

# Employee Handbook



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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

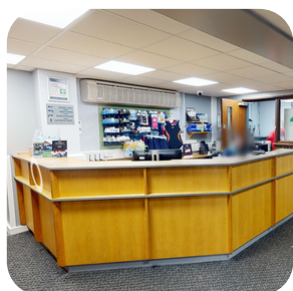
Our operations depot is based here.

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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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**

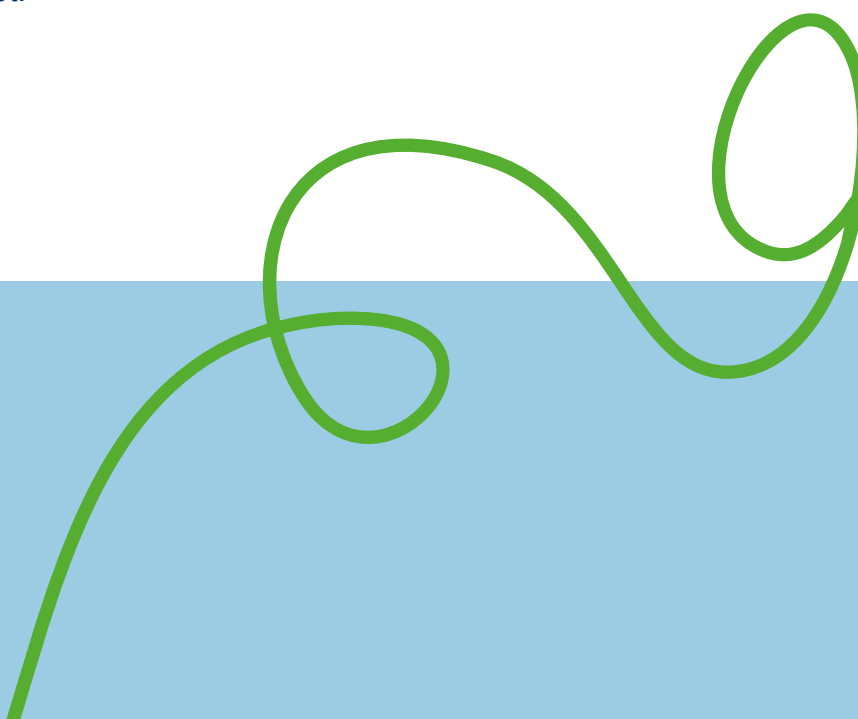
Seasonal flu is easily spread and affects people of all ages. The best way to avoid catching and spreading flu is by having a flu vaccination in early autumn, before the flu season starts. We offer contracted employees a vaccination, offers for the flu jab will be advertised in the autumn for you to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

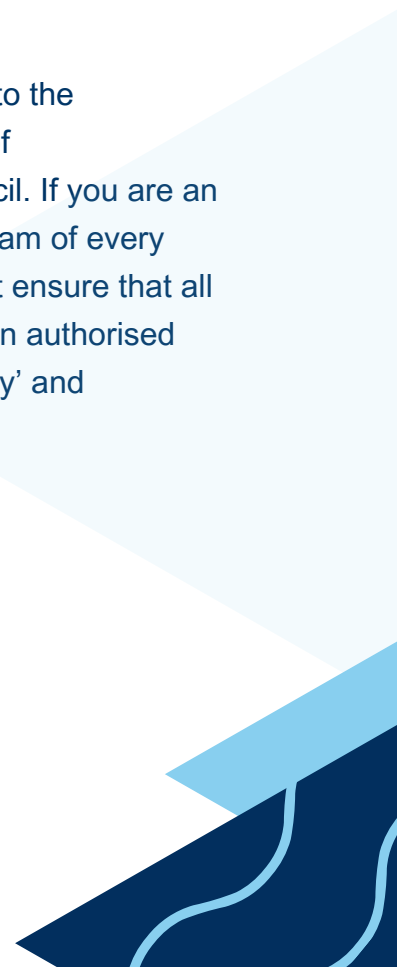
## **Professional references**

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.