

Committee – Employment Committee
23 September 2026

Report by: Head of HR and OD

Lead Cllr: Cllr Claffey
Portfolio Holder for Workforce



Wards
All

Open / Exempt
Open

Key Decision?
No

Employment Policies Update

Executive Summary:

HR have a programme of undertaking a programme to review and refresh 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.

Recommendations

1.1. Employment Committee are requested to endorse these policies

Key Corporate Plan Priorities

1

Doing our Core Work Well

Report Author(s)

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report provides a summary the policies that are being submitted for endorsement.

2. BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

2.1 The policies reviewed in this period are:

- Shared Parental Leave (updated)
- Paternity Leave (Updated)
- Unpaid Parental Leave (updated)
- Probation Policy (updated)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (new)
- Recruitment and Selection Policy (updated)

Summary of the changes:

Policy	Amendments
Shared Parental Leave	Front Cover and Index Added 1.4 updated with eligibility requirements 1.7 added information to link to Leave Arrangements Policy for Parental Bereavement Leave. 4.2 details added to amount of SPL available 5.1 amended wording within the table to outlined changes due to changes to day one right for leave purposes 6.2 wording added regarding blocks of leave and process 8.1 Timescales removed as now day one right 9.2 Information added regarding contact during SPL and right to return to role. Flowchart updated to add in process changes Forms amended with timescales
Paternity Leave	Index added 1.1 service requirement removed as law changed for the purposes of leave as it is now a day one right 1.4 Removed the timeframe as eligible from day one. 1.5 Removed qualifying period as this is now a day 1 right for leave. 1.7 Section added to link to the leave arrangements policy for Parental Bereavement Leave. 3.0 Section added for Bereaved Parents Paternity Leave
Unpaid Parental Leave	Index added 3.2 one years service requirement removed as law changed and leave is now a day one right. 3.4 additional wording to clarify information regarding part-time working patterns. 4.1 additional wording added around meetings with employees where postponement is required
Probation Policy	Index added 2.2 Probation period reduced from 6 months to 3 months.

	2.3 Probation period for fixed term contracts reduced to 2 months. 3.2 Sickness triggers outlined during the probation period and new form introduced for sickness meetings in probation period – Appendix 1 6.0 Probation Review Meeting timescales changed in line with reduction of probation period. 7.1 New Probation Record form introduced – Appendix 2 8.1 Timescale amended in line with the changes to the probation period. 8.2 – 8.4 wording amended regarding extension to probation periods. 13.1 detail added regarding report and supporting documentation. 13.4 Wording added regarding postponement of meetings to enable companion attendance. 15.6 Information added regarding appeals process
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy	This is a new policy as an outcome of the Workforce Strategy and HDC For Everyone Group
Recruitment and Selection Policy	Inclusion of Care Leavers commitment Reviewed and updated the policy to improve clarity, consistency and accessibility. Strengthened wording throughout to provide greater transparency of process and ensure alignment with current legislative and organisational requirements.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED & NOT RECOMMENDED

3.1 N/A.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

4.1 N/A

5. POST-DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Policies endorsed will be reviewed in line with the policy schedule.

6. IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

6.1 Council Key Priorities and Performance

- Improving quality of life for local people
- Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations
- Doing our core work well

These policies support the organisation to ensure that they are legally compliant and have the right processes and procedures in place to support staff to do our core work well and to delivery the Council's key Priorities. This allows HDC to continue to work towards being an employer of choice.

6.2 Financial Implications

- 6.3** Day One rights for family leave policies may have an increased financial impact on the Council, but it is not possible to forecast this

6.4 Policy Implications

- 6.4.1** These have been amended to ensure that they are in line with legislative updates and best practice.

6.5 Legal & Constitutional Implications

- 6.5.1** These have been amended to ensure that they are in line with legislative updates and best practice.

6.6 Community Impact

- 6.6.1** Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out for each policy following endorsement

6.7 Environment & Climate Change Implications

- 6.7.1** N/A

6.8 Equality & Diversity Implications

- 6.8.1** The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy will support staff in the workplace

- 6.8.2** Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out for each policy following endorsement

6.9 Implications on Resources

- 6.9.1** N/A

6.10 Health & Wellbeing Implications

- 6.10.1** N/A

6.11 Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Implications

- 6.11.1** LGR is taken into consideration for all policies that are reviewed or updated in line with legal requirements, and where possible, taking into consideration what neighbouring Council's approaches are.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1** These policies are designed to mitigate risk to the organisation and to allow consistent application across all service areas.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS– LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

- 8.1** N/A.

Shared Parental Leave Policy

Version 1.2

<u>Version Control</u>			
<u>Version</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Changes</u>
1.1	HR Business Partner LGSS	June 2015	New Policy
1.2	Lisa Baggaley	July 2026	Front Cover and Index Added 1.4 updated with eligibility requirements 1.7 added information to link to Leave Arrangements Policy for Parental Bereavement Leave. 4.2 details added to amount of SPL available 5.1 amended wording within the table to outlined changes due to changes to day one right for leave purposes 6.2 wording added regarding blocks of leave and process 8.1 Timescales removed as now day one right 9.2 Information added regarding contact during SPL and right to return to role. Flowchart updated to add in process changes Forms amended with timescales

Name of Policy	Shared Parental Leave Policy
Person / Post Responsible	HR Manager
Date approved / adopted	
Approved by	Employment Committee
Review Date	

Shared Parental Leave

Index Page Number

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Shared Parental Leave Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out the rights of employees to shared parental leave and pay. Shared parental leave (SPL) is a type of leave that is available to parents with babies due on or after 5 April 2015. In the case of adoption SPL is available to parents of children placed for adoption on or after 5 April 2015.
- 1.2 The intention of SPL is to allow both parents to take it turns to have periods of leave to care for a child or to take leave at the same time in the year following a child's birth/placement.
- 1.3 To do this the mother/primary adopter ends their maternity/adoption leave/pay and shares the remaining leave/pay with their partner as SPL. Alternatively the mother/primary adopter may return to work early from maternity/adoption leave and opt to take SPL at a later date.
- 1.4 SPL is not the same as ordinary parental leave which remains unchanged – the Council's ordinary parental leave policy gives further information.

Unlike paternity leave and unpaid parental leave, shared parental leave is not a day-one right. The eligibility conditions set out in section 5 continue to apply.

From 6 April 2026, under section 17 of the Employment Rights Act 2025, an employee who takes shared parental leave in respect of a child is no longer prevented from taking paternity leave, or from receiving Statutory Paternity Pay, in respect of the same child. Paternity leave and shared parental leave may be taken in any order.

2.0 Terminology

- 2.1 This policy uses the following terms:
 - Mother/expected mother.
 - Primary adopter.
 - Partner – the father of the child, or the partner, spouse or civil partner of the mother/primary adopter.
 - Expected week of childbirth (EWC) – The week (starting with the Sunday) in which it is expected that the child will be born.
 - Expected week of placement (EWP) - The week (starting with the Sunday) in which it is expected that the child will be placed for adoption.

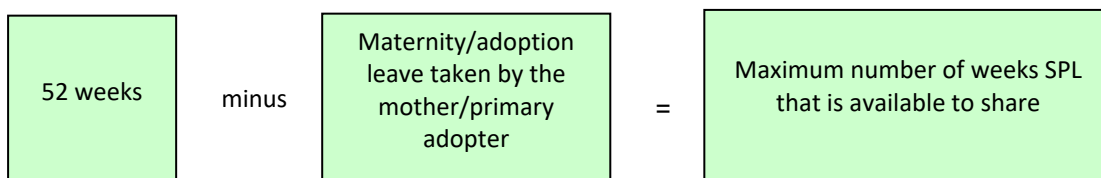
3.0 Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to employees of the Council, whether they are the mother/primary adopter or the partner.

- 3.2 If it is the mother/primary adopter who is employed by the Council, his/her partner must submit any notifications to take SPL to their own employer if they want to take a period of SPL.
- 3.3 Similarly, if it is the partner who is employed by the Council, the mother/primary adopter must submit any notifications to take SPL to their own employer. The mother/primary adopter and the partner should each liaise with their own employer to ensure that requests for SPL are handled appropriately.

4.0 Amount of SPL Available

- 4.1 The amount of SPL available depends on how much maternity/adoption leave the mother/primary adopter chooses to take before bringing their maternity/adoption leave to an end.
- 4.2 The maximum amount of SPL available is 52 weeks, less the number of weeks maternity / adoption leave the mother or primary adopter has taken, or will have taken, before ending that leave. Because a minimum of two weeks' maternity leave must be taken after the birth, the maximum SPL available in practice is 50 weeks.



- 4.3 The minimum period of maternity leave that a mother must legally is 2 weeks following the birth of the child. If a mother chooses to take only 2 weeks maternity leave then the remaining 50 weeks can be taken as SPL.
- 4.4 The earliest that SPL can commence is 2 weeks after the date on which the child is born or 2 weeks after the date of placement of adoption and it must end no later than 12 months after that date.
- 4.5 Employees are only entitled to a maximum of 50 weeks SPL regardless of the number of children born as a result of the pregnancy or the number of children placed under the same adoption arrangement.

5.0 Eligibility for SPL

- 5.1 For employees to be eligible to take SPL, both parents must meet certain eligibility criteria as outlined in the table below:

Mothers/primary adopter's eligibility for SPL (all of the following criteria must be met)	
The mother/primary adopter is eligible for SPL if s/he: Has been continuously employed by the Council for at least 26 weeks by the end of	In addition the partner must: Has been employed or self-employed in at least 26 weeks of the 66 weeks immediately before the expected week of childbirth or

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the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth or placement, and remain employed by the Council until the week before any period of SPL begins, is employed with the Council until the week before taking SPL. • Share main responsibility with the partner for the care of the child. • Is entitled to statutory maternity/adoption leave in respect of the child. • Have ended or given binding notice to end their maternity or adoption leave. • Complies with the notification requirements.	placement, have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold for any 13 of those 66 weeks. • share main responsibility with the mother/primary adopter for the care of the child.
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Partners eligibility for SPL (all of the following criteria must be met)

The partner is eligible for SPL if s/he: • Has been employed or self employed in at least 26 of the 66 weeks immediately before the expected week of childbirth or placement is employed • Is employed with the Council until the week before taking SPL. • Has average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold in 13 of those 66 weeks. • share main responsibility with the mother/primary adopter for the care of the child. • Complies with the notification requirements.	In addition the mother/primary adopter must: • Has been continuously employed for at least 26 weeks by the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth or placement. • Has average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold for any 13 of those 66 weeks. • share main responsibility with the partner for the child. • be entitled to statutory maternity/adoption leave, statutory maternity/adoption pay or maternity/adoption allowance in respect of the child; and • comply with the relevant notification requirements.
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6.0 Notification Requirements

- 6.1 The notification requirements that must be followed by the mother/primary adopter and the partner are made up of 3 elements:

- a. **A curtailment notice** - from the mother/primary adopter stating when she proposes to end her maternity/adoption leave (this is not required if the mother/primary adopter has already returned to work).
- b. **A notice of entitlement and intention** giving an initial, non-binding indication of each period of SPL the employee is requesting; and
- c. **A period of leave notice** setting out the start and end dates of each period of shared parental leave the employee is requesting.

Requests for a single continuous block of a number of complete weeks will be granted.

- 6.2 An employee taking SPL can split their leave into up to 3 separate blocks instead of taking it all in one go, even if they are not sharing the leave with their partner. A request for blocks of leave will be granted unless there are clear and evidenced operational reasons why it cannot be accommodated. Where a request is refused, the manager will set out the reasons in writing and will meet the employee to discuss alternatives before the two week discussion period ends.
- 6.3 SPL must be taken in blocks of a week or more. A minimum of 8 weeks notice must be given before each block of leave begins.
- 6.4 If both parents are taking SPL then they can take their leave at the same time as each other, or at different times. However the combined time off can only reach a maximum of 50 weeks leave and 37 weeks Shared Parental Pay ShPP.
- 6.5 SPL can start for the partner whilst the mother/primary adopter is still on maternity or adoption leave as long as the mother/primary adopter has given binding notice to end their leave.
- 6.6 **Discontinuous Leave**

If the employee requests discontinuous periods of leave the Council has two weeks (from the date of the period of leave notice) to:

- Agree to the pattern of leave requested
- Propose an alternative pattern of leave
- Refuse the pattern of leave requested.

If no agreement has been reached within the two week discussion period, the employee is entitled to take the leave as one continuous period of leave – starting on a date chosen by the employee that is at least 8 weeks after the date the period of leave notice was submitted.

The employee must specify this date within five days of the end of the two-week discussion period. If the employee does not choose a start date within this timeframe the period of continuous SPL will start on the date of the first period of leave originally requested.

Alternatively, if no agreement has been reached during the two-week discussion period, the employee may withdraw a period of leave notice (this can be done up to the 15th day after the notice was submitted). A notice that

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has been withdrawn does not count towards the total number of requests for leave an employee can make.

7.0 Shared Parental Pay

- 7.1 Statutory shared parental pay (ShPP) is available for eligible parents to share between them while on SPL. The number of weeks' ShPP available to the parents will depend on how much statutory maternity/adoption pay or maternity/adoption allowance the mother/primary adopter has been paid when her maternity/adoption leave or pay period ends.
- 7.2 A total of 39 weeks' statutory maternity/adoption pay or maternity/adoption allowance is available to the mother/primary adopter. The amount of ShPP will be:

39 weeks	minus	Statutory maternity/adoption pay received by the mother/primary adopter	=	Maximum amount of statutory shared parental pay available to be shared.
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- 7.3 ShPP is paid at a rate set by the Government or at 90% of the employee's average weekly earnings (whichever is lower).
- 7.4 It is up to the parents as to who is paid the ShPP and how it is apportioned between them.

8.0 Eligibility for Shared Parental Pay

- 8.1 For employees to be eligible for ShPP both parents must meet certain eligibility requirements as set out below:

Mothers/primary adopter's eligibility for ShPP (all of the following criteria must be met)	
The mother/primary adopter is eligible for ShPP if s/he: • Is employed by the council until the week before taking SPL; • has normal weekly earnings above the lower national insurance threshold in the 8 weeks ending with the 15th week before the EWC/EWP. • shares main responsibility with the partner for the child. • intends to care for the child during SPL; and • is entitled to statutory maternity/adoption pay but the	In addition the partner must: • have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold (currently £30) for any 13 of those 66 weeks. • share main responsibility with the mother/primary adopter for the care of the child.

maternity/adoption pay period has been reduced.	
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Partners eligibility for ShPP (all of the following criteria must be met)	
The partner is eligible for ShPP if s/he: • Is employed by the council until the week before taking SPL; • has normal weekly earnings above the lower national insurance threshold in the 8 weeks ending with the 15th week before the EWC/EWP. • shares main responsibility with the mother/primary adopter for the child. • intends to care for the child during SPL.	In addition the mother/primary adopter must: • have average weekly earnings of at least the maternity allowance threshold (currently £30) for any 13 of those 66 weeks. • share main responsibility with the partner for the care of the child; and • be entitled to statutory maternity/adoption pay or maternity/adoption allowance but maternity/adoption pay period has been reduced.

9.0 Contact During Shared Parental Leave

- 9.1 The Council will maintain reasonable contact with employees on SPL to discuss return to work arrangements and to keep them informed of any significant changes in the team or the organisation.
- 9.2 An employee can agree to work for the Council (or to attend training) for up to 20 days during shared parental leave. These are known as "shared-parental-leave-in-touch" (SPLIT) days. Both parents taking SPL have 20 SPLIT days each. The Council cannot require employees to undertake SPLIT days and is not obliged to agree to an employee's request for SPLIT days.

The method, frequency and purpose of contact during SPL will be agreed with the employee before their leave begins. An employee is not obliged to respond to contact during a period of SPL and will not be asked to work a SPLIT day at short notice.

An employee who takes 26 weeks or less SPL has the right to return to the same job. An employee who takes more than 26 weeks SPL has the right to return to the same job or, where that is not reasonably practicable, to a job which is suitable or appropriate in the circumstances. An employee has the right not to be subject to detriment, and not to be dismissed, for taking or seeking to take SPL. Taking SPL will not affect employee's performance assessment, access to training or promotion, routine pay increases, contractual benefits, employer pension contributions or accrual of annual leave.

- 9.3 Employees will be paid the hours undertaken during a SPLIT day at their normal hourly rate of pay. A SPLIT day claim form must be completed for each full or half day worked. Employees will receive payment for the SPLIT day in addition to any ShPP they are entitled to.

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10.0 Employee Rights During SPL

- 10.1 During SPL, all terms and conditions of the employee's contract except normal pay will continue. This means that, all other benefits will remain in place e.g. holiday entitlement will continue to accrue.

10.2 Local Government Pension Scheme Members

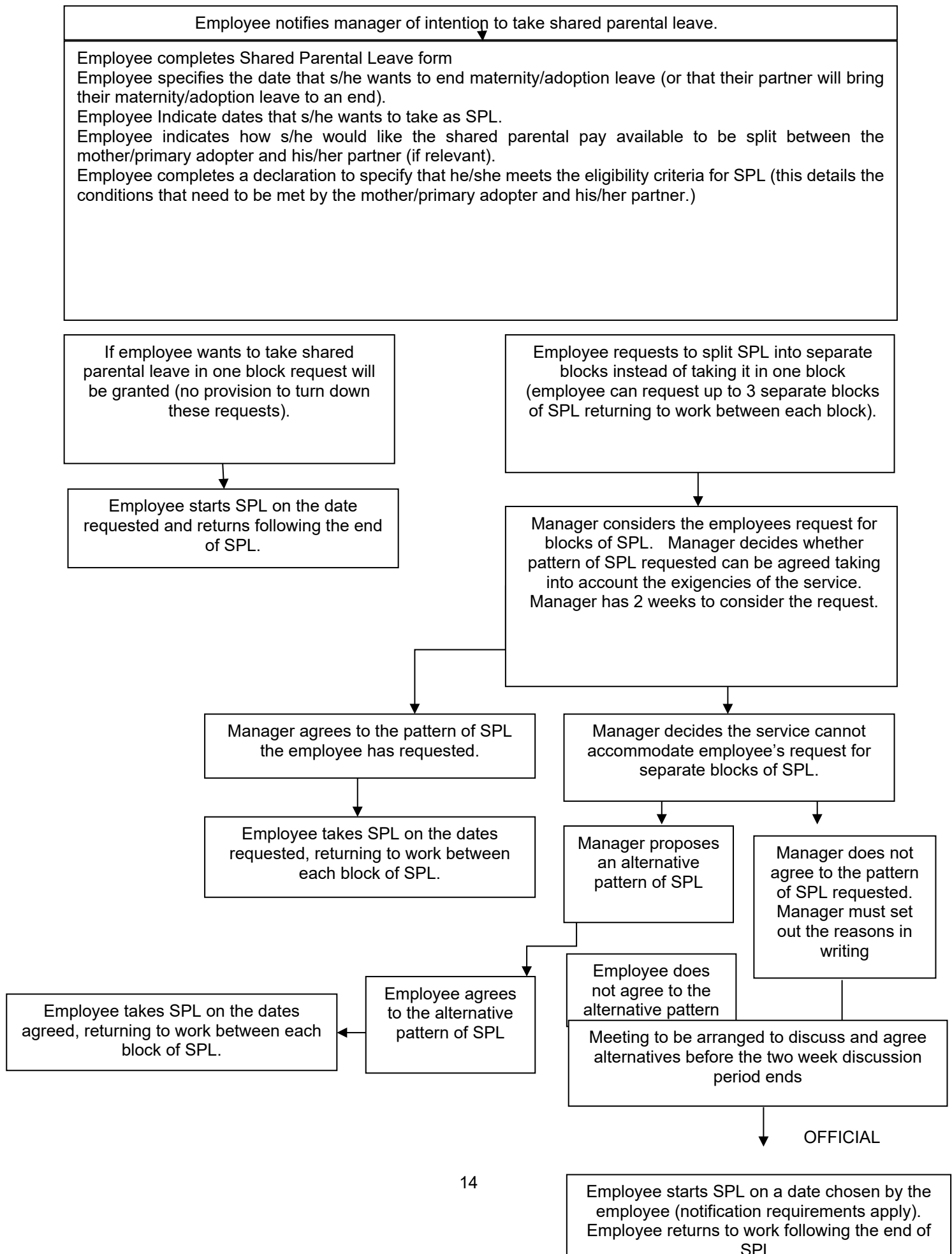
If the employee is a member of the local Government Pension Scheme, they will continue to pay contributions during the period of **paid** shared parental leave. These contributions will be based on any pensionable pay actually received but will allow service to be treated as working normally.

For periods of **unpaid** shared parental leave, employees will have the opportunity to buy back any or all of the “lost” pension by paying an age-related Additional Pension Contribution (APC). Provided the employee makes an application to make the arrangements within 30 days of the day they return to work, the employee shall pay 1/3rd of the cost and the council 2/3rd of the cost. The amount of lost pension will be calculated as 1/49th of the assumed pensionable pay for employees in the main LGPS scheme and as 1/98th for employees in the 50/50 section. If an employee is in the 50/50 section of the scheme, they can still commence an APC.

11.0 Return to Work Following SPL

- 11.1 The employee has the right to return to the same job when returning to work from shared parental leave if the period of leave (when added to any other period of shared parental leave, statutory maternity/adoption or paternity leave) is 26 weeks or less.
- 11.2 If the employee is returning from a total period of leave that is more than 26 weeks s/he has the right to return to the same job unless this is not reasonably practicable. In these circumstances the employee will then have the right to return to another job that is suitable and appropriate.
- 11.3 Where an employee intends to return to work earlier than the end of their SPL period they must provide the Council with at least eight weeks' notice of the date on which they intend to return.

Appendix 1: Process Flowchart



Notice of entitlement and intention to take Shared Parental Leave

Employees with a child due to be born or placed for adoption on or after 5 April 2015 who wish to take shared parental leave (SPL) to share the main caring responsibilities with the other parent/partner must submit this form to their manager **at least eight weeks** before the start date of the first period of SPL.

Please refer to The Council's Shared Parental Leave policy for details on eligibility and further information before completing this form.

Section 1 – Basic Details

Employee name	
Are you the mother / main adopter of the child or the partner of the mother / main adopter?	
Child's expected date of birth/date of placement for adoption	
Child's actual date of birth/date of placement for adoption (if known)	
Start date of mother/main adopter's maternity/adoption leave (or pay period*)	
End date of mother/main adopter's maternity/adoption leave (or pay period*)	

* The start and end dates of the statutory maternity/adoption pay or maternity allowance period if the mother/main adopter is not entitled to statutory leave.

Section 2 – Employee notice of curtailment of maternity/adoption leave

Please complete this section if you are the mother / main adopter. If on maternity leave, this date must be at least two weeks after the birth of your baby. You must give at least eight weeks' notice of your curtailment date.

I wish my maternity / adoption leave to end on the following date:	
Signed: _____	Date: _____

Section 3 - Shared Parental Leave Details

The total amount available is 52 weeks minus the number of weeks' leave/pay already taken by the mother/main adopter according to the dates given in the previous section.

Total number of weeks' SPL available	
Number of weeks' SPL you intend to take	
Number of weeks' SPL the other parent intends to take	
Indication of start and end dates of SPL that you intend to take This indication is nonbinding. You must submit a formal period of leave notice for each period of SPL you wish to request for it to be binding. Complete the section below if you wish your request for any/all of these periods of leave to be treated as a period of leave notice.	
Do you wish the dates indicated for the period(s) of leave to constitute a formal (binding) period of leave notice? (delete as appropriate)	YES / NO / YES, for the following dates only:

Section 4 - Shared Parental Pay Details

The total amount of shared parental pay (ShPP) which may be available is 39 weeks minus the number of weeks' pay already taken by the mother/main adopter according to the dates given in Section 1.

Total number of weeks' ShPP available	
Number of weeks' ShPP you intend to claim	
Number of weeks' ShPP the other parent intends to claim	
Indication of start and end dates of your ShPP periods	

Section 5 – Employee declaration

I confirm that I meet the following conditions:

- I am the mother, father, or main adopter of the child, or the partner of the mother or main adopter
- I have (or share with the other parent) the main responsibility for the care of the child and I am taking SPL in order to care for the child
- I have been continuously employed by the Council for at least 26 weeks' by the end of the 15th week before the expected week of birth or placement, and remain employed by the Council before any period of SPL begins.
- I intend to be in continuous employment until the week before any SPL is taken
- (If I am claiming shared parental pay) I have average weekly earnings equal to or above the Lower Earnings Limit over the eight week period ending with the relevant week
- I agree to inform the Council immediately if I cease to meet the conditions for entitlement to SPL or ShPP.

If you are the mother/main adopter:

- I have submitted a curtailment of maternity/adoption leave notice by completing Section 4 above.

Signature: _____	Date: _____
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Section 6 – Declaration of other parent

Name	
Address	
National Insurance Number	

I confirm that I meet the following conditions:

- I have been employed or self employed in at least 26 of the 66 weeks' immediately before the expected week of birth or placement.
- I have average weekly earnings of at least £30 during at least 13 of the 66 weeks prior to the relevant week

- I agree to inform your employee immediately if I cease to meet the two conditions above
- I consent to your employee taking SPP and ShPP as set out in Sections 2 and 3 above.

If you are the mother/main adopter:

- I have curtailed my maternity leave and pay/adoption leave and pay/maternity allowance or
- will have done so by the time your employee starts shared parental leave

I consent to you processing the information contained in this declaration.

Signature: _____	Date: _____
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Shared Parental Leave (SPLIT) Day Claim Form

Section A – Employee Details

Please complete Section A and submit to your line manager for approval AFTER each occasion you have attended work as a SPLIT day.

1. Name:

Payroll Reference:

Job Title:

Directorate:

2. I confirm that I am currently on Shared Parental Leave.

3. I wish to claim payment for working on an agreed shared-parental-leave-in-touch (SPLIT) day.

4. I confirm that I worked on the following date/s for the total number of hours each (SPLIT) day:

Date: Hours:

Date: Hours:

Date: Hours:

5. I understand that I will get paid for the number of hours undertaken on each SPLIT day. I understand that pay is based on my normal hourly rate of pay and is offset against any entitlement I have to occupational maternity pay.

6. I understand that any monies claimed will be subject to tax/NI and pension deductions in the normal way.

7. I confirm that the information provided above is correct.

Signed Date:

SECTION B – Manager Authorisation - To be completed by the line manager.

1. Name:

Job Title:

2. I confirm that the above SPLIT day payment is authorised.

Signed Date:

Submit a copy of this form to the HR Team -
HumanResources@huntingdonshire.gov.uk



Paternity Leave Policy

Version 1.2

<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.
1.2	Lisa Baggaley	July 2026	Index added 1.2 service requirement removed as law changed for the purposes of leave as it is now a day one right 1.4 Removed the timeframe as eligible from day one. 1.5 Removed qualifying period as this is now a day 1 right for leave. 1.7 Section added to link to the leave arrangements policy for Parental Bereavement Leave. 3.0 Section added for Bereaved Parents Paternity Leave

Name of Policy	Paternity Leave Policy
Person/posts responsible	HR Manager
Date approved/adopted	
Approved by	Employment Committee
Review Date	

Paternity Leave

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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 10 days Paternity Leave which includes 5 days payable at 100% 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).

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 have already taken the time off through the Adoption Leave Policy.

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 (Appendix 1). 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.

Where an employee joins the Council too late to give 15 weeks' notice of entitlement they must instead give as much notice as is reasonably practicable. No employee will lose their entitlement to paternity leave because they were not employed by the

Council at the point at which the standard notice would otherwise have been due. Paternity leave and shared parental leave may be taken in any order. Taking shared parental leave in respect of a child no longer prevents you from taking paternity leave, or from receiving Statutory Paternity Pay, in respect of the same child.

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.

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.

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.

1.7 Parental Bereavement Leave

Please refer to the Council's Leave Arrangements Policy for further information on Parental Bereavement Leave entitlements and Pay.

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

3.0 Bereaved Partners Paternity Leave

- 3.1 Bereaved Partners Paternity leave is for the partner of someone who has died; either the mother or parent who gave birth, the primary adopter or an intended parent having a baby through surrogacy.
The leave can be used when someone dies within the first year of their child's life or adoption. The leave is unpaid.

The father or partner can take up to 52 weeks' unpaid leave to care for their child, taken as one continuous block of leave.

In most cases, they must take the leave within 52 weeks of either:

- the child's birth – including intended parents in a surrogacy
- the child's adoption placement
- the child's entry to Great Britain for overseas adoptions

If the death happens less than 14 days before the end of the 52 weeks. The father or partner can still take 14 days' leave.

- 3.2 The father or partner must have responsibility for bringing up the child and be at least one of the following:
- the child's father
 - married to, the civil partner or partner of the mother or parent who gave birth
 - married to the civil partner or partner of the primary adopter.

3.3 Giving notice and starting leave

When requesting leave you should make contact with your Line Manager as soon as you can and complete the Bereaved Partners Paternity Leave Form (Appendix 2).

If it's less than 8 weeks since your partner died the leave can start straight away.

If it's more than 8 weeks after the death you must give at least 1 weeks' notice before the start of the leave.

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 100% 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 100% 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:			
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	

Appendix 2: HDC Bereaved Partners Paternity Leave Application Form

Please complete this form, ask your manager to sign it and return it to
Human.resources@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Employee Details			
Employee Number		Employee Name	
Post Title		Department	
Baby Birth Date:		Date of adoption:	
Date of Partners death:			
Bereaved Partners Paternity Leave Start Date		Bereaved Partners Paternity Leave End Date (if known)	
Relationship to dependent:			
Employee Signature		Date of application	
Manager Name		Date	

Unpaid Parental Leave Policy

Version 1.2

Version Control			
Version	Author	Date	Changes
1.1	Kiran Hans	June 2015	New Policy
1.2	Lisa Baggaley	April 2026	Index added 3.2 one years service requirement removed as law changed and leave is now a day one right. 3.4 additional wording to clarify information regarding part-time working patterns. 4.1 additional wording added around meetings with employees where postponement is required.

Name of Policy	Unpaid Parental Leave
Person/posts responsible	HR Manager
Date approved/adopted	
Approved by	Employment Committee
Review Date	

Unpaid Parental Leave**Index Page Number**

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Unpaid Parental Leave

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Huntingdonshire District Council recognises that an employee may wish to take time off to look after his or her child, to spend more time with the child or to make arrangements in respect of the child (e.g. looking at new schools).
- 1.2 This policy aims to support parents through employment matters relating to parenting. Supporting employees makes good business sense for the Council as the Council retains valuable knowledge and skills and contributes towards equal opportunity in employment. This policy sets out the Council's unpaid parental leave policy.

2. Employee groups covered by the policy

- 2.1 This policy applies to all Council employees.

3. Parental leave

- 3.1 An employee who is a parent of one of the following children is entitled to unpaid parental leave provided he or she meets all other eligibility requirements.

Child	Entitlement
Child under the age of 18	Up to 18 weeks until the child's 18 th birthday
Adopted child	Up to 18 weeks until the fifth anniversary of the adoption or by the child's 18 th birthday (if this is sooner)
Child who has been awarded the disability living allowance or personal independence payment	Up to 18 weeks until the child's 18 th birthday

- 3.2 To be eligible, the employee must:

- Have (or expect to have) the parental responsibility for the child.
- Give the Council the correct notice and evidence.

- 3.3 Parental leave can only be taken in full-week blocks unless the child has been awarded the disability living allowance or personal independence payment, in which case the parental leave can be taken one day at a time or in blocks or multiples of one day. In any given year, an employee cannot take more than four weeks' parental leave.

- 3.4 The right to a period of parental leave is available in respect of each child. If an employee has two or more children under the age of 18, he or she may take up to 18 weeks' parental leave in respect of each of those children. Part-time employees are entitled to parental leave on a pro rata basis. A week of parental leave means one week of the employees' normal working pattern. Part-time employees are entitled to the same 18 weeks' parental leave as full-time employees.
- 3.5 The employee must tell his or her manager as soon as possible and at least 21 days prior to starting parental leave:
- That the employee intends to take parental leave.
 - The dates the employee wishes to start parental leave.
 - The number of weeks (or days, in the case of a disabled child) of parental leave the employee wishes to take.
 - The name of the child in respect of whom the employee is taking parental leave.
 - That the parental leave is being taken for the primary purpose of caring for that child.
 - That the employee has not exhausted his or her entitlement to parental leave with a previous employer.

The employee must confirm the above in writing by submitting a Parental Leave Form. Unless the employee has already done so in a previous request for unpaid parental leave, the employee must also give his or her manager written evidence of:

- Parenthood or parental responsibility (e.g. birth certificate, adoption papers or evidence of the employee's relationship with the child's parent).
- The child's age, date of adoption or the child's entitlement to disability living allowance or personal independence payment.

4. Postponement of parental leave

- 4.1 The employee's manager can postpone a requested period of parental leave for up to six months (provided it ends before the entitlement to parental leave expires) if the employee's absence from work would unduly disrupt the operation of the Council's business, for example, work is at a seasonal peak, other members of staff are absent or particular skills or expertise are required at that time and cannot be easily covered.

Before postponing a period of parental leave, the manager will meet the employee to discuss whether the operational difficulty can be resolved by other means and will consider alternative dates put forward by the employee. Any postponement must be approved by the relevant Service Manager and the business reasons recorded in writing.

- 4.2 However, parental leave cannot be postponed where it is intended to begin on the day on which the employee's child is born or placed for adoption.
- 4.3 The employee's manager will write to the employee within seven days of receiving a request for parental leave confirming the reasons for the postponement and the dates that the leave can be taken.

5. Employees with more than one job

- 5.1 If an employee has more than one job within the Council, this does not increase the total leave to which he or she is entitled.
- 5.2 If the employee wants to take parental leave at the same time in both jobs, notice must be given to both managers. If one manager wishes to postpone the request, the parental leave will be postponed for both jobs. If the employee wishes to take parental leave at another time, both managers must agree to the timing of the request.

6. Rights during parental leave

- 6.1 All terms and conditions of an employee's contract of employment continue during parental leave except normal pay (e.g. annual leave continues to accrue and Council policies and procedures).
- 6.2 An employee is not entitled to contractual sick pay while on parental leave.
- 6.3 For every bank holiday that falls during a period of parental leave, an employee is entitled to accrue one day of annual leave.
- 6.4 An employee must not be dismissed for any reason directly connected with taking parental leave.

7. Return to work

- 7.1 During parental leave, the Council may make reasonable contact with the employee to help plan his or her return to work (e.g. to inform the employee of significant workplace developments, learning and development opportunities or job vacancies).
- 7.2 There is no need for the employee to give notice of his or her return to work – it is assumed that the employee will return to work on the date agreed with his or her manager.
- 7.3 An employee who returns to work from parental leave has the right to resume working in the same job if the period of parental leave was:
- Four weeks or less.
 - An isolated period of leave.
 - The last of two or more consecutive periods of leave (not including a period of additional maternity leave of more than four weeks).
- 7.4 If the employee does not fall into one of the above categories, the employee has the right to return to the same job or, if that is not reasonably practicable, to another job that is suitable and appropriate for the circumstances.

8. Misuse of parental leave

- 8.1 An employee must not misuse this policy, for example, by:
- Taking parental leave for a primary purpose that is not caring for the child (e.g. where another person is taking the primary responsibility for care of the child).
 - Misrepresenting the age of the child.
 - Misrepresenting the amount of parental leave taken with a previous employer.

9. Further Information

- 9.1 Employees with questions about this policy should speak to their Line Manager. Managers who need further information on how to apply this policy should contact the HR Team.

10. Policy monitoring

- 10.1 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.

Unpaid Parental Leave Form

Section A – Employee Details

Employee's Name:

Job Title:

Service:

Payroll Number (if known):

Section B – Notification of Parental Leave

3. I wish to apply for parental leave in respect of

..... (name of child)

for the periodto.....

4. The child's date of birth is.....

5. I confirm that I have (or expect to have) the parental responsibility for the child.

I attach copies of the following (please tick).

- Child's birth certificate
- Adoption papers
- Guardianship papers
- Court order
- Disability living allowance award (benefits agency letter/bank statement)
- Child benefit allowance award (benefits agency letter/bank statement) as evidence that the child resides with me

There is no need to attach evidence of parental responsibility if you have already done so in a previous request for parental leave.

6. I confirm that I am taking parental leave for the primary purpose of caring for the child. (Please provide details below).

7. I confirm that I have takenweeks'/days' (please circle) parental leave in respect of this child with a previous employer. I understand that I am not entitled to parental leave in respect of this child if I have exhausted my entitlement to parental leave with another employer.

8. I understand that the period of parental leave will be unpaid.

9. I understand that any false information that I give on this form may result in disciplinary proceedings against me.

Signed: Date:

Section C – Manager's Approval

1. Manager's name:

2. Parental leave approved?

• Yes ☐ No

3. If no, please confirm:

- Reasons for postponing leave:

- Dates when postponed leave may be taken:

Signed:..... Date:

4. Second manager's name (if employee has two jobs with the Council):

5. Parental leave approved?

☐ Yes ☐ No

6. If no, please confirm:

- Reasons for postponing leave:

- Dates when postponed leave may be taken:

7. Have you discussed the postponed leave with the employee's other manager?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Signed:..... Date:

Submit a copy of this form to the HR Team at HumanResources@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Probation Policy

Version 1.2

Version Control			
<u>Version</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Changes</u>
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.
1.2	Lisa Baggaley	April 2026	Index added 2.2 Probation period reduced from 6 months to 3 months. 2.3 Probation period for fixed term contracts reduced to 2 months. 3.2 Sickness triggers outlined during the probation period and new form introduced for sickness meetings in probation period – Appendix 1 6.0 Probation Review Meeting timescales changed in line with reduction of probation period. 7.1 New Probation Record form introduced – Appendix 2 8.1 Timescale amended in line with the changes to the probation period. 8.2 – 8.4 wording amended regarding extension to probation periods. 13.1 detail added regarding report and supporting documentation. 13.4 Wording added regarding postponement of meetings to enable companion attendance. 15.6 Information added regarding appeals process

Name of Policy:	Probation Policy
Person/posts responsible:	HR Manager
Date approved/adopted:	To be added
Approved by:	Employment Committee
Review Date:	To be added

PROBATION POLICY

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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 3 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 2 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.
- 3.2 Managers should not wait until an absence trigger has been reached before engaging with an employee about an absence issue. Support to improve attendance should be offered as soon as it is needed.

Disability related illness will be referred to Occupational Health and where adjusted triggers are recommended this will be discussed with the employee.

Pregnancy related illness will not be included for monitoring purposes.

Where an employee has reached an absence trigger a Probation Sickness Review meeting should be carried out and documented, the form for this meeting is at Appendix 1.

Absence Triggers during the probation period:

- ☐ Over 3 working days in a 3 month rolling period
- ☐ Absences linked to the avoidance of work tasks
- ☐ Unacceptable patterns of absence causing concern e.g. repeat days of the week
- ☐ Part time absence trigger hit: _____ days

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. Explore if the employee requires and support / adjustments in post.	
4 weeks	To check that an employee is settling into the role and has an understanding of the basics required to do the job. To check the progress of an employee's induction. Any performance or attendance issues identified are discussed at this meeting with specific examples given and any support / adjustments discussed.	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). Copy provided to employee.
8 weeks	To check that an employee is progressing sufficiently in the role and to discuss any training or development issues. If there are performance or attendance issues these should be discussed and progress / improvement against actions reviewed.	Progress to be noted. Probation Review notes to be updated to address outstanding issues, including any support or training agreed and signed by manager and employee. Copy provided to employee.
Final Review 12 weeks	No outstanding issues or concerns 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. ----- Outstanding issues remain	No outstanding issues or concerns Manager prepares a confirmation in post letter and issues this to the employee. ----- Outstanding issues

	If there are outstanding concerns the manager decides at this point if a probation hearing is required. The manager will inform the employee that a probation hearing will be held	Manager informs HR and their Service Manager that a probation hearing is required. Letter sent by HR convening probation hearing.
No later than 16 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 probation review meeting record form at Appendix 2. 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 three 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.

No further extension will normally be agreed. This does not affect the Council's duty to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010. A further extension will be granted where it is a reasonable adjustment for a disabled employee, or where the employee has been unable to complete the probation period for a reason connected with pregnancy, maternity or another protected characteristic.

- 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) the probation period will be suspended for the duration and will resume when they return. For the purposes of sickness absence up to 28 days the probation period may be reviews and the employee will be notified of any agreed extension period.
- 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 1 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 3 days sickness absence in 3 months;
- 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. The employee will also receive the probation report and any supporting documents at the time of notification.
- 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.

Where the employee's chosen companion is unavailable on the re-arranged date, the employee may propose an alternative time under section 10 of the Employment Relations Act 1999, and the hearing will be postponed to that time provided it is reasonable and falls within five working days of the original date. Where a longer postponement is requested and is reasonable in the circumstances, it will be considered and will not be unreasonably refused. If an employee then fails to attend without good reason, the hearing may proceed in their absence and any written representations will be considered.

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.
- 15.6** Employees who have been dismissed will have a right of appeal in line with the Appeals against Dismissal Policy. The letter confirming dismissal will inform the employee of their right of appeal.

16. Final Extension

- 16.1 The Service Manager may decide that a final extension is required up to a maximum of 1 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.

PROBATION SICKNESS REVIEW MEETING FORM

Strictly Private and Confidential

Employee name:	Manager name:
Service:	Date of meeting:

This meeting is taking place because you have met the following sickness trigger under the probation policy (**please tick**):

- ☐ Over 3 working days in a 3 month rolling period
☐ Absences linked to the avoidance of work tasks
☐ Unacceptable patterns of absence causing concern e.g. repeat days of the week
☐ Part time absence trigger met: _____ days

Please outline in the table below the absence dates in the last 3-month period:

Reason	Absence Start Date	Absence End Date	Working Days lost
Total			

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss your level of sickness that is causing concern. The meeting is also a chance for you to share any concerns you may have that are causing the absence.

Reasons for absence / any problems making it difficult to attend work/underlying condition?
If appropriate state medical advice sought (including advice from GP/Occupational Health (OH) and date/s of appointment and/or whether a OH referral is required, if there is an underlying health concern seek advice on whether employee is covered under Equality Act). ☐ If employee is covered under Equality Act give copy of Disability at Work policy
Please could you outline any action you have taken to improve your health?
The impact of the sickness on service provision (please tick to confirm this has been discussed) ☐

What support could we give as your employer (record any support/adjustments agreed)

Objectives and Actions agreed (please tick)

- ☐ To reduce your sickness and remain within the triggers laid out in the policy before the end of your probation period
- ☐ To return to work by: __ / __ / ____
- ☐ Another _____ agreed _____ objective, _____ please _____ include _____ below:

It is expected that you will:

- act in accordance with HDC's Sickness Absence and Attendance Policy
- comply with HDC's Sickness Pay Scheme, inappropriate use of the Sickness Pay Scheme can result in dismissal.

As a result of this meeting, if the objectives are not met and/or there has not been a reduction in your sickness levels, it may result in an extension of the probation period or dismissal.

Support services discussed and how to access them (please tick)

- ☐ Employee Assistance Programme (EAP including counselling, health and legal advice)
- ☐ Employee Representatives Group (Manager or Intranet)

☐ Copy of Probation Sickness Review form given to employee

☐ Copy of Probation Sickness Review form given to HR

Probation Review Meeting Record

Member of staff name:										
Managers name:										
Date of meeting:										
Probation review period. Enter a 'X':	Week 1		4 weeks		8 weeks		12 weeks		Extended review period. (Maximum 1 month):	

Target for 12 weeks – At the start of the probation period, detail here the targets you wish to be achieved by 12 weeks in line with the Job Description. For each review period discuss where the member of staff is regarding the achievement of these targets. You could score this out of ten if that helps represent progress. Follow-up this with actions that need to be implemented to achieve the targets set for week 12.

Work area	Targets to be achieved	Current position at review period	Comments at review period / any support agreed

icare values - Detail how the member of staff is presenting the icare values

Value area questions	Confirm, and add examples, of how this is met, or discuss how it could be improved. Identify actions if needed and add to the below list of actions.
Inspiring – You have genuine pride and passion for public service; doing the best you can for our customer's.	
Collaborative – You achieve much more by working with others, and this allows you to provide the best service to customers.	
Accountable – You take personal responsibility for your work and decisions and you deliver on your commitments to customers.	
Respectful – You respect people's differences and are considerate to their needs.	
Enterprising – You use drive and energy to challenge the norm and adapt to changing circumstances. You are always ready for challenge and opportunities and you embrace them.	

Actions agreed – This could include support that is required, further learning/training, work actions/performance that need to be completed and behaviours that need to be addressed. The actions listed must align to the above two sections work/value areas.

Work area	Actions agreed	By whom and when	Status Date completed / in progress / overdue

Others matters discussed – Please detail here any other discussions that took place.

Signatures for review period

The signatures can be electronically entered then a copy emailed across to the member of staff as confirmation, cc to include HR as an official record.

Employee signature or electronic printed name:		Date:
Manager signature or electronic printed name:		Date:

Complete for final review period only

Manager to select decision made at final review period, and provide appropriate advice to member of staff. Please refer to the policy and HR for guidance.

Final review outcome

Outcome decision by Manager. Enter an 'X' for decision made	Manager signature or electronic printed name	Date of decision:
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	No outstanding issues or concerns. 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. Manager prepares a confirmation in post letter and issues this to the employee.		
	Outstanding issues remain If there are outstanding concerns the manager decides at this point if a probation hearing is required. The manager will inform the employee that a probation hearing will be held. Manager informs HR and their Service Manager that a probation hearing is required. Letter sent by HR convening probation hearing.		

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Version 1.1

Version Control			
<u>Version</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Changes</u>
1.1	Lisa Baggaley	June 2026	New Policy

Name of Policy:	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
Person/posts responsible:	HR Manager
Date approved/adopted:	To be added
Approved by:	Employment Committee
Review Date:	To be added

Equality, Diversity, and, Inclusion Policy

1.0 Introduction

Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) is committed to encouraging equality and diversity among our workforce and eliminating unlawful discrimination.

The aim is for our workforce to be truly representative of our local demographic and for each employee to feel respected and able to give their best.

The council is also committed against unlawful discrimination of customers and residents.

2.0 Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out HDC's commitment to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I), ensuring fairness in employment and service delivery, and complying with all relevant UK legislation. It aims to create a culture where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, and where differences are valued and celebrated.

This policy applies to:

- All employees (permanent, temporary, part-time, full-time)
- Workers, contractors and agency staff
- Volunteers
- Job applicants
- Customers, clients and service users

It applies to all areas of employment and service provision, such as recruitment, training, promotion, pay, dismissal, redundancy, flexible working requests and access to services.

3.0 Principles

This policy is underpinned by current UK legislation and guidance, including:

- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010)
- Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011
- Relevant case law and statutory guidance

The Equality Act protects individuals from discrimination based on the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including ethnic or national origin, nationality, colour)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

We are committed to:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advancing equality of opportunity
- Fostering good relations between different groups
- Creating an inclusive environment where people feel safe, valued and able to contribute fully

We recognise that discrimination can be direct, indirect, institutional or systemic, and we are committed to identifying and removing barriers to inclusion.

We will:

- Provide equality, fairness and respect for all individuals
- Promote diversity and value differences
- Ensure decisions are based on merit and objective criteria
- Take proactive steps to remove disadvantage and support underrepresented groups
- Make reasonable adjustments for disabled people and others where appropriate
- Encourage participation from diverse communities

4.0 Responsibilities

4.1 HDC

HDC commits to:

- Develop our employees, volunteers and Councillors to help them promote equality and inclusion in our communities.
- encourage a genuine commitment to equality and diversity in the workplace
- create a working environment free of bullying, harassment,

victimisation and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued

- review employment practices and procedures when necessary to ensure fairness, and also update them and the policy to take account of changes in the law
- monitor the make-up of the workforce regarding information such as age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability in encouraging equality and diversity, and in meeting the aims and commitments set out in the equality policy. Monitoring will also include assessing how the equality policy, and any action plan, are working in practice, reviewing them annually, and considering and taking action to address any issues.

This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the equality, diversity and inclusive policy. This also involves staff conducting themselves to help the council provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination.

4.2 Managers

All managers will commit to:

- Implementing the EDI principles in day-to-day management of their teams
- making opportunities for training, development and progression available to all staff, who will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, so their talents and resources can be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the council
- ensure decisions concerning staff are based on merit (apart from in any necessary and limited exemptions and exceptions allowed under the Equality Act).
- Address inappropriate behaviour promptly
- Support staff and promote inclusive team cultures

4.3 All Staff

All representatives of the Council (staff, Councillors and volunteers) are expected to treat others with dignity and respect in line with this policy. Not engage in any discrimination, harassment or victimisation of others and challenge inappropriate behaviour where safe to do so. All members of staff are expected to display the Council's iCare values at all times and Councillors should understand our iCare values and demonstrate them when dealing with HDC employees. All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination, in the course of their employment,

against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the

All staff must take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation and unlawful discrimination by fellow employees, customers, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the council's work activities.

Appropriate and proportionate action will be taken in line with the Raising Concerns Policy, where complaints are raised.

5.0 Monitor and Review

The HR Team will:

- Monitor workforce data and equality outcomes annually
- Conduct Equality Impact Assessments where appropriate
- Review this policy regularly (at least every 2–3 years or when legislation changes)
- Set and review equality objectives via the "HDC for Everyone" group

Recruitment & Selection policy

Version 1.3

Version Control			
Version	Author	Date	Changes
1.1	Sam Sanderson	May 2025	Updated to reflect process change and included approach to secondments and internal moves. Included The Immigration Act 2016
1.2	Sam Sanderson	May 2026	Updated to reflect approach to references
1.3	Sam Sanderson	Sep 2026	Inclusion of Care Leavers commitment Reviewed and updated the policy to improve clarity, consistency and accessibility. Strengthened wording throughout to provide greater transparency of process and ensure alignment with current legislative and organisational requirements.

Name of Policy	Recruitment & Selection Policy
Person/posts responsible	Head of HR and OD
Date adopted	Reviewed July 2026 for Endorsement in Sep 2026
Endorsed by	Employment Committee
Review Date	Sep 2028

Recruitment and Selection Policy

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) acknowledges that recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce is essential for achieving our goals. This policy promotes fair and consistent recruitment practices that support equality of opportunity, vital for service delivery.
- 1.2 Recruitment and selection are critical management functions representing significant investments. Our policy ensures effective recruitment practices to build a diverse workforce that enhances our service quality.
- 1.3 The policy is based on equal opportunities, emphasising equity, fairness, consistency, and merit-based appointments.
- 1.4 It aims to appoint the best candidates, support diversity, and ensure cost-effectiveness in the recruitment process.
- 1.5 HDC commits to ensuring hiring managers are trained and competent in managing recruitment and understanding equality standards.

2. Scope of Policy

- 2.1 Effective recruitment is key to HDC's success, requiring employees with the skills and qualifications to meet strategic objectives.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all recruitment undertaken by or on behalf of HDC, including the engagement of temporary, agency and contract staff. Where a role is filled through an agency, the equality, shortlisting and selection standards in this policy apply equally.

3. Policy Objectives

- 3.1 We value diversity in our workforce and are committed to fostering diversity through our recruitment practices.
- 3.2 The recruitment policy will be regularly reviewed to ensure fair and equitable processes that do not discriminate unlawfully on various grounds.
- 3.3 All colleagues involved in recruitment must adhere to our Equality and Diversity Policy and Code of Conduct; violations may result in disciplinary action.
- 3.4 We will promote vacancies to a wide pool of candidates, encouraging applications from under-represented groups and considering positive action where appropriate.
- 3.5 Recruitment decisions will be based on merit, incorporating results from role-related assessments and interviews.
- 3.6 We will support career mobility by considering internal promotions and secondments.
- 3.7 Flexible working options will be offered where appropriate.

- 3.8 Agencies providing temporary workers must adhere to an open and transparent process aligned with HDC values.
- 3.9 Coaching and training on recruitment, equality, and diversity will be provided to all involved in the recruitment process.

4. Recruitment Steps

It is HDC policy to follow the steps below when considering the recruitment of new staff. Please refer to our Recruitment Processes Guide for Hiring Managers for more detail.

- 4.1 When an existing position becomes vacant, the hiring manager must review the requirements of the role and determine if the role is still required. If it is, considerations should be made to determine if a like for like replacement, or a revision of the role is required. If recruitment is necessary, the existing job description should be reviewed and any necessary changes made.
- 4.2 All new job descriptions must be evaluated before recruitment; existing posts should be re-evaluated if there are any changes made to the job description.
- 4.3 For any recruitment need, the hiring manager must complete and submit a vacancy authorisation form (VAF) to the recruitment team, for CLT approval.
- 4.4 Upon VAF approval, the hiring manager will provide advert copy along with a job description to the recruitment team, and a recruitment timetable will be established.
- 4.5 Job advertisements will usually close at least two weeks from publication, although the advertising period can be shortened, depending on business need. Hiring managers are encouraged to review applications regularly and can close the advert early, should sufficient applications be received. Shortlisting will be completed within five working days and the completed shortlisting matrix and interview schedule emailed to the recruitment team to action.
- 4.6 Secondment opportunities will be advertised internally.
- 4.7 Interview panel members must be informed of the timetable and collaborate and agreed on interview questions in advance.
- 4.8 Recruitment documentation, including shortlisting matrices, interview notes and scores for all candidates, will be retained for 12 months from the date of the selection decision and then securely destroyed."
- 4.9 If the successful candidate declines the offer or the post becomes available within six months, other suitable candidates will be contacted.

5. Advertising

- 5.1 We will ensure advertisements reach a diverse candidate pool, with all permanent and fixed-term posts advertised internally and externally as needed.
- 5.2 All vacancies will be advertised on the HDC website unless an internal-only recruitment approach is deemed appropriate. Any external advertising expenditure will be coordinated through the Recruitment Team.
- 5.3 The most effective advertising methods will be utilised, and positive action may be taken to encourage applications from under-represented groups.
- 5.4 Cost-effective campaigns may be run for specific posts.

- 5.5 In certain cases, vacancies may be offered to redeployees or as secondments instead of external advertising.

6. Information for Applicants

All advertised roles must include:

- Application instructions
- Job description and person specification
- Contract length and salary/grade
- Closing date and potential interview dates
- Location
- Working hours
- Background information on HDC and/or the role
- Any conditional offer requirements (e.g., DBS checks, Drug and Alcohol screening)
- Equality and diversity statement

7. Shortlisting

- 7.1 Applications received by the closing date will be reviewed and shortlisted by at least two assessors, including the hiring manager, to ensure a robust and objective selection process. Applicants **must** be chosen against the essential criteria. It is the responsibility of the hiring manager at this stage to record on the shortlisting matrix scores for all applicants. The completed shortlisting matrix and interview schedule must be returned to the recruitment team who will invite selected candidates for interview. This will include timetabling the interviews and arranging any pre-employment checks if appropriate. Candidates who have not been shortlisted will also be informed by the recruitment team.
- 7.2 HDC is a Disability Confident employer. Being a Disability Confident employer means actively committing to attracting, recruiting, retaining, and developing a diverse workforce, including disabled people. A key component is the "guaranteed interview" aspect, where if an applicant with a disability meets the essential criteria (minimum requirements) outlined in the job description, they are guaranteed an interview. It is the responsibility of the hiring manager to ensure disabled candidates who meet the essential criteria, are shortlisted for interview.
- 7.3 HDC is a signatory to the Care Leaver Covenant and is committed to supporting care experienced young people into employment. As part of this commitment, applicants who identify as a care leaver and meet the essential criteria (minimum requirements) of the role, as outlined in the person specification, will be guaranteed an interview. It is the responsibility of the hiring manager to ensure that eligible care leaver applicants who meet the essential criteria are shortlisted for interview.
- 7.4 The appointing manager will approach suitable colleagues to assist with **shortlisting and interviewing**. At least two people should be involved in shortlisting and sit on the interview panel. The same people should be involved in all interviews where possible to ensure consistency. If a panel member feels there is a conflict of interest with a candidate, they should seek advice from the recruitment team at the earliest opportunity.

8. Interviews

- 8.1 The hiring manager must lead the interview panel, familiar with equality, diversity, and recruitment policies. All panel members should have received relevant training.
- 8.2 The interview panel should ideally consist of two members, ensuring diversity. More senior positions may require three members.
- 8.3 Candidates will be given reasonable notice for interviews and any required tests, with adjustments made for disabled candidates.
- 8.4 The panel will discuss questions in advance, covering requisite skills and HDC values. Consistency is essential; all candidates should be asked the same core questions.
- 8.5 Interview durations should be consistent, and notes should be taken. Recruitment documentation, including shortlisting matrices, interview notes and scores for all candidates, will be retained for 12 months from the date of the selection decision and then securely destroyed.
- 8.6 Appropriate selection methods will be used, including assessment centres or tests as needed.
- 8.7 The panel will score candidates based on their performance, considering both technical competence and alignment with HDC values.

9. Selection and Offer

- 9.1 Following interviews, the panel will compare candidates' answers against the person specification and decide on suitability.
- 9.2 Panel scores will be recorded, and appointment decisions will be made by consensus. If no candidates are suitable, the post may be re-advertised.
- 9.3 The hiring manager will inform the successful candidate and agree on a start date and salary.
- 9.4 Candidates will be informed of the outcome within five working days of the final interview. Feedback is available upon request and, where requested, will be provided within ten working days. Feedback will be based on the scores awarded and the written evidence recorded within the shortlisting matrix and interview assessment records.

10. External Offers

- 10.1 It is the responsibility of the hiring manager to extend the verbal offer. Once accepted, the hiring manager will complete a preferred candidate form and email it along with the interview notes to the recruitment team.
- 10.2 The recruitment team will contact the selected candidate with a written conditional offer, subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks.
- 10.3 The recruitment team will ask the candidate for evidence of their right to work in the UK at point of offer. The hiring manager will verify the original right to work in the UK documentation on the candidate's first day and email it to the recruitment

team for our records. HDC does not hold a Sponsorship Licence and is unable to provide a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) or take over existing sponsorship.

- 10.4 Employment commences upon receipt of satisfactory references and required pre-employment checks, including an occupational health fit certificate.
- 10.5 The Recruitment team will manage DBS/BPSS checks, with costs covered by HDC. If the new starter requires a BPSS, the hiring manager will need to request this from the recruitment team.
- 10.6 Any unsatisfactory pre-employment checks (as laid out in section 16.1), may lead to a withdrawal of the conditional offer.

11. Internal Offers

- 11.1 It is the responsibility of the hiring manager to extend the verbal offer. Once accepted, the hiring manager will complete an internal mover's form and email it along with the interview notes to the recruitment team.
- 11.2 The recruitment team will contact the selected candidate with a written conditional offer, subject to any necessary pre-employment checks.
- 11.3 Hiring managers are advised to follow the guidelines as set out in the Guidance for Secondments and Internal Moves.

12. Redeployees

- 12.1 The Council is committed to minimising compulsory redundancies and redeploying employees who are no longer able to fulfil their current role. One way of achieving this is to redeploy employees who are at risk to other jobs within the Council.
- 12.2 Redeployees need only to demonstrate during the shortlisting and interview process that they meet the essential criteria in the person specification in order to be appointable to the job. The post must be deemed a suitable alternative employment.
- 12.3 Redeployees will be considered for suitable vacancies before the vacancy is advertised internally or externally. A redeployee who meets the essential criteria will be offered the role and will not be required to compete with other candidates. Redeployees are entitled to a trial period of at least four weeks in any suitable alternative role, in accordance with s.138 Employment Rights Act 1996, without prejudice to their redundancy entitlement. Reasonable training will be provided where a redeployee could meet the essential criteria within a reasonable period.
- 12.4 Please see the Redundancy Policy for more details.

13. Secondments and Internal Moves

- 13.1 We encourage the use of secondment arrangements as a valuable means of providing cost-effective career development opportunities for our employees. Secondments are also a way of effectively covering the need for resources on a fixed term basis and for resourcing project work. Managers are advised to follow the guidelines as set out in the Guidance for Secondments and Internal Moves.
- 13.2 Hiring managers are advised to conduct a formal interview process ensuring fairness and transparency by ensuring all interested parties are asked the same interview questions.

- 13.3 Applications shall be accepted from internal applicants who are not subject to a live formal disciplinary sanction. Applications from internal applicants who are subject to a capability action plan, to disciplinary proceedings, or to a live formal disciplinary sanction will be considered on their merits. The hiring manager will consult the relevant HR Business Partner before making a decision and will record the reasons. A move will not be refused solely because a process is ongoing, and where a move to a different role would be a reasonable adjustment for a disabled employee it will be given effect.

14. Acting Up

- 14.1 It is the responsibility of the Hiring Manager to determine the need for an acting up arrangement, usually in response to a temporary vacancy, absence, or project requirement. This assessment should involve consultation with your HR Business Partner.
- 14.2 The hiring manager must clearly communicate the acting up opportunity to all members of the team, outlining the reasons for the arrangement, the role's responsibilities, and the expected duration. This can help to manage expectations and encourage suitable candidates to apply.
- 14.3 Where more than one expression of interest is made, or there is more than one suitably qualified member of staff, hiring managers are advised to conduct a formal interview process ensuring fairness and transparency by ensuring all interested parties are asked the same interview questions. If there is only one expression of interest, it is the hiring manager's decision as to whether to conduct a formal interview process.

15. Equality and Diversity

- 15.1 HDC recruits based on ability and job requirements in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty Section 149 and the Equality Act 2010
- 15.2 The Equality and Diversity statement is included in all external advertisements and is available on HDC's careers page.
- 15.3 No applicant will be asked about pregnancy, or about an intention to have children, at any stage of the recruitment process. A conditional offer will not be withdrawn, and a start date will not be altered, because an applicant is pregnant or has notified an intention to take family leave.
- 15.4 HDC is committed to supporting disabled people and will actively promote opportunities for disabled applicants and employees in accordance with its commitments as a Disability Confident Employer.
- 15.5 HDC is committed to supporting care experienced people and will actively promote opportunities for care leavers in accordance with its commitments under the Care Leaver Covenant.

16. Employment Checks

- 16.1 The following checks are to be used to ensure suitability of all new colleagues, prior to commencement of employment at HDC.

- Proof of identity and right to work in the UK
 - Reference checks for two previous employers, or previous three years of employment, or character/education references if no employer references are available.
 - Occupational Health fit certificate.(Occupational health assessment, requested only after a conditional offer has been made).
 - Proof of qualifications (if relevant to the role)
 - Valid UK driving licence (if relevant to the role)
 - DBS (if relevant to the role)
 - Drug and Alcohol screening (if relevant to the role)
- 16.2 All candidates must have the proof of identity confirmed by the hiring manager and recruitment before they are offered employment. They must submit original documents (on the approved list) to prove their identity and their right to work in the UK. HDC does not hold a Sponsorship Licence and is unable to provide a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) or take over existing sponsorship.
- 16.3 Candidates are required to disclose any unspent criminal convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Possession of a criminal record does not necessarily preclude the candidate from employment. Information which has a bearing on the requirements of the post will normally be discussed with the candidate at interview. Where a criminal record is disclosed, the Council will consider its relevance to the specific role, the age and nature of the offence, and any evidence of rehabilitation, before reaching a decision. The candidate will be given the opportunity to provide context before any decision to withdraw an offer is taken.
- 16.4 If information given during the application process is found to be untrue, the offer of employment will be withdrawn.

17. English language

- 17.1 The Immigration Act 2016 created a duty for public sector employers to ensure that each person who works for them in a customer facing role speaks fluent English.
- 17.2 Fluency relates to an individual's ability to speak with confidence and accuracy, using accurate sentence structures and vocabulary, all without hesitation and appropriate to the situation in hand. It does not relate to regional accents, dialects, speech impediments or the tone of conversations.
- 17.3 The fluency standard will be applied only where the role genuinely requires it and will be assessed against the requirements of the role rather than against any particular manner of speech. Reasonable adjustments will be made for candidates whose disability affects speech. Complaints about the operation of the fluency duty may be made under the Council's corporate complaints procedure
- 17.4 The person specification for customer facing roles explains what our fluency standard is for those roles.
- 17.5 Job applicants will demonstrate their level of fluency by competently answering interview questions in English.

18. References

- 18.1 Employment references are required for each new colleague to cover the last two employers or previous three years of employment. One must be from their current or most recent employer unless suitable reason is given. References will be requested only after a conditional offer has been made, and will not be sought from a current employer without the candidate's written consent. The Council will seek factual references confirming dates of employment, job title and reason for leaving.
- 18.2 Where the candidate has no previous employment record, a reference from their school or other educational institution should be obtained where relevant. In exceptional circumstances, where no employment or education reference we will accept character references.
- 18.3 Where the candidate was self-employed, they will need to provide evidence that their business was properly conducted, i.e references from clients, bank manager, or accountant.
- 18.4 The recruitment team will take up references. If there are concerns about a reference, we will contact the referee for further information. If this is not possible or there is difficulty obtaining references, we will contact the hiring manager for authorisation to proceed without the required references.
- 18.5 If satisfactory references are not received within a reasonable timescale, the conditional offer of employment may be withdrawn.

19. Health

- 19.1 All employees at HDC are asked to complete an occupational health questionnaire via our occupational health provider. This is to ensure the employee is able to undertake all of the duties expected of them in line with the job requirements.
- 19.2 Successful applicants who share they are disabled or may require adjustments to their work or working environment may be referred to our Occupational Health provider. Where reasonable adjustments are agreed these must be recorded in writing using the adjustment passport. The candidate should also receive written confirmation of whatever adjustments have been agreed.
- 19.3 Where an occupational health report identifies a need for adjustments, the Council will consider and, where reasonable, implement them, and will record them using the Council's reasonable adjustments passport. A conditional offer will not be withdrawn on health or disability grounds unless the Council has first considered all reasonable adjustments, taken occupational health advice, discussed the position with the candidate, and recorded its reasons in writing. The candidate will be told of their right to raise the matter with the Head of HR and OD

20. Use of Agencies

- 20.1 In circumstances where there is deemed a business need, HDC shall use an agency to assist with finding the right candidate for a role.
- 20.2 Recruitment is responsible for all contact with the agencies and for negotiating the recruitment fees. Managers or other employees should have no contact with

agencies unless agreed by Recruitment and all enquiries from agencies should be re-directed to Recruitment. Equality and inclusion policies of all agencies shall be verified by Recruitment.

- 20.3 The Council will monitor the use of agency workers and will ensure that agency workers receive their entitlements under the Agency Workers Regulations 2010. Where an agency placement has continued for more than 12 months in a role which is not genuinely temporary, the Council will review whether the post should be established.