

17 March 2026

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PERFORMANCE AND APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

You are summoned to a meeting of the Performance and Appointments Committee which will be held in Council Chamber, Council Offices, Woodgreen, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 1NB on **Wednesday, 25 March 2026 at 4.00 pm.**



Giles Hughes
Chief Executive

To: Members of the Performance and Appointments Committee

Councillors: Andy Graham (Chair), Alaric Smith (Vice-Chair), Duncan Enright, Michele Mead and Liam Walker

Recording of Proceedings – The law allows the public proceedings of Council, Executive, and Committee Meetings to be recorded, which includes filming as well as audio-recording. Photography is also permitted. By participating in this meeting, you are consenting to be filmed.


As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record any part of the proceedings please let the Democratic Services officers know prior to the start of the meeting.

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**
To receive any apologies for absence.
2. **Declarations of Interest**
To receive any declarations of interest.
3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**
To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 4 February 2026.
4. **Human Resources Employment Policies (Pages 3 - 94)**
Purpose:
To update the Performance and Appointments Committee relating to the writing of new employment policies for West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC), (“the Council”). No changes have been made to the employee terms and conditions, only to clarify and enable policies to be used concurrently with employee relations matters, giving clarity and usability to both employees and managers alike.

Recommendation:
That the Performance and Appointments Committee Resolves to:
Agree the eleven Employment policies below and included in Annex A.
 - Agency Workers Policy and Procedures
 - Career Break Policy and Procedures
 - Carers Leave Policy and Procedures
 - Death in Service Policy and Procedure
 - Fixed Term Contract Policy and Procedure
 - Mediation Policy and Procedure (including Mediation Agreement Form)
 - Paternity and Neonatal Care Leave Policy and Procedure
 - Pay and Grading Principles Guidance
 - Redeployment Policy and Procedure
 - Work Experience Policy and Procedure
 - Working Abroad Policy and Procedure
5. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**
If Performance and Appointments Committee wishes to exclude the press and the public from the meeting during consideration of any of the items on the exempt from publication part of the agenda, it will be necessary for Committee to pass a resolution in accordance with the provisions of section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.
6. **Exempt Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 95 - 98)**

(END)

 WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and Date of Committee	PERFORMANCE AND APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE – 25th MARCH 2026
Subject	HUMAN RESOURCES EMPLOYMENT POLICIES
Wards Affected	Nil
Accountable Member	Councillor Andy Graham – Leader of the Council. Email: andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable Officer	Giles Hughes – Chief Executive. Email: giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk
Report Author	Kathryn Dowell – Strategic People Lead. Email: kathryn.dowell@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To update the Performance and Appointments Committee relating to the writing of new employment policies for West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC), ('the Council'). No changes have been made to the employee terms and conditions, only to clarify and enable policies to be used concurrently with employee relations matters, giving clarity and usability to both employees and managers alike.
Annex	Annex A – Updated Employment Policies
Recommendation	That the Performance and Appointments Committee Resolves to: Agree the eleven Employment policies below and included at Annex A. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency Workers Policy and Procedures • Career Break Policy and Procedures • Carers Leave Policy and Procedures • Death in Service Policy and Procedure • Fixed Term Contract Policy and Procedure • Mediation Policy and Procedure (incl Mediation Agreement Form) • Paternity and Neonatal Care Leave Policy and Procedure • Pay and Grading Principles Guidance • Redeployment Policy and Procedure • Work Experience Policy and Procedure • Working Abroad Policy and Procedure
Corporate Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Good Quality of Life For All; • Working Together for West Oxfordshire

Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	<p>Human Resources worked with Brightmine (previously XpertHR), the Trade Unions (where appropriate) and in accordance with current employment law and in line with the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Code (ACAS) in order to update the policies. This approach ensured that all the policies could be used simultaneously and there were cohesions to mitigate future risk.</p> <p>This report has been circulated for comments prior to the Performance and Appointments Committee to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Finance Services • Head of Governance and Regulatory Services • Head of Legal Services

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Following Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Publica transition to West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC), ('the Council'), it was recommended that the Council develop a refreshed suite of key employment policies. Some of these are newly drafted policies. All are fully aligned with legislation and the Council's current terms and conditions, to ensure they can be applied clearly and concurrently in employee relations cases.
- 1.2 No changes have been made to Council employee Terms and Conditions.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 These are the policies which apply to those employees directly employed by the Council including the statutory officers. These policies do not apply to Publica employees for which a separate suite of policies exist and have been created to ensure consistency in approach.
- 2.2 Human Resources (HR) have developed up to date, ACAS compliant, clear policies which will ensure transparency and consistency.
- 2.3 This review builds on the previous review of policies undertaken in 2023 ensuring no employment terms and conditions were altered which conflicted with the Councils existing terms.
- 2.4 Where appropriate the Strategic People Lead has consulted with the Council's Trade Union Representatives from UNISON and GMB.

3. MAIN POINTS

- 3.1 The review of the HR Policies was to ensure that the Council's policies reflected and complied with existing / new regulation and case law, reflected best practice and importantly were clear and concise to allow managers to implement them as and where necessary. Updating all policies together, ensures flow and for policies to be used in conjunction when complex cases arise, ensuring matters are dealt with in a timely fashion and thereby mitigating risk for the Council.
- 3.2 HR Policies provide legal protection for the Council. HR policies and procedures give guidance on a range of employment issues and how a wide range of issues should be handled.
- 3.3 HR Policies provide clear guidance that reflects employment law and regulations and can help avoid involvement from employment tribunal claims.
- 3.4 Even when a policy or procedure is not specifically required by law, employers often find it helpful to have a policy in place to provide clear guidance that reflects the legal framework for handling the issue in question and it also helps employees be clear about the Council's stance on a particular subject, setting clear expectations.
- 3.5 HR Policies play a key role in supporting fairness and consistency across the Council, as well as potentially helping to protect the Council against legal claims and costly exit payments.
- 3.6 HR Policies provide general and practical advice and guidance for managers and staff on a range of employment issues and the procedures give a step-by-step account of specific arrangements that apply in particular circumstances.

4. DELEGATED AUTHORITY

- 4.1 Employment legislation and case law can change on a yearly or bi-annual basis. Therefore, in order to maintain a current, up to date, and working set of HR policies, expediting changes to the suite of policies is key to ensure the Council is within the legal framework.

- 4.2 A three yearly policy review and revision is an important part of procedure management which needs to be carried out on a regular basis and in line with employment law updates.
- 4.3 The HR team continues to have Employment Legislation update training on this basis to ensure policies can be amended accordingly.
- 4.4 To ensure expedience, it was agreed that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Director of Governance and Regulatory Services as follows:
“Delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Director of Governance, to approve subsequent amendments to any West Oxfordshire District Council employment policies that may be necessary, in line with legal changes and best practice, to ensure the Council’s policies remain compliant.”
- 4.5 This was approved in November 2023 (CL.115)

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 5.1 Retaining existing, outdated policies places the Council at risk of challenge.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 HR was supported by Brightmind (previously XpertHR) and ACAS to develop a clean and clear set of policies that mitigate risk for the Council. This suite of policies is up to date and legally compliant.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Whilst there are no financial implications arising directly from this report, it is important that the Council’s HR policies are reviewed regularly to ensure they comply with relevant legislation and best practice guidance.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Adopting up to date policies will help the Council manage employees more effectively. In addition, if subject to any legal action, will help to demonstrate that the Council has complied with the law.

9. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 By not updating and implementing the new suite of policies, the Council may fail to comply with new laws and regulations and leave itself exposed to costly employment law cases.

10. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 10.1 Each employment policy has been assessed to confirm alignment with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. These policies are applied uniformly to all employees across the Council.

11. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are none arising.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1 Nil

(END)

New Employment Policies with this suite
Agency Workers Policy and Procedures
Career Break Policy and Procedures
Carers Leave Policy and Procedures
Death in Service Policy and Procedure
Fixed Term Contract Policy and Procedure
Mediation Policy and Procedure (incl Mediation Agreement Form)
Paternity and Neonatal Care Leave Policy and Procedure
Pay and Grading Principles Guidance
Redeployment Policy and Procedure
Work Experience Policy and Procedure
Working Abroad Policy and Procedure

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Agency Workers Policy and Procedure

Introduction

West Oxfordshire District Council ('the Council') prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees, to give their best.

The Council is committed to ensuring that we deliver excellent services to our residents, communities and businesses at all times. We will, where necessary, use temporary agency workers to help to fulfil this demand and maintain the highest standards of service.

This policy applies to all individuals responsible for hiring temporary agency workers and to all temporary agency staff while they are on assignment with the Council.

The Agency Workers Policy and Procedure ('the Policy') does not form part of your Contract of Employment and we reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time.

Definition of an agency worker

An agency worker is an individual who:

- Has a contract with an employment agency or employment business, but
- Works temporarily under the supervision and direction of a hirer (for example, the Council).
- Agency workers are sometimes referred to as temporary agency workers, temps, or agency staff. They are not employees of the hirer, and their contractual relationship is with the agency supplying them.

Under the Agency Workers Regulations 2010, an agency worker is someone who:

- Is supplied by an agency to work temporarily for a hirer
- Is paid by the agency (not the hirer)
- Works under the hirer's supervision and direction
- Is not genuinely self-employed and not working as part of a managed service contract

When agency workers will be used

The Council will use temporary agency workers only to provide additional resources and allow for flexibility on a short-term basis from time to time. We will hire temporary agency workers from carefully selected agencies to assist in relation to:

- occasional work, such as one-off projects

- sudden increases in demand for our services and
- the absence of employees, for example due to holiday or sickness.

Process for hiring agency workers

Where additional resources are required, the hiring manager should submit a request to recruit via the Applicant Tracking System (ATS) for approval following input from Finance and Human Resources. No agency worker will be hired without the appropriate written approval.

In the written request for additional resources, the hiring manager must set out the:

- agency worker's intended start date;
- approximate length of the assignment;
- guaranteed hours of the assignment (if they will be required to regularly work consistent hours);
- reason why additional resources are required;
- appropriate rate of pay;
- job description; and
- names of any preferred individual, if a choice of workers is offered by the agency.

Once approval has been given to proceed, the hiring manager, must liaise and negotiate with the relevant agency to secure the best commercial rate.

Hiring managers must liaise with Human Resources regarding using an agency to provide an agency worker before they commence the process. The Recruitment Team are able to advise on appropriate agencies. There are agreed terms and non-compliance by hiring managers may result in the agencies requesting penalty clauses be enacted against us if they were not made aware of roles.

It is the responsibility of all hiring managers to ensure compliance with this process and if they have any queries, to speak with Human Resources or the Recruitment Team in the first instance.

From day one of an assignment

Induction

Agency workers will receive an induction to the Council by the line manager and will be issued with their IT equipment.

Access to collective facilities

All agency workers will be given the same access to the Council's collective facilities and amenities as a comparable worker who is recruited directly. This access will be given from the first day of the agency worker's assignment with the Council. The line manager will provide details to agency workers of our facilities on the first day of their assignment. Agency workers will have access to:

- all toilet and shower facilities
- the employee Staff Room;
- first aid room and
- car parking.

Information on relevant vacancies

From day one of an assignment with us, agency workers will be able to access on the Council portal, information about any relevant job vacancies within the Council.

We will provide information about relevant vacancies via the Council employee portal. This will be explained to agency workers on their first day of an assignment with the Council.

After 12 weeks of an assignment

Equal treatment

Once an agency worker has completed 12 weeks with the Council in the same role, they will be entitled to the same basic working and employment conditions that would apply to employees or workers who have been directly recruited to the same job. This includes pay, duration of working time, rest periods and breaks, and annual leave. We will liaise with the agency to ensure that the agency worker receives equal treatment.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that the agency worker is achieving a satisfactory performance and acceptable level of attendance. Any concerns or issues will be raised by the manager with the agency under whom the agency worker is employed.

Pay

All agency workers will be entitled to the same basic pay to which an employee or worker who has been directly recruited to the same job would be entitled. This includes pro-rated salary and where applicable overtime pay.

Pension

The Council will not enrol the agency worker into the Local Government Pension Scheme. The agency with whom the agency worker is registered, is now required to offer access to a workplace pension scheme to workers on their books. All agency workers between 22 and State Pension Age and earning over the “earnings threshold” of £10,000 should be 'auto-enrolled' into a workplace pension scheme.

Annual leave

Agency workers will be entitled to the same paid annual leave to which an employee or worker who is recruited directly to the same job would be entitled. This leave entitlement will be pro-rated to the length of the assignment. The line manager will liaise with Human Resources for the leave entitlement details and advise the agency accordingly.

Working hours

Agency workers will work the same basic working hours as an employee or worker who is recruited directly to the same job unless advised otherwise. The line manager is responsible for ensuring that the agency worker records their hours correctly and checks them before submitting to the agency.

Rest periods

Agency workers will be entitled to the same rest periods and breaks to which an employee or worker who is recruited directly to the same job would be entitled. At least half an hour must be taken for lunch.

Information for agency workers

Facilities and relevant vacancies

An agency worker who believes that they have not been provided with equal access to collective facilities or relevant vacancies may make a written request to their line manager in the first instance for information about such access.

Within 28 days of receiving such a request, the line manager will provide the agency worker in writing with the:

- relevant information about access to collective facilities and/or access to vacancies; and
- reasons for the treatment of the agency worker in relation to access to collective facilities and/or access to vacancies.

Equal treatment

An agency worker who believes that they may not have been treated equally in respect of basic employment and working conditions (after 12 weeks in the same assignment) should, in the first instance, make a written request to their agency for further information. The agency is required to provide a written statement to the agency worker setting out the relevant information relating to the basic working and employment conditions of the Council's employees and workers. The agency has to do this within 28 days of receiving the request.

If the agency worker has not been provided with a statement from their agency within 30 days of making the request, they can make a written request to the Council for a statement setting out the relevant information relating to the basic working and employment conditions of the Council's employees and workers.

In these circumstances, the Council will provide a written statement within 28 days of receiving the agency worker's request containing information relating to the relevant basic working and employment conditions of the Council's employees.

Moving agency workers to new assignments/roles

If a manager requires an agency worker to take on a new assignment within the Council or a manager is re-engaging an agency worker who has been used before, the manager should seek prior approval from the Senior Leadership Team.

If the agency worker is simply undertaking a new assignment within the same role, the agency worker's qualifying period will continue to accrue. The agency worker will be deemed to be continuing to work in the same role unless:

- the work or duties that make up the new role (or the main part of it) are substantially different from the work or duties that made up the previous role (or the main part of it); and
- the agency has informed the agency worker in writing of the type of work the agency worker will be required to do in the new role.

If the new assignment is a different role or there is a break of more than six weeks between assignments, the agency worker's qualifying period will accrue from the start date of the new assignment for the purposes of calculating the agency worker's qualifying period. However, this is subject to certain exceptions (refer to [Absences](#) and [Family-friendly rights](#) sections below). Any new assignment will need to be approved on the ATS.

The hiring manager will notify the agency if the agency worker's work or duties have changed and this information must be passed to the agency worker. It will be up to the agency to provide the agency worker in writing with:

- notification that the role is a new one that is substantially different from the previous role;
- a description of the new role; and
- an explanation that the qualifying period will start again.

If concerns arise with the agency workers conduct or performance, the line manager will speak to Human Resources for advice in the first instance and then where necessary, address the conduct or performance concerns directly with the agency as the agency worker's employer.

If an agency worker has a concern or wishes to make a complaint, they should contact their agency to outline their concerns and the agency will then contact the line manager or Human Resources regarding the Councils process to handle this.

For either an extension of a current assignment or the termination of a current assignment the line manager should speak to Human Resources to seek advice on the process to follow and the communication with the agency who directly employs the agency worker.

Absences

There are exceptions where a break of more than six weeks between assignments "pauses" the qualifying period (i.e. the qualifying period does not continue but picks up where it left off when the agency worker returns). Reasons for the agency worker's qualifying period to "pause" include that they have a break:

- of up to 28 weeks because they are incapable of work due to sickness or injury;
- for the purpose of taking annual leave or any other leave to which they are entitled;
- of up to 28 calendar weeks to allow them to perform jury service; or
- caused by industrial action, for example a strike within the Council.

Family-friendly rights

The agency worker's 12-week qualifying period continues to run (i.e., it continues to accrue during the absence) if the break is due to pregnancy, childbirth or maternity, and the absence occurs during pregnancy or up to 26 weeks after childbirth. This includes, for example, pregnancy-related sickness absence or absence because there is a health and safety reason why the agency worker cannot carry out the role.

The qualifying period also continues to run during any breaks that occur because the agency worker is taking maternity leave, adoption leave or paternity leave from the agency.

If an agency worker is pregnant, has given birth within the previous six months, or is breastfeeding, they should inform both their agency and the Council in writing as soon as possible. The Council will carry out a risk assessment for any agency worker in these circumstances.

If any potential health and safety risk is identified, the Council will, where possible, make reasonable adjustments to the role. If it is not possible to remove the risk through adjustments, the Council will inform the agency, and the agency should seek suitable alternative work for the agency worker.

Antenatal Appointments

An agency worker who has completed 12 weeks in the same assignment with the Council is entitled to take paid time off to attend antenatal appointments. This entitlement applies to pregnant agency workers and to agency workers who are the partner of a pregnant woman (or the intended parent in a surrogacy arrangement).

The time off must be for an appointment that has been recommended by a registered medical practitioner, midwife or nurse. The agency worker may be asked to provide evidence of the appointment and a declaration that the time off is for antenatal care.

Adoption Appointments

An agency worker who has completed 12 weeks with the Council in the same assignment is entitled to take paid time off to attend adoption appointments. Where a couple are jointly adopting a child, they may choose which partner will take paid time off for up to five appointments, and which partner will take unpaid time off for up to two appointments. The appointment must be arranged by, or at the request of, the adoption agency and must take place before the date of placement.

In summary:

Right now, agency workers have:

Day one

- Access to facilities
- Access to job vacancies
- Day-one paternity leave
- Day-one parental leave
- Neonatal care leave
- Shared parental leave (in most cases)

After 12 weeks

- Equal pay and annual leave
- Paid antenatal appointments
- Paid/unpaid adoption appointments
- Pregnancy-related protections

Responsibility

The Strategic People Lead has overall responsibility for ensuring that agency workers receive the correct access to collective employee facilities, information on vacancies and other entitlements under this policy.

However, it is the responsibility of all managers to ensure that this policy is implemented.

Version Control:	
Document Name:	Agency Workers Policy and Procedure
Version:	1.0
Responsible Officer:	Strategic People Lead
Approved by:	Performance and Appointments Committee
Date First Approved:	25 th March 2026
Next Review Date	March 2029
Retention Period:	This Policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier if new legislation requires it.

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Career Break Policy and Procedure

Introduction

This document sets out West Oxfordshire District Council's ('the Council') policy for employees who wish to be considered for a career break or "sabbatical." Employees who wish to take a break from their career and who intend to resume their career at a later date, may apply to participate in this scheme. The most common reasons to take a career break tend to be:

- Caring responsibilities, such as looking after children, partners or other dependants.
- To travel on a long-term basis.
- To study full time or to pursue another development opportunity.
- To take part in community projects and voluntary work.

A career break is a period of unpaid leave from work. All requests will be given serious consideration. However, there is not an automatic right to take a career break and the needs of the Service will be paramount. Any recent performance/absence difficulties would have to be resolved before a career break was agreed.

A career break will be a minimum of three months and a maximum of 12 months. A career break is an arrangement for the purposes of Section 213(3) (c) of the Employment Rights Act 1996 and will not be regarded as having broken the employee's continuity of service. The Council will use its best endeavours to reinstate the employee into the same or a similar post on the same terms and conditions. However, it is possible that with changes in legislation, Council requirements and technological developments that employee needs may be affected from time to time which may result in restructuring exercises, redeployments and redundancies.

A career break scheme has the following benefits for the Council:

- It can help retain valuable and skilled employees
- It can revitalise employees by allowing a prolonged period of intensive training or personal development which can be beneficial to performance when the person returns
- It reinforces the Council's commitment to work/life balance
- It can provide development opportunities for other employees who may be able to cover for the absent post holder

All decisions regarding career break applications will be made in accordance with the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, ensuring fair and consistent treatment for all employees regardless of background or personal circumstances.

Scope

The Career Break Policy and Procedure ('The Policy') applies to employees employed by the Council. It does not apply to workers, contractors, consultants or any self-employed individuals working for the Council.

Eligibility

The Policy is available to all permanent employees both full-time and part-time, who have been employed by the Council for two years or more. Acceptance will be entirely at the discretion of the Senior Leadership Team in consultation with HR.

Employees who are the subject of a disciplinary investigation, have a current warning on their file or have issues being dealt with under the capability procedure will not usually be granted a career break.

Special Leave in the Time Off Guidance Policy which may be more appropriate where the break required is of a short duration.

Affect On Pay and Benefits

All pay and benefits will be suspended from the start of the career break and will be reactivated on return to work i.e. salary and incremental benefits, holiday entitlement and sick pay. The employee will not receive any salary progression during the career break but will receive any annual cost of living increases. Any changes to terms and conditions agreed as part of the National Conditions of Service framework which may occur during the absence, will be incorporated into the employees Contract of Employment.

Holiday Entitlement

Employees are encouraged to take all outstanding leave prior to commencing a career break. However, if for operational issues this is not possible, any remaining leave will be paid in the employee's final salary. Employees will not accrue annual leave whilst on a career break.

Pension

If the employee is a member of the Local Government Pension scheme when they commence a career break, they must pay the first 30 days pension contributions. They then have a number of options:

1. Employees can pay the missing pension contributions as a lump sum from their first month's salary on their return to work, or in several monthly instalments until the missing months pension contributions are paid in full. This will ensure that continual service is maintained for pension purposes.
2. Employees can choose not to pay pension contributions throughout the duration of the career break. If this is the case, the last day of pensionable service will be the day before the career break commences.
3. Employees can choose not to pay pension contributions for the period of unpaid leave but begin paying them on their return to work. However, this will be a break in the employee's pensionable service. Deferring pension contributions may have an effect on employees death in service benefits.

If the employee does not return to work for the Council after the career break, they will have two options available:

1. Employees are able to pay their pension payments for the months they had unpaid leave. This will enable them to buy back their pensionable service.
2. Employees can choose not to pay pension contributions for the months they have been on a career break. In these circumstances the last day of pensionable service will be the day before the career break commences.

Sickness

Employees will not be entitled to sick pay whilst on a career break. In some circumstances employees may also be expected to complete a health questionnaire in order that medical clearance can be obtained from our Occupational Health provider, prior to returning. Under exceptional circumstances, if an employee is unable to return to work due to sickness, the Council may in its discretion, withhold the payment of sick pay.

Outstanding Monies Owed to The Council

Any monies owed to the Council must be repaid prior to commencing a career break. This includes any of the following, however the list is not exhaustive:

- Car loan
- Bike loan
- Training Fees

Applying For a Career Break

Employees must initially complete the Application for a Career Break form at **Appendix 1** and discuss their plans with their Line Manager and Service Head.



They will then consider the request in consultation with the Director and HR. The Head of Service and Director will consider the request and determine how the employees work may be covered during the proposed career break. Temporary staff may be recruited to cover the employee's absence.



Acceptance onto the scheme will be entirely at the discretion of the Senior Leadership Team in consultation with the Strategic People Lead.
The decision will normally be given to the employee within 21 days of receipt of the written request.

Potential outcomes

There are a few potential outcomes that may follow a decision which the employee will be informed of in writing, either;

1. The application may be accepted and approved as requested.
2. The application may be accepted with adjustments i.e. length of time or postponement to be able to fulfil business requirements.
3. The application may be denied.

Can an employee apply for a career break more than once?

Employees may apply for a career break more than once during their employment. However, only one application every 3 years will be considered. Each application will be assessed independently and must meet the eligibility criteria at the time of submission.

What if an employee would like to request an extension?

An employee may request an extension to a career break, provided the total duration does not exceed the maximum limit of 12 months. Any extension request must be submitted in writing to the employee's line manager and the Strategic People Lead at least 8 weeks before the original return date for consideration. Approval will depend on service needs and employee arrangements. Extensions are not guaranteed and will be considered on a case-by-case basis at the Council's discretion.

Keeping In Touch

Employees have a duty to maintain contact and to notify the Council of any changes in their circumstances relevant to the career break arrangements. Employees will be expected to maintain contact with their Service in order to update their knowledge and skills and to attend any appropriate training and refresher courses if possible. The line manager will be expected to keep in touch with the employee, ideally on a quarterly basis (or a monthly basis if the career break is only for three months.) This will enable the employee to stay in touch with developments and changes within the Service and the Council.

If direct communication is not possible due to the nature of the career break, other avenues should be explored such as updates via e-mail. The Council reserves the right at its absolute discretion to terminate a career break in the event of an emergency.

What happens if an employee becomes pregnant during the career break?

If an employee becomes pregnant during a career break, the employee should notify Human Resources as soon as possible. The employee may be entitled to maternity leave and pay depending on their continuity of service and eligibility under the Local Government terms. The employee's career break may be paused or adjusted to accommodate maternity leave, and Human Resources will work with the employee to ensure their rights are protected and return to work is managed appropriately.

Terminating The Agreement

The Council reserves the right to terminate the career break agreement if the employee fails to meet the conditions of the Policy. This will apply especially where an employee moves away and cannot fulfil the agreed training / refresher requirements.

The employee may terminate the agreement at any time if their circumstances change and they are no longer able to comply with the conditions of the scheme. Any such decision should be submitted in writing to the Strategic People Lead. All career breaks will have a specified start and end date. If the employee wishes to return to work at an earlier date, they must write to the Strategic People Lead and give 4 weeks' notice of their intention to return. The return date may be delayed if managers have to give temporary staff notice to leave.

Paid Work During a Career Break

It will be a general condition of the Policy that employees on it will not undertake paid work elsewhere, unless they have received written consent from the Council. Failure to receive written approval may result in the termination of the agreement.

Volunteering During a Career Break

An employee may undertake voluntary work without prior approval, provided it does not conflict with Council interests. A declaration can be made to HR, to ensure transparency and protects both the employee and the Council from potential conflicts of interest.

Phased Return To Work

To assist the employee to settle into a working routine, especially after a 12-month career break, a phased return may be necessary. This will involve the employee returning on reduced hours and slowly increasing until they are working the number of hours contracted. This will need to be agreed by the Head of Service and HR. The employee's pay will be reduced according to the hours worked during this arrangement.

In some cases, the Council may feel it would be mutually beneficial to refer the employee to occupational health to ensure the right support is in place ready for their return to work. This will be discussed with you by your line manager.

Return To Work Induction

On the employee's return to work, the line manager will hold an induction session with the employee. This will enable them to catch up on current issues, changes and workload. The induction will also cover issues such as fire procedures. Line managers should use the induction checklist for new starters and cover all points.

Appeals

Employees have the right of appeal if a request for a career break is refused. This should be sent within 5 working days of the refusal, in writing to the Director and Strategic People Lead. The Senior Leadership Team in consultation with Human Resources will consider both the employee's case and the management's case and make a decision.

The employee will be notified in writing of the decision within 14 days of the Director receiving the written appeal and the decision will be final. There is no further right of appeal against this decision. However, the employee is eligible to re-apply for a career break in the future, on the basis of one application per year.

Appendix I: Application For a Career Break

Name	
Service	
Job Title	
Proposed start date for career break	
Proposed end date for career break	
Total months taken for career break	
Reason for career break	

<p>Pension Contributions During Career Break</p> <p>In preparation, if your application is accepted, please select the pension contribution option you prefer below.</p>		
Option 1a	I choose to pay the missing pension contributions as a lump sum from my first month's salary on my return to work. I understand that this will ensure that continual service is maintained for pension purposes.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Option 1b	I choose to pay the missing pension contributions from my salary on my return to work in several monthly instalments until the missing months pension contributions are paid in full. I understand that this will ensure that continual service is maintained for pension purposes.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Option 2	I choose not to pay pension contributions throughout the duration of the career break. I understand, the last day of pensionable service will be the day before the career break commences.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Option 3	I choose not to pay pension contributions for the period of unpaid leave but begin paying them on my return to work. However, I understand this will be a break in my pensionable service and deferring my pension contributions may have an effect on my death in service benefits.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Declaration

I have read and understand and accept the terms and conditions of the Career Break Policy and Procedure. I understand that all my terms and conditions of employment will cease until I return to work after my career break.

Signature	
Date	

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Carers Leave Policy and Procedure

Introduction

West Oxfordshire District Council ('the Council') prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees, to give their best.

The Carers Leave Policy and Procedure ('the Policy') sets out the statutory right of employees to carer's leave to provide or arrange care for a dependant with a long-term care need, and other support that we offer to combine work with care.

We recognise the challenges that carers face while trying to balance the demands of caring, work, and looking after their own health. As a Council, we are committed to doing what we can to help ensure the health and wellbeing of employees with caring responsibilities is looked after.

The Policy does not form part of the employees Contract of Employment, and the Council reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time.

Scope

This Policy applies to employees employed by the Council. It does not apply to workers, contractors, consultants or any self-employed individuals working for the Council.

A carer is anyone with caring responsibilities who provides care, assistance and support to any other individual who may be seriously ill or unable to care for themselves. An employee may acquire caring responsibilities overnight or they may develop over time.

Carers might find it difficult to distinguish their caring role from the personal relationship they have with the individual they are caring for, be it a relationship with a spouse, civil partner, child, parent, or friend. Therefore, some employees may not immediately identify themselves as a carer.

The activities that carers undertake are wide ranging, including but not limited to:

- Help with personal care
- Help with mobility
- Managing medication
- Practical household tasks
- Emotional support
- Help with financial matters or administration

Requesting support

The Council recognise that caring can be unpredictable, emotionally taxing, and a topic that not everyone finds easy to talk about. However, the Council encourage employees to speak with their line manager about any particular issues that they are experiencing to ensure that employees are provided with the right support.

Although employees are not required to share evidence or the details of who they care for and their needs, being as open as possible about their caring responsibilities helps the Council to explore how we can support employees with any challenges they are facing. If for any reason employees are unable to approach their line manager, they can speak to Human Resources.

Any information disclosed by employees during discussions with their line manager or Human Resources will be treated sensitively and in strict confidence.

Entitlement to carer's leave

Whatever an employee's length of service, they have a statutory right to take carer's leave to provide or arrange care for a dependant if they have a long-term care need.

In the context of statutory carer's leave, a dependant can include:

- Your husband, wife, civil partner, partner, child or parent
- Any person who lives in the same household as you (other than as a lodger, tenant, boarder or employee)
- Any other person who would reasonably rely on the employee to provide or arrange care, such as an elderly neighbour

A dependant has a long-term care need if they have any of the following:

- An illness or injury (whether physical or mental) that requires, or is likely to require, care for at least 3 months
- A disability as defined under the Equality Act 2010
- Require care for a reason connected to their old age

This statutory right to carer's leave applies to a wide range of caring situations, but excludes general childcare, except where the employee's child meets the definition of a dependant with a long-term care need.

What carer's leave can be used for

Examples of when carer's leave could be used include, but is not limited to:

- Taking an employees disabled child to a hospital appointment
- Moving an employees parent who has dementia into a care home
- Accompanying a housebound dependant on a day trip
- Providing meals and company for an elderly neighbour while their main carer is away with work for the day

Amount of carer's leave an employee can take

The amount of carer's leave that an employee can take is up to one week in any 12-month rolling period.

A week of carer's leave is the same duration as an employee's normal working week, meaning that a full-time employee is entitled to 5 days' carer's leave in any 12-month rolling period. If an employee is contracted to work 3 days per week, for example, an employee will be entitled to 3 days of carer's leave, and so on.

An employee can take the leave in one continuous block, as individual days, or as half days.

If an employee is caring for more than one dependant, they do not have a separate entitlement to carer's leave for each dependant.

Notice to take carer's leave

If an employee needs to take carer's leave, they should submit their notice via email to their line manager and Human Resources.

The Council asks that employees give as much notice as possible when requesting carer's leave so that the Council can plan for the employee's absence. In any event, the employee must give notice in advance that is either twice the number of working days that the employee wishes to take as carer's leave, or 3 days, whichever is earlier.

If the employee is unable to give the correct notice, approval will be at the discretion of their manager. Alternatively, the employee may be able to request emergency leave under our Time off for Dependants' Policy.

All carer's leave must be approved in advance by the employee's manager.

Pay during carer's leave

Any leave taken as carer's leave is unpaid.

All other benefits will remain in place. For example, holiday entitlement continues to accrue and pension contributions will continue to be paid.

Postponing carer's leave

While every effort will be made to meet an employee's request, we may postpone a period of carer's leave if we consider that the absence will disrupt business operations.

If a decision is taken to postpone an employee's leave, their line manager will consult with the employee to find an alternative leave period within one month of the carer's leave period originally requested.

The line manager will write to the employee within 7 days of receiving the notice, clarifying the reason for the postponement and the revised dates on which the carer's leave can be taken.

Cancelling carer's leave

An employee can cancel carer's leave and take it at a different time as long as the employee let's their line manager know before their leave has started.

An employee cannot cancel any carer's leave that has already begun.

Our commitment to employees

Following carer's leave, an employee has the right to resume working in the same job as before on terms and conditions that are no less favourable than the terms that would have applied had the employee not been absent. The employee's continuity of employment is not affected.

The employee has the right not to be subjected to any detrimental treatment (including being unfairly penalised, disciplined or dismissed) because an employee has taken, sought to take, or made use of the benefits of carer's leave.

If an employee is told not to take or request carer's leave, or believes that they have been subjected to detrimental treatment because they have taken or requested carer's leave, they should report the matter to Human Resources. Alternatively, employees can raise this under the Council's Grievance Policy and Procedure.

Any such behaviour will not be tolerated and may be treated as a disciplinary offence.

Other types of leave

The statutory right to carer's leave is intended to be for planned and foreseen caring commitments. If an employee needs to take time off to manage an unexpected or sudden problem relating to a dependant and make any necessary longer-term caring arrangements, please see our Time off for Dependants' Policy and Procedure.

The Council recognises that employees may need a longer period off work that goes beyond the statutory entitlement to carer's leave under this Policy. In such cases, the Council may agree for employees to take the time off work as annual leave.

The Council realises that flexible working can help navigate the challenges of caring while working. The Council enables a wide range of flexible working practices within the workplace. If an employee feels that they would benefit from a change to their working arrangements to help balance their work and caring responsibilities, the Council encourages them to look at the Flexible Working Policy and Procedure.

If employees feel that they would benefit from a temporary change to their working arrangement on an ad hoc basis, the employee should discuss and agree this with their line manager.

External sources of help

There are various organisations that provide help and support to carers, including:

- [Carers UK](#), which provides help and advice for carers on employment rights, benefits and tax credits, assessments, and other practical matters for carers
- the [NHS website](#), which provides a wealth of information and advice for carers
- [Grace Care Consulting](#), which provides advice and support on care, special needs and neurodiversity
- [Age UK](#) and [Independent Age](#), which offer information and support to anyone providing informal unpaid care to an older person through a range of local services
- [Contact a Family](#), which provides support, advice and information to families with disabled children
- [Carers Trust](#), which works with other organisations to provide access for carers to breaks, information, advice, education, training and employment opportunities

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Death in Service Policy and Procedure

Introduction

The death of an employee during service at West Oxfordshire District Council ('the Council') is a deeply distressing event for their family, colleagues, and the Council. It is essential that such situations are handled with compassion, dignity, and efficiency, while ensuring all legal, procedural, and contractual obligations are met.

The Death in Service Policy and Procedure ('the Policy') sets out the approach to be followed by the Council in the event of the death of an employee during their employment. It outlines the responsibilities of managers and Human Resources and the support available to the employee's family and colleagues, and the arrangements for managing pay, pension, and other benefits.

The Council is committed to treating each case with sensitivity and respect, ensuring that bereaved families receive appropriate support and that employees are informed and supported through a coordinated and respectful process.

Scope

This Policy applies to all employees of the Council, including those on permanent, temporary, and fixed-term contracts, regardless of grade or working hours, who are in active service at the time of death.

It does not apply to:

- Contractors, agency workers, or consultants
- Former employees which should be reported to the Pensions Team at Oxfordshire County Council
- Elected members (who are covered by separate provisions)

This Policy covers:

- Internal procedures to be followed upon the death of an employee
- Support for the employee's family or next of kin
- Communication with employee's and external stakeholders
- Administration of pay, pension, and death-in-service benefits
- Consideration of memorials or tributes where appropriate

The Policy is intended to ensure a consistent, compassionate, and professional response to death in service situations within a local government context.

Being Notified About the Death of a Colleague

There are several ways in which the Council may be informed of the death of a colleague. This information may come from:

- The employee's family or next of kin, who may contact the Council directly
- Another employee or close colleague who was aware of the situation
- External authorities, such as the police or emergency services, particularly in the event of a sudden or catastrophic incident (e.g. road traffic collision or natural disaster)
- Routine absence follow-up, where an employee fails to attend work without explanation, prompting contact with the individual or their next of kin

It is essential that all employees ensure their emergency contact and next of kin details are kept up to date with Human Resources, to enable prompt and appropriate communication in such circumstances.

The death of a colleague may be:

- Sudden and unexpected, causing significant shock to teams
- The result of a known long-term illness, where some employees may have been aware of the situation in advance

Regardless of the circumstances, managers must act with discretion, empathy, and professionalism. While every case will be different, the Council expects that certain key steps should be taken to ensure a respectful and coordinated response. These are set out in the sections that follow.

Who to Notify Within the Council

When the Council is informed of the death of an employee, the person receiving the information must immediately notify both:

- A member of Human Resources, and
- The line manager of the deceased colleague

Human Resources will coordinate the internal response and ensure that the following individuals and teams are notified as appropriate:

- The relevant Director, who will inform the Chief Executive
- Human Resources will notify:
 - The HR Support Centre including Payroll
- The Health and Safety Business Partner (if the death occurred in connection with work, or there are any health and safety considerations)
- The relevant Trade Union(s), if the employee was a member

The process for managing internal and external communications, is set out in the sections below.

Informing direct colleagues

In the event of the death of a colleague, clear, compassionate, and timely communication is essential. We should also ensure the wishes of the family are considered as a priority unless communication is required for critical business delivery reasons.

Internal Notification

The Director or Head of Service (as appropriate) should take responsibility for informing those closest to the deceased, typically their immediate team, as promptly and sensitively as possible so they hear it first hand and can be offered support. Where appropriate, employees affected by the death should be reminded of the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and other support services available to them.

Employee Assistance Programme

All employees have access to free, confidential counselling and wellbeing services through the Council's EAP provider.

- Health Assured
 - Call: 0800 028 0199
 - Visit: <https://wisdom.healthassured.org>
 - MHA312725

In addition, support is available through Medicash via the employee portal:

- 24/7 Health & Stress Support Line
 - Call: 0151 702 0265
 - Online: <https://www.medicash.org/customer-service/>

Managers should encourage affected employees to make use of these services, particularly those who were close to the colleague or are struggling with grief.

Social Media and Public Communications

Human Resources and the Communications Team will work with the Director/ Head of Service to agree an approach to informing the wider Council about the death. Each scenario will be different, and care should be given to the wishes of the family and the impact on colleagues.

The use of social media to share or confirm the death of an employee is strongly discouraged, unless it has been formally agreed in advance with the family or next of kin, and approved by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Human Resources.

All employees are reminded that:

- Communications relating to a colleague's death should be handled with discretion, sensitivity, and professionalism
- No information should be shared publicly, including via social media, internal platforms, or messaging groups, unless the family's explicit wishes have been confirmed
- The privacy of the deceased and their family must be respected at all times

If there is any doubt about what can be shared, or how to respond to public or employee enquiries, employees must consult Human Resources for advice before making any statement.

The Council's Communications Team may support official external communications where appropriate, in coordination with Human Resources and SLT.

Funeral Attendance of a Colleague

The Council recognises the importance of supporting employees during times of loss and bereavement. Where appropriate, employees may wish to attend the funeral or memorial service of a deceased colleague to pay their respects and show support.

Time Off

- Employees will be granted reasonable paid time off to attend the funeral or memorial service of a colleague.
- Employees should seek approval from their line manager in advance and refer to the Council's Compassionate Leave Policy and Procedure for guidance on time off entitlements.
- In cases where additional time off is required, managers may consider granting unpaid leave or annual leave at their discretion, taking into account individual circumstances.

Representation at the Funeral

- Unless the family or next of kin express otherwise, it is customary for close work colleagues and/or a senior representative of the Council (such as a line manager or director) to attend the funeral or memorial service on behalf of the Council.

Supporting Employees

- Managers should be sensitive to the needs of employees who may find attending the funeral difficult and offer appropriate support and flexibility.
- Employees experiencing grief or distress are encouraged to make use of the Council's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and wellbeing services.

Covering the Deceased Employee's Duties

The Council recognises that the period following the death of a colleague can be an especially difficult time for employees.

Nevertheless, it is important for management to act promptly to ensure that the deceased employee's duties are covered. This helps to provide clarity and stability for the team and ensures the Council can continue to operate effectively without unnecessary disruption.

- If the employee was already on sick leave, their duties may already be covered by another employee
- If not, management will temporarily reassign the deceased employee's responsibilities to existing team members or consider engaging temporary support, such as agency staff, until a permanent replacement is appointed.
- Management should aim to balance operational needs with sensitivity to the emotional wellbeing of the team during this time.

Informing Third Parties of the Death of an Employee

The Senior Leadership Team, in consultation with Human Resources, must ensure that the wishes of the deceased employee's family or next of kin are fully considered when deciding how and when to notify third parties of the employee's death.

Third parties may include:

- Fellow employees outside the immediate team
- Customers, clients, or service users
- External partners, suppliers, or other contacts who had regular dealings with the employee

It is the responsibility of the employee's line manager supported by Human Resources to communicate with these third parties sensitively and appropriately, respecting confidentiality and the family's preferences.

Making Final Salary Payments

Human Resources and Payroll will work together to determine any outstanding monies owed to the deceased employee. This includes:

- Basic salary up to the date of death
- Any other accrued remuneration
- Payment for any accrued but untaken holiday entitlement

Payments will be made to the deceased employee's next of kin or, if no next of kin is identified or there is a dispute, to the deceased employee's estate.

Before making any payments, Human Resources must obtain formal proof that the individual requesting payment is the deceased's personal representative (usually the executor of the will) or next of kin. Payments should not be made to the first family member who requests them without this verification. A receipt should be obtained on behalf of the estate.

Payroll will complete a P45 form for the employee, clearly indicating that the employee has died.

The Senior Leadership Team, in consultation with Human Resources, will consider whether any outstanding debts owed by the deceased to the Council (for example, loan repayments) should be deducted from the final salary payment.

Payroll must ensure that any correspondence sent to the family or next of kin, such as payslips or forms, is not addressed to the deceased employee.

Other Payments Due on the Death of an Employee

If the deceased employee was an active member of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), their surviving spouse, civil partner, or other dependents may be entitled to receive payments or benefits under the scheme.

- In such cases, a death certificate will be required as part of the claim process.
- Human Resources will liaise with the family or next of kin to request the necessary documents, including the death certificate.
- The Pension Team at the administering authority will also contact the next of kin directly to request the death certificate if it has not already been provided to Council Payroll.

Other Practical Issues Following the Death of an Employee

Following the death of an employee, there are several practical matters that need to be managed with sensitivity and care:

- Human Resources should consult with the deceased's family or next of kin to determine whether they wish to personally pack the employee's belongings or would prefer a close colleague to do so on their behalf.
- The Line Manager or Head of Service will complete a leavers form and, in coordination with IT Services, ensure the employee is deregistered from all Council systems and relevant contact lists (e.g., internal directories, websites, phone lists). Computer files will be securely held and kept confidential until instructions are received regarding their deletion.
- Human Resources will notify all relevant internal departments and external organisations, such as trade unions, of the employee's death. This will help prevent the family or next of kin from receiving employment-related correspondence addressed to the deceased.
- In cases of death occurring at the Council or where circumstances suggest an investigation is appropriate, the Health and Safety Business Partner will liaise with the Council to consider initiating an internal enquiry.
- For deaths related to incidents with potential legal or insurance implications, the Health and Safety Business Partner will coordinate with the Council's insurance providers and legal advisors. Copies of all relevant incident reports and investigations should be promptly forwarded to the Health and Safety Business Partner.
- Human Resources will update the employee's personnel records to ensure that no inappropriate contact is made after their death.

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Fixed Term Contract Policy and Guidance

Introduction

Within West Oxfordshire District Council (the 'Council'), the Fixed Term Contract Policy and Guidance ('the Policy') provides guidance on the use, management, and conclusion of Fixed-Term Contracts (FTCs) within the Council. It ensures compliance with relevant employment legislation and promotes fair and consistent treatment of employees engaged on a fixed-term basis.

FTCs play an important role in supporting operational flexibility, covering temporary needs such as project work, maternity leave, or specific funding arrangements. However, it is essential that employees on FTCs are treated fairly and that their employment rights are recognised and upheld throughout the duration of their contract.

This Policy sets out:

- The conditions under which FTC's may be used,
- The entitlements of fixed-term employees,
- The process followed at the conclusion of an FTC, and
- The circumstances under which redundancy or redeployment may apply.

The Council is committed to managing FTCs responsibly and in accordance with relevant employment law, including protection against less favourable treatment and provisions relating to redundancy and continuity of service.

Scope

This Policy applies to:

- All employees engaged on FTC's, regardless of service, role, or grade.
- Managers and Human Resources are responsible for initiating, managing, or concluding FTCs.

It covers:

- The appropriate use and management of fixed-term employment,
- Rights and responsibilities of fixed-term employees,
- Conditions for redundancy and redeployment,
- The transition to permanent employment after four years (where applicable under legislation).

This Policy does not apply to contractors, casual workers, or agency staff who are not engaged as employees of the Council.

Definition of a FTC

A FTC is an employment agreement that:

- Has a clearly defined end date, or
- Ends upon completion of a specific task or project, and
- Is not intended to be permanent at the outset.

General Principles

- Employees on FTCs will have access to the same terms and conditions as permanent employees, unless different treatment is objectively justified.
- FTCs will be used only when appropriate and will not be used to avoid obligations associated with permanent employment.

End of Contract – No Redundancy Pay

If the FTC:

- Is clearly marked as fixed-term, and
- Runs its full term, ending on the agreed date, and
- Is not renewed,

Then no redundancy payment will be made. This is because the role was always intended to be temporary and the contract concluded as planned.

Clarification on Notice

Where a fixed-term contract runs to its agreed end date, the end date stated in the contract of employment will be the employee's final day of service. The Council is not required to provide additional notice in these circumstances. Notice would only be required if the contract is brought to an end earlier than the specified date.

Early Termination – Redundancy and Redeployment

If a FTC is:

- Concluded early (i.e., before the agreed end date), and
- The reason for early termination is redundancy (i.e., the role is no longer required), and
- The employee has completed 2 or more years of continuous service,

then the employee will be:

- Eligible for statutory redundancy pay, and
- Considered for redeployment opportunities within the Council, where appropriate.

Please see the Council's Redundancy Policy and Procedure and Redeployment Policy and Procedure.

Redundancy: Right of Appeal

The natural expiry of a fixed-term contract is not a dismissal following a selection process. Therefore, there is no formal right of appeal.

Employees may still raise questions, provide feedback or request further meetings during consultation, and this will be considered before the decision is confirmed.

4-Year Rule – Automatic Permanent Status

In accordance with employment legislation (e.g., the Fixed-Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002 in the UK):

- An employee who has been employed on successive FTC for four years or more will be deemed a permanent employee, unless:
 - Continued use of a FTC is objectively justified, and
 - This justification is clearly documented.

Monitoring and Review

- All FTC will be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain appropriate.
- Managers must give at least 4 weeks' notice prior to the end of an FTC to assess:
 - Whether the contract should be extended,
 - Whether redeployment is possible,
 - Or whether the contract will end as planned.

Support and Advice

Please contact Human Resources for any support or advice.

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WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Mediation Agreement

This Mediation Agreement ("Agreement") is entered into by the undersigned parties in accordance with the Mediation Policy and Procedure of West Oxfordshire District Council ("the Organisation").

1. Parties

This Agreement is between:

- **Party A:** [Full Name]
- **Party B:** [Full Name]

Collectively referred to as "the Parties."

2. Purpose

The Parties agree to engage in a confidential mediation process in good faith to resolve the dispute described below:

Dispute Summary: [Brief description of the issue]

3. Mediator

The mediation shall be facilitated by an impartial third party ("the Mediator"):

- **Mediator Name:** [Name]
- **Organisation (if applicable):** [Name]
- **Mediator Contact:** [Phone / Email]

The Mediator has no decision-making authority and will guide the Parties in reaching a mutually acceptable resolution.

4. Voluntary Participation

Mediation is voluntary, and either party may withdraw from the process at any time by providing written notice to the Mediator and the other party.

5. Confidentiality

All communications made during the mediation are confidential and will not be disclosed to anyone outside the process unless:

- Required by law;
- Both Parties agree in writing; or
- Disclosure is necessary to enforce a mediated settlement agreement.

The Parties agree not to use any information disclosed during mediation as evidence in any legal or administrative proceeding.

6. Mediation Process

- The mediation session(s) will occur on: [Insert Date(s)]
- Location (or virtual platform): [Insert Location or Platform]
- Duration: [Insert anticipated length, e.g., "half-day," "2 hours," etc.]

The process may include joint and/or separate meetings with the Mediator.

7. Settlement Agreement

If a resolution is reached, the terms will be recorded by email and are to be accepted by both Parties.

8. Costs

Unless otherwise agreed, the cost of mediation will be:

Covered by the Organisation

9. Acknowledgement and Signatures

By signing below, the Parties confirm that they understand and agree to the terms of this Mediation Agreement.

Party A

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Party B

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Mediator

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____



Mediation Policy and Procedure

Introduction

West Oxfordshire District Council ('the Council') is committed to fostering a positive and respectful workplace culture where issues are resolved constructively and at the earliest opportunity. Mediation is a voluntary, confidential, and informal process that supports employees and managers in resolving conflict in a collaborative way.

The Mediation Policy and Procedure (the 'policy') outlines the Council's approach to mediation, responsibilities of employees and managers, and how mediation fits within broader workplace resolution strategies.

Scope

This Policy applies to all employees of the Council, including permanent, temporary, part-time, full-time, and agency workers. It does not apply to contractors, consultants or any self-employed individuals working for the Council. It is intended to support the resolution of workplace conflicts such as:

- Interpersonal disagreements
- Communication breakdowns
- Team relationship issues
- Perceptions of unfair treatment

Note: Mediation is not appropriate for cases involving serious misconduct, safeguarding concerns, or where legal or disciplinary processes are ongoing.

Definition of Mediation

Mediation is:

- **Voluntary** – both parties must agree to take part.
- **Confidential** – what is said in mediation is not shared outside the process unless agreed by both parties.
- **Facilitated** – by a trained, impartial mediator who does not take sides or impose outcomes.
- **Solution-focused** – helping individuals to reach mutually acceptable agreements.

Principles

- Early intervention is encouraged to prevent escalation.
- Mediation will not replace formal grievance or disciplinary processes but may be offered alongside or prior to them.
- All participants will be treated with respect and dignity throughout the process.
- Mediators will remain neutral and unbiased.
- Agreements reached in mediation will be informal unless both parties agree to formalise them.

When to Use Mediation

Mediation is an informal option that is available in addition to the Council's formal grievance and disciplinary procedures.

If a grievance or disciplinary process has been initiated and the parties opt to try mediation, the Council may suspend the grievance or disciplinary process.

If mediation does not resolve the dispute, the grievance or disciplinary process will be reinstated.

Appropriate Circumstances

- Personality clashes or misunderstandings
- Decline in team morale due to conflict
- Perceptions of unequal treatment (not involving legal discrimination)
- Breakdown in communication between colleagues or between a manager and employee

Inappropriate Circumstances

- Allegations of bullying, harassment, or discrimination requiring formal investigation
- Ongoing formal HR processes (e.g. grievances or disciplinaries)
- When one or both parties are unwilling to participate in good faith
- If a manager is using mediation to avoid taking responsibility to address the issues

Roles and Responsibilities

Employees

- Engage openly and respectfully in mediation if offered
- Commit to finding a resolution and working towards improved relationships
- Maintain confidentiality throughout and after the process

Managers

- Identify early signs of conflict and consider mediation before resorting to formal processes
- Encourage and support employees to engage with mediation
- Avoid assigning blame or taking sides
- Liaise with HR to arrange mediation when appropriate

Human Resources

- Provide guidance and support on the use of mediation
- Maintain a pool of trained internal mediators or liaise with external providers
- Maintain records of mediation offers (not content of discussions)
- Monitor and review mediation usage and effectiveness

Appointing a mediator

Once the parties in dispute have agreed to mediation, the Council will appoint a mediator.

The Council will consider the circumstances and complexity of each case and will appoint an appropriate qualified mediator within the Council who is sufficiently independent of the parties, has not previously been involved in the dispute and is available. If no internal mediator is available, or if the Council consider it necessary, the Council will appoint an external qualified mediator.

The Council will pay the external mediators fees, if the case has complexities and an internal mediator is not deemed suitable.

On appointment, the mediator will make contact with the relevant parties, agree with them the dates and locations of the mediation meetings and arrange all other matters in relation to the mediation process.

The Mediation Process

1. Referral

Either party, a manager, or HR may suggest mediation. If agreed, a referral is made to HR.

2. Assessment

HR or a mediation coordinator will assess whether the situation is suitable for mediation.

3. Mediator Assignment

A trained internal or external mediator is appointed. Where possible, mediators will not be from the same team or service area.

A mediation agreement must be signed by all parties. This agreement sets out the parties' acceptance of the mediation process and confirms the confidential and voluntary nature of the mediation.

4. Pre-Mediation Meetings

The mediator meets each party separately to understand the issues and explain the process.

5. Joint Mediation Session

The parties come together in a safe, neutral setting with the mediator to explore the conflict and work towards agreement.

6. Agreement

If resolution is reached, the mediator may help draft a written agreement. This can be informal or formal, depending on the parties' wishes. The parties may agree that a copy of the mediation settlement agreement is sent to certain individuals, such as the relevant line manager, HR and trade union representative.

7. Follow-Up (Optional)

The mediator may schedule a follow-up session to review progress if decided it is necessary and agreed by both the parties.

Right to be accompanied

Parties are not normally accompanied in mediation meetings. In exceptional circumstances (for example, where emotional support is required), a colleague may accompany a party, provided that:

- all parties agree;
- the companion does not participate in the discussions; and
- the companion signs the agreement to mediate, thereby committing to keep confidential all information relating to the mediation.

Confidentiality and Record Keeping

Mediation discussions are confidential and no notes or records are kept on employee personnel files. HR will keep a high-level log of mediation usage (date, department, outcome) for monitoring and evaluation only.

If you are involved in mediation, you should keep information about the mediation confidential and not disclose it to any other party or third party, nor use it for any other purpose other than the mediation.

Mediation and Formal Procedures

Engaging in mediation does not affect an employee's right to pursue formal grievance procedures. However, where mediation is successful, the need for further formal action may be reduced or eliminated.

Mediation must not be used to suppress or redirect whistleblower disclosures. Any concerns raised during mediation that fall under whistleblowing protections will be referred to appropriate formal channels.

When Mediation Does Not Work

While mediation is often effective, it is a voluntary and informal process and may not always lead to a resolution. The following steps outline what will happen if mediation does not result in an agreement or if either party chooses to withdraw.

If mediation does not result in a resolution, this will not be considered a failure or held against any participant. Mediation discussions are confidential and cannot be used as evidence in any subsequent decision-making process.

Return to Formal Procedures

Where issues remain unresolved, the matter may need to progress through the Council's formal procedures, including:

- Grievance Policy and Procedure
- Dignity at Work / Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure
- Capability or Conduct (depending on the nature of the dispute)

Managers will advise employees on the appropriate next steps.

Review of Workplace Arrangements

If appropriate, the manager may:

- Review team dynamics or workload issues
- Adjust working arrangements
- Put in place temporary or permanent management interventions

These actions will not breach the confidentiality of the mediation.

Training and Awareness

The Council will:

- Provide awareness training for managers and employees on the benefits of mediation
- Offer training for internal mediators, where appropriate
- Promote mediation as part of a positive employee relations strategy

Option for Further Support

Employees may be offered additional support, such as:

- HR guidance
- Occupational Health referral

- Coaching or facilitated discussions (not mediation)
- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) support

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Paternity and Neonatal Care Leave Policy and Procedure

Introduction

West Oxfordshire District Council ('the Council') prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees, to give their best.

This policy sets out the rights of employees to paternity leave and pay.

We are committed to supporting a positive work-life balance for all our employees and recognise that time with your children is important. No employee will suffer any detriment, disadvantage or discrimination for requesting or taking paternity leave.

The Policy does not form part of your contract of employment, and we reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time.

Scope

This Policy applies to employees employed by the Council. It does not apply to workers, contractors, consultants or any self-employed individuals working for the Council.

Who can take Paternity Leave?

You can take paternity leave if you:

- have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth (or by the week you are notified of being matched with a child for adoption).
- are the biological father of a child, or the spouse, civil partner or partner of the child's mother (or adopter)

have, or expect to have, responsibility for the child's upbringing, apart from the mother's/adopter's primary responsibility. Paternity Leave is available to an eligible employee regardless of gender if they are married to, the civil partner of, or the partner of the child's mother or parent. The employee must also have, or expect to have, responsibility for the child's upbringing.

Paternity Leave is also available to the spouse, civil partner or partner of an individual who has adopted a child, including same-sex partners. Where a couple adopt a child jointly, one may take Adoption Leave and the other may take Paternity Leave, and they may decide between themselves which partner takes which type of leave.

To be eligible for paternity leave for a child adopted within the UK, you must have you: have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment by the end of the week in which the adoption agency formally notifies the adopter that they have been matched with the child.

Paternity leave is also available in cases of surrogacy and fostering for adoption. If you are an intended parent under a surrogacy arrangement and apply for, or expect to obtain, a Parental Order, you are entitled to paternity leave and pay (if eligible). Where a child is placed under a "foster-to-adopt" arrangement by an adoption agency, you will be entitled to paternity leave and pay on the same basis as adoption leave rights.

Length and timing of Paternity Leave

An eligible employee can take either one week's leave or two consecutive weeks' leave to be taken within 52 weeks after the child is born. You can take this leave in a single block of one or two weeks, or in two separate blocks of a week each. You do not have to take your leave in one consecutive period, but the leave must be booked in blocks of at least one week. You cannot take paternity leave in individual days.

A week of paternity leave is the same duration as your normal working week, meaning that if you are a full-time employee, one week is 5 days. If you are contracted to work 4 days per week, one week is 4 days, and so on.

You can take only 2 weeks' paternity leave per pregnancy or adoption, regardless of the number of children born as a result of the pregnancy or the number of children placed under the same adoption arrangement.

You can start your paternity leave on any day from the child's birth, but it must end within 52 weeks of the birth (or the expected week of childbirth if the child is born early).

In the case of an adopted child, the 52-week period runs from the date the child was placed for adoption with the adopter (or the child's entry into Great Britain for adoptions from overseas).

If you wish to take shared parental leave, you must take your paternity leave first. You cannot take paternity leave if you have already taken a period of shared parental leave in relation to the same child.

Notice to take Paternity Leave

To take paternity leave for a birth child, you need to give your line manager and Human Resources 28 days' notice before each week of leave and written notice of:

- the date on which your partner's baby is due
- the length of paternity leave you wish to take (and whether in one single or two separate blocks)
- the date on which you wish your paternity leave to start.
- Your declaration that the purpose of the leave is to care for the child or support your partner in relation to the child.

Your notice to take leave will depend on when you would like your leave to start. You can choose to begin your leave on either:

- The date the child is born: Notice to be given at least 28 days before the first day of the expected week of childbirth.
- A certain number of days after the child is born: Notice to be given at least 28 days before the date falling that number of days from the first day of the expected week of childbirth.
- A predetermined date (no earlier than the first day of the expected week of childbirth): Notice to be given at least 28 days before the specified date.

To notify us of your intention to take statutory paternity pay and leave, you should complete the following form available from the GOV.UK website - [Statutory Paternity Pay and Leave: becoming a birth parent \(SC3\)](#). Send the completed form to your manager and hr@westoxon.gov.uk.

Adoption within the UK

For adoption within the UK, an employee must have 26 weeks' continuous service by the week they are notified of being matched with a child. To take paternity leave for an adopted child you need to give your manager and HR written notice of your intention to take paternity leave no later than 7 days after the date notification of the match with the child was given by the adoption agency. The notice must specify:

- The date the adopter was notified of having been matched with the child
- The date the child is expected to be placed for adoption
- The date you wish your paternity leave to start
- The length of paternity leave you wish to take (and in one single or two separate blocks)
- Your declaration confirming that you meet the eligibility requirements to take paternity leave and that the purpose of the leave is to care for the child or support the child's adopter

To notify us of your intention to take statutory paternity pay and leave, you should complete the following form available from the GOV.UK website - [Statutory Paternity Pay and Leave: becoming an adoptive or parental order parent](#). Send the completed form to your manager and hr@westoxon.gov.uk

You can choose to begin your leave on either:

- The date on which the child is placed for adoption
- A set number of days after the child is placed for adoption
- On a predetermined date, which has to be no earlier than the first day of the child's placement for adoption

Overseas adoption

An employee must have 26 weeks' continuous service by the week they receive the official notification that they have been matched with a child (or, in overseas cases, the "official notification" confirming the adoption process). To take paternity leave for a child adopted from overseas, you need to give your manager and HR written notice of your intention to take paternity leave no later than 28 days after the date notification of the match with the child was given by the adoption agency (or the date you complete 26 weeks' continuous employment, if that is later, for pay eligibility). The notice must specify:

- The date the adopter was notified of having been matched with the child
- The date on which the child is expected to enter Great Britain (or, if they have already entered, the date of entry)
- Your declaration confirming that you meet the eligibility requirements to take paternity leave

You must give your line manager and Human Resources further notice in writing of:

- When you want to start your leave
- The length of paternity leave you wish to take (and in one single or two separate blocks)
- Your declaration that the purpose of the leave is to care for the child or support the child's adopter

Your notice to take leave will depend on when you would like your leave to start. You can choose to begin your leave on either:

- The date of your child's entry into Great Britain: Notice to be given at least 28 days before the date the child is expected to enter Great Britain
- A predetermined date (no earlier than the date of your child's entry into Great Britain): Notice to be given at least 28 days before that predetermined date

To notify us of your intention to take statutory paternity pay and leave, you should complete the following form available from the GOV.UK website - [Statutory Paternity Pay and leave: adopting a child from abroad](#). Send the completed form to your manager and hr@westoxon.gov.uk.

If it is not reasonably practicable to give notice within the timeframes set out in the above sections, notice must be provided as soon as reasonably possible.

Maternity Support Leave

This is a benefit that applies to employees of the Council who will be providing support to a pregnant woman around the time that they are giving birth.

Such employees are defined as being expectant fathers; partners or nominated carers. As an expectant father, you will be able to take five days' maternity support leave, paid at normal pay.

This must be combined with Paternity Leave. Therefore, you can take one week of Maternity Support Leave at full pay and one further week of Paternity Leave (if you qualify), paid at the statutory paternity pay rate. There is no required qualifying period for Maternity Support Leave.

Time off for Antenatal Care

In addition to your paternity leave, you have the right to take time off to accompany a pregnant woman with whom you are having a child at up to two antenatal appointments. You are eligible if you're the pregnant woman's husband, civil partner, or if you're living together in a long-term relationship, if you are the biological father of the expected child you are also eligible. You may be asked to make up some or all of the time taken off.

To make a request for time off to accompany someone at an antenatal appointment, you should contact your line manager.

The antenatal appointment must be made on the advice of a registered medical practitioner, midwife, or nurse. We expect that normally no more than half a day is needed for an antenatal appointment, but the leave includes the time needed to travel to the appointment and any waiting time needed at the appointment and can be for a maximum of six-and-a-half hours on each occasion.

You should endeavour to give as much notice as possible of time off required for the antenatal appointment and, wherever possible, arrange for them to be as near to the start or end of the working day as possible.

Time off to attend Adoption Appointments

If you are adopting a child, you are entitled to take time off to attend adoption appointments, which enable contact with the child (for example, to bond with them before the placement) or for any other purpose connected with the adoption (for example, to meet with the professionals involved in the care of the child).

Where you are part of a couple jointly adopting a child, the couple can elect for one of them to take paid time off to attend up to five adoption appointments. The other can elect to take unpaid time off to attend up to two adoption appointments.

To make a request for time off for an adoption appointment, you should contact your line manager.

The appointment must have been arranged by or at the request of the adoption agency. The time off must be taken before the date of the child's placement for adoption with the employee.

You should endeavour to give as much notice as possible of when you need the time off for the adoption appointment and, wherever possible, arrange them for them to be as near to the start or end of the working day as possible.

Changing your Paternity Leave Plans

If you wish to change the timing of your paternity leave, you must give your line manager at least 28 days' written notice of the revised start date.

Rights During Paternity Leave

During your leave, all the terms and conditions of your contract except normal pay will continue. Your salary will be replaced by statutory paternity pay if you are eligible for it.

This means that all other benefits will remain in place. For example, holiday entitlement continues to accrue and pension contributions will continue to be paid.

Statutory Paternity Pay

If you are eligible for paternity leave, and have 26 weeks' continuous employment, you will be paid statutory paternity pay (SPP). That is two weeks at the current [statutory amount](#) set by the Government for the relevant tax year, or 90% of average weekly earnings, whichever is the lower.

In order to qualify for SPP, you must;

- Have average weekly earnings in the 8 weeks up to the end of the qualifying week of no less than the [lower earnings limit](#) set by HMRC
- Remain in continuous employment with us on the date the child is born (in a birth situation), is placed for adoption (for adoptions within the UK) or entered Great Britain (for adoptions from overseas).
- Have complied with the relevant notice and evidential requirements and are able to provide the declarations as set out in this Policy.
- Confirm when you wish to start receiving SPP within the relevant form to provide period of leave notice to take paternity leave.

Returning to work after Paternity Leave

Following your leave, you have the right to resume working in the same job as before on terms and conditions that are no less favourable to you than the terms that would have applied had you not been absent.

Your continuity of employment is not affected.

Neonatal Care Leave

If your baby requires admission to hospital or receives consultant-led care within the first 28 days of life, and this care lasts for at least seven continuous days, you will be entitled to take Neonatal Care Leave. This allows you the time and space you may need during what can be a very difficult and emotional period.

Eligibility

You can qualify for neonatal care leave from the first day of your employment with the Council, if you are:

- a parent (biological)
- a partner of the child's parent if they will have main responsibility for the child
- an adoptive parent, prospective adopter
- adopting from overseas, if qualifying periods occur once the child has entered Great Britain.
- a child's intended parents (i.e. surrogacy)

Length and Timing of Leave

You will receive one week of leave for every seven continuous days your baby is in neonatal care, up to a maximum of 12 weeks. This entitlement is available to you from your very first day of employment with us, so there is no minimum service requirement. The leave can be taken any time within the first 68 weeks after your child's birth, so you have flexibility to use it when it is most needed.

Pay

If you have at least 26 weeks' continuous service by the 15th week before your baby was due, and you meet the statutory earnings threshold, you may also qualify for Statutory Neonatal Care Pay (SNCP). The rate of SNCP is currently the same as Statutory Maternity Pay after the first six weeks, or 90% of your average weekly earnings if this is lower.

If you do not qualify for SNCP, you are still entitled to take Neonatal Care Leave, however the leave will be unpaid.

Interaction with other leave

Neonatal Care Leave is in addition to your statutory maternity, paternity, adoption or shared parental leave, meaning that it extends your entitlement rather than replacing it. Where both parents are eligible, each can take their own period of Neonatal Care Leave.

Evidence required

At the Council, we want to ensure you feel supported at every step. You will need to provide confirmation of your child's neonatal admission, such as a hospital admission letter or care note from a neonatal consultant. We will never ask you to share medical details beyond this.

Experiencing Loss

If the mother/adopter dies, the surviving parent can take paternity leave even if not meeting usual service requirements.

If you experience a miscarriage or sadly the loss of a child after 24 weeks or at birth, we also have separate policies to cover parental bereavement leave, supporting employees experiencing pregnancy loss and the statutory right to take time off for dependants.

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Pay and Grading Principles Guidance

Scope

The Pay and Grading Principles Guidance ('the Framework') applies to all employees of West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) ('the Council'). Where different arrangements apply for example for Chief Officers, this will be made clear within the Framework.

The Framework used at the Council

The Job Evaluation system used within the Council is called Evaluate. It is a job grading system which uses factors to determine the relative value of different roles within the Council and places them into clearly defined levels (see Appendix B).

The purpose of the Framework

The main purposes of having the Framework in place are to:

- aim to ensure that all elements of our pay, grading and reward systems are fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010. The Council is committed to the principle of equal pay for all employees and aims to eliminate any bias which may be identified in our pay and reward systems relating to sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief
- ensure that the Framework enables the retention of employees and aids recruitment of employees with the right skills and capabilities
- take account of regional, national variations and local market factors
- provide a logic to underpin pay levels, job roles and career paths, making it easier for HR and line managers to make rational and objective decisions on job roles and pay
- make it clear to employees how their role and pay relates to others within the Council and externally
- ensure that jobs of equal value are remunerated fairly and transparently and helps us to demonstrate that this is the case
- support clear procedures for implementing salary increases and progression
- seek to ensure that the Framework is, and remains, affordable and support value for money in the services the Council and its partner organisations provide.

The pay structure is underpinned by three core elements:

- Job value – how the job evaluation system evaluates the roles
- External market value for similar professional grouping– using market data to establish the Council’s position against external comparators
- Peer Group comparisons

The Framework has been designed to create pay grade ranges that are able to take account of the job value of the role and the market value of the role (by profession and/or location).

The structure of the Framework

The Framework aims to ensure that ALL job roles below the level of Director (who are evaluated using the LGA Senior Officer Job Evaluation Scheme through South East Employers) are placed into one of 10 job groups. The 10 job groups are as follows:

Core

1. Process and Internal Support
2. Customer Advisor
3. Level 1 Case and Field Worker
4. Level 1 Specialist

Implement

5. Level 2 Case and Field Worker
6. Level 2 Specialist

Guide

7. Level 3 Specialist
8. Managers

Translate

9. Business Manager
10. Level 4 Specialist

Each Job Group has a minimum, median and a maximum salary.

Within each job group there is a further subcategory of Peer Groups. A Peer Group is made up of job roles that are job evaluated within the same Job Group. As the Council’s Job Groups are wide, having peer groups within the Job Group allows the Council to ensure that job roles that are broadly the same, have similar characteristics and which have a similar level of responsibility to each other, get broadly the same pay. Differences within a Peer Group will be equalised using pay levelling (local pay award) over time (see below).

Each Peer Group has a minimum, average and maximum salary level based on all the job roles within that particular peer grouping.

Pay Progression

There are two ways in which employees' salaries can be increased, and the Council may apply one or both of them to the Framework:

1. Via the annual cost of living award on the 1st April each year (negotiated and agreed nationally via the National Joint Council (JNC for Chief Officers) and once agreed uprating of salaries.
2. Via a local pay award*. The local pay award is made up of two elements, the job group mid-point and the peer group average. A post holder can qualify for part of the local award if they fall below one of these elements or a larger part of the award if they fall below both elements. The following criteria will help calculate any additional local pay award:
 - the difference between an individual's current salary and the mid-point of the job group salary grade; and
 - the difference between an individual's current salary and the average salary of others in the same professional peer group

In this way those employees who are furthest away from the job group grade mid-point and professional peer group average will receive an increase until they reach that peer group average salary. This will ensure that we can align historic pre-TUPE pay equality for all of our employees.

* Please note local pay awards do not apply to employees within probation, are protected by TUPE (from outside of the partnership), apprentices, graduates, interns, Directors and above and those in pay protection.

An annual review of the pay levelling will be undertaken by the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Strategic People Lead.

Pay levelling, or the Local Pay Award, aims to bring employees who are paid below the average in their peer group towards the average, or move those who are below the mid-point for the job group towards the mid-point. The award is dependent upon the budget available each financial year and replaces incremental pay. WODC committed to pay levelling in 25/26 as part of our TUPE measures letter, and a decision has been made about whether this will continue in 26/27.

Types of pay at the Council

The Real Living Wage

The Real Living Wage is the only UK wage rate that is voluntarily paid by UK businesses who believe their employees deserve a fair day's pay for a hard day's work.

The Council pay the Real Living Wage which is higher than the government minimum. The Real Living Wage is reviewed by the Living Wage Foundation annually

The Council will pay an employee the Real Living Wage if their substantive level of pay is below the Real Living Wage (with the exception of Apprentice pay rates).

Apprentices

There is a national Apprenticeship Wage set by the Government which is reviewed and updated annually.

The Council will pay their apprentices the National Minimum Wage appropriate for each categorised age group – this is a level significantly higher than the National Apprenticeship Wage.

Graduates and Interns

The Council will pay a fair salary to Graduate and Intern vacancies at a predetermined rate as agreed by available funds. If a graduate placement will also require a further qualification to be funded by the Council, the salary will be adjusted accordingly.

Interns will be paid a fair salary for the work carried out at a predetermined rate as agreed by available funds.

Overtime

As the Council move to a new flexible working approach and business need prevails, there may be occasions where overtime is required to fulfil peaks in business demands.

Overtime will be paid at 1 ½ the hourly rate for any hours worked over the standard working week of Monday to Sunday (37 hours). Any hours worked up to 37 hours will be paid at plain time (hourly rate). All overtime has to be agreed in advance by your Line Manager. Where outside of budget this must be approved by the Director of Finance.

The enhanced rate of time and a half will only be applied once the employee has worked 37 * hours.

Sundays and Bank Holiday Working

* As per the Council's Contract of Employment, the enhanced rate of double time will be applied to all overtime hours worked on a Sunday or Bank Holiday.

Honarium Payment

This is the mechanism by which employees will be rewarded for temporarily undertaking additional duties to their current role or for being rewarded for their contribution for an exceptional piece of work. All requests for honorarium payments should be approved by the appropriate Director in the first instance and by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) where the Director of Finance must be in attendance or provide email authorisation. Honorariums can be paid in regular instalments or one lump sum. See the attached process guidance for Honorarium payments at Appendix A.

Acting up Payment

All requests for Acting up payments should be approved by the appropriate Director in the first instance and by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) where the Director of Finance must be in attendance or provide email authorisation. This payment is made on the basis that an employee is actively taking on additional duties, at a higher level either on a full-time basis or specific hours alongside their current role.

If the arrangement is to last more than 3 months, then following approval at SLT (and subsequent recording on Eploy the Council's Applicant Tracking System (ATS) the employee will be seconded to the higher graded role for the agreed period of time required. The employee's substantive post will not be permanently filled allowing the employee to return at the end of the secondment period.

See attached process guidance for Acting up allowances at Appendix A.

Pay and Salary protection

Any reduction to an employee's pay/salary grade as a result of a restructure will where applicable, be protected for a period of up to three years (or less if proposed pay catches up with protected pay).

Recruitment and Pay

When an external job vacancy is advertised it should normally be advertised detailing the relevant peer group minimum to mid-point.

When the successful applicant is offered the job, they should ordinarily be placed on the salary for the peer group minimum but if the hiring manager wishes to offer a higher salary for a particular reason, they should seek approval with a business case for doing so, from the relevant Director and SLT and before offering check with HR that the increase in salary does not sit negatively against the existing employee base within the service.

*Upon agreeing the budget for the vacancy, the Head of Finance will have provided confirmation based on a salary from Min to average. The Director and SLT agreement therefore is to offer outside of policy.

Promotion/role gained at a higher Job Group

Where internal employees apply for a job at a higher job level than their current role or to a higher Peer Group in the same job group in the Framework and are successful, the salary offered should not place the employee at any detriment.

If the job role sits within the same peer group or is at the same pay level as their current job role, the employee should not suffer any detriment to their current salary.

Pay Progression for Chief Officers

Chief Officers sit within the Joint National Council (JNC) for Chief Officers.

Annual increments shall be payable until the maximum incremental point of the grade is reached subject to the Chief Executive (for Directors) or Performance and Appointments Committee (for Chief Executive) being satisfied that a suitable standard of performance has been achieved.

Annual increments will be payable on 1 April each year to the maximum of the grade. Chief Officers must have completed a minimum of six months service in their current post to qualify for an increment at 1 April.

For clarity, Chief Officers starting in their current post between 1 April and 1 October will receive an increment, if applicable, the following April. Employees starting after 1 October and before 1 April will receive an increment, if applicable, after six months in the post.

Getting it right

Individual employees must not be verbally promised salary increases under any circumstances without prior authorisation nor should the likelihood of an increase be implied.

Individual managers must not undertake any appointment, without prior approval.

A clear and transparent approach to pay and reward will ensure that the Council has the right people, with the right skills at the right time.

Failure to adhere to the rules may lead to disciplinary action, grievances or breach of contract claims.

Appendix A

Honoraria Payments

The Council has a responsibility to ensure equal pay for all employees and so the use of honoraria payments should be carefully considered and be capable of justification. All requests for honorarium payments should be approved by the appropriate Director in the first instance and by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) where the Director of Finance must be in attendance or provide email authorisation. Please speak to HR who will support to advise on the sums to be paid and ensure that these are consistent with payments elsewhere in the the Council.

Honoraria payments can be used:

- by making a single payment to an employee to recognise a *specific* contribution that they have made
- **or**
- to recognise that an employee is temporarily undertaking some higher additional responsibility for a continuous period of at least four weeks (e.g. to cover some of the work of another employee during a period of absence) by making a regular monthly payment to them during that temporary period

Where used, honorarium payments should be for a maximum of six months and only in exceptional circumstances and with SLT agreement should continue past this.

Where only part of the duties of a higher graded post is undertaken, or a number of employees share the duties, a proportion of the difference between the employees and the higher salaried role should be paid as an honorarium. Normally payment should be made at the end of the period of time in question. Where there is the likelihood that the arrangements will continue for the maximum of six months, payment may be made on a monthly basis.

Acting up allowances

All requests for Acting up payments should be approved by the appropriate Director in the first instance and by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) where the Director of Finance must be in attendance or provide email authorisation.

An Acting Up allowance will only be agreed where the employee is required to undertake the full duties of the higher graded post for a continuous period of at least four weeks. If the arrangement is to last more than 3 months, then following approval at SLT (and subsequent recording on Eploy the Council's Applicant Tracking System (ATS) the employee will be seconded to the higher graded role for the agreed period of time required. The employee's substantive post will not be permanently filled allowing the employee to return at the end of the secondment period.

The individual employee must agree to the arrangement. Payment may not be made where the higher graded officer is on annual leave, but it may be appropriate for an absence through long-term sickness, provided finances are available.

Where the higher graded post is vacant, care should be taken not to create expectations in the mind of the employee that they will automatically be promoted to the higher post.

Payment should be made after four weeks and backdated to the first day of undertaking the higher duties. If it is known in advance that the acting up period will be longer than 4 weeks, then the payment can be made

from the 1st day. The new temporary rate of pay will be that which would have been paid had the employee been promoted to the more senior post (usually the Peer Group min for the role).

Where the duties and responsibilities are shared between more than one employee an acting up allowance is not the correct method of payment. Instead, an honorarium payment should be considered and the business case should factor in the fact that the duties of the higher graded post are being shared.

Appendix B

The Council's Job Evaluation Process

Job Evaluation of roles within the Council

- The grading of job roles within the Council is based on a system known as job evaluation. This is quite simply, a method of comparing different jobs within the Council, to provide a fair basis for a grading and pay structure
- Job evaluation helps to accommodate new or revised jobs into the existing grading structure. It can help to remove anomalies or inequalities in a pay system by providing a more objective and structured basis for deciding grading levels
- Job evaluation scores specific factors within a job role. It does not measure the individual post holder or their qualifications and experiences. It is important to remember that it is an evaluation of the role, not the person carrying it out

Which Council jobs can be evaluated under this procedure?

This Framework covers all positions employed by the Council below Director level jobs and on NJC terms and conditions.

The Council uses the Evaluate system for evaluating these jobs.

What are the reasons for jobs to be evaluated?

There are two criteria where the job evaluation system will be used:

1. Newly created jobs.
These need to be graded using the Council's job evaluation system. All new roles should be approved in the usual way and job descriptions sent to HR. Evaluation will be based on their duties and responsibilities and placed alongside all other jobs in the grading structure
2. Existing jobs where duties and responsibilities of a job or several jobs have substantially changed or increased

Determining the Salary banding of a New Job

All new posts must be graded via the Council's job evaluation system.

1. Line manager completes the job description using the Job Description Convention Document and seeking advice from HR (if required), based on the duties and responsibilities of the role.
2. The completed job description must then be sent to HR who will quality assure it and put it through the job evaluation system. The outcome of this will determine the Job Group level of the job in the Council's pay structure.
3. Job Evaluations will be undertaken by the HR Job Evaluation Panel made up of the Strategic People Lead and the Assistant Human Resources Business Partner.
4. Relevant Peer Groups must be referred to and accurate comparison made to the job role being evaluated.
5. The relevant Peer Group will be allocated by the HR Job Evaluation Panel.
6. Job Groups and Peer Groups for new posts should be confirmed via the Council's job evaluation system Evaluate, before being confirmed to the line manager of the role.

Re-grading of an Existing Post

An employee may be eligible to put their job forward for a re-grading request where they can demonstrate that there are or have been substantial changes/increases to their duties and responsibilities.

The level of responsibility, duties and expectations are all taken into consideration when the job is ranked in the overall grading structure of the Council. Some expansion of the job is often anticipated and incorporated within the Job Description. The duties and responsibilities of jobs are not necessarily subject to detailed definition and may vary from time to time, without changing the character of the post or its level of responsibility. Such changes are inevitable and are a common occurrence and cannot themselves justify reconsideration of re-grading.

A change in the volume of work is not a relevant factor, nor are variations brought about by new or amended legislation, unless there is a substantial impact upon the role.

Jobs placed for re-grading will be reviewed in their entirety which means that some factors may go down as well as up.

Procedure to be followed for a Re-grading Application

Jobs which have already been through a challenge meeting/reviewed or re-graded will not normally be considered for a further re-grading review unless there has been a substantial change to the job description.

No more than one application for a re-evaluation of a role will be considered in a 12-month period.

All individual review requests must be submitted via a formal business case outlining the reasons for the re-grading request and should be submitted by or via the post holder's Line Manager. The report must be endorsed by the relevant Director.

The employee and their line manager must also complete the job description with a full list of duties, essential and desirable qualifications and skills for the role. This must be sent to HR who will quality assure the job description and put it through the job evaluation system at the HR Job Evaluation Panel.

Service re-organisations, where more than one job has, or are proposed to change, will usually be the subject of a Business Case report to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). All proposed changes must usually be confirmed via the Council's Evaluate job evaluation system before any reports are placed before SLT. The line manager is responsible for ensuring that individual job descriptions are completed and sent to HR so that revised Job Group/Peer Group can be determined before SLT report deadlines are met.

Any individual Job Group/Peer Group changes that are due to a significant change in the duties or responsibilities of a post will be subject to the approval of the Head of Service, Director and Director of Finance.

After a Job has been evaluated

HR will inform the relevant manager of the outcome of the evaluation panel by email. If there are any further points that need clarification, then HR will contact the relevant manager immediately.

Communication of outcome to the individual post holder (i.e. where an existing post has been regraded)

Once the Service Head, Director and Director of Finance have agreed the grade of a post following evaluation, HR will send the individual a confirmation email including the right of appeal, copied to the relevant line manager. The email needs to be agreed and returned to HR by the post holder.

Appeals Procedure

If the applicant is not happy with the outcome of the grading decision, they will have the right to appeal.

An employee who is dissatisfied with the grading of their job can appeal on one or more of the following reasons:-

- The scheme has been wrongly applied e.g. factor levels within each Job Group have been wrongly allocated
- The wrong Peer Group has been allocated
- The job description failed to capture some essential aspects of the job
- It is believed that a job of equivalent responsibility within the Council is more highly graded

The Appeal request must be formally submitted to the Strategic People Lead and the relevant line manager on the Job Grading Appeals Form (see the Appendix C). The grounds for appeal must be clearly stated on the form. A Director who will be accompanied by an *HR representative not involved in the original evaluation (*who sits within the wider partnership) will review the appeal documentation prior to an Appeal Meeting being arranged.

The applicant will be invited to attend the Appeal meeting and to make their case for a higher grading. They may be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or a colleague if they wish. The Line Manager should also attend the meeting.

The resulting decision of the Appeal meeting will be final. The decision will be given in writing/email to the applicant as soon as practicably possible after the meeting, and certainly within 5 days.

If an Appeal is upheld and the grade is increased, the outcome and revised grading will be backdated to the date of the original request.

Appendix C

Job Evaluation Appeal form

Name(s) of employee	
Role title	
Mapped as	
Where the individual(s) wanted to be mapped to	
<p>Reason for appeal: Choose from the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scheme has been wrongly applied e.g. factor levels within each Job Group have been wrongly allocated. • The wrong Peer group has been allocated • The job description failed to capture some essential aspects of the job • It is believed that a job of equivalent responsibility within the Council is more highly graded <p>Please explain the reasons behind the above:</p>	
Panel Completion (only) Following Appeal	
Evaluate Criteria Appeal Assessment	
Expertise Outcome	
Reasons why at this level	The role is - Pick some key phrases from evaluate criteria and examples from the challenge paperwork / discussion
Reason why not at next level	The role is not - doing (key phrases from criteria) as evidenced by (challenge documentation and meeting)
Complexity Outcome	
Reasons why at this level	
Reason why not at next level	
Impact Outcome	
Reasons why at this level	

Reason why not at next level	
Influence Outcome	
Reasons why at this level	
Reason why not at next level	
Resource Outcome	
Reasons why at this level	
Reason why not at next level	
Appeal outcome	<p>Brief synopsis: Declined on basis of - e.g; a) not working at Translate level b) comparable roles within the Council are not at this level c) Not working in a specialist job group (nature of the role is case work)</p>

Additional information Appendix for panel only

Impact of movement to new band	<p>Would be £xxxx below MIN for Level 4 specialist (so would get an instant pay increase)</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Would fall within new range at MIN - MID</p>
Comparable roles in other areas of the Council	

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Redeployment Policy and Procedure

Introduction

West Oxfordshire District Council ('the Council') prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees, to give their best.

There may be circumstances due to various reasons which could result in an employee being redeployed within the council. It is important for both the Council and the employee to have a clear understanding about the process that will apply in such situations. The Redeployment Policy and Procedure ('the Policy') will be used in all cases of redeployment and as such will have to be read in conjunction with other related employment policies.

Definition of Redeployment

Redeployment is the process in which alternative employment within the Council is sought for an employee.

The Council's Responsibilities:

- Ensure that full consultation takes place with the employee and the staff side (where appropriate) as soon as redeployment becomes a possibility.
- Where possible secure reasonable suitable alternative job opportunities taking into account the employees' relevant skills, abilities, pay and status. The Recruitment Team (Join Us) will hold a redeployment list.
- Ensure that relevant retraining, a trial period in a new position and appropriate support are available to employees who are being redeployed.
- Provide pay protection of a period of three years where the alternative job has a lower grade.

Redeployment Procedure

A redeployment situation may occur due to:

- Redundancy
- Organisational restructuring
- Budgetary cuts
- Capability or
- Through legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010

Please refer to the Redundancy Policy and Procedure, the Performance Improvement (Capability) Policy and Procedure, the Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure or speak to Human Resources for further details.

Where it appears unlikely from medical advice that an employee will be unable to return to their substantive role following long term sickness absence, redeployment may also be considered.

Where a redundancy situation occurs, the following procedure will be followed:

- HR, having been notified that suitable alternative employment should be sought for the employee, will meet with the employee to determine where their skills, abilities and experience lie. During this meeting the preferences the employee has regarding alternative employment will be explored. However, it is possible that not all the preferences may be met. At this stage it may be possible to identify and agree any general training as appropriate which could be of benefit.
- The employee will be placed on a redeployment list held in the Recruitment Team. The employee should also be proactive in looking at the Council Portal for any advertised vacancies that may be of interest. Before a vacancy is advertised, the Recruitment Team will check the redeployment list to see if there are any employees who meet the relevant criteria. Any vacancies arising will be assessed to see if the employee meets the relevant criteria set out in the person specification or will be capable of meeting them with appropriate support and retraining.

The role location and hours will also be taken into consideration as part of the assessment of suitability. Wherever possible the employee's preferences will be considered. Consultation with the receiving line manager will take place at this point about the possibility of redeployment. If there is more than one employee suitable, those employees who may be pregnant or taking maternity, shared parental or adoption leave should be offered the role first as they have special redundancy protection. A fair process must be followed and all candidates interviewed.

- Where a vacancy is considered by the Recruitment Team to potentially be suitable for the employee they will be contacted, and a job description and person specification will be supplied for the post. If applicable they should apply for the position via the Portal. If, after discussion by the Recruitment Team with the employee, it is decided the post is not suitable then they will remain on the list and will be contacted again when another suitable vacancy arises.
- If the employee takes up the vacancy, a trial period of a minimum of 4 weeks will be undertaken to assess their suitability for the position by both the manager and the employee. This period can be extended if training is required. This period can be extended by up to 12 weeks by mutual written agreement to provide for any necessary training. While the trial period is in operation the employees' original position, where it still exists, will be frozen.
- Before the end of the trial period a joint review meeting will be held with the employee, the line manager and HR to assess the suitability of the arrangement becoming permanent.
 - If the trial period is considered successful, then the employee will be transferred to the post and a contract of employment issued. Any further training needs will be agreed in consultation with HR.
 - If after the trial period the new position is not deemed suitable, the employee with notice, will return to their original position and be considered for future vacancies. In a redundancy situation where the original post no longer exists the employee will have the option to take a redundancy payment. If an employee unreasonably refuses the offer of alternative employment the redundancy payment will be withheld.

Please see Redundancy Policy and Procedure.

Manager's Responsibilities

- Ensure that all applications from any redeployees are fully considered and where they meet the essential criteria they are guaranteed an interview

- Whilst there is no obligation to create a role in order to redeploy an employee, where a vacancy exists redeployment should be considered.
- Where the redeployee is in a redundancy situation, there have a statutory right to a 4 week trial period so the manager needs to determine if the post is suitable.
- To provide the relevant training and support to a redeployee and reviewing their performance against set objectives.

Employee's Responsibilities

- An employee is expected to be committed to try and secure suitable employment.
- If an employee thinks the job is not suitable the employee needs to detail in writing why this is the case.
- The employee can access a range of support services including Human Resources and the Employee Assistance Programme which provides confidential help, support and counselling.

HR's Responsibilities

- Support the manager when they are considering applications from any redeployees and where the redeployees meet the essential criteria ensure they are offered an interview.
- Meet with employees to determine where their skills, abilities and experience lie and liaise with the Recruitment Team accordingly regarding employee role preferences.
- Ensure that during a trial period the manager provides any training to the redeployee that is required. Any potential extension of the trial period beyond the statutory 4 weeks period should be discussed with HR.
- Support both the employee and manager at a review meeting to assess the outcome of the trial period and ensure the relevant HR paperwork is then completed.

Salary Protection

A post accepted on a lower grade will be eligible for salary protection and will last for a period of three years from the date of the redeployment. During the protection period they remain on their current grade and will not be entitled to the NJC yearly pay award until such time as the peer group maximum catches up with their current pay. At the end of the protection period, they will move to the maximum salary of the peer group range.

Salary protection applies in situations where the employee is redeployed to a lower graded post through the action of the Council. Where the request for redeployment is made by the employee and is not considered necessary by their line manager for operational reasons salary protection will not apply.

Pension Contributions

Salary protection applies to basic pay only and does not extend to pension contributions, which will be calculated based on the actual salary received in the redeployed role, in accordance with the rules of the relevant pension scheme.

Applying for a post above current grade

Employees who apply for a higher graded post compared to their current grade, will be subject to a competitive interview process where appointments will be made on merit.

Timescales, where at risk of redundancy

At the beginning of the redeployment procedure the employee will receive a letter informing them that their position is at risk of redundancy. The redeployment procedure will continue throughout the employee's notice period. During this time the employee will remain on full pay. If after this period, no permanent transfer has been made, employment will be terminated. The employee will be informed in writing of the reason for their dismissal and may have the right to appeal if that is included in the relevant procedure.

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Work Experience Policy and Procedure

Introduction

West Oxfordshire District Council ('the Council') recognises that as part of the community it has a role to fulfil in terms of the provision of work experience through its local schools and colleges. This can be done by providing a structured programme which can generate maximum benefit for both the student/young person and the Council.

We encourage work experience placements and acknowledge the benefits that a work experience person can bring, such as enthusiasm, extra human resource to help to complete projects and improved ties with the local community.

Similarly, a work experience person benefits from their placement with the Council by gaining valuable career experience and enhancing their CV.

The Work Experience Policy and Procedure ('the Policy') does not form part of any contracts of employment and we reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time.

Scope

The Policy applies specifically to students of school age (in their last two years of compulsory schooling) and those undertaking post-16 courses at schools or colleges. The main features of these placements are:

- placements take place on the employer's premises
- the vast majority of pre-16 placements last for one week
- students under compulsory school leaving age may only take part in placements arranged as part of their education by their school or governing body.

The Council is also committed to offering work experience opportunities to students/young persons in and leaving care to support them in harnessing their potential and providing them with this experience.

This Policy does not cover apprenticeships which are managed under separate arrangements.

What is Work Experience?

Work experience can be defined as: a placement on employer's premises in which a student/young person carries out a particular task or duty, or a range of tasks and duties, more or less as would an employee, but with the emphasis on the learning aspects of the experience.

'Work shadowing' may also form part of the experience, allowing close observation of jobs which for reasons of complexity and/or safety cannot be actively undertaken by the student/young person.

The success of a placement relies upon the effective partnership between the Council, the work experience organiser, the school and the student/care provider and the young person. Outcomes for the student/young people might include:

- learning to work on their own and as part of a team
- developing self-reliance, flexibility and self confidence
- developing key skills: communication, IT, problem solving and the management of self-learning
- developing an understanding of different vocational and occupational skills, which may help to determine their career choice
- improving attainment by making learning more relevant

Responsibility

The HR Team will be responsible for co-ordinating work placements with schools/colleges/care providers, and the department(s) where the student/young person will be placed. Therefore, in the first instance HR must be contacted before a student/young person is placed within the Council.

Head of Talent and Development at Publica, our HR support service, will work with specialist education, employment and training officers from care providers to identify opportunities to ensure they reach young people in or leaving care.

The necessary support will be provided to students/young people when they take up these opportunities, which may take the form of some reasonable adjustments.

Schools and colleges / Care providers

Applications from schools/colleges/care providers will be received positively and will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to the Council's ability to accommodate such a placement. There may be occasions where a student/young person wishes to undertake specific work experience i.e. in one section for the duration of their placement. It is the responsibility of the school to inform the HR team of any preferences for the placement(s). However, the student/young person will have the opportunity to let us know during their placement interview.

The school/college will contact HR, and an interview will be set up with the prospective student/young person and HR or the line manager who will act as the placement's supervisor/host for the duration of their work experience (Appendix A). The student/young person will be asked to fill in and bring along a pre-experience work form (Appendix B). HR will confirm the placement in writing to the school/care provider and a letter will be sent to the student/young person with a timetable for their placement (Appendix C & D).

Student/young person Feedback

At the end of each placement they will be asked to provide feedback on their experience with the Council. This feedback is valuable in helping the Council improve future placements and ensure they remain meaningful and supportive. They will be provided with a link to an online feedback form (via [Microsoft Forms](#)) to complete at the end of their placement.

Types of placements

Placements can be either:

- a work-shadowing placement of up to one week's duration, where the individual observes the work undertaken by employees but does not perform any work for the benefit of the Council, except for doing some work for illustrative or learning purposes; or
- a work experience placement, where the individual is expected to perform some work or provide some assistance to the Council or to its employees.

Method of placement

The HR Team will liaise with any departments that wish to offer work experience opportunities to coordinate a list of available work experience placements.

It will be the responsibility of each department to identify the likely commencement date and duration of each work experience placement and to notify the HR team. The duration of each work experience placement will be a matter for HR team to confirm, no single placement will usually be for more than 1 week in duration.

Induction and supervision

The supervisor/host will arrange for an induction for the work experience person on the first day of the assignment, during which they will be given essential information about the workplace and a tour of the building. This will include providing the work experience placement with the *Work Experience Handbook* and the supervisor/host will go through the Induction Checklist (Appendix E).

The HR team and supervisor/host will be made aware of any visits from representatives of the school and of the telephone number of a contact at the school in case of accident or emergency.

The assigned supervisor/host will be responsible for supervising people on work experience. They must be aware of safeguarding responsibilities and act in line with the Council's safeguarding policies and procedures. Supervisors/hosts should also refer to the Child Protection Guidance for Placement Providers (Appendix F) for practical advice on supporting students/young people appropriately during placements.

Tasks

The line manager acting as the assigned supervisor/host for the work experience placement and HR will ensure that the work experience person is given work that is commensurate with their skills and abilities.

The work may cover a range of tasks and may be in one department or in different departments over their time with the Council. Should there be insufficient work available in the department the relevant line manager will make reasonable efforts to find the work experience person suitable alternative work within the Council by liaising with the HR team and other line managers.

Hours

The number of hours worked will be agreed in advance by the Council, school/college, parents/guardians and students/the young person. The hours will be clearly stated on their work experience programme and covered through induction. Unless there are strong reasons to the contrary, it is recommended that students/young

people should not be asked to work more than a standard 7 ½ hour day. The Working Time Regulations (1998) also apply to students, and they should not be asked to work for more than five consecutive days out of seven, and must have a minimum of a 30 minute lunch break.

Payment

Work experience is part of the student's education, and the Council will make no payment for work performed, whether to the students/young people, the school or the educational/care institution arranging the placement.

Disciplinary and Capability Issues

Our disciplinary, grievance and capability procedures do not apply to work experience placements.

Where the relevant line manager has reason to believe that there are minor issues concerning the work experience person's capability or conduct, they will raise it informally with the work experience person. Where, in the opinion of the line manager, the capability or conduct issues are serious, the matter should be brought to the attention of the HR team.

Nevertheless, line managers and other employees should observe basic principles of fairness in dealing with any issues of capability or conduct that may arise.

In cases of capability, individuals should be informed of any shortcomings in their performance and given the chance to improve. In cases of misconduct, the line manager must have reasonable grounds for believing that the individual has been guilty of misconduct and should give them the opportunity to give any explanation/mitigation.

We reserve the right to terminate a placement immediately, should the work experience person be guilty of serious misconduct or any negligence resulting in loss or damage to the Council.

Health and Safety

We must ensure that all those who are on work experience or work-shadowing placements have the same basic training on matters of health and safety as other workers. The Council will also comply with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Working Time Regulations 1998, and safeguarding legislation relevant to young people under 18.

As part of a work experience placement, it is essential that:

- students/young people are properly prepared and briefed on the hazards of the workplace and the control measures provided to reduce or eliminate risk or injury, before they start work.
- workplace supervisors/hosts and other employees know exactly what is expected of them and aware of their responsibilities.
- the schools/colleges are clear about their responsibilities in arranging placements for students/young people and introducing them to general health and safety at work issues, prior to their placement.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 apply to all young people under 18. Risk assessments will need to be carried out for each placement before they arrive, and the measures put in place to control them. Please refer to the [Risk Assessment Guidance document](#) and complete a [Risk Assessment Template](#) on the portal. In addition, once they are in place specific assessments on their workstation must be undertaken. When students/young people are below compulsory school leaving age the Council must provide their parents/guardians with key findings of the risk assessment and the control measures introduced to minimise, or ideally eliminate any significant risks. This information will normally be passed on through the student's school/care provider.

Any problems with the placement should be discussed with HR and the school will then be notified. In particular, in the case of any accident involving a student/young person, a report giving full details should be made, without delay to the Safety Adviser.

Insurance

The Council provides Employers and Public Liability Insurance which covers all students/young people undertaking any work experience with the Council.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

The Council is committed to ensuring work experience opportunities are accessible to all, regardless of background, and will make reasonable adjustments to support students/young people with additional needs.

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Private and Confidential

Via Email

Name

Address 1

Address 2

Postcode

Date



Work Experience Placement Interview

Dear **{Name}**

I am pleased to confirm that we have arranged a work experience placement for you for **{Insert dates from – to}**.

We would like to meet you before you begin your placement so that you gain the most from this experience. Please therefore ask for **{Insert name}** at **{Insert time}** at our **{Insert place}** Offices, (please find a map enclosed).

I have enclosed a form which I would like you to complete and bring with you as this will help us to get to know each other in a little more detail before you begin the placement.

In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or if there is anything that you are not sure about.

Yours sincerely

{Insert name}

{Insert title}

cc Work experience host or nominated employee involved on this interview



Pre Work Experience Placement Form

This form is for you to complete before commencing your work experience placement with the Council. It is designed for you to let us know about yourself including your career interests so that we can try to make your placement with us as rewarding and enjoyable as possible. We cannot guarantee placement in a particular area, as it is dependent on service needs. **Please bring this with you when you come to meet us at your interview.**

Name				
School/College/Care				
Dates of Placement	From		To	

Interests / Hobbies:

Career Interests:

My reasons for wanting to be placed at West Oxfordshire District Council:

Are there any areas of work that you are particularly interested in?

What objectives would you like to achieve by the end of your placement?



Name

Address 1

Address 2

Address 3

Address 4

Postcode

Work Experience Placement {Insert dates from – to}

Dear **{Name}**

I am pleased to confirm that we have arranged a work experience placement for you during the dates above. Your placement with the Council will involve you working in **one OR a number of different service areas**. This will enable you to gain an insight of how these service areas are run individually and provide you with an overview of the variety of work carried out by the Council as a whole.

On your first day please report to **{Insert name}** at **{Insert time}** at our Woodgreen Offices (please find a map enclosed). They will be your central point of contact for the duration of your time with us, therefore please note their telephone number is **{Insert number}** should contact need to be made in the case of an emergency. They will provide you with an induction on arrival so that you understand your programme fully for the week(s) ahead. Please find enclosed a detailed timetable for your placement.

We kindly ask that you complete a short online feedback form after your placement to help us improve future opportunities, using [this link](#).

In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or if there is anything that you are not sure about. We look forward to welcoming you to West Oxfordshire District Council and hope that you find your work experience both enjoyable and useful.

Yours sincerely

{Insert name}

{Insert title}

cc Work experience placement supervisor/host involved on this placement



Work Experience Timetable

Name		Dates	From: To:
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Please complete the Work Experience Feedback Form at the end of your placement by clicking [HERE](#) or by scanning the QR code above.

Date	Time	Service Area	Content	Supervisor/Host

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Work experience guidance notes and checklist

Name:		Host Name:	
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Standards and expectations - while work experience students should be treated the same as all other employees to give them a true experience of the working environment, they may not be aware of certain 'normal' standards of working practice. Please have patience with students.

Training/supervision - level of tasks and previous experience will depend on the age of the student – please explain tasks fully before leaving a student to work alone. Whether currently at school, school leaver or undergraduate, you may find that your student is more/less capable than you expected, so be flexible when explaining things.

Keeping in touch – students may not be used to working alone, make sure they know who their key contacts are – especially if their host is called away, make sure they know who they can call if they are late/cannot get into work/are ill etc.

Please refer to the following checklist during your hosting period with the student:

Activity	Date actioned
Discuss building access arrangements, signing in at reception, passes, entrances and exits (including when main reception is closed if they arrive before 9am/leave after 5pm)	
Discuss the Pre Work Experience Placement Form sent with their Welcome Letter. If possible, <i>adapt placement to suit the student – if they're interested in another area, can you arrange for them to meet with someone from that department for ½ hr to discuss their role?</i>	
Print off Handbook and explain they should take it with them to each hosting department. Give them time to read through it and go through the timetable.	

Activity	Date actioned
Ensure you have their emergency contact details and any medical info that you need to be aware of during their placement and note this at the end of this form.	
Introduction to colleagues - discuss their roles and responsibilities, Show them to their workstation, if applicable	
Tour of the building and location of different departments.	
Toilets	
Local facilities/amenities	
Fire exits and muster points – refer to SAFE Emergency Evacuation process	
Catering arrangements – what are their plans for lunch? Ensure they have at least 30 minutes	
Parking & cycle arrangements - optional	
Smoking facilities - optional	
Printer locations	
Notice boards	
Meeting room locations - optional	
Advise them of any particular security arrangements that apply	
Show a brief overview of the Portal - News, WOW	
<p>Show them a copy of employee Health & Safety Handbook, incorporating the H&S Policy Statement on page 3/the portal.</p> <p>Allow time for them to read the booklet and ask questions.</p> <p><i>A person might be unfamiliar with ‘obvious’ risks and the hosting manager should consider the need for tailored training/closer supervision.</i></p>	

Activity	Date actioned
Discuss the requirements for personal protective equipment (PPE), if relevant and arrange for the necessary items to be ordered as soon as possible. Discuss when it is to be worn and how to return it	
Introduction to the Council and explain how employees make valuable contribution to the Council and its values.	
At the end of each day, have a catch up to discuss their day and experience.	
End of work experience feedback form (at end of Handbook) – we would encourage you to discuss this with the student on their penultimate/last day with you.	
Please note anything HR needs to know that may affect the placement, i.e. medication etc below:	
Emergency Contact Information (include name, phone number, their relation to you and a teacher's name to contact):	
	Teacher Information:

For the Student/Young person in placement to complete:

I have had all the above areas explained to me and I fully understand my responsibilities whilst at the Council.

I understand that any knowledge and information gained whilst on placement must remain strictly confidential at all times.

Student/young person Signature	
Date	

Child Protection Guidance for Placement Providers

Work Experience Scheme

West Oxfordshire District Council ('the Council' is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all young people undertaking work experience. The following guidance sets out practical measures for supervisors/hosts/managers and employees to help ensure placements provide a safe, supportive, and professional environment for students. This guidance should be read alongside the Council's Safeguarding Policy and other relevant procedures.

- **Touch:** There may be occasions when you need to touch a young person (e.g. When you are guiding them in carrying out a technical operation) but these should be kept to a minimum.
- **Behaviour:** Whilst it is important to reassure a young person who may be nervous in a new placement and reliant on your guidance, you should avoid being over familiar. Never permit 'horseplay' which may cause embarrassment or fear.
- **Environment:** Where possible avoid being on your own in an isolated or closed environment with a young person.
- **Travel:** Ensure that there is a known destination and check-in times with a third party in situations where a young person will be travelling alone with an adult during the placement. It is also a good idea to make available a mobile phone (or equivalent) in such situations.
- **Mentor:** Those placed immediately in charge of young people should be competent in their work-role, mature in their attitudes, and yet, at the same time, be at ease with them.
- **Disclosure:** Occasionally young people may disclose confidential information to a work colleague that gives rise to concern for their physical or emotional safety. In such situations you should speak to your line manager and share your concern with an appropriate representative of the education provider (usually this will be a school's work experience co-ordinator or the head teacher).
- **Disqualification:** You are reminded that you are required under law to protect children from harm and that any employees are required, under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act, to declare that they are disqualified from working with children.



Working Abroad Policy and Procedure

Introduction

West Oxfordshire District Council ('the Council') prides itself on being an employer of choice. With an incredibly varied role in delivering the very best for our residents, communities and businesses, our employees are committed and really make a difference. In return we seek to support and empower our employees, to give their best.

The Working Abroad Policy and Procedure ('the Policy') is to support flexibility in work arrangements while maintaining compliance with business needs, employment laws, and tax regulations. This Policy allows permanent employees to request to work from an international location for a limited period, while ensuring that such arrangements are temporary in nature.

This Policy does not form part of your Contract of Employment, and we reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time.

Scope

This Policy applies to all permanent employees who have completed at least one year of continuous service with the Council and who are not the subject of ongoing disciplinary, grievance, capability or sickness absence processes.

It does not apply to contractors, consultants, agency workers or any self-employed individuals working for the Council.

Restrictions

This Policy does not allow requests for permanent relocation outside the UK or extensions beyond the 4-month period. These requests will not be considered.

Additionally, this Policy only allows requests to work in countries within the EU and covered by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

This policy assumes that if misconduct is suspected, our separate Disciplinary Policy and Procedure will apply. For example, we may take disciplinary action if there is evidence that:

- An employee is undertaking inappropriate activities whilst working abroad
- An employee has breached any of the Council's policies and procedures

Application and approval procedure

An employee may request to work abroad for up to a maximum of 4 months, and an employee can submit one request within a rolling 12-month period.

An employee must submit a formal request to their manager in writing at least 3 months prior to the intended start date of the working abroad arrangement. An employees requests must include:

- Justification for the temporary overseas work arrangement
- Details on the specific location and any potential impact on business operations
- Proposed start and end dates, including the total duration of the arrangement
- Confirmation that a valid VISA or other authorisation (existing Citizenship etc.) will be in place for the host country to cover the duration of the intended stay

An employee must demonstrate that their role can be effectively performed remotely without negatively impacting service delivery, collaboration, or team performance.

The manager will usually arrange a meeting to discuss the request. The aim of the meeting is to find out more about your proposed working arrangements and how they could be of benefit to both the employee and the Council. An employee should be prepared to suggest solutions which will help the case.

Each request will be reviewed by the appropriate Head of Service, HR, ICT and appropriate Director on a case-by-case basis, considering operational feasibility, compliance with tax and legal obligations, data security, and any time zone or work-hour limitations.

Final approval of requests rests with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), in conjunction with HR and is subject to departmental workload and organisational priorities.

Timescales

Once an employee has submitted a request, it will be dealt with as soon as possible. The aim is for all requests to be dealt within a reasonable timeframe from receipt of the request. The timescales within this Policy may be extended where mutually agreed.

Notifying employees of the decision

If an employees request is approved, the agreed arrangements will be confirmed to you in writing.

If your request is denied, the reason for the decision will be confirmed in writing. A request may be denied in full or in part, for example, the Council may propose:

- A modified version of the request
- An alternative start date
- A shorter period of time for the working abroad arrangements

Right of appeal

As the Council does not have a business requirement to operate outside the UK and this Policy is implemented entirely at the Council's discretion, decisions regarding requests to work abroad are final and not subject to appeal.

Terms and conditions

The Council reserve the right to terminate the working abroad arrangement at any time if it affects performance, operational needs, or compliance. The employee will usually be given at least 20 working days' notice to terminate the arrangement.

An employee is required to return to the UK at their own expense if business needs arise, such as resolving IT issues, attending mandatory in-person meetings, or fulfilling other critical responsibilities. In these circumstances, the employee will be given as much notice as possible, where applicable.

While working abroad, all the Council's Policies and procedures will continue to apply.

Work location

The overseas location must have the infrastructure to support the necessary technology and data security requirements for the employee's role. The employee is not able to move work location between countries during the period abroad.

Time zone considerations

The employee must align the work hours with UK business hours, unless an alternative schedule is approved in advance by their manager. An employee should be accessible during agreed working hours and maintain regular communication with their manager.

Tax and legal compliance

The employee will be responsible for ensuring compliance with any local tax and immigration requirements and must work with HR to confirm that no tax liabilities or legal risks arise for the Council.

Compensation and benefits

The employee will continue to be paid in GBP and remain subject to UK taxes, employment benefits and employment law. No additional compensation for travel, accommodation, or living expenses will be provided. The employee will remain a resident of the UK.

Company equipment and data security

The employee must use Council-issued equipment and follow all of the Council's data security protocols. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that adequate measures are in place to prevent the loss or damage to Council equipment, ensure data security and prevent fraud.

Insurance and liability

The employee should verify that they have adequate personal travel insurance; the Council assumes no liability for personal matters arising abroad.

The Council's insurance does not cover our work equipment while working outside of the UK. The Council will review the risk associated with each case and agree on appropriate actions on an individual basis.

Reinstatement to UK-based work

At the end of the approved overseas work period, the employee is required to return to their primary work location in the UK and continue their duties as per their original contract terms and by a date specified before departure.

Related policies

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Council's Agile Working Policy and Procedure.

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Approved by:	Performance and Appointments Committee
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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

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