

Slough Borough Council

Report To:	Employment Committee
Date:	18 th January 2024
Subject:	HR policies and Procedures
Chief Officer:	Sarah Hayward
Contact Officer:	Surjit Nagra
Ward(s):	Not Applicable
Exempt:	No
Appendices:	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 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 reference 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