

FRAMPTON COTTERELL PARISH COUNCIL

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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Frampton Cotterell Parish Council Ethos

- To improve the overall quality of life for all residents in the parish through the promotion of social, environmental, and community values.
- To work together with members of the community regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation and to make decisions fairly and inclusively with the resources available.
- To promote a proactive community by encouraging the involvement, engagement, and empowerment of individual in addressing local needs.
- To invest in young people providing support from youth service partners and having a safe space to have fun, learn new skills, and have a voice in the community.
- To create an open dialogue for proposed projects and seek the input of councillors, employees, and the community from the ideas stage to implementation and completion.
- To be transparent with spending and resources, aiming to deliver cost effective projects and services which benefit local residents.
- Frampton Cotterell parish includes some areas of Coalpit Heath

Staffing Policy review method

Annual review
Review when legislation or organisational changes occur *
Review over a 4 year cycle

Policy title	Last reviewed- next review	Next review
Absence	August 2023	
Appraisal, Supervision & Training	March 2024	2024/25
Company Mobile Phone	August 2023	By 2027/8
Employee Handbook	August 2023	
Employee Health & Safety	August 2023	
Grievance Policy including Bullying & Harassment	August 2023	
Home Working Policy	August 2023	By 2027/8
Job Share Scheme	August 2023	By 2027/8
Leavers	August 2023	By 2027/8
Managing Employees Performance & Disciplinary	August 2023	By 2027/8
Menopause	August 2023	
Probationary	August 2023	By 2027/8
Recruitment & Selection	August 2023	
Time of work & leave	August 2023	
Training & Development Policy	March 2024	2024/25

1. Introduction

Welcome to Frampton Cotterell Parish Council. We have designed our employment policies and procedures to make sure everyone is treated fairly and consistently. We have developed them to make you aware of what we expect of you and what we offer in return.

We adopt a number of principles in preparing our employment policies to help us achieve this:

- Provide pay and benefits that are fair and competitive for the job.
- Reflect a sensitivity to the attitudes and views of all our employees.
- Promote high standards of occupational health and safety.
- Fully promote and utilise knowledge, skills and experience to maximise the efficient and timely operation of our activities.
- Whenever possible, address future needs by offering development opportunities and advancement to employees with ability, ambition and integrity.

This handbook sets out our policies and procedures. These help us pursue our commitment to develop and maximise potential and maintain lasting and mutually beneficial working relationships.

We sincerely hope that you enjoy a long and rewarding career with us. Please read this handbook carefully and let us know if you have any queries.

2. Starting Employment

Confirmation of Employment

We make an offer of employment with brief details of your job, start date, pay etc. following application and interview. The principal statement plus the details in this handbook summarise your main terms and conditions of employment.

Misrepresentation

Your employment is subject to the factual accuracy of information you provide at recruitment. Such information may include:

- Your right to work in the UK.
- Your qualifications.
- The content of your C.V. or references.
- Your status with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or equivalent body.
- Your freedom to enter into an employment contract with us without breaching a prior undertaking to someone else.

If we discover you supplied false or misleading information to secure your employment, we will investigate this as a disciplinary matter. Potentially this is gross misconduct. Infringement may lead us to end your employment.

Before you start work, we routinely verify your entitlement to work in the UK. If documentation you provide identifies 'limited leave to remain in the UK' we will conduct appropriate checks with you periodically.

If your employment status changes or legal entitlement to work is revoked, you must tell us immediately. We may have no alternative but to end your employment.

We may verify information you supply to obtain employment at any time by consulting a third party or statutory agency.

Personnel File and Data Protection

We create a personnel file which contains relevant personal details (such as your application form, letter of engagement etc.). We may add relevant documentation relating to you individually during the course of your employment.

We retain this personal data in written or computerised form. It will be processed in a fair and lawful manner meeting statutory requirements. You have the right to access your file by giving reasonable notice.

We require you to consent to the use of your personal data to facilitate your ongoing employment. We, our representatives or appropriate third parties may need to use such information. We may need it to contact you, pay you or provide statutory benefits like maternity pay. We may need to make statutory deductions on your behalf such as tax and National Insurance. We may record details of training, the outcome of a grievance, disciplinary hearing or some other valid employment related matter.

3. During your Employment

Personal Appearance

The Council expects employees to observe a standard of personal appearance which is appropriate to the nature of the work undertaken, follows operational requirements and which portrays a professional approach which the public will have confidence in. Employees are expected to observe a high standard of cleanliness and personal hygiene.

Gifts and Hospitality

The Bribery Act 2010 makes it an offence to offer, promise or give a bribe. It is also an offence to request, agree to receive or accept a bribe.

A bribe is “a financial or other advantage offered or requested with the intention of inducing or rewarding improper performance of a relevant function or activity”. It also applies where you “know or believe that acceptance would constitute improper performance of a function or activity”.

It is our policy to conduct our business in an open, honest and transparent way. We do not condone the use of corrupt practices or acts of bribery to obtain an unfair advantage. We adhere to the highest ethical standards and this is reflected in every aspect of the way in which we operate.

You must be alert to attempts to influence you inappropriately or to engage in/facilitate bribery. This is especially relevant to those procuring goods or services or dealing with third parties on our behalf. For instance, you may be offered excessive hospitality or gifts to facilitate business dealings. You must not accept any inducement designed to influence you inappropriately in the performance of your job.

Do not accept gifts from suppliers, any other person or organisation with whom we do (or might develop) business. This avoids any misunderstandings or allegations of impropriety. It is important you do not act inconsistently with our standards or, however inadvertently, impugn our integrity. Accepting a gift which influences or seems to influence your actions or decisions on our behalf may do this.

You must not accept money, gifts or other rewards from suppliers etc contrary to our normal practices. Do not accept inappropriate levels of hospitality. Accepting lunch may be acceptable. Accepting a free holiday will not. If unsure, check first with the Clerk or Chairman.

This policy does not apply to promotional items such as stationery or pens with a logo or company name. This is always provided the items have no significant value.

We are committed to this policy and take a "zero tolerance" approach to any act of bribery or corruption by a member of staff. We view breaches as serious misconduct which, following investigation, may lead to disciplinary action. The penalty may include summary dismissal where we believe gross misconduct has taken place.

We will review this policy from time to time in the light of experience.

Personal Details

Please inform us of changes in your personal circumstances e.g., new address, telephone number, next of kin. It is important such information is up to date so we can make contact should it be necessary. This may include contact outside of normal working hours.

Political Neutrality

Employees serve the whole of the Council and work with all councillors from all political groups. Employees may be required to advise them in ways that do not compromise political neutrality and must not:

- Use their position for political gain either as an individual or for any political group.
- Allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work

Disclosure of Information

The council encourages a culture of openness and transparency. The law requires that certain information must be made available to councillors, auditors, government departments, service users and the public. Certain information may be confidential or sensitive and therefore not appropriate to be made public. Employees should:

- be aware of what information the council is open about and what it is not open about and follow the appropriate procedures when disclosing information.
- Adhere to a duty of confidentiality to the council and must act as required in accordance with the paragraph above to maintain confidentiality.
- not use any information obtained in the course of their employment for personal gain or benefit, nor should they pass it on to others who might use it in such a way.

All employees are under a duty to comply with The Data Protection Act 2018 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI). See **Communications & Data Protection Policy**.

Safeguarding

The Council has a statutory duty to ensure the safety and welfare of children, young people and adults at risk. All employees who, during the course of their employment, have direct or indirect contact with children or adults at risk, or who have access to information about them, have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk. The Safeguarding Policy is available from the Clerk and compliance with it is mandatory.

Relationships- Personal relationships

Employees must declare to the Clerk any situation where their impartiality, objectivity, or honesty may be compromised due to their being related to or having a close personal relationship with someone at work. Councillors - Mutual respect between employees and Councillors is essential to good local government. Employees are required to observe the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations. Local Community and Service Users - Employees have responsibilities to all residents of the Parish and must ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service delivery to all groups and individuals. Contractors/Procurement - Orders and contracts must be awarded impartially and on merit through fair competition in accordance with procedure rules and legal provisions. Employees whose work involves the procurement, appointment or supervision of contractors must disclose any former or current private or official relationship with relevant contractors to the Clerk. When a conflict of interest is disclosed, the Council reserves the right to remove the employee from any areas of direct or indirect involvement in the matter concerned.

Other Employment

Employees must not allow their private interests to come into conflict with their work. Employees must devote their working hours to the work of the Council and may not engage in any other business or take up any other additional employment without the written permission of the Council. This does not preclude employees from undertaking additional work outside their working hours providing that it does not impact on, distract them from or conflict with their Council work and is subject at all times to written permission being granted. All employees who undertake additional work (either paid or voluntary) must notify the Clerk in order to ensure compliance with the Working Time Regulations 1998.

4. Equal Opportunities and Diversity

We promote a working environment in which diversity is recognised, valued and encouraged. We acknowledge the multi-cultural and diverse nature of the UK workforce and society in general. We are committed to principles of fairness and mutual respect where everyone accepts the concept of individual responsibility. It is therefore your responsibility to make sure you observe and adhere to this policy at all times. We view any breach seriously. We will investigate and potentially take disciplinary action. This may include dismissal in instances we consider gross misconduct.

We recognise that discrimination in the workplace in any form is unacceptable and in most cases unlawful. Our policy seeks to ensure job applicants and employees are treated fairly and without favour or prejudice. We are committed to applying this throughout all areas of employment. This includes recruitment and selection, training and development, benefits, rewards and promotion, dealing with grievances and disciplinary issues.

Our policy complies with current legislation. We will update it if the law changes. However, we recognise that equality of opportunity is best achieved by day-to-day commitment throughout the organisation. We offer support and training where necessary to achieve and maintain this.

Recruitment

The selection methods we use for recruitment are related to the requirements of the job. We do not seek irrelevant qualifications, experience, or skills. Applicants for employment are short-listed/selected solely on the basis of their assessed capability for the role.

Protected Characteristics

No job applicant, employee, or anyone our Council deals with receives less favourable treatment because of their protected characteristics. The protected characteristics are:-

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin)
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Your Responsibilities

Each and every one of us is a stakeholder in the success of this policy. We expect you to make a positive contribution towards maintaining an environment of equal opportunity throughout the Council. Please make sure you observe this policy at all times. In particular, you have individual responsibility to adopt the following:-

- Do not take unlawful discriminatory actions or decisions contrary to the spirit of this policy.
- Do not discriminate against, harass, abuse or intimidate anyone on account of their protected characteristics.
- Do not place pressure on any other employee to act in a discriminatory manner.
- Resist pressure to discriminate placed on you by others and report such approaches to an appropriate Councillor.

- Co-operate when we investigate, including providing evidence of conduct which may amount to discrimination.
- Co-operate with any measures introduced to develop or monitor equal opportunity.

Discrimination is not just treating one person less favourably than another. It can take place because:-

- Someone *associates* with a person with a protected characteristic.
- Someone is *believed to possess* a protected characteristic (even though they don't).
- Something *particularly disadvantages* people who share a protected characteristic more than others.

We expect you to treat, and be treated by, other employees and the people our Council deals with considerately and with respect.

Where You Encounter Discrimination

If you feel subject to discrimination, make clear to the individual concerned that you find it unacceptable. Person-to-person discussion at an early stage may be enough to resolve it without involving anyone else. Alternately, seek the help of a trusted colleague and ask them to approach whoever has caused you offence.

If discrimination continues, or you consider an instance to be particularly serious, please implement the grievance procedure. We assure you that grievances will be dealt with promptly and in a discrete and caring manner.

5. Non-Harassment Policy

Our Policy

We support your right and opportunity to seek, obtain and hold employment without discrimination and with respect for your dignity.

Harassment in the workplace is a discriminatory act which in any form is unacceptable and in most cases unlawful. We are committed to providing a working environment which is harmonious and acceptable to all. We extend this principle to the people our Council deals with.

What Is Harassment?

Harassment is “unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which violates an individual’s dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.”

Harassment is not only unacceptable language or behaviour which causes the *recipient* to be embarrassed, offended or threatened. Someone may complain about particular behaviour that they find offensive even though it was not directed at them. Neither does the person complaining need to possess the protected characteristic. It may also be behaviour directed at someone who *associates* with a person who has a protected characteristic or because they are *believed* to possess a protected characteristic (even if they do not).

Your Responsibilities

It is your duty to treat people with respect, appreciating their feelings and considering their well-being in what you say or do. What may be acceptable to one person may upset and/or intimidate another. Harassment takes many forms and can range from relatively mild banter to actual physical violence. It can be delivered in many ways and this policy applies to all forms of communication including text messages, email and comments posted on social networking sites.

Some Examples

The following are examples of behaviour which we consider constitutes harassment:-

- Coarse or insensitive jokes and pranks.
- Coarse or insensitive comments about appearance or character.
- Display or distribution of offensive material whether written or pictorial.
- Deliberate exclusion or isolation from conversation or activities.
- Unwelcome familiarity or body contact.
- Abusive, insulting, or threatening language.
- Demands or threats to intimidate or obtain favours.
- Threatened or actual violence.

This is not intended as an exhaustive list.

We will investigate all allegations of such behaviour. Offenders are liable to disciplinary action and, in serious cases, dismissal.

Third Party Harassment

Harassment may also take place through someone who is not our employee. This is known as third party harassment. If someone using our services or who has a business relationship harasses you, tell the Chairman immediately. We can then take reasonable steps to prevent it from recurring.

Where You Encounter Harassment

If you feel you are being harassed, the first step is to make clear you want it to stop. Tell the person harassing you that you find such behaviour unacceptable. Person-to-person discussion at an early stage is often enough to stop harassment. Alternatively, you could seek the help of a trusted Councillor and ask them to approach the person causing offence on your behalf.

If the behaviour continues, or you consider an instance to be particularly serious, please implement the grievance procedure. We assure you that grievances will be dealt with promptly and in a discrete and caring manner.

Where you make or support a complaint in good faith, you will not be victimised for doing so whatever transpires.

We are unable, however, to protect anyone who maliciously makes or supports an untrue complaint. We investigate such occurrences utilising our disciplinary procedure.

6. Training and Development

Development Training

We will discuss and agree your participation in internal and external training activities in advance. We will meet agreed costs incurred in such training.

We also encourage you to undertake training appropriate to your development. We will consider this on the basis of mutual benefit. In particular we examine the relevance to your role, development and our needs.

Your Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment gives further information concerning your training.

7. Health and Safety

Alcohol and Drugs

Under no circumstances should you work under the influence of alcohol, intoxicants, drugs or other illegal substances. If you attempt to work in such condition, this is a serious breach of our safe working procedures.

Health and Safety at Work

We each have a duty of care for our own health and safety and that of others. This applies whether they are employees, residents, visitors etc. You must cooperate with us and adhere to our rules and procedures to protect health and safety. We attach great importance to providing employees with a healthy and safe working environment. We accept our legal responsibilities to provide a safe place and systems of work. We provide suitable equipment for employees to do their jobs safely. You must not interfere with any measures we have introduced for safety and/or protection of employees' health.

We treat breaches of safety rules or procedures as infringements of our disciplinary provisions. We deal with such breaches under our disciplinary procedure. We regard serious breaches as gross misconduct. We may summarily dismiss you if we believe your behaviour constitutes gross misconduct.

8. Sickness/Injury Absence, Payments and Conditions

Absence - Notification

You must notify the Clerk, your line manager, or Chairman at the earliest opportunity of any sickness you feel will affect you fulfilling your role. It is essential we know you are ill so we can cover your duties and responsibilities. Please tell us the reason for your absence and how long you expect to be off work. You must keep us regularly informed of progress, especially if your absence continues longer than expected. Further information is given in your Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment.

Following our Procedures

We expect you to follow our sickness procedures.

Holidays and Long-Term Sickness

Statutory holiday entitlement will continue to accrue during a period of sickness. If your sickness extends for some time, we reserve the right to substitute a period of statutory holiday. This is particularly relevant where the end of the holiday year is approaching. You would potentially forfeit your remaining holidays otherwise.

If your employment ends because of long-term sickness, we pay any untaken statutory holiday entitlement with final salary.

You do not accrue contractual holidays exceeding the statutory holiday entitlement during sickness.

Independent Medical Examination

We reserve the right to ask you to undergo an independent medical examination at our expense where we consider it necessary.

Medical Report

We may seek access to a written medical report supplied by your doctor or specialist where necessary. This provides us with details of your health and fitness to return to undertake normal/alternative duties. We will seek your written consent on every occasion.

Repeated or Continued Absence

You must keep us notified at frequent intervals when absence is likely to extend for some time. You must keep us supplied with consecutive medical certificates to cover the entire period.

We may review your overall absence where there is repeated or continued absence. This applies even where absence is certificated. We sympathise with genuine periods of sickness absence and have regard to the Equality Act 2010. However, we must focus on the needs of the organisation. We cannot operate efficiently with high levels of absenteeism. We will take account of your doctor or specialist's professional judgement. We may also obtain an occupational health advisor's opinion. We will consult you about available options and carefully consider your views.

Medical opinion may suggest that no improvement is likely within a reasonable timescale. Equally, we may explore options to manage a permanent incapacity or disability but consider them

impractical. In such circumstances, we may have to consider dismissal on the grounds of capability.

Sick Pay - Statutory

We are responsible for the payment of statutory sick pay (SSP) during authorised sickness/injury absence. There are specific qualifying criteria for the payment of SSP (laid down by Government Regulation). Further details are in your contract of employment.

9. Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Family Friendly Provisions

Maternity

Our Procedures

- We carry out a health and safety risk assessment to protect the health of new and expectant mothers. We do this once you tell us you are pregnant. We also risk-assess if you have given birth in the last six months or are breast-feeding.
- You may change your mind about the date on which you want maternity leave to start. If you do, you must give us at least twenty-eight days' notice in writing.
- You may change your mind about the date on which you want maternity leave to end. If you do, you must give us at least fifty-six days' notice in writing.
- Pregnancy-related illness in the four weeks before your expected week of childbirth (EWC) triggers maternity leave. This is to protect your and your baby's health and safety.
- You cannot work under any circumstances for at least the first two weeks after giving birth. In some instances the period is four weeks.
- We may suggest or you can request up to ten 'keeping in touch days' (KIT days). These are the only days when you can be paid to work without affecting maternity benefits. You can use KIT days for work, attendance at meetings with Councillors, undertaking training etc.
- We must mutually agree any KIT day requests between us. There is no legal obligation for KIT days to be offered or undertaken.

Regulations

The Regulations relating to statutory maternity provisions are complex. In order to assess your entitlements correctly we require the following information:-

- When your baby is due.
- When you would like your maternity leave to start.
- Whether you wish to take the full fifty-two weeks entitlement.
- A copy of the MatB1 certificate issued by your doctor or midwife.
- How many weeks of maternity leave you wish to take personally.

We require the above information no later than fifteen weeks before your expected date of childbirth; preferably earlier.

You are entitled to up to fifty-two weeks of maternity leave, irrespective of length of service. This consists of twenty-six weeks ordinary maternity leave (OML) and twenty-six weeks additional maternity leave (AML). The legal provisions that apply to OML and AML differ slightly.

You continue to benefit from your terms and conditions of employment during OML and AML. There are some exceptions. The most notable exception is remuneration. You are also bound by your obligations of employment. For instance, you must continue to observe Council confidentiality provisions.

You are entitled to thirty-nine weeks paid maternity leave. This applies providing you have twenty-six weeks' continuous employment by the fifteenth week before your expected week of childbirth. This is necessary to meet current statutory maternity pay provisions (SMP). Your average earnings must also exceed the lower earnings level applying to National Insurance contributions to qualify. You can then take a further thirteen weeks of maternity leave but this is without maternity pay.

If you do not qualify for statutory maternity pay, you may still be entitled to claim Maternity Allowance. You should ask Jobcentre Plus for information about this.

Taking Holidays during Maternity Leave

You cannot take paid holidays during maternity leave. If you are not returning after the birth of your child, payment for outstanding holidays is made when you leave.

Your holidays accrue as normal during maternity leave. Maternity leave may run over from one holiday year to the next. You should take holidays accrued in the first holiday year before your maternity leave starts. You should take holidays accruing in the second holiday year at the end of maternity leave. Alternately, they may be taken after you return to work.

When you advise us you are pregnant, please agree when you will take your holidays.

Transferring Maternity Leave

You may propose to return to work without using your full fifty-two week entitlement to maternity leave. You may be eligible to transfer up to twenty-six weeks of your remaining maternity leave. This includes entitlement to eligible statutory maternity pay. You must give us proper notice. This facility applies to your spouse, civil partner or partner, or the father of the child. They take this as extra paternity leave (and extra statutory paternity pay) providing you return to work.

The earliest extra paternity leave may start is twenty weeks after the date on which your child is born. It must end no later than twelve months after the date of birth. The minimum period of extra paternity leave is two consecutive weeks. The maximum is twenty-six consecutive weeks. Therefore you must have at least two weeks of unexpired maternity leave remaining to be eligible.

Further information will be needed from your spouse's or partner's employer. You must also submit a signed declaration to that employer. They may contact us to verify the entitlement to extra paternity leave and pay.

Paternity

Fathers are normally entitled to either one or two weeks' paternity leave following the birth. You must have at least twenty-six weeks continuous employment by the fifteenth week before the expected week of childbirth. You must take the leave as a single block of either one or two weeks. You cannot take odd days or two separate weeks. We pay paternity leave at the current statutory rate providing your earnings exceed the National Insurance lower earnings limit.

You may also take paternity leave if you are the mother's partner and will have responsibility for the child's upbringing.

You must make your request by the fifteenth week before the expected week of childbirth. You must also give us at least twenty-eight days' notice of when you want the leave to start.

Your spouse, civil partner or partner, or the mother of your child may propose to return to work early. She may not use all her fifty-two weeks of statutory maternity leave. Consequently, she may

be eligible to transfer up to twenty-six weeks to you. You take this as extra paternity leave (and extra statutory paternity pay). She must return to work. Please see the “Transferring Maternity Leave” section above for details. You must also submit a signed declaration to us when making your request.

Adoption

You are entitled to up to fifty-two weeks adoption leave if you are newly matched with a child for adoption. You must have at least twenty-six weeks continuous service at the time. It consists of twenty-six weeks ordinary adoption Leave (OAL) and twenty-six weeks additional adoption leave (AAL). You must request your start date for adoption leave within seven days of being matched with the child.

You are entitled to statutory adoption pay (SAP) if your earnings are above the National Insurance lower limit. This is paid for 39 weeks.

We may suggest, or you can request, ‘keeping in touch days’ (KIT days) during adoption leave. These are the only days during the adoption pay period when you can undertake work without affecting adoption benefits. You can use KIT days for work, attendance at meetings with colleagues, training etc. We must mutually agree any requests between us. There is no legal obligation for KIT days to be offered or undertaken.

If you are adopting with a partner, you need to decide which of you is going to claim the adoption leave/pay. The other person may qualify for paternity leave and pay (see paternity leave/pay above).

Please see “Taking Holidays during Maternity Leave” above for detail of how we treat your holidays.

You may return to work without using the full entitlement to adoption leave. You may be eligible to transfer up to twenty-six weeks of remaining adoption leave. You must give us proper notice. This includes entitlement to statutory adoption pay where eligible. It can transfer to your spouse, civil partner or partner. It is taken as extra paternity leave (and extra statutory paternity pay) and you return to work. You must submit a signed declaration form to us when making your request. Please see the “Transferring Maternity Leave” section above for more details.

Parental Leave

You have the right to apply for unpaid parental leave if you have at least one year’s continuous service. You must be the parent of a child under five years old. Each parent can take a total of eighteen weeks leave for each child under the age of five. For a disabled child the total is eighteen weeks for each child under eighteen years old.

Similar provisions apply if you adopt a child or young person under the age of eighteen. Adoptive parents can each take a total of up to eighteen weeks’ parental leave. This applies until the fifth anniversary of placement with you or their eighteenth birthday, whichever comes first.

You can only take up to four weeks parental leave each year. You must take it in blocks of a minimum of one week. A part week counts as a full week. In the case of a disabled child you have the flexibility to take leave one day at a time.

You must give twenty-one days’ notice of your intention to take parental leave. We have the right to postpone the leave for up to six months for business reasons.

Section 9

Part time employees receive a proportion of the leave. For example, an employee working two days may take a total of eighteen weeks at two days per week. This provides a maximum of thirty-six days in total.

Parental leave that you took while employed elsewhere still counts towards the total of eighteen weeks per child.

10. Special Leave

Attendance at Court as a Witness

You may be required by the Crown Prosecution Service to attend court as a witness. You should tell the Clerk or Chairman at the earliest possible opportunity if you are. You may be able to claim an allowance for loss of earnings. When you attend court, you will be issued with the appropriate claim form. You need to pass this to us. We then verify your loss of earnings so that you can submit the claim. It is your responsibility to make sure you are reimbursed correctly by the court. We cannot correct this through your wages. We will subsequently deduct the equivalent sum from your wages/salary.

Bereavement/Compassionate leave

If a dependant or close relative of yours dies or has a life threatening illness, please tell the Clerk or Chairman if you wish to request compassionate leave. Up to 5 days paid compassionate leave is available to employees with the agreement of the Clerk or Staffing Committee. We view such requests as sympathetically as possible. We consider each request individually. We will also consider requests for short-notice annual leave.

A dependent/close relative is defined as a:

- Spouse/partner
- Child (including adopted or foster child)
- Parent
- Someone who lives with you as a member of the family (excluding lodgers, friends, flatmates, etc...)
- Brother
- Sister
- Parent-in-law (including parents of the employee's partner)
- Grandparent
- Grandchild
- To include step-relatives where there is a close relationship with the employee.

Jury Service

You should tell the Clerk or Chairman at the earliest possible opportunity if summoned for jury service. Jury service normally lasts no longer than ten working days. You are then normally exempt from further jury service within a two-year period. The court provides you with a "Certificate of Loss of Earnings or Benefit" when first appointed.

We need to certify this before you return it to the court. You must claim the relevant daily allowance and tell us the number of days you served. It is your responsibility to make sure you are reimbursed correctly by the court. We cannot correct this through your wages.

We will subsequently deduct the equivalent sum from your wages/salary.

11. Disciplinary Procedure

Introduction

We intend this procedure to assist and encourage you to achieve and maintain appropriate standards of conduct and performance. We do not construe the procedure simply as taking punitive action. We make every effort to ensure any action we take is consistent, fair and reasonable to all.

General Principles

- We always consider informal action in preference to using formal disciplinary procedures as a first resort.
- We fully investigate all potential disciplinary matters before any action is taken.
- We may suspend you on full pay while we investigate more serious allegations. Such action is entirely precautionary and not a pre-judgement of the outcome.
- We will give you notice of any disciplinary hearing and detail of the complaint(s) in advance. We will provide written copies of evidence and relevant witness statements.
- A colleague or trade union representative can accompany you at formal disciplinary hearings and appeals. Union representatives must be certificated by that union to act as a worker's companion.
- We will provide suitable notice of meetings. We will consider one adjournment if the date or time selected is inconvenient to your representative.
- We will give you the opportunity to provide your views during the hearing and before any decision is made.
- You have the right to appeal against any formal disciplinary action imposed or against your dismissal. A Councillor without prior involvement will hear appeals, wherever possible.
- Only someone specifically authorised by our Parish Council can take the decision to discipline or dismiss you.

Rights of Appeal

Informal action about minor issues of misconduct or unsatisfactory performance is part of day-to-day management. It carries no right of representation or appeal.

You are entitled to appeal following the imposition of any formal disciplinary penalty including a decision to dismiss. We will send you a letter setting out the outcome of the disciplinary hearing. If you wish to appeal, you must do so in writing within five days of receipt.

The Process we Follow

Informal Action

We normally deal with minor issues of misconduct or unsatisfactory performance informally. In some cases we may offer extra training, coaching, advice or support. This is a normal facet of day-to-day management and not part of our formal disciplinary procedure. As such, it will not be appropriate or necessary to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative.

We hold informal discussions in private. We will take account of your opinions and any mitigating circumstances you provide. Criticism will be constructive. We aim to achieve and sustain improvement through such discussion. We may confirm what is agreed in writing where appropriate.

If it emerges during discussion that the matter is more serious than previously envisaged, we will adjourn the meeting. We will reconvene it at a later date under our formal disciplinary procedure. You may then be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative if this happens.

Misconduct

We may issue a written warning if you repeat inappropriate activity or improve insufficiently following a previous informal warning. Misconduct may also be sufficiently serious in itself to warrant a written warning without previous informal warning. Such warning will identify the problem and the improvement we require. We will set out the time-frame for improvement and any support available. We will keep a record on your personnel file for twelve months. We will then consider it spent, subject to you achieving and sustaining the improvement we require.

Serious Misconduct

We may issue a final written warning if you repeat inappropriate activity or improve insufficiently following a previous written warning. Misconduct may also be sufficiently serious in itself to warrant a first and final written warning without previous written warning. The final written warning will identify the problem and the improvement we require. We will set out the time-frame for improvement and any support available. We will keep a record on your personnel file for twelve months. We will then consider it spent, subject to you achieving and sustaining the improvement we require.

Ending your Employment

We may dismiss you if there is further inappropriate activity or you fail to improve to the required standard. An instance of misconduct may also be so serious in itself that it warrants dismissal without previous warning. We normally refer to this as an act of gross misconduct. We will provide you with the reasons for dismissal in writing. We will make clear the date on which your employment ends.

We will terminate employment with notice or payment in lieu of notice in the event of your contractual dismissal for misconduct. We will summarily terminate your employment (i.e., without notice or payment in lieu of notice) for gross misconduct.

Gross Misconduct

We may suspend you on full pay for a short period while we investigate an allegation of gross misconduct. A disciplinary hearing will then take place. We may summarily dismiss you if we believe your behaviour constitutes gross misconduct. Summary dismissal is dismissal without notice or payment in lieu of notice.

Gross Misconduct Examples

The examples below are indicative of matters we regard as gross misconduct. This list is not intended to be exhaustive:-

- Theft of money or property.
- Action intended to defraud/deceive.
- Fighting, physical assault and threatening behaviour.
- Behaviour or action that potentially brings our Council into serious disrepute.
- Serious insubordination.
- Serious breach(es) of health and safety rules or procedures.
- Deliberate and serious damage to property.
- Discriminatory conduct, bullying or harassment.
- Deliberately accessing internet sites containing pornography, offensive or obscene material.
- Serious incapability at work due to alcohol or non-prescribed drugs or substances.
- A serious breach of trust or confidence.

12. Confidential Reporting

We operate a confidential reporting procedure. It's available to everyone irrespective of length of service or position. We trust you never need to use it but please be aware of its availability.

Our procedure provides you with access to a safe and effective means of reporting matters of genuine concern. This could be something inappropriate about the way you believe we run our Council. It could be something inappropriate you believe another employee or Councillor is doing. It could be perceived misconduct or some other wrongdoing. It is not intended for personal matters relating to your own contractual terms and conditions of employment. You must deal with such matters through our grievance procedure.

We acknowledge that it is never easy to report a concern. This is particularly the case when you observe serious misconduct or discover unlawful acts. However, we urge you to refer such matters at the earliest opportunity. This allows us to respond speedily and effectively, before problems worsen. As far as we are able, we will deal with anything you report promptly and confidentially. To ensure this, it's important you follow our procedure.

Guiding Principles

- We must all be watchful for unlawful or unethical conduct at work. Preventing and eliminating workplace wrongdoing is important. We all have a duty to report such inappropriate behaviour or activity.
- We will consider matters you raise under this procedure confidentially. We will investigate them promptly and thoroughly.
- We will not victimise or penalise you for raising a reasonable belief under this procedure. This applies equally if you come forward with genuine concerns which later turn out not to be justified.
- You cannot be instructed to cover up wrongdoing or told not to report genuine concerns. This applies even if the person telling you to do so is someone in authority such as the Chairman. To tell you to behave in this way is itself a serious disciplinary offence.
- If anyone attempts to intimidate, bully, harass or victimise you for reporting something through this procedure you must tell us. To behave in this way is itself a serious disciplinary offence.
- We treat misconduct or wrongdoing uncovered following an investigation under this procedure as a disciplinary matter. We may also have to report it externally; for instance to a statutory body.

Our Procedure

- Initially, you should report concerns to the Clerk or Chairman. If you are unsure whether to raise the matter, you can talk confidentially with that person. If you have concerns the Chairman and Clerk may be involved, please contact the Vice-Chairman.
- The Clerk or Chairman will either investigate your allegation personally or refer it to another Councillor. You will be advised if it is to be referred elsewhere. On conclusion of the investigation, we will advise you of the outcome. We will explain what action we are taking. If we do not intend to take any action, we will explain why.
- If you do not receive an acknowledgement of your concerns within seven days, please contact the Clerk or Chairman. You can also do this should you believe investigation has been insufficient. It's very important to us that you have complete confidence in this procedure.

Public Interest Disclosures

The law provides special protection for workers who make what are known as “public interest disclosures”. This is colloquially referred to as “whistle-blowing”. Officially they are qualifying disclosures made in accordance with current public interest disclosure legislation. They only apply when you report something which is in the public interest. You must reasonably believe it to be so because it concerns:-

- A criminal offence.
- A miscarriage of justice.
- An act creating risk to health and safety.
- An act causing damage to the environment.
- A breach of another legal obligation we may have.
- Our concealment of any of the above.

We do not expect you to provide definitive proof of such wrongdoing. However, you must have a reasonable belief that it is, has been or is likely to take place. Providing you follow the above procedure, we will investigate urgently. We do not expect you to undertake this aspect yourself. Our guiding principles are always at the forefront of any investigation we mount.

It's possible our investigation may not satisfy every concern you have. Where the matter is a protected disclosure you may be able to refer it to a statutory agency. This only applies where you refer something you reasonably believe is in the public interest, as defined above. Statutory agencies include HM Revenues and Customs, Office of Fair Trading, Health and Safety Executive and Environment Agency.

Making Malicious Allegations

If we identify that you deliberately made or supported malicious allegations, we may consider this to be gross misconduct. We will investigate this using our disciplinary procedure. Following investigation, should we conclude your actions amounted to gross misconduct; this can result in your dismissal.

13. Grievance Procedure

Where possible, you should try to settle minor, day to day, work-related issues informally. Please do this via the Clerk or Chairman. If the issue concerns the Clerk and Chairman, you can raise it with the Vice-Chairman. We recommend discussing any concern promptly. This is often the best way to resolve matters speedily, effectively and without need for formality.

Our Procedure

Our formal grievance procedure allows you to express a complaint or identify a matter of concern still remaining unresolved. It provides an opportunity for us to consider issues you can't resolve informally. You can also use it where you believe an informal approach would be inappropriate. The procedure is open to you at any time and we always try to deal with issues fairly and consistently.

If you wish to have a grievance formally investigated, please submit it to us in writing. Please provide full details of the matter and tell us about the solution you are seeking. This should normally be addressed to the Clerk or Chairman. They will arrange a meeting to discuss and consider it. If the grievance is about the Clerk and Chairman, address it to the Vice-Chair. Following the meeting we will confirm the outcome in writing. Please see the separate Disciplinary and Grievance Policy.

Appeal

If you feel a matter has still not been satisfactorily resolved, you may appeal in writing. This must be done within five days of receiving the written outcome from the meeting. Appeals will be heard, wherever possible, by another Councillor without any prior involvement in the matter. The outcome of the appeal is final.

Representation

A colleague of your choice or trade union representative may accompany you at grievance hearings or appeals. Union representatives must be certificated by that union to act as a worker's companion. We give suitable notice of meetings and will consider one adjournment if the date or time is inconvenient to your representative.

14. Property and Equipment

If you are issued with workwear and personal protective equipment for your safety, you must wear and use these items when you are working, failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

You will take good care of council equipment and property made available to you by the Employer and if such equipment is damaged or destroyed as a result of the Employee's negligence or misuse of such equipment the Employer reserves the right to claim against the Employee the cost of such damage. When you leave the council, you will be required to return all council equipment in your possession, in good condition.

Any of your own personal property is your responsibility and, if you leave it on our premises this is at your own risk, we cannot accept liability for loss or damage to personal property.

15. Smoke Free Workplace

It is the Council's policy that all of its workplaces are smoke-free and that you have the right to work in a smoke-free environment. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in formal disciplinary action being taken against you, as set out in the Council's disciplinary procedure.

You should be aware that enforcement authorities can issue penalties and fines if you are found guilty of smoking in a smoke-free place. You will be personally liable for any fine or fixed

penalty imposed for non-compliance. Smoking, including the use of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) or electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), is prohibited throughout the entire workplace with no exceptions.

16. Use of Vehicle

Use of Own Vehicle

Council do not recommend that employees use their own vehicle for company business.

Use of Company Vehicle

The Council have a company vehicle which is primarily for use by the Estates & Amenities Officer. However, Council insure the vehicle for any employee to use so it is recommended that employees speak with the Clerk if they need to use the vehicle for company use. Dependent upon use, this will be subject to the appropriate benefit-in-kind tax. You will be expected to adhere to the Company Vehicle Policy in relation to vehicles and driving. Any employee using the company vehicle will be required to provide a copy of their full driving license to be held on file. Use of the company vehicle is at the discretion of the Council.

17. Mobile Phone

Company mobile phones may be provided to employees in order to fulfil their duties professionally and efficiently. The mobile phone remains the property of the Council. If you are issued with a Company mobile phone you are responsible for its safe-keeping.

The Company permits reasonable personal use of the mobile phone subject to the contract having free call allowance. The Company reserves the right to monitor usage of the phone and in circumstances where the Company believes the employee has exceeded reasonable use, you will be informed of this and the excess cost will be your responsibility. The Company reserves the right to make deductions from your pay to cover the excess cost.

On termination of your employment, the mobile phone and any accessories must be returned to the Council no later than the final day of your employment. The Company reserves the right to make deductions from your pay to cover the replacement cost of non-returned items in addition to replacement of any broken or damaged items.

Please see the Council Mobile Phone Policy for more information.

APPENDICES-STAFFING POLICIES

Absence Policy

Introduction

The Council aims to maximise the attendance at work for all employees and ensure that when ill health occurs there will be a fair and systematic approach applied to managing such cases.

The procedure aims to:

- Ensure that a fair and consistent process is adopted regarding employee sickness absence and issues of ill health
- Help and encourage employees to achieve and maintain acceptable standards of attendance
- Ensure that employees who are unable to attend work due to sickness absence are managed appropriately, by clearly stating the standards of attendance expected and advising of potential outcomes should these not be reached; offering any available help or support to assist the employee improve their health and in turn their attendance; utilising occupational health expertise to assist in the management of ill health situations for mutual benefit
- To ensure that managers recognise their duties and responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.
- To ensure that managers and employees recognise their duties and responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974

Scope

This procedure applies to all employees of the Council.

Roles and Responsibilities

Staffing Committee –

- Decide in dismissals.
- Hear appeals against dismissal.

Clerk/CEO & RFO –

- Review absence across the organisation and take a strategic approach to addressing concerns.
- Manage attendance issues take actions under this policy regarding employee attendance, except dismissal
- Ensure employees are aware of the sickness absence notification procedures and their Responsibilities
- Ensure that the management responsibilities are applied consistently when managing employee attendance.

Employee - Follow the sickness absence notification procedures, attend meetings to discuss their absence, alert the Council of any ill health that may affect their work and adhere to the responsibilities set out in this procedure.

Representative or companion, Either a trade union representative or work colleague - Support and advise employee. Can put forward employee's case, ask questions or make representations but cannot answer questions that are directly put to the employee.

Sickness absence notification procedure

To advise the Clerk/CEO & RFO or the Office in the Clerk/CEO & RFO's absence on the first date of sickness absence within an hour of normal starting time or within such other timescales which may be specific to certain services. Further notification should be made on the fourth

and seventh day of sickness absence and, thereafter, on a weekly basis or at longer intervals as services deem appropriate in individual cases.

Employees can use the Council self-certification arrangements for the first seven days absence. A medical certificate or 'Fit Note' from their GP is required to cover every subsequent day.

A 'Fit Note' from the employee's doctor must be sent to the Council by the eighth calendar day of absence (including Saturday and Sunday) and subsequent 'Fit Notes' need to be concurrent and forwarded to the office within 24 hours of issue by the GP.

The employee may be able to return to work before the end of the period that their GP has advised due to a faster recovery than anticipated or the GP not being aware of ways we could support the employees return. The employee will need to agree they are fit to return to work, you do not need to wait until the end of the Statement period for them to do so.

All 'Fit Notes' will be retained confidentially for the current year plus 3 years.

Sickness and Leave

Employees continue to accrue annual leave as normal whilst absent due to ill health. Employees can take annual leave during sickness absence if they wish. If they do they will be paid for annual leave not sick pay for those dates. Employees can take this option if they are in a no pay period.

If the employee is unable to take all of their statutory annual leave entitlement within a year because of illness, they can carry forward the unused **statutory** entitlement up to a maximum of 28 days including Bank Holidays.

If employees become ill whilst they are on annual leave and want to claim sick pay instead of holiday pay, they must inform the Council immediately, submit a GP Certificate (Fit Note) to cover **all** periods of sickness and will be considered as absent due to ill health from the date of the GP Note.

When an employee is receiving sick pay, it will continue if a public or extra statutory holiday falls during the absence period, no substitute or extra statutory holiday will be given.

Return to Work Interview

Following each absence from work due to sickness, the absent employee must participate in a return to work discussion. This is an essential part of the procedure; these interviews should be conducted fairly and consistently and should be private & confidential. Interviews should be held, ideally, on the day an employee returns to work and no later than 5 days after they return. The return to work interview should normally be completed by the Clerk/CEO & RFO within 5 working days after completion of the return to work interview.

The meeting would normally include:

- a welcome back to work;
- outline the purpose of the return-to-work meeting which is to manage and monitor absence and attendance to identify any problem areas and offer support where appropriate;
- a discussion about the reasons for absence, in a supportive way and to understand whether the Council can take any steps to help the employee's attendance;
- explain that the absence will be recorded;
- establish if medical advice has been sought if appropriate;
- ensure the self-certification form has been completed or a fit note from the doctor has been provided;
- a discussion on absence over the last 52 weeks, including if Intervention targets have been reached and the consequences of any further episodes of sickness absence. the impact on pay and any next steps;
- a handover of work where appropriate.

May be fit for some work' and Phased Returns

If the GP advises on the 'Fit Note' that an employee 'may be fit for work' the Clerk/CEO & RFO will discuss with the employee ways of helping them get back to work. This might mean talking about a phased return to work, amended duties, or additional support.

A phased return to work where recommended by a medical practitioner or where it is deemed appropriate by the Clerk/CEO & RFO can allow a gradual return to work after a significant absence (usually 4 months duration) or a significant illness. It should normally last for a maximum period of 6 weeks (in the majority of cases 4 weeks will be sufficient) and generally for no less than half their contractual hours. During this period, the employee may not receive their full contractual pay (not including statutory sick pay), only hours worked will be paid the contracted rate, and there should be a gradual increase in hours within the agreed period, recorded in a return-to-work plan.

Other means of assisting a phased return to work may be explored, for example reviewing work hours, duties or responsibilities.

If it is not possible to provide the support an employee needs to return to work – for example, by making the necessary workplace adjustments – or an employee feels unable to return then the Statement will be used in the same way as if the GP advised that the employee was 'not fit for work'.

Medical appointments

The Council recognises that employees will, from time to time, need to attend medical appointments. Please try to arrange medical appointments in your own time or, if this is not possible, at times that will cause the minimum amount of absence from work or inconvenience to the Council. The Council will allow reasonable time off work for such appointments. There is no legal requirement for the Council to pay time off for medical appointments except antenatal appointments.

Statutory Sick Pay

If you are ill and unable to attend work, you may be entitled to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). All Officers should refer to their Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment for details on their entitlement to statutory sick pay.

Qualifying Days absence from work:

The Qualifying Days are your normal working days that are in your contract. Tax and national insurance will be deducted from SSP and if you earn below the lower earnings limit, you will not qualify for SSP.

The period during which sick pay shall be paid, and the rate of sick pay, in respect of any period of absence shall be calculated by deducting from the employee's entitlement on the first day the aggregate of periods of paid absence during the twelve months immediately preceding the first day of absence.

Periods of full pay will include SSP. In periods of half pay, employees receive half pay in addition to SSP provided the total does not exceed normal pay.

If an employee abuses the sickness scheme or is absent on account of sickness due or attributable to deliberate conduct prejudicial to recovery or the employee's own misconduct or neglect or active participation in professional sport or injury while working in the employee's own time on their own account for private gain or for another employer sick pay may be suspended.

Sickness Absence Review

Monitoring of sickness absence is intended to ensure that employees are treated fairly and consistently and appropriate support and assistance is offered to employees at an early stage. Trigger levels are a tool to assist managers in keeping track of the frequency of an employee's absences and to highlight when management intervention is required.

The manager must hold a Sickness Absence Review Meeting with the employee when the sickness absence record falls into one of the following categories: -

- 10 cumulative days sickness absence in a rolling 52-week period
- 4 periods of sickness absence in a rolling 52-week period
- Patterns of sickness absence (for example, regular Friday/Monday absence)

The trigger(intervention) point for considering action for part time employees is calculated pro-rata to the number of days on which the employee is expected to attend work.

The employee shall be notified in writing of the meeting at least 7 days prior to the meeting (unless otherwise agreed). Whilst there is no necessity to do so, employees may wish to be accompanied or represented at such review meetings by a work colleague or trade union representative. If following a sickness absence review meeting, the desired improvement in attendance is not achieved the employee's absence will be dealt with under the formal procedure.

Occupational Health

The point at which an employee is referred for examination to the Council's Occupational Health provider will depend upon the particular circumstances of the case. However, at a minimum, an employee will normally be referred in the following circumstances: -

- Where a sickness absence is attributable to work related stress, irrespective of the duration or likely duration of the absence, or after 2 weeks continuous sickness absence
- to seek a medical report on your illness or injury;
- to establish when you might be able to return to work;
- to understand when you are likely to be fully fit to resume your normal duties;
- to understand what alternative duties you might be fit to undertake if you are unfit to resume your normal duties;
- to understand when you are likely to be fit to undertake any alternative duties;
- to ask for guidance on your condition, for example if there is a possibility that you are disabled or ambiguity as to the exact nature of the condition;
- to ask what reasonable adjustments could be made to working conditions or premises to facilitate a return to work;
- to understand the likely recurrence of the illness or injury once you have returned to work; and
- to discuss any adjustments that could be made to accommodate your disability, if you are disabled.
- If the condition is due to an industrial injury (accident, injury or illness resulting from activities at work)
- If redeployment on health grounds should be considered and
- Prior to any decision to terminate an employee's contract on the grounds of capability due to ill health On receipt of an occupational health report a meeting will normally be convened to discuss the content of the report with the employee under the relevant stage of this procedure.

The Council will pay the cost of the report and you will have the right to see it. The Council will also be provided with a copy of the report and once we have seen it, we will want to meet you to discuss the findings and consider options available to you. If you choose not to consent to an Occupational Health referral, any decisions in relation to your employment may be made without the benefit of access to medical reports.

Short Term Sickness Absence Procedure

There are three key stages to the formal procedure for dealing with short term persistent absence (frequent and regular). The basic structure to the meeting is outlined below.

Stage 1

The Clerk/CEO & RFO will write to the employee notifying them of the concerns over their attendance and invite them to a meeting to discuss the matter providing at least 7 calendar days' notice prior to the meeting. Employees have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or represented by a trade union official at every stage of the formal procedure.

At the meeting, the Clerk/CEO & RFO will discuss the sickness absence(s) which have occurred in detail, referring to information in this policy, return to work interview notes, previous sickness absence review notes and, where applicable, Occupational Health reports. Through discussion with the employee, the Clerk/CEO & RFO will seek to identify the reasons for poor attendance which may include underlying medical conditions, personal problems or work problems. The Clerk/CEO & RFO should explore these problems in depth and if necessary the meeting can be adjourned to obtain Occupational Health advice. The Clerk/CEO & RFO will consider any available support that could be offered to the employee to help them to reach an acceptable level of attendance.

The Clerk/CEO & RFO must advise the employee of the effects of their sickness absence on the Council (specifically the service), the improvement in attendance required over the set timescales and the likely next steps if there is no improvement in their attendance, if improvement is achieved that there will be no further action and normal sickness absence monitoring will resume. The outcome of these discussions will be detailed in writing to the employee.

The employee will enter the formal procedure at Stage 1 and should the required improvement in attendance not be achieved, will proceed to Stage 2.

Depending on the individual circumstances of the case, the Clerk/CEO & RFO may also wish to consider the temporary removal of the ability to self-certificate during the agreed review period. The Clerk/CEO & RFO should not wait until the end of the review period before progressing to the next stage of the process if there has been further absence which has meant that the desired improvement cannot be met. Equally where an employee has been removed from the formal process but within a short space of time their sickness absence becomes a concern once more the Clerk/CEO & RFO can re-enter the formal process at the same stage or next stage. If the period of time between leaving a particular stage and deterioration in attendance occurs is over 6 months it would be normal to re-enter the formal process at stage 1.

Stage 2

This shall be a repetition of the stage 1 process

Stage 3

If the standard of attendance is not reached following Stage 2 then a Stage 3 sickness absence meeting must be held to consider the employee's continued employment with the Council.

The employee will be notified in writing at least 7 calendar days prior to the meeting of:

- The details and purpose of the meeting
- Their right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative
- The potential outcomes of the meeting (potential termination of employment on the grounds of capability due to ill health).

The employee will be issued with all relevant paperwork which the Clerk/CEO & RFO may refer to at the meeting. The employee will also have the opportunity to submit any information that they wish to be considered at the meeting and this must be submitted no less than 3 calendar working days before the meeting.

The purpose of the Stage 3 meeting is to explore;

- The employee's sickness absence record
- All information relating to the employee's sickness absence record including occupational health reports and discussions throughout this process
- Whether the employee has an underlying medical condition and how this has attributed to the employee's sickness absence record
- Whether the employee has a medical condition that is covered by the Equalities Act
- Whether all reasonable adjustments have been considered
- Whether applicable employee assistance services have been offered
- Whether any further adjustments may bring about the necessary improvement in attendance required
- The impact of the sickness absence on the team, service and overall Council

If new medical information is introduced at Stage 3 it may be appropriate to adjourn the meeting to obtain up to date medical advice. The manager must consider the following;

- Whether the employee has been made aware of the standards of attendance
- Whether reasonable efforts have been made to support the employee to reach the required standard
- That despite these efforts the required standards of attendance have not been achieved

Following a Stage 3 meeting the options open to the Clerk/CEO & RFO will be either;

- 1) to recommend to the Staffing Committee panel to dismiss the employee on the grounds of capability due to ill health
- 2) to provide a further opportunity for the employee to reach the required standard of Attendance

In cases of short term persistent sickness absence (frequent and regular), where the Clerk/CEO & RFO considers that an employee may benefit from a final opportunity to reach an acceptable level of attendance then the employee will be offered a further period to accomplish this and appropriate support will be considered accordingly. It should be emphasised to the employee that if they have failed to make the required improvement in their attendance then a further Stage 3 meeting will be arranged. The Clerk/CEO & RFO will endeavour to announce the decision to the employee and their representative verbally at the end of the meeting. The decision will be confirmed in writing to the employee as soon as possible and no later than 7 calendar days from the date of the meeting.

When considering the reasons for absence, and deciding on whether a formal meeting is appropriate, the Council will not consider any pregnancy related absence.

The Council will also make reasonable adjustments where absences are related to a disability in line with the Equality Act 2010 by allowing a higher level of absence before considering whether disciplinary action is appropriate.

Where it appears that there is no acceptable reason for an absence or if you have not followed the correct absence notification procedure, the matter should be treated as a conduct issue and dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

Long Term Sickness Absence Procedure

As a guide, long-term absence is any absence which lasts or is expected to last over 4 weeks. In all cases of long-term absence, it is essential for the Council to maintain contact with you. In cases where the return date is less certain this will take the form of consultation and will include:

- Discussions at the start of the absence and periodically throughout
- Discuss the current sickness absence in more detail including how the employee is feeling, any treatment they are going through, likely duration and where applicable recent Occupational Health reports.
- Seek to identify any underlying medical conditions, personal problems or work problems that may be causing or attributing to the sickness absence. The Clerk/CEO & RFO should explore these problems in depth and if necessary the meeting can be adjourned pending updated Occupational Health advice.
- The Clerk/CEO & RFO will consider any available assistance that could be offered to the employee to assist their recovery and return to work.
- Where appropriate alerting you to the fact that your absence is becoming a problem, and
- Allowing you the opportunity to state your opinion of your condition and giving consideration to that opinion.

The Clerk/CEO & RFO will write to the employee to provide a written summary of the discussions at the meeting.

Where ill-health means that you are unlikely to return to work for a long period of time, the Council may need to consider bringing your employment to an end. In these circumstances, the Council will:

- Review your absence record to assess whether or not it is sufficient to justify dismissal
- Consult with you
- Obtain up-to-date medical advice
- Advise you in writing as soon as it is established that termination of employment has become a possibility
- Meet with you to discuss the options and consider your views on continuing employment before any decisions are made, allowing you to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative
- Review if there are any alternative jobs that you could do prior to taking any decision on whether or not to dismiss
- Allow a right of appeal against any decision to dismiss you on grounds of capability due to long-term ill health
- Following this meeting, inform you of the final decision

Please note-Standard recovery times where an operation has taken place will be taken into account and the long term absence procedure may not be applied until the sickness absence exceeds 2 weeks after the standard recovery time.

The Clerk/CEO & RFO will write to the employee notifying them of the concerns over their attendance and invite them to a meeting to discuss the matter providing at least 7 calendar days' notice prior to the meeting. Employees have the right to be accompanied by a colleague or represented by a trade union official at every stage of the formal procedure

Medical Capability

Where a medical condition is affecting an employee's ability to carry out the duties and responsibilities of their post, the Clerk/CEO & RFO must formally meet with the employee to consider the following:

- Ascertain the full extent of the medical condition and how this impacts on the duties of the post
- Seek occupational health advice, guidance and recommendations
- Consider all support & assistance mechanisms to assist the employee to carry out their duties
- Consider all reasonable adjustments in accordance with the Equality Act
- Assess the impact of the duties that cannot be undertaken on service delivery

Where the employee cannot perform the duties of the post and all other reasonable interventions have been explored or exhausted, the Clerk/CEO & RFO must consider the employee's continued employment with the Council. Specifically the Clerk/CEO & RFO must decide on the basis of all the information available to them whether to terminate the employment on the grounds of capability due to ill health.

Three members of the Staffing Committee will review the information and will make the decision to dismiss.

Dismissal on the grounds of capability due to ill health

It is reasonable for the Council to dismiss an employee on the grounds of capability due to ill health in the following circumstances;

- Where an employee is on long term sickness leave and is not fit to return to work within a reasonable period
- Where an employee is unable to maintain a sustained attendance at work through short term or bouts of longer term absence or a combination of both

- Where the employee is unable to carry out the duties of their post due to a medical condition despite efforts to address such issues
- Where the Occupational Health Adviser has confirmed that the employee meets the criteria for permanent ill health retirement under the local government pension scheme

In all circumstances, the full consideration of reasonable adjustments and support measures must be exhausted by the Clerk/CEO & RFO before any such decision is taken and regard given to the Equality Act.

The employee will be given formal notice in accordance with their contract of employment or payment in lieu of notice. The letter of termination will confirm the effective date of termination, give the reason for dismissal and state the right of appeal.

Appeals Procedure

Employees are entitled to an appeal against dismissal. This should be submitted in writing to the Clerk/CEO & RFO within 14 calendar days of receiving the letter confirming the decision of the meeting. Any appeal letter must include reasons for the appeal and any evidence the employee wishes to submit.

Appeals against dismissal are determined by 3 members of the Staffing Committee or Council and will have not previously been involved in the dismissal decision.

Appeals Decisions

The decision of the Chair of the Staffing Committee will be one of the following:

- Uphold the appeal and rescind the action taken
- Uphold the appeal in part which may result in the level of action being reduced
- Dismiss the appeal
- There shall be no further right of internal appeal against the decision of the Staffing Committee .

Related Policies

You may also find it helpful to read the following related HR policies:

- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Managing Performance & Disciplinary Policy
- Employee Handbook
- Employee Health and Safety Policy

Employee Responsibilities

1. To look after their general health and wellbeing and seek medical or other support where necessary in order to minimise sickness absence from work.
2. To comply with the Council's notification and certification procedures.
3. To attend any appointment or undergo examination by any medical or specialist practitioner identified by the Council in relation to the management of their sickness absence. The terms of the Access to Medical Reports Act 1990 will apply where employees have a right to access the information provided by the general practitioner. If the employee is unwilling to sign the medical consent form, they should be advised that they will still be required to attend for a medical examination and a decision will be taken regarding employment based on the information available to the Clerk/CEO & RFO.
4. To maintain contact (either face to face or by telephone) with the Clerk/CEO & RFO and adhere to the established practice of conducting sickness absence meetings at the employee's place of work .
5. To promptly make the Clerk/CEO & RFO aware if they consider their sickness absence to be connected with their job and to explain their perceptions in relation to this. This should be confirmed in writing. They should also co-operate with the Clerk/CEO & RFO with any future action identified as a result of these discussions.
6. To attend return to work interviews and other attendance management meetings.

7. To accept and comply with appropriate medical and other advice and assistance measures to minimise sickness absence.

Clerk/CEO & RFO's responsibilities

1. To manage sickness absence and apply the terms of this policy fairly and consistently, taking account of individual circumstances.
2. To maintain and apply appropriate sickness absence monitoring and review systems and procedures.
3. To advise employees of the importance of minimising sickness absence and ensure they are aware of their responsibilities.
4. To advise employees who they should contact to report a sickness absence and the timescales within which this contact should be made.
5. To have an up to date understanding of current policies and available assistance measures with the aim of assisting employees to maximise their attendance at work.
6. To have an up to date understanding of their responsibilities in terms of considering "reasonable adjustments" where an employee has a disability in line with the Equality Act.
7. To treat information regarding an employee's health in a sensitive and confidential manner.
8. To manage health and safety in the workplace with the aim of minimising sickness absence. If an absence is due to accident or injury at work then the relevant Health & Safety policies need to be adhered to.
9. To participate in training related to managing sickness absence and maximising attendance.
10. To request medical and specialist advice where appropriate.
11. To maintain contact with absent employees.
12. To conduct return to work interviews and other sickness absence management meetings. Return to work notes must be retained by the Clerk/CEO & RFO for their records. If further advice or an Occupational Health referral is required, the Clerk/CEO & RFO will make the necessary arrangements.
13. To take appropriate management action to deal with sickness absence.
14. To advise employees of the potential for termination on the grounds of medical capability due to ill health if there is no significant improvement in the attendance levels and to deal with these cases in line with the Council's policies, procedures, conditions of service and employment legislation.

Sick Pay

Entitlement to Occupational Sick Pay is determined by the conditions of employment and length of service with local government. The allowances set out above are the maximum provision in any rolling 52 week period. The rate of pay received is calculated by adding together the total number of workdays of sickness absence (on full or half pay) taken during the 12 months immediately preceding the first date of absence and deducting this from your full/half pay allowance.

Length of service Entitlement

During 1st year of service - 1 month full pay and, after completing 4 months service 2 months half pay

During 2nd year of service - 2 months full pay and 2 months half pay

During 3rd year of service - 4 months full pay and 4 months half pay

During 4th and 5th year of service - 5 months full pay and 5 months half pay

After 5 years of service - 6 months full pay and 6 months half pay

The Council shall have discretion to extend the period of sick pay in exceptional circumstances.

Sick pay may be suspended if an employee abuses the sickness scheme; or is absent on account of sickness due or attributable to:

- deliberate conduct prejudicial to recovery, the employee's own misconduct or neglect
- active participation in professional or dangerous sports
- injury whilst working in the employee's own time, on their own account, for private gain or whilst working for another employer.

The Council shall advise the employee of the grounds for suspension of sick pay and the employee shall have the right of appeal to the Chair of Frampton Cotterell Parish Council. If the Council decides that the grounds of suspension of sick pay were justified then the employee shall forfeit the right to any further payment in respect of that period of absence.

Please note- If the sickness absence relates to the Clerk/CEO & RFO then the Chairman of the Council and or the Chairman of the Staffing committee will undertake the actions require

Appraisal & Supervision Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 The Council recognises our employees are our most valuable asset. Regularly communicating job expectations and supporting staff development is critical for achieving a motivated and capable workforce.

1.2 As a small workforce, informal communications are encouraged and will take place on a daily and/or weekly basis between the Clerk and team, discussing work priorities and objectives. These meetings are not recorded but notes may be taken and retained where necessary.

1.3 The Council supports a minimum of 3 supervision and 1 appraisal discussion a year, which will be recorded, to enable:

- a structured and confidential discussion on work programmes linked to Council objectives;
- the identification of achievements and to raise any concerns;
- effective employee support and guidance;
- discussions about training and development needs and individual aspirations;
- recognition of good performance and reward arrangements.

1.4 The Clerk (or the Chair of the Staffing Committee in the case of the Clerk) is responsible for ensuring the policy is followed; and for giving employees constructive, timely, and honest appraisals of their performance, which should take into account both Council and individual aims. The Clerk will ensure the timetable is adhered to and the process is monitored effectively. Employees are expected to engage with all areas of the policy.

1.5 The Council sees the value in recognising and sometimes rewarding employees whose behaviour and actions go above and beyond the required job standards. The Clerk and councillors are encouraged to verbally, and in Council meetings, acknowledge and note those employees deserving of recognition. In addition, at the annual appraisal, eligible employees who receive a superior or excellent performance rating can earn a voucher/s and /or extra day's annual leave for that calendar year.

2. Scope

2.1 Informal communications will be held on a regular basis with all employees and casual, agency workers, and contractors. Supervision meetings will be held with all employees, including those under probation, and on temporary contracts.

2.2 An annual appraisal will be provided to all staff, except new starters in a probation period, staff on temporary contracts of less than a year, and casual or agency workers.

2.3 The start of the appraisal year will be October.

2.4 All appraisals will need to be completed by the start of the November to feed any budget considerations into the budget review cycle.

2.5 The Appraisal template will be used for all appraisals

3. Supervision Process

3.1 The Council acknowledges that supervision is important to enable staff to fulfil the duties outlined in their job description, their role objectives, and feel fully supported by the Clerk or Staffing Committee in the case of the Clerk (referred to as the Council).

3.2 Whilst the policy specifies a minimum of 4 meetings per year the Clerk, in liaison with the staff member, can determine if more supervision meetings are required, according to the job performed. If an employee has any concerns about the level of supervision they receive, they should discuss this with the Clerk initially or the Staffing Committee.

3.3 Supervision will be a flexible two-way process. The meeting should take place in a private room, outside of the open office environment as this allows a more open, honest, and confidential discussion to take place. The supervision can follow the outline provided in the template form (Annex 1) to be completed by the Clerk (or Staffing Committee in the case of the Clerk) and signed by both parties. A record should be kept on file.

3.4 If performance is rated as 'less than satisfactory' this should come as no surprise to the employee as discussions should have already taken place in supervisions. Consideration should be given to the Council's Managing Employee Performance Policy which is available on the SharePoint. HR advice can be sought following approval from the Staffing Committee as HR services are chargeable.

4. Appraisal

Before the Appraisal Meeting

4.1 The appraisal discussions will be held over a designated period on an annual basis as set by the Clerk in liaison with the Staffing Committee. The Councillor or Clerk will arrange meetings and give at least one week's notice when inviting employees. The appraisal form should be provided to the employee with the invite to allow time to reflect and prepare.

4.2 The Clerk's appraisal will take place first in the annual cycle conducted by the Chair of the Council and the Chair of the Staffing Committee or a Councillor from the Staffing Committee followed by the RFO (if there is a separate RFO) and then the remaining workforce.

At the Appraisal Meeting

4.3 The meeting should be held in a confidential environment that is free from interruption. The appraisal discussion will allow an opportunity for both the employee and Clerk/Councillor to reflect and comment on the previous year's objectives linked to Job Descriptions and Council aims. It will praise achievement and encourage the employee in their role.

4.4 The meeting will set objectives for the forthcoming year, aligned with Council aims, and identify areas for development and improvement i.e. can improvements be made to the way tasks are carried out.

4.5 Any issues of concern or support requirements and training and development needs should be discussed and written onto the form; to include future training requirements, planned qualifications, development opportunities, and career planning.

4.6 It is important to be specific in terms of evidencing achievements and development needs. Any comments made by the Appraiser or employee are to be constructive and should not be seen as a criticism.

4.7 At the meeting you will discuss each category on the form and assessment level, including overall assessment & award. The overall rating can be 'less than satisfactory', 'satisfactory', 'good' , 'superior' or 'excellent'.

4.8 If attendance or timekeeping relates to pregnancy or disability, advice should be sought from HR on how to treat such episodes in liaison with the Staffing Committee as HR services are chargeable.

After the Appraisal Meeting

4.9 Following the meeting the Clerk or Councillor will type up the Appraisal form, to ensure consistency in the application of the process. The form will be given to the employee for them to complete with their comments. It is important for the employee to express their views on the appraisal.

4.10 The appraisal form will be discussed at a Staffing Committee meeting, reviewing all Council appraisal forms. The Committee will consider all appraisals and overall ratings and will make the final decision on any rating to be agreed.

4.11 A superior performance rating will result in the granting of an additional day's leave or a voucher for £120 for the current leave year, providing this is allowed for in the Employees Statement and Terms of Conditions of Employment, adheres to the Statement. An excellent performance rating will result in the granting of two additional day's leave or a voucher FOR £240 for the current leave year. The member of staff can select which performance award they would prefer or a combination of both, (although the voucher choice will be classed as a taxable benefit).

The Clerk will be notified for annual leave recording purposes providing this is allowed for in the Employees Statement and Terms of Conditions of Employment, adheres to the Statement.

4.12 The final version of the appraisal form, marked confidential, will be copied to the employee, the Clerk, and another copy will be held on the employee's personal file.

4.13 The Staffing Committee and Clerk, in liaison with employees, will ensure any training, development, and support requirements identified in the appraisal are considered.

Appeal

4.14 Councillors, the Clerk, and employees are asked to support their comments and opinions with factual examples and evidence if necessary. Should an employee believe that they have not received a fair appraisal and/or performance rating they should make this comment on the form and discuss the issue with the Councillor or Clerk who conducted the appraisal. Members of the Staffing Committee can attend the meeting if required.

4.15 Should they still remain dissatisfied, they have the right of appeal to full Council, within 10 working days of the final appraisal form being returned. Their grounds for appeal should be fully outlined in writing to the Chair of the Council.

5. Training and Development

5.1 Staff and the Clerk are encouraged to discuss training request in appraisal and supervision meetings.

5.2 When requesting training staff should specify:

- if they are requesting time off during working hours to complete the training;
- any workload implications of the training;
- the qualification title, level & provider, costs, and timescales – considering the most economic and effective means to undertake the training i.e. local colleges or online.

5.3 Apart from short courses or workshops e.g., 1-2 days which the Clerk can approve, all training requests will go to the Staffing Committee for approval. Requests are subject to the provision and availability of training budgets. Priority will be given to training essential to any job role and training of relevance to the role and Council aims. Further information is included in the Training & Development Policy.

6. General

6.1 This policy is regarded as non-contractual and does not form part of any contract of employment. Frampton Cotterell Parish Council reserves the right to amend, update, include or remove any policies according to the need of the Council's business.

ANNEX 1 – Supervision Template

Employee name:

Supervisor Name:

Date:

Current Workload

e.g. progress; volume; priorities; problems; successes and failures.

Agreed Action Points

Performance Agreed Action Points (If applicable)

Personal Support

e.g. line management support, teamworking

Agreed Action Points

Development

e.g. new training/development needs identified, progress on previously agreed development.

Agreed Action Points

Other

e.g. bright ideas; value for money and efficiency; any other matters.

Date of Next Supervision: _____

Frampton Cotterell Parish Council Staff Appraisal Form

Employee's name:				
Job title:				
Date of meeting:				
	Current performance			
What has gone well in the past year?				
Employee to complete before Annual Appraisal Meeting				
What could have gone better?				
Employee to complete before Annual Appraisal Meeting				
Objective/competence 1:				
Employee to complete before Annual Appraisal Meeting – taken from last year's form. In the first year this section can be left blank				
Less than satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Superior	Excellent
Objective/competence 2:				
As above				
Less than satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Superior	Excellent
Objective/competence 3:				
As above				
Less than satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Superior	Excellent
Objective/competence 4:				
As above				
Less than satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Superior	Excellent
Objective/competence 5:				
As above				

Less than satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Superior	Excellent

Main Competencies

Member focus – dedicated to working for Members, manages expectations, supports committee structure

Employee to complete before Annual Appraisal Meeting. Please fill in with how you feel you have performed in this area.

Less than satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Superior	Excellent

Customer focus – acts with customers in mind, maintains positive relationships, meets customers’ needs, balances customer needs with the resources available.

As above

Less than satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Superior	Excellent

Takes responsibility – accurate, timely, conscientious, uses own initiative, ensures problems are resolved

Employee to complete before Annual Appraisal Meeting

Less than satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Superior	Excellent

Creativity – explores solutions to problems, encourages others to consider options, use best practise and case studies

Employee to complete before Annual Appraisal Meeting

Less than satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Superior	Excellent

Teamwork – tactful, supportive, maintains a harmonious workspace and positive relationships with staff and partners, shares information, supports diversity

Employee to complete before Annual Appraisal Meeting

Less than satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Superior	Excellent
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satisfactory				
<p>Communication skills – communicates effectively and appropriately, relates to people, speaks and writes well</p> <p>Employee to complete before Annual Appraisal Meeting</p>				
Less than satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Superior	Excellent
<p>Overall Competence</p> <p>Employee to complete before Annual Appraisal Meeting</p>				
Less than satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Superior	Excellent
<p>Development summary:</p> <p><i>Areas of the employee's work where further training and support is required, any areas where performance is particularly strong and should be developed further.</i></p> <p>To be completed by the manager after the meeting and sent to the appraisee in the draft for agreement</p>				

<p>Development and training</p> <p><i>List specific requirements for any training or development. May include attachments, project coaching, planned experience or any other suitable activity that will enhance the skills, knowledge and behaviour required in the employee's work or to develop him/her further.</i></p> <p>To be completed by the manager after the meeting and sent to the appraisee in the draft for agreement</p>
<p>Health, Safety and Well-being</p> <p><i>This section should record any other points raised at the appraisal meeting regarding health and safety concerns or suggestions, and well-being considerations.</i></p> <p>Employee to complete before Annual Appraisal Meeting and to be updated by the manager after the meeting and sent to the appraisee in the draft for agreement</p>
<p>Other areas of discussion</p> <p>This section should record any other points raised at the appraisal meeting.</p> <p>To be completed by the manager after the meeting and sent to the appraisee in the draft for agreement</p>

The coming year	
Objective/competence 1:	
<i>This section should be used to record discussion on the key areas of the job agreed for the coming year.</i>	
To be completed by the manager after the meeting and sent to the appraisee in the draft for agreement. A minimum of three competencies should be set. There is no maximum managers are reminded to keep workloads manageable.	
Objective/competence 2:	
To be completed by the manager after the meeting and sent to the appraisee in the draft for agreement	
Objective/competence 3:	
To be completed by the manager after the meeting and sent to the appraisee in the draft for agreement	
Objective/competence 4:	
Optional - To be completed by the manager after the meeting and sent to the appraisee in the draft for agreement	
Objective/competence 5:	
Optional - To be completed by the manager after the meeting and sent to the appraisee in the draft for agreement	
Employee's signature:	
Appraiser's signature:	
Date:	
One copy of this completed form will be kept by the appraiser, one by the appraisee.	

Recommendations

Do you recommend the employee for a reward for superior performance <i>The employee achieves superior in most/all areas &/or has made a superior contribution to the Council's activities</i>	
Do you recommend the employee for a reward for excellent performance <i>The employee achieves excellent in most/all areas &/or has made a excellent contribution to the Council's activities</i>	
Signed by the Clerk <i>If it relates to the Clerk- signed by the Chairman of the council & Chairman of the Staffing Committee</i>	Date:

Employee comments (to be signed & dated)

Agreed by the Staffing Committee (to be signed & dated)

January Review – Date of meeting

What has gone well in the past three months?

What could have gone better?

Objective/competence 1:

Objective/competence 2:

Objective/competence 3:

Objective/competence 4:

Objective/competence 5:

COMPANY MOBILE PHONE POLICY

1. All company mobile phones issued by the Council remain the property of the Council and must be returned upon cessation of employment with Frampton Cotterell Parish Council.
2. Mobile phones supplied by the Council are for work related calls only, unless it is an emergency. If an employee is called out at short notice or required to work later than planned and needs to advise their family a short call is treated as business purposes.
3. Sensitive and person identifiable information must never be sent by text or other message facility.
4. When using a mobile phone, employees must exercise caution and consider their immediate environment when making confidential calls.
5. While carrying out day-to-day tasks, if an employee has to use the camera or video function on their allocated mobile phone they should be aware of their surroundings and members of public at all times and must also ensure that any captured images do not breach Data Protection.
6. Any captured images should be sent to the office and removed from the device as soon as possible.
7. Employees should ensure that they take their allocated mobile phone with them whenever they are on duty and that it is stored securely when not required.
8. The mobile phone should always be switched on during working hours, or when on-call, except where it would be inappropriate for the phone to ring e.g. in meetings, whilst driving etc. The volume can be muted as opposed to switching the phone off.
9. It is the employee's responsibility to keep their allocated mobile phone and any associated equipment operational and safe.
10. Employees should not leave a mobile phone unattended where it can easily be seen and/or stolen.
11. Allocated mobile phones must conform to the standard pre-set specification and employees should not attempt to personalise the mobile phone by downloading ring tones, graphics etc.
12. SIM cards should not be swapped from one mobile handset to another unless authorised by the Clerk.
13. The SIM card pin lock should be activated at all times. The office should keep a record of the pin number for the phone and if changed the office to be informed immediately so they can update the records. Fingerprint recognition should not be enabled on the phone.
14. The automatic keypad/screen lock should be activated at all times.
15. Any faults or issues related to the allocated mobile phone, or additional equipment, should be reported to the office as soon as possible.

16. Mobile phones should not be used when driving or controlling any vehicle. The use of hands free equipment is not advised and any calls should only be taken or made when it is safe to do so.
17. Mobile phones should not be used in any manner which would or could cause harassment or distress to any member of public or service users – including the distribution of inappropriate text messages/images or the capturing of images/video without consent.
18. If a mobile phone is lost or stolen it must be reported to the office at the earliest possible opportunity.
19. Smart phones should only be used with applications, software and facilities supplied with the smart phone, or from a recognised respected company. The downloading and use of software, facilities, programs, and apps on smart phones is not permitted unless the software has already been approved. Please note that Navigation or Hourly time calculator's apps such as Waze and time calc are approved apps.
20. All mobile phones, of any type, issued by the Council, must never be used as a permanent storage device for sensitive or person identifiable data under any circumstance. Sensitive or person identifiable information should be removed from the device and stored by the Clerk.
21. All mobile phone usage will be monitored using itemised billing facilities and on-line management tools.
22. All employees are required to comply with this Policy. Non-compliance involving misuse of a Frampton Cotterell Parish Council mobile phone and any associated equipment may result in disciplinary action.
23. These procedures will be regularly reviewed to ensure they continue to meet service and employee requirements and will reflect any changes to other Council policies, procedures, legislation, or contracts.
24. It is the responsibility of full Council or the Staffing Committee to decide upon which Officers can have a company phone.
25. All Officers issued with a mobile phone will sign a form to confirm receipt of the phone and its associated equipment.
26. Frampton Cotterell Parish Council reserve the right to deduct from any final salary the cost of a company phone and its associated equipment should it not be returned to the office upon cessation of the Officers employment.

EMPLOYEE HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY **(including Lone Working and Eye Tests)**

1. Introduction

Frampton Cotterell Parish Council is committed to achieving good standards of health & safety for all employees at work.

The main principles of the Council's policy are that:

- Health and safety is everyone's responsibility, whilst acknowledging Councillors and the Clerk have ultimate responsibility;
- Employees and contractors who are managing and carrying out work are responsible for making sure it is safe;
- Standards should be high and control measures should be proportionate to the level of risk.

If in doubt employees should raise health and safety matters with the Clerk or Staffing Committee, the most effective practice measures require management action.

Please also refer to all other Council Health & Safety Policies and systems which are available in the Council shared drive, or upon request to the Clerk.

2. Lone Working

2.1 Lone workers are defined by the Health and Safety Executive as those people who work by themselves without close or direct supervision.

2.2 Lone working is acceptable in many circumstances, provided appropriate measures are made to control risks; following the Health and Safety at Work Act and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulation. Some tasks require at least two people to be involved in the work.

A risk assessment should be carried out prior to any lone working in order to identify the hazards of the work, assess the risks involved, and devise and implement a safe method of working.

2.3 The hazards that all workers face are increased when there is no one else to give a warning and emergency assistance is unavailable if required, so the risk of serious injury can be more likely.

2.4 **Never** work alone in the following situations:-

- 2.4.1 Where the risks are unacceptable;
- 2.4.2 In confined spaces;
- 2.4.3 Over or near water;
- 2.4.4 On live electrical equipment;
- 2.4.5 Areas specifically designated as "no lone working."

2.5 Wherever the risk assessment determines, avoid working alone in the following situations:-

- 2.5.1 Known or potentially violent or threatening situations;
- 2.5.2 In remote locations;
- 2.5.3 In derelict or empty buildings;

- 2.5.4 In any hazardous environment, e.g. cliffs or confined spaces;
- 2.5.5 On live roads;
- 2.5.6 On roofs;
- 2.5.7 Using ladders which cannot be tied and require footing;
- 2.5.8 Near demolition work.

Risk Assessment and Precautions

There are a few criteria to be used in deciding whether an individual can safely undertake a task by working alone:-

- Is the workplace and access to it safe?
- Does the task require more than one person e.g. heavy lifting, inspection work involving the erection and moving of ladders?
- Are the risks such that it would not be safe for one person to undertake the work e.g. visiting a potentially violent client, inspection of a derelict building or on a live highway?
- Does the individual have experience of the hazards and sufficient ability to undertake the work by him/herself?
- Is there a risk of violence and/or aggression?
- Are females especially at risk if they work alone?
- Is the person medically fit and suitable to work alone? – consider both physical and mental factors in and routine work or foreseeable emergencies that may impose additional burdens on the individual.

Precautions should be taken when lone working is planned or could arise. The main aspects that these precautions cover are:-

- Awareness of any special hazards; devise and implement safe systems of work to ensure that the risks are eliminated or controlled. If in doubt, send two or more people;
- Ability to act effectively if an emergency;
- Arrangements to alert others of the need for action if return is overdue;
- Check if there are any particular rules or requirements that you should follow;
- Make sure any equipment can be safely handled by one person and also, ensure safe access and exits;
- Mobile phones supplied to Estates & Amenities Officer should be carried at all times, be fully charged and turned on;
- Ensure the member of staff has adequate protective clothing and equipment, particularly clothing to keep out rain and cold;
- Take a torch, suitable for the work environment, if you expect to be out after dark or entering unlit areas;
- If working on electrical apparatus, ensure that a safe system of work is implemented. Prior to work beginning, apparatus should be switched off and locked off and unable to be re-energised by any other person;
- Do not ask anyone to perform work they are not trained, equipped, or prepared to perform safely.

2.6 Wherever possible, work should be undertaken by two or more persons when working away from the office or normal workplace. There may be occasions when it is possible for one employee to carry out the work. When this situation arises, the employee should remain in regular contact with the office staff, who can summon help if required.

2.7 If the risks are assessed and it is deemed acceptable to work alone, it is

important that the employee communicates their whereabouts, intentions, and expected periods of absence to the Clerk and/or office staff. A tracker facility may be placed on a mobile phone, so if there was no contact or delayed contact, and the office staff have attempted to ring the Estates & Amenities Officer, they could then use the tracker tool to reveal their whereabouts to be relied upon to institute a search or contact the emergency services if overdue.

- 2.8 See 'Procedure for Working Alone' or 'Visiting other Premises/Locations Guide' below.

3. EMPLOYEE EYE TESTS

- 3.1 Computer screen work does not cause vision problems, but if people have problems, they may become more apparent as they work with a computer. The Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992 (amended in 2002) describe what workers are entitled to, and this policy is based on those regulations

People are advised not to commit themselves to any expenditure without being sure of their entitlement.

What you are entitled to is normally:

- An eye examination – for most users of computer equipment.
- Glasses – for a small number of people in special circumstances.

3.2 *Eye examination*

If you regularly use a computer for extended periods e.g. two hours or more consecutively, then you are entitled to the cost of an eye examination, when you start work and if you have not had one for a reasonable period (2 years if suitable in most cases but a shorter period may be suitable if you are experiencing significant problems).

The examination is similar to a traditional eye examination, but it will also examine the vision at an intermediate distance (where the screen is likely to be) in addition to the traditional reading and distance levels.

There is no obligation on employees to have an eye and eyesight test. Eye and eyesight tests are to be undertaken in the employee's own time.

3.3 *Glasses*

You are only entitled to glasses if they are needed only for the screen work and not for everyday use such as reading or driving.

You will not be provided with glasses if they are the following:

- (i) A near vision prescription that brings the screen into focus e.g. reading glasses, or
- (ii) A distance prescription that brings the screen into focus.

This normally means an intermediate distance prescription. The free glasses provision covers basic single vision lenses and does not include special lens treatments such as tints and coatings.

If people want varifocals, tints, or more expensive frames, they can pay a top up, but note that in many cases varifocals can present problems because they could lead you to adopt a poor working posture, with stress on your neck.

Extract from Health & Safety Executive guidance

Does my employer have to pay for DSE spectacles?

***Answer:** Your employer will only have to pay for spectacles if the test shows you need special corrective appliances (normally spectacles) that are prescribed for the distance the screen is viewed at. If an ordinary prescription is suitable for your DSE work, your employer does not have to pay for your spectacles.*

A report from the optician should be given to the Parish Council which should clearly state whether or not the employee needs a corrective appliance specifically for his or her work at the VDU. If so, the Council will pay for the basic cost of the glasses to a maximum of £60, or the equivalent amount of money towards a pair of glasses of the employee's choosing.

In terms of driving, each individual is responsible for ensuring they are fit to drive. It is not the Parish Council's policy to pay for eye tests and spectacles for employees who drive in their course of work.

Procedure for Working Alone or Visiting other premises/Locations Guide

The Clerk should ensure awareness of the safety procedures in place, including the following points:

- Do **not** turn a “blind eye” to potential problems just to get information or “cut corners.”
- Do **not** assume that people will wonder where you are. Ensure that they know.
- Do **not** leave a work area in an unsecured manner.

All Council employees who are required to visit other premises, existing buildings, unoccupied sites, remote locations, derelict buildings, and any other location involving working away from the office as part of their normal work activities. Inexperienced staff must not be sent to work at hazardous locations/situations, unless supervised by experienced colleagues familiar with such hazards (it is normally inappropriate for persons under 18 years old to work alone).

Consideration should be given to possible health and safety hazards when developing safe systems of work. Some examples are:-

Before a visit:-

- What will you be doing?
- What clothing and equipment will you need?
- Will you need help to carry out the work?
- Discuss the hazards at the site with the Clerk or a colleague who has visited the site before, or the occupier. To include fire escape arrangements, security details, and first aid kit.
- Ensure an intruder could not get into the building whilst a worker was working alone.
- Ensure that someone knows where you are going, what you will do, and when you expect to return.

On arrival at the location / site:-

- If visiting an occupied work location, report to reception or the site office.
- Establish the occupier's rules or procedures for site visitors and follow them; ask to be briefed on the hazards associated with that particular site.
- Obey all warning signs and notices.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment, e.g. gloves, eye protection, ear defenders, high visibility clothing, and head protection.

While carrying out the work:-

- Observe the comments above, on arrival at the location.
- Report the hazards to the occupier or site manager.
- Whilst working on site, follow safe systems of work at all times.

On leaving the site:-

- Report your departure to the reception office.
- Return any borrowed equipment or clothing.
- On return to the Brockridge Centre, report your arrival. However, if you are not returning to the office, confirm your departure off the site by a telephone call to the office staff.

All council buildings

- Use the hatch (where available) when dealing with members of the public.
- Care should be taken to ensure that all outside doors are locked and secured from unauthorised intruders

Leaving Buildings at Night

When leaving Parish Council premises at night, following meetings of the Council or one of its committees:

- When there is only one member of staff present, a member of that committee should be requested to remain until the building is secured in order that the member of staff is not alone (*this is especially important at the Pavilion*).
- When there is more than one member of staff present, they should leave together and ensure that no-one is left in the building on their own.

Emergency Call Outs

- When “called out” because the alarm has been activated at a Parish Council building the member of staff attending should not enter the premises until the arrival of the police and their indication that it is safe to do so, to ensure their safety.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE / POLICY **INCLUDING BULLYING AND HARASSMENT**

Employees occasionally raise issues, problems or have objections. They may have concerns with their work or working conditions they wish to raise with the Clerk or Staffing Committee to resolve.

This policy outlines how employee grievances should be raised and responded to.

The objectives of the procedure are: -

- To foster good relationships between the Council and its employees by discouraging the harbouring of grievances;
- To settle grievances as near as possible to their point of origin;
- To ensure the Council treats issues at work seriously and resolves them as quickly as possible;
- To ensure that employees are treated fairly and consistently throughout the Council. This also applies to those who are the subject of an allegation.

The Council reserves the right not to consider grievances that are without substance, minor or malicious, or that merely repeat issues that have already been raised and addressed. Such matters will be responded to appropriately and in a way which minimises disruption to the Council business, still ensuring employees are treated fairly. False or malicious allegations of harassment or bullying which damage the reputation of a fellow employee will not be tolerated. Where it is clear that a grievance has been raised with no substance or for malicious purposes, this could amount to misconduct and will be addressed in accordance with the Council's Managing Employee Performance Policy.

The matter will be deemed to have been resolved, or no further action will be taken, if six months have elapsed since the date the issue was originally raised and there has been no involvement from either party during this time. At any point the employee can decide to withdraw their grievance but they must accept that the matter may not be re-opened.

On rare occasions there may be overriding reasons why the outcome of a case may need to be made known to others as changes may need to be made. Maintaining confidentiality is always very important when handling grievances and cases of bullying and harassment.

This procedure follows the ACAS Code of Practice.

1. SCOPE

- 1.1 This procedure applies to all employees of the Parish Council.
- 1.2 Any communication from an employee which contains a problem or complaint will be treated as a potential grievance. If there is any doubt – clarify this with the employee.
- 1.3 This policy covers work related complaints and complaints of bullying and harassment as per Annex 2.
- 1.4 Grievances cannot be initiated after employment with the Council has ended. If a former employee raises a complaint/dispute the Council may consider engaging in a dialogue with the individual with the hope of resolving the issue, however this would be done outside of the remit of this Grievance Procedure. Grievances already in process when the employee leaves should be concluded. There is no right of appeal through the Council in these circumstances.

- 1.5 Matters excluded from this procedure are as follows: -
- Appeals against salary or grade;
 - Management decisions in respect of the Managing Employee Performance Procedure i.e., a decision to convene a performance hearing, or the outcome of a performance hearing; as they have their own appeal processes;
 - Income tax, national insurance matters, rates of pay collectively agreed at the national or local level;
 - Rules of the pension schemes;
 - Difficult working relationships, unless they amount to bullying and harassment and/or discrimination.

2. INFORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE – STAGE 1

- 2.1 Work related issues should always be resolved informally whenever possible. Problems can escalate quickly and become extremely stressful and adversarial; undertaking a formal process can itself compound the problems.
- 2.2 Attempts to resolve the matter quickly and informally must be made before progressing to the formal procedure. Associated grievances that have been raised by both/all parties should be considered together.
- 2.3 In the interests of maintaining good working relations the employee should discuss any grievance first with the Clerk (or in the case of the Clerk, or if concerns relate to the Clerk, it should be discussed with the Staffing Committee, with a view to resolving the matter informally. The purpose of the discussion is to establish the core issue and resolve the problem. If necessary, the Clerk or Staffing Committee can support the employee by facilitating discussions between the employee and other parties.
- 2.4 The employee must work with the Clerk or Staffing Committee to make concerted attempts to resolve the issue informally before continuing to the formal stage of this procedure. If the decision/outcome of the informal action(s) is not satisfactory to the employee e.g. they believe not all options to resolve the issue have been explored, the employee can request that the matter is considered under the formal process.

3. FORMAL GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE – STAGE 2

- 3.1 The employee must set out their grievance in writing (“Formal Grievance”) and provide a copy to the Clerk or Chair. If the grievance is concerning the Clerk and/or the Chair then the grievance should be sent to the Vice Chair of the Council, within 10 working days of receipt of the outcome of the informal efforts. The written statement must make clear the nature of the problem and the remedy sought.
- 3.2 Once the Council has had a reasonable opportunity to consider the information provided in the Formal Grievance, the Council will carry out an appropriate investigation, if required. The Chair can delegate this to the Clerk working with two or three councillors, all of which would have had no previous involvement. This does not need to be extensive in all cases but should enable the facts to be established. It should be completed as soon as practicably possible, taking into account witness availability and evidence gathering.
- 3.3 The employee who raised the grievance and any other parties involved or the subject of the grievance should be given advance notice that an investigation is to be conducted, and any specific allegations made. The investigation members, with support from HR (see 5.5), should refer to the Council’s Managing Employee Performance Procedure as necessary.

- 3.4 All evidence gathered through the investigation will be provided to the employee who raised the grievance and subject of the grievance, prior to any formal grievance meeting.
- 3.5 The employee will be invited to attend a formal grievance meeting to discuss the matter.
 - a. The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting.
 - b. Grievance meetings will take place at the earliest possible date, in consideration of any necessary investigation.
 - c. The employee has the right to be accompanied to a grievance meeting by a fellow employee or by a Trade Union representative.
 - d. If the meeting is inconvenient for either the employee or his/her companion, the meeting may be re-scheduled once. If they fail to attend without an acceptable explanation the matter may be concluded without a meeting.
- 3.6 A grievance meeting may be adjourned to allow matters raised during the course of the meeting to be investigated, or to afford the Clerk and/or Councillors time to consider the information
- 3.7 The Council with support from HR (see 5.5), will consider the grounds for the grievance and assess it on its merit. A decision will be made based on the presentations and evidence provided from all parties. Timescales for completion should be indicated when possible.
- 3.8 The Council will convey the outcome to the employee in writing (enclosing any relevant documents)

4. GRIEVANCE APPEAL PROCEDURE – STAGE 3

- 4.1 If the employee wishes to appeal against the Council's decision, they must inform the Council within 5 working days of receiving the decision. This would be in writing to the Clerk, Chair or Vice Chair of the Council.
- 4.2 If the employee notifies the Council that they wish to appeal, the employee will be invited to attend a grievance appeal meeting as soon as practicably possible after receiving notice that the employee wishes to appeal and given five (5) working days' notice. The grievance appeal meeting will be considered by three councillors who have had no previous involvement in the grievance. HR involvement can be sought (see 5.5) and/or external support such as a mediator or legal representative. The employee has the right to be accompanied to a grievance appeal meeting by a colleague or a Trade Union representative.
- 4.3 The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend that meeting. If the meeting time is inconvenient for the employee or his or her companion, the employee may ask to re-schedule the meeting once.
- 4.4 The councillors can require any additional information from any employee whom they consider may assist and will be supplied with written statements by both parties and these will be supplied in at least 3 working days in advance of the meeting.
- 4.5 After the grievance appeal meeting the employee will be informed of the Council's final decision within 5 working days. The meeting may be reconvened for this purpose. The Council's decision will be confirmed to the employee in writing.

5. NOTES ON PROCEDURE

5.1 Complaints by employees (including bullying & harassment) against Council Members

If the grievance is about a council member and they have attempted informal resolution, they must raise this immediately with the Parish Clerk or South Gloucestershire Council's Monitoring Officer, who will take the appropriate action referring to the council's Members Code of Conduct.

5.2 Complaints by members of the public

A member of the public who feels s/he has been bullied or harassed by any members or officers of a Council and have attempted informal resolution, should use the Council's official Complaints Policy.

5.3 Complaints from employees against service users/customers

Employees must tell the Clerk if they are being harassed by non-employees to ensure that reasonable steps can be taken to prevent this from happening again.

5.4 A copy of the Formal Grievance, a note of the decision taken at the first stage of the procedure, any notice of appeal and appeal decision will be placed on the employee's/ex-employee's personal file, together with any notes or evidence taken or compiled during the course of the procedure.

5.5 Advice can be sought from HR on any aspects of this policy, after a discussion with the Staffing Committee as services are usually chargeable.

5.6 Adjustments can be made to support employees, including considering an appropriate venue for any grievance meetings.

ANNEX 1 - BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Bullying and harassment are both forms of behaviour that the Council absolutely will not tolerate.

The Council is committed to ensuring:

- (i) Employees are treated with dignity and respect at work.
- (ii) A working environment is provided free from bullying and harassment.
- (iii) The Clerk and Members adopt high standards of staff management, in which bullying and harassment have no place.
- (iv) It provides fair and effective procedures to deal with complaints.
- (v) All allegations of bullying and harassment are taken extremely seriously.

1.1 This policy reflects the spirit in which the Council intends to undertake all of its business and outlines the specific procedures available to all employees in order to protect them from bullying and harassment. It should be read in conjunction with the Council's procedures on Equalities, Managing Employee Performance, Employee Code of Conduct, Employee Handbook, and Member Code of Conduct.

1.2 Definitions - Taken from ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration)

1.2.1 **Bullying** may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour; an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

1.2.2 **Harassment** Unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic (as in the Equality Act 2010), which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. The protected characteristics are the grounds on which discrimination is unlawful and include - age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

1.2.3 Employees can also complain of behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them, they do not need to possess the protected characteristic.

1.2.4 Employees are also protected from harassment because of:

- Perception – perceived to have a protected characteristic and harassed because of that perception.
- Association – associated with someone who has a protected characteristic.

1.2.5 Bullying and harassment may be carried out by an individual against an individual or involve groups of employees. It may occur face-to-face, in meetings, through written communication, including e-mail and social media, by telephone or through automatic supervision methods. It may occur on or off work premises, during work hours or non-work time

1.2.6 Both bullying and harassment are behaviours which are unwanted by the recipient and offensive. Bullying and harassment in the workplace can lead to poor morale, low productivity and poor performance, sickness absence, lack of respect for others, employee turnover, damage to the Council's reputation and ultimately, Employment Tribunal or other court cases and payment of compensation.

1.3 Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour

(This list is not exhaustive).

Examples:

- Spreading malicious rumours, insulting someone by word or behaviour (particularly on the grounds of a protected characteristic).
- ridiculing or demeaning someone,
- exclusion or victimisation,
- unfair treatment,
- overbearing supervision or other misuse of position or power,
- unwelcome sexual advances,
- making threats or comments about job security without foundation,
- deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading work and/or constant criticism,
- preventing an individual's promotion or training opportunities,
- publicly commenting about an individual's performance who is not present to defend themselves or copying documents that are critical about someone to others who do not need to know.

2. Procedure for Dealing with Cases of Bullying and Harassment

The procedure (formal and informal stages) is the same as the process for dealing with grievances.

If informal resolution is not possible, the Clerk or Members may decide the matter is a disciplinary issue to be dealt with formally under the Council's Managing Employee Performance Procedure.

As with any performance issue a fair procedure will be followed. In the case of bullying or harassment the complainant and the accused must both be treated fairly.

All cases of bullying and harassment will be treated as confidential in respect of the person making the complaint and the subject of the complaint.

2.1 Informal Approach – Stage 1

Approaching the other person directly.

- 2.1.1 An employee who believes they have been bullied or harassed should ask the person to stop (either verbally or in writing) making it clear what it is they find offensive and unacceptable and the effect it is having on them. They should also warn that formal action may be initiated if the behaviour does not stop. Having an open, adult, and honest discussion is often the most powerful way to address the problem.
- 2.1.2 If the employee is unable to approach the other person directly, a work colleague, Member, HR representative, or Trade Union representative may make an approach on their behalf, on an informal and confidential basis.

Involving the Clerk

- 2.1.3 The employee should contact the Clerk to get their advice if they are unable to resolve the matter (if the Clerk is not the person whose behaviour is the issue), or the Staffing Committee. This can be undertaken on behalf of the employee by a work colleague, HR or Trade Union representative.
- 2.1.4 Mediation can be a good way of dealing with bullying, discrimination or harassment situations depending on the nature of the allegation. Contact HR (see 5.5) and ACAS for advice on accessing mediation.
- 2.1.5 Appropriate management action will include discussion with the person complained of as part of resolving the situation.
- 2.1.6 Employees who fail to comply with a management instruction may be dealt with in accordance with the Managing Employee Performance procedure.

3. The Legal Position and Related Issues

- 3.1 Councils have a duty of care towards all their workers and liability under common law arising out of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Equality Act 2010. Under the Equality Act 2010, bullying and harassment may be considered unlawful discrimination.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 created a criminal offence of harassment with a fine and/or prison sentence as a penalty and a right to damages for the victim.

Some bullying and harassment behaviour may also be offences-in law which could lead to police involvement and/or criminal prosecution. The Council should take appropriate legal advice, sometimes available from the Council's insurer, if such a matter arises.

- 3.2 The Council's Health and Safety policies may need to be considered – which covers prevention of violence at work when an employee is assaulted, verbally abused or threatened during the course of their employment. Employees should immediately inform the Clerk or Staffing Committee.

Useful Contacts

- HR South Gloucestershire Council - 01454 868945
- ACAS www.acas.org.uk (08457 474747)
- Monitoring Officer at South Gloucestershire Council.
- SLCC www.slcc.co.uk

HOMEWORKING POLICY

Introduction

This policy describes the working arrangements and expectations that will apply to any employee working from home.

The Policy applies to all employees who carry out any work from home whether full time, part time, casual, fixed term, or doing hybrid working.

Safe working environment

Health and safety for home-based staff applies in the same way as office-based staff, insofar as is reasonably practicable, that you work in a safe manner and that you follow all health and safety instructions issued by the Council. You must complete and submit a 'Home Based Workers Risk Assessment' to the Clerk. This is a checklist for you to identify any possible hazards in your home working area. Following completion of the checklist, measures may need to be taken to control any risks identified. This checklist should be completed annually, or more frequently if there are any changes to your arrangements such as new equipment or changes to your home-office space. You must complete and submit a workstation risk assessment and ensure that this remains up-to-date. If you have any questions about the risk assessment, or if you identify any potential risks when carrying out the assessment, you should refer these to the Clerk in the first instance.

Some of the most important considerations include: -

- If possible, an area should be set aside from the rest of your living space to ensure that you are able to work from home without distractions,
- Your home office should have adequate space for you to work safely and comfortably,
- Your desk should be large enough to accommodate your equipment and paperwork,
- You should have sufficient storage and your workspace should be organised so equipment is close to hand,
- Your work area should be well lit, with natural lighting if possible,
- Equipment and sockets should be situated to avoid potential trip hazards, and,
- You must also ensure that you visually check the cables of any electronic equipment supplied to you regularly (and at least every 6 months) and report any defects.

We reserve the right to visit you at home at agreed times for work-related purposes, including health and safety matters and to inspect, service or repair equipment e.g. for PAT testing.

Facilities and equipment

The Council may provide you with equipment for you to work from home and we will maintain and replace these items when necessary. It is your duty to ensure that proper care is taken of the equipment provided to you and to let the Clerk know of any need to maintain or replace the equipment. Should the risk assessment identify any further equipment that is necessary, please discuss this with the Clerk. All equipment provided by the Council is for you to work safely and effectively at home and cannot be used for personal use by you or your family. All equipment will belong to the Council and you will be required to return it to us promptly should you leave our employment. If we are unable to make suitable arrangements, we may collect the equipment and any documents before your last day.

Hours of work

As a home-based worker, your contract of employment will specify the hours when we expect you to be at work and contactable by telephone or email. There may be times during the working day when you are not available in which case these should be flagged to the Clerk with prior authorisation. You must be mindful to take adequate rest breaks which should be, as a minimum:

- A break of at least 20 minutes during each working day over 6 hours,
- A daily rest break of at least 11 continuous hours, i.e. the time between stopping work one day and beginning work the next day, and,
- At least one complete day each week when no work is done which is usually on a weekend.

Potential conflicts of interest

During your hours of work, the Council expects that your work environment enables you to work effectively and that you are not distracted by domestic matters. It is not appropriate to combine homeworking with caring for a dependant. If there is an emergency and you need to attend to a non-work matter, then you should notify the Clerk.

Data protection

As a home-worker you are responsible for keeping all documents and information associated with the Council secure at all times. Specifically, homeworkers are under a duty to:

- Keep filing cabinets and drawers locked when they are not being used,
- Keep all documentation belonging to us in the locked filing cabinet at all times except when in use,
- Set up and use a unique password for the laptop computer, and,
- Ensure that documents are saved to the server rather than the laptop computer's hard drive.

Furthermore, the laptop computer and other equipment provided by us must be used only for work-related purposes and must not be used by any other member of the family at any time or for any purpose. If you have a telephone conversation where you are discussing confidential work matters, you should ensure that such calls take place in privacy to avoid inadvertent breach of confidentiality.

Visits to work premises

On occasions we may need you to attend Council offices for training, performance assessment meetings, team briefings etc. This will normally not be frequent, and the dates and times of such visits will be agreed in advance. The employees Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment will state the working requirements specific to each employee.

Insurance, mortgage, or rental agreements

Whilst our Employer's Liability Insurance extends to home-based staff, and any Council equipment installed in your home will also be covered, you should ensure that any agreement with your landlord or mortgage lender allows you to work from home, and that your house buildings and contents insurance will not be invalidated by you working from home. This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

Notes

This is an example of an employment policy designed for a small Council adhering to statutory minimum requirements and does not constitute legal advice. As with all policies it should be consistent with your terms and conditions of employment.

Note: Where this policy states the Clerk, if the Officer is the Clerk then they should speak to the Chairman of the Council.

Home Working Risk Assessment Template

Use the following simple risk assessment to find out how safe your home working space is. Take a look at the risks in the first column and answer 'yes' or 'no' as applicable and then make a note of what needs to be done to reduce or remove risk if necessary.

Date:

Assessor:

Location of Assessment:

RISK	YES/NO	ACTION REQUIRED
<p>Desk Area</p> <p>Do you have adequate space to work comfortably?</p> <p>Is there enough space underneath your desk to stretch your legs?</p> <p>Are there trailing electrical cables around your working area that need to be tied up?</p> <p>Is your working area warm, well-lit and well ventilated?</p> <p>Do you need to a desk lamp to improve lighting?</p> <p>Is your working area clutter free so that you can focus easily on the task?</p>		
<p>Display Screen Set-Up</p> <p>Is your desk chair set up correctly?</p> <p>Is your lower back supported, are there armrests and are your feet flat on the floor?</p> <p>Do you have enough surface space on your desk to work comfortably?</p> <p>Are your keyboard and mouse clean and within easy reach, without having to stretch?</p> <p>Is your display screen clean and positioned so there is no glare from a window or light?</p>		

<p>Is your display screen level with your eyes so it doesn't cause discomfort to your neck or head?</p>		
<p>Fire and Electrical Safety</p> <p>Are smoke detectors working and checked regularly e.g. every month?</p> <p>Do you regularly dispose of waste, including papers, to prevent a build-up of fire 'fuel'?</p> <p>Does any electrical equipment spark or show signs of burns and so needs removing from use?</p> <p>Do any wires look damaged or frayed and so need removing from use?</p> <p>Do you regularly inspect your electrical equipment to check for signs of wear and tear?</p> <p>Do you switch off equipment when not in use?</p> <p>Do you have emergency arrangements in place in case of fire?</p>		
<p>Stress and Welfare</p> <p>Do you take regular breaks away from your workstation?</p> <p>Do you carry out regular stretches at your desk to avoid stiff or sore muscles?</p> <p>Do you sit with good posture or are you hunched over the desk?</p> <p>Do you have easy access to first aid equipment if required?</p> <p>If you regularly use a computer, do you have your eyes tested every year?</p> <p>Can you easily reach everything that you need without twisting and straining your upper body?</p>		
<p>Manual Handling</p> <p>Are all items that you need for work within easy reach?</p>		

<p>Are heavy items stored on lower shelves to avoid the need for lowering them?</p> <p>Do you know how to correctly pick up, carry and lower heavy items?</p>		
<p>Slips, Trips and Falls</p> <p>Are floor coverings, such as carpets and rugs, secure?</p> <p>Do you frequently carry hot drinks and food upstairs/downstairs and risk tripping?</p> <p>Are stairways and corridors clear of trip hazards?</p> <p>Is the floor area around your desk clear of boxes, papers, and wires?</p>		
<p>Lone Working</p> <p>Are you familiar with your employer's lone working health and safety policy?</p> <p>Do you know the name and number of a manager or supervisor who you can get in touch with easily?</p> <p>Do you have a system for regularly 'checking in' with your employer if you are not visibly online each day?</p> <p>Is your home kept secure whilst you're working there?</p> <p>Are important files and laptops kept locked away securely when not in use?</p>		

Actions Required:

Date Actions Completed:

Job Share Scheme

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Job-sharing can bring a range of benefits for employees and employers alike. Two people can bring a wider range of skills and experience to a role and can contribute new ideas and working approaches. Job-sharing has also been shown to improve retention and absence cover. Nevertheless, job-sharing does require a high degree of organisation and commitment on all sides.
- 1.2 The council supports job-sharing as part of its equal opportunities policy, its flexible approach to recruitment and retention of suitably qualified employees and its family friendly policies. The scheme will apply in principle to all permanent posts.

2. What does Job Sharing involve

- 2.1 Job Share is the division of duties of a post, typically between two employees on an equal basis. The post is covered by the employees for the whole of the working week.
- 2.2 There is continuity between the post holders and in some cases, a degree of overlap to ensure that job-sharers can exchange information or carry out some work together.
- 2.3 Each job-share employee has the same rights and obligations as full-time employees with certain benefits shared, pro-rata to hours worked.
- 2.4 Appointment to the post is made on condition that, in the event of any difficulty in filling one part of the post, the council is able to change the post back to a full-time post (or the full total hours if not full time).
- 2.5 The option of job-sharing will be considered in the following circumstances:-
- Vacancy or restructuring;
 - Request by an existing employee to job-share his/her post;
 - Request by an employee who is on maternity/adoption leave or shared parental leave to return to their post on a job-sharing arrangement.
- 2.6 The council's supports job-sharing on the basis that it will not lead to any loss of efficiency or decrease in the level of service provided. There may be operational reasons for excluding certain posts from being open to job-share, subject to a decision by the Parish Clerk or Staffing Committee in the case of the Clerk. Advice is available from HR.

3. Procedure

The following factors should be considered:-

- 3.1 **The Job** - consider the complexity of the job, the level of responsibility, the degree of involvement with the public, the extent of individual case work, the requirement for continuity in terms of knowledge and availability, handover periods and/or other supervisory control arrangements.
- 3.2 **Supervisory Responsibilities** - posts with supervisory responsibilities can be considered for a job-sharing arrangement, provided it is operationally sustainable.
- 3.3 **Employees** - a successful job-sharing arrangement depends on **both** of the job-sharers' commitment and flexibility to ensure any operational problems are overcome.

3.4 **Staffing Structure** - consider whether or not having a number of job-share and/or part-time staff within a section will adversely affect the provision of services. If an employee asks to job-share his/her existing post and the decision is to reject the request for operational reasons, the reasons must be put in writing to the employee. For vacancies, decide before advertising about the suitability of the post for job share and specify on the advert.

4. **Terms and Conditions**

4.1 **Hours/Days of Work** - normal arrangements are the full-post hours will be split 50/50, variations to this are fine as long as the agreed split meets the needs of the service i.e. one job-sharer could work 3 days and the other 2 days; split days every week, with one job-sharer working mornings and the other afternoons; three days on one week, two days on the following week.

4.2 **Rates of Pay** - job-sharers are paid pro-rata to the full-post salary. (However, it is possible for job-sharers to receive different rates of pay if they are appointed on a different incremental point or work a different number of hours).

4.3 **Work Outside Normal Hours** - as far as possible, arrangements for any work outside normal working hours is shared.

4.4 **Annual Leave** - annual leave is shared on a pro rata basis. The other job share partner may be required to work additional hours, and be paid, to cover for lengthier annual leave periods as directed by the Clerk.

4.5 **Bank Holidays** - all job-sharers have a pro-rata entitlement to bank holidays included in their leave entitlement. However, the preferred option for ensuring that these holidays are shared equally, is for the manager to agree with job-sharers an arrangement where in each week that public or extra statutory holidays occurs, both sharers work equal numbers of hours and have equal holidays (e.g. if one bank holiday they each work two days, if bank holiday plus extra statutory day they each work one and a half days that week).

4.6 **Doctors/Dentists appointments** - as most job-shares will involve employees working only part of a week, managers should insist that where possible, doctors, dentist, hospital appointments etc. are arranged in the employee's own time and do not involve time off work.

4.7 **Absence cover** - if one job-sharer is absent or one half of a job-share post is vacant for a significant period, the remaining partner can be asked to work additional hours to cover.

- 4.8 **Vacancy** - in the event that one of the job-sharers leaves the post, the following procedure applies:-
 - The remaining job-sharer may be offered the post on the full-post hours basis;
 - If the offer is not accepted, then the job-share vacancy can be advertised;
 - The remaining job-sharer will be expected to be flexible regarding changing their pattern of work, if necessary to fit in with the newly appointed job-sharer. (However, the onus will be on the new job-sharer to fit into existing patterns of working where possible);
 - If it is not possible to recruit into the vacant hours of the post having tried one external advertisement, then the post will revert to the full-post hours and the existing employee will be expected to work these hours (seek HR advice in this instance).

LEAVERS POLICY

Frampton Cotterell Parish Council is committed to managing leavers effectively as handling of an exit process can have a lasting impact on an employee's view of the council.

The Leavers Policy and procedure is legally compliant and covers notice period, long service awards for eligible employees, retirement, and associated processes.

Notice periods are explicit for both the Council issuing notice to employees and employees when giving notice to resign or retire.

The Council has a policy on providing references for all departing or former employees.

The Council issues leavers questionnaires and offers exit interviews to all departing employees.

For employees leaving non-voluntarily as a result of redundancy, long-term illness, ill health retirement, termination of a limited term contract and performance processes, the Clerk or Staffing Committee may seek HR advice as other policies and procedures will apply.

1. Scope

This policy applies to all employees who are leaving the Council; including retiring, resigning, or being dismissed.

2. Notice periods

2.1 Employer

The Council must give notice to dismiss employees in line with their Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment or the Employment Rights Act 1996 – whichever is longer.

The statutory notice periods, based on length of continuous service are as follows:-

- Employees with one month to two years' service – not less than one week's notice for each completed year of service.
- For employees with two years or more service – not less than one weeks' notice for each completed year of service up to a maximum of 12 weeks' notice.

2.2 Employee

Employees resigning or retiring must give notice as per their Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment:-

3. Leaver Notification

3.1 On receiving notice of resignation or retirement in writing, the Council should write to the employee to confirm the leaving arrangements and ensure the necessary payroll arrangements are made.

3.2 Before an employee's last day, the Clerk, or Staffing Committee in the case of the Clerk, should ensure any Council property has been returned e.g., keys, mobile phones, I.T. equipment, and uniform, in reference to the employee contract.

3.3 The Council should check annual leave and TOIL owed or excess taken and ensure the payroll adjustments are made accordingly.

4. Retirement

4.1 There is no default retirement age and employees can resign/retire (with or without pension) when they choose. There is flexibility about when you can take your pension with the option to take it at any age from 55 to 75. In the new scheme your Normal Pension Age (NPA) is linked to your State Pension Age (SPA). If you take your pension before your NPA, it will normally be reduced and if you take your pension after your NPA it will normally be increased (see Avon Pension Fund for more information regarding your personal circumstances and pension policies as well as the State Pension Age Calculator to calculate your SPA).

4.2 Early retirement

All employees should speak to their pension provider to obtain details concerning their pension and information on taking early retirement.

4.3 Ill health retirement

Ill health retirement (where recommended by Occupational Health) requires confirmation from an independent Doctor and is based on the definitions provided under The LGPS Regulations. This will be managed in accordance with the Absence Policy.

4.4 Flexible Retirement

With Council consent, you can reduce your hours and/or your pay grade when aged 55 or over and draw some or all of your pension (provided you have met the 2 years vesting period in the Scheme) whilst remaining in work. Employees should submit their request in writing to the Staffing Committee for consideration.

4.5 Former employees – release of Pension Scheme benefits on compassionate grounds

The Council has approved a scheme to consider claims from former employees for the release of their deferred pension on compassionate grounds, in accordance with the LGPS Regulations. These allow councils to pay the full pension to those over the age of 55 who joined the LPGA on or after 1 April 2008 (or 50 for those who are existing scheme members as at 31 March 2008) on compassionate grounds. Each case is treated on its merits in view of the very individual nature of the ex-employee's circumstances. The Council's policy is that ex-employees need to be able to show that the early payment of pension is justified on the basis that they cannot continue or resume employment as a result of their circumstances. It should be noted that financial hardship on its own is not a sufficient reason. Requests for early pension payments from former employees on compassionate grounds should be made in the first instance to the Staffing Committee.

4.6 For advice and support in managing any of the retirement scenarios employees should contact the Clerk or Staffing Committee as HR services are provided on a charging basis.

4.7 Council will support employees in preparing for retirement as much as possible.

5. Leaving Questionnaires and Interviews (see Appendix 1)

5.1 When employees leave it is important to provide them with an opportunity to comment on their reasons for leaving. The Council's policy is to offer leavers questionnaires and interviews so that feedback can be used to assess what we are doing well and how we can improve as an employer.

5.2 The Council should encourage all employees who are leaving the Council to complete a leaving questionnaire. However, leaving questionnaires and interviews are voluntary and the Council needs to be mindful to exercise discretion where an employee is not leaving voluntarily, for example as a result of long-term illness, disciplinary or redundancy.

6. Providing References

6.1 There is no legal duty on an employer to provide references. There is a legal duty concerning the content of references for both the employee it relates to and the employer to whom it is provided. A reference must be true, accurate and fair, and not misleading. The person providing the reference could be held liable if any misleading statements are made.

6.2 References should be completed by someone who has had direct knowledge of the employee and experience of working with them, usually the Clerk.

6.3 References should provide factual details on all relevant information; subjective or personal opinions should be avoided.

6.4 Employee information should be checked, such as job title and dates of employment.

6.5 The reference must not contain any information the employee would not be aware of but could include details on criminal convictions. However the Council must not disclose any 'spent' convictions, unless the employee has applied for a position which is excluded under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. For further advice contact HR (after speaking to the Clerk as HR services are chargeable).

6.6 Only current disciplinary offences should be included if the job they are applying for is not working with children or vulnerable adults. Details of current or expired disciplinary offences can be included if a job is working with children or vulnerable adults, where expired ones involved any safeguarding concerns, stating clearly if the allegations were investigated or not. Only where an offence has resulted in formal disciplinary action and the case against the employee has been 'proven' in line with Council policy and/or a sanction has been issued should this be disclosed.

6.7 References should not include information on sickness absence. The Equality Act 2010 states that details of sickness should not be revealed until a job offer has been made.

6.8 References should not be provided in cases where a settlement agreement has been reached, or if an employee is currently bringing a claim against the Council. In most cases a reference will be agreed as part of the settlement.

6.9 It is important to note that references can be viewed by the employee concerned in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

6.10 All completed references should be kept on personal files.

7. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically. The Parish Council reserves the right to review and amend the Retirement Policy in the light of operational experiences and any changes to employment or pension legislation or to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

APPENDIX 1

Invitation to exit interview

Sample letter to leaver:

Date

Dear first name,

Confidential

It is really important for us to understand why people leave the Council as it helps us to assess what the Council is doing well and what we can do to improve as an employer.

I believe that an opportunity for a face-to-face meeting with you will help us to gain a much better understanding and interpretation of your feedback compared to information on a paper or electronic form. Of course, written feedback is valuable and you are welcome to complete a paper version of the form if you would prefer to do so.

The exit interview is a chance for you to give positive, critical, and constructive feedback which will help us to assess all aspects of the working environment e.g. culture, processes and systems, management, opportunities for career and personal development, communication etc.

We will take action based on the feedback we receive and so your participation will make a difference.

Rest assured that your comments will be treated in the strictest confidence and any analysis will be entirely anonymous. Information you provide will not be reflected in any job references.

Thank you for taking part in this process.

Yours sincerely,

Clerk Name

Clerk to Council

Leaver Questionnaire

1. *Your destination*

Local government	Private sector	Further education
Other public sector	Voluntary work	Not employed
Details		

Leaving date	
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2. *Reasons for leaving*

Please tick as many of the boxes below that explain why you chose to leave your job with the Council.

Retirement	Career change	Taking further training/education
Career development/promotion opportunity	Lack of training & development opportunities	Bullying, harassment, or discrimination
Personal reasons – change of personal circumstances (e.g. moving house, marriage, pregnancy, care of dependants)	End of contract term	Relocation of workplace travelling/parking difficulties
Competition from other employers (e.g. better position/prospects/working environment than here)	Ill health	Workload/stress
Dissatisfied with pay or conditions of employment	Poor management (e.g. poor communication, lack of supervision, lack of recognition/feedback)	Felt that my job was no longer secure here
Dissatisfied with nature of the work/ disliked the job	Redundancy	Other (please specify):
Comments		

3. **Your engagement**

Please **circle/mark as bold** what your feelings are towards the following points, whilst you were employed with the Council.

Your work

I felt challenged and motivated in my work, was clear on what I needed to achieve and understood how my role 'fitted in' to the whole Council	Yes	No	Unsure
I felt able to work in the most efficient way, had the equipment/resources I needed, there were enough staff to do my job well and good cooperation between the teams I worked with	Yes	No	Unsure
Comments			
Your involvement			
I felt that I was given enough information to do my job well and that the Council kept me well informed	Yes	No	Unsure
When changes happened in the Council I understood why, was able to have a say in decisions and found changes to be well managed	Yes	No	Unsure
I was encouraged to find new and better ways to do work and often did more than was expected of me at work	Yes	No	Unsure
Comments			
Your wellbeing			
I was comfortable with the pressure placed on me in my job and could meet the requirements of my job without regularly working excessive hours	Yes	No	Unsure
The Council treated me with fairness and respect and respects individual differences	Yes	No	Unsure
The Council took my health and safety seriously whilst at work and supported me with personal and emotional issues	Yes	No	Unsure
I was satisfied with my total benefits package (e.g. flexible working, salary, pension)	Yes	No	Unsure
I felt I received the training and development I needed to do my job well and was encouraged to develop new skills	Yes	No	Unsure
Comments			

Your manager – the person who manages your work on a day-to-day basis and does your one to ones/PDPR			
I felt my manager communicated well with me, gave me appropriate feedback, supported, motivated and inspired me	Yes	No	Unsure
What were positives of your team/manager and weaknesses			
Comments			
Your senior managers (Clerk, Councillors, Line Manager)			
I felt that senior managers had a clear vision, were open and honest when communicating with staff and enabled me to feedback my views to them	Yes	No	Unsure
Comments			
The Council			
I was satisfied to be working for the Council and would recommend the Council as a good place to work	Yes	No	Unsure
Comments			

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4. Any other comments

Are you happy for the contents of this questionnaire to be shared with the Staffing Committee? Yes/No

5. Personal details

We ask for these details so that reporting can relate to particular areas.

Name	
Job Title	
Line Manager	

Did you work full-time or part-time?

Full-time 37 hours a week Monday to Friday, normal office hours	Part-time (under 37 hours a week, Monday to Friday, normal office hours)
Full-time (37 hours a week, outside normal office hours, e.g. shifts, weekends, evenings, on call)	Part-time (under 37 hours a week outside normal office hours, e.g., shifts, weekends, evenings, on call)

About you

We ask employees to provide equality-based information in order to:

- *check that our standards remain high for every individual, no matter what their role, background, or personal characteristics.*
- *ensure that we meet legal requirements and duties.*

These questions are optional and all your data will be held in the strictest confidence.

Are you:

Male	Female	Prefer not to say
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What is your age?

Under 18	19 - 24	25 – 44	45 - 64
65 - 74	75+	Prefer not to say	

What is your ethnic origin?

Arab	Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups – White & Asian
Asian/Asian British – Bangladeshi	Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups – White & Black African
Asian/Asian British – Indian	Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups – White & Black Caribbean

Asian/Asian British – Pakistani	Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups – Other
Asian/Asian British – Chinese	White – English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British
Asian/Asian British – Other	White - Irish
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – African	White – Other
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – Caribbean	Other ethnic group
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British – Other	Prefer not to say
Gypsy or Traveller of Irish Heritage	

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as ‘a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on (a person’s) ability to perform normal day-to-day activities. ‘Substantial’ means more than minor or trivial and ‘long term’ means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months.

No
Prefer not to say
Yes - Physical impairment, such as difficulty using arms or mobility issues which may mean using a wheelchair or crutches
Yes - Sensory impairment, such as being blind / having a serious visual impairment or being deaf / have a serious hearing impairment
Yes - Mental health condition, such as depression, anxiety, or schizophrenia
Yes - Specific learning difficulty, such as dyslexia or dyspraxia
Yes - Learning disability/difficulty (such as Down’s Syndrome, dyslexia, dyspraxia) or cognitive impairment (such as autistic spectrum disorder)
Yes - Long standing illness or health condition, such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease or epilepsy
Yes - other (please state)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

MANAGING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE PROCEDURE & DISCIPLINARY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Parish Council recognises that its ability to deliver satisfactory services and meet its objectives is dependent on the effective work performance of its employees.
- 1.2 The Council will carefully recruit and select staff, provide induction, one to ones and team meetings, ensure staff are clear about the standards that apply and their expected work performance levels, and develop staff. The Clerk (or Councillors/from the Staffing Committee in the case of the Clerk) will review and give feedback to staff.
- 1.3 The Council expects its employees to maintain satisfactory levels of attendance, job performance, and conduct, raise any problems affecting their work, and respond constructively to advice, guidance and development provided by the Clerk (or Councillors in the case of the Clerk).
- 1.4 The Council believes that the workforce is well motivated and performs well.
- 1.5 The Council also recognises there will be situations where an employee's performance, attendance, or conduct does not meet the standards required. This procedure is designed to help and encourage employees to achieve and maintain acceptable standards of conduct and job performance at all times, including the need to: -
 - Fulfil the duties specified in their contract of employment.
 - Be honest and act beyond suspicion of dishonesty.
 - Maintain high standards of integrity and conduct to protect the Council's image and reputation with the public.
- 1.6 This policy indicates the process that will normally be followed in the event of misconduct, poor attendance, or poor job performance, and complies with legislation (Employment Rights Act 1996, Human Rights Act 1998, the Employment Act 2021) and guidance provided by ACAS. The following list provides examples of conduct that will normally be regarded as misconduct leading to performance management. The list is not exhaustive. These are examples only:
 - a. Failure to comply with Council's rules and procedures applicable to job requirements, including those relating to attendance, time keeping, sickness absence, health and safety, uniform policies, use of Council facilities, use of I.T., data protection policies, and financial processes;
 - b. Unsatisfactory productivity due to sporadic sickness absence (especially where there are no underlying medical conditions);
 - c. Failure to work to the productivity/performance standards which are expected;
 - d. Failure to exercise reasonable care or skills, due to negligence or lack of effort;
 - e. Deliberate failure to carry out a reasonable management instruction and insubordination;
 - f. Behaviour deemed to be discriminatory, bullying, or harassment;

- g. Consuming alcohol or substances outside of working hours or during working hours that affect performance or ability to work safely or reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or other substances. If an offer of support and treatment is not taken up or leads to little or no change then this will be dealt with under this Procedure (see Council's Absence Policy).
 - h. Any other conduct that from time to time is defined by the Council as amounting to misconduct.
- 1.7 At every stage in the procedure the employee will be advised of the nature of the complaint against him or her and will be given the opportunity to state his or her case before any decision is made. Meetings may be recorded. Employees' have the right to appeal against written warnings and dismissal. Employees have the right to be represented at investigation meetings, hearings and appeals (by a trade union representative or work colleague). Representatives have the right to address the hearing or appeal. They may only ask questions and present the employee's case but cannot answer questions on the employee's behalf. Should the employee fail to attend a hearing or appeal without an acceptable reason, then the Chair of the panel may proceed in the employee's absence.
- 1.8 Records will be kept of informal and formal stages and stored confidentially in accordance with Data Protection legislation.
- 1.9 The Council will deal with any performance matters promptly, firmly, consistently, and confidentially in order to demonstrate the Council takes these issues seriously.

2. SCOPE

The procedure applies to all employees of Frampton Cotterell Parish Council relating to misconduct, capability, and sickness absence (with the exception of long-term absence or absences due to underlying medical condition/disabilities when adjustments have not been made which are dealt with under the Absence Policy. This procedure does not cover employees still within their probationary period, for these staff please refer to the probationary policy.

3. INFORMAL ACTION

- 3.1 For first instances of minor misconduct or unsatisfactory performance, the Clerk or Councillor (in the case of the Clerk) may speak to the employee informally seeking to resolve any problems quickly and confidentially.
- 3.2 In the majority of cases this meeting will only involve the employee and Clerk/Councillor, however there may be situations where it is beneficial for the employee to be accompanied at the meeting by a trade union representative or work colleague i.e. when the employee requests this as a reasonable adjustment. The Clerk/Councillor may require Human Resources to assist at the meeting. Any accompaniment would be on the clear understanding that it does not change the informal status of the meeting.
- 3.3 The informal discussion should cover the following:
- a. explain what the conduct/capability/performance/attendance concerns are and ensure the employee understands,
 - b. investigate reasons behind these concerns, consider if there are any health or domestic issues or any workplace issues,
 - c. re-enforce standards and requirements,

- d. consider whether any adjustments are needed to the work or workplace to enable to employee to improve,
- e. offer support, advice and guidance and consider if any additional training or coaching is required.
- f. state how the performance or conduct will be reviewed and over what period.

To put the meeting into context the Clerk/Councillor should make the employee aware of this Procedure and the consequences of failure to improve, i.e. possibility of formal stages.

- 3.4 If through discussions with the employee the matter is considered more serious the Clerk/Councillor should adjourn any meeting and tell the employee advice will be sought on managing the issue formally.
- 3.5 The Clerk/Councillor should keep brief notes of any agreed informal action for reference purposes and in some situations it may be useful to confirm in writing to the employee what has been decided.
- 3.6 Informal discussions can take place in scheduled one-to-one meetings but should not be delayed pending such a meeting. One-to-one discussions can be used to monitor performance and review progresses made and ensure training and support requirements are met.
- 3.7 If acceptable improvement is made then this should be communicated to the employee (in writing when the informal discussion was detailed in writing). If there is not sufficient improvement in performance or attendance then the Clerk/Councillor should take formal action.

4. FORMAL ACTION/DISCIPLINARY

4.1 MANAGEMENT INVESTIGATION

- 4.1.1 If informal action does not bring about the desired improvements and/or if the conduct or performance issue is considered sufficiently serious, the Clerk/Councillor will nominate an investigating officer to investigate the alleged misconduct/poor performance (likely to be Councillors from the Staffing Committee who have had no previous involvement). HR advice should be sought at this stage if this has not already been done.

4.1.2 SUSPENSION

At this stage the Chair of the Council/Clerk/HR may consider suspending the employee on full pay if alleged misconduct is:

- a. potential gross misconduct and dismissal could be the eventual penalty;
- b. the investigation cannot proceed if the employee remains in their current job without the risk of the alleged offence being repeated and it is not possible to move the employee to another job/place of work until the process is complete;
- c. to allow the employee to remain at work would place other employees, service users, or others at risk of harm/injury
- d. there are concerns that evidence may be tampered with or witnesses put under undue pressure.

You may consider making adjustments to the working arrangements of the employee in the avoidance of suspension.

Suspension is not considered a disciplinary sanction and does not mean that any judgement has been made as to whether the employee is guilty of any misconduct –

suspension would only be actioned as a last resort. It is possible that suspension may be lifted during the investigation and prior to any hearing, if the circumstances merit it.

Suspended employees will be allocated a contact officer. They must not enter their place of work or contact any clients or members of staff without prior approval from their contact officer. They will remain on their existing terms and conditions throughout the period of suspension so need to report sickness and book annual leave, even though they are not at work, via their contact officer.

4.1.3 Child Protection or Abuse against a Vulnerable Adult

If allegations involve any concerns around abuse of a child or vulnerable adult, reference should be made to the Council's Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and all necessary agencies such as Social Services and the Police will be contacted, alongside all actions detailed in this Procedure.

4.1.4 Criminal charges or convictions

Where an employee is likely to be subject to criminal charges the following need to be considered:-

- i. If the employee is alleged to have committed an offence and any possible Court action is some months away, the Clerk/Chair of the Council should consider whether there is sufficient justification to take any action and if there is, a management investigation should proceed without delay.
- ii. It is imperative that there is a proper and thorough investigation, and not to rely on the fact that there is a court case pending. A request should be made to the Police or the relevant agency for any evidence they are able to release to aid in the Council's investigation.
- iii. If it is decided to convene a performance hearing a decision can be made on the basis of the information/evidence available. It is not necessary to wait for a Court decision before the panel reaches its decision.
- iv. If very little information is available to the Council prior to the Court hearing, then there may be no option but to defer any investigation pending the Court hearing. Suspension of the employee during this time can be considered.
- v. If an employee is detained in prison, then the Clerk or Staffing Committee must make a decision as to how to proceed depending on the length of time involved or the nature of the offence. A Performance Hearing should be held if there is sufficient evidence available to the Council, in the employee's absence (the employee can provide a written submission or send a representative to speak on their behalf).

4.1.5 The Council will set out in writing the allegations that lead the Council to contemplate taking any action against the employee, determining the principal cause of the performance issue: **sickness absence, misconduct, or capability**, and confirm that a management investigation will be undertaken. The employee should be given a copy of this Procedure and kept informed throughout the process.

4.1.6 The investigator will need to carry out any investigations of alleged poor performance or misconduct without unreasonable delay to establish the facts of the case. They will conduct a fair and balanced investigation. In some cases this will require holding an investigatory meeting with the employee (with 5 working days' notice and the right to be accompanied). The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting. In others, the investigatory stage will be a collation of evidence by the investigator.

4.1.7 The investigator will need to decide if other witnesses need to be interviewed or whether other relevant information needs to be obtained e.g. from Occupational Health.

- 4.1.8 If any underlying medical condition is identified, consideration should be given to the Council's Managing Ill Health Procedure.
- 4.1.9 The investigation must be sufficient to establish whether there is genuine belief that there is a performance issue and provide reasonable grounds on which to sustain the belief on the balance of probabilities. The case does not have to be proven beyond reasonable doubt.
- 4.1.10 **Investigation Outcome**
The investigating officer will report back to the Clerk/Chair of the Council on their findings and recommendations. If the investigation determines that there is in fact no performance issue, the employee should be notified in writing (with any training, support or extra supervision or advice provided). If there is a case to answer the investigating officer should arrange a Performance Hearing.
- 4.1.11 If an employee's sickness absence from work is delaying any stage of the process the investigator may seek advice from Occupational Health as to whether the employee's illness prevents the employee from participating in this process. They may decide to progress the investigation and Hearing with all available information including any written submissions from the employee if unfit to attend, recognising that delays can cause further stress to all parties concerned. This decision will be communicated in writing to the employee.
- 4.1.12 If any issues are raised by the employee about the investigator, consideration should be given as to whether a different investigator should carry out the investigation. If the employee's issues relate to the way the investigation has been conducted these should be presented if the case proceeds to a Performance Hearing. The Panel will have to decide whether or not the issues have materially affected the outcome of the investigation.

4.2 PERFORMANCE HEARING

- 4.2.1 An employee will be given, in writing, no less than 5 working days' notice of the date of the Performance Hearing. They will be informed of the matters that are to be discussed and the possible consequences. A copy of this Procedure and a written submission will be provided together with the notice of the hearing date and the right to be accompanied. The written submission will include copies of any previous correspondence, any documentation relevant to the issue, witness statements, absence records, or anything intended to be presented as evidence. This will be provided to all panel members and an additional copy will be sent to the employee for their representative.
- 4.2.2. Details of any witnesses the employee intends to call and any written submission or documents that the employee wishes to refer to at the hearing must be submitted to the Investigating Officer at least 3 working days prior to the hearing.
- 4.2.3 The Performance Hearing Panel would normally be three members of the Council Staffing Committee, one of which is the Chair and a HR Advisor (all parties will have had no involvement in the investigation).
- 4.2.4 The Hearing will normally proceed as follows:
- The Hearing Chair will introduce Panel members and specify their roles, clarify the purpose of the hearing and state the allegations;
 - The investigating Clerk/Councillor will present the case outlining the background, any current sanctions, and the performance/conduct issue. They will call any witnesses to give evidence and ask questions of their witnesses. The employee's side will then have the opportunity to question the witnesses and the investigators on the evidence presented, followed by the Hearing Panel.

- The employee and/or their companion will present their case and any mitigating factors that they wish the panel to take into consideration. The employee or companion will call any witnesses to give evidence. The employee will ask questions of their witnesses. The investigators will then have the opportunity to question the witnesses and the employee on the evidence presented, followed by the Hearing Panel.
- If new evidence emerges it may be necessary to adjourn the hearing to allow time to investigate it and share any further information prior to the hearing being convened.
- Both the investigator and employee will have the opportunity to summarise the main points raised.
- Hearing Panel adjourn to make their decision;
- Hearing reconvened and the employee/representative informed of the decision and, if necessary, their rights of appeal.

4.2.5 When an employee raises a grievance during the hearing it may sometimes be appropriate to consider stopping the hearing and suspending the procedure - for example if bias/discrimination is alleged in the conduct of the hearing.

4.2.6 The panel will consider in private all of the relevant evidence and come to a decision as to whether or not the case is proven, this may be on the balance of probabilities. If the case is proven, the Councillor chairing the panel, advised by HR, will decide the appropriate sanction. The Council will consider any current sanctions for the purposes of determining a relevant sanction. Recently spent sanctions may also be considered, should these be related to the allegations under consideration. If the case is not proven the employee will be informed accordingly both verbally and in writing.

4.2.7 The Hearing outcome letter will detail the panel's conclusions concerning the allegations, any mitigating factors, and the sanction imposed. It will also detail the nature of any improvement required, any support to be provided to the employee and inform the employee of the implications of any further misconduct, absence or unsatisfactory performance in the case of First or Final Written Warnings. The letter will also detail the employee's right of appeal (see section 6.4).

4.3 SANCTIONS

4.3.1 In determining the appropriate disciplinary action, regard should be given to the employee's previous record, the gravity of the offence, any explanation, and the category of the allegation – Misconduct, Sickness Absence or Capability or Gross Misconduct.

4.3.2 Any sanction can also include withholding of any increment or withdrawing any salary enhancement (for first or final written warnings), an agreement to repay any sums of money owed to the Council, including breaches of working hours.

4.3.3 Any first or final written warning will remain current for the time period specified but will remain on an employee's file thereafter for information.

4.3.4 The panel may decide as an alternative to dismissal to consider transferring or demoting an employee (with their agreement) to an existing vacancy, alongside the issuing of a final written warning.

SANCTION	TIME PERIOD	WHEN TO USE

First written warning	12 months from date of hearing panel	If this is the first hearing for misconduct, sickness absence, or capability, normally a first written warning will be given.
Final written warning	2 years from date of hearing panel	If the employee has a current warning then further misconduct, absence or performance (whether or not connected with the earlier offence) will normally result in a final written warning, or exceptionally could result in dismissal (see below). OR if the issue is considered sufficiently serious it may be justifiable to move directly to a final written warning.
Dismissal with contractual notice		For misconduct/unsatisfactory performance EXCEPT gross misconduct, by an employee who is under a final written warning. The employee will be dismissed with notice or pay in lieu of notice and paid for the balance of any untaken annual leave. Dismissal letter to specify the reason for dismissal.
Gross Misconduct (see section 4.3.4 below)		In cases where gross misconduct is established the employee will be summarily dismissed without notice or pay in lieu of notice.

4.3.5 GROSS MISCONDUCT

Gross misconduct refers to situations where the employee's conduct is such that it fundamentally repudiates the contract of employment. It may justify dismissal without any previous performance warning, unless there are extenuating circumstances. The following list provides examples of conduct that will normally be regarded by the Council as gross misconduct, depending on the seriousness and circumstances of the offence; the list is not exhaustive. These are examples only:

- a. Theft, fraud and deliberate falsification of financial records (including falsification of pay, expense claims, qualification, or attendance records).
- b. Failure to declare a criminal conviction or disqualification (where relevant to the post) on job application or once employed.
- c. Deliberate damage to Council's property and misuse of the Council's property or name.
- d. Fighting, assault or other physical violence, or serious verbal abuse to another employee, client, Member, or member of the public.
- e. Serious infringement of the Council's Health and Safety procedures (including acts or omissions at work which seriously endanger the health or safety of employees, clients or members of the public).
- f. Serious incapacity, whilst on duty, due to alcohol or drugs.
- g. Serious harassment and/or discrimination.
- h. Physical or sexual abuse of clients of the Council or failing to bring to the Council's attention any such offences committed by other Council employees.
- i. Serious negligence in carrying out the required duties of the post which causes, or has the
- j. potential to cause, unacceptable loss, damage or injury.
- k. Serious insubordination, or wilfully failing to carry out reasonable instructions.
- l. Serious breach of Council's ICT policies and procedures such as deliberately viewing, downloading or transmitting pornographic, racist, or other offensive material
- m. Serious breach of Council's Data Protection policies such as unauthorised disclosure of confidential information.

- n. Sleeping on duty.
- o. Conduct bringing the Council into serious disrepute.

4.4 RIGHT OF APPEAL

4.4.1 If the employee wishes to appeal against the Council's decision, they must notify the Chair of the Council in writing within five working days of receiving notice of the Council's decision. In lodging an appeal the employee must outline their grounds of appeal in writing, specifying whether it relates to the facts of the matter, new evidence, the level of sanction imposed or the way in which the procedure was followed, and the remedy sought.

4.4.2 If the employee appeals, the Council will invite the employee to attend an appeal meeting before the Council's Appeal Panel. The Appeal Panel will consist of differently constituted panel of 3 members of the Council, providing that they have had no previous involvement in the matter. The employee must take all reasonable steps to attend the meeting. The employee has the right to be accompanied at an appeal meeting by a work colleague or trade union representative. Independent external professionals may also be part of the panel to ensure fairness and independence.

4.4.3 Arranging an Appeal

The date and time of the appeal will be organised by the Clerk or Staffing Committee. It is the responsibility of each side to prepare themselves for the appeal including arranging for any witnesses to attend. The Chair of the original panel and the employee or their representative will, where possible, submit papers for consideration by the appeals panel, at three days prior to the appeal meeting.

4.4.3 Appeal Meeting process

The Appeal Meeting will normally proceed as follows:

- i. The Appeal Meeting Chair will introduce Panel members and specify their roles, clarify the purpose of the meeting, and state the sanction imposed and grounds of appeal.
- ii. The Hearing Panel Chair will present the case outlining the background, any current sanctions
 - a. and the performance/conduct issue. They will call any witnesses to give evidence.
 - b. They will ask questions of their witnesses. The employee's side will then have the
 - c. opportunity to question the witnesses and the Hearing Panel Chair on the evidence
 - d. presented, followed by the Appeal Meeting Panel.
- iii. The employee and/or their companion will present their grounds for an appeal. The
 - a. employee or companion will call any witnesses to give evidence. The employee will
 - b. ask questions of their witnesses. The Hearing Panel Chair will then have the
 - c. opportunity to question the witnesses and the employee on the evidence presented,
 - d. followed by the Appeal Meeting Panel.
- iv. If new evidence emerges it may be necessary to adjourn the appeal to allow time to
 - a. investigate it and share any further information prior to the appeal being convened.
- v. Both the Hearing Panel Chair and employee will have the opportunity to summarise
 - a. the main points raised. Appeal Panel adjourn to make their decision;
- vi. Hearing reconvened and the employee/representative informed of the decision.

4.4.4 The following applies at the appeal meeting:

- a. Any new evidence arising after the Hearing which is relevant to the outcome of the Hearing that the employee wishes to put forward will be considered. The original disciplinary sanction will be reviewed.

- b. The sanction originally imposed cannot be increased upon appeal.
 - c. The appeal meeting will not necessarily take place before any sanction imposed by the Council takes effect. If the employee's appeal is against dismissal and the appeal is successful, he or she will be reinstated and continuity of employment will be preserved.
 - d. The Appeals Panel has the right to call its own witnesses should it consider this to be of assistance in making its decision.
- 4.4.4 After the appeal meeting the employee will be informed of the Council's final decision within five working days; the meeting may be reconvened for this purpose. The Council's decision will be confirmed to the employee in writing.

5 GENERAL PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

- 5.1 Where performance proceedings are instigated against the Clerk, all employee relations matters are dealt with by the Council's Staffing Committee. Any investigations and any meetings will be carried out by the Council's Staffing Committee and/or independent external professionals.

Any appeal meeting will be conducted by three (3) members of the Council, who do not sit on the Staffing Committee and/or independent external professionals.

- 5.2 Where an employee raises a grievance during this Procedure the process may be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the grievance. Where the grievance and performance cases are related it may be appropriate to deal with both issues at the same time.

5.3 Trade Union Officials

In normal circumstances no action will be taken against an Officer of a recognised trade union until the matter has been discussed with an officer of that union, who may wish to be the representative.

Menopause Policy

PURPOSE

Frampton Cotterell Parish Council is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment for everyone who works here and so, for the purposes of this policy, gender neutral pronouns will be used. Frampton Cotterell Parish Council recognises that not every person going through the menopause will identify as 'female' and this policy is inclusive of all gender identities including trans and non-binary.

Menopause is a natural part of life for some, and it isn't always an easy transition. With the right support, it can be much better. Whilst every person does not suffer with symptoms, supporting those who do will improve their experience at work. Menopause should not be taboo or 'hidden'. The council wants everyone to understand what menopause is, and to be able to talk about it openly, without embarrassment.

The council considers this issue is not just for those suffering from menopausal symptoms, everyone should be familiar with it.

The changing age of the UK's workforce means that between 75% and 80% of people experiencing menopause are in work. Research shows that the majority are unwilling to discuss menopause related health problems with their line manager, or to ask for the support or adjustments that they might need.

This policy sets out the guidelines for member of staff and councillors on providing the right support to manage menopausal symptoms at work. It is not contractual and does not form part of the terms and conditions of employment.

SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to all Frampton Cotterell Parish Council staff (including volunteers) and councillors. The policy applies to all stages of the menopause: perimenopause, menopause and post menopause.

AIMS OF THIS POLICY

The aims of this policy are to:

- Foster an environment in which colleagues can openly and comfortably instigate conversations or engage in discussions about menopause.
- Ensure everyone understands what menopause is, can confidently have good conversations, and are clear on the parish council's policy and practices.
- Educate and inform staff and councillors about the potential symptoms of menopause and suggest how they can support their colleagues, who may be experiencing symptoms, at work.
- Ensure that colleagues suffering with menopausal symptoms feel confident to discuss it, ask for support and ask for any reasonable adjustments that allow them to continue to be successful in their roles.
- Reduce absenteeism due to menopausal symptoms.
- Assure staff that the parish council is a responsible employer, committed to supporting their needs during menopause.

DEFINITIONS

Menopause is defined as a biological stage in a person's life that occurs when they stop menstruating and reach the end of their natural reproductive life. Usually, it is defined as

having occurred when someone has not had a period for twelve consecutive months (for people reaching menopause naturally). The average age for a person to reach menopause is 51, however, it can be earlier or later than this.

Perimenopause is the time leading up to menopause when a person may experience changes, such as irregular periods or other menopausal symptoms. This can be years before menopause.

Post menopause is the time after menopause has occurred, starting when a person has not had a period for twelve consecutive months.

SYMPTOMS OF MENOPAUSE

It is important to note that not every person will notice every symptom, or even need help or support. However, 75% of people do experience some symptoms, and 25% could be classed as severe. Symptoms can manifest both physically and psychologically including, but not exclusively, hot flushes, poor concentration, headaches, panic attacks, heavy/light periods, anxiety, and loss of confidence. Some people also experience difficulty sleeping.

POLICY GUIDANCE

Frampton Cotterell Parish Council has used guidance from the Faculty of Occupational Medicine (FOM), and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), to inform this policy. The NICE guidelines set out the recommendations for medical professionals when treating menopausal symptoms.

Self-management, with support from managers and colleagues, will help to manage symptoms. Appendix A details some recommendations to support symptomatic people, and others, who might just need advice and support. Appendix 1 is a template to assist managers and/or councillors in recording conversations with members of staff and noting agreed actions and adjustments.

In accordance with FOM and NICE guidelines, symptomatic people should be advised to seek medical advice from the GP in the first instance. Appendix B offers a helpful guide giving advice on how to have constructive conversations about menopause with a doctor.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Members of staff are responsible for.

- Taking personal responsibility to look after their health.
- Speaking to the Clerk/CEO & RFO or a member of the Staffing Committee.
 - Being open and honest in conversations with the Clerk/CEO & RFO /staffing committee.
- Contributing to a respectful and productive working environment.
- Being willing to help and support their colleagues.
- Understanding any necessary adjustments their colleagues are receiving as a result of their menopausal symptoms.

Clerk/CEO & RFO (see Appendix 1 for Managers' Guidance) will:

- Familiarise themselves with the Menopause Policy and Guidance.
- Be ready and willing to have open discussions about menopause, appreciating the personal nature of the conversation, and treating the discussion sensitively and professionally.

- Use the guidance in Appendices A and B, signposting and reviewing together, before agreeing with the individual how best they can be supported, and any adjustments required.
- Record adjustments agreed, and actions to be implemented.
- Ensure ongoing dialogue and review dates.
- Ensure that adjustments are adhered to.

Where adjustments are unsuccessful, or if symptoms are proving more problematic, the Clerk/CEO & RFO may:

- Discuss with the staff member a referral to Occupational Health for further advice, with the assistance and guidance of the parish clerk.
- Review Occupational Health advice, and implement any recommendations, where reasonably practical.
- Update any action plan and continue to review.

The role of Occupational Health is to:

- Carry out a holistic assessment of individuals as to whether or not menopause may be contributing to symptoms/wellbeing, providing advice and guidance in line with up-to-date research.
- Signpost to appropriate sources of help and advice (refer to Appendix B for more information).
- Provide support and advice to the managers in identifying reasonable adjustments, if required.

The Clerk/CEO & RFO and *the Staff Committee will:*

- Undertake training and provide updates that affect this policy.
- Consider relevant applications for work adjustments made under this policy
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy in respect of related absence levels and performance.
- Remind councillors of the Nolan Principles, including “Leadership”: Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs. (The Seven Principles of Public Life - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk))

Appendix A Managers’ Guidance for colleague discussions

The council recognises that everyone is different, and it is therefore not feasible to set out a structured set of specific guidelines. All advice is given, and written, in accordance with the Faculty of Occupational Medicine (FOM) recommendations and best practice. If an employee wishes to speak about their symptoms, or just to talk about how they are feeling (they may not recognise themselves that they are symptomatic), or if they wish to speak about a family member, please ensure that you:

- Allow adequate time to have the conversation,
- Find an appropriate room to preserve confidentiality,
- Encourage them to speak openly and honestly,
- Suggest ways in which they can be supported (see symptoms below) – hand out the Menopause advice sheet (Appendix B),

- Agree actions, and how to implement them (you should use template at Appendix A.1 to record the meeting, so that all parties agree what has been discussed, and the next steps, before the meeting ends). Ensure that this record is treated as confidential and is stored securely.
- Agree if other members of the team should be informed, and by whom,
- Ensure that designated time is allowed for a follow up meeting. Do not rely on quick queries during chance encounters in the corridor or office.

Symptom Support

Symptoms can manifest both physically and psychologically, including, but not exhaustively those listed below. Support for individuals should be considered as detailed below:

Hot flushes

- Request temperature control for their work area, such as a fan on their desk, or moving away from a heat source.
- Ensure storage space is available for a change of clothing.
- Permit staff to work from home for a time, where possible.

Headaches

- Have ease of access to drinking water.
- Offer a quiet place to work.
- Offer noise-reducing headphones to wear in open spaces.
- Have time out to take medication if needed. Difficulty Sleeping
- Consider flexible working, particularly if suffering from lack of sleep.

Low Mood

- Agree time out from others, when required, without needing to ask for permission.
- Identify a 'buddy' for the colleague to talk to (outside of the work area if possible).
- Identify a 'time out space' to be able to go to 'clear their head'.
- Permit staff to work from home for a time, where possible, ensuring they do not become isolated.

Loss of Confidence

- Ensure there are regular Personal Development discussions.
- Have regular protected time with the Clerk/CEO & RFO to discuss any issues.
- Have agree protected time to catch up with work.

Poor Concentration

- Discuss if there are times of the day when concentration is better or worse and adjust working pattern/practice accordingly.
- Review task allocation and workload.
- Provide books for lists, action boards, or other memory assisting equipment.
- Offer a quiet space to work.

- Offer noise reducing headphones to wear in open offices.
- Reduce interruptions, where possible.
- Have agreements in place in an open office that an individual is having 'protected time', so that they are not disturbed.
- Have agreed protected time to catch up with work.

Anxiety

- Promote the DAS – 24-hour counselling helpline service, available to employees and their immediate families, on 0117 934 2121.
- Identify a 'buddy' for the colleague to talk to (outside of their work area if possible).
- Be able to have time away from their work to undertake relaxation techniques.
 - Encourage and allow reasonable time for mindfulness activities such as breathing exercises or going for a walk.

Panic Attacks

- Promote the DAS – 24-hour counselling helpline service, available to employees and their immediate families, on 0117 934 2121.
- Agree time out from others, when required, without needing to ask for permission.
- Identify a 'buddy' outside of the work area.
- Be able to have time away from their work to undertake relaxation techniques
 - Encourage and allow mindfulness activities such as breathing exercises or going for a walk.

Discuss whether the member of staff has visited the GP. Depending on the discussion, this may be the next step suggested, particularly if the areas of difficulty are sleeping, panic attacks or anxiety. If they have visited their GP and are being supported by them, it may be helpful at this point to make an Occupational Health referral to give specific advice regarding the workplace.

Appendix A.1 Confidential Colleague Discussion – Template

Member of staff's details			
Name:			
Job Title:		Location:	

Names of those present at meeting	
Date of discussion:	

Summary of discussion:

--

Agreed actions/adjustments:

Date of next review meeting:

.....

Signed (member of staff):

.....
.....

Signed (manager):

.....
.....

Appendix B Menopause Advice Sheet – How to talk to your GP about menopause

If you're suffering from menopausal symptoms to the point they're getting in the way of your work and enjoying life, it's time to talk to your doctor. However, sometimes, that is easier said than done.

We all know how difficult it can often be just to get an appointment, and then it's often only for 10 minutes. Talking about symptoms can be hard, let alone if you feel rushed or unprepared. So, what can you do? We've put together some helpful, straightforward tips to help you get the best from your appointment.

Don't wait. It is all too common to feel like you must simply 'put up' with menopausal symptoms as a part of life, but if they are affecting you, there are things you can do, and support available. There is no need to wait until symptoms feel unbearable. Read the NICE guidelines. This stands for National Institute for Health and Care Excellence and these guidelines are what your doctor will use to determine the type of conversations to have with you and treatments to offer. There are guidelines for patients, which are really useful to read before you see your GP, so you know what to expect.

Prepare for your appointment. It's easier for your doctor to understand what's going on if you provide them with all the information. That may sound obvious, but blood tests to say where

you are on the menopause transition aren't always available or accurate – your hormones can fluctuate daily during this time. So, your doctor will be thinking about what to recommend for you, based on your symptoms.

Keep a list of your symptoms, your menstrual cycle, hot flashes, how you're feeling and any changes you've noticed. Write them down and take them to your appointment. Your doctor will thank you for it, and it's more likely that together, you'll find the right solution faster. If you have any preferences about how you manage your symptoms, tell them that too – for example, if you'd like to try hormone replacement therapy (HRT), or not.

Ask the receptionist which doctor is best to talk to about menopause. They are often the font of all knowledge at a surgery and can help you to find the best person to speak to – it might not be your usual GP; it could be someone who has had special training in the subject. Ask for a longer appointment. If you don't think your standard appointment will be long enough, try to book a double appointment, as some surgeries do offer this.

Don't be afraid to ask for a second opinion. If you don't feel that you have received the help that you need, ask to speak to someone else. Don't be put off, you know how you are feeling and how it is affecting you.

Ask if there is a menopause clinic in your area. Occasionally, there are regional clinics, specifically devoted to menopause. If there is one in your area and you think that it would be helpful to you, ask for a referral.

Take a partner or friend with you. The chances are, you spend your life supporting others and, during menopause, it may be your turn to ask for support. Your partner or a friend will know how the symptoms are affecting you. They could support you at the appointment and find out how to continue to support you.

What to expect from your doctor

There are certain things a GP should, and should not, do during your appointment.

They should:

- Talk to you about your lifestyle, and how to manage both your symptoms, and your longer-term health.
- Offer advice on hormone replacement therapy and other non-medical options.
- Talk to you after the safety and effectiveness of any treatment

They should not:

- Tell you that it is just that time of your life. Yes, menopause is a natural stage, but please don't feel that means you should have to put up with every symptom without help.
- Tell you that they don't prescribe HRT. It's up to you what you want to try, and for them to say whether it could be right for you, depending on your medical history.
- Impose unnecessary time restrictions, such as they will only prescribe this once, or for a year or two. This is an ongoing conversation and if your symptoms persist, you will still need help to manage them.

Remember your GP is there to help and support you, and you should feel comfortable and confident in talking to them about your symptoms, and any help you need. Don't think you have to struggle through menopause when there is help and support available

Appendix C- External Links

Probationary Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A probationary period enables both parties in a contract of employment to assess the suitability of an individual to the role and the Council, and to enable members of staff to be trained in the Council's working methods and procedures.
- 1.2 The purpose of a probationary period is to enable the organisation to assess the skills, conduct, capability, and attendance of an individual before deciding whether or not to confirm the appointment. The Council is committed to providing clarity of expectation, reasonable training and support needed for new employees to meet the required standards.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to any employee who is taking up their first appointment with Frampton Cotterell Parish Council, whether it is a temporary or permanent contract, or following a break in service.
- 2.2 All new employees (including those from other authorities) to the Council are subject to the Probationary Policy.

3 PROBATIONARY POLICY & PROCEDURE

- 3.1 The probationary period is stated in the employee Statement of Terms and Conditions and is usually 6 months, a probationary report must be completed at three and five months after the employee's start date and discussed with the employee.
- 3.2 A formal Probationary Interview should be arranged where an issue has been identified and no improvement is apparent. The outcome must be confirmed in writing to the employee and if performance is unsatisfactory, an employee will be dismissed with notice as stated in the employees Statement of Terms and Conditions (unless in cases of gross misconduct).
- 3.3 When a formal Probationary Interview or Appeal is required, the Council should consider seeking HR advice (in consultation with the Staffing Committee as HR services are chargeable).

4 PROBATIONARY REPORT

- 4.1.1 Managers should hold regular 1:1 meetings with the new employee during the probationary period and throughout employment, to ensure purpose of the role and specific objectives are clear. Records of the meetings should be kept.
- 4.1.2 The Probationary Report must be completed and the manager should discuss this with the employee to allow the opportunity to comment on feedback and to improve their performance where identified.
- 4.1.3 An appointment can be confirmed at three months if performance is satisfactory at the discretion of the Staffing Committee.
- 4.1.4 An appointment can be terminated if performance is unsatisfactory and unlikely to improve, and sufficient time has been allowed for improvement, equally if the employee's behaviour or actions are significantly unacceptable.

- 4.1.5 Where no improvement is apparent during the probationary period, an employee will be dismissed with notice as stated in the employees Statement of Terms and Conditions.

5 PROBATIONARY INTERVIEW

- 5.1 Where a need for improvement has been identified and discussed with the employee and no improvement is apparent, a formal Probationary Interview should be arranged by the manager as soon as reasonably possible (no later than the fifth month following the employee's start date).
- 5.2 The employee should be advised in writing of the interview giving a broad outline of the areas for improvement, to be discussed fully at the interview.
- 5.3 The line manager (or members of the Staffing Committee in the case of the Clerk) and employee will be present at the interview. Employees have the right to be accompanied at this interview if they wish by a colleague.

The line manager will chair the meeting, introducing all parties and explaining the format of the interview. They will present the background and the facts of the case to include:

- Employee details – date of commencement, post title, grade, location;
- Strengths and weaknesses identified;
- Role purpose and specific objectives;
- Induction, support and training provided & timescales;
- Guidance and assistance provided to overcome the weaknesses;
- Supervision and support provided including evidence e.g., reports from meetings;
- The line manager should be clear how performance is unsatisfactory and that unless there are mitigating circumstances, the employment will not be confirmed.

The employee is invited to make a response or put forward any mitigating circumstances. The employee and person accompanying them then leave the room.

The decision is made as to whether or not the employee's employment should be confirmed, or to extend the probation period. If the decision is made to dismiss, the line manager will consider if the employee will be required to work the weeks' notice or to be paid in lieu of notice.

- 5.4 The outcome of the interview must be confirmed in writing detailing the employee's right of appeal.

6 EXTENSIONS

- 6.1 If the performance is unsatisfactory but is likely to become satisfactory in a reasonable timescale, the probation period can be extended by a maximum of 3 months. The improvements required should be confirmed in writing. If there is no improvement within the set timescales, the employee will be dismissed under the terms of the Probationary Policy.

7 DISMISSALS

- 7.1 If performance is unsatisfactory (whether extended or not, and unless it is gross misconduct), the employee will be dismissed with one weeks' notice. It is important that the period of notice does not cause continuous service to exceed 6 months (unless

an extension has been agreed), otherwise the employee cannot be dismissed under the Probationary Policy.

8 RIGHT OF APPEAL

- 8.1 The employee has the right to appeal against a decision to dismiss under the Probationary Policy. The employee must lodge their appeal in writing to the Parish Clerk (or the Staffing Committee in the case of the Clerk) within 5 working days of the decision.
- 8.2 The appeal will be heard by at least two members of the Staffing Committee.

Probation Report

Employee Name:				
Start Date:				
Post Title:				
Please tick appropriate box for each category. Any comments should be added, together with an explanation.				
	Very Poor	Poor	Good	Excellent
Quality of work & attention to detail				
Conduct and co-operation				
Attitude				
Progress made				
Relationship with team/manager/colleagues				
Reliability				
Attendance & time keeping				
Details of sick leave		Days		
Line Manager's comments (include any remarks regarding induction training and mandatory e-modules, improvements identified and actions agreed. When assessing sick leave, consider if there is an underlying medical condition disability and if reasonable adjustments have been made when assessing.)				
Final Report				
Do you recommend this employee passes their probation?		<i>Yes/No/Consider Extension</i>		
If "No" or an extension is required, please state reasons:				
Have you discussed this report with the employee?		<i>Yes/No</i>		
If "No" please state reasons:				
Signed:			Date:	
Name:				
Post Title:				

Please keep completed form on the employee's file

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION GUIDE

1. Introduction

This guide provides a framework to enable fair and effective recruitment and selection to take place. The Council expects everyone involved in recruiting and selecting to have read and understood this guide in order to:

- be aware of the techniques to be objective, unbiased and professional.
- use best practice methods.
- promote a positive image of the Council.
- make cost effective appointments.
- comply with legislation.
- be fair and consistent.
- identify and address inequality.

2. Review the Vacancy

2.1 A vacancy arising from an employee leaving is an opportunity to look at the needs of the Council and to consider if the post needs changing to match these needs, or even consider if the post is needed at all.

2.2 How do I assess if the post is needed or should be amended?

There are sources of information available that can be used to analyse the job and service needs such as; appraisals, feedback from staff, councillors, and members of the public, time recording or other performance information, budget information, information on town and parish council websites and circulars about legislative changes.

2.3 What questions should I be asking?

- Has there been a change in service need?
- Does the job still exist or only part of its responsibilities?
- Could the resource be used more effectively?
- What am I trying to achieve now and in the future?
- What does this post contribute to Council objectives?
- Is there a review/restructure pending?

2.4 Do I need to fill the vacancy now?

- Is there a short-term dip in work?
- Could I reallocate the work to other staff on a temporary basis?
- Would the service be better served by appointing on a short term, limited term or agency basis?
- What are the consequences of leaving the post vacant or deleting it?

3 Prepare the Job Description

Yes, I need to fill the post, so what now?

3.1 All vacancies need to be approved by the Council's Staffing Committee before they can be advertised.

3.2 You will need to write a job description specifying the job title, hours, grade, who they report to and line manage/supervise, a list of main duties and responsibilities, and include a person specification detailing essential and desirable requirements. Clear selection criteria can improve the chance of making a cost-effective appointment through attracting the right people to your advert; provide clarity for applicants to enable them to state exactly how they meet the criteria, provide a common standard for shortlisting and selection; be used to provide constructive feedback to unsuccessful candidates and to demonstrate fair selection decisions in response to any complaint against the Council.

3.3 Applicants will use the job description to assess their suitability and make their application, so they need to be clear and concise and free from any jargon or unnecessary requirements. You may have applicants whose first language is not English, or groups who have substantial relevant experience but fewer formal qualifications. Your aim is to be “inclusive”.

- You must avoid terms like “Draughtsman” and ensure the use of his/her where appropriate.
- Avoid any words that could be considered discriminatory on the grounds of age e.g. young, energetic.
- Do not use number of years’ experience or any other criteria which could be considered discriminatory on the grounds of age.
- Include and consider equivalent relevant experience, qualifications, etc.
- Do not use selection criteria which could exclude specific groups unless they are absolutely essential e.g., in most instances possession of a driving licence is not an essential criterion as alternative methods of transport are available.
- You can set a criterion for a job requiring a specific gender or ethnic group if it is a genuine occupational qualification (GOQs) – seek HR advice on this if deemed relevant.
- More flexible working arrangements may well open up a vacancy to a wider pool of potential applicants and solve recruitment difficulties.

4 Filling the Vacancy

4.1 Vacant Posts

Posts can be advertised internally and externally and available to Frampton Cotterell Parish Council employees and external applicants, other than in the following situations:-

- Where the vacant post is to be filled by an “at risk” employee or an existing Council apprentice (after 9 months service).
- Where the same post has recently been advertised (within the previous three months) and suitable applicants remain available for appointment to the post.
- If restructuring is pending and posts need to be ring fenced and filled via expressions of interest. Advertising can be widened in successive stages if not filled.
- Where it is considered likely that a suitable appointment can be made from an “internal only” advertisement, having regard to the skills and experience available within the Council. It is stressed that in these situations the decision is made by the Staffing Committee and the post can be subsequently advertised externally.
- If an employee has been in a limited term post for over 12 months, was appointed to it on a competitive selection basis in response to an advert and has carried out their duties satisfactorily, the Staffing Committee may permanently appoint the employee, without advertising.

4.2 Advertising a Vacancy & Choosing the media

Ask yourself:-

- What media are your target audience likely to be using?
- How do publication dates fit into your schedule for filling the vacancy?
- What would be cost effective?

Possible sources:

- National press.
- Council website.
- Local Government organisations such as SLCC and NALC.
- Other local town and parish councils.
- Local press including free papers.
- Specialist journals.
- Radio.
- Targeting schools and colleges.
- Other websites.
- Job Boards.
- Social Media.
- Consultancies (direct sourcing or search).

4.3 Job Advert

The key to a good advert is precision and clarity. The aim should be to attract attention, not to explain every detail of the job. Think about job titles from an external point of view – would they understand what the job is from the job title?

The first couple of sentences of the advert (the “hook”) should be written so as to make the job attractive and encourage applicants to apply or request further details.

Most applicants will be looking for information on:-

- Job title.
- Location.
- The job and key tasks.
- The most important essential competencies, qualifications, skills and experience the job requires.
- Salary range.
- Hours of work, and if open to flexible arrangements.
- Benefits.
- A realistic closing date.
- Interview date.
- A unique selling feature.
- How to apply.
- An informal contact (name and telephone number).
- If the post is subject to DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service requirements)

Apply the same inclusive aspects as detailed in point 4. Avoid duplication and repetition and write in the second person (you/we) as it creates a less formal style. Avoid technical terms or jargon as it could put candidates off.

You are allowed to make encouraging statements e.g. “We welcome applications from all sections of the local community, including ethnic minorities and disabled people who are currently under-represented.”

5 Agree Method of Application

5.1 In normal circumstances a full application form should be completed. However, an Expression of Interest application would be appropriate in certain circumstances e.g. for internal acting up or secondment opportunities.

6 Agree Selection Methods

6.1 Interviews should be used for all Council vacancies. It is a good idea to arrange an early meeting with the other interview panel members to decide on additional selection methods if required.

6.2 Some things cannot be measured as easily by interview and the following additional selection methods could be used to assess criteria on the employee specification:-

- Presentations.
- Aptitude tests.
- Written submissions.
- Work samples e.g. in-tray exercises, word processing tests or other practical tests based on simulation of real work.
- Case studies.

6.3 Where appropriate a number of the above methods can be combined to obtain as much information about the candidates' skills and abilities. You should determine the scoring and weighting of each test.

7 Shortlisting

7.1 Shortlisting is the process of comparing the applicants against the selection criteria not against other candidates.

7.2 The panel will comprise of the Clerk and at least 1 Councillor from the Staffing Committee, the panel will compare each of the application forms, initially, with a number of the essential criteria set down in the Job Description. You must record the results of your shortlisting assessment as these can then be used if candidates request feedback or if there is a complaint of unfair treatment against the Council. If there are still too many applicants, then a comparison against the desirable criteria should be carried out.

7.3 School leaver age (England) - Young people must stay in some form of education or training until they turn 18. For work opportunities they could undertake an apprenticeship or take a job combined with part-time education or training.

7.4 Rehabilitation of ex-offenders - As an organisation using the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checking service to assess applicants' suitability for positions of trust, our Council complies fully with the Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a DBS check on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

7.5 What do I do if?-

- **There are no suitable candidates?**
If this is the case, you may wish to re-advertise or review the vacancy.
- **If there is only one candidate who meets the essential criteria?**
It is acceptable to shortlist that candidate and make an appointment if appropriate.
- **Internal candidates?**
Should be treated in exactly the same way as external candidates. Please note that agency workers will be entitled to the same access to internal vacancies and be treated as an internal candidate, once they have achieved parity.

8 Prepare for the Selection Process and Interview

8.1 Notifying Applicants

The Clerk or Staffing Committee will need to invite candidates to interview. If there are to be any additional tests or assessments as part of the process these should also be detailed in the letter to the candidate. The letter will ask if there are any special requirements and inform candidates of the proof of right to work in the UK requirements as below:

Employers have a legal responsibility (Asylum and Immigration Act 1999) to ensure that an individual has the right to work in the United Kingdom. All candidates shortlisted for interview are now required to produce documentation to satisfy the conditions placed upon employers by this legislation. Candidates will be required to bring documentation as specified in the Proof of Right to Work – ID of Subject Form to their interview. All documents must be originals as photocopies are not acceptable. Any offer of employment will be wholly subject to the production of this documentation. You need to have a sponsor licence to hire most workers from outside the UK. The new system does not apply to EEA or Swiss citizens you already employ in the UK. EEA and Swiss citizens who were living in the UK by 31 December 2020, and their family members, can apply to the EU Settlement Scheme.

All unsuccessful candidates should also be advised.

8.2 Points to consider:

- Previous criminal convictions are not normally a reason for rejecting a person at shortlisting stage, and you should take up any queries on this at interview stage.
- The panel should comprise of people with the appropriate level of competence and knowledge to assess candidates' suitability for the role.
- Anticipate candidate's questions about the job – it is an important decision for them too.
- If a disabled person has been shortlisted, they may need supportive arrangements in order to take part in the process e.g., signers, loop system, special software, additional time, or any other aids/support. This needs to be checked as early as possible after shortlisting in case you need some time to research and obtain the required support.
- All candidates should be asked the same standard questions at interview, although probing or follow-up questions can be used and/or questions about specific items on a candidate's application form, including criminal convictions and gaps in employment. The same selection exercises should be used.

9 The Selection Process and Interview

9.1 Interview structure

The main objective of an interview is to get an accurate picture of a candidate's suitability for the job. Most people are going to be apprehensive at an interview and it may help a candidate, to provide the information you want, if you can encourage them to relax. Give some background information about the job and where it fits in. Begin by asking the candidate to talk about things they will be familiar with e.g. why they have applied for your job? Ask a couple of questions and always thank them. Once you have got the interview flowing you can move into your standard and other prepared questions. On departure ensure the candidate knows how and when they will be informed of the outcome.

9.2 Interview Questions

The following points are helpful to bear in mind:-

- The best pointer to future performance is how someone has performed in the past, so it is a good idea to ask open questions which relate to previous experiences, such as:-
 - ❖ Tell me about.....
 - ❖ Describe a time when....
 - ❖ Give me an example of your involvement in....
 - ❖ Why did you....
- Prepare sufficient questions to cover all your selection criteria that you have decided are measurable at interview (this may be supplemented by other selection tests).
- Move on if after having been given sufficient opportunity the candidate does not have the depth of knowledge on a particular question or range of questions e.g. on a technical area.
- Use silence after a question to give the candidates time to think and again after the initial answer to encourage them to say more.
- Be wary of asking multiple questions e.g. when did you do the project, how long did it take and what was your role in it? This can risk creating confusion.
- Avoid leading questions i.e. those that appear to be looking for a particular answer e.g. Do you get on well in a team?
- Take notes of how well a candidate has responded to each question in relation to your model answer. You should use a separate assessment form (please see example form) for each candidate at interview. Notes are essential to making an objective comparison of the candidate's performance and may have to be made available in the light of a complaint.

9.3 Making the decision

- ❖ Using all the information acquired by each panel member on their assessment forms and interview notes, candidates should be evaluated objectively against the specific selection criteria.
- ❖ Where a unanimous decision cannot be reached, the panel should consider looking again at the selection criteria against each candidate to see if there is a clear choice.

Points to consider:

- Interviewers need to be especially careful to ensure all candidates are treated fairly

and feel they have had every opportunity to explain how their knowledge, skills and experience make them suitable for the job.

- Assessment should concentrate exclusively on which candidate achieves the best performance in relation to the selection criteria. There should be no questions about personal circumstances unless relevant to the job and asked of all the candidates.
- To ensure that any candidate with access requirements is not disadvantaged by the interview process, check that they are happy with what is provided at the commencement of the interview or any tests.
- Make your decision on the basis of merit and only then start to consider appointment checks for the successful candidate. These may include health concerns, investigating support and reasonable adaptations for a disability, discussing previous criminal convictions or processing reference enquiries and Disclosure & Barring Service checks.

10 Appointment Checks

10.1 Having decided on your preferred candidate you can offer them an appointment subject to reference, medical and other checks. Employees should not start until all of these checks have been satisfactorily completed. The purpose of which is to ensure Safer Recruitment guidelines are followed to minimise the risk to children and vulnerable adults.

10.2 References

The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective, verifiable, and factual information to support appointment decisions. References will always be obtained directly from the referee and not from the candidate. Subjective opinion, open references and testimonials i.e. "To Whom it May Concern" should not be used. These steps will help ensure that the Council meets its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the safety and welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

Referencing requirements are as follows:

- External candidates for permanent, temporary, casual, and volunteer appointments require a minimum of two written references. At least one referee must be a present or most recent employer. If the candidate is not currently in employment and/or the last employer cannot give a reference because the organisation no longer exists, then a reference from a professional person should be sought. If the candidate has just left school/college/university the reference should be from a Headteacher, Head of Year or Head of Faculty.
- Verbal references should always be followed up by a written reference. It is essential to complete a full record of the information provided and obtain written confirmation from the referee.
- Other than in exceptional circumstances references from relatives, partners, or close friends are not acceptable.

Whether in writing or by telephone, reference requests should ask for specific job-related information and refer to the job summary, which should always be sent with reference requests, to help the referee understand the requirements.

If taking a telephone reference it is essential to complete a full record of the information provided, and let the referee know we will be seeking written confirmation of the reference.

10.3 Disclosure of Criminal Background

Candidates who will be working with children, young people, and adults who are vulnerable in a particular situation are obliged only to disclose convictions, cautions, reprimands, or final warnings that are not "protected" as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2013). In addition employers will no longer be able to take an individual's old and minor cautions and convictions into account when making recruitment decisions.

All cautions and convictions for specified serious violent and sexual offences, and other specified offences of relevance for posts concerned with safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, will remain subject to disclosure as will all convictions resulting in a custodial sentence, whether or not suspended and all convictions where an individual has more than one conviction recorded. These are known as listed offences which means that the offence is included on a list of offences which are serious, relate to sexual or violent offending or are otherwise deemed to be relevant in the context of safeguarding. These offences will never be filtered from a criminal record check. The legislation also covers equivalent offences committed overseas.

It is very difficult to provide a concise summary of all 'listed offences'. Please refer to the DBS guidance and information available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-list-of-offences-that-will-neverbe-filtered-from-a-criminal-record-check>

10.4 Medical Checks

The successful candidate may be required to complete a medical questionnaire to send to Occupational Health for them to assess fitness for the role. The information provided is confidential to the occupational health service.

10.5 Qualifications

Where it is essential that qualifications are required to do the job, the successful candidate will be required to produce originals of relevant certificates.

Points to consider:

- Checks are carried out to ensure that there is nothing in an individual's background that could cause a problem for the Council, and it is reasonable to seek to find out if there have been any work performance problems, criminal convictions, or disciplinary problems.
- What is important is that candidates are treated fairly in the consideration of this information, and any details which give concern are discussed with them to ascertain the background and any reasons or explanations.
- The panel should consider the seriousness of the information, how recent any issues were, and the relevance of the issues to performance of the job. A judgement will need to be made as to whether it is necessary to protect the Council's interests or confirm the appointment.

10 Feedback to Unsuccessful Candidates

All job applicants, both internal and external, should be able to receive information on why their application or interview was unsuccessful. The benefits of this are:-

- The Council as an employer develops a professional reputation in promoting an open and fair recruitment process.
- The applicants appreciate that they can learn and develop their abilities and will have confidence in the selection procedure.
- The intention should be to provide positive, honest, and accurate feedback in a sensitive and tactful manner. Use the written records to provide objective feedback about the areas the applicant scored well and perhaps not as well against other

applicants whilst not divulging other scores. It may give rise to a complaint of unfair treatment by an applicant if any subjective reasons were provided such as personal circumstances.

- Feedback should be clear and concise and kept to a minimum to protect the Council from information being misconstrued.

11 New Starters

11.1 As soon as you have made an offer of appointment you should start planning the induction programme. Points to note are: -

- The Clerk or Staffing Committee must ensure that induction takes place for all new starters upon commencement of employment.
- Induction is best tailored to the needs of the individual e.g., those totally new to local government/Parish Councils may need more support than those transferring from another local authority or Council.
- All new employees should be given the induction pack and form available from the Clerk. The induction record should be held on the employees personal file as evidence.

12.2 Ensure the probation procedure is followed.

12.3 Make arrangements for I.T. requirements;

12.4 Ensure new starters are aware of and have access to relevant Council policies and procedures.

TIME OFF WORK AND LEAVE POLICY

All employees are entitled to time off work for a number of reasons, for example, holiday, maternity, dependents leave, time off in lieu (TOIL). Some of these are statutory entitlements, some are paid, and some unpaid.

Allowing time off work has a number of benefits, it supports employee wellbeing, maintains/improves staff morale, and provides a balance between work and personal commitments.

This policy sets out obligations when taking leave and the associated entitlements.

All leave, including time owing in lieu, must be requested in advance and authorised with the Clerk, or the Chairman if it's for the Clerk, who can reject leave requests for a number of reasons such as office cover, service provision, and/or a number of employees requesting leave at the same time.

Employees found to be applying for leave dishonestly will be dealt with under the Council's Managing Employee Performance Policy.

Records should be kept by the Clerk, or the Chairman in the case of the Clerk, of all leave taken by employees within their team.

1 Scope

1.1 This policy covers all Frampton Cotterell Parish Council employees. Leave due to illness is dealt with under separate policies such as the Sickness Absence Policy. Specific entitlements are detailed where relevant.

2 Annual Leave

2.1 Most permanent Council employees are provided with a paid entitlement of 23 days plus bank holidays in a complete leave year and two extra statutory days which must be taken between Christmas and New Year. After five years continuous local government service, employees receive an additional 3 days leave. All entitlements are pro rata for part-timers. Employees should refer to their Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment for confirmation of their leave entitlement.

2.2 The leave year is the 12-month period from 1 April to 31 March.

2.3 The Clerk, or Chairman in the case of the Clerk, will advise and confirm individual leave entitlements with their employees as soon as possible after commencing employment and where appropriate, part-time staff should have their leave calculated in hours.

2.4 Annual leave can be taken in units of full or half days leave. Leave taken should be deducted from the total leave entitlement, remembering to deduct for bank holidays as they arise.

2.5 On reaching five years' local government service, a proportion of the additional 3 days leave is granted on the first month following the month of the service date.

2.6 Where an employee reduces or increases their working hours, any leave entitlement will be adjusted to the new hours worked.

2.7 The leave entitlement for an employee leaving or joining the Council is proportionate to their completed service during the leave year.

- 2.8 When an employee leaves the Council and has taken in excess of their proportionate leave entitlement, the Council will make an appropriate deduction from their final salary. When an employee leaves and has taken less than their proportionate leave entitlement, an appropriate additional payment may be made.
- 2.9 Annual leave must be taken by the end of the leave year and cannot be carried over, unless granted by the Clerk and Staffing Committee, who may grant carry over of leave in exceptional circumstances (no more than 5 working days for full-time equivalents). There are separate rules for the carry-over of leave under the Maternity and Ill Health Policies and Procedures (see 2.10).
- 2.10 Employees on maternity, adoption, paternity, shared paternity and parental leave will continue to accrue annual leave, however, annual leave cannot be taken during this leave.
- 2.11 Employees continue to accrue holiday entitlement whilst absent from work due to sickness regardless of how long the period of sickness lasts. They are entitled to take annual leave whilst on sickness leave if they wish. However, if an employee is unable to take all of their annual leave entitlement within a leave year due to illness, they are able to carry over a maximum of 28 days (the statutory entitlement), to the next leave year.
- 2.12 No more than two weeks holiday may be taken at any one time unless the Clerk or Staffing Committee gives permission, with a return to work of at least two weeks between holiday bookings.

3 Public/Bank Holidays

- 3.1 All employees get a paid holiday on each of the 8 statutory, general, and public/bank holidays as they occur and an additional 2 fixed days which will be taken between Christmas and New Year.
- 3.2 As leave entitlement includes bank/public holidays, employees who are due to work on a day that is a bank/public holiday will need to deduct their working hours for that day from their total leave entitlement. If a bank/public holiday falls on a day an employee was not scheduled to work, no deduction is necessary.
- 3.3 No substitute bank/public holiday or extra statutory day will be given if an employee is off work sick on a bank/public holiday or extra statutory day.

4 Time off in Lieu (TOIL)

- 4.1 Council roles may demand flexible working hours outside the normally accepted office hours arrangements i.e. to cover evening meetings or events.
- 4.2 Additional hours worked will be accrued to be taken as single time off in lieu. This applies to all work undertaken outside the normal working week including Saturdays and Sunday work.
- 4.3 Additional and out of hours duties are only to be undertaken by specific request of the Staffing Committee, Chairman, or The Clerk.
- 4.4 A timesheet recording details of hours worked should be kept up-to-date and available to the Clerk weekly to verify.
- 4.5 Hours owing must be used up within four weeks of extra time worked or will be lost, unless prior agreement is sought from the Clerk, Chairman, or Staffing Committee.

- 4.6 In exceptional circumstances time owing in lieu can be paid at single time rates, if agreed by the Staffing Committee/Council.

5 Extra Statutory Day

- 5.1 The extra two statutory day's leave is awarded to all employees. The extra statutory days are to be taken on the working days between Christmas and New Year when the offices are closed.

6 Time off for public duty

Jury Service

- 6.1 Employees called for Jury Service must inform the Clerk or Chairman in the case of the Clerk, as soon as possible and then complete a 'certificate of loss of earnings' form which they will receive from the courts. The Clerk will ensure payroll is correctly updated. The employee should notify the Clerk of any payment made by the courts so that the appropriate amount can be deducted from their salary. If such a claim cannot be made, then paid leave will be granted.

Court Appearances

- 6.2 Employees who are required to attend as a witness in Court proceedings should claim for loss of earning from the Court. If such a claim cannot be made, then paid leave will be granted.

Reserve Forces

- 6.3 Upon proof of membership, volunteer members of the non-regular forces can request time off for training, which the council will consider in line with 6.4 below. The using of annual leave or unpaid leave requests will be considered, the Council has discretion to agree to paid leave if essential training and subject to operational requirements. See guidance at www.gov.uk/employee-reservist for more information.

Statutory Duties

- 6.4 Any employer may permit an employee time off for public duties if they are:
- A magistrate (also known as a justice of the peace) – by law, the Council must allow reasonable time off to carry out these duties. Employees can claim an allowance from the court for loss of earnings.
 - a local councillor
 - a school governor
 - a member of any statutory tribunal (e.g., an employment tribunal)
 - a member of the managing or governing body of an educational establishment
 - a member of a health authority
 - a member of a school council or board in Scotland
 - a member of the General Teaching Councils for England and Wales
 - a member of the Environment Agency or the Scottish Environment Protection agency
 - a member of the prison independent monitoring boards (England or Wales) or a member of the prison visiting committees (Scotland)
 - a member of Scottish Water or a Water Customer Consultation Panel
 - a trade union member for trade union duties

If you qualify, you are allowed reasonable time off to go to meetings or to carry out your duties. The time must be agreed with the Clerk beforehand who can refuse your request if it is unreasonable. A specific amount of time off is not laid down in law.

Whether your time off is classed as 'reasonable' will depend on:

- what your duties are.
- The time you need to carry them out

- The impact on service needs
- How much time off you have already had for public duties or trade union duties.

Paid leave of absence can be granted at the discretion of the Clerk, Chairman, or Staffing Committee/Council, bearing in mind the requirements of their post and the nature of their public duties.

7 Time off for Medical Screening and Other Appointments

7.1 Wherever possible, visits to GP and other routine medical appointments should be made outside of working hours. However, when employees are able to show that these visits unavoidably occur during working hours, these will be permitted, subject to the employee making up the hours lost.

7.2 Employees having to attend hospital, clinic appointments, or work-related appointments i.e. sight tests, Occupational Health appointments, where the timing of the appointment is beyond their control, will be able to attend these appointments during working hours with no expectation to make up the hours lost.

7.3 Reasonable paid time off will be granted for the purposes of medical screening and IVF treatment.

8 Special Leave

8.1 Additional leave with or without pay may be granted in special circumstances at the discretion of the Council.

9 Study Leave

9.1 Paid leave will be given to all employees in order to sit approved examinations applicable to local government work.

9.2 In addition, up to three days study leave per year of course, pro-rata for part-time staff and for course length, will be given either prior to sitting examinations or for the purpose of completing assessed course work or assignments required by the approved training course. In the instance where a course does not have to be completed within a set period of time, the period of study leave due is to be confirmed with the Parish Clerk.

10 Maternity leave and maternity support leave

The Council operates a maternity leave and pay scheme. Full details of eligibility, criteria and pay can be found in the Employee Handbook.

10.1 Maternity support leave is available to employees accompanying the expectant mother as follows:

- Employees who are the child's father, the spouse, partner, civil partner **or** nominated carer (see below) of the expectant mother or the intended parent of a child in a surrogacy arrangement are eligible. However, the employee must have been continuously employed by the Council for at least 26 weeks by the end of the 15th week before the week that the baby is due. The employee must then continue to be employed by the Council until the date the baby is born.
- One half day paid leave to attend a specific ante-natal session which can only be accommodated in working hours.
- Five days with pay shall be granted at or around the time of birth. This can be used in conjunction with paternity or parental leave.

- Any pregnancy (not just the first child).
- 10.2 A nominated carer is the person the mother nominates to assist in the care of the child and to provide support to the mother at or around the time of birth. This could be a partner, child's father or another nominated carer e.g., mother's mother. Only one nominated carer is eligible for maternity support leave per pregnancy.
- 10.3 To apply for maternity support leave, you should first agree with the Clerk or Staffing Committee before completing the adoption support leave application form and send this to Payroll.

11 Adoption leave and adoption support leave

The Council operates an adoption leave and pay scheme. Details of eligibility, criteria and pay can be found in the Employee Handbook.

- 11.1 Five days paid adoption support leave is available for the partner or nominated carer of the primary carer at or around the time of placement. This can be used in conjunction with paternity or parental leave.
- 11.2 A nominated carer is the person nominated by the primary carer to assist in the care of the child and to provide support to the primary carer at or around the time of placement. Only one nominated carer is eligible for adoption support leave per adoption.
- 11.3 To apply for adoption support leave, you should first agree with the Clerk or Staffing Committee before completing the adoption support leave application form and give it to the Clerk to ensure the appropriate payroll updates are made.

12 Paternity leave

The Council operates a paternity leave and pay scheme. Details of eligibility, criteria and pay can be found in the Employee Handbook.

13 Parental leave

- 13.1 This gives an employee the right to take up to 18 weeks unpaid leave to care for a child up to the age of 18 years old (including adoptions), providing they have one year's continuous employment. This is pro-rata for part-time employees. The right is for up to 18 weeks per child. In the case of multiple births, 18 weeks leave must be provided for each child.
- the employee is the mother or father of a child under 18 years old, or
 - the employee is the adoptive parent of a child under the age of 18.
 - the employee has acquired formal parental responsibility for a child who is under 18 years old
- 13.2 The right is an individual right, so both parents are entitled to unpaid parental leave. The parent does not have to be living with the child to qualify.
- 13.3 Parental Leave can be taken in blocks of between one and four weeks in any one year (part weeks count as one week). The parent/carer of a disabled child may take leave in single days. The leave may be taken immediately following on from Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Leave subject to agreement of the Council.
- 13.4 Requests for parental leave must be made in writing to the Clerk or Staffing Committee with a minimum of 21 days' notice of the required start date. The employer must reply to a request for Parental Leave within a time equal to the amount of time requested.

- 13.5 A special provision can be made for fathers to take time off immediately after the birth or adoption, providing at least 21 days' notice is given before the week in which the birth or adoption is expected. The employer may not postpone this.
- 13.6 The Parish Clerk can postpone the leave where the needs of the Council make this necessary and it is reasonable, but not for more than six months and not where it would extend past the child's 18th birthday. To postpone leave, the council must write to the employee within seven days of receiving the request, explaining why the leave needs to be postponed and confirming the new start and end dates.
- 13.7 The contract of employment will continue but the employee will not be paid.
- 13.8 The Clerk or Staffing Committee can ask for evidence, if it is reasonable, to show that:
- the employee is the parent of a child
 - the employee has parental responsibility for the child.
 - the child is below the age at which the right to parental leave ceases.
 - in the case of a disabled child the child is entitled to disability living allowance.
- 13.9 If an employee tries to claim for Parental Leave dishonestly, they will be subject to the Managing Employee Performance Policy.

14 Dependants care leave

- 14.1 The Employment Relations Act 1999 (EReIA) introduces a statutory right to unpaid dependants leave and defines 'dependant' and the 'unexpected or sudden problem' for which leave would be granted. Frampton Cotterell Parish Council has incorporated this statutory entitlement into Dependants' Care Leave.
- 14.2 The definition of a 'dependant' is:
- Spouse/partner
 - Child (including adopted or foster child)
 - Parent
 - Someone who lives with the employee as a member of the family (excluding lodgers, friends, flat mates, etc.)
- 14.3 This is for unexpected, sudden, unforeseen, emergency matters, not where the employee knows in advance that they are going to require time off
- Caring for dependant who is ill, injured or assaulted- emergency doctor or hospital visits, not planned, routine visits;
 - Having a baby – if the birth is unexpected, DCL does not apply after the birth.
 - Disruption of care arrangements i.e. your child minder does not turn up.
 - Dealing with a serious incident involving a child which occurs unexpectedly during school hours.
- 14.4 Dependent Care Leave may be given at the discretion of the Clerk, or the Chairman if it relates to the Clerk.
- 14.5 Employees have the option to take annual leave, unpaid dependents care leave, or time in lieu.

15 Foster carer leave

- 15.1 Employees, who are foster carers, are eligible to receive up to a maximum of five days paid leave per annum for the purpose of attending:
- Training events.
 - Statutory review, education planning and other meetings related to their foster carer responsibilities.

- Supervision sessions.

15.2 All paid leave must be authorised by the Clerk or Staffing Committee, so employees who are foster carers, should provide as much notice as possible of the request for leave.

16 Compassionate leave

16.1 Up to five days paid compassionate leave is available to employees, with the agreement of the Clerk or Staffing Committee and which will not be unreasonably withheld. Following the death of a dependant/close relative (see 16.2) or in the cases where a dependant/close relative has a life-threatening illness. The five days do not need to be continuous.

This leave would include time to make funeral arrangements, attend the funeral, and deal with the emotional difficulties associated with bereavement and serious illness.

16.2 A dependent/close relative is defined as a:

- Spouse/partner
- Child (including adopted or foster child)
- Parent
- Someone who lives with the employee as a member of the family (excluding lodgers, friends, flat mates, etc....)
- Brother
- Sister
- Parent-in-law (including parents of the employee's partner)
- Grandparent
- Grandchild
- To include step-relatives where there is a close relationship with the employee.

17 Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay

Parental Bereavement Leave provides up to two weeks' leave for employees following the loss of a child, on or after 6 April 2020, who was under the age of 18 or a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

Parental Bereavement Leave

In order to qualify for parental bereavement leave and pay, the employee must be either:

- the child's legal parent; or
- a parent's partner, in an enduring family relationship with the child who has passed away and their parent; or
- an individual with a caring relationship to the child, such as a "parent in fact", who are defined as a person who for a continuous period of at least four weeks before the child's death has lived with the child in the person's home, and had day to day responsibility for the child's care (provided they are not paid for that role, foster payments excepted);
- the "intended parent" of a child who has passed away, i.e. a parent using a surrogate; or
- the "natural parent" of a child who has passed away who is named in a court order, i.e., where a court orders some contact for an adopted child's birth parent; or
- the adopter of a child who has passed away.

All employees, who are eligible as above, are entitled to 2 weeks' parental leave regardless of their length of service.

The two weeks' leave can be taken, either as one block or in two one-week blocks. The leave may be taken at any time within 56 weeks of the child's death.

Notification requirements

If the employee wishes the leave to start within 56 days of the child's death, notice must be given to the Clerk/Staffing Committee before the day the employee wishes the leave to start, or where that is not possible as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Employees must give the Clerk/Staffing Committee at least one week's notice if they wish the leave to start after the 56-day period.

When giving notice the employee must specify, in writing, to the Clerk/Staffing Committee:

- the date of the child's death,
- the date on which the employee intends the leave to start, and
- whether the period of absence is for one week or two weeks.

Cancellation of Parental Bereavement Leave

If an employee has asked to begin parental bereavement leave within the first 56 days of the date of the child's death, they can cancel the parental bereavement leave, as long as they inform the Clerk/Staffing Committee prior to when they would have been due to start work.

If an employee has asked to begin parental bereavement leave more than 56 days after their child's death, then they can cancel their request for parental bereavement leave, as long as they inform the Clerk/Staffing Committee Clerk at least one week in advance.

Employees cannot cancel any week of parental bereavement leave that has already begun.

Parental Bereavement Pay eligibility

In order to qualify for parental bereavement pay employees must meet the eligibility criteria as above and also have:

- at least 26 weeks' continuous service by the week before the week in which their child passes away, and still be employed by the Council on the day on which the child passed away;
- weekly average earnings over the lower earnings limit for National Insurance contributions in the eight weeks prior to the week before the child's death.

Parental Bereavement Pay

Parental bereavement leave will be paid at the Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay (SPBP) rate or 90 per cent of the average weekly earnings, whichever is the lower.

In order to receive parental bereavement pay, an employee must notify the Clerk/Staffing Committee in writing within 28 days of the start of the week's (or weeks') leave or, if that is not reasonably practicable, as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Notice must include the parent's name and the date of the child's death. Furthermore, on the first occasion leave is taken, the employee must also provide a written declaration that they meet one of the qualifying conditions in terms of their relationship with the child.

Parental bereavement leave for employees who are not eligible for parental bereavement pay will be unpaid.

Parental Bereavement Leave counts for the purpose of continuous service.

Returning to work following parental bereavement leave

Employees have the right to resume working in the same job when returning to work from parental bereavement leave if the period of leave, when added to any other period of statutory leave (typically maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, or shared parental leave) in relation to the same child, is 26 weeks or less.

Employees are entitled to return to an alternative job that is suitable and appropriate, rather than the same job, if:

- the period of leave taken is more than 26 weeks, when added to other statutory leave (typically maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, or shared parental leave) in relation to the same child; and
- it is not reasonably practicable for them to return to the same job.

18 Severe weather conditions

18.1 Where possible, staff should attend for work as agreed with the Clerk or Staffing Committee. In exceptional circumstances flexible working arrangements such as home working can be agreed. Where staff do not attend work, agreement can be made to take the day as annual leave, unpaid leave, or time in lieu. Additionally, staff may be eligible for dependants care leave if their child or other dependants care arrangements are disrupted.

19 Unpaid leave scheme

19.1 This policy applies to all Parish Council employees with at least 24 months service.

19.2 Subsequent periods of unpaid leave can only be requested after a further 24 months have been worked. Only where exceptional compassionate circumstances apply will a subsequent request for unpaid leave be considered.

19.3 The Clerk/Staffing Committee will consider requests for unpaid leave of absence. Unpaid leave may be granted for:

- Caring responsibilities for children, elderly parents or other close relatives as defined under Dependants Care Leave;
- Education or training;

- Receive any other salary, allowance or payments that form part of the employment conditions;
- Be entitled to have any of the periods of unpaid leave regarded as sick leave, even if they submit a fit note.

19.14 If the employee wishes to return to work early, at least one month's notice must be given in writing to the Parish Clerk or Staffing Committee, stating the nature of the exceptional circumstance so that the request can be considered.

19.15 The Clerk must ensure payroll adjustments are made.

20 Important Notice

The Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment, followed by the Employee Handbook, take precedence over this policy. Employees should always refer to the Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment for terms specific to them.

Training & Development Policy

1. Introduction

This policy sets out :-

- The Council's commitment to training
- The identification of training needs
- Financial assistance
- Short courses/workshops
- Evaluation of training
- Links with other policies
- Reporting on progress

2. Commitment to Training

2.1 The Council is committed to the on-going training and development of all councillors and staff to enable them to make the most effective contribution to the Council's aims and objectives in providing the highest quality representation and services for the people of the parish.

2.2 The Council recognizes that its most important resource is its councillors and staff and is committed to encouraging both to enhance knowledge and qualifications through further training. Some training is necessary to ensure compliance with legal and statutory requirements, the Council will consider the type of contracts staff are employed on in determining any requests. The Council requires all new councillors to undergo training and, thereafter, to attend training as appropriate to their responsibilities, such as finance, planning or chairman training.

2.3 Training and development will be achieved by including a realistic financial allocation for training and development in the annual budget, as well as taking advantage of any relevant partnership or in-house provision available.

2.4 The process of development is as follows:

- i. Training needs should be identified by considering the overall objectives of the organisation, as well as individual requirements.
- ii. Planning and organising training to meet those specific needs.
- iii. Designing and delivering the training.
- iv. Evaluating the effectiveness of training.

3. The Identification of Training Needs

3.1 Staff will be asked to identify their development needs, with advice from their line manager, during their annual appraisal or regular meetings with the Clerk/CEO & RFO.

3.2 Other circumstances may present the need for training:

- The Clerk/CEO & RFO should be CILCA qualified and if they are not when they are appointed should work to start attaining it within one year.
- Legislative requirements i.e. First Aid, Fire Safety, Manual Handling

- Changes in legislation
- Changes in office software and systems
- New or revised qualifications become available
- Accidents
- Professional error
- Introduction of new equipment
- Complaints to the Council
- A request from a member of staff or councillor
- delivery of new services

4. Resourcing Training

4.1 An allocation will be made in the budget each year to fund technical literature, training fees and travel expenses. The amount will be reviewed annually.

4.2 The Council subscribes to the National Association of Local Councils, Avon Local Councils Association and The Society of Local Council Clerks, in order to receive regular updates on matters relevant to the sector and have access to the courses and conferences which are provided.

5. Financial Assistance

5.1 It is important to note that all sponsored training must be appropriate to the needs of the Council, be relevant to the individual's role and is subject to the availability of financial resources. Each request will be considered on an individual basis and the benefits to the individual and the organisation will be identified.

5.2 Other considerations include the following:

- Implication of employee release for training course(s) on the operational capability of the Council
 - The most economic and effective means of training
 - Provision and availability of training budget

5.3 For approved courses councillors and staff can expect the following to be sponsored:

- course fee
- examination fees
- associated membership fees
- one payment to re-take a failed examination

5.4 Councillor and staff attending assisted courses are expected to inform the CEO & RFO immediately of any absences for any reason.

5.5 Failure to sit an examination may result in the Council withdrawing future course funding and/or requesting the refunding of financial assistance. Each case will be considered on an individual basis.

5.6 The Council operates a 'Training Costs Agreement'. Any staff member undertaking post-entry qualifications funded by the Council must be aware that should they leave the Council's employ within 12 months of completion of the qualification they may be required to repay all costs associated with the undertaking of such training (a sliding scales applies as specified in the agreement in the Appendix. Each case to be reviewed by the Clerk/CEO & RFO, or in the case of the Clerk/CEO & RFO's training, jointly by the Chair of the Staffing Committee and/or the Chair of the Council.

6. Study Leave

6.1 Employees who are given approval to undertake external qualifications are granted the following:

- Study time to attend day-release courses
- Time to sit examinations
- Study time of one day per examination (to be discussed and agreed by line manager in advance)
- Provision of study time must be agreed with the line manager prior to the course being undertaken.

7. Short Courses/Workshops/Residential Weekends (including conferences)

7.1 Where staff attendance is required at a short course on a Saturday or Sunday, up to a normal working day of straight TOIL per day may be taken.

7.2 Councillors and staff attending approved short courses/workshops/residential weekends can expect the following to be paid:

- The course fee (usually invoiced following the event)
- Travelling expenses in accordance with the Council's current policy
- Reasonable subsistence in accordance with the Council's current policy

8. Evaluation of Training

8.1 Records of all training undertaken by staff will be kept in the personnel files of each member of staff.

8.2 As part of the Council's continuing commitment to training and development, councillors and staff are encouraged to share information received and circulate training presentation papers for in-house training use. They are asked to provide feedback on the value and effectiveness of the training they undertake, highlighting the key implications of new legislation, guidance and/or best practice for the ongoing efficiency and effectiveness of the authority.

9. Linking with other Council Policies

9.1 How will this link to the Council's other policies?

- Equality of opportunity in all aspects of councillor and staff development
- Risk Management Policy — a commitment to Training and Development greatly assists in achieving good governance and an effective system of Risk Management
- Health and Safety Policy — on-going training and development is key to ensuring a positive approach to Health and Safety is embedded throughout the Council's activities

10. Reporting on Progress

The Clerk/CEO & RFO will report to the Staffing Committee, detailing attendance at training over the year including an evaluation of courses attended.

11. Conclusion

The adoption of a training policy should achieve many benefits for the Council.

Training will:

- Widen skills and experience
- Provide opportunities to network
- Provide the skills to confront challenges
- Encourage innovation
- Raise the standards of Frampton Cotterell Parish Council

The policy will be reviewed annually by the Council's Staffing Committee as to continuing fitness

for purpose with recommendations for any changes made to the Council at the annual Council meeting.

12. Freedom of Information

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this document will be posted on the Council's website www.framptoncotterellparishcouncil.gov.uk and copies of this document will be available for inspection on deposit in the Council's offices.

Appendix - TRAINING COSTS AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT is dated
AND IS MADE BETWEEN:-

("the Employee");
and Frampton Cotterell Parish Council.

WHEREAS:-

A. The Employee is employed by the Employer as a (insert job title).....

B. The Employer has booked a place for the Employee in relation to training and development in..... (insert subject) with (name of training provider) ("the Course").

IT IS HEREBY AGREED AND DECLARED THAT

1. In consideration of the Employer meeting the costs of the Course which are set out in the Schedule to this Agreement ("the Costs"), the Employee undertakes to reimburse to the Employer the Costs if:

(i) he/she voluntarily withdraws from or terminates the Course early without the Employer's prior written consent, including a failure to attend;

(ii) he/she is dismissed or otherwise compulsorily discharged from the Course, unless the dismissal or discharge arises out of the discontinuance generally of the Course;

(iii) he/she resigns from the employment of the Employer

reimbursement as per the employees Statement of Terms and Conditions apply. Usually, the following repayment clause is included in employee Statements but that must be checked and the Statement of Employment overrides this Policy:

"If you leave our employment within 12 months' then you will have to pay back any training costs that the Council has incurred for the last 12 months for you over the value of £50 on a sliding scale: - leave within 3 months 100% to be repaid, leave within 6 months 50% to be repaid, leave within 12 months 25% to be repaid. Any repayment will be net as the Council can reclaim VAT. Payback does not include any mandatory training such as health and safety. All employees will be required to sign an agreement when any training is agreed so you are reminded of the payback clause and sign to confirm the agreement. "

2. To the extent permitted by law, the Employee agrees that the Employer may deduct a sum equal to the whole or part of the Costs due in accordance with Clause 1 (iii) under the terms of this Agreement from his/her wages (as defined in Section 27 of the Employment Rights Act 1996) or from any other allowances, expenses, or other payments due to the Employee.

If this deduction does not cover the total amount due to the Council, any money outstanding to be repaid by the employee within three months of the date of their termination of employment.

3. The amount due to the Employer under the terms of this Agreement is a genuine attempt by the Employer to assess its loss as a result of the termination of the Employee's employment and takes into account the derived benefit to the Employer.

This Agreement is not intended to act as a penalty on the Employee upon termination of his/her agreement.

SIGNED: (name of employee)

..... (name of Councillor/Clerk) for and on behalf of Frampton Cotterell Parish Council.

NB. This Agreement must be signed by both parties prior to the commencement of the Course.

SCHEDULE OF COSTS

Course Fees:-

Cost of books/materials (if applicable):-

Any other expense.