



**Committee:** PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

**Date:** THURSDAY, 23<sup>RD</sup> JULY 2020

**Venue:** THIS WILL BE A VIRTUAL MEETING

**Time:** 5.00PM, OR AT THE RISE OF THE MEETING OF JCC, WHICHEVER IS THE LATER

## A G E N D A

1. **Apologies for absence**

2. **Minutes**

Minutes of meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020 (previously circulated).

3. **Declarations of Interest**

To receive declarations by Councillors of interests in respect of items on this Agenda.

Councillors are reminded that, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, they are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests which have not already been declared in the Council's Register of Interests. (It is a criminal offence not to declare a disclosable pecuniary interest either in the Register or at the meeting).

Whilst not a legal requirement, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9 and in the interests of clarity and transparency, Councillors should declare any disclosable pecuniary interests which they have already declared in the Register, at this point in the meeting.

In accordance with Part B Section 2 of the Code Of Conduct, Councillors are required to declare the existence and nature of any other interests as defined in paragraphs 8(1) or 9(2) of the Code of Conduct.

4. **Items of Urgent Business authorised by the Chair**

5. **Proposed Policy Updates** (Pages 3 - 6)

Report of the Head of HR.

Review of Probation Policy - Proposed Updates (Pages 7 - 36)

Review of Bereavement and Compassionate Leave - Proposed Updates (Pages 37 - 41)

Flexible working hours scheme - Proposal to change bandwidth permanently (Pages 42 - 61)

6. **Review of Equality & Diversity Policy - Review and share initiatives for improvements** (Pages 62 - 64)

Report of the Head of HR.

Lancaster District: Fair Work Charter (Pages 65 - 71)

Staff Wellbeing & Inclusion Group (Pages 72 - 75)

Recruitment statistics & costings for advertising on different job boards (Pages 76 - 78)

## **ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS**

### **(i) Membership**

Councillors Oliver Robinson (Chair), Phillip Black (Vice-Chair), June Greenwell, Caroline Jackson, Erica Lewis, Cary Matthews and David Whitworth

### **(ii) Substitute Membership**

Councillors Roger Dennison (Substitute), Andrew Gardiner (Substitute), Jake Goodwin (Substitute), Mandy King (Substitute), Joyce Pritchard (Substitute), Jason Wood (Substitute), Peter Yates (Substitute) and Joanna Young (Substitute)

### **(iii) Queries regarding this Agenda**

Please contact Stephen Metcalfe, Democratic Services - email [sjmetcalfe@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:sjmetcalfe@lancaster.gov.uk).

### **(iv) Changes to Membership, substitutions or apologies**

Please contact Democratic Support email [democraticsupport@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:democraticsupport@lancaster.gov.uk).

KIERAN KEANE,  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE,  
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Published on Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE****Proposed Policy Updates**

23rd July 2020

**Report of the Head of HR****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To enable the Committee to consider and approve the updates to the Probation Policy, Bereavement and Compassionate Leave Policy and the Flexible Working hours Policy

This report is public.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (1) That the Personnel Committee agrees to the updates to the Probation Policy**
- (2) That the Committee agrees to the updates to the Bereavement and Compassionate Leave Policy**
- (3) That the Committee agrees to the permanent changes in flexi scheme band-width and credit and debit hours increases, as set out in the report.**

**1. Introduction**

There is a requirement to regularly review HR policies in line with updates to employment law and improvements identified to ways of working.

As a result, there are three policies which have recently been identified as requiring review and updating.

**2. Probation Policy**

- 2.1 Section 1.1 – amendment to wording as per highlighted text.
- 2.2 Section 3.2 last bullet point – has been changed to confirm in writing to the appointee the outcome of the Probationary/Appointment Review Period. Following the results of the Ad Esse lean review and recommendations.
- 2.3 Section 3.3 first bullet point – amendment from guidance document to intranet
- 2.4 Section 8.6 – amended to say that we won't provide employees with the documents but provide them with a link to the intranet pages, as all employees have access to these in an agile way.
- 2.5 Section 9.3.6 last bullet point – changed to say 'confirm date of Six-Month Review Meeting' rather than to arrange it as it should already be booked in
- 2.6 Section 9.4.10 – has been changed to 'Where the employee has met the required standard and completed Probation/Appointment Review Form 3 – Six Month Review, their line manager will write to the appointee to confirm the successful completion of their Probation/Appointment Review Period'. Following the results of the Ad Esse lean review and recommendations.
- 2.7 Section 12.5 – This has been changed to say that only Heads of Service who report into a Director can hold these meetings. There has been no change here other than to reflect the current job titles

- 2.8 Section 13.2 – changed from writing to the HR Manager to just HR
- 2.9 Section 13.3 – changed from Service Manager to Director to reflect new job titles and to be in line with section 12.5
- 2.10 Any referral to a Chief Officer has been changed to Director
- 2.11 Any referral to Service HR Partner has been changed to HR
- 2.12 Any reference to 'job description and person specification' to just 'job description' now that we no longer have person specifications

### **3 Bereavement and Compassionate Leave Policy**

- 3.1 Fundamentally, changes were made to update the policy to reflect the introduction of Jack's Law. The Parental Bereavement Leave Regulations 2020 and the Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Act 2018.
- 3.2 Addition of a weeks' statutory parental bereavement leave and pay in line with the new legislation (added sections 3.2-3.8) Jack Herd's mother Lucy Herd campaigned for reform after the death of her son, hence the name 'Jack's law'.

See below link to government article on the introduction of Jack's Law for info

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-set-to-introduce-jacks-law-new-legal-right-to-paid-parental-bereavement-leave>

We already have a generous scheme which allow all employees a week's bereavement leave on full pay for the death of an immediate family member and so we added a week's statutory bereavement leave and pay to our allowance to comply with the new law.

- 3.3 A change has been made to introduce a day's funeral leave for those who lose a member of their family which isn't immediate family where bereavement leave would not apply i.e. Aunt, Uncle Grandparent (added section 3.2).
- 3.4 Changes to a shift in emphasis to allow for non-conventional family units i.e. bereavement leave to be allowed at managers discretions for those who were raised by a grandparent or other relative (section 2.1 definitions).

All other provisions inclusive of the current arrangements for compassionate leave remain unchanged.

### **4 Flexible working hours scheme policy**

- 4.1 During the Covid 19 pandemic, to enable the Council to support the community and to assist our employees to be able to continue to work their hours, we introduced temporary changes in the flexi time bandwidth. The earliest start time in the policy was from 07:30 hours and the latest finish time 19:30 hours. This is documented in section 3 of the policy.
- 4.2 To enable staff to work even more flexibly to support caring responsibilities and for the Council to be able to extend the Customer Services opening times from 8am until 8pm 7 days a week, and also after asking staff what they felt would be a reasonable band-with to accommodate these requirements, we agreed on a temporary band-with of start time 06:00 hours and a finish time of no later than 22:30 hours. As result of wellbeing surveys, staff have said this temporary flexibility has worked extremely well and they would like these changes to be made permanent.

4.3 There were also a request from staff to temporarily increase the credit hours from 12 to 15 and the debit hours from 4 to 15, to support flexibility during the pandemic. The credit and debit hours are documented in sections 6.1 and 6.2 of the policy. As a result of wellbeing surveys, staff have said this has worked extremely well and they would like these changes to be made permanent.

**6. Conclusion**

Members are asked to review and accept the changes, or offer alternative suggestions for further amendment to the probation policy

Members are asked to accept the changes to the Bereavement and Compassionate Leave Policy as per the changes in employment law.

Members are asked to review and accept the permanent changes to band-with in the flexi time scheme policy or offer alternative suggestions.

**CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing):**

N/A.

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Act 2018, which came into force on 18 January 2020, amended and inserted new statutory provision into the Employment Act 1996 (which is the primary employment act). The new provision enable the Secretary of State to make Regulations in respect of parental bereavement leave and pay. The Parental Bereavement Leave Regulations 2020, which came into force on 10 March 2020, make the relevant provision.

This report seeks to address the recent changes in employment law. The Council should carefully consider its policies to ensure that they are up-to-date and compliant with current law.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications arising from the appended probation policy. With regard to the bereavement policy, any additional leave arising will be managed from existing budgets.

**OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, such as Human Resources, Information Services, Property, Open Spaces:**

Not applicable.

**SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The s151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

**MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Current policies and amended policies

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## **Probation and Appointment Review Policy and Procedure**

### **1.0 Scope**

- 1.1 The Council's Probation and Appointment Review Policy and Procedure applies to all newly appointed employees and to existing employees, excluding Directors, the Head of Paid Services, the Monitoring Officer and the S151 Officer, who have taken on a new role within the Council. These employees will be referred to throughout this document as the 'appointee'. The Probation and Appointment Review Policy and Procedure forms part of the contract of employment.
- 1.2 The Probation and Appointment Review Policy and Procedure does not apply to casual workers.

### **2.0 Objectives and Principles**

- 2.1 Lancaster City Council recognises the need to support and develop new appointees to achieve their full potential. The Probation/Appointment Review Period allows the Council to assess the capabilities and conduct of each appointee and allows the appointee to decide whether or not the job is suitable for them.
- 2.2 All appointees must be clear about the standard of work expected during the course of their employment. An up to date job description provides a knowledge and skills framework for each post, and will be used in conjunction with regular interaction during the Probation/Appointment Review Period between the manager and appointee.
- 2.3 The Council recognises the link that can develop between a poor induction and Probation/Appointment Review Period and poor performance in the role. The Council is committed to ensuring an effective induction and Probation/Appointment Review Period to avoid performance management issues arising later in employment.
- 2.4 Whilst some appointees may be recruited or promoted from within the organisation, it is still necessary to monitor the effectiveness of internally appointed employees and assist them in achieving the required standards of performance in a new post. The Council is therefore committed to the provision of an Appointment Review Period for internal recruits, which shadows the Probation Procedure to assist the appointee in achieving the required standards in their new role.
- 2.5 The objectives of this Policy are:
- ❑ To ensure that new appointees are supported in a structured way during their Probation/Appointment Review Period.
  - ❑ To provide line managers with a framework and guidance to assess the skills, conduct, performance and attendance of appointees, before deciding whether or not to confirm their appointment.

- ❑ To ensure that before the appointee is confirmed as successfully completing their Probation/Appointment Review Period they have reached the required standard of performance expected for that role.
- ❑ To ensure there is a consistent, supportive and fair approach to dealing with issues that arise during the Probation/Appointment Review Periods, in line with legislative guidelines and best practice.
- ❑ Where appointees under Probation/Appointment Review are unable to reach a good standard of performance, to deal with any concerns in an appropriate and timely manner.

2.6 The following principles apply to the Council's procedures for dealing with matters of concern that arise during the Probation/Appointment Review Period:

- ❑ Application of the procedure will be fair, prompt, impartial and consistent, and will be applied without discrimination.
- ❑ Action will be taken as soon as problems are identified. Where appropriate and if timescales allow, the appointee may be given more time to meet the requirements of the role and provided with further support.
- ❑ Appointees are encouraged to raise, at an early point, any concerns they might have during their Probation/Appointment Review Period. The Council will in return take all reasonable and practicable steps to assist the employee.
- ❑ Where it is apparent that the appointee is unable to reach the required standards of performance the matter will be handled appropriately and without unnecessary delay.

### **3.0 Responsibilities**

3.1 Appointees' responsibilities:

All appointees have a contractual responsibility to work to the required standard and to achieve a level of performance which is prescribed by and acceptable to the Council.

Appointees therefore have a responsibility to:

- ❑ demonstrate their suitability for the post which they are appointed to;
- ❑ bring to the attention of their line manager, at the earliest opportunity, any difficulties they are experiencing, or concerns they may have;
- ❑ raise any issues outside of work which may affect their performance with their line manager, as soon as possible;
- ❑ raise with their line manager any need for training, development or support, which they believe to be necessary in order for them to fulfil the requirements of the role;
- ❑ individuals newly appointed to Lancaster City Council must attend the Council's Corporate Induction and undertake any mandatory training required for the post;
- ❑ co-operate fully with the Council's Probation and Appointment Review Policy and Procedure where performance falls short of the required standards.

3.2 Management responsibilities:

Managers are responsible for actively managing and monitoring the Probation/Appointment



Reviews, and will be supported by Human Resources (HR). It is essential that managers proactively assess and support employees during these key first months of a new role.

Probation should not be viewed by line managers as a form filling exercise that only needs to be considered at specific intervals during the Probation/Appointment Review Period. Rather the Probation/Appointment Review Period should be viewed as a clear opportunity for line managers to shape and develop the post holder.

Managers should therefore ensure they communicate what is expected of their appointee on a regular basis during the Probation/Appointment Review Period. This may be through regular one to one meetings, team meetings or briefings, training sessions, etc., which will form the basis of support offered to the appointee.

Managers have a responsibility to:

- ❑ establish standards of performance, responsibilities and objectives that are consistent with the position and in line with the **job description**;
- ❑ communicate the required standards, responsibilities and objectives of the post to the appointee;
- ❑ communicate the Values and Behaviours expected of all employees of the Council and ensure that these are demonstrated in the Probation/Appointment Review Period.
- ❑ be available for advice and supervision with the appointee, when required;
- ❑ keep written notes of 1:1 meetings and supervision sessions;
- ❑ ensure that the appointee is effectively inducted locally within the service area and their immediate team;
- ❑ ensure that the appointee attends Corporate Induction and all mandatory relevant courses, including any online e-learning that is assigned;
- ❑ promptly hold formal Probation/Appointment Review meetings by the end of the second week, third and sixth month anniversary of their appointment;
- ❑ fully complete all required paperwork and send to HR in a timely fashion;
- ❑ take action, where necessary, to resolve any issues at an early stage.
- ❑ **confirm in writing to the appointee the outcome of the Probationary/Appointment Review Period.**

### 3.3 HR responsibilities:

The HR Team are responsible for providing advice and support to managers and employees during the Probation/Appointment Review Period, as required.

HR will:

- ❑ ensure that the line managers are sent the dates of the Probation/Appointment Review Meetings, **including links to the relevant forms on the intranet.** ;
- ❑ provide advice and guidance to managers, appointees and trade union representatives on the correct implementation of the policy and procedure;

- ❑ ensure that managers treat all new appointees in a fair and equitable manner through the consistent application of this policy and procedure;
- ❑ attend formal meetings as outlined in the procedure;

#### **4.0 The distinction between a Probation Review and an Appointment Review**

- 4.1 All appointees who are new to Lancaster City Council are subject to a six month Probation Period.
- 4.2 Appointees who are new to Lancaster City Council, but who have worked previously in Local Government or within a body covered by the Local Government Modification Order are also subject to the six month Probation Period, as they are new to Lancaster City Council. Whilst suitability for the role must be established, this does not affect any other rights to continuous service e.g. for redundancy purposes.
- 4.3 Where an appointee with previous Local Government service fails to establish their suitability for the role their employment will be terminated with the appropriate notice.
- 4.4 Existing Lancaster City Council appointees who have transferred internally from another role within the Council are subject to a six month Appointment Review Period. When issues arise during the Appointment Review Period managers should handle these in line with this procedure. Should the required improvements not be made, the matter should be progressed to Stage 2 of the Capability and Performance Improvement Policy and Procedure.

#### **5.0 Temporary Staff**

- 5.1 Appointees on contracts of six months or longer will be required to complete a full Probation Review period.
- 5.2 The successful completion of a Probation Review Period by a temporary appointee will not confer permanent employment on that individual.
- 5.3 Where an individual is on a temporary contract of less than six months, the Probation Review Period will span the whole period of employment. If the temporary contract was to be extended, the Probation Review Period would continue in line with the procedure until such time as they have met the probation requirements. As a minimum, the line manager should undertake the Two Week and Three Month Review Meetings to ensure the required level of performance is reached.
- 5.4 In the case of 5.2 and 5.3 above, there will not usually be a requirement to undertake the Six Month Review Meeting, as in most cases, there will be no permanent post for the individual to be confirmed into. If, however, it is likely that the temporary contract will be extended beyond six months duration, or there is chance of the contract becoming permanent, then it will be necessary to undertake the Six Month Review Meeting.
- 5.5 It is recommended, however, that even where a Six Month Review Meeting is not required, line managers should meet with individuals to feedback on their level of performance regularly throughout the Probation Review Period until the end of the temporary contract.
- 5.6 At all times, the employee should be clear that the contract is one of a temporary nature.
- 5.7 All reviews should be completed in a timely fashion, in line with the dates outlined in this Policy and Procedure, until the employee leaves the organisation.

#### **6.0 Staff on Secondment**

- 6.1 Any individual on secondment for more than six months, into another role within the Council, will be subject to a full Appointment Review Period.
- 6.2 There is no requirement for an individual on secondment for less than six months to have an Appointment Review Period. However, if the line manager has concerns regarding the employee's performance, capability, attendance or conduct during the term of the secondment, they should speak with them, in the first instance, to discuss if any further support can be identified. The manager may decide that the most appropriate option is to terminate the secondment early, following advice from HR. Where this is considered to be the most appropriate course of action the manager will explain their reasons for this decision to the secondee, and will give them reasonable notice of their return to their substantive role.
- 6.3 On successful completion of the Appointment Review Period, the appointee will be confirmed into the role for the agreed period of the secondment only. This will not be confirmation into the role on a permanent basis.

## **7.0 Probation and Appointment Review Procedure**

- 7.1 In order to support the Probation and Appointment Review process the Council has developed a procedure to assist in the fair and consistent treatment of all new appointees.
- 7.2 The Probation/Appointment Review Period normally lasts for a period of six months. Throughout the six month Probation/Appointment Review Period an appointee's performance and competence should be subject to assessment by their line manager.
- 7.3 Regular informal one to one meetings or discussions should be held to review performance and to ensure that new appointees are kept informed of their progress against the required standards. Whilst one to one meetings are informal, these still form part of the process of assessing or measuring an appointee's performance, and ensuring that they are receiving appropriate support.
- 7.4 Managers must ensure that any concerns are raised as soon as possible to allow the appointee opportunity to improve. Where concerns only develop towards the end of the Probation/Appointment Review Period, this will not prevent matters being considered in line with the relevant sections of this Policy and Procedure.
- 7.5 Formal review meetings should take place within the appointee's first two weeks of employment, then at the three month, mid-way point, and six months after they started in the role, in line with Section 9.
- 7.6 It is good practice for the line manager to book the review meetings into the diary of the employee soon after the start of employment, to ensure that the review meetings take place in a timely manner.

## **8.0 Commencing Employment and Induction**

- 8.1 Line managers have responsibility for ensuring that their employees are appropriately inducted into their roles. It is known that where an effective induction takes place and the appointee feels welcomed into a new organisation or team, they are more likely to feel a stronger positive connection with their employer and therefore more likely to perform and attend work well.
- 8.2 It is good practice for line managers to contact the appointee prior to them starting work in their new role and ensure they know when and where to arrive on their first day in the role and who they should ask for upon arrival. This is also an opportunity for the appointee to ask any further questions they may have before their first day in the role.

- 8.3 The line manager should ensure that they (or another nominated individual) are available to welcome the appointee on their first day in the role. In the first few days in the role the line manager should give a local induction to provide the appointee with essential information regarding the role, team and wider Council, including time to complete any appropriate online e-learning and to ensure that the employee understands their responsibilities with regard to relevant health and safety matters.
- 8.4 Line managers are responsible for ensuring that work locations or work stations are prepared and any equipment the appointee may require is ordered in preparation for their first day. This will help ensure that the appointee feels welcome on arrival.
- 8.5 Where appointees need to undertake specified training before they are able to undertake some or all aspects of their role, such as manual handling, the line manager should ensure that this is arranged promptly.
- 8.6 A new starter email will be provided by HR to the line managers of any appointees who are new to Lancaster City Council. **The email will contain links to the intranet** where the relevant documents can be found, which should be completed with the appointee and used in conjunction with any service based induction arrangements.

## **9.0 Undertaking Probation and Appointment Review Assessments**

### **9.1 Initial Meeting**

- 9.1.1 An initial Probationary/Appointment Review meeting should then be held within the first two weeks of the appointee commencing their new role. This is separate to any general induction meetings. This is an opportunity for the line manager to outline their expectations during the Probation/Appointment Review Period and to set initial objectives for the appointee. The main objectives should be listed on the **Probation/Appointment Review Form 1**.
- 9.1.2 The Probationary/Appointment Review Period must be properly planned to be effective. The standards required and objectives to be achieved need to be explained to the appointee and they should be clear of what is expected of them. By signing the Probation/Appointment Review Form 1, the appointee is confirming they understand the standards required and objectives they must achieve.
- 9.1.3 Appointees should be set between three and six objectives, depending on the nature of the job role, which should follow the S.M.A.R.T. principle (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time limited). These should be linked to the relevant Job Description for the post. Further support on setting objectives is available from HR or via the HR Learning and Development pages on the intranet.
- 9.1.4 It is recognised that in some areas of the Council, in addition to the main objectives listed on the form, the service unit may have a fuller list of objectives/targets that they consider must be achieved in order for a specific role to be effectively carried out. Where this is the case the line manager must ensure that the appointee is aware of this and it may be useful to append any such document to the **Probation/Appointment Review Form 1**.
- 9.1.5 The health and safety risk assessment(s) for the post, will have been revisited by the line manager at the time the post was advertised, and therefore the health and safety information discussed between the manager and appointee will be current. During the initial meeting the line manager will make the appointee aware of any key health and safety responsibilities and requirements, which are attached to the post.
- 9.1.6 A record of the meeting must be kept on the **Probation/Appointment Review Form 1**,

which must be signed by both the line manager and the appointee. The form should be sent to HR within five working days of the meeting and this will be retained on the appointee's central personnel record. Copies should be retained by the manager and appointee for their reference.

## 9.2 Initial Learning and Development Needs

9.2.1 The manager and appointee should also discuss any initial learning and development needs, which will assist the appointee in becoming effective in their role. It is important that any development needs should be clearly linked to the role. The line manager should make the appointee aware of corporate training opportunities and ensure that any mandatory training is completed as soon as possible. In the case of e-learning this should be within the first week of appointment.

9.2.4 All new appointees will automatically be invited to Corporate Induction within their probation period. It is a mandatory requirement that all individuals who are new to the Council attend this Corporate Induction to ensure that they are orientated to the wider Council. This may take place some weeks after the employee starts in their new role, therefore managers must ensure that they have appropriately inducted the appointee into the Service and team.

## 9.3 Three Month Review Meeting

9.3.1 The formal Three Month Review Meeting, which is at the mid-way point of the Probation/Appointment Review Period, should happen on or as near to the three month anniversary of the appointee starting the role as possible.

9.3.2 At the Three Month Review Meeting the appointee and manager must formally document the standards of work performance, conduct and attendance of the appointee, as well as their progress against the objectives that were set at the initial meeting. The manager and appointee should recognise areas where they have met or exceeded objectives as well as areas where they have not yet met objectives. Any areas of concern should be discussed and noted on the Review Form.

9.3.3 The meeting should also consider what, if any, further support, training or guidance is required. A review of any courses, including e-learning, which were identified as required on the Probation/Appointment Review Form 1 should take place. Consideration should also be given to any further learning and development needs.

9.3.4 A record of the meeting, including appointee comments, should be made on **Probation/Appointment Review Form 2 – 3 Month Review**, which must be signed by both the line manager and the appointee. The form must be sent to HR within five working days of the review taking place. Copies should be retained by the manager and appointee for their reference.

9.3.5 It is not expected that managers should wait until this meeting to discuss any issues relating to the appointee's performance, conduct or attendance. Managers should raise any concerns as soon as they come to light, so that the appointee has opportunity to make any required improvements. The manager should ensure that the issues raised have been recorded. Equally the appointee should not wait until this meeting before raising any issues that are impacting upon their ability to achieve their objectives and the standards of performance required. However, where issues have been previously identified it will be appropriate for those to be reviewed during the discussion.

9.3.6 The manager should:

- discuss the appointee's performance against objectives and targets set at the initial meeting;

- ❑ discuss the Council's Values and Behaviours and how these are being demonstrated by the new appointee;
- ❑ review customer service skills (internal and external) in line with corporate standards;
- ❑ review interpersonal and communication skills;
- ❑ review attendance and punctuality, noting any absences that have occurred and the reasons for these;
- ❑ identify any areas of performance, conduct and attendance that need improving, specifying the standards required and how these can be achieved;
- ❑ review training requirements and agree any further development needs;
- ❑ recognise and record good performance and achievements made so far;
- ❑ note what support and guidance has been provided to date and what future support and guidance is available;
- ❑ confirm the date of the Six Month Review Meeting

#### 9.3.6 The appointee should:

- ❑ actively participate in the review, including identifying any successes or difficulties they have experienced;
- ❑ further discuss any problems or issues which they believe are preventing them from demonstrating their suitability for the role;
- ❑ confirm any training and development needs identified since the initial meeting.

#### 9.4 Six Month Review Meeting

9.4.1 The formal Six Month Review Meeting should happen on or as near to the six month anniversary of the appointee's start date in the role as possible.

9.4.2 The manager should review the appointee's performance in the final three months of the Probation/Appointment Review Period, as well as reviewing progress against any issues identified at the Three Month Review Meeting. During the meeting the manager and appointee will discuss their performance against objectives/targets and discuss whether there are any further development needs or objectives that need to be met.

9.4.3 At the Six Month Review Meeting the manager should confirm verbally with the appointee whether they have successfully completed their Probation/Appointment Review Period.

9.4.4 If the manager considers that the appointee has not met the objectives and/or standards to be confirmed in post, the manager should verbally advise the employee of this and whether or not it is the intention to extend the Probation/Appointment Review Period.

9.4.5 A record of the meeting should be kept on the **Probation/Appointment Review Form 3 – 6 Month Review**, which must be signed by both the line manager and the appointee. The form must be sent to HR within five working days of the review taking place. Copies should be retained by the manager and appointee for their reference.

9.4.6 It is not expected that managers should wait until this meeting to discuss any issues relating to the employee's performance, conduct or attendance. Where these have been a

matter of concern it is appropriate for these to be formally discussed and noted, whether the issues have been resolved or are ongoing. Subject to the issues involved, it may be appropriate for matters to be dealt with in line with Sections 10 – 14.

9.4.7 The manager should:

- ❑ discuss the appointee's performance against objectives and targets set at the initial meeting;
- ❑ review whether the appointee has met the requirements discussed at the Three Month Review Meeting, including quality and accuracy of work, customer services skills, interpersonal/communication skills and attendance/timekeeping in line with service and corporate standards;
- ❑ review whether the appointee has demonstrated that they are able to meet the Values and Behaviours expected of all Council employees;
- ❑ review training requirements and agree any future learning and development needs.

9.4.8 In the case of a Probationary Period the manager should then decide whether to:

1. confirm the appointee has successfully completed their Probationary Period.
2. extend the Probationary Period for a period of up to three months, (see Section 11).
3. take action in line with Section 12 below to consider terminating the appointee's contract during their probationary period due to the appointee's inability to demonstrate their suitability for the post.

9.4.9 In the case of an Appointment Review Period the manager should then decide whether to:

1. confirm that the employee has successfully completed their Appointment Review Period.
2. in the event that there are unresolved issues that have occurred during the Appointment Review Period and it is not possible for the manager to confirm the successful completion of the Appointment Review Period, the appointee will be referred to Stage 2 of the Council's Capability and Performance Improvement Procedure.
3. only where the manager is confident that a short extension to the Appointment Review Period will result in the appointee meeting the standard, should consideration be given to a temporary extension, as an alternative to moving directly to Stage 2 of the Council's Capability and Performance Improvement Procedure.

9.4.10 Where the employee has met the required standard and completed **Probation/Appointment Review Form 3 – Six Month Review**, their line manager will write to the appointee to confirm the successful completion of their Probation/Appointment Review Period.

## **10.0 Managing Performance, Attendance and Conduct**

A formal meeting to discuss an appointee's performance, attendance or conduct can be called at any time during the Probation/Appointment Review Period, if the manager considers that there is appropriate reason to do so. It is not in either the appointee's or the Council's interest to delay or ignore issues that are giving cause for concern.

## 10.1 Issues Regarding Performance Capability

10.1.1 Issues that arise in respect of an appointee's performance capability during the Probation/ Appointment Review Period should be discussed with the appointee at the time that they occur, rather than leaving them until the formal review meetings. It may be beneficial for managers to seek advice from HR at an early point when concerns begin to develop.

10.1.2 Where performance capability issues arise the manager should meet with the appointee informally in the first instance to:

- ❑ clarify what the difficulties are in detail, specifying where and how their performance is falling below what is acceptable;
- ❑ provide (as appropriate) evidence and examples of the problems and issues to be discussed;
- ❑ allow the appointee an opportunity to raise and respond to any concerns;
- ❑ discuss the action required by the member of staff to address the problem, e.g., set targets specifying in detail what standards of performance are required to reach an acceptable level;
- ❑ identify any training needs that may need to be met in order for the appointee to achieve the targets;
- ❑ set dates by when the targets should be met;
- ❑ explain what the consequences may be if the standards / targets are not met, i.e., it may be necessary to discuss the matter further at a formal meeting, the outcome of which may mean that the appointee is not confirmed in post or in certain circumstances that the Probation/Appointment Review Period is terminated early.

10.1.3 The manager should provide a written summary of what was discussed during the meeting to the appointee within five working days of the meeting. A copy of the letter should be sent to HR for the employee's record.

10.1.4 If performance does not improve within a reasonable timescale following any informal meetings, appointees in the Probation Review Period should be invited to attend a Formal Review Meeting with their line manager and a member of the HR Team, in line with Section 12.

10.1.5 A Formal Review Meeting can be called at any time during the Probation/Appointment Review Period.

10.1.6 The outcome of the Formal Review Meeting may lead to the termination of their employment within their Probationary Review Period. Appointees who are under Appointment Review can either be referred to Stage 2 of the Council's Capability and Performance Improvement Procedure or, if a secondment arrangement is in place, it may be appropriate to bring the secondment to an end, in line with Section 6.

## 10.2 Issues Regarding Poor Attendance

10.2.1 A Probation/Appointment Review Period enables the appointee to demonstrate their suitability for the role, it is therefore expected that attendance is excellent to ensure that the appointee fully utilises the time available to demonstrate their suitability.



- 10.2.2 Evidence suggests that individuals who have poor attendance in the first few months of in a new role are likely to continue with that pattern if they are confirmed in post. The Council requires excellent levels of attendance to ensure efficient and effective services are provided to the public and the Probationary/Appointment Review Period is an appointee's opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to this.
- 10.2.3 Where a manager has concern over attendance they should seek further advice from HR and arrange a formal meeting in line with Section 12. Appointees subject to an Appointment Review Period will be managed, as appropriate, under the Council's Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedure.
- 10.2.4 Poor attendance during the Probation Review Period is likely to lead to termination of employment.

### 10.3 Issues of Misconduct

- 10.3.1 The Council's full disciplinary policy and procedure does not apply where any misconduct issues arise within the Probation Review Period. Managers should contact HR and arrange a formal meeting in line with Section 12.
- 10.3.2 Misconduct during the Probation Review Period is likely to lead to termination of employment. For those staff in an Appointment Review Period, the Council's normal Disciplinary Policy and Procedure should be invoked.

### 11.0 Extending the Probation/Appointment Review Period

- 11.1 The Probation Review Period runs for a period of six months. During this time managers must ensure that constructive feedback is given to appointees on a regular basis and that any performance, attendance or conduct issues are resolved as soon as possible within this period. It is important that managers make all reasonable efforts to support appointees in meeting the agreed objectives during this time. Managers should keep a record of issues discussed at informal meetings, to enable the manager and the appointee to keep track of their performance against overall objectives each time they meet.
- 11.2 In the majority of cases, where the appointee has not met the standard within the normal six month Probation/Appointment Review Period, it will be appropriate to discuss this at the Six Month Review Meeting.
- 11.3 In exceptional circumstances the Probation Review Period may be extended for up to three months. This may apply to a situation where an employee has not yet demonstrated their suitability, but they are likely to do so given more time.
- 11.4 Where the Probation/Appointment Review Period is extended, incremental progression will remain suspended until the employee has satisfactorily demonstrated their suitability for the post. Managers must inform HR if this is to take place.
- 11.5 Appointees who have not demonstrated their suitability during their Appointment Review Period should be transferred to Stage 2 of the Council's Capability and Performance Improvement Policy, if they have not met the required standard by the Six Month Review Meeting. In certain circumstances (see Section 9), the manager may consider it appropriate to agree an extension of up to three months to the Appointment Review Period. However, if the appointee fails to achieve the necessary standard by the end of the extension period, they would automatically be moved to Stage 2 of the Council's Capability and Performance Improvement Policy.
- 11.6 Where a manager believes that the appointee may not be able to achieve the required standard by the Six Month Review Meeting, they should discuss this with HR in good time,

prior to arranging the Six Month Review Meeting. Where it is considered appropriate to offer a short extension to the Probation/Appointment Review Period, this should be discussed with the appointee at the Six Month Review Meeting and subsequently confirmed on the relevant form.

- 11.7 If the decision is taken to extend the Probation/Appointment Review Period the line manager should complete the **Probation/Appointment Review Form 4 - Extension of Probation/ Appointment Review**, which must be signed by both the line manager and the appointee. The form must be sent to HR within five working days of the review taking place. Copies should be retained by the manager and appointee for their reference.
- 11.8 The manager should confirm with the appointee:
- the reasons for the extension;
  - the length of the extension period;
  - any assistance, guidance or training to be given during the extension;
  - any areas of improvement that are required and how these will be monitored;
  - the consequences should they not reach the required standard by the Extension Review Meeting. In the case of appointees in a Probation Review Period, this will mean that the appointee will not be confirmed in post and that their employment is likely to be terminated in line with Section 12 below.
- 11.9 Where it is appropriate to extend Probation/Appointment review, the manager and appointee should have discussed and recorded the performance to date, and also discussed and recorded the future objectives, standards and improvements that must be met during the extension period.
- 11.10 The manager must convene an Extension Review Meeting, towards the end of the extension period, to discuss the appointee's performance during the extension period. After discussion during the meeting, the manager will confirm whether or not the appointee has met the necessary standard or not. A record of the meeting should be made on the **Probation/Appointment Review Form 5 – Extension Review Meeting**, which must be signed by both the line manager and the appointee. The form must be sent to HR within five working days of the review taking place. Copies should be retained by the manager and appointee for their reference.
- 11.11 In the case of a Probationary Period the manager should then decide whether to:
1. confirm the appointee has successfully completed their Probationary Period.
  2. take action in line with Section 12 to consider terminating the appointee's contract during their probationary period, due to their inability to demonstrate their suitability for the post.
- 11.12 In the case of an Appointment Review Period the manager should then decide whether to:
1. confirm that the appointee has successfully completed their Appointment Review Period.
  2. transfer the appointee to Stage 2 of the Council's Capability and Performance Improvement Procedure.
- 11.13 Where the appointee has met the required standard, HR will, upon receipt of the completed

**Probation/Appointment Review Form 5 – Extension Review Meeting**, write to the appointee to confirm them in post.

### **12.0 Termination of Employment in the Probation Period**

- 12.1 Where the appointee has failed to achieve the required standard of performance, conduct or attendance during their Probation Review Period, they should be invited to a formal meeting to discuss this by their manager.
- 12.2 On occasion it may be apparent early in the Probation Period that the appointee is not suitable for the role. On such occasions it will not be necessary to wait until the end of the normal six month review period to take action against the appointee. Advice should be obtained from HR in all cases.
- 12.3 The manager should write to the appointee giving five working days' notice that they are required to attend a Formal Review Meeting to discuss their performance during Probation Review Period.
- 12.4 The purpose of the meeting will be to consider the appointee's performance, conduct and attendance to date and take a decision on whether employment should be terminated due to the failure to achieve the required standards.
- 12.4 The appointee is entitled to be accompanied at the meeting by a trade union representative or work colleague. Managers should be accompanied by HR.
- 12.5 **Only Heads of Service** may hold Formal Review Meetings to consider whether or not the appointee's employment should be terminated. In the majority of cases it is likely that the Head of Service will not be the appointee's line manager. On occasion the Formal Review Meeting may be conducted by the appointee's line manager, who has conducted the probation review meetings. **The Head of Service** may ask the line manager to attend the discussion to explain why they consider the employee has failed to meet the required standard.
- 12.6 Where the manager considers that the appointee's performance, conduct or attendance is below the required standard and that this is unlikely to improve within a reasonable period of time the appointee may be dismissed with one weeks' notice or offered pay in lieu of notice, where normal deductions would apply.
- 12.7 A letter confirming the outcome of the meeting should be sent to the appointee in the 5 working days following the meeting.
- 12.8 If at any point the appointee wishes to end their employment within the Probation Review Period they must give a minimum of one months' notice in writing to their line manager. However, in exceptional circumstances, the line manager in consultation with HR, may agree to a request from the appointee to serve a shorter notice period.

### **13.0 Right of Appeal**

- 13.1 Where a decision is made to terminate employment the appointee has the right of appeal against this decision.
- 13.2 In order to exercise this right, the appointee must write to **the HR Department** within 10 working days of receipt of the written notice of termination of employment, clearly stating their grounds of appeal.
- 13.3 **A Director** will normally hear the appeal within 20 days of receipt of the letter of appeal. If it is not possible to hear the appeal within the above timescale, it is the responsibility of the

manager to write to the appointee setting out the reason for delay and the intended date of the hearing. Consult with HR before sending onto the appointee.

- 13.4 At the appeal hearing the appointee has the right to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or work colleague. The Hearing Officer will be accompanied by a member of the HR Team.
- 13.5 The Head of Service who took the decision to dismiss the employee will present the management case outlining why the decision to dismiss was taken.
- 13.6 A Director will allow both sides opportunity to present their case. After adjourning to consider the available information, the Director will reconvene the hearing and will normally verbally communicate their decision. This will be followed by confirmation of the decision in writing, within 5 working days of the hearing.

A Director will either:

- extend the Probation Review Period for a further defined period of time of no more than three months, clearly outlining the standards/objectives to be achieved by a set date, or;
- uphold the decision to terminate employment.

The decision of the Hearing Officer is final and there is no further right of appeal.

#### **14.0 Transfer to Stage 2 of the Capability and Performance Improvement Policy**

- 14.1 Where an appointee within the Appointment Review Period has failed to meet the necessary standards, they will be transferred to Stage 2 of the Capability and Performance Improvement Policy.
- 14.2 Managers may elect to move them to Stage 2 of the Capability and Performance Improvement Policy at any point during the Appointment Review Period, though in the majority of cases it is likely to be at the Six Month Review Meeting or the Extension Review Meeting.
- 14.3 After discussion with the appointee, the manager will verbally confirm their decision to the appointee. Where the discussion takes place prior to one of the formal Review Meetings, the manager should discuss their concerns with HR and must formally document their decision to move the appointee to Stage 2 of the Capability and Performance Improvement Policy.
- 14.4 There is no right of appeal against the decision to move an appointee to Stage 2 of the Capability and Performance Improvement Policy. The manager will complete the necessary paperwork and provide a copy to HR within five working days to confirm that the appointee has been unable to complete the Appointment Review Period.
- 14.5 The manager, with advice from HR, should write to the appointee to confirm this decision. Any arrangements after this point will be made in line with the Capability and Performance Improvement Policy.

#### **15.0 Review**

This policy and procedure will be reviewed two years after implementation or earlier in the event of changes in legislation.

**Document Control:**

<b>Version No.</b>	<b>Effective date</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Review due</b>
1.0	03.02.2015	New policy agreed by Personnel Committee	03.02.2017
2.0	02.02.2016	Revisions agreed by JCC and Personnel Committee	02.02.2018
3.0	02.10.2018	Revisions to be considered by JCC and Personnel Committee	02.10.2020
4.0	30.04.2020	Amendment to policy	30.04.2022



## **Probation and Appointment Review Policy and Procedure**

### **1.0 Scope**

- 1.1 The Council's Probation and Appointment Review Policy and Procedure applies to all newly appointed employees and to existing employees, excluding Chief Officers, who have taken on a new role within the Council. These employees will be referred to throughout this document as the 'appointee'. The Probation and Appointment Review Policy and Procedure forms part of the contract of employment.
- 1.2 The Probation and Appointment Review Policy and Procedure does not apply to casual workers.

### **2.0 Objectives and Principles**

- 2.1 Lancaster City Council recognises the need to support and develop new appointees to achieve their full potential. The Probation/Appointment Review Period allows the Council to assess the capabilities and conduct of each appointee and allows the appointee to decide whether or not the job is suitable for them.
- 2.2 All appointees must be clear about the standard of work expected during the course of their employment. An up to date job description and person specification provides a knowledge and skills framework for each post, and will be used in conjunction with regular interaction during the Probation/Appointment Review Period between the manager and appointee.
- 2.3 The Council recognises the link that can develop between a poor induction and Probation/Appointment Review Period and poor performance in the role. The Council is committed to ensuring an effective induction and Probation/Appointment Review Period to avoid performance management issues arising later in employment.
- 2.4 Whilst some appointees may be recruited or promoted from within the organisation, it is still necessary to monitor the effectiveness of internally appointed employees and assist them in achieving the required standards of performance in a new post. The Council is therefore committed to the provision of an Appointment Review Period for internal recruits, which shadows the Probation Procedure to assist the appointee in achieving the required standards in their new role.
- 2.5 The objectives of this Policy are:
  - ❑ To ensure that new appointees are supported in a structured way during their Probation/Appointment Review Period.
  - ❑ To provide line managers with a framework and guidance to assess the skills, conduct, performance and attendance of appointees, before deciding whether or not to confirm their appointment.

- ❑ To ensure that before the appointee is confirmed as successfully completing their Probation/Appointment Review Period they have reached the required standard of performance expected for that role.
- ❑ To ensure there is a consistent, supportive and fair approach to dealing with issues that arise during the Probation/Appointment Review Periods, in line with legislative guidelines and best practice.
- ❑ Where appointees under Probation/Appointment Review are unable to reach a good standard of performance, to deal with any concerns in an appropriate and timely manner.

2.6 The following principles apply to the Council's procedures for dealing with matters of concern that arise during the Probation/Appointment Review Period:

- ❑ Application of the procedure will be fair, prompt, impartial and consistent, and will be applied without discrimination.
- ❑ Action will be taken as soon as problems are identified. Where appropriate and if timescales allow, the appointee may be given more time to meet the requirements of the role and provided with further support.
- ❑ Appointees are encouraged to raise, at an early point, any concerns they might have during their Probation/Appointment Review Period. The Council will in return take all reasonable and practicable steps to assist the employee.
- ❑ Where it is apparent that the appointee is unable to reach the required standards of performance the matter will be handled appropriately and without unnecessary delay.

### **3.0 Responsibilities**

3.1 Appointees' responsibilities:

All appointees have a contractual responsibility to work to the required standard and to achieve a level of performance which is prescribed by and acceptable to the Council. Appointees therefore have a responsibility to:

- ❑ demonstrate their suitability for the post which they are appointed to;
- ❑ bring to the attention of their line manager, at the earliest opportunity, any difficulties they are experiencing, or concerns they may have;
- ❑ raise any issues outside of work which may affect their performance with their line manager, as soon as possible;
- ❑ raise with their line manager any need for training, development or support, which they believe to be necessary in order for them to fulfil the requirements of the role;
- ❑ individuals newly appointed to Lancaster City Council must attend the Council's Corporate Induction and undertake any mandatory training required for the post;
- ❑ co-operate fully with the Council's Probation and Appointment Review Policy and Procedure where performance falls short of the required standards.

3.2 Management responsibilities:

Managers are responsible for actively managing and monitoring Probation/Appointment Review, and will be supported by Human Resources (HR). It is essential that managers proactively assess and support employees during these key first months of a new role.

Probation should not be viewed by line managers as a form filling exercise that only needs to be considered at specific intervals during the Probation/Appointment Review Period. Rather the Probation/Appointment Review Period should be viewed as a clear opportunity for line managers to shape and develop the post holder.

Managers should therefore ensure they communicate what is expected of their appointee on a regular basis during the Probation/Appointment Review Period. This may be through regular one to one meetings, team meetings or briefings, training sessions, etc., which will form the basis of support offered to the appointee.

Managers have a responsibility to:

- ❑ establish standards of performance, responsibilities and objectives that are consistent with the position and in line with the job description;
- ❑ communicate the required standards, responsibilities and objectives of the post to the appointee;
- ❑ communicate the Values and Behaviours expected of all employees of the Council and ensure that these are demonstrated in the Probation/Appointment Review Period.
- ❑ be available for advice and supervision with the appointee, when required;
- ❑ keep written notes of 1:1 meetings and supervision sessions;
- ❑ ensure that the appointee is effectively inducted locally within the service area and their immediate team;
- ❑ ensure that the appointee attends Corporate Induction and all mandatory relevant courses, including any online e-learning that is assigned;
- ❑ promptly hold formal Probation/Appointment Review meetings by the end of the second week, third and sixth month anniversary of their appointment;
- ❑ fully complete all required paperwork and send to HR in a timely fashion;
- ❑ take action, where necessary, to resolve any issues at an early stage.

### 3.3 HR responsibilities:

The HR Team are responsible for providing advice and support to managers and employees during the Probation/Appointment Review Period, as required.

HR will:

- ❑ ensure that the line managers are sent the dates of the Probation/Appointment Review Meetings, plus associated guidance, following selection of the appointee;
- ❑ provide advice and guidance to managers, appointees and trade union representatives on the correct implementation of the policy and procedure;
- ❑ ensure that managers treat all new appointees in a fair and equitable manner through the



consistent application of this policy and procedure;

- attend formal meetings as outlined in the procedure;
- confirm in writing to the appointee the outcome of the Probationary/Appointment Review Period.

## **4.0 The distinction between a Probation Review and an Appointment Review**

- 4.1 All appointees who are new to Lancaster City Council are subject to a six month Probation Period.
- 4.2 Appointees who are new to Lancaster City Council, but who have worked previously in Local Government or within a body covered by the Local Government Modification Order are also subject to the six month Probation Period, as they are new to Lancaster City Council. Whilst suitability for the role must be established, this does not affect any other rights to continuous service e.g. for redundancy purposes.
- 4.3 Where an appointee with previous Local Government service fails to establish their suitability for the role their employment will be terminated with the appropriate notice.
- 4.4 Existing Lancaster City Council appointees who have transferred internally from another role within the Council are subject to a six month Appointment Review Period. When issues arise during the Appointment Review Period managers should handle these in line with this procedure. Should the required improvements not be made, the matter should be progressed to Stage 2 of the Capability and Performance Improvement Policy and Procedure.

## **5.0 Temporary Staff**

- 5.1 Appointees on contracts of six months or longer will be required to complete a full Probation Review period.
- 5.2 The successful completion of a Probation Review Period by a temporary appointee will not confer permanent employment on that individual.
- 5.3 Where an individual is on a temporary contract of less than six months, the Probation Review Period will span the whole period of employment. If the temporary contract was to be extended, the Probation Review Period would continue in line with the procedure until such time as they have met the probation requirements. As a minimum, the line manager should undertake the Two Week and Three Month Review Meetings to ensure the required level of performance is reached.
- 5.4 In the case of 5.2 and 5.3 above, there will not usually be a requirement to undertake the Six Month Review Meeting, as in most cases, there will be no permanent post for the individual to be confirmed into. If, however, it is likely that the temporary contract will be extended beyond six months duration, or there is chance of the contract becoming permanent, then it will be necessary to undertake the Six Month Review Meeting.
- 5.5 It is recommended, however, that even where a Six Month Review Meeting is not required, line managers should meet with individuals to feedback on their level of performance regularly throughout the Probation Review Period until the end of the temporary contract.

- 5.6 At all times, the employee should be clear that the contract is one of a temporary nature.
- 5.7 All reviews should be completed in a timely fashion, in line with the dates outlined in this Policy and Procedure, until the employee leaves the organisation.

## **6.0 Staff on Secondment**

- 6.1 Any individual on secondment for more than six months, into another role within the Council, will be subject to a full Appointment Review Period.
- 6.2 There is no requirement for an individual on secondment for less than six months to have an Appointment Review Period. However, if the line manager has concerns regarding the employee's performance, capability, attendance or conduct during the term of the secondment, they should speak with them, in the first instance, to discuss if any further support can be identified. The manager may decide that the most appropriate option is to terminate the secondment early, following advice from HR. Where this is considered to be the most appropriate course of action the manager will explain their reasons for this decision to the secondee, and will give them reasonable notice of their return to their substantive role.
- 6.3 On successful completion of the Appointment Review Period, the appointee will be confirmed into the role for the agreed period of the secondment only. This will not be confirmation into the role on a permanent basis.

## **7.0 Probation and Appointment Review Procedure**

- 7.1 In order to support the Probation and Appointment Review process the Council has developed a procedure to assist in the fair and consistent treatment of all new appointees.
- 7.2 The Probation/Appointment Review Period normally lasts for a period of six months. Throughout the six month Probation/Appointment Review Period an appointee's performance and competence should be subject to assessment by their line manager.
- 7.3 Regular informal one to one meetings or discussions should be held to review performance and to ensure that new appointees are kept informed of their progress against the required standards. Whilst one to one meetings are informal, these still form part of the process of assessing or measuring an appointee's performance, and ensuring that they are receiving appropriate support.
- 7.4 Managers must ensure that any concerns are raised as soon as possible to allow the appointee opportunity to improve. Where concerns only develop towards the end of the Probation/Appointment Review Period, this will not prevent matters being considered in line with the relevant sections of this Policy and Procedure.
- 7.5 Formal review meetings should take place within the appointee's first two weeks of employment, then at the three month, mid-way point, and six months after they started in the role, in line with Section 9.
- 7.6 It is good practice for the line manager to book the review meetings into the diary of the employee soon after the start of employment, to ensure that the review meetings take place in a timely manner.

## **8.0 Commencing Employment and Induction**

- 8.1 Line managers have responsibility for ensuring that their employees are appropriately inducted into their roles. It is known that where an effective induction takes place and the appointee feels welcomed into a new organisation or team, they are more likely to feel a stronger positive connection with their employer and therefore more likely to perform and attend work well.
- 8.2 It is good practice for line managers to contact the appointee prior to them starting work in their new role and ensure they know when and where to arrive on their first day in the role and who they should ask for upon arrival. This is also an opportunity for the appointee to ask any further questions they may have before their first day in the role.
- 8.3 The line manager should ensure that they (or another nominated individual) are available to welcome the appointee on their first day in the role. In the first few days in the role the line manager should give a local induction to provide the appointee with essential information regarding the role, team and wider Council, including time to complete any appropriate online e-learning and to ensure that the employee understands their responsibilities with regard to relevant health and safety matters.
- 8.4 Line managers are responsible for ensuring that work locations or work stations are prepared and any equipment the appointee may require is ordered in preparation for their first day. This will help ensure that the appointee feels welcome on arrival.
- 8.5 Where appointees need to undertake specified training before they are able to undertake some or all aspects of their role, such as manual handling, the line manager should ensure that this is arranged promptly.
- 8.6 A new starter pack will be provided by HR to the line managers of any appointees who are new to Lancaster City Council. The documents within the starter pack should be completed with the appointee and used in conjunction with any service based induction arrangements.

### **9.0 Undertaking Probation and Appointment Review Assessments**

#### **9.1 Initial Meeting**

- 9.1.1 An initial Probationary/Appointment Review meeting should then be held within the first two weeks of the appointee commencing their new role. This is separate to any general induction meetings. This is an opportunity for the line manager to outline their expectations during the Probation/Appointment Review Period and to set initial objectives for the appointee. The main objectives should be listed on the **Probation/Appointment Review Form 1**.
- 9.1.2 The Probationary/Appointment Review Period must be properly planned to be effective. The standards required and objectives to be achieved need to be explained to the appointee and they should be clear of what is expected of them. By signing the Probation/Appointment Review Form 1, the appointee is confirming they understand the standards required and objectives they must achieve.
- 9.1.3 Appointees should be set between three and six objectives, depending on the nature of the job role, which should follow the S.M.A.R.T. principle (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time limited). These should be linked to the relevant Job Description/ Person Specification for the post. Further support on setting objectives is available from HR or via the HR Learning and Development pages of the intranet.
- 9.1.4 It is recognised that in some areas of the Council, in addition to the main objectives listed on the form, the service unit may have a fuller list of objectives/targets that they consider

must be achieved in order for a specific role to be effectively carried out. Where this is the case the line manager must ensure that the appointee is aware of this and it may be useful to append any such document to the **Probation/Appointment Review Form 1**.

- 9.1.5 The health and safety risk assessment(s) for the post, will have been revisited by the line manager at the time the post was advertised, and therefore the health and safety information discussed between the manager and appointee will be current. During the initial meeting the line manager will make the appointee aware of any key health and safety responsibilities and requirements, which are attached to the post.
- 9.1.6 A record of the meeting must be kept on the **Probation/Appointment Review Form 1**, which must be signed by both the line manager and the appointee. The form should be sent to HR within five working days of the meeting and this will be retained on the appointee's central personnel record. Copies should be retained by the manager and appointee for their reference.

## 9.2 Initial Learning and Development Needs

- 9.2.1 The manager and appointee should also discuss any initial learning and development needs, which will assist the appointee in becoming effective in their role. It is important that any development needs should be clearly linked to the role. The line manager should make the appointee aware of corporate training opportunities and ensure that any mandatory training is completed as soon as possible. In the case of e-learning this should be within the first week of appointment.
- 9.2.4 All new appointees will automatically be invited to Corporate Induction within their probation period. It is a mandatory requirement that all individuals who are new to the Council attend this Corporate Induction to ensure that they are orientated to the wider Council. This may take place some weeks after the employee starts in their new role, therefore managers must ensure that they have appropriately inducted the appointee into the Service and team.

## 9.3 Three Month Review Meeting

- 9.3.1 The formal Three Month Review Meeting, which is at the mid-way point of the Probation/Appointment Review Period, should happen on or as near to the three month anniversary of the appointee starting the role as possible.
- 9.3.2 At the Three Month Review Meeting the appointee and manager must formally document the standards of work performance, conduct and attendance of the appointee, as well as their progress against the objectives that were set at the initial meeting. The manager and appointee should recognise areas where they have met or exceeded objectives as well as areas where they have not yet met objectives. Any areas of concern should be discussed and noted on the Review Form.
- 9.3.3 The meeting should also consider what, if any, further support, training or guidance is required. A review of any courses, including e-learning, which were identified as required on the Probation/Appointment Review Form 1 should take place. Consideration should also be given to any further learning and development needs.
- 9.3.4 A record of the meeting, including appointee comments, should be made on **Probation/Appointment Review Form 2 – 3 Month Review**, which must be signed by both the line manager and the appointee. The form must be sent to HR within five working days of the review taking place. Copies should be retained by the manager and appointee for their reference.
- 9.3.5 It is not expected that managers should wait until this meeting to discuss any issues

relating to the appointee's performance, conduct or attendance. Managers should raise any concerns as soon as they come to light, so that the appointee has opportunity to make any required improvements. The manager should ensure that the issues raised have been recorded. Equally the appointee should not wait until this meeting before raising any issues that are impacting upon their ability to achieve their objectives and the standards of performance required. However, where issues have been previously identified it will be appropriate for those to be reviewed during the discussion.

### 9.3.6 The manager should:

- ❑ discuss the appointee's performance against objectives and targets set at the initial meeting;
- ❑ discuss the Council's Values and Behaviours and how these are being demonstrated by the new appointee;
- ❑ review customer service skills (internal and external) in line with corporate standards;
- ❑ review interpersonal and communication skills;
- ❑ review attendance and punctuality, noting any absences that have occurred and the reasons for these;
- ❑ identify any areas of performance, conduct and attendance that need improving, specifying the standards required and how these can be achieved;
- ❑ review training requirements and agree any further development needs;
- ❑ recognise and record good performance and achievements made so far;
- ❑ note what support and guidance has been provided to date and what future support and guidance is available;
- ❑ set a date for the Six Month Review Meeting.

### 9.3.6 The appointee should:

- ❑ actively participate in the review, including identifying any successes or difficulties they have experienced;
- ❑ further discuss any problems or issues which they believe are preventing them from demonstrating their suitability for the role;
- ❑ confirm any training and development needs identified since the initial meeting.

## 9.4 Six Month Review Meeting

9.4.1 The formal Six Month Review Meeting should happen on or as near to the six month anniversary of the appointee's start date in the role as possible.

9.4.2 The manager should review the appointee's performance in the final three months of the Probation/Appointment Review Period, as well as reviewing progress against any issues identified at the Three Month Review Meeting. During the meeting the manager and appointee will discuss their performance against objectives/targets and discuss whether there are any further development needs or objectives still to be met.

- 9.4.3 At the Six Month Review Meeting the manager should confirm verbally with the appointee whether they have successfully completed their Probation/Appointment Review Period.
- 9.4.4 If the manager considers that the appointee has not met the objectives and/or standards to be confirmed in post, the manager should verbally advise the employee of this and whether or not it is the intention to extend the Probation/Appointment Review Period.
- 9.4.5 A record of the meeting should be kept on the **Probation/Appointment Review Form 3 – 6 Month Review**, which must be signed by both the line manager and the appointee. The form must be sent to HR within five working days of the review taking place. Copies should be retained by the manager and appointee for their reference.
- 9.4.6 It is not expected that managers should wait until this meeting to discuss any issues relating to the employee's performance, conduct or attendance. Where these have been a matter of concern it is appropriate for these to be formally discussed and noted, whether the issues have been resolved or are ongoing. Subject to the issues involved, it may be appropriate for matters to be dealt with in line with Sections 10 – 14.
- 9.4.7 The manager should:
- ❑ discuss the appointee's performance against objectives and targets set at the initial meeting;
  - ❑ review whether the appointee has met the requirements discussed at the Three Month Review Meeting, including quality and accuracy of work, customer services skills, interpersonal/communication skills and attendance/timekeeping in line with service and corporate standards;
  - ❑ review whether the appointee has demonstrated that they are able to meet the Values and Behaviours expected of all Council employees;
  - ❑ review training requirements and agree any future learning and development needs.
- 9.4.8 In the case of a Probationary Period the manager should then decide whether to:
1. confirm the appointee has successfully completed their Probationary Period.
  2. extend the Probationary Period for a period of up to three months, (see Section 11).
  3. take action in line with Section 12 below to consider terminating the appointee's contract during their probationary period due to the appointee's inability to demonstrate their suitability for the post.
- 9.4.9 In the case of an Appointment Review Period the manager should then decide whether to:
1. confirm that the employee has successfully completed their Appointment Review Period.
  2. in the event that there are unresolved issues that have occurred during the Appointment Review Period and it is not possible for the manager to confirm the successful completion of the Appointment Review Period, the appointee will be referred to Stage 2 of the Council's Capability and Performance Improvement Procedure.
  3. only where the manager is confident that a short extension to the Appointment Review Period will result in the appointee meeting the standard, should

consideration be given to a temporary extension, as an alternative to moving directly to Stage 2 of the Council's Capability and Performance Improvement Procedure.

9.4.10 Where the employee has met the required standard, HR will, upon receipt of the completed **Probation/Appointment Review Form 3 – Six Month Review**, write to the appointee to confirm the successful completion of their Probation/Appointment Review Period.

9.4.11 Incremental progression will be withheld until such time that the appointee has successfully completed their Probation/Appointment Review Period and the completed form has been returned to HR. Incremental progression will then be reinstated and back dated, as appropriate.

## **10.0 Managing Performance, Attendance and Conduct**

A formal meeting to discuss an appointee's performance, attendance or conduct can be called at any time during the Probation/Appointment Review Period, if the manager considers that there is appropriate reason to do so. It is not in either the appointee's or the Council's interest to delay or ignore issues that are giving cause for concern.

### **10.1 Issues Regarding Performance Capability**

10.1.1 Issues that arise in respect of an appointee's performance capability during the Probation/Appointment Review Period should be discussed with the appointee at the time that they occur, rather than leaving them until the formal review meetings. It may be beneficial for managers to seek advice from their Service HR Partner at an early point when concerns begin to develop.

10.1.2 Where performance capability issues arise the manager should meet with the appointee informally in the first instance to:

- clarify what the difficulties are in detail, specifying where and how their performance is falling below what is acceptable;
- provide (as appropriate) evidence and examples of the problems and issues to be discussed;
- allow the appointee an opportunity to raise and respond to any concerns;
- discuss the action required by the member of staff to address the problem, e.g., set targets specifying in detail what standards of performance are required to reach an acceptable level;
- identify any training needs that may need to be met in order for the appointee to achieve the targets;
- set dates by when the targets should be met;
- explain what the consequences may be if the standards / targets are not met, i.e., it may be necessary to discuss the matter further at a formal meeting, the outcome of which may mean that the appointee is not confirmed in post or in certain circumstances that the Probation/Appointment Review Period is terminated early.

10.1.3 The manager should provide a written summary of what was discussed during the meeting to the appointee within five working days of the meeting. A copy of the letter should be sent to the Service HR Partner for the employee's record.

- 10.1.4 If performance does not improve within a reasonable timescale following any informal meetings, appointees in the Probation Review Period should be invited to attend a Formal Review Meeting with their line manager and a member of the HR Team, in line with Section 12.
- 10.1.5 A Formal Review Meeting can be called at any time during the Probation/Appointment Review Period.
- 10.1.6 The outcome of the Formal Review Meeting may lead to the termination of their employment within their Probationary Review Period. Appointees who are under Appointment Review can either be referred to Stage 2 of the Council's Capability and Performance Improvement Procedure or, if a secondment arrangement is in place, it may be appropriate to bring the secondment to an end, in line with Section 6.

## 10.2 Issues Regarding Poor Attendance

- 10.2.1 A Probation/Appointment Review Period enables the appointee to demonstrate their suitability for the role, it is therefore expected that attendance is excellent to ensure that the appointee fully utilises the time available to demonstrate their suitability.
- 10.2.2 Evidence suggests that individuals who have poor attendance in the first few months of in a new role are likely to continue with that pattern if they are confirmed in post. The Council requires excellent levels of attendance to ensure efficient and effective services are provided to the public and the Probationary/Appointment Review Period is an appointee's opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to this.
- 10.2.3 Where a manager has concern over attendance they should seek further advice from their Service HR Partner and arrange a formal meeting in line with Section 12. Appointees subject to an Appointment Review Period will be managed, as appropriate, under the Council's Sickness Absence Management Policy and Procedure.
- 10.2.4 Poor attendance during the Probation Review Period is likely to lead to termination of employment.

## 10.3 Issues of Misconduct

- 10.3.1 The Council's full disciplinary policy and procedure does not apply where any misconduct issues arise within the Probation Review Period. Managers should contact their Service HR Partner and arrange a formal meeting in line with Section 12.
- 10.3.2 Misconduct during the Probation Review Period is likely to lead to termination of employment. For those staff in an Appointment Review Period, the Council's normal Disciplinary Policy and Procedure should be invoked.

## **11.0 Extending the Probation/Appointment Review Period**

- 11.1 The Probation Review Period runs for a period of six months. During this time managers must ensure that constructive feedback is given to appointees on a regular basis and that any performance, attendance or conduct issues are resolved as soon as possible within this period. It is important that managers make all reasonable efforts to support appointees in meeting the agreed objectives during this time. Managers should keep a record of issues discussed at informal meetings, to enable the manager and the appointee to keep track of their performance against overall objectives each time they meet.



- 11.2 In the majority of cases, where the appointee has not met the standard within the normal six month Probation/Appointment Review Period, it will be appropriate to discuss this at the Six Month Review Meeting.
- 11.3 In exceptional circumstances the Probation Review Period may be extended for up to three months. This may apply to a situation where an employee has not yet demonstrated their suitability, but they are likely to do so given more time.
- 11.4 Where the Probation/Appointment Review Period is extended, incremental progression will remain suspended until the employee has satisfactorily demonstrated their suitability for the post.
- 11.5 Appointees who have not demonstrated their suitability during their Appointment Review Period should be transferred to Stage 2 of the Council's Capability and Performance Improvement Policy, if they have not met the required standard by the Six Month Review Meeting. In certain circumstances (see Section 9), the manager may consider it appropriate to agree an extension of up to three months to the Appointment Review Period. However, if the appointee fails to achieve the necessary standard by the end of the extension period, they would automatically be moved to Stage 2 of the Council's Capability and Performance Improvement Policy.
- 11.6 Where a manager believes that the appointee may not be able to achieve the required standard by the Six Month Review Meeting, they should discuss this with their Service HR Partner in good time, prior to arranging the Six Month Review Meeting. Where it is considered appropriate to offer a short extension to the Probation/Appointment Review Period, this should be discussed with the appointee at the Six Month Review Meeting and subsequently confirmed on the relevant form.
- 11.7 If the decision is taken to extend the Probation/Appointment Review Period the line manager should complete the **Probation/Appointment Review Form 4 - Extension of Probation/ Appointment Review**, which must be signed by both the line manager and the appointee. The form must be sent to HR within five working days of the review taking place. Copies should be retained by the manager and appointee for their reference.
- 11.8 The manager should confirm with the appointee:
- the reasons for the extension;
  - the length of the extension period;
  - any assistance, guidance or training to be given during the extension;
  - any areas of improvement that are required and how these will be monitored;
  - the consequences should they not reach the required standard by the Extension Review Meeting. In the case of appointees in a Probation Review Period, this will mean that the appointee will not be confirmed in post and that their employment is likely to be terminated in line with Section 12 below.
- 11.9 Where it is appropriate to extend Probation/Appointment review, the manager and appointee should have discussed and recorded the performance to date, and also discussed and recorded the future objectives, standards and improvements that must be met during the extension period.
- 11.10 The manager must convene an Extension Review Meeting, towards the end of the extension period, to discuss the appointee's performance during the extension period. After

discussion during the meeting, the manager will confirm whether or not the appointee has met the necessary standard or not. A record of the meeting should be made on the **Probation/Appointment Review Form 5 – Extension Review Meeting**, which must be signed by both the line manager and the appointee. The form must be sent to HR within five working days of the review taking place. Copies should be retained by the manager and appointee for their reference.

- 11.11 In the case of a Probationary Period the manager should then decide whether to:
1. confirm the appointee has successfully completed their Probationary Period.
  2. take action in line with Section 12 to consider terminating the appointee's contract during their probationary period, due to their inability to demonstrate their suitability for the post.
- 11.12 In the case of an Appointment Review Period the manager should then decide whether to:
1. confirm that the appointee has successfully completed their Appointment Review Period.
  2. transfer the appointee to Stage 2 of the Council's Capability and Performance Improvement Procedure.
- 11.13 Where the appointee has met the required standard, HR will, upon receipt of the completed **Probation/Appointment Review Form 5 – Extension Review Meeting**, write to the appointee to confirm them in post.

## **12.0 Termination of Employment in the Probation Period**

- 12.1 Where the appointee has failed to achieve the required standard of performance, conduct or attendance during their Probation Review Period, they should be invited to a formal meeting to discuss this by their manager.
- 12.2 On occasion it may be apparent early in the Probation Period that the appointee is not suitable for the role. On such occasions it will not be necessary to wait until the end of the normal six month review period to take action against the appointee. Advice should be obtained from the Service HR Partner in all cases.
- 12.3 The manager should write to the appointee giving five working days' notice that they are required to attend a Formal Review Meeting to discuss their performance during Probation Review Period.
- 12.4 The purpose of the meeting will be to consider the appointee's performance, conduct and attendance to date and take a decision on whether employment should be terminated due to the failure to achieve the required standards.
- 12.4 The appointee is entitled to be accompanied at the meeting by a trade union representative or work colleague. Managers should be accompanied by their Service HR Partner.
- 12.5 Only senior Service Managers who report directly into a Chief Officer, may hold Formal Review Meetings to consider whether or not the appointee's employment should be terminated. In the majority of cases it is likely that the senior Service Manager will not be the appointee's line manager. On occasion the Formal Review Meeting may be conducted by the appointee's line manager, who has conducted the probation review meetings. The

senior Service Manager may ask the line manager to attend the discussion to explain why they consider the employee has failed to meet the required standard.

- 12.6 Where the manager considers that the appointee's performance, conduct or attendance is below the required standard and that this is unlikely to improve within a reasonable period of time the appointee may be dismissed with one weeks' notice or offered pay in lieu of notice, where normal deductions would apply.
- 12.7 A letter confirming the outcome of the meeting should be sent to the appointee in the 5 working days following the meeting.
- 12.8 If at any point the appointee wishes to end their employment within the Probation Review Period they must give a minimum of one months' notice in writing to their line manager. However, in exceptional circumstances, the line manager in consultation with their Service HR Partner, may agree to a request from the appointee to serve a shorter notice period.

### **13.0 Right of Appeal**

- 13.1 Where a decision is made to terminate employment the appointee has the right of appeal against this decision.
- 13.2 In order to exercise this right, the appointee must write to the HR Manager within 10 working days of receipt of the written notice of termination of employment, clearly stating their grounds of appeal.
- 13.3 The Chief Officer will normally hear the appeal within 20 days of receipt of the letter of appeal. If it is not possible to hear the appeal within the above timescale, the HR Partner will write to the appointee setting out the reason for delay and the intended date of the hearing.
- 13.4 At the appeal hearing the appointee has the right to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or work colleague. The Hearing Officer will be accompanied by a member of the HR Team.
- 13.5 The Service Manager who took the decision to dismiss the employee will present the management case outlining why the decision to dismiss was taken.
- 13.6 The Chief Officer will allow both sides opportunity to present their case. After adjourning to consider the available information, the Chief Officer will reconvene the hearing and will normally verbally communicate their decision. This will be followed by confirmation of the decision in writing, within 5 working days of the hearing.

The Chief Officer will either:

- extend the Probation Review Period for a further defined period of time of no more than three months, clearly outlining the standards/objectives to be achieved by a set date, or;
- uphold the decision to terminate employment.

The decision of the Hearing Officer is final and there is no further right of appeal.

### **14.0 Transfer to Stage 2 of the Capability and Performance Improvement Policy**

- 14.1 Where an appointee within the Appointment Review Period has failed to meet the necessary standards, they will be transferred to Stage 2 of the Capability and Performance Improvement Policy.
- 14.2 Managers may elect to move them to Stage 2 of the Capability and Performance Improvement Policy at any point during the Appointment Review Period, though in the majority of cases it is likely to be at the Six Month Review Meeting or the Extension Review Meeting.
- 14.3 After discussion with the appointee, the manager will verbally confirm their decision to the appointee. Where the discussion takes place prior to one of the formal Review Meetings, the manager should discuss their concerns with HR and must formally document their decision to move the appointee to Stage 2 of the Capability and Performance Improvement Policy.
- 14.4 There is no right of appeal against the decision to move an appointee to Stage 2 of the Capability and Performance Improvement Policy. The manager will complete the necessary paperwork and provide a copy to HR within five working days to confirm that the appointee has been unable to complete the Appointment Review Period.
- 14.5 The manager, with advice from the Service HR Partner, should write to the appointee to confirm this decision. Any arrangements after this point will be made in line with the Capability and Performance Improvement Policy.

**15.0 Review**

This policy and procedure will be reviewed two years after implementation or earlier in the event of changes in legislation.

**Document Control:**

Version No.	Effective date	Reason	Review due
1.0	03.02.2015	New policy agreed by Personnel Committee	03.02.2017
2.0	02.02.2016	Revisions agreed by JCC and Personnel Committee	02.02.2018
3.0	02.10.2018	Revisions to be considered by JCC and Personnel Committee	02.10.2020



## Bereavement and Compassionate Leave Policy and Procedure

### 1. Scope

- 1.1 The bereavement and compassionate leave policy applies to **all employees**, excluding casual workers.

### 2. Definitions

- 2.1 **Immediate family** is defined as spouse, partner, child, mother, father, brother and sister. Managers are however granted discretion to assess the circumstances and diversity of guardianship, for example where a staff member may have been raised by their grandparent or other guardian

**Commented [CJ1]:** Recognising diversity of family groups

- 2.2 **Critical illness** refers to an emergency, life threatening illness.

### 3. Bereavement Leave

- 3.1 Employees, regardless of length of service, may be granted **Bereavement Leave of up to five days (pro-rata) with pay** as a result of the death of an **immediate family** member.

- 3.2 Employees may also be granted one days leave with pay for attendance at a funeral of a close family member, not included in the above immediate family definition. Examples of this include a grandparent, cousin, aunt or uncle.

**Commented [CJ2]:** As part of recognising diverse family groups, this has been updated as a definition of a close family member

- 3.3 Employees, regardless of length of service may also be granted **Parental Bereavement Leave** of an additional week (up to 2 weeks leave in total) (pro rata) if they are:

- The bereaved parent of a child under 18, or have a stillbirth from the 24<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy.
- The partner of a deceased child or stillbirth as above, as long as they live in an "enduring family relationship" with the child and their parent.
- A "parent in fact", someone who, for a continuous period of at least four weeks before the child died, lived with the child and had "day-to-day responsibility" for the child (but who is not being paid to look after the child).
- Adoptive parents, the parents of children born through a surrogate and the "natural parents" of adopted children who have been granted some court-ordered contact.

- In addition, parents who suffer a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy can take parental bereavement leave.

**3.4 Parental Bereavement Leave** can only be taken as a two week block or 2 blocks of 1 week

**3.5** Where more than one child has passed away, the employee is entitled to two weeks' **Parental Bereavement Leave** in respect of each child.

**3.6** Employees with at least 26 weeks' continuous service and weekly average earnings over the lower earnings limit will also be entitled to **statutory parental bereavement pay** (SPBP) for this second week of leave, paid at the statutory rate for SPBP, or 90% of average weekly earnings if this is lower.

**3.7** To claim SPBP employees should notify their service manager in writing within 28 days of the leave starting, or if this isn't possible as soon as you can. In the notification it is important to include your name, the date of your child's death (or date of birth for a stillborn child) and the date that you wish the periods of leave and pay to start and finish.

**3.8** Service managers should inform Human Resources as soon as they are aware of a requirement to claim SPBP.

#### **4. Compassionate Leave**

**4.1** Employees may be granted **Compassionate Leave of up to five days** (pro-rata) with pay as a result of:

- the **critical illness** of a member of their **immediate family**.

**4.2** Senior Service Managers will have discretion in whether an employee's situation fulfils the criteria to be granted Compassionate Leave. HR may be contacted for guidance.

#### **5. Approval process**

**5.1** A request for Bereavement or Compassionate Leave must receive approval from the relevant Senior Service Manager before commencement. Managers may request evidence before or after the request is received.

**5.2** However, the Council is aware that this may not be feasible in an emergency, in which case the employee should receive approval from their line manager or another available manager before commencement of the leave. The employee is then responsible for ensuring approval is received from a Senior Service Manager as soon as practicably possible.

**5.3.** Employees are entitled to chose when they take Parental Bereavement Leave up to 56 weeks after the bereavement. For the first seven weeks following, an employee only needs to inform their line manager before they start work on the first day of absence. After this you will be required to provide your line manager with at least one week's notice. It may be taken in a single block of two weeks, or two blocks of one week taken at different times within the 56 weeks.

**5.4** Compassionate Leave will only be available for an emergency, life threatening critical illness and therefore, at the point where this definition is no longer met, it is expected

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**Commented [CJ3]:** Changed to reflect the introduction of Jack's Law. The Parental Bereavement Leave Regulations 2020 and the Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Act 2018.

that employees will return to work or request another type of leave, for example Unpaid Leave.

- 5.5 In exceptional circumstances, Directors have discretion to approve greater amounts of Bereavement and Compassionate leave than outlined, having considered the circumstances of the case. HR should be approached for guidance in these cases.
- 5.6 When approving Compassionate Leave, the aim is to assist the employee in remaining in work. HR should be approached for guidance to ensure that appropriate support measures and flexibility, which may include an additional period of Unpaid Leave for the employee, are in place.
- 5.7 If approved, the line manager must ensure that any absence approved under the Bereavement and Compassionate Leave Policy is correctly recorded onto the MyView system.
- 6. **Review**
- 6.1 This Bereavement and Compassionate Leave Policy will be reviewed two years after implementation or earlier in the event of further changes in legislation.

**Document Control:**

Version no.	Effective Date	Reason	Review due
1.0	May 2008	Provisions contained within Family Leave Scheme	
2.0	02.02.2016	Policy agreed by Personnel Committee	02.02.2018
3.0.	01.04.2020	'Jack's Law' has come into force	01.04.2022



## **Bereavement and Compassionate Leave Policy and Procedure**

### **1. Scope**

- 1.1 The bereavement and compassionate leave policy applies to **all employees**, excluding casual workers and is available to employees **without a qualifying service period**.

### **2. Conditions**

- 2.1 Employees may be granted **Bereavement Leave** of **up to five days** (pro-rata) **with pay** as a result of:

- the death of a member of their **immediate family\***.

- 2.2 Employees may be granted **Compassionate Leave** of **up to five days** (pro-rata) **with pay** as a result of:

- the **critical illness\*\*** of a member of their **immediate family\***.

- 2.3 For the purposes of this policy, **immediate family\*** is defined as spouse, partner, child, mother, father, brother and sister.

- 2.4 For the purposes of this policy, **critical illness\*\*** refers to an emergency, life threatening illness.

- 2.5 Senior Service Managers will have discretion in whether an employee's situation fulfils the criteria to be granted Compassionate Leave. HR may be contacted for guidance.

### **3. Approval process**

- 3.1 A request for Bereavement or Compassionate Leave must receive approval from the relevant Senior Service Manager before commencement. Managers may request evidence before or after the request is received.

- 3.2 However, the Council is aware that this may not be feasible in an emergency, in which case the employee should receive approval from their line manager or another available manager before commencement of the leave. The employee is then



responsible for ensuring approval is received from a Senior Service Manager as soon as practicably possible.

- 3.3 Compassionate Leave will only be available for an emergency, life threatening critical illness and therefore, at the point where this definition is no longer met, it is expected that employees will return to work or request another type of leave, for example Unpaid Leave.
- 3.4 In exceptional circumstances, Chief Officers have discretion to approve greater amounts of Bereavement and Compassionate leave than outlined, having considered the circumstances of the case. HR should be approached for guidance in these cases.
- 3.5 When approving Compassionate Leave, the aim is to assist the employee in remaining in work. HR should be approached for guidance to ensure that appropriate support measures and flexibility, which may include an additional period of Unpaid Leave for the employee, are in place.

**4. Recording Bereavement or Compassionate Leave**

- 4.1 If approved, the line manager must ensure that any absence approved under the Bereavement and Compassionate Leave Policy is correctly recorded onto the MyView system.

**5. Failure to return**

- 5.1 Failure to return on the agreed date after a period of Bereavement and/or Compassionate Leave will result in pay being suspended, and will be treated as an unauthorised absence which will be dealt with through the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

**6. Review**

- 6.1 This Bereavement and Compassionate Leave Policy will be reviewed two years after implementation or earlier in the event of further changes in legislation.

**Document Control:**

Version no.	Effective Date	Reason	Review due
1.0	May 2008	Provisions contained within Family Leave Scheme	
2.0	02.02.2016	Policy agreed by Personnel Committee	02.02.2018



# **FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS SCHEME**

**LANCASTER  
CITY COUNCIL**

*Promoting City, Coast & Countryside*

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## FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS SCHEME

### POLICY STATEMENT

Lancaster City Council is committed to providing, where practical and operationally possible, employees with a greater degree of flexibility in arranging their working hours to meet the demands of their jobs. The aim of the policy is to enable employees, whose jobs allow participation in the scheme, to consistently and effectively fulfil their service responsibilities and contracted hours of work whilst providing an element of flexibility to assist with meeting their domestic and personal commitments.

The Flexible Working Hours Scheme aims to provide flexibility by allowing some choice, with the agreement of employees' line managers, in the start and finish times and working patterns available to employees in completing their work, whilst at the same time offering the City Council the flexibility to manage varied and fluctuating workloads. Consideration will always be given to identifying the operational viability and the volume and type of work available when assessing if a flexitime working arrangement is appropriate for a particular type of work or service.

The City Council also recognises that not all posts, owing to the nature of the type of work the employee is required to perform, will be suitable for this type of flexible working arrangement. If this is considered to be the case, the Council will try to identify, where practically possible, ways of providing an employee with some flexibility in working practices in order to ensure that basic needs connected with balancing work and home life can be accommodated.

In adopting good employment practice in relation to flexible working the Council will take a leading role by supporting flexible working practices that have the potential to reduce the amount of traffic congestion and improve general well being of both employees and residents.

#### 1. SCOPE

The Flexible Working Hours Scheme applies to full time employees, part time employees, temporary employees and those in their probationary period unless it is withdrawn for any reason in accordance with the provisions in the Scheme. Whilst the Council will seek to maximise the number of staff to whom flexitime arrangements will apply, there will be some employees working in sections for whom flexitime cannot be made available for operational reasons.

The Council's primary objective is to deliver quality services to the residents of the district and this must always take priority over the availability of the Flexible Working Hours Scheme. In any situation, where it is found that the business needs of the Council conflict with the operation of the Scheme, the Council reserves the right to suspend the Scheme for the employees involved.

#### *Note*

*Employees who find their posts are outside the scope of this policy may include those whose working patterns are not conducive to flexitime working, or those who are expected to attend regular meetings outside of normal office hours, or those who do not have contractual overtime agreements in place. In such circumstances the daily hours worked may be varied to meet the needs of the Service.*

It is vital that services to the public should not be affected by the operation of the Scheme and the Council's normal official opening hours will continue to be maintained as **8.45 a.m. to 5.15 p.m. Monday to Friday**. Restrictions to the Scheme may be necessary to maintain cover to deal with enquiries from the public. Service Heads are responsible for

ensuring that office/reception cover during official office opening hours is maintained at all times.

*Some Services, with the approval of Management Team, will be allowed to operate a different flexible working hours scheme to the one described in this document to take into account varied operational needs. In some cases general flexible working is not available. However, the Council's commitment to helping its employees to achieve a work life balance is a genuine one. In Services where, for operational reasons, this Scheme is not implemented, the wider principles and commitment of the Council in respect of flexibility are expected to be observed and facilitated where possible.*

## **2. OPERATION OF THE SCHEME**

A senior member of staff in each Service will be responsible for the management of the Scheme. Service Heads are responsible for ensuring the smooth running of the scheme within their service, taking into account the need for office/reception cover to meet the demands of our customers, both external and internal.

The future open nature of this scheme means that it is even more important to keep an accurate record of employees' whereabouts. Employees are responsible for ensuring that an accurate record of hours worked is kept and on the occasions when they leave the building for any reason that the usual rules in relation to recording time for health, safety and security reasons are observed. A failure to 'sign in' and 'sign out' in the required way will be treated as a serious matter.

## **3. THE FLEXITIME SCHEME**

The flexitime scheme will operate to the following basis

- Full time employees who work 37 hours per week are required to work 148 hours per 4 week flexitime period
- The flexitime scheme can, where there is an operational requirement to do so, include working patterns that are based 5 days work being rostered over a 7 day working cycle.
- There is no core attendance time, however;
  - Employees must work a minimum of 3 hours on any day they attend for duty

Subject to agreement, the starting and finishing times are:

- The earliest start time an employee can start work is **06.00 a.m.**
- The latest time an employee can finish work is **10.30 p.m.**

The bandwidth of hours in any day is therefore 16.5 hours – however we do not recommend employee works the full hours even with regular breaks. The bandwidth is to support work life balance and caring responsibilities.

It is not expected that any employee covered by NJC Conditions of Service will work in excess of 48 hours in a single working week

Where employees are accessing or vacating buildings outside of the standard building opening hours Service Heads must ensure that a risk assessment has been conducted and a procedure is in place to ensure the safety of employees in respect of lone working during those time periods.

- Employees working over 6 hours per day must take a minimum break of 30 minutes. This break will be expected to be taken between the hours of 11 a.m. and 3.00 p.m.
- The maximum amount of flexitime leave an employee can request to take in a 4 week settlement period is **2 days i.e. 14 hours 48 minutes - pro rata for part time employees.**

The granting of requests for flexi leave will normally depend on:

- The operational needs of the Service
- The amount of time an employee has already accrued
- Satisfactory individual performance i.e. achievement of tasks/targets
- The workload of the individual/team
- Level of attendance in the previous 4 week period was as expected

Full time employees (pro-rata for part time employees) will be allowed to carry over a maximum **of 15 hours credit** at the end of each 4 week flexitime period. **Time in excess of 15 hours will automatically be forfeited.** Employees are also permitted to carry over a debit of flexitime of up to **minus 15 hours** at the end of a settlement period.

**To successfully and fairly implement this type of flexitime working arrangement for the benefit of the maximum number of employees, Services may, if necessary, introduce a rota system to ensure minimum staff numbers are maintained to ensure the consistent and efficient delivery of the service provided.**

#### **4. WORKING WEEK - PART TIME EMPLOYEES**

Part time employees who are able to participate in the Scheme must first seek the approval of this from their Service Head as to what credit and debit hours that will apply pro rata in their individual case. For example, an employee who works 18½ hours per week will only be allowed to take a maximum of 7 hours 24 minutes per flexi period and carry over a maximum of 6 hours credit or a maximum of 2 hours debit balance i.e. half the allowance of a full time employee.

#### **5. RECORDING OF HOURS WORKED**

All time at work should be recorded on the flexitime recording spreadsheet or manual form provided by each service (**a copy of Blank Flexi Sheet (6.00am - 10.30pm) Mon - Sun, is available from the Human Resources or via this [Intranet link](#)** ). Employees must record accurately on this form the actual time they are at work.

The open nature of this flexitime scheme requires all breaks, for whatever reason, to be recorded on the **Flexi sheet**. For example this includes lunch breaks, smoking breaks, mid morning shopping or fitness training breaks and medical appointments. Where there is a statutory duty to allow time off for a medical appointment i.e. antenatal care, or the need to attend for cancer screening (NJC conditions of service refer) or where an employee is required to attend for a medical emergency, time credit will be made and authorised by the employee's manager or supervisor.

The Council reserves the right to alter the methods used for time recording as is considered appropriate. In addition, Managers may also improve or supplement recording procedures in order to ensure that employees whereabouts are known thereby ensuring that their safety remains of paramount importance.

Managers who are responsible for authorising flexitime recording spreadsheets/forms cannot always validate the accuracy of an employee's time personally and, therefore, every employee is placed in a position of trust and responsibility for recording their own time on the forms accurately.

Under no circumstances must an employee sign in or sign out for a colleague, nor should any record be made in advance of starting and finishing times. Misuse of the Flexible Working Hours Scheme will be treated very seriously as potentially gross misconduct and may result in the consideration of disciplinary action including dismissal. In addition, some instances of misuse of the Scheme may constitute fraud.

## 6. SETTLEMENT PERIOD

The settlement period is four weeks. At the end of every four week period employees will be expected to have worked the required number of hours, i.e.,  $4 \times 37 = 148$  hours, for full time employees subject to the following:

### 6.1 Credit Hours

Employees are allowed to carry over, from one flexitime period to the next, a maximum of **15 hours** (pro rata for part time employees). **No more than 15 hours can be carried over from one flexitime month to another.** If employees have in excess of **15** hours credit at the end of a settlement period, **the excess will be forfeited.** It is the responsibility of every employee to manage his/her time effectively.

In most cases excess time will be automatically forfeited as indicated above, however, Service Heads will have some discretion to allow greater amounts of carry over in situations where there are operational problems and business needs to be met. In such cases it is expected that Service Heads will discuss the need for the relaxation of this rule with the Corporate Director.

**There is no facility within the Scheme to transfer credit hours to time in lieu records or for payment.**

### 6.2 Debit Hours

The maximum carry over of debit hours from one flexitime month to another is **minus 15 hours** (pro rata for part time employees). If an employee is minus **15** hours in debit, they must make arrangements with their Service Head or line manager to make up the required time within the next settlement period. It is not envisaged that an employee will regularly carry over debit hours from one month to the next. If an employee consistently i.e. for three or more flexitime periods, carries over minus **15** debit hours, they can be required to 'pay off' the debit using annual leave. These occasions are expected to be rare rather than the norm and regularly balancing flexitime records through the use of annual leave will not be permitted.

Service Heads are authorised to suspend the Flexible Working Hours Scheme for any employee who is finding it difficult to manage their time under the Scheme. In such cases, standard working hours, based on the Council's official opening hours will apply.

## 7. MANDATORY BREAKS

**All employees are required to take a minimum of a 30 minute break,** on any day that they intend to work a total of 6 hours or more. It is therefore an essential feature of the Flexible Working Hours Scheme that employees take a minimum break of 30 minutes and

it is the line managers' responsibility to ensure that employees have access to the minimum break allowed in the interests of health, safety and welfare.

Employees will normally be expected to take **no more** than 1 hour at lunch break, without first seeking authorisation from their line manager or Service Head, in advance. Authorisation to take a longer lunch break will not be unreasonably withheld.

## 8. ANNUAL LEAVE

It is anticipated that owing to the 'open' nature of the scheme, in future annual leave is more likely to be taken in full rather than half days. However, where an employee wishes to avoid falling into deficit within the flexitime scheme by simply recording hours actually worked on a day when only half a day is worked, the flexi record can be credited with 3 hours and 42 minutes for a half day absence and the leave entitlement reduced accordingly. The credit for a full day annual leave is 7 hours 24 minutes.

If an employee wishes to work flexibly and the hours proposed to be worked do not compromise the efficient delivery of the services provided and is agreed by the employees manager work may, for example, commence at 07.30 a.m. and finish work at 11.30 a.m. In such circumstances the employee would record 4 hours actual attendance and 'lose' 3 hours 42 minutes that day rather than a half-day annual leave.

The open nature of the flexitime scheme requires managers to accept responsibility for the successful administration of the scheme and for both managers and employees to be clear as to when time off is being taken as annual leave or flexitime leave.

## 9. HOURS WORKED OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

Should an employee leave the office on official business and expect to return before the end of the day, they do not need to record the time they left the office on the flexitime recording form. Employees should note that different Services have other procedures for time recording and signing in and out of the office and for reasons other than flexitime recording e.g. fire safety etc.

Where employees are in and out of the office on a regular basis, to make an adjustment on the flexitime sheet for all work related absences would be too onerous. In these cases it is for Service Heads to satisfy themselves that their local procedures for time recording are adequate and the Scheme is not open to abuse.

## 10. HOURS WORKED OUTSIDE THE DISTRICT

### Business Meetings

On occasions where an employee is required to attend a business meeting at the request of their manager, the time taken to travel to and from the meeting may be included as part of the time during which flexitime can be accrued (i.e. part of the 'working day') even if this means extending the bandwidth hours on such days. This is providing that;

- There is a legitimate reason for that employee to attend the planned meeting
- The amount of 'travelling time' claimed is reduced by the total amount of time that an employee would have spent travelling to and from work had they been attending the normal place of work.
- Should the meeting times require an employee to travel the day before and stay overnight the accrual of flexitime is restricted to the actual time spent travelling to the place of overnight stay.



### Training Courses

The accrual of flexitime over and above a standard day (7 hours and 24 minutes) will not be permitted when an employee is required to attend a training course. This applies to all NJC employees regardless of grade.

## 11. OVERTIME

### **The relationship between Flexible Working Hours and Overtime**

Where a manager has authorised overtime working the following points will apply:

- Employees must have worked a minimum of 37 hours per week in order to qualify to receive a premium payment for work conducted outside the standard bandwidth hours of 06.00 a.m. and 10.30 p.m. For part time employees working less than 37 hours, additional hours will be paid at the rate of plain time until 37 hours is exceeded.
- An employee who is contractually obliged to work overtime i.e that this is confirmed by their contract of employment, will be paid at the appropriate premium rate based on their actual rate of pay, regardless of grade and not limited to the value of SCP28. The reference to capping overtime rates at SCP 28 for employees whose substantive grade is SCP29 or above, relates to the need to work non-contractual authorised overtime.
- Overtime worked on a Monday to Saturday outside the hours listed above, will be paid at a rate of time and a half. An exception to this is for hours worked on any day between the hours of 12 midnight and 06.00 a.m. when overtime will be paid at the rate of double time.
- Any overtime worked on Sundays and Public and Extra Statutory days will be paid at double time
- Overtime is normally only paid to those employees graded SCP 28 and below. Exceptions to this may sometimes apply. In such cases where the officer receiving overtime payments is graded SCP 29 or above, and only with the advance authorisation of the Service Head, overtime rates will be calculated on the basis of SCP 28.
- Overtime will normally only be authorised for time worked before 06.00 a.m. and after 10.30 p.m. Monday to Friday, but a Service Head is able to authorise overtime to commence (as an alternative to the accrual of flexitime) from 06.00 p.m. in circumstances where this can be justified. These occurrences are expected to be rare rather than the norm, and in all such cases the Service Head is expected to record the reasons for taking this course of action.
- In all cases the Service Head is directly responsible for ensuring that there is budgetary provision for the costs associated with the authorisation of overtime. The Council reserves the right to consider whether or not posts for which there is a regular requirement to work beyond the bandwidths provided for in this Scheme are suitable for participation in it.

#### *Note:*

*As an alternative to claiming overtime, officers graded SCP 28 and below have the option to have the bandwidth times extended on the working day(s) in question. The effect of this is that these employees will have the option to be paid overtime for the work carried out or to accrue additional flexitime time outside the normal bandwidth.*

## 12. **STANDBY AND CALLOUT**

### **The relationship between Flexible Working Hours and Standby and Call Out**

For employees who have access to Flexible Working Hours and who are also involved in providing Standby and Callout cover, amended arrangements will apply on the days when participation in Standby and Callout is necessary.

- On a working day when an employee is participating on a Standby and Callout rota, the opportunity to accrue flexitime will be limited to the hours of 08.00 a.m. and 06.00 p.m. (*rather than 07.30 a.m. and 07.30 p.m.*). On such days, employees having 'clocked off' at or before 06.00 p.m. will continue to be paid a standby allowance at the agreed rate from 06.00 p.m. The standby payment will continue through the evening or night (depending on the in-service arrangement) until 08.00 a.m. the following morning, regardless of whether or not an employee has been called on to perform work.

*Note:*

*It is the responsibility of managers to ensure that where extended working is planned or necessary that those employees participating in that work take the appropriate rest breaks. Advice in relation to this and the need to comply with the Working Time Directive is available from Human Resources and Organisation Development.*

## 13. **AUTHORISED ABSENCE**

Employees who are away from work due to sickness, annual leave or attendance at college, training courses, external meetings, conferences etc., should record the reason on the flexitime recording form. A ½ day will count as 3 hours 42 minutes and a full day as 7 hours 24 minutes (pro rata for part time employees).

The maximum number of hours that can be credited for attendance on a college course, other training course, conference or external meeting is 7 hour 24 minutes. If the absence is for a ½ day then the maximum that can be recorded is 3 hours 42 minutes.

## 14. **MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS**

Employees attending routine medical appointments with their GP, dentist, hospital doctor, physiotherapist, are expected to do so in their own time. On days when such an appointment is arranged this means that an employee will record (and be credited for) the actual time at work.

Employees attending antenatal appointment, cancer screening appointments or appointments for a medical emergency, must inform their Service Head and will be credited for the actual time away from the office.

## 15. **SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS**

Employees who are unable to attend work due to severe weather conditions are expected to take annual leave/flexitime leave, if they are unable to get to work. If every effort to attend work is made and an employee arrives at work then they should record their actual time of arrival as the start of their day.

Only in exceptional circumstances, e.g. where large numbers of employees have been affected by widespread conditions, will time be credited because of severe weather

conditions and this will usually be as a result of a report being considered by Management Team.

**16. FLEXTIME LEAVE ENTITLEMENT**

The maximum flexitime leave entitlement allowed in any one-flexitime period is up to two days (14 hours 48 minutes), pro rata for part time employees. All flexitime leave must be authorised by Service Heads or nominated senior officer, who must ensure that there are sufficient staff available to deal with the workload of the Service.

Annual leave cards are issued with the dates of flexitime periods printed on the reverse and any flexitime leave must be recorded and authorised using this card.

**17. MISUSE OF THE FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS SCHEME**

Any employee who is found to be abusing the Flexible Working Hours Scheme may be subject to disciplinary action under the Council's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. Misuse of the Flexible Working Hours Scheme will be treated very seriously as it is potentially gross misconduct and may result in the consideration of disciplinary action including dismissal. In addition, some incidents of misuse of the Scheme may constitute fraud.

**18. SUSPENSION OF THE FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS SCHEME**

Service Heads are authorised to suspend the Flexible Working Hours Scheme for any of the following reasons:

- (i) Where an employee is finding it difficult to manage their time under the Scheme.
- (ii) Where an employee is found to be misusing the Scheme.
- (iii) Where the workload in their Service demands that fixed hours are introduced for a temporary period, as a result of either an increase or decrease in workload.
- (iv) Where an employee's attendance record is subject to a caution under the Council's Sickness Absence Policy, for repeated and persistent short-term absence, flexitime will be suspended for the whole period of the caution.
- (v) Where flexitime has been planned in advance and subsequently suspended for poor attendance then the employee must use annual leave or take unpaid leave if the leave is still required.
- (vi) Substitution of annual leave for a flexi-leave day may be applied retrospectively if a flexi-leave day has been taken in the same period prior to an attendance caution being issued.

In the interests of fairness and consistency, Service Head's considering this course of action are required to consult with Human Resources and Organisation and Development.

**19. FURTHER INFORMATION**

If you would like further guidance on the operation of the Flexible Working Hours Scheme, please contact Human Resources and Organisation Development.



# **FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS SCHEME**

**LANCASTER  
CITY COUNCIL**

*Promoting City, Coast & Countryside*

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#### *Note*

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It is vital that services to the public should not be affected by the operation of the Scheme and the Council's normal official opening hours will continue to be maintained as **8.45 a.m. to 5.15 p.m. Monday to Friday**. Restrictions to the Scheme may be necessary to maintain cover to deal with enquiries from the public. Service Heads are responsible for

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The future open nature of this scheme means that it is even more important to keep an accurate record of employees' whereabouts. Employees are responsible for ensuring that an accurate record of hours worked is kept and on the occasions when they leave the building for any reason that the usual rules in relation to recording time for health, safety and security reasons are observed. A failure to 'sign in' and 'sign out' in the required way will be treated as a serious matter.

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- There is no core attendance time, however;
  - Employees must work a minimum of 3 hours on any day they attend for duty

Subject to agreement, the starting and finishing times are:

- The earliest start time an employee can start work is **07.30 a.m.**
- The latest time an employee can finish work is **07.30 p.m.**

The bandwidth of hours in any day is therefore 12 hours – because of the requirement to take a minimum 30-minute break, the maximum time an employee can work in any day is 11 hours 30 minutes.

It is not expected that any employee covered by NJC Conditions of Service will work in excess of 48 hours in a single working week

Where employees are accessing or vacating buildings outside of the standard building opening hours Service Heads must ensure that a risk assessment has been conducted and a procedure is in place to ensure the safety of employees in respect of lone working during those time periods.

- Employees working over 6 hours per day must take a minimum break of 30 minutes. This break will be expected to be taken between the hours of 11 a.m. and 3.00 p.m.
- The maximum amount of flexitime leave an employee can request to take in a 4 week settlement period is **2 days i.e. 14 hours 48 minutes - pro rata for part time employees.**

The granting of requests for flexi leave will normally depend on:

- The operational needs of the Service
- The amount of time an employee has already accrued
- Satisfactory individual performance i.e. achievement of tasks/targets
- The workload of the individual/team
- Level of attendance in the previous 4 week period was as expected

Full time employees (pro-rata for part time employees) will be allowed to carry over a maximum of **12 hours credit** at the end of each 4 week flexitime period. **Time in excess of 12 hours will automatically be forfeited.** Employees are also permitted to carry over a debit of flexitime of up to **minus 4 hours** at the end of a settlement period.

**To successfully and fairly implement this type of flexitime working arrangement for the benefit of the maximum number of employees, Services may, if necessary, introduce a rota system to ensure minimum staff numbers are maintained to ensure the consistent and efficient delivery of the service provided.**

#### **4. WORKING WEEK - PART TIME EMPLOYEES**

Part time employees who are able to participate in the Scheme must first seek the approval of this from their Service Head as to what credit and debit hours that will apply pro rata in their individual case. For example, an employee who works 18½ hours per week will only be allowed to take a maximum of 7 hours 24 minutes per flexi period and carry over a maximum of 6 hours credit or a maximum of 2 hours debit balance i.e. half the allowance of a full time employee.

#### **5. RECORDING OF HOURS WORKED**

All time at work should be recorded on the flexitime recording spreadsheet or manual form provided by each service (a copy of form FLEX1, is available from the Human Resources and Organisation Development Service). Employees must record accurately on this form the actual time they are at work.

The open nature of this flexitime scheme requires all breaks, for whatever reason, to be recorded on the FLEX1 record. For example this includes lunch breaks, smoking breaks, mid morning shopping or fitness training breaks and medical appointments. Where there is a statutory duty to allow time off for a medical appointment i.e. antenatal care, or the need to attend for cancer screening (NJC conditions of service refer) or where an employee is required to attend for a medical emergency, time credit will be made and authorised by the employee's manager or supervisor.

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Managers who are responsible for authorising flexitime recording spreadsheets/forms cannot always validate the accuracy of an employee's time personally and, therefore, every employee is placed in a position of trust and responsibility for recording their own time on the forms accurately.

Under no circumstances must an employee sign in or sign out for a colleague, nor should any record be made in advance of starting and finishing times. Misuse of the Flexible Working Hours Scheme will be treated very seriously as potentially gross misconduct and may result in the consideration of disciplinary action including dismissal. In addition, some instances of misuse of the Scheme may constitute fraud.

## 6. SETTLEMENT PERIOD

The settlement period is four weeks. At the end of every four week period employees will be expected to have worked the required number of hours, i.e.,  $4 \times 37 = 148$  hours, for full time employees subject to the following:

### 6.1 Credit Hours

Employees are allowed to carry over, from one flexitime period to the next, a maximum of **12 hours** (pro rata for part time employees). **No more than 12 hours can be carried over from one flexitime month to another.** If employees have in excess of 12 hours credit at the end of a settlement period, **the excess will be forfeited.** It is the responsibility of every employee to manage his/her time effectively.

In most cases excess time will be automatically forfeited as indicated above, however, Service Heads will have some discretion to allow greater amounts of carry over in situations where there are operational problems and business needs to be met. In such cases it is expected that Service Heads will discuss the need for the relaxation of this rule with the Corporate Director.

**There is no facility within the Scheme to transfer credit hours to time in lieu records or for payment.**

### 6.2 Debit Hours

The maximum carry over of debit hours from one flexitime month to another is **minus 4 hours** (pro rata for part time employees). If an employee is minus 4 hours in debit, they must make arrangements with their Service Head or line manager to make up the required time within the next settlement period. It is not envisaged that an employee will regularly carry over debit hours from one month to the next. If an employee consistently i.e. for three or more flexitime periods, carries over minus 4 debit hours, they can be required to 'pay off' the debit using annual leave. These occasions are expected to be rare rather than the norm and regularly balancing flexitime records through the use of annual leave will not be permitted.

Service Heads are authorised to suspend the Flexible Working Hours Scheme for any employee who is finding it difficult to manage their time under the Scheme. In such cases, standard working hours, based on the Council's official opening hours will apply.

## 7. MANDATORY BREAKS

**All employees are required to take a minimum of a 30 minute break,** on any day that they intend to work a total of 6 hours or more. It is therefore an essential feature of the Flexible Working Hours Scheme that employees take a minimum break of 30 minutes and

it is the line managers' responsibility to ensure that employees have access to the minimum break allowed in the interests of health, safety and welfare.

Employees will normally be expected to take **no more** than 1 hour at lunch break, without first seeking authorisation from their line manager or Service Head, in advance. Authorisation to take a longer lunch break will not be unreasonably withheld.

## **8. ANNUAL LEAVE**

It is anticipated that owing to the 'open' nature of the scheme, in future annual leave is more likely to be taken in full rather than half days. However, where an employee wishes to avoid falling into deficit within the flexitime scheme by simply recording hours actually worked on a day when only half a day is worked, the flexi record can be credited with 3 hours and 42 minutes for a half day absence and the leave entitlement reduced accordingly. The credit for a full day annual leave is 7 hours 24 minutes.

If an employee wishes to work flexibly and the hours proposed to be worked do not compromise the efficient delivery of the services provided and is agreed by the employees manager work may, for example, commence at 07.30 a.m. and finish work at 11.30 a.m. In such circumstances the employee would record 4 hours actual attendance and 'lose' 3 hours 42 minutes that day rather than a half-day annual leave.

The open nature of the flexitime scheme requires managers to accept responsibility for the successful administration of the scheme and for both managers and employees to be clear as to when time off is being taken as annual leave or flexitime leave.

## **9. HOURS WORKED OUTSIDE THE OFFICE**

Should an employee leave the office on official business and expect to return before the end of the day, they do not need to record the time they left the office on the flexitime recording form. Employees should note that different Services have other procedures for time recording and signing in and out of the office and for reasons other than flexitime recording e.g. fire safety etc.

Where employees are in and out of the office on a regular basis, to make an adjustment on the flexitime sheet for all work related absences would be too onerous. In these cases it is for Service Heads to satisfy themselves that their local procedures for time recording are adequate and the Scheme is not open to abuse.

## **10. HOURS WORKED OUTSIDE THE DISTRICT**

### Business Meetings

On occasions where an employee is required to attend a business meeting at the request of their manager, the time taken to travel to and from the meeting may be included as part of the time during which flexitime can be accrued (i.e. part of the 'working day') even if this means extending the bandwidth hours on such days. This is providing that;

- There is a legitimate reason for that employee to attend the planned meeting
- The amount of 'travelling time' claimed is reduced by the total amount of time that an employee would have spent travelling to and from work had they been attending the normal place of work.
- Should the meeting times require an employee to travel the day before and stay overnight the accrual of flexitime is restricted to the actual time spent travelling to the place of overnight stay.

### Training Courses

The accrual of flexitime over and above a standard day (7 hours and 24 minutes) will not be permitted when an employee is required to attend a training course. This applies to all NJC employees regardless of grade.

## 11. OVERTIME

### **The relationship between Flexible Working Hours and Overtime**

Where a manager has authorised overtime working the following points will apply:

- Employees must have worked a minimum of 37 hours per week in order to qualify to receive a premium payment for work conducted outside the standard bandwidth hours of 07.30 a.m. and 07.30 p.m. For part time employees working less than 37 hours, additional hours will be paid at the rate of plain time until 37 hours is exceeded.
- An employee who is contractually obliged to work overtime I.e that this is confirmed by their contract of employment, will be paid at the appropriate premium rate based on their actual rate of pay, regardless of grade and not limited to the value of SCP28. The reference to capping overtime rates at SCP 28 for employees whose substantive grade is SCP29 or above, relates to the need to work non-contractual authorised overtime.
- Overtime worked on a Monday to Saturday outside the hours listed above, will be paid at a rate of time and a half. An exception to this is for hours worked on any day between the hours of 12 midnight and 06.00 a.m. when overtime will be paid at the rate of double time.
- Any overtime worked on Sundays and Public and Extra Statutory days will be paid at double time
- Overtime is normally only paid to those employees graded SCP 28 and below. Exceptions to this may sometimes apply. In such cases where the officer receiving overtime payments is graded SCP 29 or above, and only with the advance authorisation of the Service Head, overtime rates will be calculated on the basis of SCP 28.
  - Overtime will normally only be authorised for time worked before 07.30 a.m. and after 07.30 p.m. Monday to Friday, but a Service Head is able to authorise overtime to commence (as an alternative to the accrual of flexitime) from 06.00 p.m. in circumstances where this can be justified. These occurrences are expected to be rare rather than the norm, and in all such cases the Service Head is expected to record the reasons for taking this course of action.
  - In all cases the Service Head is directly responsible for ensuring that there is budgetary provision for the costs associated with the authorisation of overtime. The Council reserves the right to consider whether or not posts for which there is a regular requirement to work beyond the bandwidths provided for in this Scheme are suitable for participation in it.

#### *Note:*

*As an alternative to claiming overtime, officers graded SCP 28 and below have the option to have the bandwidth times extended on the working day(s) in question. The effect of this is that these employees will have the option to be paid overtime for the work carried out or to accrue additional flexitime time outside the normal bandwidth.*

## 12. **STANDBY AND CALLOUT**

### **The relationship between Flexible Working Hours and Standby and Call Out**

For employees who have access to Flexible Working Hours and who are also involved in providing Standby and Callout cover, amended arrangements will apply on the days when participation in Standby and Callout is necessary.

- On a working day when an employee is participating on a Standby and Callout rota, the opportunity to accrue flexitime will be limited to the hours of 08.00 a.m. and 06.00 p.m. (*rather than 07.30 a.m. and 07.30 p.m.*). On such days, employees having 'clocked off' at or before 06.00 p.m. will continue to be paid a standby allowance at the agreed rate from 06.00 p.m. The standby payment will continue through the evening or night (depending on the in-service arrangement) until 08.00 a.m. the following morning, regardless of whether or not an employee has been called on to perform work.

*Note:*

*It is the responsibility of managers to ensure that where extended working is planned or necessary that those employees participating in that work take the appropriate rest breaks. Advice in relation to this and the need to comply with the Working Time Directive is available from Human Resources and Organisation Development.*

## 13. **AUTHORISED ABSENCE**

Employees who are away from work due to sickness, annual leave or attendance at college, training courses, external meetings, conferences etc., should record the reason on the flexitime recording form. A ½ day will count as 3 hours 42 minutes and a full day as 7 hours 24 minutes (pro rata for part time employees).

The maximum number of hours that can be credited for attendance on a college course, other training course, conference or external meeting is 7 hour 24 minutes. If the absence is for a ½ day then the maximum that can be recorded is 3 hours 42 minutes.

## 14. **MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS**

Employees attending routine medical appointments with their GP, dentist, hospital doctor, physiotherapist, are expected to do so in their own time. On days when such an appointment is arranged this means that an employee will record (and be credited for) the actual time at work.

Employees attending antenatal appointment, cancer screening appointments or appointments for a medical emergency, must inform their Service Head and will be credited for the actual time away from the office.

## 15. **SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS**

Employees who are unable to attend work due to severe weather conditions are expected to take annual leave/flexitime leave, if they are unable to get to work. If every effort to attend work is made and an employee arrives at work then they should record their actual time of arrival as the start of their day.

Only in exceptional circumstances, e.g. where large numbers of employees have been affected by widespread conditions, will time be credited because of severe weather

conditions and this will usually be as a result of a report being considered by Management Team.

**16. FLEXITIME LEAVE ENTITLEMENT**

The maximum flexitime leave entitlement allowed in any one-flexitime period is up to two days (14 hours 48 minutes), pro rata for part time employees. All flexitime leave must be authorised by Service Heads or nominated senior officer, who must ensure that there are sufficient staff available to deal with the workload of the Service.

Annual leave cards are issued with the dates of flexitime periods printed on the reverse and any flexitime leave must be recorded and authorised using this card.

**17. MISUSE OF THE FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS SCHEME**

Any employee who is found to be abusing the Flexible Working Hours Scheme may be subject to disciplinary action under the Council's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. Misuse of the Flexible Working Hours Scheme will be treated very seriously as it is potentially gross misconduct and may result in the consideration of disciplinary action including dismissal. In addition, some incidents of misuse of the Scheme may constitute fraud.

**18. SUSPENSION OF THE FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS SCHEME**

Service Heads are authorised to suspend the Flexible Working Hours Scheme for any of the following reasons:

- (i) Where an employee is finding it difficult to manage their time under the Scheme.
- (ii) Where an employee is found to be misusing the Scheme.
- (iii) Where the workload in their Service demands that fixed hours are introduced for a temporary period, as a result of either an increase or decrease in workload.
- (iv) Where an employee's attendance record is subject to a caution under the Council's Sickness Absence Policy, for repeated and persistent short-term absence, flexitime will be suspended for the whole period of the caution.
- (v) Where flexitime has been planned in advance and subsequently suspended for poor attendance then the employee must use annual leave or take unpaid leave if the leave is still required.
- (vi) Substitution of annual leave for a flexi-leave day may be applied retrospectively if a flexi-leave day has been taken in the same period prior to an attendance caution being issued.

In the interests of fairness and consistency, Service Head's considering this course of action are required to consult with Human Resources and Organisation and Development.

**19. FURTHER INFORMATION**

If you would like further guidance on the operation of the Flexible Working Hours Scheme, please contact Human Resources and Organisation Development.

## PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

### Review of Equality & Diversity Initiatives

23rd July 2020

#### Report of the Head of HR

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To enable the Personnel Committee to review and offer input to the draft Fair Work Charter and to provide input to the diversity of our recruitment process and review and recommend improvements to our equality and diversity policy.

This report is public.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That Members review and offers feedback on the draft Fair Work Charter to be passed on to Cllr Wood and Cllr Sinclair**
- (2) That Members listen to the updates from the D&I group and offers suggestions to amendments to the current Equality & Diversity Policy**
- (3) That Members reviews the current recruitment process and the statistics for BAME applicants and offer suggestions for change.**

#### 1. Introduction

As part of reviews to policies, we also strive to engage with staff and the community to seek opportunities to improve the way we treat people and encourage people to work at our Council.

We recognise the need for improvements and continuous work on various initiatives, a Fair Work Charter and other social justice elements such as equalities, diversity and inclusion. We would then like to update our Equality & Diversity policy to reflect these improvements.

#### 2. Fair Work Charter

2.1 Work commenced on the development of a Fair Work Charter in early March 2020, however due to the Covid pandemic, it was placed on hold until recently, when it was reviewed again. There is an opportunity to share the Charter at the next Cabinet meeting, therefore we would welcome a review of the draft Charter and its standards for our own employees in consultation with the trade unions; and start working on a consultation paper for external organisations and the community. Noting that the related work on Ethical/Social value Procurement is nearing completion. As there are new Cabinet portfolio holders for HR and Governance (Cllr Erica Lewis) and Finance and Corporate Services (Cllr John Reynolds), they have now had an opportunity to review the draft charter and would welcome feedback and input from the Trade Unions and Personnel Committee.

See appendix 1 – Fair Work Charter

**3 D&I group initiatives**

3.1 As part of a recovery group team, there has been significant focus on staff wellbeing, diversity and inclusion and there has been some positive pieces of work already started as part of the pandemic, which we would like to grow and continue. The team would like to share with the Trade Unions and Personnel Committee the progress to date and would welcome suggestions for further initiatives to help improve and develop our Equality & Diversity Policy

**4 Recruitment Process and improvements for inclusivity**

Upon analysis of our recruitment statistics following a question from Cllr Young in response to the recent Black Lives Matters campaigns, we felt it was an appropriate time to see if any improvements could be made to encourage applicants from the BAME community and other diverse groups.

We have also been reviewing current advertising providers and felt there may be an opportunity to use the some of this existing budget for more diverse jobs boards. We would welcome feedback from the Trade unions

See appendix 2 – recruitment statistics and costings for advertising on different jobs boards.

**5. Conclusion**

Members are asked to provide feedback on the Fair Work Charter and offer input to the Charter.

Members are asked to offer suggestions and input to the D&I group for further initiatives and improvements

Members are asked to review the diversity statistics for the recruitment process and offer suggestions for change.

<p><b>CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b> (including Health &amp; Safety, Equality &amp; Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing):</p> <p>N/A.</p>
<p><b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b></p> <p>No further comments.</p>
<p><b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b></p> <p>There may be a requirement to re-distribute our recruitment advertising budget and look at using new providers.</p>
<p><b>OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, such as Human Resources, Information Services, Property, Open Spaces:</b></p> <p>Not applicable.</p>

**SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The s151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

**MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Monitoring Officer has no further comments.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Fair Work Charter, Equality & Diversity  
Policy, Recruitment stats

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## Lancaster District: Fair Work Charter

### Introduction

Lancaster City Council adopted updated priorities in January 2020, to include three cross-cutting themes of:

- **Climate Emergency**  
Taking action to meet the challenges of the climate emergency
- **Community Wealth Building**  
Building a sustainable and just local economy that benefits people and organisations
- **Community Engagement**  
Drawing on the wealth of skills and knowledge in the community and working in partnership.

As we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic and seek to rebuild our local economy, collaborations and partnerships with other employers, institutions and industries in our district are key to building back better and creating a sustainable and prosperous community. The Council has made strong links with community groups, businesses, and our residents through the initial period of Covid-19 lockdown. It is from this basis that we seek the support of everyone in the district to continue to work together throughout the journey of economic and social recovery.

In June 2020, Lancaster City Council's Cabinet agreed to work with stakeholders and communities to develop 'Plan 20 30: Recovery for a Safe, Sustainable and Socially Just District: Health, Connected, Empowered and Enabled'. This evolving plan supports the establishing of Five Core Workstreams that will proactively address Council priorities and nurture dynamic and diverse co-production across the Lancaster district:

- Climate Emergency
- Finance & Resources (Internal)
- Healthy & Happy Communities (Reducing Inequality)
- Community Power, Engagement & Resilience
- A Regenerative and Distributive Economy.

In addition to the ongoing work of the Council with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) on community wealth building and the development of new social value procurement guidelines; and the Council's declaration of a climate emergency, the administration is seeking to establish a fair work charter across the district. The first stage is to set high standards of employment for the Council's own staff.

Once the Council has set high employment standards for Council employees and is leading by example, we will then look at how to encourage other employers to work towards similar minimum standards for their employees commensurate with their size, type of business and industry sector. This work will begin with the public sector, partner/anchor institutions identified by CLES from the work on community wealth building, and other key groups. We will encourage them to adopt Fair Work Charter standards as employers and to embed them in their contracting processes and supply chains.

For each of these commitments, the Council will, in accordance with its Social Value/Ethical Procurement guidelines and commitment to support a local zero-carbon economy, seek to commission/procure locally and from other organisations that undertake to reach the same standards.

The Council will work with employers, employer groups and trade unions to also adopt similar high standards for all employees in the district.

## **1. The Foundation Living Wage**

- 1.1 The foundation living wage is the minimum needed to live on, as calculated by the Living Wage Foundation. It is neither economically nor morally justifiable for public money to be paid to organisations that do not pay the real living wage to its employees.
- 1.2 Lancaster City Council will become an accredited living wage employer.
- 1.3 Lancaster City Council believes in the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.
- 1.4 All employers in the district are also encouraged to become accredited living wage employers and to encourage organisations in their supply chain to do the same.
- 1.5 In the case of emerging social enterprises, small businesses, and start-ups, the Council will work with these organisations to develop a plan to reach the goal of paying staff the foundation living wage as soon as practicable.

## **2. A Secure Income**

- 2.1 Insecure incomes cause workers and their households unnecessary stress and hardship. Workers' living standards are at risk when their contracted working hours are much lower than the paid hours they normally work. Employers should not use agency or 'self-employed' status as a method of avoiding responsibilities to long-term employees.
- 2.2 The Council will not use zero hours contracts or, where possible, other forms of casual contracts, but will endeavour to employ staff on contracts that reflect the actual hours they work, and will offer direct employment to long-term staff, rather than requiring them to be classed as agency staff or self-employed.
- 2.3 The Council recognises that there may be times where specialist skills are required for a specific need and that these skills can only be acquired through the use of fixed term contracts or consultants. However, the use of consultants should be minimised where possible and we will look to develop the skills of our existing staff to meet our ongoing and future business needs.
- 2.4 All employers in the district are encouraged to end the use of zero hours and insecure casual contracts and to instead offer staff contracts that guarantee payment for the hours that they regularly work. All employers are encouraged to offer staff who work for them for a prolonged period the opportunity to become direct employees.

## **3. Support for training and development at work**

- 3.1 Good quality well paid jobs should be accessible to everybody in the district.
- 3.2 The Council will offer and promote high quality apprenticeships/traineeships and accessible opportunities for learning throughout life. We will support a properly funded, high quality and accessible lifelong skills programme, recognising that further education colleges and our two universities are key anchor institutions in our local community.
- 3.3 The Council will encourage cooperative new ventures which offer education and training for our local workforce delivered by our local education and training institutions.
- 3.4 All employers in the district are encouraged to provide: high quality apprenticeships and traineeships for local people; and development opportunities for workers such as paid time off for training.

## **4 Equalities, diversity, and inclusion**

- 4.1 A fundamental principle in this district is that people should be treated equally. Lancaster City Council recognises the following equality characteristics which are protected under The Equality Act 2010 - race (includes Gypsy Travellers), sexual orientation, sex (gender), disability, gender reassignment, age, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership. The Act provides legal protection for people with the listed characteristics, but this must be viewed as minimum standards to be exceeded not targets to just meet.

- 4.2 The Council will work to ensure that women and men are paid equally for work of equal value and will promote work/life balance and strive to eradicate discrimination in all its forms. We will aim to have a workforce that is diverse and broadly reflective of the community that we serve. We acknowledge that we can always learn new lessons and investigate new ways of working to improve the lives of our workforce and all residents in our district.
- 4.3 The Council is committed to supporting a society where everyone can participate equally. Addressing inequality is not about treating people equally. Structural inequalities build up over time and institutions are often slow to react to keep up with changing community values. The Council will work with equalities groups in the district to meet the needs of their communities and promote equalities rights'.
- 4.4 All employers in the district will be encouraged to be transparent in their pay policies and take action to close the gender pay gap, to actively promote work-life balance and the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, and to eradicate discrimination in all its forms. Employers across the district will be encouraged to adopt the aim of having a workforce that reflects the community where they are located.

### Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities

- 4.5 The Council recognises racist discrimination can prevent BAME people from having equal access to good quality jobs and pay. BAME people also share many of the same concerns as all residents regarding access to fair employment, pay, promotion and training. However, racist discrimination can deepen the impact of problems faced in applying for jobs and in workplaces.
- 4.6 The Council commits to challenging racism and working with our local BAME communities to improve their lives and prospects.
- 4.7 The Council will ensure that applications for Council jobs are encouraged from the BAME community and commit to guaranteeing interviews for all those who meet the essential job criteria. Where an applicant does not meet the essential criteria, the Council will advise the applicant accordingly and will provide further information and advice as to how their application can be improved for future applications.

### LGBT+ Rights and Support

- 4.8 In order to recognise the need for public institutions to show leadership in the area of LGBT+ rights, the Council will work with our local LGBT+ rights organisations, to develop and then become accredited under a local LGBT+ Quality Mark scheme.
- 4.9 The Council will ensure that applications for Council jobs are encouraged from the LGBT+ community and commit to guaranteeing interviews for all those who meet the essential job criteria. Where an applicant does not meet the essential criteria, the Council will advise the applicant accordingly and will provide further information and advice as to how their application can be improved for future applications.

### Disability Rights and Support

- 4.10 The Council is committed to recognising and supporting residents, employees and customers with disabilities in our district. We will work with Disability Rights UK and local disability rights advocacy groups to close the gap between disabled and non-disabled people in employment and pay.
- 4.11 The Council will ensure that applications for Council jobs are encouraged from those in our community with disabilities and commit to guaranteeing interviews for all those who meet the essential job criteria. Where an applicant does not meet the essential criteria the Council will advise the applicant accordingly and will provide further information and advice as to how their application can be improved for future applications.
- 4.12 This includes those with what is referred to as 'hidden disabilities'. The Council supports schemes such as The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower scheme to allow everyone with a

hidden disability to choose to be subtly visible when they need to be. The Council will join the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower scheme and provide training for its staff.

### Armed Forces Veterans and their Families

- 4.13 The Council recognises the valuable contribution made to the UK by our armed forces personnel. The Council has signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant which is based upon two key principles: The Armed Forces community should not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services; and, Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.
- 4.14 The Council will ensure that applications for Council jobs are encouraged from the armed forces community and commit to guaranteeing interviews for all those who meet the essential job criteria. Where an applicant does not meet the essential criteria the Council will advise the applicant accordingly and will provide further information and advice as to how their application can be improved for future applications.
- 4.15 The Council encourages the integration of Service life into civilian life and encourages members of the Armed Forces community to work with their local community.

## **5. A Strong, Independent Voice at Work**

- 5.1 Collective bargaining and regular constructive dialogue between employers and trade unions is important to ensure good employment relations and safe workplaces, facilitate mutually beneficial adjustments to employment practices, and to ensure high-quality service delivery.
- 5.2 The Council will continue to recognise and work with trade unions. We will abide by collective bargaining agreements and arrangements. Where workers delivering outsourced or externally procured services are not covered by collective bargaining arrangements, we will explore and pursue opportunities to establish sectoral collective bargaining at the most appropriate levels within and across the district.
- 5.3 The council and trade unions will work together to explore ways of generating income from in-house services and maximising council funds before making cuts. We will unite in solidarity to campaign against central government cuts to highlight and secure the funding needed.
- 5.4 The council will:
- a. Actively promote trade union membership among our employees and external service providers.
  - b. Ensure access to trade union members by recognised trade union officials.
  - c. Continue and develop our own effective industrial relations strategies with the trade unions.
  - d. Maintain our autonomy with regard to facility time and the continuing use of check-off (union subscriptions paid from payroll deductions)
  - e. Update formal agreements with the trade unions on all aspects of the Trade Union Act, including facility time and check off.
  - f. Promote union learning agreements and quality training for trade union representatives.
- 5.5 All employers in the district are encouraged to recognise, work and bargain with relevant trade unions. Employers should ensure that there is no black-listing or victimisation of trade union members.

## **6. Healthy and Supportive Workplaces**

- 6.1 The Council will promote a healthy and supportive work environment. There are many organisations with initiatives and employer charters to improve peoples' working lives. The

Council will be open to exploring new ideas and better ways of working to support a happy and diverse workforce.

Wellbeing & Mental Health:

- 6.2 The Council believes healthy workplaces promote mental health and wellbeing; are positive and productive, and get the best out of everyone. Employers that care about good mental health and wellbeing attract and keep top talent because they are great places to work. As well as benefiting employees, a mentally healthy workplace is also better for productivity.
- 6.3 At least one in six workers experiences common mental health problems, including anxiety and depression. All employers need to address mental health in the workplace. We all have mental health and we can fluctuate between thriving, struggling and being ill. People experiencing mental health issues can be in any of these groups and, with the right support, a person with a serious mental health problem can still thrive at work.
- 6.4 The Council believes that we must all work together to become more aware of our own mental health and other people's mental health and develop more sensitive and strengths-based responses to changes in mental health in the workplace. We must become better at listening without judgement and recognise that we all share responsibility in making this change.
- 6.5 Drawing on the recommendations, evidence base and best practice guidance found in the 2017 Thriving at Work Report, produced by Paul Farmer, Mind CEO, and Lord Stevenson on behalf of the UK Government, the council will, working with stakeholders, develop an Employer Action Plan that will achieve lasting change in the workplace. This plan will detail the actions the council is committed to delivering to tackle stigma and discrimination around mental health. It will also celebrate activity we have delivered & enable the establishing of the "mental health core standards" recommended by the Thriving at Work Report:

*Core Standards*

- a. Produce, implement and communicate a mental health at work plan that encourages and promotes good mental health of all staff and an open organisational culture.
- b. Develop mental health awareness among employees by making information, tools and support accessible.
- c. Encourage open conversations about mental health and the support available when employees are struggling, during the recruitment process and at regular intervals throughout employment, with appropriate workplace adjustments offered to employees who require them.
- d. Provide your employees with good working conditions and ensure they have a healthy work/life balance and opportunities for development.
- e. Promote effective people management to ensure all employees have a regular conversation about their health and wellbeing with their line manager, supervisor or organisational leader and train and support line managers in effective management practices.
- f. Routinely monitor employee mental health and wellbeing by understanding available data, talking to employees, and understanding risk factors.

*Enhanced Standards*

- g. Increase transparency and accountability through internal and external reporting to include a leadership commitment and outline of the organisation's progress on mental health.
- h. Demonstrate accountability by nominating a health and wellbeing lead at Board or Senior Leadership level, with clear reporting duties and responsibilities.

- i. Improve the disclosure process to encourage openness during recruitment, ensuring employees are aware of why information is required and make sure the right support is in place to facilitate a good employer response following disclosure.
  - j. Ensure provision of tailored in-house mental health support and signposting to clinical help and signposting to clinical help, including digital support, employer-purchased Occupational Health or Employee Assistance Programmes, or NHS services, amongst other sources of support.
- 6.6 The Council will work with the NHS, other mental health providers, and with people with lived experience to improve workplace policies and practices.

#### Dying to Work Charter

- 6.7 The Council will sign up to the Trade Union Congress (TUC) Dying to Work Charter and, consequently, will:
- a. Review sick pay and sickness absence procedures and include a specific statement that they will not dismiss any person with a terminal diagnosis because of their condition.
  - b. Ensure that they have an Employee Assistance Programme that has the capacity and competency to provide support to any person with a terminal illness, including access to counselling and financial advice.
  - c. Provide training to line managers and all HR staff on dealing with terminal illness, including how to discuss future plans with any worker who has a diagnosis of a terminal illness, and on what adaptations to work arrangements may be necessary.
  - d. Following the adoption of the Dying to Work Charter, notify all employees we have made the commitments contained in it.
  - e. Encourage employers across the district to also sign up to the Dying to Work Charter.

#### Employers with Heart Charter

- 6.8 The Council recognises the difficulties and uncertainty faced by parents premature babies and that their worrying time in hospital should not be spent as maternity or paternity leave. We understand that premature babies need more time; time to develop, time to grow and time for mums and babies to bond at home after neonatal intensive care. That's why we're signing up to The Smallest Things Employer with Heart Charter – supporting parents of premature babies.
- 6.9 The Employer with Heart Charter means we will:
- a. Extend maternity leave for mothers who give birth prematurely (before 37 weeks gestation) by the number of days a baby was born prior to their due date. We will pay extended leave at full pay and this may be classed as compassionate leave.
  - b. Give dads the time they need to be with their baby in hospital, receiving at least two weeks' paid compassionate leave on the birth of their premature baby. Fathers may wish to save or split their paternity leave, being there when their baby comes home from hospital. We understand that plans may change depending upon the baby's medical needs, that additional compassionate leave may be required and that the date a baby will come home from hospital is rarely set in stone.
  - c. Support parents returning to work following the birth of a premature baby. We understand that returning to work can be a difficult time for parents of premature babies and that babies born too soon can have ongoing medical needs, requiring regular hospital appointments and check-ups. We therefore follow the ACAS best practice guidance, considering formal and informal flexible working patterns and offering additional paid or unpaid leave.

Charter Against Modern Slavery

- 6.10 Modern slavery is a crime and a violation of fundamental human rights. It takes various forms, such as slavery, servitude, forced and compulsory labour and human trafficking, all of which have in common the deprivation of a person's liberty by another in order to exploit them for personal or commercial gain. We have a zero-tolerance approach to modern slavery and we are committed to acting ethically and with integrity in all our business dealings and relationships and to implementing and enforcing effective systems and controls to ensure modern slavery is not taking place anywhere in our own business or in any of our supply chains.
- 6.11 We are also committed to ensuring there is transparency in our own business and in our approach to tackling modern slavery throughout our supply chains, consistent with our disclosure obligations under the Modern Slavery Act 2015. We expect the same high standards from all of our contractors, suppliers and other business partners, and as part of our contracting processes, we will include specific prohibitions against the use of forced, compulsory or trafficked labour, or anyone held in slavery or servitude, whether adults or children, and we expect that our suppliers will hold their own suppliers to the same high standards.
- 6.12 Lancaster City Council will:
- a. Train its corporate procurement team to understand modern slavery through the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply's (CIPS) online course on Ethical Procurement and Supply.
  - b. Require its contractors to comply fully with the Modern Slavery Act 2015, wherever it applies, with contract termination as a potential sanction for non-compliance.
  - c. Challenge any abnormally low-cost tenders to ensure they do not rely upon the potential contractor practising modern slavery.
  - d. Highlight to its suppliers that contracted workers are free to join a trade union and are not to be treated unfairly for belonging to one.
  - e. Publicise its whistle-blowing system for staff to blow the whistle on any suspected examples of modern slavery.
  - f. Require its tendered contractors to adopt a whistle-blowing policy which enables their staff to blow the whistle on any suspected examples of modern slavery.
  - g. Review its contractual spending regularly to identify any potential issues with modern slavery.
  - h. Highlight for its suppliers any risks identified concerning modern slavery and refer them to the relevant agencies to be addressed.
  - i. Refer for investigation via the National Crime Agency's national referral mechanism any of its contractors identified as a cause for concern regarding modern slavery.
  - j. Report publicly on the implementation of this policy annually.

**7. Addressing Climate Change**

- 7.1 In January 2019, Lancaster City Council declared a climate emergency and is working towards a target of becoming zero-carbon by 2030.
- 7.2 Addressing climate change is in the interests of the whole community – both present and future. The Council will seek to engage with individuals, businesses, and organisations to reach the same goals: protecting our planet, preserving and enhancing our natural environment, managing flood risks, and improving air quality.
- 7.3 The Council will work with other employers across the district to encourage and support their efforts to make the district a zero-carbon economy as soon as possible.

## Staff Wellbeing & Inclusion Group

### Group Members

<b>Exec Lead</b>	<b>Suzanne Lodge</b>
<b>Group Lead</b>	<b>Stephy Jayne Anderson</b>
<b>Group Lead Staff Wellbeing</b>	<b>Stephy Jayne Anderson</b>
<b>Group Lead Inclusion</b>	<b>Dave Richmond</b> (HR lead OD) <b>Lydia Brookbanks</b> (HR lead HR Legislation)
<b>HR, Personnel Committee &amp; Unions etc.</b>	<b>Sue Graham</b>
<b>Information Governance, wellbeing &amp; inclusion</b>	<b>Amy Holland</b>
<b>Salt Ayre Leisure Centre &amp; Men's Mental Health</b>	<b>Callum Don</b>
<b>Communications</b>	<b>Alison Gardner</b>
<b>Community Connections</b>	<b>Paula Doherty</b>

### Other support

<b>Groups which feed into this workstream</b>	<b>Wellbeing Group</b> (Across the organisation) <b>Your Voice Group</b> (Sue Graham Lead) <b>Staff Ambassadors</b> (Your Voice)	<b>Stephy Jayne Anderson</b> <b>Dave Richmond, Sue Graham</b>
<b>HR support</b>	<b>Molly Bolton</b> <b>Hannah Read</b>	<b>Dave Richmond, Lydia Brookbanks &amp; Sue Graham</b>
<b>Community Wellbeing Advisory Group</b>	<b>Councillor Sinclair</b>	<b>Stephy Jayne Anderson</b>
<b>Personnel Committee</b>	<b>Councillor Robinson</b> <b>Councillor Lewis</b>	<b>Sue Graham</b> <b>Stephy Jayne Anderson</b>
<b>Community Hub</b>	<b>Emily Turbitt</b> <b>Joe Frith</b>	<b>Suzanne Lodge</b>



## Staff Wellbeing

Theme: Policy & legislation	Informed by	Working with
<i>Sickness Policy</i>	Your Voice (health & wellbeing survey)	HR
<i>Volunteering Policy</i> <b>m/h policy?</b>		HR

Theme: Support Offer	Informed by	Working with
<i>Health &amp; Wellbeing Intranet pages</i>	Wellbeing Group & Your Voice (health & wellbeing survey)	<b>Wellbeing Group</b> (specifically Molly Bolton updates the pages)
<i>Staff Ambassadors</i>	Your Voice (health & wellbeing survey)	<b>Your Voice</b>
<i>Working conditions</i>	Your Voice (health & wellbeing survey)	<b>Your Voice/Wellbeing Group/ Property/ ICT/Managers</b>
<i>Taking notice of colleagues</i>	Wellbeing Group & Your Voice (health & wellbeing survey)	<b>Wellbeing Group</b>
<i>Wellbeing conversations</i>	OD	HR
<i>Your Time</i>	OD	HR
<i>Team meeting guidance</i>	OD	HR
<i>Safe spaces in our buildings</i>	Wellbeing Group & Your Voice (health & wellbeing survey)	<b>Wellbeing Group/ Property</b>
<i>Health checks</i>	Wellbeing Group & OD	<b>HR &amp; SALC</b>
<i>Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) (Network now created, currently 4 people trained. 3 adult 1 youth) Looking into training more.</i>	Wellbeing Group	<b>OD &amp; L&amp;D</b>

Theme: Activities, events, campaigns	Informed by	Working with
<i>Opportunities to be active</i>	Wellbeing Group & Your Voice (health & wellbeing survey)	<b>SALC</b>
<i>Campaigns - #ThisIsMe, Hidden Disabilities, Mens Health</i>	Wellbeing Group	<b>Wellbeing Group, SALC &amp; Front line teams</b>
<i>Campaigns – Cross department, Great British Spring Clean, community groups etc.</i>	Wellbeing Group	<b>Public Realm</b>
<i>Support &amp; discussion groups (external speakers etc.) tbc</i>	Wellbeing Group	<b>Wellbeing Group &amp; L&amp;D &amp; OD</b>
<i>Time to Change Champions -Have we signed the pledge?</i>	Wellbeing Group	<b>Wellbeing Group</b>
<i>Awareness Days &amp; Campaigns on H&amp;W calendar</i>	Wellbeing Group	<b>Wellbeing Group</b>

Theme: Communication	Informed by	Working with
<i>Staff Wellbeing &amp; Inclusion Comms Plan</i>	Wellbeing Group	<b>Wellbeing Group</b>
<i>Monthly Wellbeing Group chats</i>	Wellbeing Group	<b>Wellbeing Group</b>
<i>Health &amp; Wellbeing Calendar</i>	Wellbeing Group & Your Voice (health & wellbeing survey)	<b>Wellbeing Group</b>
<i>Staff Ambassadors (also support offer)</i>	Your Voice (health & wellbeing survey)	<b>Your Voice</b>

<i>A Day in the Life of articles</i>	Wellbeing Group & Your Voice (health & wellbeing survey)	<b>Anyone</b>
<i>Good news stories/ best practice</i>	Wellbeing Group & Your Voice (health & wellbeing survey)	<b>Anyone</b>
<i>Front Line newsletter</i>	Wellbeing Group	<b>Wellbeing Group</b> (Specifically Molly Bolton & Alison Gardner)
<i>Your Ideas scheme</i>	Your Voice & Staff Ambassadors	<b>Your Voice</b>
<i>Notice boards at each site.</i>	Your Voice	<b>Your Voice &amp; Staff Ambassadors</b>
<i>Staff benefits</i>		<b>HR</b>

<b>Theme: Training</b>	<b>Informed by</b>	<b>Working with</b>
<i>Lunch &amp; learns</i> - <i>Agile project management</i> - <i>MHFA</i> - <i>5 Ways to wellbeing tbc</i>	Wellbeing Group & Your Voice (health & wellbeing survey)	<b>L&amp;D &amp; OD</b>
<i>Learning Zone Courses</i>		<b>L&amp;D &amp; OD</b>
<i>Training for line managers – Mental Health Awareness</i>	Wellbeing Group & Your Voice (health & wellbeing survey)	<b>L&amp;D &amp; OD</b>
<i>MHFA/ Mental health support – Staff ambassadors to consider</i>	Wellbeing Group & Your Voice (health & wellbeing survey)	<b>L&amp;D &amp; OD</b>
<i>Leadership training</i>	Wellbeing Group & Your Voice (health & wellbeing survey)	<b>L&amp;D &amp; OD</b>

## Inclusion

**Note: Your Voice survey on Diversity & Inclusion TBC. Will inform inclusion work going forward.**

<b>Theme: Policy &amp; legislation</b>	<b>Informed by</b>	<b>Working with</b>
<i>Sickness Policy</i>	Your Voice (health & wellbeing survey)	<b>HR</b>
<i>Equality &amp; Diversity Policy</i>	Your Voice (Inclusion & Diversity survey)	<b>HR</b>
<i>Recruitment practices</i>	Your Voice (Inclusion & Diversity survey)	<b>HR, OD</b>
<i>Reward &amp; recognition</i>	Your Voice (Inclusion & Diversity survey)	<b>L&amp;D, OD &amp; HR</b>
<i>Bullying</i>	Your Voice (Inclusion & Diversity survey)	<b>HR</b>
<i>Harassment</i>	Your Voice (Inclusion & Diversity survey)	<b>HR</b>

<b>Theme: Support Offer</b>	<b>Informed by</b>	<b>Working with</b>
<i>Accessible spaces</i>		<b>Property</b>

<b>Theme: Communication</b>	<b>Informed by</b>	<b>Working with</b>
<i>Different methods of communication</i> - <i>Voice overs</i>		<b>Communications &amp; Marketing</b>

- Animations - Briefings		
Language		
Your Voice Survey	External Research	<b>Your Voice (Diversity and Inclusion Group)</b>
Discussion Groups	Your Voice (Health & Wellbeing survey)	<b>OD, HR</b>

<b>Theme: Training</b>	<b>Informed by</b>	<b>Working with</b>
Accessible training		

## Appendix 2

### Lancaster City Council

#### Analysis of Recruitment Statistics and Potential Advertising Providers

##### Recruitment diversity analysis:

- Since we started recording vacancies on the system (which was in 2016) we have had 531 vacancies
- We have logged 9889 applications of which 486 did not identify as white, a further 42 selected 'prefer not to say' and 340 did not answer the question.
- There were 800 successful applicants of which 22 did not identify as white and a further 2 selected 'prefer not to say'
- The equal opportunities section of the application is entirely voluntary, applicants only complete the section if they wish to and can choose what parts they would like to answer. Managers do not get to view the equal opportunities part of the application form. Hiring managers also do not get to see any diversity information, only name, skills/qualifications/experience from the application form.
- We are a Disability Confident employer, therefore disabled applicants that meet all of the essential criteria must be interviewed. We encourage managers to use a shortlisting matrix that we have made available to them on the intranet, this ensures that the applicant is being scored on the essential and desirable criteria of the role and nothing else.
- The HR Assistants also review any advertising documents before they go out to ensure managers are not indirectly discriminating against a protected characteristic. For example managers have to provide a reason why a driving licence is essential, so that they are not discriminating against someone who cannot drive due to a disability. Where possible we will state that reasonable adjustments can be made for those people that cannot drive due to a disability.
- We have recruitment fairs each year where we go out to many schools and colleges in the area to advertise our apprenticeships and this is being extended to a graduate recruitment scheme. We're also working with Morecambe and Lancaster college to provide 'Traineeships' for those less academic students, who we can provide less academic career paths for within the council.

##### Costs for on [LGBTjobs.co.uk](https://www.lgbtjobs.co.uk) [BMEjobs.co.uk](https://www.bmejobs.co.uk) and [Disabilityjobs.co.uk](https://www.disabilityjobs.co.uk)

Each job goes on all 3 Diversity Job Boards. Giving us full coverage.

- **50 job advertising credits to go on ALL 3 Diversity Job-boards. £50 per credit**
- **100 job advertising credits to go on ALL 3 Diversity Job-boards. £35 per credit**
- **12 months Unlimited Job Postings - £3950 per annum (Offer running till 31<sup>st</sup> July)**

# POST JOBS ON THE DIVERSITY NETWORK

We believe that inclusivity, equality and diversity should be embraced as a positive part of everyday life and we are developing a variety of resources and networks to enhance opportunities for employment in the UK.

It is crucial to us that everyone is actively involved and represented in the UK workplace. Across the board within the public, private and third sectors we have seen a shift towards the absolute need for diversity, inclusion and equality within the working environment. This is becoming increasingly important for not only job seekers but also for those who are employing.

## Our Diversity job boards

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**LGBTJOBS.CO.UK** 

 **Disabilityjob.co.uk**

 **BMEjobs.co.uk**

## Pricing to appear on all three boards

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### STANDARD JOB LISTING

- Edit Your Job Listings
- See Job Posting Stats
- 30 day posting

From £325

### FEATURED JOB LISTING

- Edit Your Job Listings
- See Job Posting Stats
- Home Page Listing
- Higher Ranking
- 30 day posting

From £395

### OR:

To advertise on one job board only.

Prices start  
From £200

If you would like more information please call us at 0345 057 3408  
or email [admin@lgbtjobs.co.uk](mailto:admin@lgbtjobs.co.uk)

Part of Yourvacancy Ltd, company reg 11446754



**Statistic breakdown:**

Yourvacancy Ltd provide organisations with online job-boards specifically targeted at increasing awareness of Equality and Diversity. Showcase your commitment to Equality and best practice to job-seekers and candidates.

**LGBTJOBS.CO.UK**  Unique Users **92,114**

 **BMEjobs.co.uk** Unique Users **79,233**

 **Disabilityjob.co.uk** Unique Users **75,204**

**Candidate Sectors:**

- |                           |      |                   |      |
|---------------------------|------|-------------------|------|
| • Administration          | 3.8% | • Housing         | 9.9% |
| • Arts & Heritage         | 3.8% | • Human Resources | 2.0% |
| • Automotive              | 1.9% | • Legal           | 2.1% |
| • Charities               | 6.4% | • Logistics       | 4.3% |
| • Construction & Building | 5.3% | • Manufacturing   | 6.7% |
| • Education               | 3.9% | • Oil & Gas       | 3.8% |
| • Engineering             | 2.1% | • Sales           | 6.7% |
| • Finance and Accounting  | 9.0% | • I.T             | 4.0% |
| • Hospitality & Catering  | 3.3% | • Retail          | 8.8% |



- Male 53%
- Female 47%



If you would like more information or are interested to champion diversity call **0345 057 3408**

Data correct as of 1st-31st June 2019. Part of Yourvacancy Ltd, company reg 11446754