

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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