

**MEETING**

**EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE**

(Councillors Zarait (Chair), Khawar, Bedi, Escott,  
D. Parmar and Qaseem)

**DATE AND TIME:**

THURSDAY, 18TH JANUARY, 2024 AT 6.30 PM

**VENUE:**

COUNCIL CHAMBER - OBSERVATORY HOUSE, 25  
WINDSOR ROAD, SL1 2EL

**DEMOCRATIC SERVICES  
OFFICER:  
(for all enquiries)**

TOBY HOWES

**SUPPLEMENTARY PAPERS**

The following Papers have been added to the agenda for the above meeting:-

\* Items 3 and 5 were not available for publication with the rest of the agenda.

**PART 1**

<b><u>AGENDA ITEM</u></b>	<b><u>REPORT TITLE</u></b>	<b><u>PAGE</u></b>	<b><u>WARD</u></b>
3.	Pay Policy Statement	1 - 16	
5.	HR Policies and Procedures	17 - 100	

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## Slough Borough Council

<b>Report To:</b>	Employment Committee
<b>Date:</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> January 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Pay Policy Statement 2024/25
<b>Chief Officer:</b>	Sarah Hayward
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Surjit Nagra – Assistant Director, Human Resources
<b>Ward(s):</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Exempt:</b>	No
<b>Appendices:</b>	Appendix A - Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 Appendix B - Pay Scales

### 1. Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1 This report sets out to provide members with an update of the revisions to the Pay Policy Statement for the financial year 2024/25 as required by the Localism Act 2011.

#### Recommendations:

Committee is recommended to:

- a) approve the Pay Policy Statement 2024/25, as attached at Appendix A,
- b) recommend the Pay Policy Statement for formal approval by Full Council for publication.

#### Commissioner Review

The Commissioners are content with the recommendations in this report.

#### Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Committee is required to approve the review of the Pay Policy Statement and forward to Full Council to approve and publish the Pay Policy Statement as required annually.
- 2.2 The Pay Policy Statement enables residents to understand the Council's pay policy for senior staff and how it relates to the salaries of the lowest paid. It provides transparency and enables residents to assess whether salaries paid represent value for money.
- 2.3 The Pay Policy Statement covers the financial year 2024/25.
- 2.4 When the national cost of living award for 2024/25 is agreed the pay scales will be updated and implemented according to the increase in pay levels.

- 2.5 Once approved by Full Council the Pay Policy Statement 2024/25, as attached at Appendix A will be published on the Council's website.

### **3. Implications of the Recommendation**

#### *3.1 Financial implications*

The expected costs of all Council salaries are included within the annual revenue budget.

#### *3.2 Legal implications*

- 3.2.1 Local Authorities are required by section 38 of the Localism Act 2011 (the Act) to prepare a pay policy statement and have regard for any guidance issued under section 40 of the Act and the Supplementary Guidance (on openness and accountability) released in February 2013. The policy statement should cover several matters concerning the pay of the authority's staff, principally Chief Officers.

The Pay Policy Statement appended to this report has been reviewed and meets the requirements of the Localism Act.

#### *3.3 Risk management implications*

- 3.3.1 There are no risks arising out of this report.

#### *3.4 Environmental implications*

- 3.4.1 There are no environmental implications arising out of this report.

#### *3.5 Equality implications*

- 3.5.1 There are no equality implications arising out of this report.

#### *3.6 Procurement implications*

- 3.6.1 There are no procurement implications arising out of this report.

#### *3.7 Workforce implications*

- 3.7.1 There are no workforce implications arising out of this report.

#### *3.8 Property implications*

- 3.8.1 There are no property implications arising out of this report.

### **4. Background Papers**

None

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Pay Policy Statement for the Year 2024/25**

#### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Localism Act requires local authorities to publish, on their website, an annual Pay Policy Statement, which has been approved by Full Council.
- 1.2 No remuneration may be made to officers that fall outside of the Pay Policy Statement, although it is possible for a meeting of the Full Council to amend the statement at any time.
- 1.3 In drawing up this statement, Slough Borough Council has considered the guidance issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government in February 2012 and the supplementary guidance issues in February 2013. This government department is now known as the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities.
- 1.4 Slough Borough Council is committed to complying with the statutory obligation to pay the National Living Wage.

The rates in the table below are for the National Living Wage (for those aged 21 and over) and the National Minimum Wage (for those of at least school leaving age). The rates change on 1 April every year (the rates shown below are effective from 1 April 2024)

<b>Month</b>	<b>21 and over</b>	<b>18 – 20</b>	<b>Under 18</b>	<b>Apprentice</b>
<b>April 2024</b>	£11.44	£8.60	£6.40	£6.40

- 1.5 This statement does not apply to schools' staff as local authority schools' employees are outside the scope of this legislation.
- 1.6 This statement will be approved by Full Council in February 2024.
- 1.7 Slough Borough Council fully endorses and supports the requirement to be open and transparent about the pay of our staff.
- 1.8 The Council is committed to paying nationally negotiated pay awards and this Pay Policy Statement will be updated as and when any such pay awards are agreed.

Please note - The amounts disclosed in the table(s) in respect of interim rates are the costs incurred by the council to secure the individuals services and not the amounts the individuals actually received (which will have been lower)

- 1.9 All employees, including Chief Officers are normally appointed on the lowest pay spine column point for their job evaluated grade. In exceptional circumstances employees may be appointed at a higher point within the evaluated grade. Instances where to attract the most experienced and sought-after skills for the good of the Council and where there is competition or shortages may determine a higher starting spinal point.

## 2 Remuneration of Chief Officers

- 2.1 In accordance with the Localism Act, the following Slough Borough Council (SBC) posts have been defined as Chief Officers, and their salary bands are as follows:

### Head of the Paid Service and Chief Officers

Post	Reports to	Salary Band
Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service	Leader of the Council	£152,330 - £182,400
Executive Director – Adult Services	Chief Executive	SML 16 £125,733 - £146,319
Executive Director – Children Services and Slough Children First Chief Executive	Chief Executive	SML 16 £125,733 - £146,319 Market Supplement £601
Executive Director – Finance & Commercial S151 Officer	Chief Executive	SML 16 £125,733 - £146,319 Market Supplement £3,629
Executive Director – Regeneration, Housing & Environment	Chief Executive	SML 16 £125,733 - £146,319
Executive Director – Strategy and Transformation	Chief Executive	SML 16 £125,733 - £146,319
Director of Public Health and Public Protection	Chief Executive	SML 16 £125,733 - £146,319 (Vacant)
Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)	Chief Executive	SML14 £104,521 - £119,233 (Vacant – Interim cover Day Rate - £950)

Please note - The amounts disclosed in the table(s) in respect of interim rates are the costs incurred by the council to secure the individuals services and not the amounts the individuals actually received (which will have been lower)

2.2 The remaining senior posts are all covered by the National Joint Council for Local Government Officers.

**Post that report to Executive Director / Chief Executive Officer**

Post	Reports to	Salary Band
Director – Digital and Technology	Executive Director – Strategy and Transformation	SML 14 £104,521 - £119,233 Market Supplement £5,146
Director – HR and Workforce Transformation	Executive Director – Strategy and Transformation	SML 14 £104,521 - £119,233 (Vacant)
Director – Policy, Performance and Resident Engagement	Executive Director – Strategy and Transformation	SML 14 £104,521 - £119,233 (Vacant)
Director – Corporate & Strategic Finance (Deputy s151)	Executive Director – Finance & Commercial	SML14 £104,521 - £119,233
Director – Financial Management	Executive Director – Finance & Commercial	SML14 £104,521 - £119,233
Director of Financial Transactions	Executive Director – Finance & Commercial	SML 13 £87,523 - £101,749 (Vacant – Interim cover Day Rate - £697)
Director – Property and Estates Management	Executive Director – Regeneration, Housing & Environment	SML 14 £104,521 - £119,233 (Vacant – Interim cover?)
Director – Housing	Executive Director – Regeneration, Housing & Environment	SML 14 £104,521 - £119,233 (Vacant – Interim cover ?
Chief Planning Officer	Executive Director – Regeneration, Housing & Environment	SML 13 £87,523 - £101,749 (Vacant)
Director – Environment and Infrastructure	Executive Director – Regeneration, Housing & Environment	SML 14 £104,521 - £119,233 (Vacant)
Head of Economic Development and Regeneration	Executive Director – Regeneration, Housing & Environment	SML 11 £64,799 - £73,441 (Vacant)

Please note - The amounts disclosed in the table(s) in respect of interim rates are the costs incurred by the council to secure the individuals services and not the amounts the individuals actually received (which will have been lower)

Deputy Director - Public Health	Director of Public Health & Public Protection	SML13 £87,523 - £101,749
Head of Public Protection (Trading Standards & Environmental Services)	Director of Public Health & Public Protection	SML12 £76,261 - £84,727 (Vacant)
Director -Commissioning	Executive Director – People (Adults)	SML 14 £104,521 - £119,233
Service Lead – Mental Health Services	Executive Director – People (Adults)	Employed by Berkshire Health Foundation Trust and SBC contribute 50% of the salary.
Director - Adult Social Care	Executive Director – People (Adults)	SML 14 £104,521 - £119,233 (Vacant – Interim cover Day Rate - £675
Director – Education	Executive Director – Children Services and Slough Children First Chief Executive	SML 14 £104,521 - £119,233 (Vacant - Interim cover Day rate - £750

### **Returning Officer Fees**

The Chief Executive is appointed as the Council’s Returning Officer in accordance with the Representation of the People’s Act 1983. The Returning Officer is eligible for fees linked to duties undertaken for running national, European, or local elections/referenda. These fees are determined by the number of electors registered in the borough/parliamentary constituency and are paid subject to a formula applied by the Government for determining fees to all Returning Officers across the Country.

### **2.3 Job Evaluation**

The pay of all employees, including Chief Officers, is based on job evaluations undertaken through the National Joint Council (NJC) Job Evaluation Scheme “Green Book.”

### **2.4 Terms and Conditions of Employment**

The Chief Executive is employed on the Joint Negotiating Committee for Local Authority Chief Executives terms and conditions of employment.

All other Chief Officers are employed on Joint National Council terms and conditions for Chief Officers.

Please note - The amounts disclosed in the table(s) in respect of interim rates are the costs incurred by the council to secure the individuals services and not the amounts the individuals actually received (which will have been lower)



The majority of the remainder of staff are employed on the National Joint Council for Local Government Services.

The remainder of staff are on either Teaching or Soulbury (pay rates for educational improvement officers and educational psychologists) terms and conditions of employment.

## **2.5 Travel and Subsistence Expenses**

There are occasions when employees incur additional expenditure than normal while undertaking their official duties on behalf of the Council away from their normal place of work. The Council has a comprehensive Travel and Subsistence Expenses Scheme, which applies to all our staff, including Chief Officers, in such circumstances.

## **2.6 Payment of Professional Fees**

The Council will pay the cost of one professional subscription per annum, per employee, including Chief Officers, which is relevant and necessary for the role. This payment supports the council to attract to professional roles which require belonging to a professional body for example Social Care.

## **2.7 Honoraria**

An honoraria payment may be made to an employee, including to a Chief Officer, in recognition of undertaking temporarily additional or outstanding extra work, which is: -

- Outside the normal scope of the duties and responsibilities of the employee
- Over an extended period undertaking part of the duties of a higher graded post
- Or where the additional duties and responsibilities are exceptionally onerous
- Or in situations which merit the employee being rewarded for specific work.

The Honoraria Scheme applies in these circumstances and the amount of payment is based on the duties undertaken.

## **2.8 Acting Up**

Acting Up arises when an employee temporarily undertakes full or part duties of a higher graded post for a consecutive period of at least four weeks.

All employees, including Chief Officers, are entitled to an acting up payment in recognition of the responsibilities. Decisions on payment consider the following: -

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- The nature and complexity of the responsibilities, undertaken by the employee and their current spinal column point.
- Whether the employee is undertaking full or part responsibilities
- If the employee is placed into post as a development opportunity

## **2.9 Secondments**

Secondments are intended to provide developmental opportunities to gain skills and experience rather than for financial gain. Therefore, secondees will normally transfer from their current position into the secondment on their existing salary. Terms and conditions of the secondee may change depending on the local variations within the department. However, if there is a significant difference between the secondment and the individual's salary this must be brought to the attention of the Head of HR – Policy and Strategy and a decision will be taken, in conjunction with the Director of HR and Workforce Transformation /Executive Director on whether to review salary arrangements in line with the complexities of the job.

## **2.10 Market Supplements**

A market supplement is payable for posts (including Chief Officer posts), which are critical to the delivery of essential/statutory services, and to which the Council has been unable to recruit or retain.

External labour market conditions can produce a situation in which staff with scarce skills and expertise can command higher salaries than the maximum provided under the current grading structure for the post. In these circumstances, based on evidence from the relevant labour market, it may be deemed appropriate to pay an additional Market Factor Supplement in addition to basic pay. They are not linked to an individual's actual or anticipated performance within the role but are linked to the difficulty in recruiting to certain posts requiring specific skills and qualifications.

It is essential that the rationale and supporting evidence for payment of a market supplement remains current and a review is documented. These payments are reviewed annually to ensure they are still justifiable, and can be changed or withdrawn,

## **2.11 Pay Protection**

An employee, who is redeployed to a suitable post which is one grade lower, will receive protection of earnings (basic pay plus local weighting allowance) for a period of one year. The salary will be frozen at its current level and the employee will not receive annual pay awards. At the end of the protection period the employee will be placed on the salary grade relevant to the redeployed post.

Where an employee accepts redeployment to a post which is more than one grade lower, there is no entitlement to protection of earnings. In exceptional

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circumstances, to minimise financial hardship and avoid redundancies Executive Directors may, subject to budgetary considerations, exercise discretion to grant some element of protection. This would apply for no longer than one year.

## **2.12 Termination Payments**

In the event of a redundancy situation, all employees, including Chief Officers, are entitled to a redundancy payment based on a multiple of 1.5 times statutory provision, based on weekly pay, subject to a cap of 30 weeks as the maximum number of weeks payable, and to a cap of 20 years' service.

The terms, and any payment relating to the termination of employment of any officer of the Council in any contentious circumstances which do not result from an award made by an Employment Tribunal or Court are settled by the Council on the basis of the legal merits of the case, the time and disruption which protracted litigation would involve, any limit of statutory entitlement on monetary claim available to an employee, and what is considered prudent in all circumstances.

Any redundancy or severance packages of £100,000 or more will be approved by Full Council. In presenting the information to Full Council the components of any such severance package will be set out including salary paid in lieu; redundancy compensation; pension entitlements; holiday pay; and fees or allowances paid.

If an application for a post (including Chief Officer posts) is in receipt of a severance payment from any local authority, or a Local Government retirement pension, this does not form part of the council's decision as to whether they should be appointed.

Any employee who is made redundant, including Chief Officers, must have a break of at least four weeks and one day to retain a redundancy payment before they can be re-employed by the Council in a different position.

Consultancies over £5,000 (excluding cover for established posts) or any consultancy/employment offered to former senior officers of the Council of third tier and above are "significant officer decision". (Significant officer decisions are circulated monthly to all members and published on the website).

## **2.13 Pension Payments**

All employees who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme, including Chief Officers, are entitled to a retirement pension calculated in accordance with the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations.

## **2.14 Interims**

Please note - The amounts disclosed in the table(s) in respect of interim rates are the costs incurred by the council to secure the individuals services and not the amounts the individuals actually received (which will have been lower)

There will be occasions where interims are engaged to undertake duties of posts that are vacant. There are various reasons for engaging interims i.e. there are specialist skills and experience that is required to fill the gap whilst recruitment takes place. In these circumstances, where it is more appropriate to engage interims the Council follows HMRC guidelines to ensure the current employment status is identified. When a need for an 'interim' arises, recruitment is normally secured via the council's temporary staffing agency framework. Individuals engaged via an agency will in most instances be paid at a rate consistent with the pay of directly employed staff performing a comparable role. The council will consider any relevant market factors to support payment of a premium rate necessary to secure appropriate levels of skills and expertise.

### **3 Remuneration of Our Lowest Paid Employees**

- 3.1 All SBC employees are paid in accordance with a locally determined salary scale, in accordance with their national terms, please refer to Appendix B.
- 3.2 Lowest Paid Employee means the employee on the lowest grade, assuming that the posts are full-time. The lowest grade is Level 2 £22,366 inclusive of Local Weighting, currently there are no employees paid at this rate However, a recent TUPE transfer into the Council has a current lowest pay rate of £21,029. This rate of pay will increase in 2024.

### **3.3 Unsocial Hours Payments**

The Council has a comprehensive Working Pattern Arrangement Scheme which sets out the allowances payable for: -

- Overtime (up to and including Level 5)
- Saturday and Sunday working
- Bank holidays
- Night Working
- Sleeping-in-duty
- Shift working
- Standby, on-call and call-out

### **3.4 Terms and Conditions of Employment**

Pay awards are negotiated nationally for separate groups of employees: -

- Chief Executive
- Chief Officers
- National Joint Council for Local Government
- Soulbury
- Teaching

Please note - The amounts disclosed in the table(s) in respect of interim rates are the costs incurred by the council to secure the individuals services and not the amounts the individuals actually received (which will have been lower)

#### **4 Relationship between the Remuneration of Chief Officers and our lowest paid employees**

The actual pay of the Chief Executive is currently £182,400. This is 8.67 times the pay of our lowest paid employees. ( $£182,400 / £21,029 = 8.67$ )

4.1 The median earnings are currently £34,063. The median earnings figure complies with the specific requirements within the Local Government Transparency Code and includes all elements of remuneration that can be valued.

4.2 The pay of the Chief Executive is currently 5.35 times the pay of the median earnings of our employees. ( $£182,400 / £34,063 = 5.35$ )

#### **5 Gender Pay Gap Information**

Employers with at least 250 employees must publish annual information about their gender pay gap. We publish this on our website, and the [Government's gender pay gap website](#). This is in line with the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017

5.1 Like most local authorities, Slough Borough Council employees more women than men (Approx. 60% women, 40% men based on permanent employees). In 2022 (reported in March 2023), there was a small decrease in both the mean and median gender pay gap from the previous year. The mean gap was 0.7% and the median gap was 0%. The council employed more women than men in all pay quartiles. The full report can be viewed on:

[Gender pay gap reporting – Slough Borough Council](#)

5.2 We are currently finalising calculations of the 2023 GPG (to be reported by 30 March 2024)

Please note - The amounts disclosed in the table(s) in respect of interim rates are the costs incurred by the council to secure the individuals services and not the amounts the individuals actually received (which will have been lower)

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**NJC Local Government Pay Agreement 2023**

SCP	Pay Level	Basic Pay Apr-23	FTE Local Weighting	Inclusive Annual Pay	Inclusive Hourly Rate
2	Level 2	22366	1039	23405	12.13
3	Level 2	22737	1039	23776	12.32
4	Level 2	23114	1039	24153	12.52
5	Level 3	23500	1039	24539	12.72
6	Level 3	23893	1039	24932	12.92
7	Level 3	24294	1039	25333	13.13
8	Level 4	24702	1039	25741	13.34
9	Level 4	25119	1039	26158	13.56
10	Level 4	25545	1039	26584	13.78
11	Level 4	25979	1039	27018	14.00
12	Level 4	26421	1039	27460	14.23
13	Level 5	26873	1039	27912	14.47
15	Level 5	27803	1039	28842	14.95
17	Level 5	28770	1039	29809	15.45
19	Level 5	29777	1039	30816	15.97
21	Level 5	30825	1039	31864	16.52
23	Level 5	32076	1039	33115	17.16
24	Level 6	33024	1039	34063	17.66
25	Level 6	33945	1039	34984	18.13
26	Level 6	34834	1039	35873	18.59
27	Level 6	35745	1039	36784	19.07
28	Level 6	36648	1039	37687	19.53
29	Level 6	37336	1039	38375	19.89
30	Level 7	38223	1039	39262	20.35
31	Level 7	39186	1039	40225	20.85
32	Level 7	40221	1039	41260	21.39
33	Level 7	41418	1039	42457	22.01
34	Level 7	42403	1039	43442	22.52
35	Level 7	43421	1039	44460	23.04
36	Level 8	44428	1039	45467	23.57
37	Level 8	45441	1039	46480	24.09
38	Level 8	46464	1039	47503	24.62
39	Level 8	47420	1039	48459	25.12
40	Level 8	48474	1039	49513	25.66
41	Level 8	49498	1039	50537	26.19
42	Level 9	50512	1039	51551	26.72
43	Level 9	51515	1039	52554	27.24
44	Level 9	52563	1039	53602	27.78
45	Level 9	53628	1039	54667	28.34
46	Level 9	54693	1039	55732	28.89
47	Level 9	55766	1039	56805	29.44
48	Level 10	56901	1039	57940	30.03
49	Level 10	58034	1039	59073	30.62
50	Level 10	59174	1039	60213	31.21
51	Level 10	60316	1039	61355	31.80
52	Level 10	61445	1039	62484	32.39
53	Level 10	62577	1039	63616	32.97

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**CHIEF OFFICERS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES 2023 (3.5% increase)**

<b>GRADE</b>	<b>SALARY RANGE 2023</b>
<b>CE0001</b>	£152,330
<b>CE0002</b>	£161,202
<b>CE0003</b>	£171,133
<b>CE0004</b>	£182,400

**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL – SENIOR MANAGEMENT GRADES (3.88%)**

<b><u>GRADE</u></b>	<b>SALARY RANGE 2023</b>	<b>LOCAL WEIGHTING 2023</b>	<b>INCLUSIVE ANNUAL SALARY RANGE 2023</b>
<b>SML111</b>	£64,799	1039	£65,838
<b>SML112</b>	£67,679	1039	£68,718
<b>SML113</b>	£70,560	1039	£71,599
<b>SML114</b>	£73,441	1039	£74,480
<b>SML121</b>	£76,261	1039	£77,300
<b>SML122</b>	£79,084	1039	£80,123
<b>SML123</b>	£81,906	1039	£82,945
<b>SML124</b>	£84,727	1039	£85,766
<b>SML131</b>	£87,523	1039	£88,562
<b>SML132</b>	£92,023	1039	£93,062
<b>SML133</b>	£96,760	1039	£97,799
<b>SML134</b>	£101,749	1039	£102,788
<b>SML141</b>	£104,521	1039	£105,560
<b>SML142</b>	£109,917	1039	£110,956
<b>SML143</b>	£115,598	1039	£116,637
<b>SML144</b>	£119,233	1039	£120,272
<b>SML151</b>	£117,490	1039	£118,529
<b>SML152</b>	£121,187	1039	£122,226
<b>SML153</b>	£127,459	1039	£128,498
<b>SML154</b>	£134,063	1039	£135,102
<b><u>Chief Officer Grade (3.5%)</u></b>			
<b>SML161</b>	£125,733	n/a	£125,733
<b>SML162</b>	£132,245	n/a	£132,245
<b>SML163</b>	£139,103	n/a	£139,103
<b>SML164</b>	£146,319	n/a	£146,319

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## Slough Borough Council

<b>Report To:</b>	Employment Committee
<b>Date:</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> January 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	HR policies and Procedures
<b>Chief Officer:</b>	Sarah Hayward
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Surjit Nagra
<b>Ward(s):</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Exempt:</b>	No
<b>Appendices:</b>	Flexible Working Policy Probation Policy Maternity and Family Friendly Policies Hybrid Policy

### 1. Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1 This report sets out the changes that have been made to 3 HR policies and management procedures in line with the requirements set within the HR Improvement plan. It also includes the Hybrid Working Policy which was implemented in November 2023 to respond to the staff engagement survey which showed an employee preference for hybrid working.

#### Recommendations:

The Employment Committee is recommended to:

- Approve three amended policies and management guidance documents.
- Note the fourth policy, which is the hybrid working policy.

**Reason:** The HR policies had not been reviewed for some time and a programme to review all HR policies is now in place. These three policies have been reviewed in line with updated employment legislation and the ACAS Code of Practice.

#### Commissioner Review

Commissioners reviewed the report and their views and comments have been incorporated into the report.

## 2. Report

### Introductory paragraph

- 2.1 The sign off of the policies and management guidance documents are in line with the requirements of the HR Improvement plan and to ensure managers receive a suite of up-to-date policies with management guidance to support the use of the policy to manage their staff effectively. The guidance is detailed to aid the development of managers to be able to a self-serve the people management issues in their services.
- 2.2 The current policies were felt to be too lengthy and difficult for managers to follow without refence to HR even at the informal stages. Due to their comprehensive nature, the policies could create risks for the organisation in terms of Employment Tribunal claims, and therefore the approach in the revision has been 'less is more.
- 2.3 They have been streamlined and separated into two parts with the format of a shorter policy statement and a more in-depth management guidance to reduce bureaucracy and mitigate risks for the organisation. The policies in this report for approval have minor changes, in the form of cosmetic and structural changes. The policy principles and processes have remained as is and therefore implementation across the organisation will be straightforward.
- 2.4 The policies have been consulted with all the staff network groups and Trade Unions
- 2.5 The Key Changes to the policies are outlined as followed:

#### 2.5.1 Flexible Working Policy:

- Moved cover sheet from front to back.
- Added in an image to modernise policy, Updated EDI statement.
- Separated out policy and procedure into policy and management guidance.
- Ensured relevant references are made to hybrid working policy.
- Ensure the policy aligns with current employment legislation and ACAS Code of Practice.
- Removed references to Associate Directors.'
- Legislation changes coming into force in the new year which will be added into policy.

#### 2.5.2 Probation Policy:

- Moved cover sheet from front page to back.
- Added in an image to modernise policy.
- Separated policy and procedure into policy and manager guidance.
- Amended EDI statement.
- Aligned section 7.2 in line with induction process on Cornerstone.
- Added in references to management guidance document.
- Added in flowchart outlining probation process in line with Agresso process.
- Aligned with new onboarding process.
- Ensured policy is in-line with the ACAS Code of Practice.
- Removed references to Associate Directors.

### 2.5.3 Maternity and Family Friendly Suite of Policies

- Amalgamated all family friendly policies and maternity into one policy.
- Moved cover sheet from front to back.
- Added in an image to modernise policy.
- Amended EDI statement.
- Separated policy and procedure into a policy and managers guidance document.
- Updated in-line with Employment Legislation and ACAS Code of Practice.
- Ensured aspects in relation to pay are aligned to legislation changes and payroll processes.
- Added a section into management guidance on wellbeing of a woman once she returns to work including breastfeeding.
- Removed references to Associate Directors.

### 2.6 Options considered.

The following options were considered in the revision of the HR policies and procedures.

- *Option 1: Do nothing - leave the policies' This option was not viable as they are out of date which could create risks for the organisation.*
- *Option 2: Amend the policies in line with the HR Improvement plan and strategic objectives of the organisation -.*

***Option 2 was recommended.***

## 3. Implications of the Recommendation

### 3.1 *Financial implications*

3.1.1 There are no direct financial implications related to this report. However, failure to follow the policies could result in significant costs if presented to Employment Tribunals.

### 3.2 *Legal implications*

3.2.1 The policies have been updated in line with employment legislation changes.

### 3.3 *Risk management implications*

3.3.1 These policies mitigate the risks of unnecessary scrutiny and criticism at Employment Tribunals. The policies are in line with updated employment legislation and the ACAS Code of Practice

### 3.4 *Environmental implications*

3.4.1 There are no environmental implications related to this report.

### 3.5 *Equality implications*

3.5.1 An Equality Impact Statement has been completed for each policy.

3.6 *Procurement implications*

3.6.1 There are no procurement implications related to this report.

3.7 *Workforce implications*

3.7.1 The policy principles have remained in line with the current policy principles which align with employment legislation and the *ACAS Code of Practice*. The policies are a more succinct and provide a suite of documents within depth management guidance for ease of reference. This will enable managers to manage their staff effectively without the need for constant HR support- fostering a self-service culture.

3.8 *Property implications*

3.8.1 There are no property implications related to this report.

**4. Appendices**

Appendix A - Hybrid Working Policy,  
Appendix B - Probationary Policy,  
Appendix C -Maternity and family friendly suite of Policies  
Appendix D - Flexible Working policy

# Hybrid Working Policy



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# Introduction

- 1.1 The hybrid working policy introduces modern ways of working to Slough which incorporates both working remotely or working in an office environment. This will enhance the ways in which we serve the residents of Slough and gives individuals more choice over where they work to meet the service needs.
- 1.2 The aim of this policy is to set out the standards and expectations for all employees of Slough council in implementing the hybrid working principles and ways of working.
- 1.3 Slough Borough Council (SBC) aims to design and implement policy documents that meet the diverse needs of our services, residents, and workforce, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others. It considers current UK legislative requirements, including the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998, and promotes equal opportunities for all.

## Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all employees of the council, except those employed in schools. This policy does not apply to interims, agency workers or contractors.
- 2.2 This policy does not deal with requests to permanently alter an individuals' working hours/pattern. In respect of a situation where an individual wishes to make a flexible working request, the council's flexible working policy encompasses the statutory right to flexible working and contains the statutory procedure for employees to make such requests.
- 2.3 This policy and procedure should be read and applied in conjunction with the manager and employee FAQ's, and the Council's other policies such as health and safety, IT policies/guidance documents, flexible working, employee code of conduct among others.

## Hybrid Working Principles

- 3.1 Hybrid working is founded on five core and critical principles:
  - Residents and Business- Our residents and businesses are at the heart of, and drive everything we do.
  - Culture and People- Staff take responsibility and are accountable for their work and outputs.
  - Team management and appraisal meetings are better done face to face, to aid collaboration, drive performance and build a positive working culture.
  - Technology- Anywhere is your office and the technology infrastructure underpins this.
  - Future Plans for "head office space"- A civic space at the heart of the community where staff can do their best work, and which optimises and benefits value for money.

- 3.2 These principles entail a cultural shift in mindset from all staff and leaders. Whilst we empower employees to take responsibility for their work, it is reliant on there being trust between managers and employees.
- 3.3 Trust is fundamental to the success of hybrid working. Any breach of trust will be treated very seriously and may be regarded as misconduct. Appropriate action may follow under the disciplinary procedure. If misconduct is found, the facility to work in a hybrid manner may be withdrawn.
- 3.4 Hybrid working is not an automatic right for all staff. There will be some circumstances where this is not a viable option, for example, front facing roles or roles that are required to carry out their work from a council premises. There will also be circumstances where operational needs necessitate a different approach.
- 3.5 All staff who can work in a hybrid manner will be able to work from home. They will however be required to attend their Slough place of work e.g., Observatory House, for a minimum of two, and preferably three days per week (pro-rated for part time workers), or more if required by the demands of the job. This will be reviewed after six months.
- 3.6 The needs of the service will be the key driver in implementing hybrid working and will take precedence. Line managers are responsible for managing their service areas, operational standards and expectations.

## Performance

- 4.1 Hybrid working relies on goal setting, performance and outcome-based management. This means that staff are managed based upon their results. To achieve this, staff are expected to deliver outcomes within their contractual hours. The arrangements for how hours are worked will be agreed in advance with line managers.
- 4.2 This approach will require a strong commitment between the employee and the manager to plan and ensure that regular 1-2-1 meetings take place, and are recorded on cornerstone, our learning management system.
- 4.3 Hybrid working requires a different relationship between employees and their managers. As a result, there are different responsibilities for both staff and managers which are outlined in the hybrid working management guidance document.

## Recruitment

- 5.1 Working in a hybrid environment requires particular skills. It is therefore important that these are considered and outlined when making new appointments.
- 5.2 The following criteria should be included in the employee specification for each post. These criteria should then be applied and assessed as part of the normal selection process.
- 5.3 **Managerial Posts**

Hybrid working requires that staff are managed both in person and remotely. Managers therefore must be able to:

- Tailor their management style as appropriate to the needs of dispersed teams/employees.
- Understand and apply different strategies for the effective management of performance by output.
- Set clear objectives/goals for staff.
- Address conflicting needs of staff in a fair and equitable manner that engenders confidence and trust.

#### 5.4 All Other Posts

Staff who wish to work in a hybrid manner must:

- Be able to complete targets/objectives through independent working.
- Make effective use of time management and prioritising skills.

## Attendance and Availability for Work

- 6.1 Employees should remember that the needs of the customer, members and the service will always take priority. This will mean that staff are expected to come into the office on a remote working day should a need arise that requires their attendance in the office. This may include situations such as training, team meetings, colleague collaboration, when they are unable to connect to the Slough IT systems, or if they are asked to do so by their manager, e.g., in the event of sickness of a colleague, inadequate cover or an emergency.
- 6.2 Ultimately, the manager will have the responsibility for ensuring that the service needs take priority; that staff are treated fairly and trusted to take responsibility for themselves and their work when working remotely. Managers will, in consultation with their staff, decide a rota pattern that best meets the needs of the service. These rotas will be subject to change, there is no entitlement to work remotely on specific days of the week, unless the service needs dictate different.
- 6.3 Staff must be available and able to work on their contracted days whether they are in the office or working remotely, unless absence is for an authorised form of leave or sickness. Any variation to this arrangement can only be made by prior agreement with the manager.
- 6.4 When staff are working from home or another location, they are expected to work in a similar way as they would in the office, for example, they should be available to answer the telephone, respond to emails, instant messaging etc during the hours that the service operates (usually between 9am-5pm), unless a change is agreed with their line manager. This includes taking appropriate breaks in line with health and safety.
- 6.5 Working from home is not a substitute for caring for dependants. Employees are expected to have made alternative arrangements for the care of their dependants during their working day.

## Remote Working Exceptions

- 7.1 It is recognised that there are circumstances where it may not be possible for staff to work in a hybrid way.
- 7.2 The following are examples of where managers may consider making exceptions. This list is not exhaustive, and advice may need to be sought from HR depending on the circumstances:

**Staff on probation, Apprentices and Trainees**

- 7.3 Staff on probation should attend the office rather than working remotely during their first few weeks in post. This enables them to have a better understanding of the organisation, team and culture. This may mean reorganising working arrangements for other team members who may be needed to support the member of staff by coming into the office, and/or asking other members of the team to work remotely on particular days.

**Staff who require specialist equipment**

- 7.4 Some staff will have special requirements and specialist equipment where hot-desking is not appropriate. The council does not want to prevent these individuals from having the same opportunities as other staff to work remotely. In discussion with the individual, and seeking advice from the health and safety team, managers should take individual circumstances into account and ensure that staff are treated fairly and according to their particular needs.

**Staff whose personal circumstances are not conducive to home working.**

- 7.5 There could be a number of reasons where working at home is not possible for a member of staff, e.g., shared flats/houses, insufficient space, someone else caring for children/relatives at home which will not enable them to have a concentrated work environment. In such circumstances, managers need to explore other remote working options with their member of staff, e.g., a permanent desk in the office, library, or other council office.
- 7.6 In the short term, the individual may need to attend the office more frequently than other members of staff. Managers are expected to manage this in consultation with other team members.

## Workstations

- 8.1 At the moment, staff have not been assigned a fixed desk and it is unlikely that this will be implemented, unless where required as part of a reasonable adjustment. Lockers are available in the office and can be obtained via facilities management. A clear desk policy applies to all workstations. Storage areas should also be kept tidy, and staff should refrain from storing personalised items or files in these.
- 8.2 As well as at Observatory House, there are limited hot desks available for staff to use in our community hubs such as Chalvey, Britwell and The Curve. These facilities are to support staff in working in a hybrid manner i.e., if visiting a client or between meetings in the area, staff can go to these sites if PC access is required to undertake work.

## Sickness absence and other leave

- 9.1 The existing procedures for requesting and notifying absence such as annual leave or sickness absence continue to apply.

**Working from home when sick**

- 9.2 As a guide, hybrid working is not to be used as a substitute for a working in the office day when an employee feels unwell. It is however recognised that there may be specific circumstances where such requests may be agreed. In their discussion, the manager should consider the hours the employee expects to be able to work and their likely output before determining whether it is appropriate for the employee to work from home in this situation.
- 9.3 An employee who has reported in as sick is not expected to work either in the office or remotely. Managers should be mindful of this and not pressure them into working, simply because employees have the equipment to work from home.

# Supply of equipment

- 10.1 All employees that are able to work in a hybrid manner will be issued with a laptop and mobile phone. The Council will not pay for additional equipment for remote working, other than that which is provided as standard issue, unless where reasonable adjustments are required to be made.
- 10.2 Employees must ensure all Council data and equipment is secured securely, and that it is not at risk of loss or theft. Hybrid workers must complete the mandatory training e-learning module on data security before commencing remote working.
- 10.3 Where an employee is working from home, they are responsible for ensuring they have the necessary furniture (such as a suitable table and chair) and broadband services to enable them to remotely access the council's IT networks.
- 10.4 The council will not reimburse employees for the costs of broadband or utility costs. We recognise that many employees will already have broadband services at home and employees who chose to work from home will also benefit from reduced travelling costs.

# Employee Wellbeing

- 11.1 It is important that employees take regular breaks from work in accordance with the working time regulations and their contract of employment. Working hours and break periods are confirmed in the employee's terms and conditions of employment, but must include:
  - A break of at least 20 minutes if working more than six hours a day
  - A rest of at least 11 hours between working days
  - An uninterrupted break of 24 hours each week
- 11.2 When working in front of a screen for long periods of time, employees must ensure they take regular breaks.
- 11.3 If you choose to work late during unsociable hours, providing you have agreement from your line manager, please be courteous and respectful to your colleagues. Colleagues are not expected to respond to emails or other forms of communication during unsociable hours, unless in the case of an emergency.
- 11.4 Individuals who use a computer, laptop or tablet whilst working at home, in the office or at another remote location will be required to undertake a self-assessment to ensure that the work can be undertaken safely without endangering their health and wellbeing.
- 11.5 Employees are required to complete the 'Display Screen Equipment training and Self-assessment' module via the online learning portal. This course is mandatory for all visual display screen users and should be repeated if there is a change in circumstances i.e., location, health etc.
- 11.6 The employee is responsible for completing this training and self-assessment and highlighting any concerns to their line manager. They are also responsible for implementing any actions identified in order to reduce or mitigate the risks in your home and make your work environment safe. If an individual is unable to put suitable safeguards in place, they may not be able to work from that location and will need to work at council sites.

# Change of circumstances

- 12.1 Hybrid working arrangements may be temporarily suspended or brought to an end at any time, subject to business and operational demands. No change to working practises will be made without consulting with the employee affected first.
- 12.2 There are circumstances where it may be necessary to review hybrid working arrangements such as:
- Staff wellbeing may require particular working practices which may require more time in the office or more time at home, these circumstances will be managed in line with our staff wellbeing policies.
  - The employee moves to a new role, either permanently or on a secondment or acting up basis. The suitability of the new position for hybrid working would need to be assessed.
  - Following a re-organisation of the work area, positions should be reassessed for hybrid working in light of any changes to service provision, job descriptions, person specification and interdependencies with other service providers.
- 12.3 Managers are responsible for reclaiming any allocated equipment when an employee leaves the council or moves to another directorate in order for it to be reallocated to the next post holder.

Policy schedule	Details
Policy owner and lead	HR BP Team
Consultation	Trade Unions Staff Network Groups 17th October Corporate / Senior Leadership Team 17th October
Equality Impact Assessment	30 <sup>th</sup> October 2023
Approving body	Employment & Appeals Committee
Date of approval	DATE
Date of implementation	30 <sup>th</sup> October 2023
This version number	V1 – 24 <sup>th</sup> October 2023
Last version	v.? - DATE
Related documents	
Review interval	Three yearly minimum or as required

# Policy Schedule

## Version

Version	Author	Date	Changes
??		DATE	
		DATE	
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## Hybrid Working Policy & Procedure – Manager FAQs

These FAQs should be read in conjunction with the Hybrid working policy and the Employee FAQs.

### Hybrid Working Principles

#### ***1. What is Hybrid Working and what does it mean for me as a manager?***

Hybrid working is a work arrangement where employees have the flexibility to split their time between working remotely (from home) and working in an office or other designated space.

As a manager, it means you will lead and support a team with members working in different locations (e.g., some in the office, some at home).

For those staff who are in a role that is suitable for hybrid working, e.g., they have a non-customer facing role and their work is office/desk based, they will be able to work from home for two, maximum three days per week. The remaining days within the week will be required to be in the office (e.g., Observatory House). This will be pro-rated for part time workers.

#### ***2. Is Hybrid working the same as Remote Working?***

No. Remote work is a work approach where employees work from a location away from their office, while hybrid work is a flexible approach that allows a mix between remote work and work in the office.

#### ***3. Who does the hybrid working policy apply to?***

The policy applies to all permanent staff. The policy does not apply to agency workers, interims or contractors. However, they will be expected to attend the office. These arrangements however should be agreed with the line manager.

#### ***4. What do I do if an individual in my team wants to permanently alter their working hours/pattern?***

The hybrid working policy does not deal with requests to permanently alter an individuals' working hours/pattern. In respect of a situation where an individual wishes to make a flexible working request, the council's flexible working policy encompasses the statutory right to flexible working and contains the statutory procedure for employees to make such requests.

#### ***5. I have some individuals in my team who work part-time. How does the policy apply to them?***

The policy principles for full time staff outline that staff can work from home 2 days, maximum 3 days per week. The remaining 2 days are required to be worked from the office. This works out to be 40% of the working week. Therefore, if you work part time, you will be required to come into the office 40% of your working week. If you work 4 days per week for example, this would be 1.5 days in the office.

Practically this may not work so it is for you and the individual to take a pragmatic approach with this. You could for example agree that one week they attend the office once per week and then the next week twice per week.

**6. I have individuals in my team who took a role in Slough on the basis that they didn't need to attend the office at all or more than 1 day per week/they have a contractual arrangement which states that they don't need to come into the office. What do I do?**

You should have a discussion with individual's regarding their personal circumstances. If you are unsure, you can contact the HR team for advice.

**Attendance and Availability for work**

**7. Can individuals in my team choose when and where they work?**

As a line manager, it is your responsibility to ensure that the residents of Slough and your service area needs take priority, that staff are treated fairly and are trusted to take responsibility for themselves and their work when working in a hybrid way.

With this in mind, in consultation with your team, you should agree a rota pattern that best meets the needs of the service and team. You should outline to your team that there is no entitlement to work from home on specific days of the week, however you should work with each individual to ascertain their personal circumstances and to explore what can be accommodated.

These rotas should be subject to change.

**8. Am I able to require staff to come into the office on days that they would normally work from home?**

Yes. Whilst we allow employees to work from home, the needs of the residents, team and service take precedence. Therefore, if you want your team to come into the office for meetings, training, collaboration, to cover sickness, service requirements, then you are entitled to require staff to come into the office. Of course, good practise dictates that you should give sufficient notice of this requirement (although it's recognised that this cannot always happen).

**9. What should I do if an individual refuses to come into the office?**

Slough is at a critical point in its recovery journey, and having staff in the office together to collaborate and meet face to face is an essential part of this journey. Asking staff to come into the office is a reasonable organisational request. You should discuss with the individual why they don't want to come in and whether there are any barriers you could help them to overcome. However, if they repeatedly refuse then this will be deemed as misconduct, and you may instigate formal proceedings under the disciplinary policy if this is deemed necessary.

**10. What should I do if a member of my team doesn't want to work from home?**

You should have a discussion to ascertain the reasoning for this. If an individual decides that they cannot and do not want to work from home, then you can arrange for them to work mainly from a Slough office.

**11. Can individuals look after their children whilst they are working from home?**

Working from home is not a substitute for caring for dependants. Employees are expected to have made alternative arrangements for the care of their dependants during their working day.

**12. During the pandemic, some individuals in my team moved to another part of the country. This means that they have an extremely long commute. How will the hybrid working policy impact them?**

The council understands that some people made personal decisions that meant they moved far away from the office. Slough is now at a point in its recovery where we need staff attending the office more. We therefore cannot make special dispensation for those individuals. You should however discuss this issue with individuals to see how they can accommodate the new policy into their working schedules.

## **Performance Management**

### ***13. How can I ensure that my team remains productive in a hybrid working setup?***

You should focus on setting clear expectations, goals and objectives, measuring outcomes rather than hours worked. Conducting regular 1:1's and recording these on Cornerstone is crucial to ensure you are providing your team with the necessary support to ensure they meet their objectives. Regular team meetings with feedback sessions will enable all members of the team to understand their requirements, and will foster a culture of open communication, collaboration and a sense of unity.

### ***14. I am concerned about the outputs of a member of my team when they are working from home. What steps should I take to address this?***

If an individual is failing to deliver the required outputs and you have taken all of the steps outlined in question 9, then you should consider formal performance management in line with the Managing Performance policy on Insite. If you have concerns regarding someone's conduct when they are working from home e.g., not logging on, not being contactable, you should consider formally investigating this in line with the disciplinary policy and procedure. You should always discuss your concerns with the employee in the first instance, and you may consider asking them to attend the office more than 2 days per week.

### ***15. What behaviours should I be looking for when recruiting staff to work in Hybrid roles?***

At the recruitment stage, you should be outlining in the person specification that you are looking for individuals who are able to display and evidence their ability to be self-motivated, self-reliant and disciplined to work without direct supervision. Individuals who can evidence their ability to complete work on time and to scheduled deadlines, demonstrate initiative, flexibility and good time management and communication skills.

### ***16. I have new starters in my team. How should I manage them in line with the policy?***

For the first few weeks of an individual joining slough, they should attend the office more. This is to ensure that they are inducted properly in line with both the local and corporate inductions, and to understand the culture within the team and Slough, and the organisations objectives. Once you feel that they are settled in and are understanding their role, service area etc, then you can allow them to work in a hybrid way.

### ***17. How can I lead by example as a manager in a hybrid working model?***

You should demonstrate your commitment to the hybrid model by abiding by the principles the policy and participating in both remote and in-office work. Be visible and accessible to all team members, treating everyone fairly and encouraging flexibility and adaptability.

## **Employee Wellbeing**

### ***18. How do I ensure that members of my team are not feeling isolated?***

As a manager, it is your responsibility to regularly check in with your team, not just from an output perspective, but also in terms of their health and wellbeing. Some individuals may struggle more than others. Bringing the whole team into the office together for team meetings, training, sessions, workshops or just to have a day together is a good way to ensure people are feeling included and not isolated. The use of MS Teams chat and phone calls ensure that people stay connected.

***19. Should I make an individual who has stated that they are unwell, work from home to save them coming into the office?***

As a guide, hybrid working is not to be used as a substitute for a working in the office day when an employee feels unwell. It is however recognised that there may be specific circumstances where such requests may be agreed. If an employee is able to work, you should consider the hours the employee expects to be able to work and their likely output before determining whether it is appropriate for them to work from home in this situation.

An employee who has reported in as sick is not expected to work either in the office or remotely. You should be mindful of this and not pressure them into working, simply because they have the equipment to work from home.

***20. How can I help my team members establish boundaries between their personal and work life whilst working hybrid?***

It is important that you and your team members look after their health and wellbeing. You should ensure that individuals establish a dedicated workspace, define their working hours and communicate their working schedules with you and colleagues. You should encourage staff to utilise tools like outlook calendars and other time management techniques to stay organised.

Staff should be taking regular breaks from work in accordance with the working time regulations and contracts of employment. Working hours and break periods are confirmed in individuals' contract of employment, but must include:

- A break of at least 20 minutes if working more than 6 hours per day.
- A rest of at least 11 hours between working days.
- An uninterrupted break of 24 hours each week.

Where an individual is working in front of a screen for long periods of time, you must encourage them to take regular breaks.

If an individual wishes to work outside of the normal office hours, you must give your agreement to this. Staff should be courteous and respectful to other colleagues. They are not obliged to respond to emails or other forms of communication during unsociable hours, unless in the case of an emergency.

## **Health and Safety**

***21. Do I need to arrange for staff to have a DSE assessment?***

Most of the regulations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 apply to individuals who are working from home as well as to employees working at council accommodation. If you use a computer, laptop or tablet whilst working in the office, or at home, or in other remote location, you are required to undertake a self-assessment to ensure that the work can be undertaken safely without endangering your health and wellbeing. At the council we use an online e-learning training and assessment program,

located within the H&S Modules of Learning Pool, called 'Display Screen Equipment Training and Self-Assessment'. This course is mandatory for all visual display screen users and should be repeated if there is a change in circumstances i.e., location, health etc.

You are responsible for completing this training and self-assessment and highlighting any concerns to your manager. You are also responsible for implementing any actions identified in order to reduce or mitigate the risks in your home and make your work environment safe. If you are unable to put suitable safeguards in place, you may not be able to work from that location and will need to work at council sites.

Whilst accidents at work are rare, they can happen. It is important that any accidents that happen whilst working remotely are reported to your line manager. An 'Accident, Incident and Near Miss Form' must be completed and forwarded to your manager. The forms can be found on SBC Insite.

***22. My staff are complaining to me that they don't feel safe walking from Hatfield car park to Observatory House with their IT equipment and personal belongings. Is there anything I can put in place as their manager?***

You should encourage your team members to arrange a system where they walk to the car park together to ensure no one is alone. You can also make suggestions as to how Slough can support with this too, such as arranging staff walking groups to the car park.

## **IT and Equipment**

***23. What technology/equipment is available for staff to work in a hybrid manner?***

Staff will be given a laptop and mobile phone. If an individual requires specialist equipment, an Astro ticket will need to be raised for such a request. If a lightweight laptop is required, a DSE assessment will need to be carried out.

***24. Are there any requirements for staff in relation to the security of Slough data?***

The council will ensure that appropriate technical security measures are in place and provide suitable equipment to protect the information used by the employee, as required by the Data Protection Act 2018.

It will be the responsibility of the employee to maintain a secure environment in order to safeguard the confidentiality of information and the physical security of furniture and electronic equipment, and all council records in line with current council policies and the employee code of conduct. Council records must be kept secure at all times and where necessary and appropriate, the council will support the employee with suitable facilities. Wherever possible employees should not store any paper records outside of the office.

Managers are responsible for reclaiming any allocated equipment when an employee leaves the council or moves to another directorate in order for it to be reallocated to the next post holder.

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## Appendix 2

### Managers guidance

**It is the responsibility of the manager to ensure that the correct processes are followed as outlined below.**

In undertaking an assessment, line manager will consider a number of factors including whether:

- the new employee can consistently demonstrate behaviors in accordance with the employing SBC's values, behavioural standards, and the SBC way of working.
- the new employee can consistently meet the requirements of their employment contract (e.g., arrive on time, fulfil their contracted hours and role).
- the new employee can consistently perform effectively in their role.
- the new employee is demonstrating higher than expected sickness absence during the probationary period as outlined in the SBC Managing Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure; subject to an assessment of the employee's health in relation to the Equality Act 2010 and refer to the Managing Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure.
- the new employee is achieving the expected level of progress in relation to any essential training requirements associated with their role.

#### 1. Management of the Probationary Process

- 1.1 It is the manager's responsibility to monitor the progress of new employees, ensure training needs are met, to keep the employees informed of their progress and ensure that any problems are sorted out quickly before they become serious concerns.
- 1.2 It is vital line managers raise and address any issues or concerns including poor performance as soon as they arise and give appropriate support to assist the new staff member to attain the required level. Action plans to address shortfalls in performance must be clearly documented to ensure all concerned are clear about the required outcomes.
- 1.3 Where the level of performance is putting the employee's continued employment at risk, this should be clearly explained and documented.
- 1.4 Following an initial meeting on commencement into role, the following formal probationary review meetings **must** be held (for Probation 6 months):
  - The first review – Month 1 to 2 (6-8 weeks)
  - The second review – Month 3 to 4 (12- 15 weeks)
  - The final review before the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> month (or at the end of the extended probation period where an extension has been agreed)
- 1.5 All meetings will be clearly documented, with a copy of the notes given to the member of staff and a copy placed on the employee's personal file. Probation process is in Agresso system refer to Agresso freshdesk guidance - [Probation Assessments in Agresso : Slough Borough Council \(freshdesk.com\)](#)

- 1.6 Where it is not possible to complete the final review meeting within the above timeframe, this must be confirmed in writing to the new member of staff and the meeting arranged for the earliest opportunity. It must be noted that this situation should occur in exceptional circumstances only.

## **2. Probationary Step Process**

### **Week 1**

- 2.1 At the earliest opportunity, during the first week of employment, the line manager will arrange a meeting with the employee. This meeting will form part of the induction process and should be used to set the 6 monthly probation meetings for the duration of the probation period. These dates should be recorded on the 'Probationary Form' refer Appendix 3 and the form is in Agresso system.
- 2.2 The manager will identify the employee's performance objectives (not usually more than 5) and link these to the competencies established for the post. All objectives should be SMART Objectives (see 'Setting SMART Objectives' guidance for further information). The Council has set a mandatory objective that the employee must achieve an excellent standard of conduct, attendance and timekeeping, with the linked competency of Job Knowledge and Professionalism.
- 2.3 The objectives and competencies should be recorded on the Probationary Form, which will be used monthly to review performance. An Induction Checklist can be found in Cornerstone. Link is [Cornerstone](#)
- 2.4 An induction checklist is automatically assigned on Cornerstone to every new starter as a prompt to run through with their line manager.
- 2.5 A further copy of the Induction Checklist should be forwarded to the line Manager.
- 2.6 The objectives set should enable the manager to assess the employee's ability to do the job, as well as assessing them against specified competencies. Areas identified for improvement, during the recruitment process, should be addressed and developed.

### **First assessment - Month 1 to 2 (If the contract is less than 12 months this should be held during the 1<sup>st</sup> month of the 3 months' probation period)**

- 2.7 The first probation review will take place at the end of the second month. This review, and subsequent monthly reviews, will focus on performance against the objectives and specified competencies and identification of learning and development needs.
- 2.8 The Probationary assessment form should be completed and signed. If performance is unsatisfactory any improvements and support required should be highlighted and addressed. In addition, any comments the employee has will be discussed and recorded also.
- 2.9 Line managers should raise any areas of concern at the earliest possible opportunity with the employee. Managers should not wait until the next monthly probation meeting to do so.



- 2.10 Where any objective has not been achieved, or only partially achieved, this must be fully explained on the Probationary Form at the time of the meeting, together with an action plan identifying how the concerns should be addressed and the required outcomes.
- 2.11 At the end of month 2, the line manager will discuss the employee's progress with the employee and will provide an opportunity to offer feedback and/or support.

**Second Assessment - Months 3 to 4 (If the contract is less than 12 months this should be held during the 1st month of the 3 months' probation period)**

- 2.12 During months 3 to 4, there will be ongoing assessment of performance against objectives, identifying areas for development. Probationary assessment form to be completed and signed. If performance has deteriorated, identify reasons and agree remedial action. Employee to be informed of required improvements to meet satisfactory level by final assessment meeting.

**Final Assessment – Months 5 to 6 (If the contract is less than 12 months this should be held during the 1st month of the 3 months' probation period)**

- 2.13 Towards the end of the 6-month probation period (unless significant concerns have emerged before this) the line manager will decide whether it is appropriate to confirm the appointment. Where the performance objectives (as set out on the Probationary Assessment Form) have been achieved, the appointment should be confirmed. Where the standards have not been achieved, and performance is considered unsatisfactory, the line manager should refer to Probationary Policy, section 10.

### **3. Confirmation of Appointment**

- 3.1 Where the appointment is to be confirmed the line manager must:
- complete the relevant section on the Probationary Final Assessment Form, in Appendix 5, and ensure that all 3 probation assessment forms are uploaded in Agresso system.
  - ensure that the objectives are reviewed and assimilated into the Council's Performance Management (PM) scheme. These objectives will then form part of the employee's ongoing performance assessment.
  - Annual increments, where applicable, are usually payable on 1st April each year, subject to six months service in the post, until the maximum spinal column point of the level has been reached.
  - However, if you are starting in this post between **1st October and 31st March**, your first annual increment will be payable six months after commencement of employment in this post and annually thereafter on 1st April. The payment of annual increments is not automatic and is subject to satisfactory performance as assessed by the services Director. Manager to complete and submit the contract variation form in Agresso for the employee.

#### **4. Unsatisfactory Performance and Process**

- 4.1 Where performance and/or conduct is unsatisfactory, line managers can recommend termination of employment at any stage during the probationary period, subject to the procedure in Probationary policy section 12.
- 4.2 Where the performance/conduct of the employee has been identified as unsatisfactory, and the line manager is contemplating further action, a meeting must be convened as soon as possible to bring this to the employee's attention. This may be separate from the standard monthly meeting.
- 4.3 The purpose of the meeting is for the line manager to discuss the area(s) of concern with the new employee, and they should be given an opportunity to respond.
- 4.4 The new employee has the right to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or a work colleague/support worker at this meeting.
- 4.5 After the meeting, the line manager will consider which of the following three options is appropriate:
  - Outline the improvement required, giving specific and realistic targets, and how these will be supported and reviewed within the remaining term of the probationary period.
  - Extension of the probationary period (see Probationary policy, section 11)
  - Termination of employment (see Probationary policy, section 12)

#### **5. Process for dealing with an Extension of Probation**

- 5.1 The line manager, who wishes to extend new employee's probation period, where the employee's assessment has been unsatisfactory should discuss the matters raised and identify remedial action that will put in place to enable the employee to meet the required standard.
- 5.2 The extension must be on the Probationary Form and forwarded to the HR BP team.
- 5.3 The employee will be notified of the extension and the grounds for it, in writing giving 5 working days' notice to attend. The employee must also be advised that failure to improve may result in the termination of employment.
- 5.4 The period of extension will not normally exceed 3 months. Line managers may choose a shorter period of extension where this is considered appropriate and should be discussed with the employee.
- 5.5 The line manager must continue to meet with the employee monthly to review progress. The monitoring / review meetings should be recorded on the Probationary Assessment Form.
- 5.6 Towards the end of the agreed extension of probation, the line manager must arrange a final meeting to review the employee's performance.

- 5.7 The purpose of the meeting is for the line manager to discuss the employee's performance during the extension period and for the employee to be given an opportunity to respond.
- 5.8 The employee has the right to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or a work colleague at this meeting.
- 5.9 After the meeting, the line manager will consider which of the following two options is appropriate:
- If the extension period has enabled the employee to reach the required standards, then the line manager will advise the employee that the appointment is confirmed and complete the Probationary Form, Appendix 5, and upload the form in Agresso.
  - If however, the employee has not reached the required standards, then the dismissal procedure, set out in Probationary Policy, section 12, should be followed.

## **6. Dismissal**

- 6.1 The line manager, in consultation with an HR Business Partnering team, will consider whether the employee's contract of employment should be terminated. Any recommendation must be justified with sufficient supporting evidence.
- 6.2 Where the decision is to dismiss, the employee will be notified in writing that their appointment is not confirmed and their contract of employment will be terminated, and of their right of appeal (see section 7 ).
- 6.3 The notice period for employees, whose contract of employment is terminated during the probationary period, is one week on either side, unless otherwise specified in the contract of employment.

## **7. Right of Appeal**

- 7.1 All probationary employees have the right to make an appeal against dismissal if they think:
- the decision based on evidence did not support the conclusion.
  - a failure to follow procedure had a material effect on the decision.
  - proper account was not taken of any matters of fact referred to at the original assessment meetings.
  - the action taken was too severe or inconsistent with previous decisions.
  - where new relevant evidence relating directly to the original concern(s) has become available.
- 7.2 The specific grounds of appeal must be made in writing to the Director or nominated managers as agreed by the Director and be received within five working days of receipt of the notice letter.
- 7.3 The appeal should normally be heard within the employee's notice period. The review meeting will be arranged within the 10 days period.
- 7.4 The employee should be given at least five working days' written notice of the

appeal hearing. The letter should include, as appropriate:

- Date, time and place of hearing.
- The employee's right to be accompanied by a Trade Union representative or work colleague.
- The names of the managers conducting the hearing
- The name of the person(s) presenting the management case
- Copies of relevant paperwork, i.e., Probationary Form and any accompanying documentation
- The name(s) of any management witnesses who will present evidence at the hearing.
- The employee's right to call witnesses and present any written submissions, provided the information is received at least two days prior to the hearing.

## **8. Appeal Hearing**

- 8.1 The appeal will be heard by a panel comprising two senior managers, at least one of whom will be the Director, who has not previously been involved in the case.
- 8.2 The management case will normally be presented by the line manager who made the recommendation to dismiss. The Director, who made the decision to dismiss, may be called to attend the hearing.
- 8.3 A written record of the hearing should be taken, which need not be word-for-word, but should accurately reflect all relevant evidence. The Chair of the Panel, who will usually be the Director, should sign the document as a true record of the proceedings.
- 8.4 The appeal panel may take one of the following forms of action:
  - Uphold the appeal and reinstate the employee (possibly with conditions, i.e., extension of probation)
  - Turn down the appeal and confirm the employee's dismissal.
- 8.5 The outcome of the appeal should be confirmed in writing as soon as possible and normally within five working days of the hearing. A copy should be placed on the employee's personal file.
- 8.6 There is no further right to appeal.

### Appendix 3

#### Probationary Assessment Form: First Assessment

Description	Details
Date:	
Assessment Period:	
Employee Name:	
Directorate/ Section:	
Job Title:	
Start Date:	

Description	Details
Job Performance:	
Conduct:	
Training & Development:	

Description	Details
Work Attendance:	
Number of days absent:	
Punctuality:	(Please state Good/ Not Satisfactory):
Managers Overall Assessment:	(Please state Exceeds Job Requirements/ Meet Job Requirements/ Still Requires Training & Coaching/ Significant Concerns Identified – Details below under Action Plan):

Issue	Action	Support/ Training Provided	By When

Issue	Action	Support/ Training Provided	By When

Description	Details
Employees Comments:	

**Name of Manager:**

**Signed:**

**Name of Employee:**

**Signed:**

**Name of Countersigning Manager:**

**Signed:**

## Appendix 4

### Probationary Assessment Form: Second Assessment

Description	Details
Date:	
Assessment Period:	
Employee Name:	
Directorate/ Section:	
Job Title:	
Start Date:	

Description	Details
Job Performance:	
Conduct:	
Training & Development:	



Description	Details
Work Attendance:	
Number of days absent:	
Punctuality:	(Please state Good/ Not Satisfactory):
Managers Overall Assessment:	(Please state Exceeds Job Requirements/ Meet Job Requirements/ Still Requires Training & Coaching/ Significant Concerns Identified – Details below under Action Plan):

Issue	Action	Support/ Training Provided	By When

Issue	Action	Support/ Training Provided	By When

Description	Details
Employees Comments:	

**Name of Manager:**

**Signed:**

**Name of Employee:**

**Signed:**

**Name of Countersigning Manager:**

**Signed:**

## Appendix 5

### Probationary Assessment Form: Final Assessment

Description	Details
Date:	
Assessment Period:	
Employee Name:	
Directorate/ Section:	
Job Title:	
Start Date:	

Description	Details
Job Performance:	
Conduct:	
Training & Development:	

Description	Details
Work Attendance:	
Number of days absent:	
Punctuality:	(Please state Good/ Not Satisfactory):
Managers Overall Assessment:	(Please state Exceeds Job Requirements/ Meet Job Requirements/ Still Requires Training & Coaching/ Significant Concerns Identified – Details below under Action Plan):
Employment to be:	(Please state Confirmed/ Probationary period to be extended until when/ Not confirmed – Details below under Action Plan)

Issue	Action	Support/ Training Provided	By When

Issue	Action	Support/ Training Provided	By When

Description	Details
Employees Comments:	

**Name of Manager:**

**Signed:**

**Name of Employee:**

**Signed:**

**Name of Countersigning Manager:**

**Signed:**

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## **Hybrid Working Policy – Employee FAQs**

These FAQs should be read in conjunction with the Hybrid Working Policy. If you have a query that has not been covered below, please discuss with your line manager.

### **Hybrid Working Principles**

#### ***1. What is Hybrid Working?***

Hybrid working is a work arrangement where employees have the flexibility to split their time between working remotely (normally from home) and working in an office or other designated space.

#### ***2. Is Hybrid working the same as Remote Working?***

No. Remote work is a work approach where employees work from a location away from their office, while hybrid work is a flexible approach that allows a mix between remote work and work in the office.

#### ***3. How does Hybrid Working affect me and my role?***

If you are working in a role that is suitable for hybrid working- e.g. you have a non-customer facing role and your work is office/desk based, then you are able to work in a hybrid manner. All staff who can work in a hybrid manner will be able to work from home for two, maximum three days per week. The remaining days within the week will be required to be in the office (e.g., Observatory House). This will be pro-rated for part time workers. The needs of the service will be the key driver in implementing hybrid working and will take precedence. Line managers are responsible for managing their service areas, operational standards and expectations.

#### ***4. Who does the hybrid working policy apply to?***

The policy applies to all permanent staff. Agency workers, interims and contractors are still expected to attend the office. These arrangements however should be agreed with the line manager.

### **Attendance and Availability for Work**

#### ***5. I would like to permanently alter my working hours/pattern. Does the hybrid working policy deal with this?***

The hybrid working policy does not deal with requests to permanently alter an individuals' working hours/pattern. In respect of a situation where an individual wishes to make a flexible working request, the council's flexible working policy encompasses the statutory right to flexible working and contains the statutory procedure for employees to make such requests.

#### ***6. Can I choose when and where I work?***

Your line manager will have the responsibility for ensuring that the residents and service needs take priority; that staff are treated fairly and trusted to take responsibility for themselves and their work when working remotely. Managers will, in consultation with their staff, create rota patterns that best meets the needs of the service. These rotas will be subject to change and there is no entitlement to work remotely on specific days of the week. However, your line manager will work with you and your

colleagues to discuss your personal circumstances and to explore what can be accommodated within the team.

***7. My manager has asked me to come into the office on a day that I would normally work from home. Do I have to come in?***

Staff are expected to come into the office on a day that they would normally work from home should a need arise that requires their attendance in the office. This may include situations such as training, a team meeting, colleague collaboration, when they are unable to connect to the Slough IT systems, or if they are asked to do so by their manager, e.g. in the event of sickness of a colleague, inadequate cover, emergency or need.

***8. Can I choose the times I work both in the office and from home?***

One of the aims of the hybrid working policy is to allow for greater flexibility and work life balance. However, the needs of the service and residents takes priority. Staff must be available and able to work on their contracted days and times whether they are in the office or working remotely, unless absence is for an authorised form of leave or sickness. Any variation to this arrangement can only be made by prior agreement with the line manager.

When staff are working from home, they are expected to work in a similar way as they would in the office, for example, they should be available to answer the telephone, respond to emails, instant messaging etc during the hours that the service operates (usually between 9am-5pm), unless a change is agreed with their line manager.

***9. Can I look after my children when I am working from home?***

Working from home is not a substitute for caring for dependants. Employees are expected to have made alternative arrangements for the care of their dependants during their working day.

***10. I currently work part-time. How does the hybrid working principles impact me?***

The policy principles for full time staff outline that staff can work from home 2 days, maximum 3 days per week. The remaining 2 days are required to be worked from the office. This works out to be 40% of the working week. Therefore, if you work part time, you will be required to come into the office 40% of your working week. If you work 4 days per week for example, this would be 1.5 days in the office. Practically this may not work so you and your manager would need to discuss and take a pragmatic approach. For example, one week you may come into the office 1 day and the next week 2 days.

## **Personal Circumstances**

***11. I am currently on probation. Am I allowed to work in a Hybrid Manner?***

All new staff in probation must work the first few weeks of their probationary period in the office. This ensures that you are probably inducted and have a good understanding of the organisation's objectives and culture.

If your role is suitable for Hybrid working, e.g. non customer facing, desk based role, then after a few weeks you can discuss with your line manager how you can work in a hybrid manner.



**12. Do I have to work in a Hybrid manner? I don't want to because my personal circumstances are not conducive to working from home.**

There could be a number of reasons where working at home is not possible for a member of staff, e.g. shared flats/houses, insufficient space, someone else caring for children/relatives at home. In such circumstances, managers need to explore other working options with their member of staff, e.g., a permanent desk in the office, library, or other council office.

**13. When I commenced employment with Slough, I took the role on the basis that I didn't need to attend the office at all or more than 1 day per week/I have a contractual arrangement which states that I don't need to come into the office. What do I do?**

You should discuss your individual circumstances with your line manager who may take advice from the HR team.

**14. I am concerned about walking with my IT equipment and personal belongings from Hatfield car park to Observatory House. What safety measures are in place to protect Slough employees.**

There is a combination of personal choice and solutions that can be proposed to support with this. If individuals do not want to park at Hatfield and walk into the office with their IT equipment, they do have the option to park at Herschel car park which are subject to standard car parking charges.

The council is open to all suggestions to support staff, such as arranging walking groups to ensure people are walking to the car park together. Alternatively, you can discuss this in your teams with your line manager to resolve how you as a team can support each other.

**15. During the pandemic, I moved to another part of the country, meaning that I have an extremely long commute. What am I going to do when the hybrid working policy is implemented?**

The council understands that some people made personal decisions during the pandemic and therefore moved far away from the office. Unfortunately, we are now at a place where we need our staff attending the office more to support with the recovery of Slough. Therefore we cannot make special dispensation for those who made the decision to move further away. Individuals in this situation will need to discuss this with their line manager and see how they can accommodate the new policy into their working schedules.

**16. I stated in the hybrid working survey that I either only wanted to come into the office once per week or not at all. What would happen if I refused to adhere to the hybrid working policy?**

Slough is at a critical point in its recovery journey, and having staff in the office together twice per week to collaborate and meet face to face is an essential part of this journey. It will enable us to communicate more effectively, re-define our organisational culture and foster good working relationships. Asking staff to come into the office is a reasonable organisational request, and more generous than a lot of organisations. If staff refuse to abide by this policy, this will be deemed misconduct, and management may instigate formal proceedings under the disciplinary policy and procedure.

## **Employee Wellbeing/Absence**

**17. If I am feeling unwell, can I still work from home to save me taking a sick day?**

If you are feeling unable to work due to sickness absence, you should inform your line manager in line with the Managing Sickness Absence Policy. As a guide, hybrid working is not to be used as a substitute for a working in the office day when an employee feels unwell. It is however recognised that there may be specific circumstances where such requests may be agreed.

An employee who has reported in as sick is not expected to work either in the office or remotely. Managers should be mindful of this and not pressure them into working, simply because employees have the equipment to work from home.

**18. How can I establish boundaries between my personal and work life whilst working hybrid?**

It is important that you and your line manager look after your health and wellbeing. You should establish a dedicated workspace, define your working hours and communicate your schedule to your family members or housemates if appropriate. Use tools like calendars and time management techniques to stay organised.

It is important that you take regular breaks from work in accordance with the working time regulations and your contract of employment. Working hours and break periods are confirmed in your terms and conditions of employment, but must include:

- A break of at least 20 minutes if working more than six hours a day
- A rest of at least 11 hours between working days
- An uninterrupted break of 24 hours each week

Where working in front of a screen for long periods of time, you must ensure you take regular breaks.

If you choose to work late during unsociable hours, providing you have agreement from your line manager, please be courteous and respectful to your colleagues. Colleagues are not expected to respond to emails or other forms of communication during unsociable hours, unless in the case of an emergency.

**19. How can I maintain good communication with my colleagues in a hybrid work environment?**

Use a combination of communication tools such as MS Teams chat, video meetings and phone calls. Schedule regular check-ins with team members and your line manager, and always attend training and team meetings in person. If you are feeling isolated at any time, you should discuss this with your line manager.

**20. What role does my manager play in supporting me in a hybrid work arrangement?**

Your manager should provide clear guidelines, maintain regular communication, and offer support when needed. They should also assess your performance based on results and objectives rather than hours worked.

**IT and Equipment**

**21. What equipment will I be given and how should I keep this secure?**

If your role has been identified as one that can be effective through hybrid working, we will provide

you with the necessary equipment to fulfil your duties.

Where possible equipment will be provided that is portable and can therefore be used from any location, including council premises.

The specific equipment provided will depend on the nature and requirements of your position but may include:

- a laptop
- telephone headsets that can be used for making calls via your laptop (rather than a desk based telephone and landline extension)
- a mobile phone if appropriate to the position

You must ensure that all council data and equipment (including laptops, handheld email devices, mobile phones etc.) is stored securely, and that it is not at risk of loss or theft. This includes where staff are working remotely. Further guidelines for employees on data security can be found on Insite. The Council will not pay for additional equipment for remote working, other than that which is provided as standard issue, unless where reasonable adjustments are required to be made.

***22. I require specialist equipment to do my role. How will I be supported by the organisation to be able to work from home?***

Some staff will have special requirements and specialist equipment due to various reasons such as job related or having a disability. The council does not want to prevent these individuals from being able to have the same opportunities as other staff and not being able to work from home.

In discussion with the individual, and seeking advice from the health and safety team, managers should take individual circumstances into account and ensure that staff are treated fairly and according to their particular needs.

***23. Will I be given a fixed desk to work from when I come into the office?***

The council is not able to allocate fixed desks to individuals with the preference being to operate a hot desking model. Work is underway to identify the future use of Observatory House and ascertain the number of working spaces available to staff. Once this has been resolved, it is likely that a new hot desking policy will be introduced which will include a desk booking system etc.

***24. Will the Council cover the cost of my broadband and utilities whilst I am working from home?***

There is no provision to cover the cost of utilities whilst staff are working from home. One of the main benefits of offering hybrid working is the reduction in travel costs which should offset the cost of utilities.

***25. Will Slough be looking at the availability of equipment such as chairs, IT cables, PCs etc, as well as making other facilities available such as touch down areas, fridges and so on in Observatory House?***

All office based staff have been issued with laptops to be used. PCs will not be issued. If a member of staff does not have a laptop, their line manager is required to submit a request. If a desk is missing cables, these can be requested from IT.

In the building, all desks have chairs. This is also the case at touch down areas. Some fridges have been switched off due to low occupancy, however this will be reviewed if numbers in the office increase.

### ***26. Do I have to do anything to set up my workstation at home correctly?***

Most of the regulations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 apply to individuals who are working from home as well as to employees working at council accommodation. If you use a computer, laptop or tablet whilst working in the office, or at home, or in other remote location, you are be required to undertake a self-assessment to ensure that the work can be undertaken safely without endangering your health and wellbeing. At the council we use an online e-learning training and assessment program, located within the H&S Modules of Learning Pool, called 'Display Screen Equipment Training and Self-Assessment'. This course is mandatory for all visual display screen users and should be repeated if there is a change in circumstances i.e. location, health etc.

You are responsible for completing this training and self-assessment, and highlighting any concerns to your manager. You are also responsible for implementing any actions identified in order to reduce or mitigate the risks in your home and make your work environment safe. If you are unable to put suitable safeguards in place, you may not be able to work from that location and will need to work at council sites.

Whilst accidents at work are rare, they can happen. It is important that any accidents that happen whilst working remotely are reported to your line manager. An 'Accident, Incident and Near Miss Form' must be completed and forwarded to your manager. The forms can found on SBC Insite.

# Probationary Policy



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## APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Probationary Period Process Flowchart

Appendix 2 - Managers Guidance

Appendix 3 - Probationary Assessment Form 1

Appendix 4 - Probationary Assessment Form 2

Appendix 5 - Probationary Assessment Form 3

## 1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 The purpose of the probationary period of employment is to assess the suitability of employees for the posts to which they have been appointed. The procedure sets out fair and equitable processes for such assessments to be made by managers and, also for employees to be able to raise any concerns that they might have. The intention is to give each individual every opportunity to succeed and provide a clear process where there are concerns that are identified during this period.

## 2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of a Probationary Period is to:
- Ensure that new members of staff have the opportunity to become familiar with the practices and procedures of Slough Borough Council (SBC).
  - Allow new members of staff to demonstrate their ability to perform their duties effectively and efficiently.
  - Ensure that new members of staff receive the appropriate support and development opportunities to enable them to perform their role to the required standards in line with their job description.
- 2.2 During their probationary period, employees are given the opportunity to become familiar with relevant practices and procedures.
- Employees have a framework within which to demonstrate their ability to perform their duties effectively and efficiently.
  - Line managers have effective methods for reviewing employees.
  - Reviews occur to agreed timescales.
- 2.3 In making their assessment, a line manager will consider a number of factors (refer to Managers guidance in Appendix 2). Probation Process has been mapped in Agresso. Managers will need to complete the Agresso Probation Form in 'Agresso Web/Forms'. [A User Guide is available on Freshdesk](#)
- 2.4 This Policy does not form part of your contract of employment. We reserve the right to amend this policy. If there is any conflict between the terms of this Policy and the statutory rights which it covers, then the statutory rights will prevail.

### **3. Scope**

- 3.1 This procedure applies to all employees of Slough Borough Council including maintained schools. It excludes school-based staff who are under the control of Governing Bodies.

### **4. Equality Statement**

- 4.1 Slough Borough Council (SBC) aims to design and implement policy documents that meet the diverse needs of our services, and workforce, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others. It considers current UK legislative requirements, including the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998. SBC promotes equal opportunities for all where an inclusive workforce and diversity is valued (Refer to EDI policy).

### **5. Length of the scheme**

- 5.1. The probationary period will be 3 or 6 calendar months (contract dependent) and for Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYEs) 12 months (Table 1) during which time the manager will meet regularly with the employee to discuss their progress and suitability for the role.
- 5.2. If there are concerns about the employee's suitability, or due to absence there has been insufficient time to assess the employee, the probationary period maybe extended by up to 3 calendar months or such period as is reasonable to be able to assess the employee.
- 5.3. Where there is sufficient evidence that the standards are not being met, or are unlikely to be met, the contract of employment may be terminated at any stage during the probation period i.e. - it is not always necessary or appropriate to wait until the end of the probation period.
- 5.4. During or at the end of the probation period, the contractual notice period required by either party to terminate the employment is one week.
- 5.5. The probationary period is stated in the employee's contract of employment. Normally, all contracts for new permanent employees' state that the contract will be subject to the satisfactory completion of a probationary period of six months. However, where an individual is on a fixed term contract, the probationary period will be proportionate according to the length of the fixed term contract (Table 1 - below). Where an employee is on an annually renewed fixed term contract due to statutory requirements, the probation period will be six months.



**Table 1**

<b>Length of Contract</b>	<b>Length of Probationary Period</b>
Fixed term, less than 12 months	3 months probationary period
Newly qualified social workers on ASYE qualification	12 months
Fixed Term 12 months +	6 months probationary period
Permanent Contract	6 months probationary period

- 5.6. If an employee is on a fixed term contract where the probationary period is three months, the probationary assessment meetings should take place during the 1st, 2nd and 3rd month of employment. The manager would be required to follow the same principles of the first, second and final assessment meetings as detailed in this policy and should complete the appropriate probationary assessment forms. If deemed necessary, the probationary period may be extended for an appropriate period.
- 5.7. Where an existing employee is appointed to a new role and have already completed a probationary period with the Council, a formal probationary period will not apply. However, the employee's performance will be monitored closely during the first six months (or proportionate period if on a fixed term contract) and during this period the employee will be expected to demonstrate their suitability for the post.
- 5.8. Where a new employee has joined Slough Borough Council with previous local government service, they will be expected to complete a full probationary period. The length of this probationary period will be determined by the type of contract the employee is on as shown in Table 1.
- 5.9. If an employee changes job within their probationary period, whatever the reason for the change, they will be expected to complete a further full probationary period in the new post.

## **6. Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (Applicable to Newly Qualified Social Worker – NQSW's)**

- 6.1 The probationary period for newly appointed NQSWs on the ASYE will be one year. The probationary period may be extended if the ASYE is extended e.g., where the NQSW has a period of maternity leave or long-term sick leave. Probationary Assessments/Reviews will be held at 3 and 6 months, completing the final assessment report at the end of ASYE at 12 months. An assessment/review can be undertaken at 9 months if the ASYE Team/Practice Manager or Practice Educator considers this to be beneficial to the NQSW.

**For further information please refer to the ASYE procedure, available on SBC Insite.**

## 7. Induction

- 7.1 It is the manager's responsibility to devise an appropriate local induction programme for all newly appointed employees which will enable the individual to meet key contacts, understand their role and the standards expected of them, and understand how they contribute to the team, service, and overarching goals of the business. The manager needs to use the induction checklist to ensure all areas are covered with the induction period.
- 7.2 The manager should also discuss and agree an initial training and development plan based on the individual's personal needs, to support them joining a new team, covering processes, systems, introduction to team members, Subject matter experts in the team, set in place a 'buddy' to support, so that they will be able to perform their new role effectively.
- An Induction Checklist can be found in **Cornerstone**. [Cornerstone](#)
  - An induction checklist is automatically assigned on Cornerstone to every new starter as a prompt to run through with their line manager.
  - A further copy of the Induction Checklist should be forwarded to the line Manager.
  - Once completed the line manager and new starter should sign this off and store it in the new starter's record in Agresso system.
  - The manager should ensure that all stipulated training is agreed, arranged, and completed by the individual, within the designated period set on Cornerstone.

## 8. Management of the Probationary Process

- 8.1 It is the manager's responsibility to monitor the progress of the new employees, ensure training needs are met, to keep the employees informed of their progress and ensure that any problems are resolved promptly before they become serious concerns. For the **process of the Probationary Assessment Meetings refer to Probationary Period Process Flowchart in Appendix 1 and Managers guidance in Appendix 2. Probationary Assessments First, Second and Final forms are given in Appendices 3, 4 and 5.**

## 9. Confirmation of Appointment

- 9.1 Where the appointment is to be confirmed, the line manager must complete the relevant section of the Probationary Final Assessment Form and refer to the Managers guidance in Appendix 2, and Probationary Final Assessment Form in Appendix 5.

## **10. Unsatisfactory Performance**

- 10.1 Where performance and/or conduct is unsatisfactory, line managers can recommend extending the probation period to allow additional time for the employee to demonstrate their suitability for the post or termination of employment at any stage during the probation period refer to Managers guidance in Appendix 2, section 4.
- 10.2 Also, the Council's Code of Conduct for Employees, Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, Capability Policy and Procedure, Managing Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure, Dignity at Work and the Grievance Policy, set out the standards of behaviour expected of employees. Failure to meet the required standard may result in the employee's contract being terminated.

## **11. Extension of the Probation Period**

- 11.1 Extension of the Probation Period does not have to wait until the end of the 6-months period if concerns have been identified sooner, an improvement action plan should be implemented. If there are no measurable improvements, then the next stage of the process needs to be instigated refer to Managers guidance in Appendix 2, section 5.

## **12. Dismissal**

- 12.1 The line manager will consider whether the employee's contract of employment should be terminated if no improvement has been made to demonstrate the suitability for the role. Any recommendation must be justified with sufficient supporting evidence.
- 12.2 Where the decision is to dismiss, the employee will be notified in writing that their appointment is not confirmed and their contract of employment will be terminated, and of their right of appeal.
- 11.2 The notice period for employees whose contract of employment is terminated during the probationary period is one week on either side, unless otherwise specified in the contract of employment - refer to Managers guidance in Appendix 2, section 6.

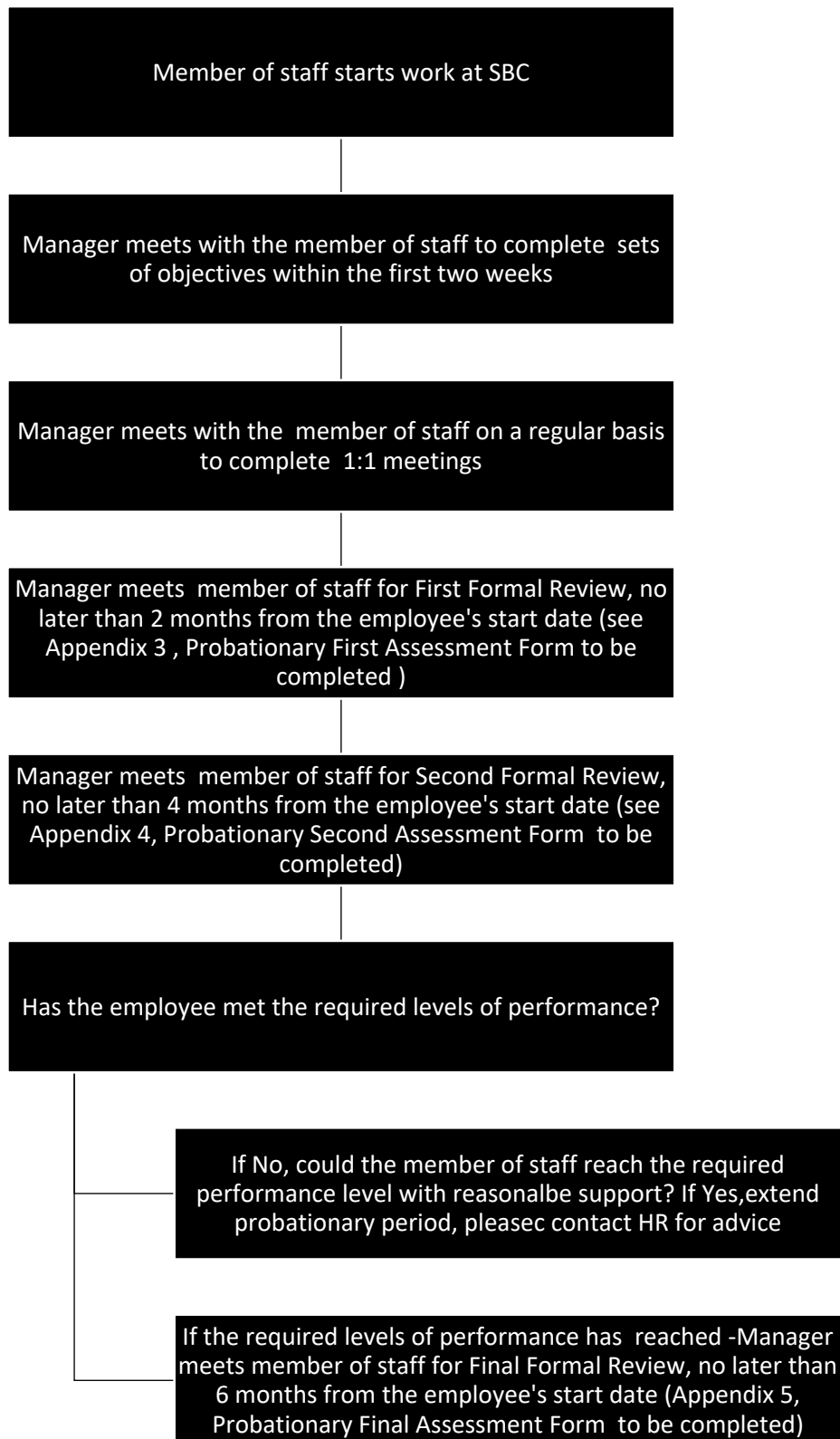
## **13. Right of Appeal and Appeal Hearing**

- 13.1 All probationary employees have the right to appeal against dismissal refer to Managers guidance in Appendix 2, section 7 and Appeal Hearing is in Appendix 2, section 8.

#### **14. Relationships with other policies and procedures**

- Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
- Capability Policy and Procedure
- Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure
- Grievance Policy and Procedure
- Dignity at Work Code of Practice.

## Appendix 1 – Probationary Period Process Flowchart



## Policy Schedule

Policy schedule	Details
Policy owner and lead	HR BP Team
Consultation	Trade Unions <b>DATE</b> Staff Network Groups <b>DATE</b> Corporate / Senior Leadership Team <b>DATE</b>
Corporate Consultative Forum	TBC
Employment & Appeals Committee	<b>DATE</b>
Equality Impact Assessment	<b>DATE</b>
Approving body	Employment & Appeals Committee
Date of approval	<b>DATE</b>
Date of implementation	<b>DATE</b>
This version number	v. ? – <b>DATE</b>
Last version	v. ?- <b>DATE</b>
Related documents	
Review interval	Three yearly minimum or as required

## Version

Version	Author	Date	Changes
??		<b>DATE</b>	
		<b>DATE</b>	
		<b>DATE</b>	
		<b>DATE</b>	
		<b>DATE</b>	
		<b>DATE</b>	

# Maternity and Family Friendly Policy



**How and where we work**  
Agile, adaptable, accessible

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## 1. Policy Statement

Slough Borough council is committed to supporting their employees and have a number of family friendly policies and procedures in place. This policy sets out the statutory rights and responsibilities of employees of the council.

## 2. Introduction

- 2.1. Mothers, fathers, and partners (including same-sex partners) and adoptive parents all have statutory rights to family leave. In the UK, there are several different types of family leave and some of them overlap.
- 2.2. This Policy explains the rules<sup>1</sup>relating to:
  - a) Maternity Leave and pay.
  - b) Adoption Leave and pay.
  - c) Paternity Leave and pay.
  - d) Shared Parental Leave and pay.
  - e) Parental Bereavement Leave and pay.
- 2.3. This Policy applies to all employees who have a contract with Slough Borough Council. This doesn't apply to agency workers or volunteers working in the council.
- 2.4. This Policy does not form part of your contract of employment. We reserve the right to amend this Policy in accordance with legislative changes. If there is any conflict between the terms of this Policy and the statutory rights which it covers, then the statutory rights will prevail.
- 2.5. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Maternity and Family Friendly Procedure/guidance document.

## 3. Maternity Leave

- 3.1. You are entitled to take up to 52 weeks of time off work when you have a child. This is known as Maternity Leave. This is your statutory right regardless of how long you have worked for us or how many hours you work.
  - 3.2. The rules relating to Maternity Leave separate the time off into an initial period of 26 weeks, which is known as Ordinary Maternity Leave (**OML**), and the following 26 weeks, which is known as Additional Maternity Leave (**AML**).
-

#### 4. Telling us about your pregnancy

- 4.1. Once you are aware that you are pregnant, please let your line manager know as soon as possible. This is so that they can review any health and safety implications, start to plan for your absence and, they will arrange for a risk assessment of your work environment to be carried out.
- 4.2. Your manager will need to know your expected week of childbirth (EWC) no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> week before your EWC (Qualifying Week). Your EWC is the week (beginning on Sunday and ending on Saturday) when your due date falls. Your EWC is used as the basis for several rules relating to maternity rights.

#### 5. Starting Maternity Leave

- 5.1. Maternity Leave cannot usually begin until the 11<sup>th</sup> week before your EWC (unless your child is born before this date). Maternity Leave will begin the day after you give birth if it hasn't already started before this.
- 5.2. If you want to change the start date for your Maternity Leave, then you should let your line manager know in writing, by amending **Form A: Maternity Notification** at least 28 days before the earliest of the original start date or the new start date (if you are bringing your leave earlier). Your line manager will then write to you with a revised return to work date.
- 5.3. Your Maternity Leave will start automatically if you are off sick for a pregnancy-related reason at any point in the four weeks before your EWC.

#### 6. Maternity Pay:

**There are three types of maternity pay:**

##### 6.1. Statutory Maternity Pay

You will be eligible for Statutory Maternity Pay (**SMP**) if you:

- Have 26 weeks' continuous service with us by the Qualifying Week
- Earned at least the average amount set by the Government each year in the eight weeks before the Qualifying Week
- Provided us with a copy of your **MATB1** form.
- Gave us at least 28 days' notice of your proposed Maternity Leave start date.

You will receive SMP for up to 39 weeks. This will be paid at 90% of your average weekly earnings for the first six weeks and at the standard SMP rate for the remaining 33 weeks. The standard SMP rate is set by the government. We will pay SMP at 90% of your average weekly earnings for all your Maternity

Leave if your average weekly earnings fall below the standard rate.

We will deduct pension, tax and National Insurance contributions from your SMP in the same way as we do from your regular salary.

## 6.2. **Maternity Allowance (MA)**

If you do not have 26 weeks' service by the Qualifying Week, then you may still be eligible for Maternity Allowance (MA). MA is administered by the Government rather than the council. The Payroll team will provide you with the SMP1 form on receipt of your completed **Form A: Maternity Notification** and **MATB1** form. We are not involved in the administration of MA. This is your personal responsibility.

## 6.3. **Occupational Maternity Pay (OMP)**

Occupational Maternity Pay is applicable to employees who have completed at least one year's continuous local government service at the 11<sup>th</sup> week prior to the expected week of childbirth and intend to return to work. Eligible employees must remain employed by the Council at the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> week prior to the expected week of childbirth.

To retain any occupational payments made after the first six weeks employees must return to work within a local authority for a minimum period of three months. If the employee fails to return to work for the required period, they will have to pay back the additional contractual payment (12 weeks at half pay).

We will deduct pension, tax and National Insurance contributions from your OMP in the same way as we do from your regular salary.

Occupational maternity pay is more generous than SMP. An employee is entitled to OMP if:

- They have at least 12 months continuous Local Government service by the 11<sup>th</sup> week before EWC
- They are still pregnant 11 weeks before the start of the expected week of childbirth (or has already given birth).
- They provide an original **MATB1** form stating their expected week of childbirth; and

- They give proper notification of their pregnancy on **Form A: Maternity Notification** and completes the Maternity leave request form in Agresso. They will be returning to work after their maternity leave for a minimum period of 3 months. This period will be extended proportionately if the employee gains agreement to return to work on a reduced hour's basis. An individual will have to return to work for longer than three months to keep their occupational maternity pay, if for example, a full-time employee returning on a part-time basis will be required to complete the full pro-rated equivalent of 3 months' full-time service. For example, if hours are reduced by half the period will be extended proportionately if the employee gain agreement to return to work on a reduced hours' basis. They will have to return to work for longer than three months to keep their occupational maternity pay, if for example, they return to work on half time {18.5 hours on a weekly basis}, from full-time, they will have to work for at least 6 months.
- They give their manager at least 8 weeks written notice by completing, **Form C: Request to Change Return to Work Date** if they wish to change their agreed return to work date. The manager reserves the right to agree to an earlier return date.
- OMP is payable for up to 18 weeks after maternity leave starts.
- OMP is treated as earnings and is therefore subject to PAYE and national insurance deductions as appropriate.

For the first 6 weeks, OMP is paid at the equivalent of 90% of the employees' average weekly earnings calculated over a specified period. For the purpose of calculating average weekly earnings, shift allowances and overtime payments are all included.

For weeks 7 – 18 at 50% of average weekly pay plus any entitlement to SMP or Maternity Allowance up to a maximum of full pay.

For weeks 19 – 39 SMP at standard maternity pay rate, {subject to qualifying conditions above} Women who have claimed OMP but who then decide to resign and not return to work for a minimum period of 3 months will be required to repay the OMP (net of their entitlement to SMP).

## **7. During Maternity Leave**

- 7.1. Your line manager will maintain reasonable contact with you during maternity leave. This may be to discuss arrangements for your return to work, changes within the organisation/service area, DBS or qualification expiry dates or simply to update them on important developments at work during their absence.
- 7.2. You will continue to receive benefits due to you under your employment contract while on Maternity Leave. Except for terms relating to pay, all your normal terms and conditions will apply.
- 7.3. Whilst on maternity leave, if you are breastfeeding, the council wishes to support employees with continuing to breastfeed after they return to work and will make every attempt to provide suitable rest and storage facilities. The manager will carry out a Risk Assessment with the employee to assess and agree what arrangements should be put in place.

## **8. Time off for antenatal appointments**

- 8.1. You are entitled to paid time off for antenatal appointments during working hours. We ask for as much notice as possible, and we may want to see confirmation of your pregnancy and an appointment card for all but the initial appointment.
- 8.2. If you have what is known as a 'qualifying relationship' with a pregnant woman or the unborn child, you are entitled to unpaid time off to accompany them to a maximum of two antenatal appointments. This applies to each pregnancy. A 'qualifying relationship' is one where you are one of the following:
  - The child's father.
  - The pregnant woman's spouse.
  - The pregnant woman's partner.
- 8.3. We expect you to give your line manager as much notice as possible. Legally, you are only entitled to 6.5 hours off work for each appointment (which includes travelling and waiting time), but if you need more time, please discuss it with your line manager.

- 8.4. To attend any further appointments, you will need to request time off as annual leave or unpaid leave (which will be managed as laid out in our *(Leave Policy and Procedure)*).
- 8.5. You must provide a signed statement showing the date and time of each appointment. It must confirm that:
- You are eligible under the 'qualifying relationship' criteria.
  - The time off is solely to accompany the woman to her appointment.
  - A doctor, midwife or nurse has advised that the woman needs the appointment.

## **9. Time off for adoption appointments**

- 9.1. You are entitled to time off to attend an adoption appointment. This is an appointment arranged by an adoption agency, usually for you to get to know the child who will be placed with you, but sometimes for other reasons related to the adoption.
- 9.2. If more than one child is being placed with you at the same time, then we treat this as one adoption and will not give you time off to attend additional appointments. Time off for this type of appointment must be taken before any child is placed with you.
- 9.3. You may attend up to five appointments per adoption, on paid time off if you are adopting on your own or will be the primary adopter. You may attend up to two appointments, on unpaid leave, if you are the secondary adopter.
- 9.4. You are entitled to take up to 6.5 hours for each appointment. This includes travelling and waiting time. Your line manager will need a signed statement with details of the time and date of the appointment as well as confirmation that:
- The adoption agency has arranged or requested the appointment.
  - You are either adopting the child on your own or jointly with someone else.
  - You are electing to take either paid or unpaid time off work if you are adopting jointly.

9.5. It may be necessary to ask you to rearrange an appointment, and we may refuse a request for a particular day or time in exceptional circumstances. Your line manager will, however, never do this without good reason.

## **10. Adoption Leave**

10.1. You are entitled to take up to 52 weeks off work if you are the primary adopter in an adoption process (**Adoption Leave**). Adoption Leave is split into an initial period of 26 weeks, which is referred to as Ordinary Adoption Leave (**OAL**) and a further period of 26 weeks, which is referred to as Additional Adoption Leave (**AAL**).

10.2. Statutory adoption leave may be taken by an employee when a child, up to the age of 18 years, is placed with them for adoption, provided they meet certain qualifying conditions.

10.3. You will be eligible for Adoption Leave if you are adopting and meet the following requirements:

- You are adopting a child through a UK adoption agency, or you are a local authority foster parent who has been approved as a prospective adopter.
- The adoption agency or local authority has given you written notice that it has matched you with a child and has told you the expected date of placement.
- You have told the agency or local authority that you agree to the placement.

10.4. Adoption Leave is also available in certain surrogacy cases if you meet the following conditions:

- A surrogate mother gives birth to a child who is biologically the child of either you or your spouse or partner (or both of you).
- You expect to be given parental responsibility under a Parental Order from the court. The child must live with you, and you must apply for the Parental Order within six months of birth.

10.5. Only one parent can take Adoption Leave (the **Primary Adopter**). The other parent may be eligible for **Paternity Leave** (see below). In some cases, you may be able to take **Shared Parental Leave** with your partner (see below).

- 10.6. All of your terms and conditions of employment will continue as normal during Adoption Leave, save those that relate to pay.

## **11. Notification of adoption, surrogacy or fostering to adopt**

- 11.1. If you are adopting or fostering for adoption, then you should let your manager know as soon as you receive an expected date of placement (**EDP**) from the local authority. Once you have provided this information to your line manager, you should also let your line manager know when you would like your Adoption Leave to start (**Intended Adoption Leave Start Date**), by completing **Form A: Adoption Notification**. We ask that you provide your line manager with this information within seven days of receiving notification of a match, but we understand that this will not always be possible. Please let your line manager know as soon as possible.
- 11.2. Please provide your line manager with a copy of your matching certificate as soon as you receive it. We will store and process your matching certificate in accordance with our [*Data Protection and Privacy Policy*].
- 11.3. In a surrogacy case, you must inform your line manager in writing of your intention to take Adoption Leave and give the expected week of childbirth (**EWC**) and your Intended Adoption Leave Start Date, by completing **Form A: Adoption Notification**. You must give this information by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the EWC, or, if that is not reasonably practicable, as soon as you can. When the child is born, you must tell your line manager the date of birth as Adoption Leave in surrogacy cases usually starts on the day that the child is born.
- 11.4. Once you have provided your line manager with this information, they will write to you and confirm their understanding of your return-to-work date.

## **12. Starting Adoption Leave**

- 12.1. In an adoption or fostering for adoption case, you can elect to start Adoption Leave at any point from 14 days before the Expected date of Placement (EDP). up to the EDP but not later.



- 12.2. In a surrogacy case, Adoption Leave will begin on the date that the child is born (or the following day if you are at work on the day that the child is born).
- 12.3. In the case of adopting from overseas from the date of the child's entry into the UK or from a pre-determined date up to 28 days after the date of entry.
- 12.4. If there is a change to the date notified in Form A, employees must complete **Form B: Notification of earlier date of birth of child** (in case of surrogacy) or placement of the child (in case of adoption).

### **13. Statutory Adoption Pay**

- 13.1. If you are the Primary Adopter and have at least 26 weeks' continuous service with us by the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the date of receiving notification of a match, or EWC in a surrogacy case, then you may be eligible for statutory adoption pay (**SAP**). SAP is paid for up to 39 weeks as SMP – see above for details.
- 13.2. We will deduct pension, tax, and National Insurance contributions from your SAP in the same way as we do from your regular salary.

### **14. Occupational Adoption Pay (OAP)**

Occupational Adoption Pay (OAP) is more generous than SAP. An employee is entitled to OAP if they have:

- at least 12 months continuous service with Local Government by the week in which they are notified by the adoption agency that they have been matched with a child.
- return to work for a minimum of 3 months immediately after adoption leave. (This period will be extended proportionately if they return to work on a reduced hour's basis).
- give proper notification of the adoption in accordance with the rules set out above.
- provide a Matching Certificate from the adoption agency.
- give at least 8 weeks written notice if they wish to change their agreed return date by completing **Form C: Request to Change Return to Work Date** available on SBC insite.

OAP is payable for up to 18 weeks after employee ceases work due to adoption. It

may commence any time after 14 days before the date of the placement.

For the first 6 weeks, OAP is paid at the equivalent of 90% of the employee's average weekly earnings calculated over a specified period. For the purpose of calculating average weekly earnings, shift allowances and overtime payments are included.

For weeks 7 – 18 at 50% of weekly pay plus any entitlement to SAP or Adoption Allowance up to a maximum of full pay.

For weeks 19 – 39 at standard SAP rate, (SBC service must meet the qualifying periods).

Employees who have claimed OAP but who do not return to work for a minimum period of 3 months will be required to repay the OAP (net of their entitlement to SAP).

We will deduct pension, tax and National Insurance contributions from your OAP in the same way as we do from your regular salary.

## **15. Relationship between Maternity Leave and Adoption Leave and Shared Parental Leave**

- 15.1. If you are on a period of Maternity Leave or Adoption Leave, then you and your spouse or partner may be eligible to transfer to a period of Shared Parental Leave (see below). This gives you the flexibility to share leave and pay entitlements in the year after birth.
- 15.2. You need to give us eight weeks' notice if you want to end your Maternity Leave or Adoption Leave and move to a period of Shared Parental Leave. You can give your line manager this notice at any time, but if you have given birth, you must stay on Maternity Leave for at least the first two weeks after birth (**Compulsory Maternity Leave**). After this time, you can share the leave with your partner in accordance with the rules set out below.

## **16. Shared Parental Leave**

- 16.1. If you want more flexibility in the first year after your child is born or placed with you, you and your partner may want to consider Shared Parental Leave (**ShPL**) instead of just taking Maternity Leave/Adoption Leave and Paternity Leave.

Provided that you are both eligible, ShPL allows you to split the available leave between you so that you can be off work at the same time or consecutively.

16.2. There is a total of 52 weeks of ShPL available, less any weeks the mother has either been on Maternity Leave (including the compulsory period) or receiving SMP or MA or any weeks when the Primary Adopter has been on Adoption Leave or receiving SAP or MA.

16.3. You or your partner may be eligible for ShPL if:

a) You are:

- the mother and share the main childcare responsibility with the child's father or your partner; or
- the father and share the main childcare responsibility with the child's mother; or
- the mother's partner and share the main childcare responsibility with the mother in place of the father.

b) Either:

- A UK adoption agency places a child with you and/or your partner for adoption, or.
- A child in local authority care is placed with you and/or your partner as foster parents under a "fostering for adoption" or "concurrent planning" scheme, or
- You adopt a child from overseas with UK government approval; or
- You have a child with a surrogate mother and the court has made or is expected to make a Parental Order.

c) You have worked for us for at least 26 continuous weeks by the end of the Qualifying Week and you will still be employed by us before you take ShPL.

d) The other parent has worked at least 26 of the 66 weeks before the EWC – this can be as an employee or self-employed – and had weekly earnings averaging at least £30 during 13 of the weeks; and

e) You and the other parents fulfil the notice and other requirements detailed below.

- 16.4. The child's mother cannot start ShPL until the end of Compulsory Maternity Leave.
- 16.5. ShPL is additional to Paternity Leave (see below). The child's father, or the mother's partner, may consider using their two weeks' Paternity Leave before starting ShPL as once ShPL starts, any Paternity Leave not already taken is lost.

### **17. Shared Parental Pay**

- 17.1. If you have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with us at the end of the Qualifying Week, you may be able to claim ShPP eligible employees may be entitle up to 37 weeks statutory shared parental leave (remaining weeks from 39 weeks entitlement after two-week compulsory maternity/adoption leave) SShPP while taking ShPL. We will pay this at the rate set annually by the Government, less any SMP, SAP or MA already claimed by either you or your partner. Your average earnings must be not less than the lower earnings limit set each tax year for you to qualify.
- 17.2. When you give us your period of leave notice (or notices), you must notify us that you intend to claim ShPP while you are on ShPL. You can also write to us at least eight weeks before the date you want us to start paying your ShPP if you have not already told us in a period of leave notice.

### **18. Occupational Shared Parental Pay (OShPP)**

- 18.1. Occupational shared parental pay is more generous than SShPP. An employee is entitled to OShPP if they have at least 12 months continuous Local Government service and return to work after Shared Parental Leave.
- 18.2. Weeks 1- 6 are paid at 90% of weekly pay (any entitlement to ShPP or maternity allowance is included in this pay).
- 18.3. Weeks 7 -18 at 50% of weekly pay plus any entitlement to ShPP or maternity allowance, up to a maximum of full pay.
- 18.4. Weeks 19 - 39 SMP at standard ShPP rate.

- 18.5. If the employee claims OShPP but does not return to work for a minimum of 3 months, they will be required to repay the OShPP (net of any entitlement to SShPP). This period will be extended proportionately if you gain agreement to return to work on a reduced hour's basis.
- 18.6. If both parents entitled to OShPP are employed by SBC it is up to the parents how the entitlement inclusive of maternity, paternity and adoption leave per couple is apportioned between them.

### **19. Annual leave rights and Maternity Leave, Adoption Leave and Shared Parental Leave**

- 19.1. If you are due any annual leave before your Maternity Leave, Adoption Leave or Shared Parental Leave begins and/or if your period of annual leave entitlement is likely to span two annual leave years, you should try to take all accrued leave before your leave starts where practical. Where annual leave is taken at the end of the maternity leave period, any unused annual leave or bank holidays may be carried over to next year.

### **20. Pension contributions during Maternity Leave, Adoption Leave and Shared Parental Leave**

- 20.1. During OML or OAL, any paid period of shared Paternity Leave and any further period of paid Maternity Leave or Adoption Leave we shall continue to make any employer contributions that we usually make into the pension scheme, based on what your earnings would have been if you had not been on leave (provided that you continue to make contributions based on the maternity, shared paternity or adoption pay you are receiving). If you wish you can buy back your lost pension for the period of unpaid absence.
- 20.2. On your return from maternity, adoption or Shared parental leave they have the option to make up pension contributions for any period of unpaid leave. However, their request to repay these contributions to avoid a break in pensionable service must be within 30 days of returning to work. Payroll will provide the employee with a Pension Buy Back Form upon their return, which must be completed and returned to payroll within the stipulated 30 days.

## **21.Redundancy and Maternity Leave, Adoption Leave and Shared Parental Leave**

21.1. If a redundancy situation occurs during your Maternity Leave, Adoption Leave or Shared Parental Leave, we will let you know about the proposals and involve you in any consultation process. We will invite you to a meeting before any final decision is reached regarding redundancies. Employees on Maternity Leave, Adoption Leave or Shared Parental Leave will be given first refusal on any suitable alternative vacancies that are appropriate to their skills.

## **22.Paternity Leave**

22.1. If you have been working for us for 26 weeks by the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the EWC in maternity or surrogacy cases (or the date of receiving notification of a match in adoption cases) and you are the father of the child or the partner of another person who has or expects to have responsibility for the child's upbringing, then you are eligible to take Paternity Leave. If you are eligible, you can take a maximum of two consecutive weeks of Paternity Leave, which can be taken at any time from the date of the child's birth or adoption placement (or any day in that week) and the 56 days after birth/placement (or due date if the child is born early).

22.2. Paternity Leave can either be taken as one week or two consecutive weeks but not separate weeks or odd days.

22.3. You must let your manager know if you intend to take Paternity Leave by no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the EWC or no more than seven days after you are notified of the EDP if you are adopting. You should tell us the start date of the leave to be taken, the EWC or EDP and whether you are taking one week or two weeks of Paternity Leave.

22.4. If you want to change the date that your Paternity Leave starts, then please give us 28 days' written notice by completing **Form C: Request to Change Return to Work Date** or, if this is not possible, as much notice as you can.

- 22.5. You can take Paternity Leave in the event of a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy or if your child is born alive after 24 weeks of pregnancy but later dies.
- 22.6. While you are on Paternity Leave, all the terms and conditions not relating to pay in your employment contract will apply. When you return, you will have the right to the same job with the same terms and conditions as you had before your Paternity Leave began.

### **23. Statutory Paternity Pay**

- 23.1. Provided that in the eight-week period prior to the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the EWC or EPD (the **Relevant Period**) your earnings were not less than the lower earnings limit set by the Government (see the link below), you will be entitled to receive Statutory Paternity Pay (**SPP**) during Paternity Leave. SPP is paid at a weekly rate set by the Government each year (see the link below for the current figure) or, if your average weekly earnings in the Relevant Period are lower than this, then at 90% of your average weekly earnings in the Relevant Period.

### **Occupational Paternity Pay (OPP)**

Occupational Paternity Pay is more generous than SPP. An employee is entitled to OPP if:

- They have at least 12 months continuous local government service by the 11<sup>th</sup> week before EWC or in the case of adoption, the week you are notified by the adoption agency that you have been matched with a child.
- Gives at least 28 days written notice of the date they intend to start Paternity Leave
- They provide a copy of the mother's **MATB1** form **and Form A: Paternity Notification** stating her expected week of childbirth at least 28 days prior to the start of paternity leave or in the case of adoption a copy of the Matching Certificate fully completed by the relevant adoption agency.

### **24. Parental Leave**

- 24.1. Parental Leave can be taken at any time until a child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and comprises 18 weeks' unpaid leave per child.

- 24.2. If you have responsibility for a child, you are entitled to take Parental Leave. Those eligible include the registered father and anyone else with formal parental responsibility for the child.
- 24.3. You must have worked for us for at least a year before you can take Parental Leave, already have – or expect to have – responsibility for a child and intend to use the leave only to care for the child or otherwise spend time with them.
- 24.4. You can take up to four weeks of Parental Leave per child, per year, in blocks of a single week or more. You cannot take less than a week at a time unless the child is disabled.
- 24.5. You need to give your manager 21 days' notice that you intend to take Parental Leave. We will always try to accommodate your request, but we may have to rearrange your dates if your absence would disrupt the organisation by, for example, leaving us short-staffed. If your leave has to be postponed, we will tell you why in writing within seven days of your request and provide you with alternative start and end dates.
- 24.6. We are unable to postpone Parental Leave if you have asked for it to start immediately after a child's birth or adoption. We are also unable to postpone Parental Leave beyond six months or beyond the child's 18th birthday.
- 24.7. Your employment contract and all its terms and conditions remain in force throughout Parental Leave, other than the fact that it is unpaid. Your annual leave entitlement continues to accrue in the normal way.

## **25. Stillbirth and neonatal loss**

- 25.1. In the event of a miscarriage before the end of the 24<sup>th</sup> week of your pregnancy, according to the statutory provisions, any time off work is treated as sickness absence. We will, of course, provide you with the appropriate support.
- 25.2. In the event that you lose your child after 24 weeks of pregnancy or your child is born alive at any stage of pregnancy but later dies, you are entitled to Maternity Leave. You may also be entitled to SMP and OMP, if you are eligible.



25.3. In the event of a stillbirth or neonatal loss, we will support you in line with our (Managing Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure).

## **26. Parental Bereavement Leave**

26.1. We offer two weeks paid Parental Bereavement Leave for any parent who loses a child aged under 18. This includes a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy. We will be flexible about how you take this leave (for example, you might want to take it in one block, or as two separate weeks).

26.2. We understand you may not be able to have any detailed discussion if somebody close to you dies, but please tell your *line manager* what has happened. An email will be fine in the interim.

## **27. Glossary**

- AML – Additional maternity leave
- EDP – Expected date of placement in adoption cases
- EWC – Expected week of /childbirth, or the week in which a pregnant woman is due to deliver.
- KIT – Keeping in Touch days.
- MA – Maternity Allowance
- OML – Ordinary maternity leave
- Qualifying Week – the 15th week before the EW
- SAP – Statutory Adoption Pay
- OAP – Occupational Adoption Pay
- ShPL – Shared Parental Leave: The scheme under which a mother can share leave with somebody else (usually the father) by opting out of the Statutory Maternity Leave scheme.
- ShPP – Statutory Shared Parental Pay: A payment similar to SMP but paid to the mother and her partner while they are on ShPL.
- OShPP - Occupational Shared Parental Pay
- SMP – Statutory Maternity Pay: The legal minimum women are entitled to receive while on Maternity Leave
- OMP - Occupational Maternity Pay

- SPLIT – Shared Parental Leave in Touch: The equivalent of KIT, in the ShPL context.
- SPP – Statutory Paternity Pay

## **28. Useful links and contacts**

28.1. The following internal policies are referred to in this Policy and provide additional information:

- a) *Holiday Policy*
- b) *Flexible Working Policy*

28.2. Managing Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure The following links may be useful:

- a) [Maternity pay and leave \(GOV.UK\)](#) – for details of the current rate of SMP, ShPP, SAP and SPP
- b) [How to claim Maternity Allowance \(GOV.UK\)](#).

## **29. Administration of the Maternity and Family Friendly Policy**

29.1. The HR Business Partnering team is responsible for the administration of the Maternity & Family Friendly Policy. Should you have any feedback, please contact them.

## Policy Schedule

Policy schedule	Details
Policy owner and lead	HR BP Team
Consultation	Trade Unions <b>DATE</b> Staff Network Groups <b>DATE</b> Corporate / Senior Leadership Team <b>DATE</b>
Corporate Consultative Forum	TBC
Employment & Appeals Committee	<b>DATE</b>
Equality Impact Assessment	<b>DATE</b>
Approving body	Employment & Appeals Committee
Date of approval	<b>DATE</b>
Date of implementation	<b>DATE</b>
This version number	v. 9 - <b>DATE</b>
Last version	v.8 - <b>DATE</b>
Related documents	
Review interval	Three yearly minimum ( <b>October 2025</b> ) or sooner if required by legislation.

## Version

Version	Author	Date	Changes
Drafts V7.1 – 7.3		<b>DATE</b>	
Draft Version 7.4		<b>DATE</b>	
Final V8		<b>DATE</b>	
Draft Version 2 Revised Policy		<b>DATE</b>	

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# Flexible Working Policy and Procedure



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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Slough Borough Council is committed to the promotion of flexible working and creativity in the design of jobs and contracts of employment which can improve performance and productivity, help with recruiting and retaining staff, increase staff motivation, promote work life balance and reduce employee stress.
- 1.2. This policy applies to all Slough Borough Council employees, not just staff with caring responsibilities. This policy does not apply to school-based staff who are under the control of Governing Bodies, Volunteers, Agency Workers and Contractors. But we will be recommending this to our maintained schools
- 1.3. Slough Borough Council (SBC) aims to design and implement policy documents that meet the diverse needs of our services, and workforce, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others. It considers current UK legislative requirements, including the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998. SBC promotes equal opportunities for all where an inclusive workforce and diversity is valued (Refer to EDI policy).
- 1.4. At SBC we are committed to promoting an inclusive workforce and enabling a wide range of people to work for us. Flexible working supports equality, diversity and inclusion and recognises that different groups of employees may benefit from different patterns of work. This policy looks to drive best practice through flexible working styles to suit both the individual and organisational needs.
- 1.5. We can work towards this through enabling our managers to build flexible teams whilst creating a positive working environment in which all our staff can succeed.
- 1.6. This policy reflects the increasing demand from the public for greater flexibility in the provision of Council services, including what is perceived as being outside of our normal working hours.
- 1.7. The Council also recognises that more flexibility can contribute to the Council's activity in reducing carbon emissions throughout its operations.
- 1.8. This policy gives all employees the right to request Flexible Working. The right to request, however, is not the right for this request to be automatically granted. Later in this policy you will see the grounds on which a request may be refused or where a manager may put forward an alternative solution.
- 1.9. All requests received will be considered in the spirit of this policy and it's aims. Consideration will need to be given against any cost that may be incurred, service delivery to customers, performance management, team working and, as far as reasonably practicable, ensuring the health, safety and welfare of our employees.

- 1.10. Responsibility for making it work must be shared by employees and managers. Together you need to assess opportunities and challenges in any proposed arrangement openly and honestly.

## **2. Policy Statement:**

- Sets out your legal entitlement to make a flexible working request (Please see under Manager and Employee responsibilities).
- Set out to ensure clarity on flexible working arrangements offered at SBC
- Sets out the formal process by which you can request flexibility at work.
- Explains how such a request should be made and the procedures we follow
- Explains what happens if a request is approved
- Sets out the circumstances where we may decline your request
- Does not form part of your contract of employment. We reserve the right to amend this policy at our discretion and in line with legislative changes.
- Suggests before you make a formal flexible working application, that you discuss any request for flexibility informally with your line manager.

## **3. Types of Flexible Working**

- 3.1. Not one size fits all. Everyone is an individual and it is likely that different employees will have different needs/reasons for their request. Below are some of the different types of flexible working that can be requested.

- 3.2. Types of Flexible Working, this list is not exhaustive.

- Part-time Working
- Term-time working
- Annualised hours
- Compressed hours
- Job sharing

- 3.1. Hybrid Working is not covered by this policy. There is a separate Hybrid Working policy that can be accessed and guidance followed.

## **4. Responsibilities/Legal Requirements**

### **4.1. Managers are expected to:**

- deal with flexible working requests in a timely way adhering to the pre stated timescales within this document unless a variation is mutually agreed with the employee



- to consider the request in relation to both the needs of the service area and the employee
- ensure there are sound and demonstrable service, management and operational reasons for the decision that is taken
- observe good practice and consult with recognised Trade Unions and employees when considering the introduction of a flexible working arrangement at the request of an individual or a group of staff which would substantially change the working arrangements
- consider each request on its own merits

NB: It is worth noting that Flexible working patterns can be a statutory “reasonable adjustment” to support disabled employees or those with long term health issues in the workplace. This needs to be considered when looking at any flexible working request.

#### **4.2. Employees are expected to:**

- be realistic and recognise that the full range of flexible working options/arrangements will not be appropriate for all service areas of the council.
- note that they have a right to request but there is no automatic right for the request to be agreed
- make themselves available for meetings with management to discuss flexible working requests
- have 26 weeks continuous employment at the time of the flexible working request (subject to employment law changes)
- from 6<sup>th</sup> April 2024, you have the right to request flexible working from day one of your employment
- have the right to be accompanied to any formal meetings by a trade union representative, work colleague or support person. The employee can postpone the meeting for up to 5 working days of the originally proposed date if the representative is unavailable
- note that normally only one flexible working option can be requested and exercised in a twelve-month period

### **5. How a request should be made**

- 5.1. Once this has been discussed informally with your line manager a formal request for flexible working should be sent to your line manager in writing.

5.2. To apply for flexible working, you must complete the Flexible Working Request Application Form in full (Appendix a). In particular, the employee needs to address the following

- State that it is a flexible working request
- Be dated
- Set out the change that you want and when you want it to take effect
- Explain what impact, if any, you think the change would have on the business and how any such effect could be dealt with
- to state whether this is a permanent or temporary request to change working arrangements
- State whether you have previously made a flexible working request to us and, if so, when

## **6. Our approach to flexible working requests**

- We will deal with flexible working requests reasonably.
- We will consider the proposed flexible working arrangements, weighing up the benefits to you (and to the business) against any adverse impact that granting your request would have on the business or other staff.
- We may grant your request in full or in part, or we may refuse it. We may also propose changes to your request for you to consider. You may be asked to complete a trial period before we confirm whether we agree to the changes.

## **7. The Meeting**

- 7.1. You will be invited to a meeting to discuss your request. The meeting will give you the chance to discuss why you are requesting the change and will allow us to understand how you think such a change will work in practice.
- 7.2. We aim to hold a meeting within 28 days of receiving your formal request.
- 7.3. If at any stage the line manager needs more time to consider the request, for example, to consider alternative work patterns they may extend the time limit in agreement with the employee.
- 7.4. Time limits will be automatically extended where the manager is absent due to annual leave or sickness when the application is received. The 28 working days period will begin when the manager returns to work. Should the absence extend beyond a reasonable time limit, the line manager's manager will consider the request.
- 7.5. We will write to you with the outcome of your flexible working request, within 10 days of having held a meeting with you.

## **8. Agreeing a request**

- 8.1. If we accept your flexible working request, then your new work pattern will form a variation to your contract of employment and will be permanent unless otherwise agreed. We will confirm your new terms in writing.
- 8.2. We will review your new working pattern with you at regular intervals following the approval of your request to make sure that it is working as expected and meeting the needs and expectations of both you and the business.

## **9. Rejecting a request**

- 9.1. We will try to accommodate flexible working requests where possible. If we cannot accept your request, we will explain why in writing and will rely on one or more of the following reasons:
  - Incurs higher financial costs to the department that can't be sustained
  - The business cannot reorganise the work among other staff.
  - The business cannot recruit more staff
  - There will be a negative effect on quality
  - There will be a negative effect on the business's ability to meet customer demand.
  - There will be a negative effect on performance.
  - There's not enough work for you to do when you've requested to work.
  - There are planned changes to the business (for example, the business intends to reorganise) and we don't think the request will fit with these plans.
- 9.2. If we reject your request, we will make it clear, in writing, that you have the right to appeal this decision.

## **10. Trial Periods**

- 10.1. The legal framework surrounding flexible working does not include any right to agree to the request on a 'trial period' basis. However, it may sometimes be useful for both you and us to 'try out' the new working arrangements before a permanent change is made to your contract of employment. In these circumstances, we may seek to agree a trial period with you.
- 10.2. If you reject the offer of a trial period, we will have to agree or reject your flexible working request. If you agree to a trial period, then we will set out this agreement in writing. The letter may also include reference to an

extension of the 4-week time limit for dealing with flexible working requests (as this period would otherwise continue to run during the trial).

- 10.3. At the end of any agreed trial period, we will make a final decision on your flexible working request and will communicate this in writing. If we decide to reject your request, then we will make clear, that you have the right to appeal this decision.

## **11. Appeals**

- 11.1. You may appeal within 5 working days of our decision. Your appeal should be dated and sent in writing to the person identified as the appeal officer in the decision letter. You must explain exactly why you are appealing.
- 11.2. We will invite you to an appeal meeting. The appeal meeting will not be led by the manager who held the meeting at which we decided what action to take. You may be accompanied by a trade union representative or a work colleague. Appeals will normally be determined within a 4-week time frame from when you sent your initial request. An extension to the time period may need to be agreed with you, where necessary.

## Policy Schedule

Policy schedule	Details
Policy owner and lead	HR BP Team
Consultation	Trade Unions Staff Network Groups Corporate / Senior Leadership Team
Equality Impact Assessment	
Approving body	Employment & Appeals Committee
Date of approval	DATE
Date of implementation	
This version number	
Last version	v.? - DATE
Related documents	Equality and Diversity Statement Stress Code of Practice Family Friendly Suite of Policies and Procedures
Review interval	Three Year minimum October 2026 or sooner if required by legislation.

## Version

Version	Author	Date	Changes
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