified early in the discussion and you will be informed of the action that will be taken in disclosing your concern.

8. Informal Procedure

- 8.1 The informal procedure can be applied in relation to any workplace concerns including any allegations of discrimination, harassment, bullying, stalking or victimisation. The informal procedure is particularly relevant to workplace concerns and/or to deal with allegations that are of a non-violent nature or where the person who the concern has been raised against may not be aware that his or her behaviour is causing offence.
- 8.2 Employees who have a concern or believe that they have been subjected to discrimination, harassment, bullying, stalking or victimisation should initially raise their concerns with the person the concern is against if they feel comfortable doing so.

Individuals can do this through a number of options to try to enable a resolution:

- Face to face meeting
- Facilitated conversation
- In writing/e mail
- By feeding back to your/their line manager
- Mediation.

8.3 Whether face to face or in writing, the employee should:

- describe specifically the concern/behaviour that has caused offence and explain the impact/how this has made him/her feel;
- If relevant, explain that he or she believes that the behaviour constitutes discrimination, harassment, bullying, stalking or victimisation;
- explain that the aim of the conversation/letter/email is to resolve the matter now;
- request an agreement that the unacceptable behaviour stop, identifying exactly what change is required;
- confirm what they would like the outcome to be.
- state clearly that a formal complaint will be made if there is no change in behaviour.

Where the individual does not feel comfortable raising their concerns to the individual(s) involved directly, they should approach their manager in the first instance.

Should this not be possible, or if there is a reason why the individual may not be comfortable raising the concern with their line manager, they may wish to approach another manager in their service or the overall service manager.

Should an employee need support or guidance with these processes, ERG and Union reps are available to provide advice.

These options enable you to be supported to resolve your concern without needing to go through a formal process. If the concern is not satisfactorily resolved at this point or the concerns can't be resolved at one of the informal stages, this would move to the formal process.

8.4 **Mediation**

Mediation is a process used to rebuild relationships when there is a disagreement at work. Mediation is not judging who was right or wrong in the past but looks at how to agree on working together in the future. The employee can also ask his or her Line Manager or Service Manager (if the Line Manager is the person that concern is against) to arrange mediation. In order for mediation to take place, all parties must agree to take part in the process.

Mediation can be used during the early resolution process, but also at any point during the formal processes where all parties feel a resolution is possible.

Managers who receive a request to participate in mediation should contact HR Team to arrange this.

9. Formal Procedure

- 9.1 If it is not possible to resolve the concern informally (or where the concern relates to bullying and harassment and is sufficiently serious) the matter may be dealt with formally and the employee should complete the 'Notification of Concern Form' included as Appendix 3 of this Policy.
- 9.2 Employees should make a formal complaint to their Line Manager or to their Service Manager if their Line Manager is perceived to be causing the alleged behaviour,

outlining the alleged behaviour on the Notification of Concern Form'. The concern should be acknowledged in writing within 7 calendar days.

Issues of discrimination, harassment, bullying, stalking or victimisation may be identified by Managers or HR without a concern being raised (e.g. through exit interviews, employee surveys and 1-2-1's). In these cases, the formal procedure can be instigated without a formal complaint being made.

9.3 **Suspension and relocation**

In certain circumstances, an authorised manager may suspend the person perceived to be causing the alleged behaviour from duty on full pay during an investigation. Suspension is a precautionary measure designed to protect the interests of both the Council and the employee and to allow a thorough investigation into the allegation(s) to be undertaken.

Suspension or relocation may be appropriate where a serious allegation has been made that, if proven, would be an act of gross misconduct (e.g. physical or sexual assault or where there is a risk of harm to the person raising the concern).

An employee who is suspended does not have the right to:

- prior notice that he or she will be suspended;
- representation while being suspended;
- an appeal of the decision to suspend.

Similarly, an authorised manager may move the person perceived to be causing the alleged behaviour to another suitable role / location where they will not be in contact with the person raising the concern.

9.4 **Investigation and Representation**

On receipt of a formal complaint, the manager should contact HR immediately who will arrange for an investigating manager to be appointed. This could be the manager receiving the complaint, or a manager from another team or service, depending on the nature of the complaint.

Where the concern is in relation to bullying or harassment an independent Investigating Manager who is from a different service area would usually be appointed to ensure impartiality.

The aim of an investigation is to establish the facts of the situation. A meeting will be arranged with the Investigating Manager, who will lead the meeting (supported by a HR representative if required), to allow the employee the opportunity to explain their concern and to state how they consider that the issue could be resolved.

During the investigation all relevant parties will be interviewed. A written record of all investigation interviews will be made and shared, however interviews will not be tape-recorded or digitally recorded by any party. Employees are required to make all

reasonable efforts to make themselves available to attend investigatory interviews to avoid any unnecessary delays.

At the formal stage employees have the right to be accompanied by an Employee Representative's Group member, a trade union representative or a work colleague (the work colleague should not be involved in the investigation process). It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that the chosen representative is available to attend the meeting.

It is the responsibility of the Investigating Manager to ensure that the person raising the complaint is kept up to date on timescales and progress, throughout the investigation.

9.5 **Witnesses**

All employees are expected to fully cooperate with investigation processes. Where employees are required to participate in the investigation process as a witness, they will be given time during the working day to attend a meeting and/or hearing.

9.6 **Investigation Report/Letter**

Once the formal investigation is complete the Investigating Manager will write a report outlining:

- Details of how the complaint was received and summary of contents of complaint
- How the investigation was conducted.
- Summary of evidence collected.
- Findings – whether the allegation(s) have been substantiated, the conclusion of the investigation.
- Recommendations for further action, including service recommendations, resolution work e.g. rebuilding relationships, or any appropriate management action.

The report will be made available to the person raising the concern. In some cases, it may be appropriate to adapt the investigation report for sharing to protect confidentiality. Any recommendations as a result of the investigation may be shared with the appropriate member of the Management Team.

9.7 **Outcome**

As part of investigation into the concerns raised, a documented outcome will be given to the individual who has raised the concern, confirming whether the concern is upheld, partially upheld or not upheld. Where the concern is upheld or partially upheld, the investigating manager will make recommendations as to how the issues can be resolved.

Possible recommendations of a formal investigation could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- an apology;
- appropriate workplace behaviour training to restore the employee's confidence and to reinforce that raising a concern should not negatively impact a career.
- Steps to rectify the concerns raised, implementing the outcomes desired

- coaching or mentoring;
- personal skills training to improve communication;
- appropriate workplace behaviour training;
- appropriate management action with individuals
- mediation.

Where a concern has been raised against another employee, the investigating manager may recommend to the service manager that there is a disciplinary case to answer or a need to invoke the Improving Performance Policy.

In such cases, the employer's service manager will be provided with relevant information gathered throughout the investigation to allow them to take any further steps necessary.

10. Appeal

- 10.1 The employee has the right to appeal against the outcome of the formal investigation, It's important to note that the purpose of the appeal is to decide whether the formal procedure was followed correctly and whether the outcome was reasonable and proportionate to the facts established i.e. this is not a reconsideration of the original issue.

To initiate an appeal the employee should put details of the issue in writing within 10 calendar days to the HR Manager. The appeal must be in writing; an email will suffice, clearly stating that this is a Raising Concerns appeal. The employee must detail how they consider the Raising Concerns policy has not been correctly applied or how the outcome was not reasonable or proportionate.

The appeal must be heard with the minimum possible delay, ideally within 14 calendar days following submission of the appeal or a mutually agreed date.

- 10.2 The appeal will be heard by an appropriate independent Manager, supported by an HR representative.
- 10.3 During the appeal meeting, the manager considering the appeal will:
- Clarify with the employee what aspect of the Raising Concerns policy has not been correctly applied or how the outcome is considered unreasonable.
 - Review the outcome summary and ask questions of the investigating manager and the employee raising the appeal.
- 10.4 The manager chairing the appeal meeting will consider all of the information presented and to reach a decision as whether the original outcome/resolution is appropriate.
- 10.5 The decision will be delivered - either after immediate consideration at the meeting, or within 10 calendar days of the meeting. The decision will be confirmed in writing to the employee as soon as possible. The decision of the manager considering the appeal is final.

11. Leaving and raising concerns

- 11.1 The Council is not obliged to hear concerns from former employees. The Raising Concerns Policy focuses on resolving issues raised by current employees.
- 11.2 When an employee raises a concern just before leaving employment with the Council, there may be insufficient time for the concern/complaint to be heard and/or resolved. In these circumstances the Council will deal with the concerns via the exit procedure – asking the employee to detail the issues in the exit questionnaire and offering an exit interview. The Raising Concerns Policy will not be appropriate in these cases. Issues highlighted in an exit questionnaire or exit interview will be followed up as appropriate despite the employee having left the organisation.

12. Links to the disciplinary procedure

- 12.1 There are scenarios in which the Raising Concerns Policy and Disciplinary Policy and procedures may be linked:
- 12.1.1 An employee raises a concern as a direct result of disciplinary action being taken against them – the concern should be dealt with through the appeal mechanism within the disciplinary procedure and not through the Raising Concerns Policy.
 - 12.1.2 An employee raises a concern at the same time as misconduct is alleged against them and the two issues are not related in any way – in these circumstances the two issues should be dealt with simultaneously and be treated separately following the two different procedures.
 - 12.1.3 An employee raises a concern that leads to the investigation of another employee or manager under the disciplinary procedure – in these circumstances the employee who raised the concern will be expected to act as a witness in any disciplinary investigation.
 - 12.1.4 Where cases lead to formal disciplinary action, evidence gathered during the Raising Concerns process may be used as evidence to avoid where possible individuals having to be re-interviewed.

13. Collective Concerns (also known as Collective Grievances)

- 13.1 This policy can be applied to a group of employees sharing a collective concern. Where the concern is collective and the issues are the same in all respects, it is expected that the concern will be presented by a nominated spokesperson. The final outcome will however be binding on all employees raising the collective concern. Management will therefore not be expected to separately hear each employee's case.

14. 3rd Party Harassment is prohibited

- 14.1 Harassment by a 3rd party will not be tolerated and everyone has a duty to report incidents of inappropriate behaviours.

Any concerns should be raised with your Manager as early as possible to allow the facts to be determined and any evidence to be gathered where relevant.

Steps to resolve the concerns could include where possible:

- Limiting the relationship with the 3rd Party.
- Ceasing the business relationship with the offending 3rd Party.
- Offer the employee an opportunity to work in a different area where there is no contact with the offending 3rd party.
- Involve the police where appropriate

15. Recording of meetings

- 15.1 Where meetings and/or hearings are held with the employee and witnesses, non verbatim notes of the meeting/ hearing should be taken and retained at all stages.
- 15.2 HDC do not permit recordings at any meetings and unauthorised recordings may result in disciplinary action being taken.

16. Advice and Support

- 16.1 It is recognised that raising a concern is not always easy, the following support services are available for all employees:
- Line Manager - Speak to your Line Manager/ supervisor (or their manager if the concern is about your direct manager).
 - A Member of the Management Team.
 - A member of the Employee Representative Group (ERG) – a full list of ERG representatives is available on the Intranet site - [Employee Representatives Group \(ERG\) \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
 - A Trade Union Representative.
 - A Member of the HR Team.

 - The Council offers an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), this is a confidential employee benefit designed to help you deal with personal and professional problems that could be affecting your home life or work life, health, and general wellbeing. The EAP service provides a complete support network that offers expert advice and compassionate guidance 24/7, covering a wide range of issues such as:
 - Life support: Access to counselling for emotional problems
 - Legal information: For issues that cause anxiety or distress including debt management, consumer, property or neighbour disputes.
 - Bereavement support: Health Assured offers qualified and experienced counsellors who can help with grief plus legal advisors to help with related legal matters.
 - Medical information: Qualified nurses are on hand to offer support on a range of medical or health-related issues offering practical information and advice.
 - Online CBT: to help dealing with a range of issues
- 16.2 Mental Health First Aiders are also available to support the ongoing wellbeing of staff, there are a number of trained staff available across the sites and they wear a yellow badge to help identify them. The representatives can be contacted by email at mentalhealth.firstaiders@huntingdonshire.gov.uk . The names of representatives can also be found on the Intranet, notice boards, via your manager or HR.

Appendix 1 – Types of Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination

1. Discrimination

There are two forms of discrimination: direct discrimination and indirect discrimination.

1.1 Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have. The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Association with a person who has any of the above characteristics

1.2 Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination can occur when there is a practice, policy, local rule or criteria that apply to all employees in the same way, but particularly disadvantage people who share a protected characteristic.

2. Harassment

2.1 Harassment is unwanted conduct by an individual or group that relates to a protected characteristic. Harassment violates (or has the purpose of violating) a person's dignity or creates (or has the purpose of creating) an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

2.2 The intention of the perceived perpetrator is irrelevant. Behaviour may constitute harassment if the victim perceives the behaviour as offensive.

Please see in the tables below examples of harassment:

Sexual harassment	
Physical Actions	Suggestive looks and gestures, staring and leering, threatening behaviour, touching in a sexual manner, promises of job benefits in exchange for sexual favours, threats of job detriment if sexual favours are not granted.
Verbal Conduct	Sexual remarks, jokes, catcalls, asking questions about sex life, turning discussions to sexual stories, sexual innuendo, sexual comments about clothing, anatomy or looks,

	patronising derogatory remarks, repeated requests for dates or sexual favours.
Non Verbal Conduct	Pin up materials, sexually explicit materials, pornography, sexist graffiti.

Disability harassment

Physical Actions	Unnecessary touching of body parts, stereotypical impressions of people with disabilities, physical abuse or intimidation.
Verbal Conduct	Asking intimate questions about a person's disability, name-calling, taunts, jokes or mockery.
Non Verbal Conduct	Exclusion from workplace events or conversations.

Age harassment

Physical Actions	Physical abuse or intimidation on the basis of the person's age.
Verbal Conduct	Derogatory comments or jokes about a person's age or perceived age; patronising remarks, stereotypical comments.
Non Verbal Conduct	Exclusion from workplace events or conversations.

Religious harassment

Physical Actions	Stereotypical impressions, physical abuse or intimidation on the basis of the person's religion.
Verbal Conduct	Offensive comments or jokes or patronising remarks, stereotypical comments, name calling, intrusive, persistent and derogatory questioning regarding a person's religion.
Non Verbal Conduct	Segregating people from different religious groups, display or circulation of offensive material, exclusion from workplace events and conversation.

Racial harassment

Physical Actions	Physical abuse or intimidation on the basis of the person's race.
Verbal Conduct	Racist and offensive comments or jokes, racist or patronising remarks, stereotypical comments, racial name calling, intrusive, persistent and derogatory questioning regarding a person's racial or ethnic origin and culture.
Non Verbal Conduct	Racist graffiti, segregating people from different racial groups, display or circulation of racially offensive material, exclusion from work place events and conversation.

3. Bullying

- 3.1 Bullying is unwelcome and unreasonable behaviour by an individual or group. The following table provides some examples of bullying behaviours:

Physical Actions	Intimidating threatening behaviour, shouting and uncontrolled anger, abuse and humiliation in public or private, blocking promotion possibilities.
Verbal Conduct	Being overly critical of a person's work without justification, persistent criticism and/or sarcasm. Use of nicknames towards colleagues where these are unwanted or are offensive to others.
Non Verbal Conduct	Exclusion from work information, setting unrealistic targets, taking credit for work and ideas, ignoring or isolation.

4. Stalking

4.1 Stalking is an offence under the Protection of Freedoms Act. Stalking is action by an individual or group of individuals that harasses a person through behaviours such as those listed below.

- Following the victim.
- Excessive contact unrelated to work (phone/email).
- Contacting, or attempting to contact the victim by any means.
- Publishing statements or material about the victim or purporting to originate from the victim.
- Monitoring the victim's email account or internet usage.
- Unreasonably loitering in a public or private place.
- Interfering with property in the victim's possession.
- Watching or spying on the victim.

4.2 Where stalking occurs outside of the workplace, contact should be made with the Police to report the incident and to your line manager and HR to consider whether there is any support that needs to be put in place.

5. Victimisation

5.1 Workers have the right not to be victimised as a result of making a complaint. Victimisation means treating an employee in an unacceptable way because he or she has made a complaint, or provides evidence or information in connection with a complaint. For example, preventing an employee from applying for a vacancy or attending a team training event.

6. Upward bullying

6.1 Bullying can also happen from employees towards someone more senior, for example a manager. This is sometimes called 'upward bullying' or 'subordinate bullying'. It can be from one employee or a group of employees.

Examples of upward bullying can include:

- showing continued disrespect
- refusing to complete tasks
- spreading rumours
- constantly undermining someone's authority
- doing things to make someone seem unskilled or unable to do their job properly

It can be difficult for someone in a senior role to realise they're experiencing bullying behaviour from their staff.
It's important to consider the real reasons for the behaviour. For example, there might be a wider issue with the culture of the organisation that can be identified and addressed.

Appendix 2 - The difference between robust management and bullying

Often those accused of bullying find it difficult to recognise themselves as behaving in a bullying or aggressive way. Conversely, some managers are concerned about tackling poor performance or behaviours and being accused of bullying.

When managers find themselves having to deal with poor performance, part of their role is to motivate people to perform more effectively.

The table below looks at the difference between management and bullying behaviour;

Addressing poor performance/ behaviour	Strong management	Bullying
Identifying the performance issue	Looks at all potential reasons for poor performance, e.g. people, training, systems, equipment	Makes no attempt to identify the nature or the source of the poor performance
Agreeing new standards of performance with individuals	Involves setting and agreeing standards of performance and behaviours for individuals and the manager	Imposes new standards without discussion
Failure to achieve performance standards is dealt with as a performance issue	Opportunities are taken to identify individuals who are struggling and support is provided. If individuals are unwilling to comply with the agreed performance improvement process, disciplinary action may be taken	Individuals who fail to achieve the standards of performance are put under pressure to conform. This may include ridicule, personal criticism, shouting, teasing, sarcasm, withholding of benefits or demotion
Recognising positive contributions	Recognises and rewards improvements in performance, attitudes and behaviour	Focussing on only the areas that require improvement without passing on positive feedback where this has been given.
Managing employees through Council processes i.e disciplinary/sickness absence.	Managing staff consistently, applying processes fairly and giving appropriate support when/where required.	Inconsistent management of employee related issues. Not following processes or seeking advice when required.
Delegating work tasks to achieve team objectives	Communicate requirements and timelines clearly, offering support as required.	Delegate without clear instructions, potentially setting an employee up to fail. Not offering support or being clear about why task is being requested

Appendix 3

Raising Concern Notification Form

Please read the Raising Concern Policy before completing this form.

Please complete Section 1-4 plus either Section 5 (for a formal concern) or Section 6 (for an appeal). Please sign the declaration at the end of this form.

Where possible concerns should be resolved using the informal stages of this Policy.

Where the informal process has not been successful or the alleged behaviour is deemed so serious that it warrants formal investigation, the formal stage should be invoked.

The form should be completed and returned to either your Line Manager / Service Manager.

Your Details	
Name:	
Post Title:	
Service Area:	
Line Manager:	

Nature of the Concern
<p>Please list the issues below (Include all of the relevant details but bear in mind that you will have the opportunity to discuss more fully as part of the investigation)</p> <p>a)</p>
<p>b)</p>
<p>c)</p>
<p>(Continue as necessary)</p>

Section 4 – Informal resolution

The Raising Concerns Policy requires that attempts are made to resolve matters informally wherever possible and before moving to a formal process. Have you tried to resolve this matter informally and if so what steps have been taken?

Section 5 – Resolving your concerns

Please outline what would be your preferred outcome from this complaint (please bear in mind that this may not necessarily be achievable).

Section 6 – Raising Concerns appeal

Please list the grounds for your appeal, please be aware that the purpose of the appeal is not a re-hearing but to consider the specific areas in which you remain dissatisfied. New information is not usually admissible

a)

b)

c)

Declaration
Employee signature

Date form submitted

Employee Handbook



Contents



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Part 2 - Your Benefits

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- Discounts
- Birthday day leave
- Flu jabs
- Parental leave

Part 3 – Working for Huntingdonshire District Council

- Onboarding
- Probation
- Trade Unions
- Health and Wellbeing

Part 4 – Code of Conduct

At HDC, our employees are our greatest asset, and I am delighted to welcome you. We want HDC to be an employer of choice, and to promote this we are working hard on our employee practices to not only encourage people to apply for positions here, but also to help us retain, develop and encourage our existing employees. This Employee Handbook sets out the benefits that exist for HDC employees and sits alongside the Code of Conduct to provide you with an overview of not only what is expected of you, but also what benefits and support functions you can expect from us.



This handbook covers a range of aspects, from pay, pension and annual leave to employee assistant services and probation periods. It also explains how the Council will keep you up to date with matters that affect you and how you will stay informed.

Please take some time to read through your handbook and ask your manager if there is anything that you are unsure of. I very much look forward to meeting you at the Directors Welcome in the coming weeks.

Michelle Sacks, Chief Executive Huntingdonshire District Council



HDC is an ambitious council, working hard to ensure Huntingdonshire continues to be one of the best places to live in the country. Together, as employees and councillors, we can reach a brighter future for Huntingdonshire by each playing our part in providing support for our residents and businesses. Each employee has an important role in helping the Council to achieve this aim, and you can change people's lives for the better. Our Councillors are hugely proud of this Council, and I wanted to say thank you to you on behalf of the Administration for all you do each day to help us achieve these ambitions.

Executive Leader, Councillor Sarah Joanne Conboy

Who we are and what we do

Corporate Leadership Team

Michelle Sacks
Chief Executive Officer

Vacant
Corporate Director (People)

Mike Gildersleeves
Corporate Director (Place)

Senior Leadership Team

John Taylor
Chief Operating Officer

- Customer Service
- Revenues and Benefits
- 3C ICT Shared Services

Neil Sloper
Assistant Director (Strategic Insight & Delivery)

- Countryside
- Insight
- Improvement and Delivery
- Climate
- Green Spaces
- Parking

Suzanne Jones
Director of Finance and Corporate Services (S151)

- Section 151 Officer
- Finance
- HR
- Audit and Risk
- Health & Safety
- Estates
- Elections & Democratic Services

Gregg Holland – Head of Leisure & Health

- Leisure and Health

Sagar Roy - Head of 3C ICT

- 3C ICT Shared Services



What we do

In Huntingdonshire, the most local level of local government is the Parish or Town Council. The next level is HDC and then Cambridgeshire County Council. The primary role of a Council is to protect and support the community's people and places where there is a duty and a need to do so. It achieves this by delivering a wide range of services.

Council Departments

The primary role of a council is to protect and support the community's people and places where there is a duty and need to do so. It achieves this by delivering a wide range of services. The list below details the departments within the council and a summary of what they do.

3C Shared Services

3C ICT is a shared service between Cambridge City Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council. The shared service was established to provide a more efficient way of delivering ICT services across the three partner councils.

The services provided include:-

- Day-to-day customer support of ICT equipment and devices via the IT Service Desk
- Software and business applications support including spatial services
- Network and infrastructure services
- Web and digital development and integrations
- ICT and Digital project and portfolio management and delivery
- Technical architecture and solutions design
- Cyber Security
- Support, guidance and administration for ICT purchases
- Information governance

3C Legal and 3C Building Control are part of the shared service provided but sit within the other 2 councils.

Active Lifestyles

The One Leisure Active Lifestyles Service aims are to improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities.

Customers of the service are mainly the general public as well as organisations and groups such as parish/town councils, hospitals, schools, and youth service providers who access the services separately as a commissioning customer.

Front line health professionals use the services as a pathway for their patients or service users. The team also supports the delivery of the One Leisure Facilities Strategy. The team delivers schemes and projects such as Exercise Referral, Wellbeing Walks, Right Start Group Exercise Classes, Disability Sport, PEDALS, sports activity programmes and Healthy You.

Audit Risk and Controls

The Risk and Control's Teams purpose is to ensure risk management at HDC is carried out to the highest standard. This will prevent/reduce potential risks and issues arising from various areas of the organisation, acting as a risk advisory and compliance group.

Communications

The Communications Team is responsible for providing both internal and external communications, including working with the media, marketing activity and public relations.

Community

Community comprises the following services:

- Community Development
- Community Action Team
- Community Safety Partnership
- Environmental Health
- Emergency Planning
- Housing – Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)
- Licensing
- Resident Advice and Information
- St Neots Mobile Home Park

Community is responsible for a number of statutory services and deals with both internal and external customers on a daily basis. The services are reactive to customer needs as well as proactive and a large emphasis is placed on monitoring and evaluating to ensure that we deliver the best possible outcomes for our residents.

Business As Usual (BAU) Activities for each of the areas listed above can be found on the intranet.

The purpose of the Community Service is to:
Contribute to making our district a better place to live, to improve health and well-being and support people to be the best they can be.

The Overall outcome that Community is looking to achieve is:
Services that are customer focused and are solution led whilst continually being able to demonstrate value for money whilst also delivering statutory functions.

Corporate Fraud

The Corporate Fraud Team prevents and investigates fraud across all council services to prevent financial and reputational loss.

Responsible for the prevention, detection and pursuance of those who attempt to commit fraud against benefits, discounts or exemptions, as well as investigation of other matters, such as fraudulent housing applications. The team also supports and works with our local housing providers by investigating allegations of tenancy fraud. This helps to protect the valuable housing stock and ensure it is being used correctly for the people that need it most.

Customer Services

Customer Services now operate from the ground floor of Pathfinder House for face-to-face enquiries and the first floor, where the Call Centre is located.

Our highly trained teams deal with a huge variety of different services across all locations, including but not limited to: Planning, Building Control, Environmental Health, Housing, Licensing, Land Charges, Housing and Council Tax Benefits, Payments, Council Tax, Business Rates, Electoral Services, Sundry Income and Fraud.

Democratic Services

The Democratic Services Team is responsible for providing a comprehensive support service to the council, its Cabinet and Panels etc. The Team has overall responsibility for the servicing of a range of meetings and ensuring compliance with legal and procedural requirements.

Some of the services include:

- updating the council's Constitution in light of recent legislative change
- administration of council decision-making arrangements
- publication of Notice of Executive Decisions
- liaison and support to 71 town and parish councils and 9 parish meetings
- administration of elections and electoral registration
- giving advice and general support to members of the council.

The council's Constitution can be found [on our HDC website](#) .

The Local Land Charges Register was designed to ensure that purchasers of property or land were made aware of existing obligations or restrictions (known as "charges"), which are legally passed onto successive owners of the property or land. A search will identify any matter affecting the property or land which is registered as a Local Land Charge.

Document Centre

The Document Centre is our in-house centre for scanning and post/despatch services. It provides an efficient, effective and high-quality service which is responsive to our customers' needs.

Facilities

Facilities Management is responsible for the maintenance of all council buildings (other than leisure centres and the commercial estate), ensuring that they are a comfortable and safe place to work.

Finance

Finance provides a wide range of financial and other support services to the organisation, including:

- supplier and creditor payments
- billing and collection of sundry debts
- management and monitoring of the corporate credit card (purchase card)
- risk management advice
- insurance arrangements
- financial advice and support to service managers and members
- corporate accounting services including banking, investments and statutory financial reporting.

Housing Needs

The Housing Needs Team, located on the first floor of Pathfinder House, is responsible for housing-related issues like homelessness and the housing register and works with a number of internal and external services. This 24/7 service supports some HDC's most vulnerable customers.

Human Resources

The Human Resources function provides strategic and operational people-related activities to support HDC in developing its employees and managing their performance in order to deliver the very best versions of ourselves to the communities we serve.

A full HR service is offered from recruitment, diversity, skills development, change management and supporting the business and managers with employee relations, employee engagement activities and organisational design.

One Leisure

Huntingdonshire District Council operates six leisure facilities including the One Leisure St Ives Outdoor Complex, One Leisure Huntingdon, One Leisure Ramsey, One Leisure St Neots and Burgess Hall Conference and Event Centre.

Across all the centres there a wide range of different facilities such as swimming pools, gyms, roller skating, bowling and much more. See the One Leisure website for details of facilities at each site: [OneLeisure Home](#) | [One Leisure](#).

Operations

The Operations Division is based at Eastfield House, Latham Road. It provides the management and operation of the following services:

- refuse, recycling and garden waste collections
- street and amenity cleaning
- CCTV
- emergency planning
- vehicle fleet and mechanical plant



Planning and Development

This team produces the council's planning policies which provide a framework for making decisions about the area's future. They provide a customer-focused planning service designed to facilitate growth in a way that protects and promotes all that is valued by our communities. HDC is the largest district in Cambridgeshire, which covers 90,000 hectares including more than 80 towns, villages and smaller settlements.

Huntingdonshire has a rich history and this is reflected in the large number of historic buildings found within the district, many of which are protected as 'listed buildings', along with 61 conservation areas. Infrastructure is an important element to the successful delivery of our future growth.

Revenues and Benefits

The Revenues and Benefits Team provides a range of services, dealing with over 79,000 domestic properties, 8,800 benefit recipients and 5,500 business rate properties.

The Team looks to maximise collection rates on both Council Tax and Business Rates accounts and ensures all relevant exemptions and discounts are granted correctly.

Through the administration of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support, the Team provides essential financial help to households across the district.

Strategic Insights and Delivery

The Improvement and Delivery service is involved in providing the following services:

- Business Analysts and Project Managers work together with internal services and external partners to assess current service delivery, support organisation wide projects, provide objective analysis to define improvement opportunities and support the design of new initiatives/projects to implement the improvements within time, cost and quality to allow HDC to realise the benefits
- Parks, open spaces and amenity areas, the Open Spaces team work to ensure that there is good provision for everyone in the district to utilise and enjoy parks and open spaces.
- The Markets Team operates markets in the towns of Huntingdon, St Ives & St Neots
- Parking services are responsible for maintenance of HDC sites, issuing of parking permits, issuing of parking fines and responding to parking fine appeals.



Locations



Pathfinder House

St Marys Street, Huntingdon,
PE29 3TN

Pathfinder House is the head office for the Council.

There is no on-site car parking at this venue - however, there are a number of town centre car parks nearby. There are two on-site disabled car parking spaces which are available to applicants who hold a Blue Badge – please note these spaces cannot be reserved and are allocated on a first come basis.



Eastfield House

5 Latham Road, Huntingdon,
PE29 6YG

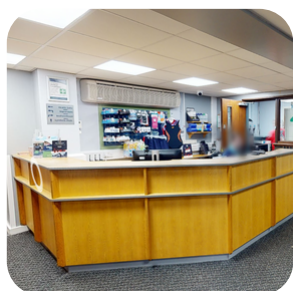
Our operations depot is based here.

There is free on-site car parking available at this venue. There are also a few disabled car parking spaces which are available to applicants who hold a Blue Badge - these spaces cannot be reserved and are allocated on a first come basis.



One Leisure Huntingdon

St Peter's Road
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire
PE29 7DA



One Leisure Ramsey

Abbey Road
Ramsey
Cambridgeshire
PE26 1DP



One Leisure St Ives

Westwood Road
St Ives
Cambridgeshire
PE27 6WU



One Leisure St Neots

Barford Road
Eynesbury
Cambridgeshire
PE19 2SA



Hinchingsbrooke Country Park

Brampton Road
Huntingdon
PE29 6DB

There is a pay and display car park on-site at this venue. There is provision for on-site disabled car parking spaces which are available to applicants who hold a Blue Badge.



Paxton Pits Nature Reserve

High Street,
Little Paxton,
St Neots
PE19 6ET

There is free on-site car parking available at this venue.

iCare values

The Council wants employees to deliver its activities and services effectively and efficiently, and to provide excellent service to its customers by 'Putting the Customer First'. To deliver this, the Council needs to have values that drive improvement on a continuous basis and support employees as they go through changes in how services are delivered. These values will help to guide our decision-making in all that we do.

Our values, known as icare, are embedded into the organisation. A number of approaches will make sure icare matters to all our employees; making icare visible across the Council, supporting managers and officers in delivering icare across the organisation; recognising good performance; and working with each other, our partners and our customers and placing icare at the forefront of all that we do.



Inspiring - We have genuine pride and passion for public service; doing the best we can for our customers.

Collaborative - We achieve much more by working together, and this allows us to provide the best service for customers.

Accountable - We take personal responsibility for our work and our decisions, and we deliver on our commitments to customers.

Respectful - We respect people's differences and are considerate to their needs.

Enterprising - We use drive and energy to challenge the norm and adapt to changing circumstances. We are always ready for challenges and opportunities, and we embrace them.

[Watch the icare video here](#) or this is available on the Council intranet page or via your manager.

Your Benefits

As an employee of HDC, there are various benefits available to you. These are listed below.

Pension

The Council are part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). This is a Defined Benefit scheme available to all eligible employees. To be eligible, you must be under 75 years of age, and have a contract of employment for at least 3 months.

Eligible employees on a salaried contract will be automatically enrolled into the scheme from their start date, whereas employees on a casual / variable contract will be assessed as per the Auto Enrolment Legislation rules. Employees may elect to opt out of the scheme at any time.

Contributions to the scheme are banded based your annual salary. For further details on the scheme, please visit the website at www.lgpsmember.org or the Payroll & Pensions intranet page.

If you're a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) at Huntingdonshire District Council, you have access to a valuable financial wellbeing platform; My Money Matters. One of the key benefits offered on My Money Matters is a Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contribution (Shared Cost AVC) scheme.

AVCs are a cost-efficient way to top up your pension pot. Not only will you benefit from the available Income Tax and National Insurance contribution savings, you'll also have the option to amend your contribution amount as and when you need to. For more information please email support@my-money-matters.co.uk, call 01252 959 779 or visit [the My Money Matters website](#) to use the live chat service.



Flexible Working

Hybrid working arrangements (role permitting). We know our employees are what make HDC great and recognise how important a healthy work-life balance is. Our hybrid work model enables employees to work remotely whilst allowing for in-office collaboration opportunities across the district.

Flexible working is welcomed and encouraged. It's not where, when, or how you fulfil your role that is important to us, it is the contribution you make to our Council.

Travel

Digital parking permit - The Council offers employees the facility to have a digital parking permit which they can pay for monthly – it costs £25.00 per month and is for use in certain car parks. For more information please email ParkingService@huntingdonshire.gov.uk.

Cycle to work scheme - Huntingdonshire District Council are delighted to be able to offer employees the opportunity to purchase a new bike and accessories up to the value of £2,000 through Cycle Scheme. As this is a salary sacrifice scheme you will be able to save money and spread the cost by having 12 monthly payments deducted from your wages prior to any deductions of tax and NI. HDC's scheme runs between April and June each year. For more details, visit www.cyclescheme.co.uk/3310da9.

Discounts

One Leisure Employee Discount

HDC offers a employee membership that allows any employees to join the gym and make considerable savings. Normal membership options start from £299 per year, but HDC memberships are only £35 or £45, depending on what membership option you choose.

To be eligible you will need to have worked at least one day in each of the three months prior to joining and then once you have joined you will need to work at least one day in the next three consecutive months, otherwise your account will be frozen. To apply for the employee membership you will need to fill out a form available on the Intranet, and a One Leisure Direct Advisor will contact you to confirm details and take payment.

VIVUP

We also offer access to an exciting range of employee benefits from our health and wellbeing partner, Vivup, offering a fantastic range of retail and leisure discounts. You can register/login at vivup.co.uk today to enjoy 1000s of savings on gifts, entertainment, supermarket shopping, hosting essentials, and more!

Huntingdonshire District Discounts

Local discounts are available across certain businesses within the district and the list of participating businesses can be found on the intranet.

Birthday Day

Have your birthday off! We offer an additional days leave for our employees to be taken on their birthday or a designated day usually within a month either side of their birthday.

Flu jabs

Seasonal flu is easily spread and affects people of all ages. The best way to avoid catching and spreading flu is by having a flu vaccination in early autumn, before the flu season starts. We offer contracted employees a vaccination, offers for the flu jab will be advertised in the autumn for you to sign up if you wish.

Enhanced Parental/Maternity Leave

Maternity leave can start at the beginning of the 11th week before the due date. The amount of time you have been working for the Council determines if you are entitled to maternity pay and what your leave entitlements are.

HDC also provides the option of taking Shared Parental Leave (SPL). The amount available depends on the amount of maternity/adoption leave taken by the mother/primary adopter. Paternity Support Leave is available to employees whose wife or partner is pregnant or who plans to adopt a baby. The amount of leave will be dependent on your length of service.

There is information about Maternity Leave, Shared Parental Leave, Paternity Leave, and Adoption Leave available on the Intranet.



Working for Huntingdonshire District Council

Onboarding

On your first day of starting with the HDC the 'New Starter Workbook' will be provided to you by your Line Manager to help you settle into your workplace. Some of the areas will have already been covered prior to you joining. There are sections to complete during your first day, your first week, 2-3 weeks of your start date and within 6 months. This also contains key information you may need to help you in your first few months of employment.

Key Policies

As a new employee, during the first 2-3 weeks of joining HDC you will be required to familiarise yourself with certain key policies.

Here is a list of the key polices you should read:

- Sickness Policy and Procedure
- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Grievance Policy and Procedure
- Bullying and Harassment policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Leave Arrangements Policy
- Flexible Working Policy

All of our policies can be found on the intranet.

Annual Leave

You are entitled to annual leave based on your length of local government service. Your manager will explain the process for booking leave in your service. Annual leave runs from 1 April to 31 March. Annual leave entitlements for full time employees (working 37 hours per week) are as follows:

Length of Continuous Service	Full time Annual Holiday Entitlement
Up to 5 years' service	24 days (177.6 hours)
More than 5 years' service	30 days (222 hours)
Directors	34 days (251.6 hours)

If you are on a part-time contract, your leave entitlement is pro rata. Also, if you work annualised hours, an average amount of hours each week should be calculated and the annual leave is based on that amount.

We also offer a Buying and Selling scheme for annual leave. The scheme to buy and sell leave will be offered once a year and capped at 5 days (pro rata'd for part time employees). The deductions or payments will be made as 1/12th payment through payroll.

Pay

The Council operates a monthly payroll for all employees, and payments are made on the 15th of each month. Where the 15th falls on a weekend or bank holiday, payments are made on the closest working day before this. Payments will be transferred directly to your nominated bank account.

All employees will have access to the secure iTrent Employee Self-Service (ESS) system, where you will receive your payslips and be able to update your personal information such as bank details. Access to the ESS system is managed by the HR team, who'll provide you with access details.

Further Payroll information can be found on the Payroll & Pensions intranet page. Please also feel free to contact the Payroll Team anytime via email at ResourcesPayroll@Huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Microhive

Microhive is a small charitable company that HDC works with us to help raise money for charities. More information on how to sign up is on the intranet.

Microhive is a very simple, but effective scheme that enables employees to donate the 'pennies' in their salary to charity each month. For example if you earn £700.17, then by signing up to the scheme you can donate the 17p to charity - so the maximum amount anyone can give is 99p each pay cycle.

Eyesight Tests

You may be entitled to a free eyesight test if you use a computer for significant parts of your day (blocks of one hour or more) and a computer is essential to your work.

There is a form available on the Intranet for you to fill out to claim back eye test expenses. If you require glasses for computer use only, you may also be entitled to claim £60 towards the cost of a basic pair of frames and/or lenses.

Intranet

Our intranet page is an internal website that is accessible only to HDC employees. It allows all employees to access important advice and support. As well as giving employees information on the various areas and departments of the Council, you can view posts, and important bulletins, together with providing links for employees to vacancies, health and wellbeing, the Council's Corporate Plan and much more.

Probation

All new employees at HDC (excluding variables) will go through a probationary period and be set with objectives to onboard the new employee into the team and to provide support to get them up to speed quickly. This will involve check ins at relevant points to ensure that progress is being made with the objectives and to discuss any issues and give feedback in line with the Probation Policy. Existing employees who transfer from other jobs within HDC do not need to have a probationary period again but should still have a full induction to make sure they are able to achieve acceptable standards of conduct and work performance.

Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)

There are individual measures of performance for services to track and benchmark a service's performance, some of these are part of the Corporate Plan and referred to as KPIs. These are reported on in quarterly public performance reports which go to Cabinet via Overview and Scrutiny.

Team and Individual objectives

Service Plans will inform the setting of team objectives, these will be how your team can achieve their key priorities, routine work and projects in line with the icare vales for the upcoming period. It is likely as a team that both the service plan and the objectives informed from it will adjust and develop through the year as priorities change. As the year progresses teams will achieve their objectives or objectives will be re-evaluated if priorities have changed. Individuals will discuss and agree how they contribute to the team objectives and organisational priorities. As with the service plan these will continue to shape and change as the priorities change/progress.

One to one's/Frequent check - ins

This varies depending on the nature of the role and the service. For some services this may be regular one to one monthly meeting's and for others e.g. Operations they will do team based catch ups and less formal one to one's. For services where one to ones take place it is recommended that these are at least quarterly. For some individuals who may want to meet more regularly or require more support they may meet as regularly as weekly.

Learning and Development

All HDC employees have access to training and development provided by Learning and Development and can work with their managers to identify areas in which training or other development is required to support you in your role.

HDC is committed to developing its employees and has learning and development opportunities available to book using Employee Self Service (ESS). We deliver a blended learning approach through online training, face to face courses and eLearning modules to employees enabling all of us to best serve the communities and citizens of Huntingdonshire.

Learning and development also run an apprenticeship service which provides development for existing employees and the recruitment of apprentices into some vacant roles.

We run a range of management apprenticeships such as Team Leader or Supervisor, Operations or Department Manager, Chartered Manager, Countryside Ranger, Business Administrator, Cyber Technician, and many more all designed to support you in progressing your career. Apprenticeships combine practical training in a job with learning and study.



Representative Bodies

HDC has the following representative bodies available to support employees.

The Employee Representatives group is a group of internal employees that represent the whole of the workforce and are a free service to our employees. They are committed to delivering assistance to HDC employees on a wide range of matters including grievances, disciplinaries, and redundancy. You can contact them by email at employee reps@huntingdonshire.gov.uk.

UNISON has an agreement with HDC to represent and act on behalf of their members. If you would like more information regarding UNISON you can contact them directly.

Health Wellbeing and Support Services

As part of the ongoing commitment to the wellbeing of our employees we offer a range of services that offer support for our employees.

Wellbeing Solutions

The health and wellbeing of our employees is paramount. We offer to all employees access to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), delivered by Wellbeing Solutions

An EAP is a confidential employee benefit designed to help you deal with personal and professional problems that could be affecting your home life or work life, health, and general wellbeing. This service offers you counselling and advice on a variety of personal or workplace issues. The service is paid for by HDC and is provided by an independent mental health company, Wellbeing Solutions. There is no cost to you and all calls are confidential.

You can contact the Employee Assistance Programme 24-hours a day, 365 days a year on 0800 328 1437.

Services available include:

- Counselling support
- Legal and financial advice
- 24/7 helpline access
- Life management advice
- Family members included – immediate family members over the age of 18 living in the same household
- Online portal – online support tools, newsletters, videos, finance calculators and more
- Discounts platform

Mental Health First Aiders

As part of the ongoing commitment to the wellbeing of our employees, we have numerous trained mental health first aiders covering all sites to offer confidential support to employees.

The purpose of the mental health first aiders is to:

- provide support to colleagues in regard to mental health issues
- promote mental health in the workplace and work towards ending mental health discrimination.

The team of mental health first aiders work together to provide a continuous source of information, campaigns, support, fundraising and general embedding of mental health awareness in the organisation.

Oasis

In our Pathfinder House building we have a space called Oasis which contains books (personal development, management and self-care), jigsaws, colouring materials, cards, magazines, personal CD players, meditation CDs, audio books. We also have a room in our Eastfield House building where you can go and take some time if needed.

This area is available to all employees, at any time, for when you just need some quiet time or head space.

Menopause

We want to support employees experiencing menopause at work and have committed to work on: recognising that menopause can be an issue in the workplace and that women need support talking openly, positively and respectfully about the menopause actively supporting and informing our employees affected by menopause. As part of this commitment, we have signed up to the Menopause Workplace Pledge.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

We are committed to creating an inclusive working environment, where diversity is valued, there is equality of opportunity for all and have therefore signed up to the equality pledge.

Domestic abuse

We have a collective responsibility to tackle Domestic Abuse so we have therefore made a commitment to achieving the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Accreditation. By becoming DAHA accredited, HDC are taking a stand, to ensure they deliver safe and effective responses to domestic abuse for our employees and our residents.

If you are affected by domestic abuse and you would like to talk to someone, there are several domestic abuse support champions within HDC who are specially trained who will be happy to speak to you in confidence and will be able to provide help and support. You can email them at DomesticAbuseSupport@huntingdonshire.gov.uk.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding means protecting a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about working together to support children, young people and adults at risk of harm to make decisions about the risks they face in their own lives and protecting those who lack the capacity to make these decisions. HDC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and expects all employees and volunteers to share this commitment. If you have any Safeguarding concerns they should be reported via the online referral form [here](#) if you have access to the intranet and a copy of the referral should also be emailed to DesignatedSafeguardingOfficers@huntingdonshire.gov.uk or raise this with your manager so they can log it on your behalf.



Part 4

Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct should be followed by all employees as it sets out the foundations of what is expected from you as an employee of HDC and how you can expect others to behave in return. We are all here to provide our residents with key public services.

Customers, the businesses that we deal with, and our colleagues all expect us to act and behave in the right way when we carry out our duties. We should all take pride in treating each other with respect and honesty. Public confidence may be damaged if there is any suspicion that our actions have been, or may be, influenced in any way by improper motives. It is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with the content of this Code of Conduct and to conduct yourself in a manner that is consistent with the values, behaviours and standards set out. Please keep in mind that no document can address every situation you may come across.

You should use your own good judgement, as well as this Code of Conduct, to guide your behaviour. If you are unsure how to behave, then explain the situation to your manager; they will be able to help you. Whilst not everything in this Code of Conduct will be relevant to you, all the information included sets out the high standards which we are all expected to achieve during our work here at Huntingdonshire District Council.

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Workplace ethics

Equality, diversity and respect

You should be polite and respectful at all times and treat other people courteously. You should deal with everyone fairly and equally, without regard to differences or similarities and irrespective of their age, disability, race, religion or belief, gender, sex or sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership status or whether pregnant or on maternity/paternity leave.

Everyone is entitled to work in a safe and respectful environment. You should not discriminate, harass, threaten, bully or victimise any person or act in any way that is likely to create an intimidating or hostile work place. You should make sure that you are familiar with and follow the Council's policies on equal opportunities and the prevention of discrimination and harassment.

If you see a colleague behaving in a way that is not in line with the standards set out above, urge you to constructively challenge them where you feel comfortable. If you feel unable to or they continue, report the matter straight away to your manager or HR.

Health & Safety

A safe and healthy workplace is important to the well-being of every employee. You have a duty to take every reasonable precaution to avoid injuring yourself or your colleagues, visitors, members of the public or any of our customers. The Council relies on you to follow all health & safety policies and procedures that are issued. Understand what the policies and procedures mean in practice.

If you are issued with protective clothing then you should wear it. Attend all training and complete all refreshers that you are required to undertake. Learn who and how you should report any health & safety concerns to. Promptly report any unsafe conditions, accidents and 'near-misses', or injuries you experience or witness to your manager.

Alcohol, drugs and smoking

The Council wants its workforce to be healthy and productive. If you need help with a drug or alcohol problem then you should speak to your manager or HR.

You should not come to work if you are under the influence of alcohol or any illegal or non-prescribed substance. If it is found that your work is affected in any way, you may be suspended and disciplinary action may be taken. You should not bring to your workplace any illegal drugs or other illegal substance. If you take any prescription or over the counter drugs and consider that they may have an adverse effect on your ability to work, then you should inform your manager. They will undertake a risk assessment to evaluate the degree of impairment and how it affects your work.

Absence from work

If you are unable to attend work for any reason, you must advise your manager as soon as possible. In the specific case of sickness absence, you must notify your manager by telephone on your first day of absence, within one hour of your normal start time. Further information is available in the Council's Sickness Absence Policy & Procedure.

Employment matters

Employees Conduct outside working time

What you do with your time whilst not at work is your own concern. Remember though that as a public officeholder how you behave is important. You should avoid doing anything that would undermine the Council's professional integrity, its reputation or damage public confidence in the way it conducts its business.

You should not be involved with an activity for personal gain or benefit which is in conflict with the Council's interests. Conflicts may not be clear cut, so if you have a question you should consult your manager or HR. You are responsible for taking action to declare and resolve any real or apparent conflict.

If you are employed on a full-time basis at Grade G or above, then you must obtain the written consent of your Head of Service or the Managing Director before engaging in any other business or taking up any other employment. Please be aware that consent is unlikely to be given if the activity has the potential to conflict with your work role.

Irrespective of your pay grade, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of any other business appointment or employment that you hold.

This information will be recorded in a register of 'outside employment'. You do not need to obtain your manager's permission if you want to get involved in voluntary or similar unpaid activities. Just keep in mind the issues listed above. If your conduct outside of work has a direct effect on your ability to perform your duties, this may result in disciplinary action being taken against you. If you have any concerns about how your outside commitments conflict with your job, then you should speak to your manager.



Personal endorsements or testimonials

You should politely decline all requests for endorsements or testimonials from suppliers of goods and services to the Council, or from your colleagues. The Council should not be seen to be favouring one business or person over another.

The Council may receive requests from suppliers asking that we become a demonstration site for their product. These requests can only be accepted by a Head of Service, after they have satisfied themselves that the link between the supplier and the Council will bring a direct and tangible benefit to the Council. These benefits should be agreed in writing with the supplier before they start using the Council's name in any marketing material or similar publicity.

Professional references

If a colleague has applied for another job, you may receive requests for references from a prospective employer. These requests should be forwarded to HR, who will respond on your behalf.

Communicating with others

Official contact with the press or media

If you receive an approach from the press or media you must refer them to the Communications Team unless you have been authorised by your Head of Service/Service Manager to act as an official spokesperson for the Council. If you are an official spokesperson, you are required to inform the Communications Team of every media contact you undertake. If you are authorised to comment you must ensure that all information you give out is true, accurate and not misleading. If you are an authorised spokesperson you should comply at all times with the 'Social Media Policy' and accompanying guidance.

Lobbying of Councillors

The Council's 52 Councillors have been democratically elected. You are required to respect their views and opinions and are required to act impartially and show no bias when dealing with them. If you provide advice to Councillors, it is important that you always keep your relationship with Councillors on a professional basis. Whilst good working relationships need to be formed, care should be taken to ensure that these remain at 'arms length'. Any appearance that you may be favouring one Councillor over another, or not acting impartially, should always be avoided.

Employees should not lobby or attempt to lobby Councillors, whilst you can listen to what is said, you cannot express an intention to vote one way or another or such a firm point of view that it amounts to the same thing. Don't accept gifts or hospitality from any person involved in or affected by a planning proposal.

Doing business honestly and ethically

Theft and fraud

All Council employees are required to be honest. The Council will not tolerate any acts of theft or fraud and will take prompt action whenever any theft or fraud is suspected.

Things like:

- using Council assets without permission
- stealing money, property or Council time
- falsifying travel/expenses claims
- falsifying financial, health and safety or performance records.

Corruption & Bribery

You should be aware that it is a serious criminal offence to be offered or to accept a bribe of any kind irrespective of its value. Gifts and hospitality can sometimes be used as bribes. You should never behave in a way that encourages anyone to think that you would be willing to accept a bribe or act dishonestly.

If you can always demonstrate transparency and openness in the decisions you take, then you will be in a strong position to refute any allegations of corruption and bribery that may be made against you.

If something dishonest is happening we need to know. Come forward and voice your concerns. Speak to your manager, the Monitoring Officer, Auditor Corporate Services.



Gifts and hospitality

The Council does not tolerate bribery or corruption. As a public sector employee there are very few reasons why you should be the recipient of any gift or hospitality.

You should not accept any hospitality or gift: that could be thought by a reasonable person to be lavish or extraordinary for an employee of the Council to receive; or that the Council would be unwilling to reciprocate.

The acceptance of any gift or hospitality, irrespective of its value, gives people the opportunity to suggest that you are being influenced to act in one particular way. You are required to act impartially and not be improperly influenced whilst performing your duties. Any evidence or allegation that suggests you haven't acted properly will be investigated.

Under no circumstances should you accept any gifts or hospitality of any nature or value from any supplier, no matter how far removed, who is involved or is likely to be involved within the next six months in any tendering or quotation process. The Council does accept that there are some occasions when it is appropriate for you to accept meals and hospitality. Further details are given below.

You are required to record all gifts and hospitality with a value in excess of £25 with the Monitoring Officer within three days of their receipt. A form is available on the intranet for you to complete. You may think the Council is only interested in the gifts and hospitality you receive during your working hours. That is incorrect. You need to tell us of all gifts and hospitality that you receive that have come about from your employment at the Council (e.g. offers of loans or discounts on works, goods and services).

Gifts

All gifts received are the property of the Council. They do not belong to you. Under no circumstances can you pay for a gift that you have received in order to keep it.

Gifts from service users

Service users may want to say 'thank you' for the help and assistance that you have provided to them. It can be embarrassing for you and the service user if a gift that has been bought specifically for you has to be refused. Gifts from service users that have a value of £25 or less can be accepted, however you must only accept a gift that is an appropriate 'thankyou' (e.g. bunch of flowers or box of chocolates). Gifts that fall within the exceptions listed should not be accepted. This includes any gifts of money (including gifts or bequests in Wills or gift vouchers etc), gifts of tickets to sporting or theatrical events or social occasions or any gifts of alcohol.

Gifts from others

Gifts from others (i.e. suppliers or contractors etc.) should only be accepted if they are of the type that are used for widely recognised promotional purposes (e.g. pens, diaries, calendars etc). You should accept no other gifts. This includes any gifts of money, gifts of tickets to sporting or theatrical events or social occasions or any gifts of alcohol. If you receive a gift without notice or warning that has a value in excess of £25, or is one that would not be considered to be for recognised promotional purposes, then you should pass the gift to the Monitoring Officer within three days who will register the receipt of the gift. The Monitoring Officer will pass all gifts received to the Chairman's Charity.

If you are personally presented with a gift that has a value more than £25 then you should politely refuse to accept it and inform the person giving you the gift that to accept it would be contrary to the Council's Values and standards of behaviour. If you remain in receipt of the gift, it should be passed to the Monitoring Officer within three days of its receipt. When attending any event in your official capacity, if you enter and win any raffles, draws or competitions, then you should treat the prize as you would any other gift. You should complete the gifts and hospitality form on the intranet and tell the Monitoring Officer what you have won. They will decide if it is acceptable for you to keep the prize or not.



Conflicts of interest

Conflicts of interest arise when you, a member of your family, or a close personal friend use your position for personal gain. It is important to remember that even the appearance of a conflict of interest must be avoided. Where you have any conflict between your private interests and official duties, you shall always resolve the matter in favour of the public interest. You must declare to your manager and the Monitoring Officer any financial or personal interests that you consider could bring about conflict with the Council's interests, or your official duties.

For example if you are involved in making decisions affecting:

- the awarding of contracts;
- the engagement or supervision of any contractor or supplier, or any other service provider; or
- any regulatory functions (e.g. licensing or statutory inspection function)
- any financial or personal interests you have in these areas should be declared.

Interests that should be declared also include things like:

- working for a supplier who also works for the council;
- deciding or allocating services that your friends or family might benefit from (e.g. housing or welfare benefit assessment);
- involvement in voluntary and community groups;
- involvement with an organisation receiving grant aid from the council;
- involvement with an organisation or pressure group which may seek to influence council policy etc;
- submitting a planning application;
- supervising a family member or a close relative; and
- ownership of, or substantial interest in a company that is a customer or supplier.

Your declaration shall be entered in a register maintained for the purpose.



Personal use of Council services

In the same way that members of the public need to access Council services, some employees of the Council may also have cause to use Council services in a private, personal capacity. It is important that the Council ensures that the decisions that affect your personal life are made using the same criteria that apply to everyone else. You should not seek to influence in any way any of your colleagues so that they arrive at a decision that is not supported by fact. You should never deal with, handle, review or influence in any way, any application or service request that you have submitted to the Council in a private, personal capacity or that you have assisted in preparing (e.g. on behalf of a voluntary group or neighbour etc). You should inform the Monitoring Officer and relevant Head of Service if you submit any planning, licence or grant application that will affect you personally. This information will be registered by the Monitoring Officer. You do not need to inform anyone of any welfare-related benefit application, or of your ordinary use of the One Leisure facilities. The Head of Service/Service Manager will ensure that your application is dealt with by an employee who has no actual or perceived conflicts of interest. If you are unhappy with the decision that has been reached on your application, you should pursue the matter in accordance with the published complaints or appeal process. You should not seek preferential treatment or speak informally with the employee who made the decision as they may consider that to be harassment or an attempt to unduly influence them.

Advertising and sponsorship

The Council occasionally seeks advertising or sponsorship for its own events, activities or publications. It also occasionally sponsors others. Sponsors who wish to become involved with Council activities generally do so in order to advertise or market their services or products. For this reason, it is important that you follow the guidance contained in the Advertising and Sponsorship Policy. You should also speak to the Communications Team. They will be able to assist you in reviewing the advertising or sponsorship that is being proposed. If an organisation wishes to sponsor an event etc, the rules of this Code that deal with gifts and hospitality apply. You should inform your manager and the Monitoring Officer as soon as you become aware that the Council is the sponsor of an event or service that you, your partner or a relative may benefit from. Your manager will inform you what further action you need to take. The Monitoring Officer will record your interest in a register kept for that purpose.

Safeguarding Council Information

Disclosing information

The Council handles and maintains a large amount of information. This may be about a person, a property or how we deliver our services. You are a guardian of that information. Whilst the Council wants to provide the public with clear and accessible information about how it operates, it is also aware that there are exceptions to the principle of openness where confidentiality is involved, or information has to be withheld.

You will handle, manage and access a lot of information whilst working for the Council. You must always handle this information in accordance with the law and the Council's procedure and policies.

This means that you must:

- only use the information for the purpose for which it was intended, and never for personal gain or benefit;
- only disclose commercial 'in confidence' information to other people who have a legitimate reason to know;
- not share information with members of your family or friends or anyone else;
- only access information for legitimate business reasons and with the permission of your manager. If you access, or even try to access information without good reason, then the matter will be treated as a disciplinary issue.

If you need to share personal information with any person who is not a permanent employee of the Council, then you should obtain the permission of your manager prior to sharing that information.

Data Protection

The Data Protection Act sets out how the Council can use the personal information it gathers or receives. The Council holds a lot of personal information on both its customers and its employees within its electronic and paper based systems.

If you handle or have access to information about individuals then the Data Protection Act applies to you. You need to learn and follow the 'data protection principles'. They say that information that is gathered must be:

- used fairly and lawfully;
- used for limited, specifically stated purposes;
- used in a way that is adequate, relevant and not excessive and accurate
- kept for no longer than is absolutely necessary;
- processed in accordance with an individual's rights;
- kept safe and secure; and
- not transferred outside the UK without adequate protection.

When we collect personal information the forms that we use to collect this data contain a statement that says to our customers that we will process their data in compliance with the principles set out in the Data Protection Act. This means that you must: keep personal information secure at all times (paper files/records or documents should be stored in a secure environment, and information held on computer systems should be held only on Council approved encrypted or provided devices which should be protected by frequent password changes); respect an individual's right to privacy, confidentiality and security when handling their personal information. You should make yourself aware of the Council's policies and procedures that deal with this matter; follow the correct procedures when collecting, using and sharing personal information; and protect all information you handle from misuse.

You should not discuss with anyone any personal information you handle, even after you have stopped working for the Council.

If you become aware of, or believe that personal information has been accessed by an unauthorised person; disclosed inappropriately; or used for purposes other than proper Council business then you must bring this to the attention of the Data Protection Officer and the Audit Team immediately.

Freedom of Information

If a member of the public requests to see information that isn't listed in the Publication Scheme, they are required to ask for it by making a Freedom of Information request. If you are required to provide information to answer a Freedom of Information request, then you will be contacted by Information Governance. They will provide guidance on what is required. If you have any concerns about the information you are being asked to provide, then you should discuss this with your manager. It may be that some of the information is about an individual which may be confidential and so shouldn't be disclosed.

Politically restricted jobs

Certain jobs in the Council are classified as 'politically restricted'. Your contract of employment will clearly state if you work in a 'politically restricted' post or not.

If your post is 'politically restricted' it means that you:

- aren't allowed to participate in political activities, voice your political opinion in public, publicly canvas for a political party or publish any written or artistic work that could give the impression you are advocating support for a political party; and are disqualified from being a Councillor for any local authority (other than a town or parish council), from being an MP.



Party political matters

If you are asked by a Councillor to provide assistance with a matter which is clearly party political, or which does not have a clear link with the work of the Council, you should politely refuse and inform the Councillor that you are referring the matter to your line manager. If you receive any information from a Councillor which does not relate to Council business, then you should treat it in confidence. You should not share it with anyone without the prior approval of the Councillor, unless disclosing it is required by law.

Publicity before elections and referendums

The Council is responsible for organising elections and referendums that are called. This includes General Elections, Town and Parish Councils, Police & Crime Commissioner, Combined authority, Mayoral elections, County Council Elections, as well the Council's own District Elections. It is important that during the period between the notice of the election or referendum and the date that the election/referendum is held, the Council does not publish any publicity relating to individuals who are contesting or involved directly in the election/referendum.

The Council has to be impartial and it should not issue any publicity which seeks to influence voters. If you are planning to issue any publicity or launch any new initiatives etc in the period when an election or referendum has been called, you must speak to the Communications Team so that they can advise you on what publicity can be issued.

Registers

All registers maintained by the Monitoring Officer will be reviewed by the Internal Audit Service each year. They will also be available for inspection by the external auditors, and any other statutory body as required by the law. If you don't have access to the intranet and need to complete any of the forms that are referred to in this Code of Conduct, you should ask your manager to provide you with a copy.

Final thoughts

Whilst the following list is not complete, it summarises the key messages that are contained in this Code of Conduct and the behaviours that we are all expected to demonstrate. We want employees to understand what is expected of them and why when they join us.

- Deal fairly and in good faith with everyone when conducting the Council's business.
- Comply with safety policies and systems. Report any unsafe working conditions or security breaches.
- Report all cases of harassment or discrimination immediately.
- Let your manager know if you are going to be absent from work.
- Make sure all the records you maintain are accurate, retained correctly, complete and comply with all internal controls, policies and procedures.
- Don't accept a bribe. Report all offers of a bribe to your Service Manager.
- Safeguard any Council resources you are responsible for, like your computer and mobile phone, and exercise good judgment regarding their use. Make sure that these resources aren't used in an unlawful or offensive way.
- Comply with the Council's rules when using IT.
- Protect all information you handle/manage. Follow the Council's Data Protection Policy.
- Be responsible in your personal use of social media and do not speak on behalf of the Council unless you are authorised to do so.
- Be aware of the responsibilities you have to the Council even after your employment with us ends.
- Immediately disclose any potential conflicts of interest to your manager.
- Don't act on the Council's behalf in any transaction or relationship where you or your family have a personal or financial interest.
- Don't let your activities outside work reflect adversely on the Council.
- Don't use your position to gain any type of personal benefit or advantage by making sure you know when it's appropriate to accept gifts and hospitality.

If you have any concerns about how others are behaving, there are lots of people you can speak to - your line manager, Head of Service/Service Manager or the HR Team.

Finally, remember that it is your responsibility to report any misconduct you know about, and even any that you suspect. The Council doesn't tolerate retaliation against anyone who raises an issue or concern in good faith. It will support you; guidance is available on the intranet that explains what may be required from you after you raise a concern and the support that will be available to you. By seeking advice, raising a concern or reporting suspected acts of misconduct, you are complying with the Values and helping to maintain an ethical workplace.

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