

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK UPDATES

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CONTENTS

Name	Page
Introduction	2
PART 1 POLICIES	3
1.1 Employment policies	4
Employee Code of Conduct	4
Recruitment Policy	4
Pay Policy	11
Working from Home Policy	12
Redundancy Policy	14
1.2 Absence from work; Leave Policies	19
Annual Leave Policy	19
Sickness Absence Policy	20
Medical Appointments	20
Unauthorised Absences and Lateness Policy	21
Compassionate and/or emergency leave	21
Parental Leave	22
Carers Leave Policy	28
Public Duties Policy	29
Time off in lieu (TOIL)	29
1.3 Information and Communication Technology	30
Use of IT and Social Media	30
Passwords	33
Email and Internet Usage Policy	34
1.4 Staff Relations	36
Statement on Employee Management	36
Training and Development Policy	37
Performance Management Policy	39
Disciplinary Procedure	41
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy	47
Member / Officer Relations Protocol	51
Dignity at Work	53
Grievance Policy	58
Whistle-blowing Policy and Procedure	61
Expenses Policy	63
1.5 Health and Safety	64
Health and Safety Policy	64
Lone Working Policy	66
Sexual Harassment Policy	69
Menopause Policy	71
Risk Management Policy	74
Protecting Vulnerable Persons Policy	74
Adverse Weather Policy	75
Environmental Policy	76
PART 2 – FORMS	Page
Change of Personal Details Form	78
Employee Expenses Claim Form	79
Employee Training Record	80
Employee Sickness Self-Certification Form	81
Employee Holiday Request Form	83

INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO NORMANDY PARISH COUNCIL

Your relationship with the council is governed by the policies and procedures in this handbook and by the terms and conditions in your contract of employment. Please take time to read both documents carefully. If there is a conflict between the two, your contract of employment prevails.

This employee handbook is divided into two parts:

PART ONE – POLICIES

Part one sets out the council's rules, policies, procedures and general information. It is broken down into 5 further sections;

section 1 includes policies relating to your employment with the council,

section 2 covers absences from work

section 3 is related to information and communication technology

section 4 covers staffing matters such as how you will be managed, and

the final section relates to your health and safety at work.

It is important that you obey the rules and always follow the set policies and procedures. These are in place to provide a safe, efficient and effective working environment, and to help and protect employees. The council's policies do not directly form part of your contract and may be changed from time to time to reflect developments such as changing legislation.

PART TWO – FORMS

Part two sets out the standard forms the council uses for employee administrative functions, such as time off requests. Using these forms and templates will enable requests to be dealt with efficiently and fairly for all employees.

If there are any changes to your personal details, please ensure you keep the council up to date by completing the 'Change of personal details' form (Appendix A).

If you are unsure about anything mentioned in either this handbook or your contract of employment, please contact the Parish Clerk who will be happy to help you.

Thank you for choosing to work for Normandy Parish Council and may your time here be rewarding, successful and happy.

PART ONE

POLICIES

Section 1

Employment Policies

Employee Code of Conduct

Status of the code

As a local government officer, your conduct must be beyond reproach and you must do nothing that might give rise to the suspicion, however ill-founded, that you are in any way influenced by improper motives.

This code sets out the standards that are expected of employees and provides a framework that will help to promote good practice. The code should be read in conjunction with the policies in this handbook and the terms and conditions of your employment contract.

Who does the code apply to?

The code covers all employees of Normandy Parish Council, including agency employees, temporary workers and internal contractors who carry out work on behalf of the council.

Responsibility

All employees of the council are expected to give the highest possible standard of service to the public, and where it is part of their duties, to provide appropriate advice to councillors and fellow employees with impartiality. All employees are encouraged, without fear or recrimination, to bring to the attention of the appropriate level of management any impropriety or breach of procedure that comes to their attention.

Abuses of the code

Employees who attempt to abuse this policy may face disciplinary action. The council takes false or misleading accusations very seriously which may result in further action taken through the disciplinary procedure. This does not include ill-founded allegations that were made in good faith using the council's Whistleblowing Policy.

Publicising and distributing the code

Every employee of the council will be issued with an employee handbook, containing the code of conduct for employees. A copy of the employee handbook will also be made available via the council's website.

Reviewing the code

The council will keep the operation of this policy under review and will make changes to the policy where appropriate, for example as a result of changing legislation. Responsibility for reviewing and amending the employee code of conduct and policies contained in the employee handbook will rest with the Human Resources Committee.

Equality and diversity

The council is committed to treating all members of the local community, councillors and employees with fairness and equity. All employees have a responsibility to comply with the policies of the employee handbook designed to support this aim, principally the Equal Opportunities Statement.

Standards and attitude

All employees must give the highest possible standards of service to the public, councillors and other employees. Employees are expected to remember their responsibilities to the community they serve and ensure a courteous, efficient and impartial delivery of services to all groups in accordance with the council's policies.

Dress code

All employees are required to be neat, clean and tidy whilst at work, whether working on the council's premises or elsewhere. Dress should be appropriate to the work undertaken. Some employees (depending on the nature of their work) may be provided with a uniform or clothing adorned with the council's name and/or logo. Such clothing should be maintained in a reasonable state of repair.

Confidentiality and data protection

All employees owe a general duty of confidentiality to the council, have a contractual obligation in relation to confidential information and are required to protect official information held in confidence.

Employees shall not divulge to any person (other than another employee or councillor that requires information for the performance of his/her duties), any information which the employee has obtained by reason of his/her employment to the council, except where that information is anyway in the public domain by virtue of legislation or under the council's publication scheme.

In particular, no employee shall divulge personal information regarding any employee, person or contractor, having dealings with the council and information relating to tenders or other such issues.

All information and data must be handled sensitively and processed in accordance with the council's Data Protection Policy. Under the General Data Protection Regulations, individuals have the right to see their own personal data held subject to the rights of confidentiality of any third parties involved in that information.

Political neutrality

Employees serve the council as a whole and must serve all councillors equally ensuring that the individual rights of all councillors are respected. Employees must follow the lawfully expressed policies of the council and must not allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere improperly with their work.

Relationships with others

Good working relationships between colleagues are essential. Employees should always treat their colleagues with dignity and respect. Attention is particularly drawn to the council's Equal Opportunities Statement and Dignity at Work Policy.

Mutual respect between employees and councillors is essential for good local government and a professional and courteous relationship should be maintained at all times. The council has adopted a Member/Officer Relationship Protocol which outlines the expectations of a good working relationship between employees and councillors.

Similarly, a good relationship with the press and other media outlets can be mutually beneficial to the council. All enquiries for information or comment on issues affecting the work of the council must be referred to the Parish Clerk. The council's Media and Communications Policies provides further guidance for employees.

All relationships of a business or personal nature with external contractors or suppliers, or potential contractors or suppliers, must be declared to the Parish Clerk at the earliest opportunity.

Orders and contracts must be awarded in accordance with council standing orders and financial regulations, on merit and without discrimination. All employees must ensure that no special favour is shown to current or recent former, employees or their partners, close relatives or associates in awarding contracts to businesses run by them or employing them in any capacity.

Use of financial resources

Employees must ensure that public funds entrusted to them are used in a responsible and lawful manner. They should strive to ensure value for money to the local community and to avoid legal challenge to the council.

All employees involved in financial activities and transactions on behalf of the council, including budgetary control, payments of accounts, payments of salaries and wages, petty cash and orders for works, goods or services must do so in accordance with financial regulations.

Protection of the council's property

Employees must take all reasonable precautions to ensure that the council's regalia, equipment and other property that is placed in their charge is kept safe and is protected from damage.

In the general interests of security in the council's premises, employees should take care not to do anything that reduces the level of security. In particular, employees must ensure that doors and windows are shut and locked when leaving any premises and that any security alarms (if present) are set or that arrangements are in place for them to be set later.

If an employee notices a potential lapse in security, they should bring it to the attention of the Parish Clerk. All resources of the council are to be used for the council's business and are not for personal use.

Anti-bribery, hospitality, gifts and sponsorship

It is illegal to offer, promise, give, request, agree, receive or accept bribes (Bribery Act 2010). This includes accepting any gift or consideration as an inducement or reward for doing, or refraining from doing, anything in an official capacity or showing favour or disfavour to any person in an official capacity.

In general, the council does not believe that it is appropriate for employees to accept gifts from service users, suppliers or any other person or organisation with which the council has (or might have) business connections. This is because it is important to ensure that no employee acts in any way that is inconsistent with the council's objectives or with the integrity of the council by accepting a gift in circumstances where it could influence, or be seen to influence, that employee's actions or decisions.

Acceptance of gifts by employees may be viewed by the public with suspicion and may make the council extremely vulnerable to criticism. For your own protection, if anyone makes an approach to you which seems to you, or might seem to a third party, to be aimed at obtaining some form of preferential treatment, or in any suspicious circumstances in connection with a contract, you must report the matter to the Parish Clerk, disclosing the fact of the gift, its nature and the identity of the sender.

Employees should not accept personal gifts from contractors and outside suppliers. The only exceptions to this rule are:

- Small gifts of only token value often given by way of trade advertisements to a wide range of people, e.g., calendars, diaries, tape measures and similar articles of use in the workplace.
- Small gifts of only token value given on the conclusion of a courtesy visit, e.g., to a factory, trade fair or other premises.

Gifts which fall outside the definition above should be politely refused and the council's policy on the acceptance of gifts should be explained. If a gift is delivered to the office without prior warning, unless it falls within the scope of acceptable gifts it should be returned, or if the return of the gift would cause offence the item should be donated to charity.

Employees should only accept offers of hospitality if there is a genuine need to impart information or represent the council in the community. Offers to attend purely social or sporting functions should be accepted only when these are part of the life of the community or where the council should be seen to be represented. They should be authorised by the Parish Clerk, in advance whenever possible.

When receiving authorised hospitality employees should be particularly sensitive as to its timing in relation to decisions which the council may be taking affecting those providing the hospitality. When hospitality must be declined, those making the offer should be courteously but firmly informed of the procedures and standards operating within the council.

All hospitality offered, whether it is accepted or not, and all gifts offered or received, whether they are accepted or returned, must be entered in a register of hospitality and gifts and a note made of the action taken. If you have any doubt about a gift or offer of hospitality, please seek advice from the Parish Clerk.

Where an outside organisation wishes to sponsor or is seeking to sponsor a council activity, whether by invitation, tender, negotiation or voluntarily, the basic conventions concerning acceptance of gifts or hospitality apply. Care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors.

Where the council wishes to sponsor an event or service, neither an employee nor any partner/civil partner, spouse or relative must benefit from such sponsorship in a direct way without there being full disclosure to the Parish Clerk of any such interest.

Similarly, where the council through sponsorship, grant aid, financial or other means, gives support in the community, employees should ensure that impartial advice is given and that there is no conflict of interest involved.

Appointments

If an employee wishes to recommend an individual for employment, they must notify the Parish Clerk. Any potential candidate for employment by the council recommended by an existing employee will be assessed equally alongside all other candidates. Employees shall not canvass any councillor or other employee of the council in respect of candidates seeking employment with the council.

Employees shall disclose to the Parish Clerk any close relationship (partner or family member) between themselves and any person who they know is a candidate for employment with the council. The Parish Clerk shall make any such disclosure to the Chairman of the Human Resources Committee.

To avoid accusations of bias, employees must not be involved with appointments where they are related to any applicant or otherwise have a close personal relationship with them. Employees who are involved in appointments must ensure that these are made on merit and on a non-discriminatory basis.

Outside commitments

Any employee who wishes to take another job must, before commencing the second job, request and be granted written permission from the Parish Clerk. The council does not prohibit employees from taking secondary employment and will not unreasonably withhold permission for an employee to work in a second job, provided

that the second job does not interfere, and is not likely to interfere, with the performance of the employee's job with the council.

You should not partake in any outside interests, voluntary activity or work that conflict with the work of the council. If you are in any doubt whatsoever that any outside activities or employment might be detrimental to the council's interests, you must discuss the matter with the Parish Clerk.

Personal interests

You must declare, in writing, to the Parish Clerk any financial or non-financial interests which could bring about conflict with the council's interests. If you are in any doubt about a potential conflict of interest, you should bring the matter to the attention of the Parish Clerk so that a decision can be made as to how best to proceed.

You must not make or become involved with any official or professional decisions about matters in which you have a personal interest. You must declare to the Parish Clerk membership of any organisation not open to the public, requiring any commitment of allegiance, or which has secrecy about rules or membership or conduct, for example, the Freemasons.

The Parish Clerk must make any declarations required by this paragraph, in writing, to the Chairman of the Human Resources Committee.

Use of non-financial resources for personal purposes

You should not use or abuse the council's equipment and other resources for your own personal purposes, either at home or at the office, regardless of whether such use is for your personal gain.

However, in certain circumstances and with the prior agreement of the Parish Clerk, it may be possible for you to make reasonable use of the council's resources, for example, photocopying. In such a case, the council will make an appropriate charge for the use of its resources.

Chairman of the Human Resources Committee

Irrespective of line management or communication lines indicated within council policies for highlighting concerns or reporting actions or events which an individual employee may believe are contrary to the interests of the council or other employees, any employee may directly approach the Chairman of the Human Resources Committee with their concerns if they feel it appropriate to do so.

Recruitment Policy

Normandy Parish Council will use the employment guidance provided in the National Joint Council for Local Government Services 'Green Book'. The council has made clear its commitment to equal opportunities for all by the adoption of an Equal Opportunities Statement. All selection processes must take place within the framework laid down by this policy.

Aims

The key aims of the council's recruitment policy are:

- To maximise the effectiveness of the recruitment and selection process
- To ensure the recruitment and selection processes are consistent, fair and transparent, and in accordance with legislation
- To ensure the recruitment and selection processes are in accordance with the councils Equal Opportunities Statement

Applications

The council will provide a job description and person specification for each vacancy, and these documents will form the basis for the selection process. The Parish Clerk will be responsible for ensuring these are reviewed and reflect the current responsibilities of the role.

The person specification will include a list of skills, experience and qualifications which are essential and/or desirable for the role. Candidates will be assessed and selected for interview against the person specification criteria.

The job description and person specification will be included in the recruitment pack, which will also provide details of working hours, pay scales and type and length of contract.

Vacancies will be advertised internally and externally, except where the council are amending a temporary or fixed-term contract to a permanent position, where the existing post-holder (assuming their performance is satisfactory) may be offered the position prior to any other advertising.

The council will consider the viability of part-time and/or job share candidates for each role and will make clear in its advertisement if this will be considered.

The council uses application forms for recruitment in respect of all employees and will not accept CVs alone. All potential applicants should be directed to apply formally through the official contact named in the advertisement.

Shortlisting

The council will agree a shortlist panel to assess the applications. The composition of the panel will vary according to the type of post being filled. Any councillor with a personal connection to any of the candidates will be excluded from the entire selection process. As soon as possible after the closing date for applications, the shortlisting panel will select candidates for interview by assessing the information in their application form against the job description and person specification.

Interviews

The council will agree the composition of the interview panel, which will normally comprise the members of the shortlisting panel.

To ensure a consistent and fair approach, all candidates will be asked similar questions, with supplementary questions structured around each candidate to enable individuals to demonstrate their relevant skills and abilities. The questions will vary depending on the vacancy.

The interview panel must take extreme care to ensure they do not imply discrimination by asking questions about personal circumstances which are unrelated to the job. Such questions are contrary to the councils Equal Opportunities Statement.

Each member of the interview panel will take notes to support their assessment of the candidates' suitability for the role, and the panel may agree a scoring system to help objectively assess the candidates.

Once all the candidates have been interviewed the panel members should compare their notes and agree the most suitable candidate, ensuring their decision is based on the criteria in the job description and person specification.

Notification and appointment

Post interview arrangements are the responsibility of the Parish Clerk, or where the vacancy is for the Parish Clerk role, the Chairman of the Human Resources Committee.

Candidates should be notified as soon as possible of the outcome. A verbal offer of appointment may be made to the successful candidate but must be formally confirmed in writing. The offer is conditional on obtaining satisfactory references and, where applicable, proof of eligibility to work in the UK and any copies of qualification certificates.

If unsatisfactory responses to references are received, the council may reconsider the offer of appointment. If the offer is subsequently withdrawn, the council may make an offer to one of the original unsuccessful candidates or decide to begin the recruitment process again.

Pay Policy

Normandy Parish Council actively promotes equal opportunities in employment and welcomes diversity within its workforce. The council is committed to ensuring a clear and fair pay policy for its employees. This policy supports those principles in explaining how pay is calculated, reviewed and paid to employees.

Legislation

The relevant legislation concerning equal pay is found within the Equal Pay Act 1970, the Equal Pay (Amendment) Regulations 1983 and the Pensions Act 2011. It is included in other United Kingdom legislation, European Community Law, the EU Directive on Fixed Term Work and resultant UK regulations including the Working Time Regulations 1998. The legislation applies to all employees regardless of full or part-time status, casual or temporary contract or length of service or any other consideration.

Pay scales

To comply with the legislation, the council will operate a transparent pay system based on objective criteria and publish pay details of employees in line with the requirements of the Local Government Transparency Code 2015. All employees' pay scales will be determined by their grading, which will align to the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) published pay scales.

Employees will be appointed to either a defined salary scale point, or within a defined salary scale published for their role. The starting salary on appointment will normally be at the lower end of the salary scale, subject to negotiation based on the appointee's level of relevant knowledge and experience.

One salary point will be added to an employee's salary, up to a maximum of four points, for success in obtaining or already holding any of the following relevant qualifications:

- The Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA)
- The Certificate of Higher Education in Community Engagement and Governance – Level 1 or equivalent qualification previously awarded by the University of Gloucestershire
- The Diploma in Higher Education in Community Engagement and Governance or equivalent qualification previously awarded by the University of Gloucestershire
- BA (Hons) degree in Community Engagement and Governance or equivalent qualification previously awarded by the University of Gloucestershire

Pay reviews

Each employee will receive an annual appraisal, which will include a review of their salary. Subject to satisfactory performance, employees appointed within a scale will progress automatically through the salary scale by annual increments until they reach the maximum salary in the range. Increments will be payable on 1 April annually. The council may withhold an increment if it is considered that performance fell below the expected level following an annual appraisal, or award additional increments for exemplary performance.

Progression for employees appointed on a single point salary will depend on their performance and will be subject to agreement by the Human Resources Committee. Increments for employees on a single point salary will be payable on a date to be agreed by the Human Resources Committee.

Salary payments

Employees are paid in arrears and receive payment by bank transfer on the 28th of each month, or if the 28th is a weekend or bank holiday, the previous working day. In December, pay day may be moved forward to an earlier date of the month, which will be advised to employees in advance.

Working from Home Policy

The Council recognises the advantages of home-based working, however it is noted that it doesn't suit everyone and some job roles may not be appropriate to undertake at home. This policy describes the working arrangements and expectations that will apply if you work from home.

It applies to all staff who are home-based whether full time, part time or fixed term.

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 us. 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.

Office equipment

The Council will provide you with the equipment necessary to carry out your tasks. If you choose to use your own digital equipment, then you must put in place the necessary security.

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 Parish 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
- 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.

Normandy Parish Council reserves 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).

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 Teams, 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 Parish 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.

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 Parish 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.

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

You are required to regularly attend Council meetings at venues to be determined within the village. On occasions you will be required to attend local venues for training, performance assessment meetings, or to man the Parish Office etc. The dates and times of such visits will be agreed in advance.

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.

Redundancy Policy

Normandy Parish Council aims to maintain and enhance the efficiency and financial sustainability of the council in a way which will, as far as possible, safeguard the employment of its employees. However, the council recognises that there may be changes in service or organisational requirements which may affect staffing needs. In such circumstances, the council will seek to minimise the effect of redundancies through the provisions made in this policy.

Reasons why redundancies may be considered may include the following:

- The council is going to close some or all of the services it currently provides
- The council has less need for a certain type of work and therefore needs less employees
- After a restructuring exercise or reorganisation of work, some roles are no longer required

Scope

In line with its Equal Opportunities Statement, the council is committed to ensuring that this policy does not discriminate directly or indirectly on grounds of gender, race, ethnic origin, disability, age, nationality, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, marital status, social class or trade union membership and activity.

In addition, part-time employees and those working under fixed-term contracts will, under no circumstances, be singled out for selection on different criteria to those applied to full-time employees.

Preventative measures

Where the need for redundancies has been identified, and in an attempt to avoid these occurring, one or more of the following measures may be considered:

- Job-sharing, part-time employment and/or other flexible working arrangements
- A review of existing workloads and overtime levels
- A salary freeze for a specific period
- Suspending advertising and recruitment
- Discontinuing casual employment contracts
- The likely effects of natural wastage

Any measure being considered will ensure that it does not adversely affect service delivery and development or prevent the council from recruiting Human Resources to help avert or prevent the conditions which give rise to the problem.

Compulsory redundancies

When selecting employees for redundancy, the following criteria (not necessarily in order of priority) will be considered:

- Loss of contract-based work or funding for a post
- Relevant experience, qualifications, capability and adaptability
- Appraisal records
- Attendance and disciplinary records
- Further social criteria relevant to affected employees e.g., employment prospects due to disability, age, etc.
- No employee will be selected for redundancy for any of the following:
 - Maternity related reasons
 - On grounds of gender, race, ethnic origin, disability, age, nationality, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, marital status or social class
 - Health and safety related reasons
 - For asserting a statutory right

- Trade union related reasons
- For carrying out the function of, or standing as, an employee representative

Consultation

When the council has reached a decision on which posts are being made redundant, they will arrange consultation meetings with those employees affected. These meetings will involve all employees concerned including those who may be absent from work due to maternity/paternity.

The initial meeting will be to advise that the affected employee(s) that they are under risk of redundancy. At this meeting, a copy of this policy will be re-distributed to the employee(s).

Directly following the meeting, the affected employee(s) will be issued with written details on:

- The grounds on which the redundancy is being considered
- The process that will be followed
- An invitation to attend a further meeting to discuss the matter in person

Subsequent meetings, to be held within two weeks of the initial consultation, will take place with affected employees on a one-to-one basis.

Notice of dismissal will not be issued until the consultation period has been completed. In such cases, notice periods are as follows:

<i>Length of continuous service</i>	<i>Notice entitlement</i>
One month – 2 years	1 week
2 years – 3 years	2 weeks
Each additional year (up to 12 years)	One additional week
12 years plus	12 weeks (maximum entitlement)

Suitable alternative employment

Employees under notice of redundancy will be advised of all vacancies within the council, including those which are expected to arise, during the period of their notice. For each available vacancy the council will establish whether an employee under notice of redundancy should be assimilated (see below) into the vacant post or offered a redeployment interview for it. Records of this process will be kept on file for six months.

Assimilation

Assimilation will occur when a vacancy is similar to a job being made redundant. The council will determine this by comparing the two job descriptions and person specifications and assessing similarity based on 90% or more match. This comparison will be made at the start of the redundancy process.

Where only one employee meets the criteria for assimilation for a vacancy they will be automatically be placed into the available post. Where more than one employee is eligible for assimilation to a vacancy, each will be invited to an interview. In such cases this is no longer assimilation, but redeployment and interviews will take place under those conditions (see below).

Employees may have a union representative or a work colleague of their choice present at the interview, in an advisory capacity.

Redeployment

Where a vacancy is not similar enough to justify assimilation, but there is a 70-89% match, the employee will be invited to a redeployment interview.

The employee may have a union representative or a work colleague of their choice present at the interview, in an advisory capacity. The purpose of the re-deployment interview is to:

- Establish whether, with a reasonable amount of training, if necessary, the employee is able to satisfactorily undertake the tasks detailed in the job description for the alternative post. This will be done by:
 - Considering the employee's complete work experience to date (whether paid or voluntary)
 - The skills they have acquired over this time
 - Whether these constitute at least 90% of the essential requirements for the vacant position
- Establish whether the employee considers the post to be a suitable alternative and is willing to accept it.

Where two employees are equally successful in applying for the same post, the post may if an additional alternative post cannot be found, be offered to both by way of a job share.

Where an employee under notice of redundancy is to be redeployed, the council will undertake to provide relevant retraining as far as is reasonably practicable. In doing this, consideration will be given to both the cost of retraining and the requirement for the employee to carry out the duties of the redundant post during the notice period.

General recruitment

Where a vacancy is not similar enough to justify assimilation or redeployment the council may, at their discretion, invite employees to apply for other suitable alternative posts. In such cases the employee will be shortlisted and interviewed before any other applicants for the post.

If, through any of the processes highlighted above, an employee finds alternative employment within the council a written offer should be made. Offers of a new contract will result in an employee's redundancy notice and the council's liability for redundancy payments being removed, providing that the new offer:

- Is made before the redundancy takes effect
- Starts within four weeks of the date of redundancy
- Gives a trial period, under the terms outlined below
- States that if the employee accepts the job they will not be dismissed under redundancy

If the employee unreasonably refuses a new job offer, dismissal will take effect. In such cases, dismissal will still be for redundancy, but the council can refuse to pay any redundancy payment.

Trial periods

Alternative employment is subject to a statutory four-week trial period from the date at which the new job is taken up. If, after this period, the employee or the council decide that the new role or employee's performance in the post is not suitable, then either party may give notice.

In such cases redundancy rights are not lost. Where a trial period is unsuccessful both parties return to the "pre-trial period" situation i.e., as if the trial had not taken place and a redundancy payment will be made. Any such payment will be calculated based on the day that the old job ended.

For the purpose of retraining, trial periods may be extended for up to 3 months, providing that written confirmation of the following is made prior to the start of the new position:

- The retraining agreement
- The date on which the period of retraining ends

- The terms and conditions of appointment applying after retraining

Appeals

Employees who are to be made redundant are entitled to appeal against the decision if they feel that the selection criteria have been unfairly applied to their case. Employees may also appeal if they are not offered suitable alternative employment following the assimilation, redeployment or general recruitment interview processes outlined in this policy.

Appeals must be submitted to the Human Resources Committee, in writing, within ten working days of the employee being advised of the decision. Employees are entitled to be accompanied at an appeal hearing by a trade union representative or a work colleague of their choice.

In the event of appeals being made, the Human Resources Committee will set up an appeals panel consisting of members of the council who have not been previously involved with the specific case to be heard. The panel will meet within ten working days of an appeal being submitted and their decision, based either on unanimous agreement or majority vote, will be final. The employee will be advised of the panel's decision, in writing within five working days of the appeal hearing.

Voluntary redundancy

The council is not obliged to offer voluntary redundancy but may consider it an option in certain circumstances. Employees may opt for redundancy if they are in a post whose termination would enable the council to avoid a compulsory redundancy and if their voluntary redundancy is accepted by the council. Volunteers for redundancy will be entitled to a statutory payment.

Notice period

During their notice period employees are entitled to a maximum of 5 working days without loss of pay to attend interviews/training.

Employees under notice of redundancy may ask to leave the council early i.e. before the end of their notice period. Consideration to such requests will be considered on individual basis and the council's agreement will be dependent on whether the request is made on reasonable grounds.

Requests to leave the council early do not invalidate an employee's right to a redundancy payment unless the council refuses the request. The employee is still considered dismissed through redundancy but on the date of expiry of the employee's notice rather than the original notice from the council.

Redundancy during maternity/paternity leave

In cases of an employee being absent from work due to maternity/paternity leave the council will ensure that, if affected by redundancy, they are always consulted. The council will, as detailed by current legislation, automatically send a written statement of the reason for redundancy to an employee who is pregnant or on maternity/paternity leave.

Redundancy during maternity/paternity leave ends any contractual obligations to both maternity/paternity pay and the right to return.

An employee on maternity/paternity leave and under notice of redundancy will be offered any suitable alternative vacancy in preference to other employees.

Continuous service

To qualify for a redundancy payment an employee must have two years continuous service. In cases where an employee has taken strike action the period of action will not count towards continuous service, although continuity of service will not be broken.

Under the terms of "The Redundancy Payments (Continuity of Employment in Local Government) (Modification) Order 1999 (as amended)" the council will include continuous service in local government (and other specified bodies) when calculating entitlement to, and the amount, of redundancy payments.

Redundancy payments

The calculation date for determining a week's pay for redundancy is the date on which statutory notice starts or, in instances where no notice or less than the statutory notice is given, the date employment ends.

Without prejudice, an employee who meets the continuous service criteria set out above will receive, at the very least, statutory redundancy payments, calculated as follows:

- (i) 0.5 week's pay for each full year of service, where age during the year is less than 22
- (ii) 1.0 week's pay for each full year of service, where age during the year is 22 or above but less than 41
- (iii) 1.5 week's pay for each full year of service, where age during the year is 41 or above

The council may, at its discretion, make enhanced redundancy payments; these will be dependent on circumstances at the time.

In calculating statutory redundancy payments, a week's pay is based on the maximum statutory weekly rate of pay in force at the time or the employee's normal rate of pay (whichever is lower). Overtime is not included. If an employee works variable hours from week to week, a week's pay is the average remuneration for the 12 weeks prior to the calculation date.

Holiday

Payments in respect of outstanding accrued holiday entitlement will be made if it is not reasonably practicable for the entitlement to be taken during the notice period.

Pay in lieu of notice (PILON)

Employees will, wherever possible, be expected to work out their notice. PILON will only be paid where there is good reason for an employee not working the full notice period.

Section 2

Absence from Work

Normandy Parish Council is committed to the care and well-being of its employees. The purpose of these policies is to ensure all employees have access to information relating to absence and are aware of the steps they must follow when absent from work.

By managing sickness and absence, the council will continue to provide a high-quality service to members of the public.

Annual Leave Policy

Details of annual leave entitlements are included in an employee's contract, in line with National Joint Council (NJC) terms and conditions.

The annual leave period runs from 1 April to 31 March the following year. A maximum of 5 day's annual leave may be carried over from one year's entitlement to the next.

All requests for annual leave must be made using the Employee Holiday Request Form (appendix E).

Requests for annual leave are at the discretion of an employee's line manager, with consideration of the operational requirements of the council being considered before a decision is made. Annual leave requests will not be unreasonably refused.

Where two or more employees request annual leave on the same dates, and it is not operationally possible to grant all the requests, preference will be given based on the following:

- Seniority of role/grade
- Length of service
- Parental/carer commitments

Sickness Absence Policy

The council recognises that there will be occasions when employees are unable to work due to sickness. The council provides a sick pay scheme for its employees in line with the NJC terms and conditions. Details of sick pay are included in the employee's contract.

If an employee is unable to attend work due to sickness, they must inform their line manager, giving the reason for sickness, the likely duration and the expected date of return. This must be done as soon as practical on the first day of absence, or within 1 hour of starting their shift work pattern, so that service levels can be maintained. Only in exceptional circumstances will the council accept notification of absence from a third party. Regular contact must be maintained with the line manager during a period of absence.

For absences of seven days or less, employees are required to complete the Employee Sickness Self-Certification form (appendix D) as outlined in the Employment Rights Act 1996. For all absences which exceed a seven-day period, a medical certificate is required.

Employees who are frequently absent could be suffering from poor health which may require medical investigation. The council will offer support and guidance in consultation with the employee and will consider referral to occupational health specialist services if deemed appropriate.

All sickness absence will be recorded. The council will investigate and assess whether further action is necessary if periods of absence due to short-term self-certification sickness reach unacceptable levels, or if patterns emerge.

The council takes a sympathetic view towards genuine ill health problems and will provide a supportive approach to employees who have been subject to long-term sickness. An employee returning to work following a period of long-term sickness will be supported on their return to work, and the following options may be considered:

- Phased return to work
- Change of role or working pattern
- Provision of specialist equipment

Where an employee has returned from any period of sickness, a return-to-work interview will be conducted by their line manager.

In cases where an employee's absence reaches excessive levels or there is a lack of information about the circumstances of the sickness absence, the council may request medical information about their condition from their GP.

Any medical information received by the council will be treated as strictly confidential. Any expense in obtaining medical information from the GP will be met by the council.

Medical appointments

Employees are expected to arrange medical appointments out of normal working hours wherever possible. The council recognises this is not always possible. Where it is necessary to make an appointment during normal working hours, employees are encouraged to make the appointments at either the start or end of the day where possible to minimise disruption to the work of the council.

In-patient appointments or procedures taking the whole day will be treated as sick leave in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.

Unauthorised Absence and Lateness Policy

Unauthorised absence occurs when an employee fails to attend work and has not made arrangements with their line manager.

Where an employee returns to work following an unauthorised absence, they will be required to attend a meeting with their line manager to explain their absence. The employee will be expected to take any unauthorised absence from their annual leave entitlement, or if no entitlement remains, pay will be deducted for the period of unauthorised absence. Unauthorised absence may result in disciplinary action being taken.

There may be occasions when it is unavoidable to be late for work. The employee should contact their line manager to explain the reasons for any delay. The employee will be expected to make up any time lost at work due to lateness. Persistent lateness may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Compassionate and/or Emergency Leave Policy

Compassionate leave is at the overall discretion of the Parish Clerk. The council recognises that each individual's respective relationships are different, however in order to achieve consistency, in general paid compassionate leave will be granted in the following circumstances:

- The death of a close family member i.e., spouse, civil partner, child, sibling, parent (or equivalent in-laws) or grandparent
- The diagnosis of, or the final stages of care for, a serious (life threatening) illness affecting a close family relative (as defined above)
- The employee falling victim to a serious crime
- Fire/flood/burglary at the employee's home
- Road traffic collisions or other distressing accidents/incidents involving the employee or a close family member

The length of paid compassionate leave granted is at the discretion of the Parish Clerk but is limited to a maximum of 5 working days. Where a situation requires an extended period of leave beyond 5 working days, other options should be discussed including use of TOIL, annual leave and/or a period of unpaid leave.

Requests for compassionate leave for situations not included above will be considered on an individual basis.

Requests for emergency leave are at the discretion of the Parish Clerk. The council recognises that each individual's personal circumstances will dictate what may be deemed as an emergency. However, to achieve consistency, in general paid emergency leave of one day will be granted in the following circumstances:

- To provide assistance or make arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured
- When an unexpected disruption or termination of arrangements for the care of a dependant occurs

Employees are expected to use the day's paid emergency leave to make any ongoing care arrangements for dependents. Any additional requests for leave should be considered as requests for annual leave and assessed using the council's annual leave guidelines.

Parental Leave

The council recognises an employee's right to maternity/paternity/adoption/parental leave as set out in the relevant legislation. This policy and procedure applies to all current employees, whether full or part-time, temporary or fixed-term and describes how the Council meets the statutory requirements for Maternity, Paternity and Adoption leave.

MATERNITY

Definitions

The following definitions are used in this policy:

"Expected week of childbirth" (EWC) means the week, during which the employee's doctor or midwife expects the employee to give birth; and "Qualifying week" means the fifteenth week before the expected week of childbirth

Notification Requirements

An employee shall notify the Parish Clerk by the 15th week before the baby is due in writing: That they are pregnant; Of the EWC, providing a copy of form MATB1 as supplied by a registered medical practitioner; and The date on which they intend to start their maternity leave. An employee can change their notified start date as long as they gives 28 days' notice or as soon as is reasonably practical.

Health and Safety

On receipt of written notification from an employee that they are pregnant, the Parish Clerk should arrange a risk assessment. The employee and relevant manager should be fully informed of any risks identified. The manager and employee have an ongoing responsibility to monitor any potential risks that may be present

Ante-Natal Care

Any pregnant employee has the right to paid time off to attend ante-natal appointments and must produce evidence of appointments if requested to do so. Wherever possible these should be arranged outside of core time.

Maternity Leave

All employees regardless of their length of service, are entitled to 26 weeks' ordinary maternity leave (OML) and 26 weeks' additional maternity leave (AML) providing a right to 52 weeks maternity leave in total. The first two weeks after the birth are compulsory.

Maternity leave shall commence no earlier than 11 weeks before the EWC or from the time of childbirth if that is earlier. From the beginning of the fourth week before the EWC, an employee's maternity leave is triggered if they are absent because of her pregnancy, e.g. due to a pregnancy-related illness or fatigue.

Maternity Pay

Less Than One Year's Continuous Service

Payments for employees who have less than 1 year's continuous local government service at the beginning of the eleventh week before the EWC shall be the employee's entitlement to Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) or Maternity Allowance (MA). In order to qualify for SMP, an employee must have at least 26 weeks' service with the Council by the end of the fifteenth week before the EWC. The payment of SMP is for paid for a continuous period of up to 39 weeks as follows.

- First 6 weeks: 90% of your average weekly earnings with no upper limit.
- Remaining 33 weeks: Standard rate or a rate equal to 90% of your average weekly earnings. You will get whichever rate is lower.

More Than One Year's Continuous Service

Payments for employees who have completed 1 year's continuous local government service at the eleventh week before the EWC shall be as follows.

- For the first six weeks of absence, an employee shall be entitled to 90% of a week's pay offset against payments made by way of SMP

- An employee who declares in writing that they intend to return to work will for the subsequent 12 weeks receive half a week's pay spread over a distribution agreed mutually by the employee and the Council without deduction except by the extent to which the combined pay and SMP exceeds full pay. The half pay will be repayable if the employee does not return to local authority employment for a minimum of 3 months.
- For employees not intending to return to work, payments during the 33 weeks after the first 6 weeks shall be the employee's entitlement to SMP.

Continuous Service

The period of Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML) and Additional Maternity Leave (AML) will count as continuous service for statutory and contractual purposes.

Leave During Maternity Leave

Annual leave - continues to accrue during both ordinary and additional maternity leave.

Bank holidays - continues to accrue during ordinary maternity leave and additional maternity leave.

Carry forward of annual leave - where an employee's maternity leave spans one leave year to the next, she can carry over any unused annual leave.

If an employee changes their hours after maternity leave - all leave accrued up to the agreed date when their hours change is calculated based on their original hours and any leave accrued subsequently is calculated on her new hours.

Returning To Work

Notification requirements

Managers must assume that an employee will return after 52 weeks, we will write to you to confirm this date. An employee need only notify their employer that she is returning to work if she is going to do so before the end of their maternity leave. Otherwise, the employee simply returns at the end of their maternity leave. However, as the return to work impacts on the half pay element of maternity pay, a manager can ask the employee to inform them if they intend to return to work. Please note that an employee can change their mind up to the point when they actually give notice and resign. If an employee can let their manager know when they are likely to return as soon as possible that would be appreciated.

Early return

If an employee wishes to return early or on a different date than they had previously notified, they must give 8 weeks' notice.

Keeping In Touch

An employee can do 10 days' work during their maternity leave, in agreement with their manager, without bringing their maternity leave to an end. Working for part of a day will count as one day. An employee will not lose any SMP (Statutory Maternity Pay) for working up to 10 days. Work is defined as any work done under the contract of employment and may include training or any activity undertaken for the purposes of keeping in touch with the workplace. Managers need to ensure that they keep in touch with their employees whilst they are on maternity leave. If you do not wish to be contacted, please notify your manager. Newsletters and any other relevant correspondence will be sent to all employees whilst they are on maternity leave.

PATERNITY

An employee has a statutory entitlement to take paternity leave for the purpose of caring for a child or supporting the child's mother in the first few weeks following the birth.

Ordinary Paternity Leave (OPL) and Maternity Support Leave (MSL)

To qualify for paternity leave the employee must satisfy the following. They must:

- Be the father of the child, or married to or the partner of the child's mother;
- Have or expect to have responsibility for the upbringing of the child; and
- Have 26 weeks' continuous service with the Council by the end of the fifteenth week before the expected week of childbirth (EWC).

Paternity leave is also available to adoptive parents where a child is matched or newly placed with them for adoption. Either adoptive parent may take paternity leave where the other adoptive parent has qualified and elected to take adoption leave.

Ordinary Paternity Leave (OPL)

An employee who meets the qualifying criteria is entitled to two weeks' Ordinary Paternity Leave. An employee can take either one week or two non-consecutive weeks' Ordinary Paternity Leave, paid at the current Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP) rate. It must be taken within the first year after the child is born or adopted, or, if the child is born early, within the period from the actual date of childbirth up to the first year after the first day of the expected week of childbirth. Employees must take this leave in full weeks, i.e. either one or two weeks' leave. It cannot be taken as odd days.

Maternity Support Leave (MSL)

This is provided for the child's father, or the partner or nominated carer of an expectant mother at or around the time of birth. There is no qualifying service requirement for this right. Maternity Support Leave replaces one week of Statutory Paternity Leave; during this time any SPP is topped up to full pay. Therefore, an employee who would otherwise have been entitled to two weeks' Statutory Paternity Leave will be entitled to one week's Maternity Support Leave (during which Statutory Paternity Pay will be topped up to full pay) and one week's Statutory Paternity Leave (during which they will receive Statutory Paternity Pay).

Notification Requirements

Before leave starts

The employee must provide the following in writing by 28 days before the expected week of childbirth. If this is not reasonably practical, notice must be provided as soon as is reasonably practical: If requested, the employee must also give the employer a signed declaration confirming they are:

- The baby's biological father, married to or in a civil partnership with the mother, or living with the mother in an enduring family relationship, but are not an immediate relative; and
- Will be responsible for the child's upbringing and will take time off work to support the mother or care for the child.

After the birth

The employee must also inform the employer of the date the child was born, as soon as is reasonably practical after the child's birth.

Shared Parental Leave

This policy applies to a parent wishing to share traditional Maternity or Adoption Leave. Unpaid Parental Leave remains as does the right to take 52 weeks Maternity or Adoption Leave. Surrogacy parents may be able to take Shared Parental Leave if they fulfil the eligibility requirements.

The right to shared parental leave (SPL) and statutory shared parental pay (ShPP) enables eligible employees who are parents (whether by birth or adoption) to take paid and/or unpaid leave within the first year of their child's life or the first year after their child's placement for adoption, provided always that the eligible mother or adopter has volunteered to end their maternity leave and/or pay or adoption leave and/or pay early (or has already returned to work early). Instead, they can then opt into the SPL regime, enabling the balance of their untaken leave and pay to be shared between them and the other eligible parent or adopter – up to a maximum of 50 weeks of SPL and 37 weeks of ShPP.

To take advantage of this provision the mother must commit, in writing, to ending their Maternity/Adoption Leave and pay at a set date, and to share the untaken balance of leave and pay as Shared Parental Leave and pay with their partner, or to return to work early from Maternity or Adoption Leave and opt in to Shared Parental Leave and pay at a later date.

The timescales and process to plan Shared Parental Leave is quite complex so please speak to your Line Manager if you have any queries or wish to discuss possible arrangements. Good communication during the planning is the key to finding a workable plan for both employee and the Council.

ADOPTION

This policy applies to all Council employees seeking to adopt a child from approved Adoption Agencies. The right to adoption leave is available to all employees (whether married or single) who adopt a child through an approved adoption agency. Where a couple jointly adopts a child, only one of them will be entitled to take adoption leave (the couple can choose which). The other adoptive parent will normally be entitled to take paternity leave, provided that he or she meets the relevant statutory criteria.

Eligibility Criteria

To qualify for adoption leave and pay an employee must be the child's adopter, i.e. have been matched with the child for adoption. A person is matched with a child when an adoption agency decides that they would be a suitable adoptive parent for the child. If an employee meets the eligibility criteria, then they are entitled to both Ordinary and Additional Adoption Leave.

The notification week is the week in which the employee is informed by the adoption agency that they have been matched with a child. The employee needs to have agreed with the adoption agency that the child should be placed with them and the date the placement should occur and provide the Council with the appropriate notice and evidence of entitlement.

Notification Requirements

Within 7 days, or as soon as possible after the day the employee receives notification from the adoption agency that they have been matched with a child, an employee must inform the Parish Clerk in writing of the following:-

- the date the child is expected to be placed with them for adoption;
- the date the employee has chosen to start their leave and pay.

Evidence

In order to receive adoption pay and leave, the employee must provide the Parish Clerk with either a matching certificate and/or a letter from the adoption agency which shows the following:-

- the name and address of the adoption agency;
- the employee's name and address;
- the date the child is expected to be placed for adoption, or where the child has already been placed, the date of placement, and;
- the date the employee was informed that the child would be placed with them.
- where an employee is entitled to Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) they must provide a signed declaration that they have elected to receive SAP and not statutory paternity pay (SPP).

Adoption Leave

Time Off Before a Child is Placed

The main adopter will be able to take paid time off for up to 5 adoption appointments. The secondary adopter will be entitled to take unpaid time off for up to 2 appointments. All employees who meet the eligibility criteria are entitled to take up to 52 weeks Statutory Adoption Leave. The first 26 weeks is known as 'Ordinary Adoption Leave', the last 26 weeks as 'Additional Adoption Leave'.

Leave can start:

- up to 14 days before the child starts living with the employee (UK adoptions)
- when the child arrives in the UK or within 28 days of this date (overseas adoptions)

An employee can change their mind about when they start their leave, provided they give sufficient notice. They must inform their manager of the new date 28 days before the date they now wish their leave to start, or as soon as is reasonably practical.

Adoption Pay

Less than one Year's Continuous Service

Paid Adoption Leave is available for a child adopted under UK law - but some details may vary for parents adopting outside the UK. To receive Statutory Adoption Pay (SAP) you must:

- Be the child's adopter.
- Earn before tax an average that is no less than the lower earnings limit which applies to National Insurance (NI). This is the amount you have to earn to qualify for benefits. You have to earn more than this amount before you actually start paying NI.
- Be employed for a continuous period of at least 26 weeks ending before the placement of the child.
- Have received official matching certificate or notification that it is being issued.

The first six weeks of SAP will be paid at 90% of the employee's normal earnings. The remaining 33 weeks will be the rate of statutory adoption pay.

More than One Year's Continuous Service

Payments for employees who have completed 1 year's continuous local government service at the eleventh week before the matching certificate or notification that it is being issued shall be as follows.

- For the first six weeks of absence, an employee shall be entitled to 90% of a week's pay offset against payments made by way of SMP (or MA for employees not eligible for SMP).
- An employee who declares in writing that they intend to return to work will for the subsequent 12 weeks receive half a week's pay spread over a distribution agreed mutually by the employee and the Council without deduction except by the extent to which the combined pay and SAP exceeds full pay. The half pay will be repayable if the employee does not return to local authority employment for a minimum of 3 months.
- For employees not intending to return to work, payments during the 33 weeks after the first 6 weeks shall be the employee's entitlement to SAP.

Continuous Service

The period of ordinary adoption leave (OAL), and additional adoption leave (AAL) will count as continuous service for statutory and contractual purposes.

Leave During Adoption Leave

Annual leave - continues to accrue during ordinary adoption leave and additional adoption leave.

Bank holidays – continue to accrue during ordinary adoption leave (OAL), and additional adoption leave (AAL).

Returning to Work

Notification Requirements

Managers must assume that an employee will return after 52 weeks, we will write to you to confirm this date. An employee need only notify their employer that they are returning to work if they are going to do so before the end of the adoption leave. Otherwise, the employee simply returns at the end of the adoption leave.

Please note that an employee can change their mind up to the point when they actually give notice and resign. Employees should let their manager know when they are likely to return as soon as possible.

Early Return

If an employee wishes to return early or on a different date than they had previously notified, they must give 8 weeks' notice.

Keeping in Touch

An employee can do 10 days' work during their adoption leave, in agreement with their manager, without bringing their adoption leave to an end. Working for part of a day will count as one day. An employee will not lose any SAP (Statutory Adoption Pay) for working up to 10 days.

Work is defined as any work done under the contract of employment and may include training or any activity undertaken for the purposes of keeping in touch with the workplace. Managers need to ensure that they keep in touch with their employee whilst they are on adoption leave. If you do not wish to be contacted please notify your manager. Newsletters and any other relevant correspondence will be sent to all employees whilst they are on adoption leave.

STATUTORY PARENTAL BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

The Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Act 2018 provides for at least two weeks' leave for employees following the loss of a child under the age of 18 or a stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy. Employees with 26 weeks' continuous service will be entitled to two weeks of paid leave at the statutory rate and other employees will be entitled to unpaid leave. Leave must be taken in a block of two weeks, or two single weeks and must be taken within 56 weeks from the date of the child's death. Notice in the first 7 weeks after the death can be given any time before you are due to start on the first day. From the 8th week up until 56 weeks, the notice required is 1 week. Leave can be cancelled or changed using the notice periods above.

Carers Leave Policy

Eligibility

All eligible employees, regardless of hours worked or length of service, have the right to take a maximum of one week's unpaid leave during any 12-month period to provide or arrange care for a dependant with a long-term care need.

The entitlement to a maximum of one week's unpaid leave is irrespective of the number of dependants and may be taken as either a continuous block, or individual full or half days within 12 months.

Purpose and Definition

The time off is intended to be absence from work to provide or arrange care for a dependent with a long-term care need, or who reasonably relies on the employee for care.

A "dependant" is a parent, spouse, civil partner, child, or someone who lives in the same household as the employee, but excluding tenants, lodgers or boarders, or someone who is employed by the employee.

Long term care is when the dependant has:

- any physical or mental illness or injury that requires or is likely to require care for more than three months.
- a condition or illness that is considered a disability under with the Equality Act 2010
- care needs connected with their old age.

Entitlement

For employees who work regular hours, a "week of carer's leave" is the period of absence from work that is equal in duration to the period the employee is normally expected or required to work in a week at the time of making the request.

Part time employees who work regular hours throughout the year will be entitled to a proportionate amount of leave based on their hours. For example, someone who works a 3-day week, will be entitled to 3 days unpaid carer's leave.

For employees who work variable hours and/or term time, we will calculate entitlement by using actual hours worked in a 'relevant period'. A 'relevant period' as defined by the Regulations is a period of 12 months which ends on the last day of the Carer's Leave that the employee has requested. To calculate, the company will divide the total of the periods for which the employee is normally required to work during the course of a week in the relevant period by 52. For new starters with less than 52 weeks service, this calculation will be based on the length of time that they have been employed with the company.

Requesting Leave

To help the Council to manage the planned absence from work, if you intend on taking a period of leave, you required to provide notice that is double the length of time that is being requested or at least three days in advance, whichever provides the greater amount of notice.

Postponement of leave

The Council reserve the right to postpone carer's leave if we believe that the absence would unduly disrupt the Council. If we deem it necessary to postpone carer's leave, we will notify you in writing within seven days of receipt of you request for carer's leave, setting out the reason for the postponement.

We will also offer alternative dates on which carer's leave can be taken. The leave will not be postponed later than one month after the start of the original request.

Terms and Conditions

During the time off, you continue to be bound by and remain entitled to the benefit of your normal terms and conditions of employment, except for terms relating to wages or salary. You will remain employed by us and accrue unbroken continuity of service and continue to accrue holiday entitlement.

Public Duties Policy

Normandy Parish Council recognises the value of employees undertaking public duties outside work. However, staffing levels must meet the demands of the council at all times. We may grant reasonable time off with pay to enable employees to carry out public duties. This may include undertaking jury service, election duties, serving on public bodies or undertaking public duties such as a Justice of the Peace.

Employees wishing to take leave to undertake public duties must get approval from their manager. They should agree to the amount of leave allowed in any one year. Managers will approve leave subject to the needs of the council. Employees who work flexible or annualised hours should use these arrangements where possible. Where an allowance is claimable for loss of earnings, the employee should claim and pay the allowance to the council.

Time off in lieu (TOIL)

The standard council working week is 37 hours. Employee's individual weekly hours are detailed in their employment contracts. The council recognises an employee's right to receive recompense for working beyond their contracted hours. Employees have a right to be paid at agreed NJC overtime rates. Any paid overtime must be agreed in advance with the line manager.

The council encourages the use of TOIL and welcomes employee's consideration of management of the council salary budget.

Requests to use accrued TOIL time must be made to the Parish Clerk and will be considered in the same way as annual leave requests, with the need to maintain operational effectiveness.

Section 3

Information and Communication Technology

Normandy Parish Council provides information and communication technology systems that enables staff to work efficiently. We recognise that email communication plays an essential role in the conduct of our organisation and that the way in which we all communicate with people not only reflects on us as individuals but also on us as an organisation. In addition, Normandy Parish Council provides access to the vast information resources of the internet to help us all do our job and be well informed. The facilities that we provide represent a considerable commitment of resources.

Use of IT and Social Media

This policy is designed to help you understand our expectations for the use of those resources and to ensure that you use those resources wisely. This policy applies to all staff (whether full time, part time, casually employed or temporary workers), agency workers, and contractors working for or on behalf of Normandy Parish Council and anyone using the Council's information and communication technology equipment.

The purpose of this policy is to set clear standards of behaviour and conduct in the use of IT and social media. The policy covers all our communications and IT equipment which includes desk top computers, laptops, internet access, remote access connections, email servers, file storage, smart phones, tablets and computing and networking facilities owned and operated by the Council. This policy also deals with the use of all forms of social media, including Facebook, LinkedIn, X, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest, Wikipedia, all other social networking sites, and all other internet postings, including blogs. It applies to the use of social media for both work and personal purposes, whether during office hours or otherwise. The policy applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using our IT facilities and equipment or equipment belonging to members of staff.

Policy Statement

Information and communication technology systems are provided to enable us all to work efficiently. They provide a means for communicating both internally and externally and, a means for storing information, including personal or sensitive information. All staff and other users are therefore expected to use the systems provided in ways which:

- Comply with the law (e.g. on data protection, equality legislation, health and safety, etc.)
- Enhance efficiency and productivity
- Enhances the Council's reputation

We recognise that the internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions and share information on particular topics using a wide variety of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs and wikis. However, inappropriate use of social media can pose risks to our confidential information, and reputation, and can jeopardise our compliance with legal obligations. To minimise these risks, to avoid loss of productivity and to ensure that our IT resources and communications systems are used only for appropriate business purposes, we expect everyone covered by this policy to adhere to it. Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. In the case of agency workers, contractors or others not covered by the disciplinary policy, action can include summarily ending the contract. Disciplinary action may be taken regardless of whether the breach is committed during working hours, and regardless of whether our equipment or facilities are used for the purpose of committing the breach. (For example if you release confidential information or make derogatory statements about the council, our member councils or people working for either on social media). Any member of

staff suspected of committing a breach of this policy will be required to co-operate with our investigation, which may involve handing over relevant passwords and login details. You may be required to remove internet postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.

People responsible for implementing the policy

The Clerk has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy, including monitoring and reviewing the operation of this policy and making recommendations for change to minimise risks. All staff have a specific responsibility for operating within the boundaries of this policy, ensuring that you understand the standards of behaviour expected of you and taking action when behaviour falls below its requirements.

Any misuse of IT resources and social media should be reported to the Clerk.

Compliance with related Policies and Agreements

The Council's policies and procedures (e.g. Disciplinary Policy and Harassment Policy) apply equally to behaviour online as off line. The IT resources and social media should never be used in a way that breaches any of our other policies. If an internet post would breach any of our policies in another forum, it will also breach them in an online forum. It is your responsibility to ensure that information and data that you hold on your council's computer systems complies fully with the principles of the Data Protection Act. In brief, the Data Protection Act requires that anyone who inputs, stores or uses personal information must ensure that the information (e.g. names, addresses, other information kept on individuals) is;

- accurate and up to date,
- only kept for legitimate reasons,
- only kept for as long as is necessary,
- used for legitimate purposes,
- not passed on to third parties without the consent of the individual and,
- secure

Computer Usage

Laptops should be fully shut down and turned off at the end of each day. To prevent unauthorised access to your files, please ensure that you log-out, or otherwise secure your laptop if you are away from your desk. The computer systems are backed up regularly, however you must ensure your work is adequately saved in a secure location that is accessible for backup.

The Internet may not be used in any way that violates the Council's policies, rules or administrative orders. Use of the Internet in a manner that misrepresents Normandy Parish Council or violates any council policy is prohibited. You must not use the council's systems to access pornographic, gaming, offensive, illegal or other improper material or make inappropriate use of the Internet. Producing, downloading or distributing sexually explicit or offensive material in any form, electronic or otherwise (e-mail, blogging, picture, file, printed-output, etc), which may be considered abusive or derogatory to individuals on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, disability, age etc. is a violation of our Equal Opportunities Policy Statement. Any such action will be considered as gross misconduct. The Council does not have a filter to block access to inappropriate sites. If you find yourself connected accidentally to a site that contains sexually explicit, offensive or illegal material, you must disconnect from that site immediately and notify the Clerk.

Normandy Parish Council prohibits internet use for mass unsolicited mailings, competitive commercial activity and access for non-employees to council resources or network facilities. You should not subscribe to chat rooms, dating agencies, messaging services, internet diary (known as blogging) or other on-line subscription Internet sites unless they pertain to work duties.

The types of activities that are encouraged include:

- Communicating with fellow employees, County Associations, business partners of the Councils (and like organisations) within the context of an individual's assigned responsibilities;
- acquiring or sharing information necessary or related to the performance of an individual's assigned responsibilities;
- and participating in educational or professional development activities.

Passwords

The Council's systems require an authenticated User ID/password combination prior to gaining access. User accounts require you to select a password with a minimum length of 12 characters, which must include at least one number, one letter. All MS365 accounts must be protected by MFA (multi factor authentication). Other accounts that provide access to council data must be protected by MFA if it is made available by the supplier.

You are not permitted to use another person's login ID (username/password). If you require access to another employee's computer system, a request must be submitted to the Clerk who will arrange for temporary access.

If a user knows or suspects their password to be compromised, they must notify the Clerk immediately.
When choosing passwords.....

Do:

- Always use a strong password, that is separate/different from other accounts
- Choose a password with at least twelve characters, a combination of upper and lower case letters, numbers and keyboard symbols. Remember that changing letters to numbers (for example E to 3) are techniques well-known to criminals.
- Use a password manager/browser suggested strong password.
- Choose three random words, including numbers, symbols and a combination of upper and lower case, to create a strong password.

Do not use:

Your username, actual name or business name.

- The same password for multiple accounts
- Family members' or pets' names.
- Your own or family birthdays.
- Favourite football or F1 team or other words easy to work out with a little background knowledge.
- The word 'password'.
- Numerical sequences.
- A single commonplace dictionary word, which could be cracked by common hacking programs.
- Ascending or descending numbers (for example 4321 or 12345), duplicated numbers (such as 1111) or easily recognisable keypad patterns (such as 14789 or 2580).

Looking after your passwords Remembering lots of different passwords is difficult. We suggest you save passwords in your browser or using a password manager. Never disclose your passwords to anyone else. If you think that someone else knows your password, contact the Clerk immediately to request a change. You are responsible for all actions under your username/password.

- Don't enter your password when others can see what you are typing.
- Don't recycle passwords (for example Abithiwtitb2, Abithiwtitb3 etc).
- Never send your password by email.
- Do use password managers/or save to your browser

Email and Internet Usage Policy

Normandy Parish Council recognises that email and internet are important information and communication systems which are used during council business. This policy provides guidelines and procedures to protect users and the council.

This policy applies to all employees who have access to the internet and email facilities via council computers. The email policy applies to all councillors in their correspondence with employees and/or other councillors.

Internet usage

Employees are encouraged to use the internet responsibly as part of their official and professional activities. Information obtained via the internet and published in the name of the council must be relevant and professional. A disclaimer must be stated where personal views are expressed. The use of the internet to access and/or distribute any kind of offensive material will not be tolerated and employees may be subject to disciplinary action.

The equipment, services and technology used to access the internet are the property of the council. The council reserves the right to monitor internet traffic and monitor and access data that is composed, sent or received through its online connections.

Unacceptable use of the internet

Unacceptable use of the internet by employees includes, but is not limited to:

- sending or posting discriminatory, harassing or threatening messages or images
- using computers to perpetrate any form of fraud, and/or software, film or music piracy
- obtaining, using or disclosing another employee's password without authorisation
- sharing confidential material or proprietary information outside of the council
- hacking into unauthorised websites
- sending or posting information that is defamatory to the council, its services, councillors and/or members of the public
- introducing malicious software onto council computers and/or jeopardising the security of the council's electronic communication systems
- sending or posting chain letters, solicitations or advertisements not related to council business or activities
- passing off personal views as those representing the council
- accessing inappropriate internet sites, web pages or chat rooms

If an employee is unsure about what constitutes acceptable internet usage, then they should ask their line manager for further guidance and clarification.

Email

The use of email is encouraged as it provides an efficient system of communication. Email should be regarded as written paper documents for the purposes of production, use, retention and disclosure and can be called upon under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Personal information should be kept in accordance with the principles established in the Data Protection Act 1998 and subsequent supporting legislation. The council reserves the right to open any email file stored on the council's computer system.

The following guidelines for email use should be observed by all employees and councillors:

- use appropriate language to avoid unintentional misunderstandings
- respect the confidentiality of information contained within emails, even if encountered inadvertently

- check with the sender if there is any doubt regarding the authenticity of a message
- do not open any attachment unless certain of the authenticity of the sender
- only copy emails to others where appropriate and necessary
- emails which create obligations or give instructions on behalf of the council must be sent by officers only, not councillors
- emails must comply with common codes of courtesy, decency and privacy

Reporting and sanctions

If a councillor receives an email from an employee which they believe is contrary to the guidance provided in this policy, it should be reported to the Parish Clerk who will consider use of the council's formal disciplinary procedure or refer the matter to the Human Resources Committee depending on the severity of the event.

If an employee receives an email from another employee which they believe is contrary to the guidance provided in this policy, it should be reported to the Parish Clerk who will consider use of the council's formal disciplinary procedure or refer the matter to the Human Resources Committee depending on the severity of the event.

If an employee receives an email from a councillor which they believe is contrary to the guidance provided in this policy, the employee is entitled to consider use of the council's grievance policy and/or report the issue through the procedures outlined in the Members' Code of Conduct.

If a councillor receives an email from another councillor which they believe is contrary to the guidance provided in this policy, the councillor is entitled to consider reporting the issue through the procedures outlined in the Members' Code of Conduct.

Security

Only software purchased by the council shall be installed on the council's computer system. Software licences shall be retained as proof of authenticity.

Section 4

Staff Policies

Statement on Employee Management

Normandy Parish Council is committed to supporting its employees in order for the council to deliver its services as efficiently and effectively as possible. To achieve this, it is important that clear lines of management are established and understood by employees and councillors. This statement sets out the guiding principles of the council in respect of the management of its employees.

Management of the Parish Clerk

It is essential that there is a formal and regular link between the Parish Clerk as the council's senior employee and representative(s) of the council as employer so that the needs and aspirations of both groups can be understood and discussed, and objectives set and progress monitored.

The responsibility for line management of the Parish Clerk on behalf of the council will be shared by the Chairman of the Council and the Chairman of the Human Resources Committee. They will undertake the Parish Clerk's annual appraisal and will also arrange to meet with the Parish Clerk on at least a quarterly basis to review progress against agreed objectives.

Management of other employees

Overall responsibility for the general management of all other employees will rest with the Parish Clerk, although this may be delegated to other nominated officers as appropriate.

From time to time, it may be necessary to seek external professional advice on employment matters. If the Parish Clerk feels this additional support is necessary, he/she will seek approval from the Human Resources Committee.

Individual councillors shall not seek to interfere in day-to-day employee management. If this does occur, the Parish Clerk shall report the interference to the Chairman of the Council and the Chairman of the Human Resources Committee.

Training and Development Policy

Normandy Parish Council recognises that training and development for employees and councillors is a major investment in its ability to deliver effective services and will seek to create a culture of continuing development.

The council will comply with the principles of the National Training Strategy for Parish and Parish Councils and may subscribe to the Surrey Association of Local Councils and Society of Local Council Clerks to ensure employees and councillors can attend their training at preferential rates.

Policy commitments

The Human Resources Committee will be responsible for determining, meeting and monitoring the training needs of employees and councillors, and managing the allocated budget.

Records of all training of employees will be noted on the Employee Training Record (appendix D). A copy of these records along with details of councillors' training and development will be kept by the Parish Clerk.

A training schedule will be drawn up by the Parish Clerk for approval by the Human Resources Committee to ensure all training is relevant, fit for purpose and is carried out in a cost-effective manner. This schedule will be informed by training needs of employees identified through the appraisal system. Consideration will be given to carrying out training locally possibly in liaison with other local councils.

Professional qualifications

All employees will be encouraged to pursue professional qualifications, such as the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) or equivalent. It will be a requirement of the Parish Clerk role for the job holder to hold the qualification or commit to achieving it within 18 months of appointment.

The council will meet the financial cost of registering for and submitting the CiLCA portfolio. If a candidate is unsuccessful, the candidate will be responsible for the cost of any re-submission.

Additional higher-level qualifications or specific qualifications relevant to the role will be discussed as part of the annual appraisal. The council may agree to meet the cost, or part thereof, of a qualification which will be of mutual benefit to both the council and employee.

Employee personal development

The council recognises that training and development for employees often provides continuous professional development for the employee, while enhancing specific skills. Training courses for personal development are motivational for employees and consistently leads to improved performance in their current role. Equally, the council acknowledges that such personal development will occasionally lead employees to seek alternate employment to maximise their new or improved skills.

Where there is a clear benefit to the council, payment for any personal development training will be made by the council, and the employee will be expected to use their new or improved skills in their existing role within the council.

Where the cost of the personal development training course exceeds £250, the employee will repay to the council the full cost of the training if they leave the employment of the council within 12 months of completion of the training. Agreement to this condition will be recorded in the employee's file.

Where the cost of the personal development training course exceeds £500, the employee will repay to the council the full cost of the training if they leave the employment of the council within 12 months of completion of the training, and 50% of the cost of the training if they leave the employment of the council after 12 months, but within 24 months of the completion of the training. Agreement to this condition will be recorded in the employee's file.

The provisions within this part of this policy do not apply to any training course deemed compulsory for the employee to carry out their existing role, for example due to a change of regulations or insistence on qualifications.

Performance Management Policy

Normandy Parish Council recognises the benefits of regular and constructive performance review and is committed to ensuring that employees are provided with support to enable them to work as effectively as possible.

One of the ways in which such support can be provided is through the performance management scheme, which provides a systematic opportunity to:

- Recognise the achievements of employees over the previous year
- Identify ways in which performance can be improved to the benefit of both the individual and the organisation
- Agree performance objectives and targets for the coming year
- Identify development/training needs and prepare a personal development plan
- Review job descriptions and salary scales

Individual performance will be reviewed on at least an annual basis, plus an interim review carried out six months after the main review.

The performance review year

Performance will be reviewed at the end of the municipal year, with the follow up review taking place six months later. Any salary increases agreed during the annual review will take effect from 1 April annually (backdated where appropriate).

The Parish Clerk will report to the Human Resources Committee annually that all employees have received their appraisal and provide a summary of recommended changes to job descriptions and salaries for approval following the annual appraisals.

All appraisal documents should be signed, and it is the signed copy only that is accepted. The Parish Clerk objectives only will be reported to council and not the whole appraisal document.

Who reviews

The review will normally be carried out by the immediate line manager. The Parish Clerk will be reviewed by the Chairman of the Council and the Chairman of the Human Resources Committee.

If either the Chairman of the Council or Chairman of the Human Resources Committee is unavailable, then the Parish Clerk will be reviewed by two other members of the Human Resources Committee who are qualified and experienced in conducting appraisals.

The Parish Clerk will monitor all appraisals for completion and consistency and will report the outcome of this monitoring to the Human Resources Committee.

Preparation for the review

For performance review to be successful and effective it is essential that both the reviewer and the employee prepare. A date should be set for the review meeting at least 2 weeks prior to the discussion taking place. The supporting paperwork including the record from the previous year's review, the part year review and the objectives must be provided to the employee when setting the date.

The job description

The job description will be reviewed as part of this process, in order to ensure it is a clear reflection of the role and may be changed by mutual agreement if there are substantial, material and permanent changes to the role.

General job performance

It is recognised that all jobs are formed of both several specific objectives and general job performance such as planning and prioritising the workload, communicating appropriately, working collaboratively with others and being flexible and adaptable. All aspects of the job will be reviewed.

Personal development

In order to carry out their role and to meet new objectives it is recognised that from time-to-time employees will need further personal development. Personal development is not simply about attending training courses. Development and training opportunities can be provided by a variety of means, but they should be realistic for both the individual and the council, whilst considering operational requirements. Opportunities may include:

- On or off job coaching
- Mentoring
- Shadowing other employees
- Taking on new responsibilities
- Undertaking project work or contributing to working parties
- Attending training courses, workshops, conferences, seminars and symposia
- Guided reading
- Networking
- E-learning

Confidentiality

The agreed objectives and comments of the reviewer and employee will be recorded on the Employee Appraisal and Development Form.

The content of the review will normally be confidential between the reviewer and employee, although the main record of discussion will be reviewed by the Parish Clerk who will retain the forms for Human Resources files and use the information to prepare the training plan.

Disciplinary Procedure

This policy is based on and complies with the 2015 ACAS Code of Practice. It also takes account of the ACAS guide on discipline and grievances at work. The policy is designed to help council employees improve unsatisfactory conduct and performance in their job. Wherever possible, the council will try to resolve its concerns about employees' behaviour informally, without starting the formal procedure set out below.

The policy will be applied fairly, consistently and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. This policy confirms:

- The council will fully investigate the facts of each case
- The council recognises that misconduct and unsatisfactory work performance are different issues. The disciplinary policy will also apply to work performance issues to ensure that all alleged instances of employees' underperformance are dealt with fairly and in a way that is consistent with required standards. However, the disciplinary policy will only be used when performance management proves ineffective.
- Employees will be informed in writing about the nature of the complaint against them and given the opportunity to state their case
- Employees may be accompanied or represented by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official at any disciplinary, investigatory or appeal meeting. The companion is permitted to address such meetings, to put the employee's case and confer with the employee. The companion cannot answer questions put to the employee, address the meeting against the employee's wishes or prevent the employee from explaining his/her case
- The council will give employees reasonable notice of any meetings in this procedure. The employee must make all reasonable efforts to attend any meeting. Failure to attend any meeting may result in it going ahead in the employee's absence and a decision being taken. An employee who does not attend a meeting will be given the opportunity to be represented and to make a written submission.
- If the employee's companion is not available for the proposed date of the meeting, the employee can request a postponement and can propose an alternative date that is within five working days of the original meeting date
- Any changes to specified time limits in the council's procedure must be agreed by the employee and the council
- Information about an employee's disciplinary matter will be restricted to those involved in the disciplinary process. A record of the reason for disciplinary action and the action taken by the council is confidential to the employee. The employee's disciplinary records will be held by the council in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998
- Recordings of the proceedings at any stage of the disciplinary procedure are prohibited, unless agreed as a reasonable adjustment that takes account of an employee's medical condition
- Employees have the right to appeal against any disciplinary action. The appeal decision is final
- If an employee who is already subject to the council's disciplinary procedure, raises a grievance, the grievance will normally be heard after the completion of the disciplinary procedure
- Disciplinary action taken by the council can include an oral warning, written warning, final written warning or dismissal
- Except for gross misconduct when an employee may be dismissed without notice, the council will not dismiss an employee on the first occasion that it decides there has been misconduct
- If an employee is suspended following allegations of misconduct, it will be on full pay and only for such time as is necessary. Suspension is not a disciplinary sanction. The council will write to the employee to confirm any period of suspension and the reasons for it
- The council may consider mediation at any stage of the disciplinary procedure where appropriate (for example where there have been communication breakdowns or allegations of bullying or harassment). Mediation is a dispute resolution process that requires the council's and the employee's consent

Examples of misconduct

Misconduct is employee behaviour that can lead to the employer taking disciplinary action. The following list contains some examples of misconduct:

- Unauthorised absence
- Poor timekeeping
- Misuse of the council's resources and facilities including telephone, email and internet
- Inappropriate behaviour
- Refusal to follow reasonable instructions
- Breach of health and safety rules

Examples of gross misconduct

Gross misconduct is misconduct that is so serious that it is likely to lead to dismissal without notice. The following list contains some examples of gross misconduct:

- Bullying, discrimination and harassment
- Incapacity at work because of drugs or alcohol
- Violent behaviour
- Fraud or theft
- Gross negligence
- Gross insubordination
- Serious breaches of health and safety rules
- Serious and deliberate damage to property

Examples of unsatisfactory work performance

The following list contains some examples of unsatisfactory work performance:

- Inadequate application of office procedures
- Inadequate IT skills
- Unsatisfactory management of employees
- Unsatisfactory communication skills

Disciplinary investigation

The council's Human Resources Committee will appoint a minimum of two investigators who will be responsible for undertaking the investigation – a fact-finding exercise to collect all relevant information. The investigators will be independent and will normally be councillors.

If the Human Resources Committee considers that there are no councillors who are independent (for example, because they all have direct involvement in the allegations about the employee), it will appoint someone from outside the council.

The investigators will be appointed as soon as possible after the allegations have been made. The Human Resources Committee will inform the investigators of the terms of reference of the investigation. The terms of reference should deal with the following:

- What the investigation is required to examine
- Whether a recommendation is required
- How the findings should be presented. For example, an investigator will often be required to present the findings in the form of a report

- Who the findings should be reported to and who to contact for further direction if unexpected issues arise or advice is needed

The investigators will be asked to submit a report within 20 working days of appointment. In cases of alleged unsatisfactory performance or allegations of minor misconduct, the appointment of an investigator may not be necessary, and the council may decide to commence disciplinary proceedings at the next stage.

The Human Resources Committee will first notify the employee in writing of the alleged misconduct and ask him/her to attend a meeting with the investigators. The employee will be given at least five working days' notice of the meeting with the investigators so that he/she has reasonable time to prepare for it. The letter will explain the investigatory process and that the meeting is part of the process. The employee should be provided with a copy of the council's disciplinary procedure. The council will also inform the employee that when he/she meets with the investigators, he/she will have the opportunity to comment on the allegations of misconduct.

Employees may be accompanied or represented by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative, or a trade union official at any investigatory meeting.

If there are other persons (e.g., employees, councillors, members of the public or the council's contractors) who can provide relevant information, the investigators should try to obtain it from them in advance of the meeting with the employee.

The investigators have no authority to take disciplinary action. Their role is to establish the facts of the case as quickly as possible and prepare a report that recommends to the Human Resources Committee whether disciplinary action should be taken.

The investigators report will contain their recommendations and the findings on which they were based. They will recommend either:

- The employee has no case to answer and there should be no further action under the council's disciplinary procedure
- The matter is not serious enough to justify further use of the disciplinary procedure and can be dealt with informally
- The employee has a case to answer and there should be action under the councils' disciplinary procedure

The investigators will submit the report to the Human Resources Committee which will decide whether further action will be taken. If the council decides that it will not take disciplinary action, it may consider whether mediation would be appropriate in the circumstances.

The disciplinary meeting

If the Human Resources Committee decides that there is a case to answer, it will appoint a sub-committee of three councillors. The sub-committee will appoint a chairman from one of its members. The investigators shall not sit on the sub-committee. No councillor with direct involvement in the matter shall be appointed to the sub-committee. The employee will be invited, in writing, to attend a disciplinary meeting. The sub-committee's letter will confirm the following:

- The names of its chairman and other two members
- Details of the alleged misconduct, its possible consequences and the employee's statutory right to be accompanied at the meeting

- A copy of the investigation report, all the supporting evidence and a copy of the council's disciplinary procedure
- The time, date and place for the meeting. The employee will be given reasonable notice of the hearing (at least 15 working days) so that he/she has sufficient time to prepare for it
- That witnesses may attend on the employee's and the council's behalf and that both parties should inform each other of their witnesses' names at least five working days before the meeting
- That the employee and the council will provide each other with all the supporting evidence at least five working days before the meeting. If witnesses are not attending the meeting, witness statements will be submitted to the other side at least five working days before the meeting
- That the employee may be accompanied by a companion – a workplace colleague, a trade union representative, or a trade union official

The disciplinary meeting will be conducted as follows:

- The chairman will introduce the members of the sub-committee to the employee
- The investigators will present the findings of the investigation report
- The chairman will set out the council's case and present supporting evidence (including any witnesses)
- The employee (or the companion) will set out his/her case and present evidence (including any witnesses)
- Any member of the sub-committee and the employee (or the companion) may question the investigators and any witness
- The employee (or the companion) will have the opportunity to sum up his/her case
- The chairman will provide the employee with the sub-committee's decision with reasons, in writing, within five working days of the meeting. The chairman will also notify the employee of the right to appeal the decision
- The disciplinary meeting may be adjourned to allow matters that were raised during the meeting to be investigated by the sub-committee

Disciplinary action

If the sub-committee decides that there should be disciplinary action, it may be any of the following:

Oral warning

An oral warning is issued for most first instances of minor misconduct. The council will notify the employee:

- The reason for the warning, the improvement required (if appropriate) and the time period for improvement
- That further misconduct/failure to improve will result in more serious disciplinary action
- The employee's right of appeal
- That a note confirming the oral warning will be placed on the employee's Human Resources file, that a copy will be provided to the employee and that the warning will remain in force for six months

Written warning

If there is a repetition of earlier misconduct which resulted in an oral warning, or for different and more serious misconduct, the employee will normally be given a written warning. A written warning will set out:

- The reason for the written warning, the improvement required (if appropriate) and the time period for improvement
- That further misconduct/failure to improve will result in more serious disciplinary action
- The employee's right of appeal
- That a note confirming the written warning will be placed on the employee's Human Resources file, that a copy will be provided to the employee and that the warning will remain in force for 12 months

Final written warning

If there is further misconduct during the period of a written warning or if the misconduct is sufficiently serious, the employee will be given a final written warning. A final written warning will set out:

- The reason for the final written warning, the improvement required (if appropriate) and the time period for improvement
- That further misconduct/failure to improve will result in more serious disciplinary action up to and including dismissal
- The employee's right of appeal
- That a note confirming the final written warning will be placed on the employee's Human Resources file, that a copy will be provided to the employee and that the warning will remain in force for 18 months

Dismissal

The council may dismiss:

- For gross misconduct
- If there is no improvement within the specified time period in the conduct which has been the subject of a final written warning
- If another instance of misconduct has occurred and a final written warning has already been issued and remains in force

The council will consider very carefully a decision to dismiss. If an employee is dismissed, he/she will receive a written statement of the reasons for his/her dismissal, the date on which the employment will end and details of his/her right to appeal.

If the sub-committee decides to take no disciplinary action, no record of the matter will be retained on the employee's Human Resources file. Action imposed as a result of the disciplinary meeting will remain in force unless and until it is modified as a result of an appeal.

The appeal

An employee who is the subject of disciplinary action will be notified of the right of appeal. His/her written notice of appeal must be received by the council within five working days of the employee receiving written notice of the disciplinary action and must specify the grounds for appeal.

The grounds for appeal include:

- A failure by the council to follow its disciplinary procedure
- The sub-committee's decision was not supported by the evidence
- The disciplinary action was too severe in the circumstances of the case
- New evidence has come to light since the disciplinary meeting

The appeal will be heard by a panel of three members who have not previously been involved in the case. This includes the investigators. The appeal panel will appoint a chairman from one of its members.

The employee will be notified, in writing, within 10 working days of receipt of the notice of the appeal of the time, date and place of the appeal meeting. The employee will be advised that he/she may be accompanied by a companion – a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official.

At the appeal meeting, the chairman will:

- Introduce the panel members to the employee
- Explain the purpose of the meeting, which is to hear the employee's reasons for appealing against the decision of the Disciplinary Sub-Committee
- Explain the action that the appeal panel may take

The employee (or the companion) will be asked to explain their grounds for appeal.

The chairman will inform the employee that he/she will receive the decision and the panel's reasons, in writing within five working days of the appeal hearing.

The appeal panel may decide to uphold the decision of the Disciplinary Sub-Committee, substitute a less serious sanction or decide that no disciplinary action is necessary. If it decides to take no disciplinary action, no record of the matter will be retained on the employee's Human Resources file.

If an appeal against dismissal is upheld, the employee will be paid in full for the period from the date of dismissal and continuity of service will be preserved. The appeal panel's decision is final.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide equal opportunities to all employees, irrespective of their gender, race, ethnic origin, disability, age, nationality, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, marital status or social class. The council opposes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.

All employees whether full-time, part-time, fixed contract, agency workers or temporary, will be treated fairly and equally. Selection for employment, promotion, training, remuneration or any other benefit will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. All employees will be helped and encouraged to develop their full potential, and the talents and resources of the workforce will be fully utilised to maximise the efficiency of the organisation.

Principles

Discrimination, direct or indirect, based on a person's gender, race, ethnic origin, disability, age, nationality, national origin, sexual orientation, religion, marital status, social class or other irrelevant distinction is unacceptable.

In addition to being unacceptable, such forms of discrimination represent a waste of human resources and a denial of the opportunity for individual fulfilment.

The council seeks to involve all employees in the continuing development and implementation of this policy.

Members of the public

The council recognises that many members of the public use its services or visit its premises. The council takes seriously its responsibility to these people and affirms that they will be treated with the same respect and rights. Likewise, it is not acceptable for employees to be treated unfairly by service users or visitors.

Organisational responsibilities

The council's Human Resources Committee is responsible for overseeing the implementation, monitoring and review of the Equal Opportunities Statement.

The Parish Clerk's responsibilities include communicating the policy and its implementation to employees, monitoring its implementation, and advising councillors on recruitment and other matters concerning equal treatment.

The co-operation of all employees is essential for the success of this policy. However, ultimate responsibility for achieving the policy objectives and for ensuring compliance with relevant statutes and codes of practice lies with the council as a whole.

Intentional breaches to the provisions or spirit of this policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary action in accordance with the council's Disciplinary Policy.

Legal framework

The policy will be implemented within the framework of the relevant legislation, the main statute being the Equality Act 2010. This brought together 116 separate pieces of legislation to provide a framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equal opportunities for all. The main pieces of legislation which have merged under the new act are:

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Gender Reassignment Regulations 1999
- Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003
- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006
- Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2007

Our commitment

Normandy Parish Council is committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and to avoiding unlawful discrimination. This policy is intended to assist the council to put this commitment into practice. Compliance with this policy should also ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.

Striving to ensure that the work environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities in employment.

The law

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality, caste and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics".

Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful, e.g. refusing to give a reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics.

The council will not discriminate against or harass a member of the public in the provision of services or goods. It is unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability. The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services. In addition, service providers have an obligation to think ahead and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

Types of unlawful discrimination

Direct discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic. In limited circumstances, employers can directly discriminate against an individual for a reason related to any of the protected characteristics where there is an occupational requirement. The occupational requirement must be crucial to the post and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Indirect discrimination is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied that is discriminatory in relation to individuals who have a relevant protected characteristic such that it would be to the detriment of people who share that protected characteristic compared with people who do not, and it cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Harassment is where there is unwanted conduct, related to one of the protected characteristics (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity; or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Associative discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.

Perceptive discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that they have a particular protected characteristic when they don't, in fact, have that protected characteristic.

Third-party harassment occurs where an employee is harassed and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties.

Victimisation occurs where an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion because they made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because they are suspected of doing so. However, an employee is not protected from victimisation if they acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments is where a physical feature or a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.

Equal opportunities in employment

The council will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.

Recruitment

Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.

Working practices

The council will consider any possible indirectly discriminatory effect of its standard working practices, including the number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked and the place at which work is to be done, when considering requests for variations to these standard working practices and will refuse such requests only if the council considers it has good reasons, unrelated to any protected characteristic, for doing so. The council will comply with its obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract variations. The council will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

Equal opportunities monitoring

The council will monitor the ethnic, sex/gender and age composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and will consider and take any appropriate action to address any problems that may be identified as a result of the monitoring process. The council treats personal data collected for reviewing equality and diversity in accordance with the data protection policy. Information about how data is used and the basis for processing is provided in the council's privacy notices.

Dignity at work

The council has a separate dignity at work policy concerning issues of bullying and harassment on any ground, and how complaints of this type will be dealt with.

People not employed by the council

The council will not discriminate unlawfully against those using or seeking to use the services provided by the council. You should report any bullying or harassment by suppliers, visitors or others to the council who will take appropriate action.

Training and prevention

The council will raise awareness of equal opportunities to those likely to be involved in recruitment or other decision making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise.

The council will raise awareness of all staff engaged to work at the council to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under the dignity at work policy and what they can do to help create a working environment free of bullying and harassment. The council will provide additional training to managers to enable them to deal more effectively with complaints of bullying and harassment.

Your responsibilities

Every employee is required to assist the council to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination. Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the council for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the council's disciplinary procedure. Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

Grievances

If you consider that you may have been unlawfully discriminated against, you should use the council's grievance procedure to make a complaint. If your complaint involves bullying or harassment, the grievance procedure is modified as set out in the dignity at work policy.

The council will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds. You will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

Member / Officer Relations Protocol

The relationship between councillors and officers is an essential ingredient that goes into the successful work of the council. This relationship should be characterised by mutual respect, informality and trust. Councillors and officers should feel free to speak to one another openly and honestly.

The purpose of this protocol is to help councillors and officers continue this relationship and give guidance on their respective roles and expectations on their relationships with each other. It also provides guidance on what to do on the rare occasions when things go wrong within this relationship.

The protocol should be read and operated in the context of any relevant legislation and national and local codes of conduct.

Roles of councillors and officers

The respective roles of the councillors and officers can be summarised as follows:

Councillors and officers are servants of the public, and they are indispensable to one another, although they have different responsibilities. Councillors are responsible to the electorate and serve only so long as their term of office lasts. Officers are responsible to the council. Their job is to give advice to councillors and to the council, and to carry out the council's work under the direction and control of the council and its committees or sub-committees. Mutual respect between councillors and officers is essential to the successful working of a local council.

Councillors are responsible for determining the policy of the council and providing strategic leadership, representing the council externally when properly authorised to do so, and acting as advocates on behalf of their constituents. It is not the role of councillors to involve themselves in the day-to-day management of the council.

Chairmen and vice chairmen of the council and its committees or sub-committees have additional responsibilities. Due to the nature of those responsibilities, their relationships with officers may be different from and more complex than those of councillors without those responsibilities. This is recognised in the expectations they are entitled to have. However, such councillors must still respect the impartiality of officers, must not ask them to undertake work of a party-political nature, or to do anything which may compromise the nature of their role.

The role of officers is to give advice and information to the councillors and to implement the policies determined by the council. In giving such advice to councillors, and in preparing and presenting reports, it is the responsibility of the officer to express his/her own professional views and recommendations, without favouring any political party view.

Certain senior officers, e.g., Proper Officer and RFO, have responsibilities in law over and above their obligations to council and/or individual councillors, and councillors must respect these responsibilities and must not obstruct officers in the discharge of their duties.

Expectations

Councillors can expect from officers:

- A commitment to the council as a whole, and not to any group or individual councillor
- A working partnership
- An understanding of and support for respective roles, workloads and pressures
- A timely response to enquiries and complaints
- Impartial, professional advice, not influenced by political views or preference

- Regular, up to date information on matters that can reasonably be considered appropriate and relevant to councillors
- Awareness of and sensitivity to the political environment
- Respect, dignity and courtesy
- Training and development in order to carry out their role effectively
- Integrity, mutual support and appropriate confidentiality
- That officers will not use their relationship with councillors to advance their personal interests or to influence decisions improperly

Officers can expect from councillors:

- A working partnership
- An understanding of and support for respective roles, workloads and pressures
- Respect, dignity and courtesy
- Integrity, mutual support and appropriate confidentiality
- Not to be subjected to bullying or harassment or to be put under undue pressure
- That councillors will not use their position or relationship with officers to advance their personal interests or those of others or to influence decisions improperly
- That councillors will at all times comply with the Members' Code of Conduct and other policies

Limitations upon behaviour

The distinct role of councillors and officers necessarily imposes limitations upon behaviour. By way of illustration, and not as an exclusive list:

- Close personal relationships between councillors and officers can often confuse these separate roles and get in the way of the proper discharge of the council's functions, not least by creating the perception in others that a particular councillor or officer may secure advantageous treatment
- The need to maintain the separate roles means that there are limits to the matters on which councillors may seek the advice of officers, both in relation to personal matters and party political issues
- Relationships with particular individuals or party groups should not be such as to create public suspicion that an employee favours that councillor or group above others

When things go wrong

From time to time the relationship between councillors and officers may break down or become strained. Whilst it will always be preferable to resolve matters informally through conciliation, there are formal procedures if this is not possible.

An officer may have recourse to the council's formal Grievance Policy and/or reporting to the District Council's Monitoring Officer to raise a Members' Code of Conduct complaint.

A councillor may have recourse to the council's formal Disciplinary Policy.

Dignity at Work (Bullying and Harassment) Policy

Normandy Parish Council believes that civility and respect are important in the working environment, and expect all councillors, officers and the public to be polite and courteous when working for, and with the council.

Purpose

The Council is committed to creating a working environment where all council employees, councillors, contractors and others who come into contact with us in the course of our work, are treated with dignity, respect and courtesy. We aim to create a workplace where there is zero tolerance for harassment and bullying

In support of this objective, Normandy Parish Council has signed up to the Civility Pledge, as a commitment to civility and respect in our work, and politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Further information about the Civility and Respect Pledge is available NALC & SLCC

We recognise that there is a continuum where unaddressed issues have the potential to escalate and become larger, more complex issues and this policy sets out how concerns will be managed however the emphasis of this policy is on resolution and mediation where appropriate, rather than an adversarial process.

This document:

- explains how we will respond to complaints of bullying or harassment;
- ensures that we respond sensitively and promptly; and,
- supports our employees in ensuring their behaviour does not amount to bullying and/or harassment by giving examples.

Scope

This policy covers bullying and harassment of and by clerks/chief officers and all employees engaged to work at Normandy Parish Council. Should agency staff, or contractors have a complaint connected to their engagement with the Council this should be raised to their nominated contact, manager, or the Chair of the Council, in the first instance. Should the complaint be about the chair of the council the complaint should be raised to the Human Resources Committee.

Agency staff, or contractors are equally expected to treat council colleagues, and other representatives and stakeholders with dignity and respect, and the council may terminate the contract, without notice, where there are suspicions of harassment or bullying.

Complaints about other employment matters will be managed under the council's grievance policy. It is noted that the management of a situation may differ depending on who the allegations relate to (e.g. employees, contractor, councillor), however, the council will take appropriate action if any of its employees are bullied or harassed by employees, councillors, members of the public, suppliers or contractors.

The position on bullying and harassment

All staff and council representatives are entitled to dignity, respect and courtesy within the workplace and to not experience any form of discrimination. Normandy Parish Council will not tolerate bullying or harassment in our workplace or at work-related events outside of the workplace, whether the conduct is a one-off act or repeated course of conduct, and whether harm is intended or not. Neither will we tolerate retaliation against, or victimisation of, any person involved in bringing a complaint of harassment or bullying. You should also be aware that, if you have bullied or harassed someone (e.g. physical violence, harassment), in some circumstances the treatment may amount to a crime punishable by a fine or imprisonment.

We expect all representatives of the council to treat each other with respect and uphold the values of the code of conduct, civility and respect pledge, equality opportunities policy, and all other policies and procedures set by the Council.

We expect you to demonstrate respect by listening and paying attention to others, having consideration for other people's feelings, following protocols and rules, showing appreciation and thanks, and being kind.

Allegations of bullying and harassment will be treated seriously. Investigations will be carried out promptly, sensitively and, as far as possible, confidentially. See the grievance policy for further details regarding the process. Employees and others who make allegations of bullying or harassment in good faith will not be treated less favourably as a result.

False accusations of harassment or bullying can have a serious effect on innocent individuals. Staff and others have a responsibility not to make false allegations. While we will assume that all complaints of bullying and harassment are made in good faith, in the event that allegations are found to be malicious or vexatious the person raising the complaint may be subject to action under the council's disciplinary procedure.

What Type of Treatment amounts to Bullying or Harassment?

'Bullying' or 'harassment' are phrases that apply to treatment from one person (or a group of people) to another that is unwanted and that has the effect of violating that person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for that person.

Examples of bullying and harassment include:

- Physical conduct ranging from unwelcome touching to serious assault
- Unwelcome sexual advances
- The offer of rewards for going along with sexual advances e.g. promotion, access to training
- Threats for rejecting sexual advances
- Demeaning comments about a person's appearance
- Verbal abuse or offensive comments, including jokes or pranks related to age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion, belief, sex or sexual orientation
- Unwanted nicknames, especially related to a person's age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion, belief, sex or sexual orientation
- Spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone
- Lewd or suggestive comments or gestures
- Deliberate exclusion from conversations, work activities or social activities.
- Withholding information a person needs in order to do their job
- Practical jokes, initiation ceremonies or inappropriate birthday rituals
- Physical abuse such as hitting, pushing or jostling
- Rifling through, hiding or damaging personal property
- Display of pictures or objects with sexual or racial overtones, even if not directed at any particular person
- Isolation or non-cooperation at work
- Subjecting a person to humiliation or ridicule, belittling their efforts, whether directly and / or in front of others
- The use of obscene gestures
- Abusing a position of power

Bullying and harassment can occur through verbal and face to face interactions but can also take place through sharing inappropriate or offensive content in writing or via email and other electronic communications and social media.

It is important to recognise that conduct which one person may find acceptable, another may find totally unacceptable, and behaviour could be harassment when the person had no intention to offend. We all have the right to determine what offends us. Some behaviour will be clear to any reasonable person that it is likely to offend – for example sexual touching. Other examples may be less clear, however, you should be aware that harassment will occur if behaviour continues after the recipient has advised you that the behaviour is unacceptable to them.

Harassment can also occur where the unwanted behaviour relates to a perceived characteristic (such as offensive jokes or comments based on the assumption someone is gay, even if they are not) or due to their association with someone else (such as harassment related to their partner having a disability for example). *See the council's equality and diversity policy.*

All employees must, therefore, treat their colleagues with respect and appropriate sensitivity and should feel able to challenge behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them.

Victimisation

Victimisation is subjecting a person to a detriment because they have, in good faith, complained (whether formally or otherwise) that someone has been bullying or harassing them or someone else, or supported someone to make a complaint or given evidence in relation to a complaint. This would include isolating someone because they have made a complaint or giving them a heavier or more difficult workload.

Provided that you act in good faith, i.e. you genuinely believe that what you are saying is true, you have a right not to be victimised for making a complaint or doing anything in relation to a complaint of bullying or harassment and the council will take appropriate action to deal with any alleged victimisation, which may include disciplinary action against anyone found to have victimised you.

Making a complaint that you know to be untrue, or giving evidence that you know to be untrue, may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you.

Reporting Concerns

What you should do if you feel you are being bullied or harassed by a member of the public or supplier (as opposed to a colleague):

If you are being bullied or harassed by someone with whom you come into contact at work, please raise this with your nominated manager in the first instance or, with the clerk/or a councillor. Any such report will be taken seriously, and we will decide how best to deal with the situation, in consultation with you.

What you should do if you feel you are being bullied or harassed by a councillor:

If you are being bullied or harassed by a councillor, please raise this with the Parish Clerk or the chair of the council in the first instance. They will then decide how best to deal with the situation, in consultation with you. There are two possible avenues for you, informal or formal. The Informal Resolution is described below. Formal concerns regarding potential breaches of the Councillors Code of Conduct must be investigated by the Monitoring Officer.

The council will consider reasonable measures to protect your health and safety. Such measures may include a temporary change in duties or change of work location, not attending meetings with the person about whom the complaint has been made etc.

What you should do if you witness an incident you believe to be harassment or bullying:

If you witness such behaviour you should report the incident in confidence to the clerk/chief officer or a councillor. Such reports will be taken seriously and will be treated in strict confidence as far as it is possible to do so.

What you should do if you are being bullied or harassed by another member of staff:

If you are being bullied or harassed by a colleague or contractor, there are two possible avenues for you, informal or formal. These are described below.

Informal resolution

If you are being bullied or harassed, you may be able to resolve the situation yourself by explaining clearly to the perpetrator(s) that their behaviour is unacceptable, contrary to the council's policy and must stop. Alternatively, you may wish to ask the Parish Clerk to put this on your behalf or to be with you when confronting the perpetrator(s).

If the above approach does not work or if you do not want to try to resolve the situation in this way, or if you are being bullied by your own nominated manager, you should raise the issue with the chair of the council. (If your concern relates to the chair, you should raise it with the Chair of the Human Resources Committee). The chair (or another appropriate person) will discuss with you the option of trying to resolve the situation informally by telling the alleged perpetrator, without prejudicing the matter, that:

- there has been a complaint that their behaviour is having an adverse effect on a member of the council staff
- such behaviour is contrary to our policy
- for employees, the continuation of such behaviour could amount to a serious disciplinary offence

It may be possible for this conversation to take place with the alleged perpetrator without revealing your name, if this is what you want. The person dealing with it will also stress that the conversation is confidential.

In certain circumstances we may be able to involve a neutral third party (a mediator) to facilitate a resolution of the problem. The chair (or another appropriate person) will discuss this with you if it is appropriate.

If your complaint is resolved informally, the alleged perpetrator(s) will not usually be subject to disciplinary sanctions. However, in exceptional circumstances (such as extremely serious allegation or in cases where a problem has happened before) we may decide to investigate further and take more formal action notwithstanding that you raised the matter informally. We will consult with you before taking this step.

Raising a formal complaint

If informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate, you can make a formal complaint about bullying and harassment through the council's grievance procedure. You should raise your complaint to the Parish Clerk or the chair of the council. A formal complaint may ultimately lead to disciplinary action against the perpetrator(s) where they are employed.

The Parish Clerk or the chair of the council will appoint someone to investigate your complaint in line with the grievance policy. You will need to co-operate with the investigation and provide the following details:

- The name of the alleged perpetrator(s),
- The nature of the harassment or bullying,
- The dates and times the harassment or bullying occurred,
- The names of any witnesses and
- Any action taken by you to resolve the matter informally.

The alleged perpetrator(s) would normally need to be told your name and the details of your grievance in order for the issue to be investigated properly. However, we will carry out the investigation as confidentially and sensitively as possible. Where you and the alleged perpetrator(s) work in proximity to each other, we will consider whether it is appropriate to make temporary adjustments to working arrangements whilst the matter is being investigated.

Where your complaint relates to potential breaches of the Councillors Code of Conduct, these will need to be investigated by the Monitoring Officer. The council will consider any adjustments to support you in your work and to manage the relationship with the councillor the allegations relate to, while the investigation proceeds.

Investigations will be carried out promptly (without unreasonable delay), sensitively and, as far as possible, confidentially. When carrying out any investigations, we will ensure that individuals' personal data is handled in accordance with the data protection policy.

The council will consider how to protect your health and wellbeing whilst the investigation is taking place and discuss this with you. Depending on the nature of the allegations, the Investigator may want to meet with you to understand better your complaint (see the grievance policy for further information, and details of your right to be accompanied).

After the investigation, a panel will meet with you to consider the complaint and the findings of the investigation in accordance with the grievance procedure. At the meeting you may be accompanied by a fellow worker or a trade union official.

Following the conclusion of the hearing the panel will write to you to inform you of the decision and to notify you of your right to appeal if you are dissatisfied with the outcome. You should put your appeal in writing explaining the reasons why you are dissatisfied with the decision. Your appeal will be heard under the appeal process that is described in the grievance procedure.

The use of the Disciplinary Procedure

If at any stage from the point at which a complaint is raised, we believe there is a case to answer and a disciplinary offence might have been committed, we will instigate our disciplinary procedure. We will keep you informed of the outcome.

Grievance Policy

This policy is based on and complies with the 2015 ACAS Code of Practice. It also takes account of the ACAS guide on discipline and grievances at work. It aims to encourage and maintain good relationships between the council and its employees by treating grievances seriously and resolving them as quickly as possible. It sets out the arrangements for employees to raise their concerns, problems or complaints about their employment with the council. The policy will be applied fairly, consistently and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Many problems can be raised and settled during everyday working relationships. Employees should aim to settle most grievances informally with their line manager.

This policy confirms:

- Employees have the right to be accompanied or represented at a grievance meeting or appeal by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official. The companion will be permitted to address the grievance/appeal meetings, to present the employees' case for his/her grievance/appeal and to confer with the employee. The companion cannot answer questions put to the employee, address the meeting against the employee's wishes or prevent the employee from explaining his/her case
- The council will give employees reasonable notice of the date of the grievance/appeal meetings. Employees and their companions must make all reasonable efforts to attend. If the employee's companion is not available for the proposed date of the meeting, the employee can request a postponement and can propose an alternative date that is within five working days of the original meeting date
- Any changes to specified time limits must be agreed by the employee and the council
- An employee has the right to appeal against the decision about his/her grievance. The appeal decision is final
- Information about an employee's grievance will be restricted to those involved in the grievance process. A record of the reason for the grievance, its outcome and action taken is confidential to the employee. The employee's grievance records will be held by the council in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998
- Recordings of the proceedings at any stage of the grievance procedure are prohibited, unless agreed as a reasonable adjustment that takes account of an employee's medical condition
- If an employee who is already subject to a disciplinary process raises a grievance, the grievance will normally be heard after completion of the disciplinary procedure
- If a grievance is not upheld, no disciplinary action will be taken against an employee if he/she raised the grievance in good faith
- The council may consider mediation at any stage of the grievance procedure where appropriate (for example where there have been communication breakdowns or allegations of bullying or harassment). Mediation is a dispute resolution process which requires the council and the employee's consent.

Informal grievance procedure

The council and its employees benefit if grievances are resolved informally and as quickly as possible. As soon as a problem arises, the employee should raise it with his/her line manager to see if an informal solution is possible. Both should try to resolve the matter at this stage. If the employee does not want to discuss the grievance with his/her line manager (for example, because it concerns the line manager), the employee should contact the Chairman of the Human Resources Committee or, if appropriate, another member of the Human Resources committee.

Formal grievance procedure

If it is not possible to resolve the grievance informally, the employee may submit a formal grievance. It should be submitted in writing to the Chairman of the Human Resources Committee.

The Human Resources Committee will appoint a sub-committee of three members to investigate the grievance. The sub-committee will appoint a chairman from one of its members. No councillor with direct involvement in the matter shall be appointed to the sub-committee.

Investigation

Within 10 working days of the council receiving the employee's grievance, the employee will be asked, in writing, to attend a grievance meeting. The sub-committee's letter will include the following:

- The names of its chairman and other members
- A summary of the employee's grievance based on his/her written submission
- The date, time and place for the meeting. The employee will be given reasonable notice of the meeting which will be within 25 working days of when the council received the grievance
- The employee's right to be accompanied by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative or a trade union official
- A copy of the council's grievance policy
- Confirmation that, if necessary, witnesses may attend on the employee's behalf and that the employee should provide the names of his/her witnesses at least five working days before the meeting
- Confirmation that the employee will provide the council with any supporting evidence at least five working days before the meeting

The grievance meeting

At the grievance meeting:

- The chairman will introduce the members of the sub-committee to the employee
- The employee (or companion) will set out the grievance and present the evidence
- The chairman will ask the employee what action he/she wants the council to take
- Any member of the sub-committee and the employee (or the companion) may question any witness
- The employee (or companion) will have the opportunity to sum up the case
- The chairman will provide the employee with the sub-committee's decision, in writing, within five working days of the meeting. The letter will notify the employee of the action, if any, that the council will take and of the employee's right to appeal
- A grievance meeting may be adjourned to allow matters that were raised during the meeting to be investigated by the sub-committee

The appeal

If an employee decides that his/her grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved by the sub-committee, he/she may submit a written appeal to the Human Resources Committee. An appeal must be received within five working days of the employee receiving the sub-committee's decision and must specify the grounds of the appeal.

Appeals may be raised on a number of grounds, e.g.:

- A failure by the council to follow its grievance policy
- The decision was not supported by the evidence
- The action proposed by the sub-committee was inadequate/inappropriate
- New evidence has come to light since the grievance meeting

The appeal will be heard by a panel of three members of the Human Resources Committee who have not been involved in the case. The appeal panel will appoint a chairman from one of its members.

If, because of involvement in the original hearing, there are an insufficient number of members of the Human Resources Committee available to form the appeal panel, other councillors may be added to the appeal panel, providing they have not been involved in the case previously.

The employee will be notified, in writing, within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal of the time, date and place of the appeal meeting. The meeting will take place within 25 working days of the council's receipt of the appeal. The employee will be advised that he/she may be accompanied by a workplace colleague, a trade union representative, or a trade union official.

At the appeal meeting, the chairman will:

- Introduce the panel members to the employee
- Explain the purpose of the meeting, which is to hear the employee's reasons for appealing against the decision of the Grievance Sub-Committee
- Explain the action that the appeal panel may take

The employee (or his/her companion) will be asked to explain the grounds of his/her appeal.

The chairman will inform the employee that he/she will receive the decision and the panel's reasons, in writing, within five working days of the appeal meeting. The appeal panel may decide to uphold the decision of the Grievance Sub-Committee or substitute its own decision.

The decision of the appeal panel is final.

Whistle-blowing Policy and Procedure

Normandy Parish Council is committed to the highest standards of openness and expects employees to come forward and voice concerns where applicable. This policy covers major concerns that fall outside the scope of other policies and procedures. It applies to concerns relating to other employees and/or councillors. Concerns relating to councillors may be better dealt with under the provisions of the Members' Code of Conduct.

All concerns raised will be treated in the strictest confidence and the identity of the employee will not be revealed without prior agreement. Employees will not be penalised, disciplined or shown other unfavourable treatment for raising a legitimate non-malicious concern under this policy.

This policy is informed by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and the Employment Rights Act 1996 which provide specific rights for employees who disclose information about alleged wrongdoings in certain specific circumstances.

Purpose of policy

This policy aims to:

- Encourage employees to feel confident to make a disclosure of concerns
- Provide appropriate avenues for these concerns to be raised by employees
- Reassure employees that they will be protected from being penalised or suffering detriment for making a disclosure

Concerns covered by this policy

This policy covers any serious concerns about any aspect of service provision or the conduct of employees or members of the council or others acting on behalf of the council.

Concerns that fall within this policy include, but are not limited to:

- Where a criminal offence has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed
- Where a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligations
- Health and safety risks, including risks to the public
- Where misleading or incorrect information is knowingly provided to the council as part of its decision making process

How to raise a concern

The council has several policies which may be a better mechanism for raising concerns, dependant on the nature of the concern. Before raising a concern under this policy, employees should refer to:

- Grievance Policy
- Members' Code of Conduct
- Complaints Procedure

If this is the most suitable mechanism for reporting, concerns should be raised, either orally or in writing, to the line manager. The most senior employee should raise any concern with the Chairman of the Council, or Vice-Chairman of the Council if the concern relates to the Chairman of the Council.

The concern should detail as much background information and history as possible, including dates, times and the nature of the concern. While the employee is not expected to prove beyond doubt the allegation, they are expected to be able to demonstrate that the disclosure is being made in good faith and with no malicious intent.

How the council will respond

- The council will investigate any concern raised under this policy. The nature of any investigation will be determined at the discretion of the individual to whom the concern was reported and may include referral to an alternate source such as an auditor. A decision may be made to use one of the alternate council policies to follow through the investigation.
- The identity of the employee raising the concern will be kept confidential throughout, unless agreed by the employee.
- The individual will be informed of how the council intends to pursue the concern, or if the council has decided the concern is unfounded.
- Should it become necessary during any investigation to meet with the employee raising the concern, every effort will be made to arrange this at a time and location to protect the identity of the employee.
- The council will take steps to minimise any difficulties which an employee may experience as a result of raising, or being suspected of raising a concern, and if an employee is required to give evidence at any criminal or disciplinary hearing the council will offer support.

Malicious allegations

The council is committed to the highest standards of openness and expects employees to come forward and voice concerns where applicable. However, the council will not tolerate deliberately misleading, malicious or substantially untrue allegations made by any employee under the guidance of this policy. Any employee found to have made a deliberately misleading, malicious or substantially untrue allegation will be subject to the council's Disciplinary Policy.

Employee Expenses Policy

This policy applies to all employees of the council and provides a framework to show how an employee can claim and be reimbursed for reasonable and authorised expenses that are incurred during their normal course of work.

Expectations

Employees are expected to:

- Behave honestly, responsibly and within the guidelines of this policy
- Submit expenses claims within reasonable timescales, on approved forms and provide enough information to explain the need for the expense
- Keep all receipts and provide VAT receipts (where appropriate) to allow the council to reclaim the VAT

The council will:

- Check claimed expenses are authorised in line with this policy
- Approve and pay legitimate claims promptly

If an employee fails to comply with this policy, this may delay reimbursement or cause claims to be rejected. Persistent or deliberate non-compliance may result in disciplinary action.

Travel related claims

The council has followed the guidance of HM Revenue and Customs in setting the following travel related expense rates and may amend these rates if guidance from HM Revenue and Customs changes, or alternate legislation recommends changes:

- Private car mileage – 45p per mile (up to a maximum of 10,000 miles per annum, thereafter 25p per mile)
- Additional passenger mileage in a private car – 5p per mile per passenger
- Motorcycle mileage – 24p per mile
- Bicycle mileage – 20p per mile
- Rail or bus fare – reimbursement of cost (standard class) as shown on ticket
- Parking – reimbursement of cost as shown on ticket (only where no free parking is available within reasonable walking distance)

Mileage should only be claimed for distances in excess of normal travel to work. You cannot claim mileage for normal travel between home and work.

The council will not, under any circumstances, reimburse employees for penalty fines incurred due to speeding, unsafe driving or any other motoring offence, parking fines or fines for failing to purchase the correct ticket on public transport.

Other expenses claims

- The following expenses are acceptable, and employees will be reimbursed for:
- Overnight accommodation and sustenance where required for attendance at a work-related event (where agreed in advance with the line manager)
- Professional membership fees (where relevant and agreed in advance with the line manager)
- Annual eye-testing (for employees who regularly use Visual Display Units (VDU's))

Claims process

- Employees must complete an approved expenses claim form (appendix B) promptly after incurring expenses (and no later than three months after the claim date) and submit to the Parish Clerk for approval.
- The line manager is responsible for checking the claim complies with this policy and includes receipts (where applicable). Once satisfied, the Parish Clerk will sign the form, thereby authorising the payment to be made.
- Payment will be made direct to the employee (not through the payroll) to their nominated bank account.
- Any employee unsure whether a claim is likely to be accepted is advised to speak to their line manager prior to incurring the expense.

Section 5

Health & Safety

Health and Safety Policy

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 sets out the general duty of employers and states the main principle as *'it shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, as far as is reasonably practical, the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees.'*

Normandy Parish Council recognises and accepts this responsibility, and for the health and safety of any other person who may be affected by its activities as far as is reasonably practical.

The council also recognises that every accident, however slight, is a matter for concern and will actively promote health and safety at all times.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 also sets out the duties of employees while at work. Employees have a duty *'to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.'*

Sensible risk management

The council will implement a Health and Safety Policy to fulfil its responsibilities, and adopt a sensible approach to risk management designed to:

- Ensure employees and the public are properly protected.
- Ensure that risks that are created are managed responsibly.
- Ensure that precautions taken are appropriate to the perceived level of risk.
- Establish an audit trail of risk assessment records.

The sensible risk management approach will ensure the council **does not**:

- Use 'Health and Safety' as a reason for preventing an activity.
- Scare people by exaggerating risks or publicising trivial risks.
- Create unrealistic demands prior to agreeing an activity.

Risk assessments

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to carry out risk assessments.

A risk assessment should be a practical exercise examining what, in your work, could cause harm to people, and putting in place controls to minimise the identified risks.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) promote a risk assessment process which follows the five following steps:

- Identify the hazards.
- Decide who might be harmed and how.
- Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions.
- Record the findings and implement them.
- Review the risk assessment and update if necessary.

The council will conduct risk assessments for any event it holds and report the findings to the Council.

The council will conduct regular risk assessments of its playground equipment and report the findings to the Estates and Facilities Committee.

A full record of all risk assessments will be kept by the Parish Clerk, including details of any remedial action taken.

A written record of any accidents, injuries or incidents will be retained by the Parish Clerk and referred to when completing any risk assessment.

Introduction and duties

The council will ensure all employees are trained in the use of any work items provided to them to fulfil their duties.

The council will actively involve employees in completion of risk assessments connected to their respective roles and encourage employees to raise any health and safety concerns they have with their line managers.

The council recognise its obligations to consult with its employees as detailed in the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996 and the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations 1977.

Other legislation

The council will be mindful of other legislation which may affect its responsibilities for Health and Safety and take these into account when assessing risks, in particular:

- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992
- The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992
- The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992

The council is also aware of other legislation which could affect its future responsibilities for health and safety, in particular:

- The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981
- The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989
- The Confined Spaces Regulations 1997
- The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
- The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998
- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)
- The Work at Height Regulations 2005
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- The Reporting of Injuries, Disease and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)

Insurance

The council will meet its legal obligations to insure against liability or disease to their employees arising out of their employment under the provisions of the Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969.

Lone Working Policy

The Health and Safety Executive defines lone workers as *'those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision.'*

Normandy Parish Council recognises that on occasions its employees may be required to work by themselves for significant periods of time without close or direct supervision in the community, in isolated work areas and out of office hours.

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the council has a duty of care to advise and assess risk for workers when they work by themselves in these circumstances. However, employees have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work and to co-operate with their employers in meeting their legal obligations.

Scope and aims of the policy

This policy applies to all situations involving lone working arising in connection with the duties and activities of the council.

The aim of this policy is to:

- (a) Increase employee awareness of safety issues relating to lone working.
- (b) Ensure that the risk of lone working is assessed in a systematic and ongoing way, and that safe systems and methods of work are put in place to reduce the risk so far as is reasonably practicable.
- (c) Ensure that appropriate training is available to all employees in all areas that equips them to recognise risk and provides practical advice on safety when working alone.
- (d) Ensure that appropriate support is available to employees who have to work alone.
- (e) Encourage full reporting and recording of all adverse incidents relating to lone working.

Responsibilities

The Parish Clerk, on behalf of the council, is responsible for:

- Ensuring that there are arrangements for identifying, evaluating and managing risk associated with lone working.
- Providing resources for putting the policy into practice.
- Ensuring that there are arrangements for monitoring incidents linked to lone working and that the effectiveness of this policy is regularly reviewed.

The Councillors and the Parish Clerk are responsible for:

- Ensuring that all employees are aware of this policy.
- Taking all possible steps to ensure that lone workers are at no greater risk than other employees.
- Identify situations where people work alone and decide whether a system can be adopted to avoid workers carrying out tasks on their own.
- Ensuring that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly.
- Putting procedures and safe systems of work into practice which are designed to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with working alone.
- Ensuring that employees identified as being at risk are given appropriate information, instruction and training.
- Managing the effectiveness of preventative measures through an effective system of reporting, investigating and recording incidents.

- Ensuring that appropriate support is given to employees involved in any incident.
- Providing a mobile phone or other personal safety equipment, if and where this is felt to be desirable.

Employees are responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions.
- Following guidance and procedures designed for safe working.
- Reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others.
- Taking part in training designed to meet the requirements of the policy.
- Reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify or any concerns they have in respect of working alone.
- Always maintaining good communication to minimise risk.

Guidance for risk assessments of lone working

Risk assessment is essential to good risk management. Assessment will be carried out for and on behalf of all employees whose working practice makes them vulnerable. This includes employees that are site based but work in isolation as well as any mobile employee whose work takes them out into the community.

Recommendations will be made to eliminate or reduce the risk to the lowest level reasonably practicable. A lone worker checklist will be completed and used as a tool to identify if the control measures are adequate and if not, what modifications or additional actions can be considered necessary to help reduce the risks associated with lone working.

Risk assessments for site based lone workers will include:

- Is the person fit and suitable to work alone.
- Safe access and exit.
- Risk of violence.
- Safety of equipment for individual use.
- Channels of communication in an emergency.
- Site security.
- Security arrangements, i.e., alarm systems and response to personal alarms.
- Level and adequacy of on/off site supervision.
- Any additional considerations for vulnerable employees.

Risk assessments for mobile lone workers will, additionally, include:

- Travelling between sites.
- Reporting and recording arrangements.
- Communication and traceability and personal safety/security.

Incident reporting

An incident is defined as *'an unplanned or uncontrolled event or sequence of events that has the potential to cause injury ill health or damage'*.

To maintain an appropriate record of incidents involving lone workers it is essential that all incidents be reported to the Parish Clerk who will prioritise each incident and identify any immediate action. Employees should ensure that all incidents where they feel threatened or unsafe are reported, including incidents of verbal abuse.

Support for employees

Employees working for the council should know that their safety comes first. Employees should be aware of how to deal with situations where they feel they are at risk or unsafe. They should also be able to recognise how their own actions could influence or even trigger an aggressive response. The Parish Clerk will ensure that all lone workers' training needs are assessed and that they receive appropriate training.

In the event of a violent incident involving a lone worker, the Parish Clerk will immediately ensure that the employee receives and necessary medical treatment and/or advice. The Parish Clerk will also consider whether the employee needs specific information or assistance relating to legal or insurance aspects, ensure appropriate written and verbal reporting of any violent incident is recorded and report the incident to the police.

If the employee subjected to the violent incident is the Parish Clerk, the next most senior employee should take responsibility for the above actions, including reporting the incident to the Chairman of the Human Resources Committee.

Good practice for lone workers

The following guidelines exist for the safety of lone working employees:

- During their working hours, all employees leaving the workplace should leave written details of where they are going and their estimated time of return.
- If, during a trip away from the workplace, plans change significantly, this should be communicated.
- Telephone contact between the lone worker and a colleague is advisable. Employees should avoid being left on their own with a client in their workplace or leaving a colleague/councillor in this situation.
- Lone workers should have access to adequate first aid facilities and mobile workers should carry a first aid kit suitable for treating minor injuries.
- Lone workers should be provided with a mobile phone and other personal safety equipment where this is necessary.
- Employees should **never** transport a child or vulnerable adult on their own.
- Before making a home visit, the lone worker must have full knowledge of the hazards and risks to which he or she may be exposed to and apply control measure to eliminate the potential risks.

Exemptions

Employees and volunteers are exempt from working alone in certain situations:

- Young persons under instruction in a fixed base (for example, work experience, helping with council tasks, etc.).
- Where activities and work with substances/machinery could be hazardous to health.

Sexual Harassment Policy

Normandy Parish Council is committed to providing a work environment free from all forms of discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment. This policy outlines the council's zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment and the procedures for reporting and addressing such behaviour.

Background

The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023, which came into effect on 26 October 2024, determines all employers must take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of their employees and to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of their workers.

All staff have a responsibility to behave in line with the requirements of this policy. Instances of sexual harassment or victimisation may lead to disciplinary action including termination of employment.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, including full-time, part-time, temporary, and contract workers, as well as volunteers and elected officials associated with Normandy Parish Council.

Definition

Sexual harassment is defined as any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, including but not limited to:

- Unwanted sexual advances
- Requests for sexual favours
- Verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature
- Displaying sexually explicit materials.

Prohibited Conduct

Sexual harassment in any form is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Making sexual propositions, innuendos, or suggestive comments
- Physical contact of a sexual nature without consent
- Sending sexually explicit messages or materials
- Creating a hostile or offensive work environment based on gender or sexual orientation.

Reporting Procedure

Any employee who believes they have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment is encouraged to report it immediately. Reports can be made to:

- The Chair of the HR Committee
- The Chair of the Parish Council

Reports can be made verbally or in writing and will be kept confidential to the extent possible. Retaliation against individuals who report sexual harassment is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Investigation Procedure

Upon receiving a report of sexual harassment, Normandy Parish Council will promptly and impartially investigate the allegations. The investigation will be conducted by the Chair of the HR Committee, who will interview the

parties involved and any witnesses. All parties will be afforded due process and confidentiality to the extent possible.

Disciplinary Action

If an investigation confirms that sexual harassment has occurred, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. This may include verbal or written warnings, suspension, demotion, or termination, depending on the severity of the offense and the circumstances involved.

Training and Awareness

Normandy Parish Council is committed to preventing sexual harassment through education and training. All employees will receive training on this policy and their rights and responsibilities regarding sexual harassment prevention and reporting.

Compliance

All employees are expected to comply with this policy at all times. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Conclusion

Normandy Parish Council is dedicated to fostering a respectful and inclusive workplace where all employees can thrive. The council takes allegations of sexual harassment seriously and will take prompt and appropriate action to address them.

Menopause Policy

Normandy Parish Council is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive working environment for everyone who works here. The Council recognises that female employees may need support during the menopause, particularly as the menopause is not a widely discussed subject and can be misunderstood.

The menopause is a natural part of ageing that usually occurs between 45 and 55 years of age, as a woman's oestrogen levels decline. In the UK, the average age for a woman to reach the menopause is 51.

The NHS states that around 1 in 100 women experience the menopause before they reach 40 years of age. This is known as 'premature menopause' or premature ovarian insufficiency' and this group of women need to have medical intervention. On average, most symptoms last around four years from the last period. However, around 1 in every 10 women experiences them for up to 12 years. Not all women will have symptoms and for those that do, the symptoms can vary in type, amount and severity.

This policy aims to raise awareness about the menopause amongst employees and Councillors and provide additional guidance to enable employees and Councillors to understand more about the menopause.

Definitions:

Menopause – is defined as a biological stage in a woman's life that occurs when she stops menstruating and reaches the end of her natural reproductive life. Usually, it is defined as having occurred when a woman has not had a period for twelve consecutive months around the ages of 45-55 (however, it can be earlier or later than this due to surgery, illness or other reasons).

Peri-menopause – is the time leading up to menopause when a woman 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 woman has not had a period for twelve consecutive months.

Menopause Symptoms

Most women will experience physical and/or psychological menopausal symptoms. Some of these can be quite severe and have a significant impact on their everyday activities, including work life. It is recognised that the menopause is a very individual experience and that women can be affected in different ways and to different degrees. The following are the most common symptoms:

- Hot flushes
- Night sweats
- Sleep disruption
- Headaches, aches and pains
- Skin irritation
- Palpitations
- Low mood or anxiety
- Fatigue
- Depression
- Difficulty concentrating
- Forgetfulness
- Urinary problems
- Clarity of thought impaired
- Loss of confidence

- Mood swings
- Weight gain and slowed metabolism
- Heavy periods and clots
- Dry eyes

The effects of the menopause should be considered in any relevant capability performance or issues as it is recognised that the physical and psychological symptoms of the menopause and side effects of hormone replacement therapy may have a detrimental impact on women's work performance. Some women may find it difficult to discuss the menopause, without embarrassment.

Accessing Support

It is recognised that the menopause is a very personal experience and different levels of support may be needed. As with all longstanding health-related conditions, the Council is aware that sympathetic and appropriate support is required from line management to help women deal with the issues arising from the menopause.

Female employees may feel uncomfortable going to their manager if they are experiencing problems, especially if the manager is male. There are other options available such as approaching the Chair or Vice Chair of Normandy Parish Council or seeking medical advice.

Normandy Parish Council is committed to ensuring that conditions in the workplace do not make symptoms worse. Adjustment may be necessary to support women who are experiencing the menopause.

A risk assessment should be undertaken in order to consider the particular requirements of menopausal women, who may at times require access to more flexible working in order to deal with their symptoms, including starting later after difficulties sleeping, needing to leave work suddenly or taking more breaks during the day. Consideration should be given regarding access to chilled drinking water and access to adequate workplace sanitary facilities.

Adjustments may be required to the employee's duties as hot flushes can be more difficult to cope with when undertaking high visibility work such as formal meetings for example.

Manager and Employee Responsibilities

Key responsibilities of managers include:

- To be familiar with this policy and be willing to have open, professional and sensitive conversations, ensuring confidentiality, with the employee. Ensure that follow up discussions are conducted.
- To listen to the employee and understand what symptoms they are experiencing. Acknowledge that they may find the menopause difficult to talk about – discuss somewhere in private where its easy to speak openly.
- Consider requests promptly for medical appointments, flexible working, agile working and other workplace adjustments that may be necessary, making decisions in line with the needs of Normandy Parish Council.

Key responsibilities of employees include:

- Employees are encouraged to facilitate a conversation with their line manager if they are experiencing difficulties at work.
- Keep their line manager up to date of any relevant changes in their health which may impact their work.
- Be flexible with their line manager in assessing options and suggesting alternative ways in which responsibilities and tasks could be undertaken, where necessary.
- Seek advice from their GP on available treatment options if symptoms persist or are having a significant adverse effect on their health and wellbeing.

Self Help Measures

Some ways women can help manage their symptoms of the menopause / perimenopause include:

- Eating healthy and regularly
- Wearing natural fibres. Consider wearing layered clothing so that they can be easily undone/removed
- Exercising regularly to maintain aerobic fitness levels
- Consulting with their GP on the management of the menopause and to ensure that any symptoms are not due to other causes
- Obtaining support and discussing their symptoms with a trusted manager
- Drinking plenty of water
- Not smoking
- Ensuring alcohol intake is at, or below, recommended levels
- Having access to natural light
- Getting adequate rest and relaxation

Risk Management Policy

Normandy Parish Council recognises that it has a responsibility to take all reasonable and practical measures to safeguard its employees, the people it works with and provides services for, and to protect the natural and built environments for which it is responsible.

The council is aware that some risks cannot be fully eliminated and has in place a strategy that provides a structured, systematic and focused approach to managing risk.

Objectives

The objectives of the risk management policy are to:

- Integrate risk management into the culture of the council.
- Manage risk in accordance with best practice and legislative requirements.
- Minimise loss, disruption, injury and damages.
- Inform policy and operational decisions by identifying risks and their likely impact.
- Raise awareness of the need for risk management.

These objectives will be achieved by:

- Identification of risk.
- Undertaking risk assessments.
- Managing the risk and recording actions.
- Incorporating risk management considerations into council processes.
- Providing appropriate training.
- Establishing clear roles, responsibilities and reporting lines.
- Effective communication with, and active involvement of, employees.

Protecting Vulnerable Persons Policy

Normandy Parish Council is committed to taking all reasonable precautions to safeguard the welfare of children and vulnerable persons that use its services and promotes a safeguarding culture and environment.

Safeguarding

The council will endeavour or safeguard children and vulnerable persons, in that:

- The welfare of the child and vulnerable adult is paramount
- All children and vulnerable adults have the right to protection from abuse
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- All employees, volunteers and elected members of the council have a responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer
- All employees, volunteers and elected members of the council are not to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred

Duty of care

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks will be carried out in accordance with the eligibility criteria in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975.

Normandy Parish Council has a duty of care to protect others from harm. This includes a range of processes including risk assessment and health and safety practices.

Allegations or suspicions of inappropriate behaviour by an employee or councillor must be referred immediately to the Parish Clerk who will refer the matter to Social Services at Surrey County Council for investigation.

You must refer – you must not investigate

Adverse Weather Policy

Normandy Parish Council recognises that adverse weather conditions can sometimes make travel to and from work difficult. Employees are encouraged to make every effort to attend work, whilst considering their personal safety in hazardous conditions. This policy applies to all employees and outlines procedures which should be followed in the event of adverse weather conditions.

Weather deterioration during the day

Employees should monitor adverse weather conditions and (where applicable) availability of public transport during the day, particularly where conditions appear to be deteriorating. Council computer systems may be used to monitor the situation, along with listening to local radio news and weather bulletins.

Employees who are likely to face a particularly difficult journey home should be allowed to leave early wherever possible. Decisions regarding employees leaving early are at the discretion of the line manager. Consideration should be given to employees with children who may need to leave early due to the unexpected closure of the child's school or nursery.

Contingency plans should be in place to maintain levels of service wherever possible, including:

- Cover arrangements provided by employees who do not have particularly long or difficult journeys home to ensure continuity of service
- Provision to divert services elsewhere as necessary
- Arrangements for employees to take work home with them, taking into account issues relating to access, security and confidentiality of data
- Providing members of the public with essential contact and emergency numbers in the event of complete closure of the premises

Where employees remain at work, health and safety requirements must continue to be met, including rules regarding working in extreme conditions in the event of the failure of heating systems.

Unable to attend work due to adverse weather

Where adverse weather occurs overnight, employees should take all reasonable steps to attend their normal place of work as soon as practical, considering their personal safety.

If an employee expects to be delayed due to adverse weather or is unable to travel safely to work at all, he/she must advise their line manager as soon as practical.

Where adverse weather is predicted in advance, contingency plans should be in place to maintain levels of service wherever possible, including:

- Cover arrangements provided by employees who do not have particularly long or difficult journeys home to ensure continuity of service
- Provision to divert services elsewhere as necessary
- Arrangements for employees to take work home with them, taking into account issues relating to access, security and confidentiality of data
- Providing members of the public with essential contact and emergency numbers in the event of complete closure of the premises

If an employee is unable to attend their normal place of work, they should continue to monitor weather conditions during the day. If conditions improve, the employee should take all reasonable steps to attend, considering their personal safety.

Employees are expected to make up time missed due to adverse weather (except where emergency leave is taken) by use of TOIL and/or annual leave. Line managers are encouraged to use their discretion where employees are slightly delayed arriving at work due to adverse weather.

Environmental Policy

Normandy Parish Council recognises that the day-to-day operations of the council can impact both directly and indirectly on the environment. The council aims to protect and improve the environment through good management and by adopting best practice wherever possible. The council will work to integrate environmental considerations into our business decisions and adopt more environmentally friendly alternatives wherever possible, throughout our operations.

Objectives

To discharge its responsibilities, the management will:

- Bring this policy to the attention of all stakeholders.
- Carry out regular audits of the environmental management system.
- Comply fully with all relevant legal requirements, codes of practice and regulations at international, national and local levels.
- Eliminate risks to the environment, where possible, through selection and design of materials, buildings, facilities, equipment and processes.
- Ensure that emergency procedures are in place at all locations for dealing with environmental issues.
- Identify and manage environmental risks and hazards.
- Improve the environmental efficiency of the council's transport and travel.
- Minimise waste and increase recycling within the framework of the council's waste management procedures.
- Only engage contractors who can demonstrate due regard to environmental matters.
- Prevent pollution to land, air and water.
- Promote environmentally responsible purchasing.
- Provide adequate resources to control environmental risks arising from work activities.
- Provide suitable training to enable employees to deal with their specific areas of environmental control.
- Reduce the use of water, energy and other natural resources.
- Source materials from sustainable supply, whenever practical.
- Consider the impact of noise and light pollution.

PART TWO

FORMS AND TEMPLATES

Appendix A – Change of personal details form

Please complete this form if any of your personal details have changed. For change of name, please provide a copy of official documentation e.g., marriage certificate, deed poll.

Name	
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<u>Tick if details changing</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>New information</u>
	Name	Enter new name
	Address	Enter new address, including post code
	Contact telephone number	Enter new telephone number(s)
	Contact email address	Enter new email address
	Emergency contact information	Enter new emergency contact name, address, telephone number and email
	Date changes take effect	Enter date

I declare that the information I have provided on this form is true and correct and accept that my details will be amended as I have requested. In signing this form, I consent to processing of my personal data within the terms of the council's data protection policies.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B - Employee Expenses Claim Form

In accordance with the council's Employee Expenses Policy, employees are entitled to claim for reasonable and authorised expenses that are incurred during their normal course of work.

All claims must be submitted on the council's expenses claim form.

Employee Name	
----------------------	--

Car mileage claim

Date	Travel from	Travel to	Reason	Miles	Amount

Other expenses claim (attach receipts for any item over £10)

Date	Reason	Amount

Total expenses claim

Amount

I declare that the details above are correct, and I claim the amount shown in accordance with the council's Employee Expenses Policy.

Signed: **Employee** _____ Date: _____

Signed: **Line Manager** _____ Date: _____

Appendix D - Employee Sickness Self-Certificate

In accordance with the council's Sickness and Absence Policy, employees are required to complete a self-certification document for sickness absences of seven days or less.

For all absences which exceed a seven-day period, a medical certificate is required.

PERSONAL DETAILS

Name: _____

PERIOD OF SICKNESS

Date of first day of sickness: _____

Date of last day of sickness: _____

Date of return to work: _____

Reason for absence (*see list*) _____

Could your absence have been due to a work-related injury/condition? **YES/NO**

Has an accident report form been completed? **YES/NO/Not applicable**

Is the absence related to a previous absence? **YES/NO**

DECLARATION

I declare that I have not worked during the period of sickness stated above and that the information given is factually correct. I understand that to give false or misleading information can result in disciplinary proceedings.

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____

Line Manager Signature: _____

Date: _____

Under the Data Protection Act 2018, 'sensitive data' such as details of sickness absence will be held about you. The above data will be used to calculate and pay benefits, meet health and safety requirements and to meet the council's duty of care to all employees. In signing this form, you consent to processing of personal data within the terms of the council's data protection policies.

Guidance notes for self-certification

- The 'Employee Self-Certification' form must be completed by all employees for each period of absence, including single day absences which are not covered by a doctor's certificate.
- The term 'work-related' means that the injury/condition occurred whilst on council premises/business.
- When completing the 'reason for absence', the attached list should be used. Please state, as a minimum, a sickness category. It is the employee's choice if they wish to disclose specific reasons.
- All employees should have a return-to-work interview with their line manager on the day of return from absence.

CATEGORY	EXAMPLES
Musculo-skeletal, back & neck	Sciatica
Musculo-skeletal, upper limb	Arm, hand, shoulder
Musculo-skeletal, other	Lower limb, head injuries, other injuries, road traffic accidents, multiple injuries, abdominal strain, arthritis, inguinal hernia, hiatus hernia
Respiratory	Colds, flu, pneumonia, bronchitis, asthma, lung infections, tuberculosis
Skin	Eczema, psoriasis, shingles, infections, allergy
Genito urinary	Recurrent miscarriage, cystitis, stones, pregnancy, hysterectomy, prostate conditions, period pains, irregular bleeding
Cardiovascular	High blood pressure, angina, heart attack, stroke, deep vein thrombosis (DVT), varicose veins, palpitations, heart operations, Reynaud's disease, blood disorders
Gastro-intestinal	Bowel disorders, liver, gall bladder, acid reflux, diarrhoea, vomiting, haemorrhoids, appendicitis, ulcer
Mental ill health	Major psychiatric illness, stress, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, panic disorder, depression, eating disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), drug induced psychosis
Cancer	Unspecified cancers, Hodgkin's lymphoma, leukemia
Endocrine	Diabetes, hypo/hyperthyroid
Nervous system	Migraine, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, vertigo, cerebral palsy
Ear, nose, throat and eyes	Allergy, infections, sinusitis, hay fever, sleep apnoea
Miscellaneous symptoms	Malaise, debility, headache, dizziness, glandular fever, post viral lethargy
Other	Childhood (infectious) diseases, alcohol and/or drug addiction, dental

