Dunstable Town Council

Grove House, 76 High Street North, Dunstable, Beds, LU6 1NF

PUBLIC NOTICE OF MEETING

Personnel Sub-Committee

Thursday, 5 November 2026

Dear All,

Notice is hereby given of a public meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee to be held at 7:00 PM on Thursday, 12 November 2026 at Council Chamber.

Members of the public and press are welcome to attend in person. To submit a question, please contact the Council at democratic@dunstable.gov.uk or call 01582 513000 by 4 pm on the Friday immediately before the meeting.

Yours Sincerely

Paul Hodson

Town Clerk and Chief Executive to Dunstable Town Council

Apologies for Absence

1. Confirmation of minutes – Thursday, 10 September 2026

To resolve that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 10 September 2026, having been circulated, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair (LGA 1972 Schedule 12 para 41).

2. Declarations of Interest

3. HR Summary

4. Policy Update

5. Exclusion of Public and Press

To RESOLVE that, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s.1(2), the public and press be excluded from the remainder of the meeting by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

6. Personnel Matters *(Exempt)*

7. Date of the Next Meeting

Thursday 12 November at 7 pm

APPENDIX I — Public Documents

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1. Confirmation of minutes – Thursday, 10 September 2026

PersonnelSubCommittee-Minutes.pdf

3. HR Summary

Item 3. HR Summary.pdf
Item 3, App1. Long-term Sickness Procedure.pdf

4. Policy Update

Item 4. Policy Update.pdf
Item 4, App 1. Annual Leave (REVIEWED).pdf
Item 4, App 2. Special Leave (REVIEWED).pdf
Item 4, App 3. Maternity Leave (REVIEWED).pdf
Item 4, App 4. Maternity Support Leave (REVIEWED).pdf
Item 4. App 5. Paternity Leave (REVIEWED).pdf
Item 4, App 6. Sickness (REVIEWED).pdf
Item 4, App 7. Time Off in Lieu (TOIL) (REVIEWED).pdf
Item 4, App 8. Overtime (REVIEWED).pdf
Item 4, App 9. Adverse Weather Conditions (REVIEWED).pdf
Item 4, App 10. Staff Volunteer Day (REVIEWED).pdf
Item 4, App 11. Carer's Leave (REVIEWED).pdf

Dunstable Town Council

Minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee

Held at the Council Chamber, Grove House, 76 High Street North, Dunstable, Beds, LU6 1NF

On Thursday, 10 September 2026

Attendance

Present: Councillors Tamara (Chair), Blennerhassett (substitute for Henderson), Hollick, Kimondo

Apologies: Councillors Attwell, Henderson (substituted by Blennerhassett), Kotarski

Also present: Paul Hodson, Kelley Hallam

236/26 Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee held on 2 June 2026 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

237/26 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

238/26 HR Summary

Members received an update on HR matters including staffing, sickness, people management, enhanced benefits and improvement projects.

Members noted that on 24 August the annual pay award was agreed by the Local Government Association (LGA) on behalf of the National Joint Council (NJC). The settlement was agreed at 3.3% on all spinal column points (SCP) and was to be backdated to the 1 April 2026. This would be implemented for all staff in the September payroll.

239/26 Policy Update

Members considered a detailed report that recommended the adoption of a Violence and Aggression at Work Policy and to accept the amendments made to the reviewed policies:

- Subsistence Payment
- Honorarium and Acting-Up
- Post Entry Training Scheme
- Fraud, Bribery and Corruption

- Capability Policy
- Complaints Policy

RESOLVED i) that the adoption of the Violence and Aggression at Work Policy be recommended to the Finance and General Purposes Committee

RESOLVED ii) that the acceptance of the reviewed policy amendments be recommended to the Finance and General Purposes Committee

240/26 Exclusion of Public and Press

It was **RESOLVED** that, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, section 1(2), the public and press be excluded from the remainder of the meeting by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

241/26 Personnel Matters

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive gave Members a verbal update on various personnel matters.

242/26 Date of the Next Meeting

It was **NOTED** that the next meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee would be held on Thursday 12 November 2026 at 7 pm.

The meeting closed at 19:38.

Signed: _____

Chair of the Personnel Sub-Committee

Date: _____

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2026

HR SUMMARY

Purpose of report: For information

1. STAFFING

1.1. Dunstable Town Council currently employs 75 staff.

1.2. Of these staff, 52 have permanent contracts, 1 has a fixed-term contract, and 22 are casual workers.

1.3. 36 employees are full-time; 16 employees are part-time.

1.4. Following an Assistant Town Ranger's resignation, the Council is recruiting a replacement on a 3-month fixed-term contract.

1.5. The programme to recruit staff for Priory House has begun. The Catering Manager, Senior Priory House Assistant and Cultural Services Assistant have been recruited. The Catering Manager started at the end of September with the other two posts starting at the end of November. Interviews for the Kitchen Assistants and Priory House Assistants are being held the week beginning 26 October 2026.

2. SICKNESS

2.1 There are currently no staff on long-term sick.

2.2 The HR & Payroll Manager has developed a formal procedure to ensure all cases of long-term sickness are managed consistently. The procedure is attached at Appendix 1 for Members' information.

3. PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

Staff Away Day

3.1. The Staff Away Day was held on 6 October 2026 at the Grove Theatre. The day was facilitated by a company called Council Culture and the theme was based on our Value 'Teamwork'. The day comprised of a mix of training, activities, and games all based around the theme of Teamwork and also included the Annual Staff Awards.

3.2. 57 staff attended the day. Feedback from staff was positive with 83% rating the day good or excellent and 17% rating it average. No respondents rated it as poor or fair.

3.3. The Annual Staff Awards were peer led nominations. A total of 81 nominations were received across the six categories. A total of 35 different staff received a nomination with 17 staff receiving nominations in multiple categories. All nominees were presented with a certificate.

3.4. Winners were determined by the number of nominations received but where there was an equal number of nominations, the Senior Management Team made the casting vote. The winners of the six categories were:

H&S Champion – Lee Bowley
Values Champion – Tim Wood
Wellbeing Champion – Annette Clynes
Leadership Award – Dave Smith
Unsung Hero – Gina Thanky
Happiness Hero – Emma Harris

3.5 Two special awards were also presented; The SMT Award for excellence was presented to Corinne Gilmore for going above and beyond and the positive impact she made whilst providing maternity cover and the Town Clerk and Chief Executive Award which was presented to Lisa Stephens for her resilience, loyalty and dedication despite having years of upheaval and uncertainty in her workplace. Both were presented with a trophy.

3.6 Planning for the 2027 Staff Away Day is underway. A meeting with a working group of six staff representing all service areas is scheduled for late November. It is intended to provide a more traditional away day in response to feedback.

Training

3.7 Staff training for the year has now been processed and booked. The training budget for 2026/2027 has now been fully allocated. Training that could not be authorised this year is being costed and will be considered as part of the 2027/2028 budget setting process. The new Head of Grounds and Environmental Services has identified a considerable training backlog; this will be addressed using the proposed increased training budget for 2027/28.

3.8 Emergency First Aid at Work and DSE training are complete. The Corporate Performance & Compliance Manager is conducting individual DSE workstation assessments. Staff who occasionally work from home will then complete assessments of their home workstations.

Health and Wellbeing

3.9 The cemetery team held a Macmillan Coffee Morning in September. Over 20 people attended and £100 was raised.

3.10 The Community Services team have organised a Men's Wellbeing Session in November which comprises a short boxing session followed by a talk on Men's Mental Health.

3.11 The HR & Payroll Manager has signed up to participate in Tech Timeout Tuesday again this year. It is held in December and encourages staff to pledge to put down their devices for at least an hour during the day. This was well received last year by all staff that participated.

4. ENHANCED STAFF BENEFITS

Stream

4.1. 26 eligible staff are currently enrolled to use Stream to enable them to access their wages early. A breakdown of how they are using the app can be found below:

	Budgeting	Saving	Flexible Pay	Education
May	16	13	6	0
June	12	13	6	0
July	13	13	5	0
Aug	15	13	6	2
Sep	16	14	7	4
Oct	16	15	6	2

Perkbox

4.2. 27 eligible staff are currently registered to use the Perkbox app. There are currently 18 active orders from the Home & Electronics option, where household items are purchased, and repaid monthly, interest free, directly from their wages.

Octopus Electric Vehicles

4.3. Three electric vehicles have now been leased via the scheme.

5. IMPROVEMENTS AND PROJECTS

5.1 The HR & Payroll Manager is currently updating the exit procedure to ensure that it is robust and provides useful information rather than a tick-box exercise.

5.2 The Employment Rights Bill has now become law, and Council policies will need to be updated to reflect changes taking effect in 2026. The employers' duty to inform workers of their right to join a trade union has been delayed until January. Details are still unknown of what this will consist of.

5.3 The HR & Payroll Manager is researching the introduction of a reference policy, work experience policy and application form and the need for a tipping policy.

5.4 The Council's HR and Health and Safety support contract with Worknest is due to expire in March 2027. Officers requested multiple companies to quote for one or both contracts. These are now being reviewed by the Town Clerk and Chief Executive and officers. A report of the outcome will be brought to a later committee meeting.

6. APPENDICES

6.1 Appendix 1 – Long-term Sickness Procedure

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 https://www.acas.org.uk/employment-rights-bill
7.2 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/employment-rights-bill-factsheets

8. AUTHOR

Kelley Hallam – HR & Payroll Manager
Kelley.hallam@dunstable.gov.uk

LONG-TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE PROCEDURE

1. Purpose

Use this procedure to manage long-term sickness absence alongside Sickness Policy 7.4. The policy's reporting, medical evidence and sick pay requirements apply throughout. Section 3 explains when this procedure applies.

Use this procedure for sickness absence lasting four continuous weeks or more, or earlier in the circumstances set out in Section 3, to:

- maintain appropriate and supportive contact with the employee;
- ensure sickness absence and pay are administered correctly;
- understand the likely duration and impact of the absence;
- consider occupational health or medical advice where appropriate;
- identify reasonable adjustments or support that may help the employee return to work;
- ensure decisions are fair, consistent and based on the available evidence.

For day-to-day management, use Sections 4–6 for contact, welfare meetings and medical advice; Section 7 for sick pay; Sections 8–10 for return planning, formal reviews and the return itself; and Section 11 for records. Section 12 provides a quick-reference timetable.

2. Responsibilities

HR & Payroll Manager

The HR & Payroll Manager should:

- maintain central oversight of long-term sickness absence cases;
- ensure absence records, self-certification forms, fit notes and return-to-work documentation are received and stored appropriately;
- monitor sickness pay entitlement and ensure payroll is updated promptly;
- advise line managers and the Senior Management Team on policy, procedure and best practice;
- coordinate occupational health referrals or requests for medical reports where required;
- ensure employee consent is obtained before requesting medical information;

- advise on reasonable adjustments, phased returns and return-to-work planning;
- support formal sickness absence meetings where required;
- ensure any decision affecting employment is based on all relevant circumstances and medical evidence where available.

If the HR & Payroll Manager is absent, the Head of Corporate Services will provide oversight as needed.

Line Managers

Line managers should:

- be the main day-to-day contact for the employee unless agreed otherwise;
- maintain regular, sensitive and appropriate contact during the absence;
- record the absence on BrightHR promptly and notify the relevant Head of Service;
- ensure fit notes and other absence documents are forwarded without delay;
- keep clear records of contact with the employee;
- discuss support needs and possible return-to-work arrangements;
- complete return-to-work documentation when the employee returns.

Senior Management Team

The Senior Management Team should:

- ensure the sickness absence procedure is applied consistently across the Council;
- support line managers in managing complex or prolonged absences;
- review cases where absence is ongoing, repeated or causing significant operational impact;
- decide when formal management action may be required;
- consider recommendations from occupational health or medical reports;
- ensure any decision is fair, proportionate and properly documented.

3. Defining Long-Term Sickness Absence

Follow this procedure once continuous sickness absence reaches four weeks. Earlier support may be appropriate where:

- absence is expected to last four weeks or more; or
- medical information indicates prolonged recovery; or
- fit notes recur or return timescales remain uncertain.

The Council may also apply the procedure earlier where absence has a significant impact or support or adjustments are needed.

4. Maintaining Contact with the Employee

Why contact should be maintained

Regular contact helps the Council:

- show concern for the employee's welfare;
- reduce isolation during sickness absence;
- understand likely return-to-work timescales;
- identify support or workplace adjustments;
- keep the employee appropriately informed;
- plan service delivery and payroll arrangements.

Keep contact supportive and proportionate. Do not pressure the employee to return before they are fit.

Who should make contact

The line manager normally leads contact. HR may lead where:

- the employee requests this;
- the relationship with the manager is difficult;
- the absence is related to workplace stress, grievance, disciplinary matters or management concerns;
- the case is sensitive or complex.
- The line manager is absent themselves

Senior managers should make routine welfare contact only if they manage the employee or have a specific reason to be involved.

How contact should be made

Use telephone contact unless another method is agreed. Alternatives include:

- email;
- video call;
- face-to-face welfare meeting;
- home visit, but only where appropriate and agreed in advance.

The preferred method of contact should be agreed with the employee as early as possible.

How often contact should be made

Agree contact frequency according to the employee's condition and circumstances. As a guide:

- **Week1**: follow the normal sickness reporting rules during the first week: first-day telephone contact, an update after three days if absence continues, and fit note

submission after more than seven days. These requirements also apply where the absence is expected to become long term.

- **Weeks 2 to 4:** the line manager should normally make contact at least once per week, unless this would be inappropriate due to the employee's condition.
- **After four weeks:** contact should normally take place every two to four weeks, depending on the circumstances.
- **Where a return date is known:** contact may reduce but should include planning for return-to-work arrangements.
- **Where there is no likely return date:** contact should continue at agreed intervals and should usually include HR involvement.

Review contact arrangements periodically and when the employee's condition changes.

5. Welfare Meetings

For ongoing or expected long-term absence, the line manager should arrange a welfare meeting, with HR support where appropriate.

The purpose of the meeting is to:

- check on the employee's wellbeing;
- discuss the likely duration of absence;
- review fit notes or medical advice;
- consider whether work has contributed to the absence;
- identify any support the Council can provide;
- discuss whether an occupational health referral may be helpful;
- consider possible adjustments or a phased return;
- agree future contact arrangements.

Keep the meeting informal and supportive. Give reasonable notice and explain its purpose. Meet by telephone, video call or at an agreed location.

6. Occupational Health and Medical Advice

If a fit note covers more than 14 days, or more than one fit note is needed, the Council may request either a doctor's letter confirming fitness to resume duties or a referral to occupational health. The Council will pay the cost.

The HR & Payroll Manager should coordinate occupational health referrals. A referral may be appropriate where:

- the absence is likely to be long term;
- there is no clear return date;

- the employee has repeated periods of sickness absence;
- the employee may need reasonable adjustments;
- there are concerns about fitness to undertake the full duties of the role;
- a phased return or amended duties may be required;
- the Council needs medical advice before making employment decisions.

Obtain written consent before requesting a medical report. Medical information cannot be supplied without the employee's consent.

HR must follow the Sickness Policy's consent and access arrangements, including applicable rights to see the report before disclosure, request corrections and attach a statement if a correction is refused.

A medical report or occupational health advice may be used to understand:

- the reason for and likely duration of absence;
- when the employee may be able to return;
- whether the condition may recur;
- what treatment is being prescribed;
- whether the employee can carry out all duties;
- what reasonable adjustments may be recommended.

If the employee refuses consent, the Council may need to make decisions based on the information available.

7. Sickness Pay and Payroll Administration

HR & Payroll Manager: apply the NJC National Agreement Sickness Scheme in the Council's policy, using length of service and sickness absence in the preceding 12 months.

The HR & Payroll Manager should:

- calculate sick pay entitlement;
- confirm when pay will reduce from full pay to half pay or statutory sick pay only;
- ensure payroll records are accurate;
- notify the employee in writing before any reduction in pay where possible;
- liaise with the line manager about missing fit notes or documentation;
- ensure delays in notification are addressed promptly.

8. Reasonable Adjustments and Return-to-Work Planning

Line manager and HR: consider reasonable adjustments where medical advice supports a return. Options include:

- phased return to work;
- temporary changes to hours;
- amended duties;
- changes to workload;
- workplace adaptations;
- temporary redeployment;
- additional supervision or review meetings;
- flexibility for medical appointments.

Discuss adjustments with the employee and review regularly. Consider whether the condition may be a disability and assess support fairly and sensitively.

A phased return bridges sickness absence and normal work through reduced hours, limited duties or both. Plan it around medical advice; it should not normally exceed three months.

9. Formal Review Meetings

If absence continues without a clear return date, ask HR whether a formal review is needed.

A formal review meeting may be appropriate where:

- the employee has been absent for a significant period;
- medical advice does not indicate a return in the foreseeable future;
- the absence is having a significant operational impact;
- reasonable adjustments have been considered but do not enable a return;
- further decisions may be needed about employment.

The employee should be invited in writing and told:

- the purpose of the meeting;
- who will attend;
- their right to be accompanied, if applicable under Council procedure;
- what information will be considered;
- possible outcomes.

Possible outcomes may include:

- continued monitoring and review;
- further medical advice;
- agreed return-to-work plan;
- temporary adjustments;

- phased return;
- redeployment consideration;
- progression to a further formal stage where appropriate.

Assess proposed changes to duties or hours and any pay implications under the Sickness Policy. Discuss these with the employee and agree any revised pay. Permanent alternative arrangements depend on operational needs and are not guaranteed.

No decision affecting employment should be made without careful consideration of all circumstances.

This guide is not a complete dismissal process. Before considering dismissal for long-term sickness, HR must establish the Council's process, decision-making authority and appeal arrangements and explain them to the employee in writing.

10. Return to Work

On the first day back, the employee must complete a self-certification form for the whole absence. The line manager must also hold a return-to-work interview that day and complete the return-to-work form with the employee present.

The return-to-work meeting should cover:

- confirmation that the employee is fit to return;
- any ongoing symptoms or restrictions;
- whether further absence is anticipated;
- whether adjustments are needed;
- any work-related factors linked to the absence;
- review dates for any phased return or temporary arrangements.
- the amendment of any risk assessments if applicable.

Line manager: check BrightHR is accurate and complete and forward the return-to-work documents appropriately.

11. Record Keeping

The line manager and HR & Payroll Manager should keep clear records of:

- absences on BrightHR
- fit notes;
- contact with the employee;
- welfare meetings;
- occupational health referrals;
- medical advice received;

- adjustments considered or implemented;
- payroll changes;
- formal meeting notes;
- return-to-work documentation.

Records should be factual, confidential and stored securely.

12. Suggested Contact Timetable

Stage of absence	Contact required	Responsible person	Purpose
First day	Telephone conversation	Employee and line manager	Report absence, reason and likely duration
Before normal start time	Text alert only if needed	Employee	Alert manager, followed by telephone call
After 3 calendar days	Update call	Employee and line manager	Confirm ongoing absence and expected duration
After 7 calendar days	Fit note required	Employee, line manager and HR/Payroll	Certify absence and support payroll administration
Weeks 2–4	Weekly welfare contact	Line manager	Maintain support and monitor likely return
Four weeks onwards	Every 2–4 weeks, agreed with employee	Line manager, with HR support	Review wellbeing, medical advice and return planning
Ongoing long-term absence	Welfare or formal review meetings as needed	HR, line manager and senior manager	Consider occupational health, adjustments and next steps
Before return	Return planning discussion	Line manager and HR	Agree phased return or adjustments
First day back	Return-to-work interview	Line manager	Confirm fitness, complete forms and discuss support

13. Key Principles

Managers should ensure that all long-term sickness cases are managed in line with the following principles:

- contact should be regular, supportive and agreed with the employee where possible;

- employees should not be pressured to return before they are fit;
- medical advice should be sought where needed;
- reasonable adjustments should be considered before formal action;
- payroll implications should be communicated clearly;
- decisions should be fair, consistent and evidence-based;
- confidentiality must be maintained at all times;
- all discussions and decisions should be documented.

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2026

POLICY UPDATES

Purpose of report:	For Members to recommend to the Finance and General Purposes Committee that the amendments to the policies listed in this report be approved

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1. That Members recommend to the Finance and General Purposes Committee that the amendments to the policies listed in this report be approved

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Dunstable Town Council regularly reviews all its policies and procedures, including annual audits from Worknest, the Council's HR and H&S Consultants, making amendments or introducing new policies as required by changes to the law, the Council's circumstances or current good practice.

3. GENERAL POLICY REVIEW

3.1 Officers regularly review Council policies to keep them up to date, accurate and fit for purpose. The amendments summarised in section 4 incorporate employment law changes without altering the policies' substance, principles or overall intent. Members are asked to recommend that the Finance and General Purposes Committee accept the amendments described.

4. SUMMARY OF POLICY AMENDMENTS

Appendix	Policy	Key Changes Made to Policy
1	Annual Leave	• Confirmed statutory leave carry-over rights • Job title amendments • Updated grammar and simplified some wording.
2	Special Leave	• Updated the legal reference and broadened who counts as a dependant. • Removed the five-day emergency dependants' leave limit; clarified notification. • Added statutory unpaid carer's leave. • Added sibling's in-law as close relatives in bereavement leave • Added statutory parental bereavement leave, separate from Council compassionate leave.

		• Clarified paid public duties leave and separate reservist commitments. • Corrected jury service wording to prevent duplicate earnings payments.
3	Maternity Leave	• Retitled the policy Maternity Leave, with maternity support and paternity leave signposted to separate policies. • Updated job tiles • Updated flexible-working provisions to cover all employees from their first day • Removed the essential user car allowance section and separate maternity support leave content. • Updated the maternity leave and pay eligibility criteria
4	Maternity Support Leave	• No changes but made a standalone policy.
5	Paternity Leave	• Removed the 26-week continuous service requirement from the leave eligibility wording as is now a day-one right. • Clarified when leave can be taken, including the arrangements for premature births. • Simplified instructions for requesting leave and notifying changes. • Updated job titles. • Added a reference to the Council's Maternity Support Leave Policy.
6	Sickness	• Clarified absence reporting, fit-note requirements and HR responsibilities. • Strengthened return-to-work guidance and defined the four-week threshold for the long-term sickness procedure.
7	TOIL	• Added a requirement that all TOIL must be logged on to BrightHR • Added a section on TOIL deficits
8	Overtime	• Minor grammar and wording amendments
9	Adverse Weather	• Added headings to distinguish workplace closure, travel disruption and other major incidents. • Simplified late-arrival wording
10	Volunteer Day	• Amended so that shorter periods allowed, up to one normal working day per calendar leave year.
11	Carer's Leave	• Minor grammar amendments.

5. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The policy amendments strengthen fairness and consistency in employment practices.

6. FINANCIAL IMPACT

6.1. None other than impacts on pay that are now required by changes to the law.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1. NONE

8. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

8.1. The recommendation accords with the Council's objective of 'continuing to improve the organisational management and efficiency of the Council'.

9. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 NONE

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The policy updates support consistent, fair and compliant employment practices.

11. CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IMPLICATIONS

11.1 NONE

12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Adopting the recommended changes will ensure that the Council's policies comply fully and clearly with current legislation.

13. APPENDICES

13.1 Appendix 1 – Annual Leave (REVIEWED)
Appendix 2 – Special Leave (REVIEWED)
Appendix 3 – Maternity Leave (REVIEWED)
Appendix 4 – Maternity Support Leave (REVIEWED)
Appendix 5 – Paternity Leave (REVIEWED)
Appendix 6 – Sickness (REVIEWED)
Appendix 7 – TOIL (REVIEWED)
Appendix 8 – Overtime (REVIEWED)
Appendix 9 – Adverse Weather (REVIEWED)
Appendix 10 – Volunteer Day (REVIEWED)
Appendix 11 – Carer's Leave (REVIEWED)

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

14.1 NONE

15. AUTHOR

Kelley Hallam – HR and Payroll Manager
kelley.hallam@dunstable.gov.uk

(Assisted by Co-Pilot)

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

Date Adopted: April 1985
Last Reviewed: Oct 2026
Last Update:
Version 1.2

ANNUAL LEAVE

This policy covers annual leave entitlement and the procedure for booking leave.

BOOKING PROCEDURE

All employees will have an account set up on BrightHR. The employee is responsible for remembering their log-in details and keeping them safe.

All requests for leave must be made via the BrightHR website or app.

Reasonable notice of leave request should be given, e.g.:

a) Two days' notice required for 1 or 2 days leave
b) One week's notice required for 3 days or more
c) If the reason for the request has occurred at short notice for an emergency, or if the line manager agrees, the advance notice can be shorter.

Once leave has been authorised by the line manager you will receive a notification informing you of this via BrightHR

ANNUAL ENTITLEMENT

Leave entitlement is as set out in your contract of employment, in accordance with the NJC Green Book and any more favourable Council arrangements. Entitlement will reflect recognised continuous service. The leave year runs from 1 April to 31 March.

Payment for holidays will be at your normal rate of pay excluding non-guaranteed payments, for example, overtime.

Unpaid leave can only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Holiday should normally be taken in the leave year and should not be carried forward. It is only in exceptional circumstances and by mutual agreement that holiday may be carried forward to the following leave year, and this is subject to the approval of the Town Clerk and Chief Executive, up to a maximum of 5 days. This limit does not apply where you have been prevented from taking holiday in the relevant holiday year due to sickness absence or statutory maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental, parental, parental bereavement, carer's, neonatal care or bereaved partner's paternity leave, in which case carry-over will be permitted in accordance with legislation and any more favourable NJC or contractual provisions. In cases of sickness absence, carry-over is limited to four weeks' holiday per year less any leave taken during the holiday year that has just ended. Any such carried over holiday which is not taken within eighteen months of the end of the relevant holiday year will

be lost. Contractual annual leave, including applicable public and extra-statutory holidays, will continue to accrue during statutory family leave.

In the event that you fall sick during the period of annual leave, you will be regarded as being on sick leave from the date of a Statement of Fitness to Work and further annual leave will be suspended from that date. In the case of sickness whilst on annual leave, normal reporting procedure applies.

Annual leave for part-time employees and employees starting part-way through the leave year will be calculated pro rata, based on their full NJC and contractual entitlement, including applicable public holidays, extra-statutory days and service-related enhancements.

Upon termination of your employment, payment will normally be made for all unused accrued holiday entitlement. If you have taken more annual holiday entitlement than you have accrued during the holiday year, the balance will be deducted from any outstanding pay. Payment for holidays in these circumstances will be made on a pro-rata basis to your service in the current holiday year.

The Council may insist on annual leave being taken at particular times depending on the needs of the business and these are set out in your contract of employment. Alternatively, we will give reasonable notice of any such requirement (the length of the notice given will be at least twice the duration of the leave the Council requires the employee to take). The Council may require annual leave to be taken during the notice period of any employee who has resigned or been dismissed.

SPECIAL LEAVE

This policy covers both unpaid and paid leave for a variety of circumstances. All employees may apply for special leave.

This policy does not cover leave that is dealt with under other provisions, eg:

- Maternity, Maternity Support, Paternity Leave, Adoption Leave, Shared Parental Leave
- TOIL
- Flexible Working Hours
- Sickness Absence
- Carer's Leave

LEAVE TO CARE FOR DEPENDANTS

Employees have a statutory right to reasonable unpaid time off for emergencies involving a dependant under the Employment Rights Act 1996. This right applies from the first day of employment.

A dependant includes a spouse, civil partner, partner, child, parent or household member, excluding tenants, lodgers and employees. It also includes someone who reasonably relies on the employee for help in an emergency or to arrange care.

Reasonable unpaid leave will be granted to allow an employee to deal with genuine emergencies and to arrange medium- or long-term care. These may be one of the following, although this is not a definitive list:

- illness of a dependant, a birth, injury or assault;
- to make longer term care arrangements for a dependant;
- in consequence of the death of a dependant (in this case the unpaid leave can be added to the paid leave granted in relation to a bereavement)
- because of an unexpected disruption or termination of arrangements for the care of a dependant;
- to deal with an incident that involves an employee's child which occurs unexpectedly during school/college hours

Reasonable unpaid leave will be granted according to the circumstances, with no fixed statutory maximum. Employees must tell their Head of Service the reason and expected length of absence as soon as reasonably practicable. Annual leave, TOIL or flexi-time may be used by agreement, but employees are not required to use these instead of statutory dependants' leave.

CARER'S LEAVE

From their first day of employment, employees may take up to one normal working week of unpaid carer's leave every 12 months to provide or arrange care for a dependant with a long-term care need. This means a disability, illness or injury requiring care for more than three months, or care needs relating to old age. Leave may be taken in half days or full days. Notice must be at least three days or twice the leave requested, whichever is longer. Evidence of care needs is not required. Requests cannot be refused, but may be postponed for serious service disruption, with written reasons and an agreed alternative date within one month.

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Paid Bereavement Leave will be granted in the case of the death of a relative. Compassionate leave with pay may be granted up to a maximum of 5 days (pro-rata to the employee's normal working week) in the case of the death of close relatives (determined as mother, father, spouse, child, siblings, grandchild, grandparents, parent's in-law and sibling's in-law). If the employee chooses not to take this time immediately, it may be taken during the 3 months following the death to allow the employee time to deal with the bereavement. This leave would also take account of any time that may have been taken in the initial emergency as well as time for making funeral arrangements and/or attending a funeral.

In the case of funerals for relatives or close friends where paid leave is not applicable employees will be able to use TOIL, flexi-time, annual leave or if necessary unpaid leave to attend.

PARENTAL BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Eligible employees may take two weeks' statutory parental bereavement leave following the death of a child under 18 or a qualifying stillbirth. This is a day-one leave right and must be taken in whole weeks, ending within 56 weeks of the death. Statutory pay is subject to separate eligibility rules. The Council's compassionate leave does not reduce this statutory leave entitlement.

LEAVE TO ATTEND MEDICAL AND OTHER SIMILAR APPOINTMENTS

Wherever possible, employees will be expected to make medical appointments outside core time with the only exception being:

- Appointments for emergency treatments;
- Where they cannot genuinely get an appointment with their doctor, dentist or health practitioner outside of core times and their Head of Service is satisfied that attempts have been made to do so;
- Appointments with specialists/consultants (although if they are covered by a private medical insurance scheme it is usually possible for the employee to dictate the appointment time).

In the above cases, employees may take time off during core time and will be credited with a maximum of two hours. Any time taken in excess of this should be debited from their flexible time or normal working hours.

Medical treatment, which is required to last for a whole day, or renders the employee unfit to return to work, should be counted as sick leave.

PUBLIC DUTIES

The Council will grant reasonable paid time off for qualifying public duties. Payment is a Council provision; the statutory right does not generally require paid leave. Examples include:

A justice of the peace
A member of a local authority
A statutory tribunal

Reserve forces commitments will be considered separately under the Council's paid leave arrangements, applicable Green Book provisions and statutory mobilisation and return-to-work protections.

The Council's TOIL scheme should be used for any additional time.

LEAVE FOR JURY SERVICE & ATTENDANCE AT COURT AS A WITNESS

Leave will be granted in line with statutory requirements.

Employees on Jury Service will be paid in full on submission of the jurors forms.

Employees summoned for jury service must be released unless the court agrees to defer or excuse attendance. As the Council continues full pay, employees must not claim an allowance for earnings they have not lost. Any genuine loss-of-earnings claim must be agreed with Payroll to avoid duplicate payment. Employees may retain permitted travel and subsistence allowances.

MATERNITY LEAVE

INTRODUCTION

These guidelines explain your rights under the Local Government Maternity Scheme. Separate policies cover entitlement to maternity support leave and paternity leave.

They are intended as a guide only and further information can be obtained from your line manager or the HR & Payroll Manager.

Remember that when you are on maternity leave, your service is continuous and you will not want to lose touch with what is happening with your team, particularly as you may be away for up to a year. Before commencing your maternity leave, you should give your line manager an idea of the length of the time you may be away and agree the type of information you would like to be sent to keep you up to date.

MATERNITY SCHEME

Who it Applies to

The Scheme applies to all pregnant employees regardless of the number of hours worked each week.

Initial Requirements

Notify the HR & Payroll Manager in writing by the end of the 15th week before your expected week of childbirth (EWC), or as soon as reasonably practicable if this is not possible. Confirm the information listed below. For maternity pay, give at least 28 days' notice before payment is to begin, or as soon as reasonably practicable, and provide your MAT B1 or other acceptable medical evidence when available. A MAT B1 is not a condition of entitlement to statutory maternity leave.

- your pregnancy
- your expected week of childbirth (EWC)
- your intended maternity leave start date

Within 28 days of receiving your maternity leave notification, the Council will confirm in writing your maternity leave start date, the last day of your maternity leave and your expected return-to-work date. Unless you have notified the Council otherwise, this will be based on taking the full 52 weeks. The Council will also provide details of your maternity pay entitlement.

MATERNITY LEAVE

All employees are entitled to 52 weeks of maternity leave. There is no minimum service requirement for maternity leave. Eligibility for maternity pay is assessed separately.

Maternity leave can normally begin no earlier than the start of the 11th week before the EWC. If your baby is born before your planned start date, leave begins automatically on the day after the birth. To change your planned start date, give the HR & Payroll Manager at least 28 days' notice before the earlier of the original and revised dates, or as soon as reasonably practicable.

You must not work during the compulsory maternity leave period immediately following childbirth. This is normally two weeks, or four weeks for factory workers. Keeping-in-touch work cannot take place during this compulsory period.

MATERNITY PAY

Less than One Year's Service

If you have less than one year's continuous local government service at the beginning of the 11th week before the EWC, you will not normally qualify for NJC occupational maternity pay. This does not affect your maternity leave entitlement. You may qualify for SMP if you have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with the Council continuing into the 15th week before the EWC,

At Least One Year's Service

If you have completed at least one year's continuous local government service at the beginning of the 11th week before the EWC, your occupational maternity pay is assessed under the NJC Green Book scheme. There is no minimum earnings threshold for occupational maternity pay; SMP eligibility is assessed separately. The return-to-work condition applies to the 12 weeks' half-pay element, not to the first six weeks' payment. The payment arrangements are set out below.

- For the first 6 weeks of maternity absence, nine-tenths of earnings
- If you have declared in writing your intention to return to work, 12 weeks at half-pay plus SMP (so long as the combined pay and SMP do not exceed full pay)*
- For the following 21 weeks, SMP is payable if you qualify, at the statutory weekly rate or 90% of your average weekly earnings, whichever is lower.
- If you do not intend to return to work, you will not receive the 12 weeks' occupational half pay. For the 33 weeks following the first six weeks, SMP is payable if you qualify, at the statutory weekly rate or 90% of your average weekly earnings, whichever is lower.

** To retain the 12 weeks' occupational half pay, you must return to work for at least three months after maternity leave, subject to the Council's provision below concerning another local authority. If you do not return or do not complete that period, the Council may recover the occupational half-pay element, but may reduce or waive recovery. SMP, Maternity Allowance and the first six weeks' maternity payment are not repayable under this condition.*

SICKNESS TRIGGER

Your maternity leave can be triggered automatically if you are absent from work for a

pregnancy related illness during the four weeks before the start of your EWC. In this case maternity leave and SMP will commence on the following day.

ANTE NATAL CARE

You have a right to paid time off for ante-natal care. You must make your Line Manager aware of the time off you need and they are entitled to ask you for evidence of your appointments.

These appointments do not necessarily have to be hospital appointments but can include ante-natal care that has been recommended by a doctor, midwife or health visitor. Parentcraft classes can also be included but these must be limited to two.

RISK ASSESSMENT

As employers we must assess all workplace risks to the health and safety of new and expectant mothers where employees include women of childbearing age. The Health and Safety Executive has produced guidance on potential risks to employees and corrective measures to assist us in this. If at any stage you have a particular worry, for example, working conditions, chemicals etc., please initially discuss the matter with your line manager.

SUSPENSION ON HEALTH & SAFETY GROUNDS

If through risk assessments, an unacceptable risk has been identified and, having taken all necessary protective and preventative measures to eliminate it, we will, if no suitable alternative work is available, have to suspend you on medical grounds.

This will continue until the beginning of the 4th week before the EWC. The suspension will be on full pay unless you have refused suitable alternative work in which case it will be unpaid.

PREMATURE BABIES

If your baby is born before your maternity leave has started, maternity leave begins automatically on the day after the birth. Notify the HR & Payroll Manager as soon as reasonably practicable so that your leave and pay dates can be confirmed.

THE RIGHT TO RETURN TO WORK AFTER MATERNITY LEAVE

You have the right to return to the job in which you were employed under your original contract of employment and on terms and conditions not less favourable than those which would have been applicable to you if you had not been on maternity leave, with the following exceptions:

- Where it is not possible to return to your old job because of redundancy, you will be offered a suitable alternative vacancy, where one exists, on conditions which are not substantially less favourable than if you had been able to return to your old job;
- In other exceptional circumstances, for example, a general re-organisation, suitable alternative employment may also be offered.

You do not have to return from maternity leave to the same employer. You may gain alternative employment with another local authority, and you will still be able to keep the 12

weeks' half pay. However, if you gain employment either with another local authority, or with any other employer, you are still required to give this authority notice in accordance with your contract of employment.

EXERCISING THE RIGHT TO RETURN

If you wish to return before the maternity leave end date confirmed by the Council, notify the HR & Payroll Manager in writing at least eight weeks before your proposed return date, unless a more favourable contractual notice provision applies or the Council agrees shorter notice.

If you give insufficient notice of an early return, the Council may postpone your return only to obtain the applicable notice period, and never beyond the end of your maternity leave entitlement. The Council cannot rely on the statutory notice requirement to postpone your return if it did not notify you of your maternity leave end date.

You do not need to give further notice if you return on the date already confirmed by the Council. If you wish to change that date, the notice requirements above apply.

CONTINUOUS SERVICE

Maternity leave counts as continuous service and will not count as sick leave or a break of service.

LEAVE ENTITLEMENT

Contractual annual leave, including applicable public and extra-statutory holiday entitlement, continues to accrue throughout both Ordinary Maternity Leave and Additional Maternity Leave.

Annual leave cannot be taken at the same time as maternity leave. Accrued leave should normally be taken before maternity leave starts or after maternity leave ends. Where statutory maternity leave prevents entitlement from being taken in the relevant leave year, it will be carried forward in accordance with legislation, the NJC Green Book and the Council's Annual Leave Policy.

Public and bank holiday entitlement will be credited in accordance with the employee's contractual entitlement and, where applicable, calculated on a pro-rata basis.

RIGHT TO REQUEST FLEXIBLE WORKING

All employees have the statutory right to request flexible working from their first day of employment. Requests may relate to working hours, working times or place of work and do not have to relate to childcare.

You may make two statutory requests in any 12-month period, with only one live request at a time. Requests must be made in writing, state that they are statutory flexible-working requests, and include:

- the date of the request;
- the change requested and proposed start date; and

- details and dates of any previous flexible-working requests.

The Council will consider requests reasonably and consult with you before refusing a request. It will communicate its decision within two months of receiving the request, including any appeal, unless an extension is agreed with you.

Requests may only be refused for one or more of the statutory business reasons. There is no automatic entitlement to the working arrangement requested.

Please refer to the Council's Flexible Working Policy for the application procedure and further guidance. Further advice is available from the HR & Payroll Manager.

RESIGNATION

If you decide not to return to work after your maternity leave you must give the appropriate written notice of your resignation in accordance with your contract of employment.

If you resign without satisfying the applicable three-month return-to-work condition, the Council may recover the 12 weeks' occupational half pay, subject to any reduction or waiver and the provision above concerning employment with another local authority. You will not be required to repay SMP, Maternity Allowance or the first six weeks' maternity payment under this condition.

PENSION IMPLICATIONS

During any period of ordinary maternity leave, you will continue to pay pension contributions based on the amount of pay you are actually receiving during this period.

During any period of unpaid maternity leave, you can elect to pay pension contributions to allow this period to count as pensionable service. The contributions will be based on the amount you were entitled to receive immediately before the unpaid leave began.

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

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MATERNITY SUPPORT LEAVE

Who it Applies to

Maternity support leave will be granted to the child's father, or the partner or nominated carer of an expectant mother, at or around the time of the birth.

A nominated carer is the person nominated by the mother to assist in the care of the child and to provide support to the mother at or around the time of the birth.

To Apply

If you qualify for maternity support leave, to apply for your 5 days' paid leave, you must forward a copy of the mother's MAT B1 form to Support Services and inform your Line Manager.

PATERNITY LEAVE

Who it Applies to
Employees are entitled to take paternity leave if they expect to have parental responsibility for a child and they are either the mother's partner or one of the adoptive parents. The purpose of the leave must be either to care for the child or to provide support for the child's mother or adoptive parent.

When you can take Paternity Leave
Employees entitled to take paternity leave are entitled to two weeks of leave, which can be taken as two consecutive weeks, or two non-consecutive blocks of one week.

Paternity leave cannot begin before the child is born or placed for adoption. It must be taken within the first year following the birth or adoption. If the child is born prematurely, the leave must instead be taken within the 52 weeks following the expected week of childbirth.

Most new parents choose to begin paternity leave on the date their child is born, but you may, if you wish, begin the leave at any time you choose provided that the whole of the leave is taken by the end of that year.

Notice of Intention to take Paternity Leave
For a birth, you must notify the HR & Payroll Manager of your intention to take paternity leave at least 15 weeks before the expected week of your child's birth. You must also give at least 28 days' notice before the date you would like each period of leave to begin.

For adoption cases, you must notify the Council within 7 days of having been notified that a child will be placed for adoption.

When notifying the Council, state how much leave you intend to take and when you intend it to begin. If your plans change, give the Council 28 days' notice of the change.

Statutory Paternity Pay
Paternity leave is payable at the statutory rate, which is subject to change every year. You can check the most up-to-date figure with the HR & Payroll Manager.

Maternity Support Leave
This policy should be read alongside the Council's Maternity Support Leave Policy. Please refer to that policy for details of eligibility, leave and pay arrangements, and how to apply.

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

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SICK LEAVE

Absence Reporting

As soon as you know you will be absent from work due to sickness, you must contact your immediate line manager or Head of Service, or, if this is not possible, another Head of Service. Contact must normally be made personally by telephone. If you are unable to make contact yourself, a relative or friend may do so on your behalf. A text message may be sent before your normal start time to alert your line manager to your absence, but this must be followed up by a telephone conversation within a reasonable time period, as determined by your Head of Service. You must explain the reason for your absence and, where possible, how long the absence is likely to last.

If absence continues beyond three days, you should contact your immediate line manager or Head of Service again to provide an update on your situation. If absence continues for more than seven calendar days, including non-working days, weekends and public holidays, you must obtain a fit note, also known as a Statement of Fitness for Work, from an authorised healthcare professional and send it to your line manager.

You may also be required to provide medical evidence for shorter periods of absence immediately before or after an annual, bank or public holiday, or where repeated absence is a cause for concern. Where the Council requires a medical statement for the purpose of qualifying for sick pay under the scheme, the Council will reimburse the cost on production of a receipt.

On your return to work you must complete a Self-Certification Form for the whole period of absence. This will be supplied to you by HR administration team.

When a line manager is notified of an absence due to sickness they must record the absence on BrightHR as soon as practically possible and notify the Head of Service. They must also ensure the Self-Certification Form is completed on the day of return to work. At that time the immediate line manager must also conduct a return-to-work interview and complete the required form in the presence of the employee.

If a fit note is submitted, it must be sent to the HR & Payroll Manager immediately on receipt.

Where a fit note covers a period of more than 14 days, or more than one fit note has been necessary, the Council reserves the right to request a letter from the doctor confirming fitness to resume duties or to refer you to an occupational health consultant. The Council will meet the cost of the letter or referral.

In the event that you fall sick during a period of annual leave, you will be regarded as being on sick leave from the date covered by a fit note, also known as a Statement of Fitness for Work, and further annual leave will be suspended from that date. All normal reporting procedures apply.

Any delay in notification will affect payroll administration and sickness payments.

Sick Pay

Sick pay will be paid in accordance with the sickness scheme in the NJC National Agreement, referred to in this policy as the Green Book, as follows:

1) The scheme is intended to supplement Statutory Sick Pay and Employment and Support Allowance or equivalent social security benefit so as to maintain normal pay during defined periods of absence on account of sickness, disease, accident or assault.

2) Absence in respect of normal sickness is entirely separate from absence through industrial disease, accident or assault arising out of or in the course of employment with a local authority. Periods of absence in respect of one shall not be set off against the other for the purpose of calculating entitlements under the scheme

3) Employees are entitled to receive sick pay for the following periods:

During 1st year of service:	1 month's full pay and (after completing 4 months service) 2 months half pay
During 2nd year of service	2 months full pay and 2 months half pay
During 3rd year of service	4 months full pay and 4 months half pay
During 4th and 5th year of service	5 months full pay and 5 months half pay
After 5 years of service	6 months full pay and 6 months half pay

Authorities shall have discretion to extend the period of sick pay in exceptional cases.

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

5) In the case of full pay periods, sick pay will be an amount which when added to Statutory Sick Pay and Employment and Support Allowance receivable will secure the equivalent of normal pay.

6) In the case of half pay periods, sick pay will be an amount equal to half normal earnings plus an amount equivalent to Statutory Sick Pay and Employment and Support Allowance receivable, so long as the total does not exceed normal pay.

7) Normal pay includes all earnings that would be paid during a period of normal working, but excluding any payments not made on a regular basis.

8) The Employment and Support Allowance or equivalent social security benefits to be taken into account for the calculation of sick pay are those to which an employee is entitled on the basis that the employee has satisfied so far as is possible:

(i) the conditions for the reporting of sickness as required by the authority;
(ii) the claiming of benefits
(iii) the obligation to declare any entitlement to benefits and any subsequent changes in circumstances affecting such entitlement.

9) An employee who is prevented from attending work because of contact with infectious disease shall be entitled to receive normal pay. The period of absence on this account shall not be reckoned against the employee's entitlements under this scheme.

10. If an employee abuses the sickness scheme or is absent on account of sickness due or attributable to deliberate conduct prejudicial to recovery or the employee's own misconduct or neglect or active participation in professional sport or injury while working in the employee's own time on their own account for private gain or for another employer sick pay may be suspended. The authority shall advise the employee of the grounds for suspension and the employee shall have a right of appeal to the appropriate committee of the authority. If the authority decide that the grounds were justified, then the employee shall forfeit the right to any further payment in respect of that period of absence. Repeated abuse of the sickness scheme should be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure

If you are absent due to sickness during disciplinary proceedings or during an investigation into alleged breaches of rules, procedures or contractual obligations, the Council may review your entitlement to occupational sick pay in accordance with the sickness scheme, the disciplinary procedure and the circumstances of the case. Statutory Sick Pay will be paid where you qualify.

If you are absent from work due to injury or illness caused by a third party, the Council may require you to repay any occupational sick pay received if you recover compensation for loss of earnings from that third party. Statutory Sick Pay will not be treated as repayable under this provision.

If you are on paid suspension and become unfit for work or unable to attend any necessary meetings due to sickness, the Council may review the suspension arrangements and your pay status in light of the circumstances. Statutory Sick Pay will be paid where you qualify, and any occupational sick pay will be considered in accordance with this policy and the Green Book sickness scheme.

At any time during employment, the Council may require you to attend a medical examination by a medical practitioner nominated by the Council, subject to the provisions of the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 where applicable. Any costs associated with the examination will be met by the Council. Where it is necessary to obtain a second medical opinion, this should be provided by an independent medical referee.

Return to Work Interviews

As part of its duty of care to employees, the Council will conduct a return-to-work interview after every sickness absence. The interview will help establish whether you are fit to return to work, identify any support or workplace adjustments needed, and discuss whether you anticipate any further absence relating to your illness. It will also give you an opportunity to raise any concerns about your illness with your line manager.

Disciplinary Action

Failure to follow the reporting procedure as set out above may result in sick pay being delayed or withheld and action under the disciplinary procedure being taken.

If you have been absent due to sickness and are found not to have been genuinely ill, you may be subject to action under the disciplinary procedure, which could include dismissal.

Appointments

You are normally expected to arrange appointments with a doctor, dentist, hospital or other healthcare provider in your own time and outside normal working hours. Where this is not reasonably practicable, time off work will be permitted to attend such appointments, provided that the appointment is substantiated if requested and the timing causes as little disruption as possible, for example at the beginning or end of the working day.

In the above cases, employees may take time off during core time and will be credited with a maximum of two hours. Any time taken in excess of this should be debited from their flexible time or normal working hours.

Medical treatment, which is required to last for a whole day, or renders the employee unfit to return to work, should be counted as sick leave.

Access to Medical Reports

In certain circumstances it may be necessary for the Council to obtain a medical report from your GP, specialist or occupational health adviser in order to establish:

- the reason for and likely duration of absence
- when you will be able to return to work, and whether the problem will recur
- what, if any, treatment is being prescribed
- whether you can carry out all the duties of the job, and
- what, if any, reasonable adjustments are recommended

This will enable the Council to plan workloads. It is in the interests of both yourself and the Council to establish, with the benefit of expert medical opinion, your ability to work. You have certain rights under the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988.

Your GP, specialist or occupational health adviser cannot submit the report to the Council without your consent. You may withhold consent to the report being sought or request to see it before it is forwarded to the Council.

If you indicate that you wish to see the report in advance, the Council will inform you when it has written to your GP, specialist or occupational health adviser. The professional concerned will also be notified that you wish to see the report. You then have 21 days to contact that professional to arrange to see it.

If you indicate that you do not wish to see the report before the Council, you still have the right to write to your GP, specialist or occupational health adviser if the report has not been provided to the Council. You have 21 days to contact that professional to arrange to see the report. You also have the right to ask that professional for a copy for up to 6 months after it has been supplied. There may be a charge for this.

You may ask your GP, specialist or occupational health adviser to amend any part of the report that you consider incorrect or misleading. If that professional does not agree, you may attach a statement of your views to the report. If that professional thinks that you or others would be harmed by the report, or any part of it, it can be withheld from you.

No decision will be made that could affect your employment without careful consideration of all the circumstances.

Where the Council wishes to obtain a medical report, you will be asked for your written consent. Should you withhold such consent the Council will take a decision regarding your continuing employment without the benefit of medical opinion.

Long-term sickness

Long-term sickness is a continuous period of sickness absence lasting four weeks or more. Where an employee's absence reaches this threshold, the Council's long-term sickness procedure must be followed. The reporting and medical evidence requirements set out in this policy continue to apply.

Phased Return to Work

When you return from a period of long-term sickness, it may be possible for you to undertake a limited range of duties as a preparation for returning to normal work. The Council will try whenever appropriate in light of medical advice to allow for a phased return to work from any long-term illness. This may involve reducing the your hours, or the scope of your duties or both. The purpose of a phased return, however, is to provide a bridge between sickness absence and normal working and so any such arrangements will be time-limited and will not normally extend over more than three months.

Alternative Work

The Council may consider agreeing changes to your duties or other working arrangements when it becomes clear that due to sickness or injury you will not be able to return to normal

working. Any such changes will be subject to the needs of the business and there is no guarantee that permanent arrangements of this sort will be possible.

Where duties or working hours are varied in this way then the job being done by the employee will need to be reassessed to determine the appropriate level of remuneration. This will then need to be agreed with the employee. If an agreement is not reached, then the Council may proceed to dismiss the employee in accordance with the procedure for long-term sickness absence.

Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

The Council is committed to making reasonable adjustments to an employee's duties or working arrangements where they would otherwise suffer a disadvantage arising from any disability.

In order to make appropriate adjustments the Council needs to know about any disability the employee may have. Employees who feel that they may require an adjustment should discuss their situation with the HR & Payroll Manager. Any such discussions will be in the strictest confidence although when an adjustment is made it may be necessary to inform other employees of the reason for this. The extent to which details of any disability will be discussed with other employees will be agreed as part of the process of making the adjustment itself.

The purpose of any adjustment will be to ensure that the employee can work effectively in an appropriate role and on appropriate terms and conditions. The Council is not obliged to maintain an employee's level of pay if hours are reduced or the employee is moved to a less senior role as a result of any adjustment. Nor will the Council agree to an adjustment which will not result in a commercially practicable working arrangement.

TIME OFF IN LIEU (TOIL)

Employees working additional hours beyond their normal working week may choose to take time off in lieu (TOIL) instead of claiming overtime payment.

A record of hours worked **must** be maintained. All hours worked to earn TOIL and all TOIL taken must be logged on BrightHR and authorised by the employee's line manager.

Requests to take TOIL must be made via BrightHR and authorised in advance by the relevant line manager.

TOIL is taken at plain time: one hour of time off for each additional hour worked.

TOIL must be taken with regard to the needs of the Council. The accumulation of TOIL hours should be limited to a maximum of one week (five days for full-time staff and pro-rata for part-time staff).

In exceptional circumstances and with prior permission from their Head of Service, employees may take TOIL before it has been earned, resulting in a deficit. Any TOIL deficit must be made up by working additional hours at the earliest opportunity.

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

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OVERTIME

OVERTIME

Employees who are required to work additional hours beyond their working week will be paid as set out below, subject to prior approval by the Head of Service.

Examples of such working are: attendance at evening Council and Committee meetings, weekend site checks and litter picking and working at Council events.

Employees in receipt of pay at or below Spinal Column Point 22 will receive enhancement on the following basis:

Monday to Saturday- Time and a half

Sundays - Double time (minimum 2 hours)

Bank Holidays - In addition to normal pay, plain time rate for all hours worked within their normal working hours for that day. In addition, at a later date, time off with pay shall be allowed as follows:

- Time worked less than half the normal working hours: half day
- Time worked more than half the normal working hours: full day

If an employee graded on or above Spinal Column Point 22 is required to work overtime, the payment arrangements set out above apply. Overtime pay will be calculated using Spinal Column Point 22.

Part time employees will receive plain rate time for all hours worked above their normal working week. Overtime rates will only be paid to part-time employees in circumstances where they have worked a full working week (37 hours) the same as full-time employees.

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

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EXCEPTIONALLY ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS ARRANGEMENTS

Workplace closure

The Council's primary duty is to provide a safe place of work. If adverse weather prevents this and the workplace needs to close, all employees will be sent home or told not to come in. In these circumstances, employees may be required to work from home where possible and will be paid as normal. If working from home is not a suitable alternative, employees will be paid in full for any working time lost

Decisions regarding arrangements for departure will be made at the time, depending on the circumstances.

If the need to close the workplace persists, the Council may invoke any lay-off clause in employees' contracts.

Travel disruption

In the case of exceptionally adverse weather affecting travel, employees are expected to make every effort to attend work at the normal starting time.

Employees who arrive late, up to midway through their normal working day, will be permitted to have the time between their normal start time and their arrival credited, subject to agreement from the Town Clerk & Chief Executive. In their absence, agreement may be given by any of the three Heads of Service.

If bad weather prevents an employee from attending work for a full day or half a day, they will be given the option of:

- Using flexitime to make up for the hours lost
- Using time off in lieu (TOIL)
- Annual leave
- Unpaid leave
- Working from home

Employees should telephone their line manager to explain the situation and continue to keep them informed as it develops.

Other major incidents

The above conditions may also be applied in the event of other major incidents occurring.

STAFF VOLUNTEER DAY

All permanent staff are offered additional volunteer leave up to the equivalent of one normal working day in a calendar leave year to undertake volunteering duties for a Dunstable based charity or voluntary group

Volunteer leave must be authorised in advance by a Head of Service or the Town Clerk and Chief Executive. The same process and conditions apply as for normal annual leave.

Staff requesting volunteer leave must provide evidence from the charity or voluntary group confirming that they will volunteer for that organisation during the requested period or periods.

Volunteer leave may be taken as a full day or in shorter periods. The total volunteer leave taken in a calendar leave year must not exceed the equivalent of the member of staff's normal working day.

Staff may choose a charity whose aims and objectives align with the Council's. Permission will not be granted to volunteer for religious or political charities.

CARER'S LEAVE

All employees are entitled to one week's unpaid leave in any 12-month period to provide or arrange care for a dependant with a long-term care need. A "week" for these purposes will be equal in duration to the period you are normally expected to work at the time of making the request. How that is calculated will depend on whether you have non-variable or variable hours of work.

A dependant is:

- your spouse, civil partner, child or parent;
- someone who lives in the same household as you, otherwise than by reason of being your boarder, employee, lodger or tenant, or;
- anybody else who reasonably relies on you to provide or arrange their care.

A dependant has a long-term care need if:

- they have an illness or injury (whether physical or mental) that requires, or is likely to require, care for more than three months,
- they have a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010, or
- they require care for a reason connected with their old age.

You can find up to date information on the Equality Act 2010 at: https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010

The minimum period of Carer's Leave that can be taken at one time is half a working day, with the maximum period being one continuous week. Leave need not be taken on continuous days.

You must give notice to your Line Manager of your request to take a period of Carer's Leave. This can relate to all or part of the leave to which you are entitled. The notice must:

- Specify that you are entitled to take Carer's Leave;
- Specify the days on which you would like to take Carer's Leave and if you will take a full or a half day; and
- Be given with the following minimum notice periods depending on how many days of leave you want to take:

    - Half a day to 1 day - 3 days' notice
    - 1.5 to 2 days - 4 days' notice
    - 2.5 to 3 days - 6 days' notice
    - 3.5 to 4 days - 8 days' notice
    - 4.5 to 5 days - 10 days' notice; or
    - 6 days (if you work 6 days a week) - 12 days' notice.

The Council may, in its absolute discretion, waive the notice length requirement above, and as long as the other requirements are met, the request will be treated as one for Carer's Leave.

Once Carer's Leave has been agreed with your Line Manager, it must be logged on your BrightHR account, and the HR & Payroll Manager **must** be notified in order to maintain an accurate record of what is being requested.

If the Council reasonably considers that the operation of the business would be unduly disrupted if your request was granted, it may postpone the start of the Carer's Leave after consulting with you to agree an alternative date(s) which is/are no later than one month after the earliest day or half day of the request. In these circumstances, the Council will give written notice to you of the postponement, setting out the reason for the postponement and the agreed dates you can take the leave. This notice will be given no later than the earlier of:

(a) seven days after your notice was given to the Council, or

(b) before the earliest day or half day requested in your notice.

An employee might need to care for more than one dependant. In these circumstances, they can still only take one week of Carer's Leave. But they can use the week of leave for more than one dependant.