

Employment Committee



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Monday, 8 July 2024 at 10.00 am
Council Chamber - South Kesteven House, St. Peter's Hill,
Grantham. NG31 6PZ

Committee Members: Councillor Anna Kelly (Chairman)
Councillor Gloria Johnson (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Matthew Bailey, Councillor Rhys Baker, Councillor Ashley Baxter,
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing, Councillor Phil Gadd, Councillor Gareth Knight and
Councillor Paul Martin

Agenda

This meeting can be watched as a live stream, or at a later date, [via the SKDC Public-I Channel](#)

- 1. Apologies for absence**
- 2. Disclosure of interests**
Members are asked to disclose any interests in matters for consideration at the meeting.
- 3. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2024** (Pages 3 - 12)
Public and exempt minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2024.

There is an exempt set of minutes from the 20 March 2024 meeting; they are exempt under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972; paragraph 1 and paragraph 2 of Schedule 12A of the Act. The press and public may be excluded from the meeting during consideration of these exempt minutes, on the grounds that if they were to be present, exempt information could be disclosed to them.
- 4. HR Dashboard and People Plan** (Pages 13 - 32)
A presentation to update on the HR metrics and activities for the 2023/2024 financial year.

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☎ 01476 406080

Karen Bradford, Chief Executive

www.southkesteven.gov.uk

- 5. SKDC Volunteer Policy - Update on Implementation** (Pages 33 - 40)
To update the Employment Committee on the implementation of the Volunteering with South Kesteven District Council Policy.
- 6. Pay Award 2024/25** (Pages 41 - 53)
The purpose of this report is endorsement from Employment Committee to implement a pay award in line with the National Employers final offer effective from 1 April 2024.
- 7. Human Resources Policies** (Pages 55 - 116)
This report seeks approval of from Employment Committee for 7 refreshed HR policies.
- 8. Work Programme 2024-2025** (Page 117)
- 9. Exclusion of Press and Public**
It is likely that the press and public will be excluded during discussion of the following agenda item because of the likelihood that information that is exempt under paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A of the Local government Act 1972 (as amended) would be disclosed to them.
- 10. HR Policy Update** (Pages 119 - 139)
Employment Committee has previously approved the adoption of the Council's Drugs and Alcohol Policy, Driving at a Safe Speed Policy and On Call/On Standby Policy. The Committee have requested an update on the implementation of these policies.
- 11. Proposed Director Targets 2024-2025** (Pages 141 - 151)
The report seeks input and engagement from Members of the Employment Committee and the approval for the proposed Directors' appraisal targets for 2024-2025.
- 12. Any other business, which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, decides is urgent**

Meeting of Employment Committee

Wednesday, 20 March 2024, 2.00 pm

Council Chamber – South
Kesteven House, St.Peter's Hill,
NG31 6PZ



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Committee Members present

Councillor Anna Kelly (Chairman)
Councillor Pam Byrd (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor Graham Jeal
Councillor Gareth Knight
Councillor Ashley Baxter
Councillor Robert Leadenham
Councillor Virginia Moran

Other Members present

Councillor Tim Harrison

Officers

Karen Bradford (Chief Executive)
Graham Watts (Assistant Director of Governance and Public Protection,
Monitoring Officer)
Fran Beckitt (HR Manager)
Leila Foster (HR Officer)
Peter Harrison (Unison Representative)
Charles James (Policy Officer)

53. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Rhys Baker, Phil Gadd and Gloria Johnson.

Councillor Ashley Baxter substituted for Councillor Rhys Baker.

Councillor Virginia Moran substituted for Councillor Phil Gadd.

Councillor Robert Leadenham substituted for Councillor Gloria Johnson.

54. Disclosure of interests

No interests were declared.

55. Minutes of the previous meetings

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2024 were proposed, seconded, and **AGREED** as a correct record.

The Chairman confirmed that the public minutes of the meeting held on 5 February were circulated to Members on 18 March 2024.

Both the public minutes and restricted minutes of the meeting held on 5 February were proposed, seconded and **AGREED** as a correct record.

56. Gender Pay Gap Report

The report was introduced by the Leader of the Council.

In 2017 the government introduced legislation requiring all organisations with more than 250 employees to publish their gender pay gap each year. The gender pay gap showed the difference in mean and median of both hourly pay and bonus payments for men and women in roles of equal value across the organisation. The information contained within this report was for the snapshot date of 31 March 2023.

South Kesteven District Council had a negative pay gap for the mean rates, meaning, on average women were paid slightly more than men. This was not uncommon but went against the overall national trend. The Council's mean gender pay gap for 2022/2023 was a negative measure of -0.98%. Therefore, women at SKDC were paid 0.98% more than men, (the mean gender pay gap for 2021/2022 was a negative measure of -3.38%). The mean hourly rate for men was £15.34, and the mean hourly rate for women was £15.49.

The median gender pay gap for 2022/2023 was 0%, (2021/2022 median gender pay gap was -11%). The median hourly rate for men and women was the same at £13.84.

The government's Gender Pay Gap website provided details of all organisations who had submitted their information for benchmarking purposes. This showed that the Council's gender pay gap compared favourably with others, including other public sector organisations.

The median gender pay gap for the whole economy was 14.3% (provisional estimate from ONS 2023). At 0%, the Council's median gender pay gap was significantly lower.

The Council's gender pay gap has remained at a negative figure, however the gap had closed slightly. This was due to fewer women joining the Council in the upper quartile salary range during 2022/2023. In the upper quartile, 19%

of the new starters were women and 81% were men. Overall women accounted for 52% of the senior roles (upper quartile). The statistics showed that due to this change, the midpoint hourly rate for both men and women was equal with the median gender pay gap at 0% for 2022/2023.

The Council remained committed to ensuring fair pay continued across the organisation for all employees.

During discussion, Members raised the following points:

- It was clear that the Council performed exceptionally well and set a great example to other Local Authorities. There were a high number of women in senior positions.
- Was there a purposeful process to achieve a 0% gender pay gap?
- It would have been particularly interesting to see statistics in terms of age-groups, particularly women in late 20's and early 30's.
- Some of the statistics were representative of past stereotypes. Junior administrative roles were filled by a higher number of females and a higher number of males filled manual labour roles.

The Head of HR confirmed that the 0% gender pay gap was achieved through initiatives and activities put in place to monitor the recruitment and application levels from a gender perspective. The wording of advertisements were monitored. Internal practices ensured the workplace remained inclusive. An example of this were the menopause cafes to provide support and understanding as well as promoting support and awareness for carers and working parents. The presence of traditional stereotypes in some areas of the organisation were acknowledged – Waste Services were 91% male employees.

It was AGREED that the Employment Committee noted the outcome of the 2022/23 Gender Pay Gap Report.

57. Corporate Plan 2024-2027: Key Performance Indicators

The Leader of the Council introduced the report.

The Corporate Plan 2024-2027 was adopted by Council on 25 January 2024.

Effective performance management was essential to the success of the Plan. It established how delivery will be monitored, improvements driven, and open and transparent accountability upheld.

The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) would monitor the delivery of the Corporate Plan Actions and the overall performance of the Council.

The Strategic Socio-Economic Indicators (SSEIs) would monitor the progress towards the fulfilment of the Council's vision, 2034 outcomes, and the overall performance of the district.

Once approved, reporting on the KPIs were to be a regular part of the Committee workplans. Mid-year (quarter 2) and end-of-year (quarter 4) reports would be presented to the Committees and Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Quarterly reports were to be presented to Cabinet and the Corporate Management Team (CMT). An annual performance report that considered all aspects of the Corporate Plan were to be presented to Cabinet.

Work was underway to strengthen the Performance Management page of the Council's website. To improve openness and transparency it was intended this page would host the KPI reports, link to the relevant Committee meetings and publish data pertaining to the performance of the Council.

An effective KPI suite must be able to perform three functions:

- Measure activity and performance.
- Understand experiences and outcomes.
- Use evidence to inform and drive improvement.

The Corporate Policy Officer confirmed that Directors had provided input to ensure all KPIs were as effective as possible.

Meeting these functions had underpinned the approach to developing the KPI suite. To do this, two basic foundational principles had been observed:

- The selected metrics must be wholly within the Council's control, so offering accountability and stimulating continuous improvement.
- The selected metrics must be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant & Timely).

The Chairman confirmed that Employment Committee were to monitor progress on completion of the People Plan (to be 100% complete by end of the Plan) and to consider the Engagement Index score from the Engagement Survey.

During discussion, Members raised the following points:

- It was considered that the Committee raise the Engagement Survey response KPI to 70%
- Were the targets achievable?
- What was the expected outcome to the organisation?

The Chief Executive confirmed that the 70% indicator would be a challenge but the HR Team were focussed on achieving the best results and what was necessary for the People Plan. Staff performance was managed through feedback from appraisals as well as the Engagement Survey to identify areas where improvements could be made. Last year, every employee received an appraisal which is used to identify training needs and acknowledge the good work taking place across the Council.

The Head of HR informed members that the engagement surveys had 2 separate KPIs – one for the response rate of the survey and one for the core questions designed to measure the engagement of staff within their roles.

The Union Representative informed Members that staff had many methods of providing feedback other than the survey.

The Leader of the Council stated that the Committee were considering indicators, not targets and the Survey was the best measure of success.

Members considered to set a target for both KPI's at 70%. This was proposed, seconded, and **AGREED**.

The Employment Committee:

- 1. Confirmed the key performance indicators it wished to review associated with the actions in the Corporate Plan 2024-2027.**
- 2. Noted that key performance indicators will be monitored throughout the year as determined by the Committee in agreeing its work programme.**
- 3. Noted that the KPI suite will be reviewed and if necessary revised as part of the annual review process.**

58. Work Programme 2023 - 2024

The Employment Committee considered the Work Programme.

A Member requested that the Volunteer Policy and the Driving at Safe Speed Policy be added to a future meeting.

The Chief Executive clarified that the Volunteer Policy update was to be added to the agenda for June 2024. An update on the Driving at Safe Speed could be circulated to Members outside of today's meeting as information would identify specific teams and employees.

This was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** by Employment Committee.

59. Exclusion of Press and Public

The press and public were excluded during discussion of the agenda item because of the likelihood that information that was exempt under paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) would have been disclosed to them.

60. Staffing Matter

Restricted Minute

61. Chief Executive's Appraisal

62. Staffing Matter

Restricted Minute.

63. Any other business, which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, decides is urgent

64. Close of Meeting

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**



Employment Committee

Monday, 8 July 2024

Report of Councillor Ashley Baxter,
Leader of the Council and Cabinet
Member for Finance, HR and Economic
Development

HR Dashboard and People Plan

Report Author

Fran Beckitt, Head of Service (Human Resources and Organisational Development)

 fran.beckitt@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

A presentation to update on the HR metrics from the 2023/2024 financial year.

Recommendations

That the Employment Committee notes the information provided in the HR dashboard for the 12 month period of the 23/24 year.

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	All Wards

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 The staffing budget is the most significant annual cost the Council incurs so it is important that the Council actively reviews and understands the composition, operation, development and performance of its workforce. This ensures it remains motivated, focused and skilled in order to support the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan ambitions.

Completed by Richard Wyles (Deputy Chief Executive and S151 Officer)

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

Completed by: Graham Watts (Monitoring Officer).

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 Appendix A contains a presentation that provides an update on South Kesteven District Council's people metrics for the 2023/24 financial year.
- 2.2 The dashboard covers the following themes from the People Strategy and narrative for each is outlined below:
- Recruitment and Workforce Planning
 - Engagement
 - Reward and Recognition
 - Development
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
 - Wellbeing
- 2.3 Recruitment and Workforce Planning:
- The establishment is 575 (307 males and 268 females). This is higher than the previous year's establishment mainly due to the TUPE of Grounds Maintenance and the markets review providing permanent contracts.
 - During the 2023/24 year the Council had 123 new starters and 89 leavers. Turnover is significantly lower than previous years from 23.71% in 22/23 to

14.61% in 2023/24. The predominant reason for employees leaving the Council is for career advancement and new opportunities.

- Nearly half (48%) of our workforce have been working for SKDC for less than 5 years.

2.4 Reward and Recognition

- A new Recognition Strategy was launched in the 22/23 financial year which increased the channels for recognising staff.
- This included #TeamSK Thank You which, through peer-to-peer nominations has received over 900 nominations since the scheme began.
- A staff awards evening was held on 9th May 2024. More than 200 nominations for the awards were received prior to the event.
- The awards thanked everyone for their hard work and also included 13 awards, some of which were nominated by peers and others were awarded by the Corporate Management Team.

2.5 Engagement

- The 2024 employee engagement survey was open from 29th May – 19th June 2024.
- The survey was designed to measure the level of employee satisfaction, motivation and engagement, as well as gain feedback on how to make SKDC an even better place to work.
- The response rate for the survey was 87%, which exceeded our KPI of 75% and showed a significant increase from the previous year's rate of 74%.
- The survey results will be analysed and fully reported at the next Employment Committee in September. The results will be discussed with teams and action plans derived from the feedback.
- As the dashboard is designed to review the 23/24 financial year, it includes information about the 2023 engagement survey and the actions taken as a result of the feedback.
- 84% said they found their work interesting and 72% said they would recommend working for SKDC (an increase of 18% on the year before).
- 83% said other members of their team support them with work when they need it.
- The engagement plan for the 2022/23 year including a varied wellbeing offering, introducing 'Team Spotlights' to learn about what other teams do and a refreshed induction process.

2.6 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- SKDC is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and ensuring all employees are treated fairly and with respect.
- Nearly 70% of our workforce are aged over 40, with the largest numbers in the age range of 50-59.
- The Council does not have a gender pay gap, as reported to the Employment Committee in March 2024. Women earn £1 for every £1 men earn when comparing median hourly pay.

2.7 Development

- 100% of appraisals were completed for the 2023/24 year. Outputs were built into the Workforce Development Plan with all training requested being delivered during the year.
- The Council has 21 Apprenticeships in topics ranging from Senior Leadership to plumbing, coaching qualifications and planning.
- The Council held Learning Week in Quarter 3 with lots of development opportunities available to staff.
- Recent development initiatives have included sessions aimed at Operatives on IT skills and interview/CV writing skills.

2.8 Wellbeing

- The sickness absence KPI was exceeded with a year on year reduction in average days lost from 13.53 to 10.33 per FTE.
- The top reasons for absence remain as stress and mental health related illness and other musculo-skeletal.
- Recent wellbeing activities have includes Mental Health Week which offered a range of activities to bring staff together and the 50 Year anniversary celebrations.

3. Consultation

- 3.1 Discussions on the HR metrics in the HR Dashboard take place with the Trade Unions as well as the Senior Team.

4. Appendices

- 4.1 Appendix A – HR Dashboard

HR Dashboard Employment Committee 2023 – 2024

17

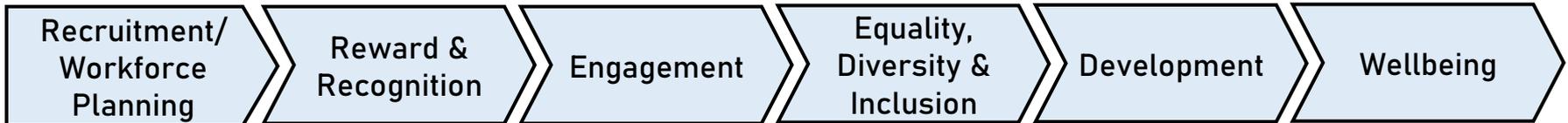
Appendix 1



SOUTH
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DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Introduction

- The People Strategy, which was signed off by Employment Committee in 2022, included a focus on the areas outlined below.
- This presentation will discuss each strand, related HR metrics and activity against each taken place during the 2023/24 year.



18

#TeamSK People Strategy

Attracting, developing and retaining
our most valuable asset, our team

2022/2025

People Strategy Aim

Our People Strategy is our roadmap for attracting, developing and retaining our most valuable asset – YOU, the people that work here.

It is at the heart of how we will become the best district in which to live, work, and visit.

Its aim is to create a flexible, innovative organisation that has the skills, resilience and motivation to deliver and achieve the Council's objectives, and is a key component in driving high performance.

The Strategy sets out:

- where we are now;
- where we want to be; and
- how we plan to get there.

It describes the expectations we have of you and the ways in which our high performance and #TeamSK culture will help you succeed in your career at the Council.

The Strategy is designed to evolve with the needs of the Council and our employees. The Human Resources team will work with senior management to develop the framework and drive the evolution of the People Strategy.

We want every employee to own our People Strategy and play a role in its success. We will continually measure progress against the People Strategy's objectives using a variety of means, including employee and stakeholder opinion surveys, appraisals and a dashboard of key performance indicators. Improvements will be made to the strategy as needed along our journey.

People and Strategy Objectives

- Recruitment**
To attract the right people and retain them
- Development**
To develop high-performing individuals and teams
- Engagement**
To strengthen employee engagement, creating an inspired workforce
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**
To improve the equality, diversity and inclusion of the organisation
- Reward and Recognition**
Attracting and motivating our people with an attractive reward offer including pay and non-pay elements
- Wellbeing**
Providing a safe and healthy working environment for our people

Recruitment/
Workforce
Planning

Reward &
Recognition

Engagement

Equality,
Diversity &
Inclusion

Development

Wellbeing

QTR 4 (23/24)



307



268

575

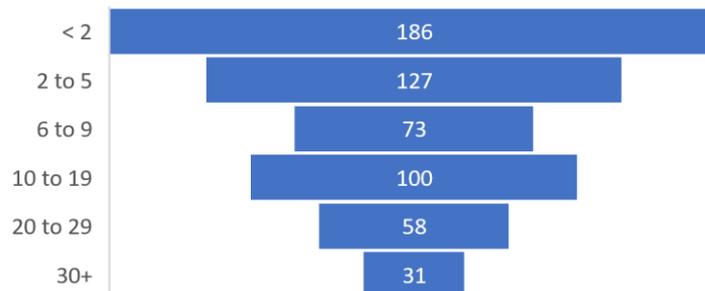
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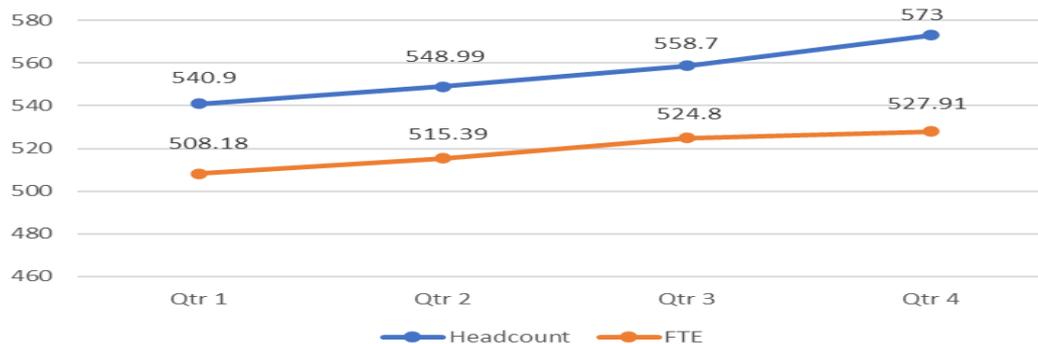
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120

Headcount by Years of Service



Average Employee Headcount and FTE



Activity

- Senior restructure delivered as well as 9 team restructures.
- Improved induction/onboarding support launched.
- Exit interviews with HR for all leavers to get feedback, insights and trends, and this is shared with Senior Leadership.
- Recruitment upskilling regularly offered to staff.



Recruitment/
Workforce
Planning

Reward &
Recognition

Engagement

Equality,
Diversity &
Inclusion

Development

Wellbeing

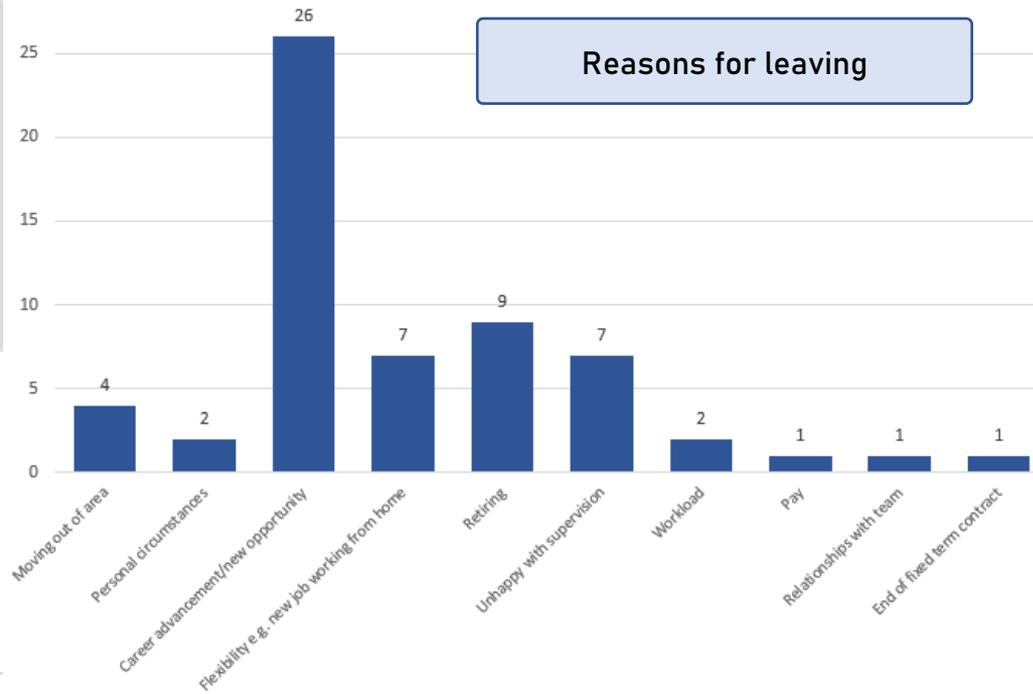
New Starters & Leavers



123

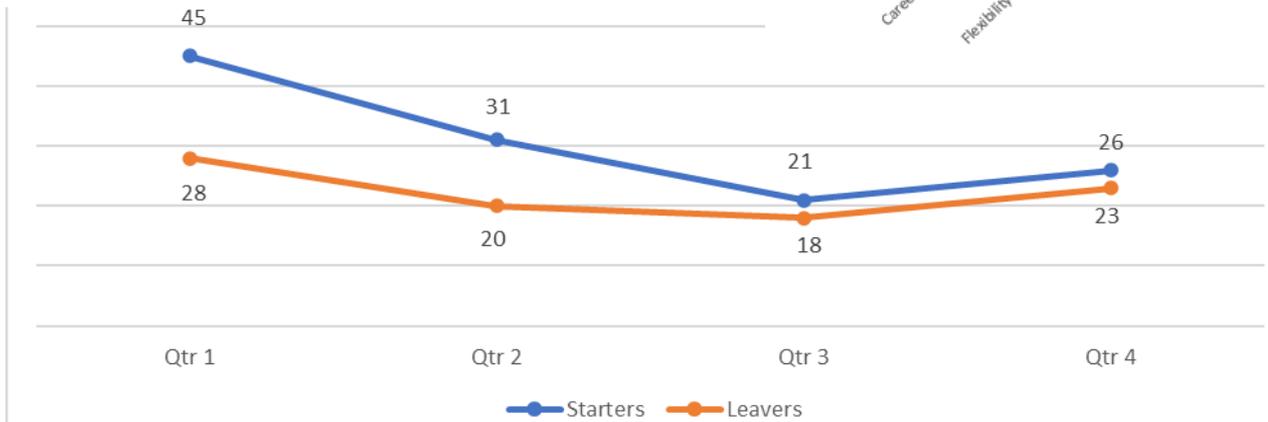


89



- 14.61% turnover for 23/24
- 23.71% turnover for 22/23 (123 leavers)
- 22.18% turnover for 21/22 (125 leavers)

Starters and Leavers 2023/24



Recruitment/
Workforce
Planning

Reward &
Recognition

Engagement

Equality,
Diversity &
Inclusion

Development

Wellbeing

Our #TeamSK Recognition Strategy includes:

#TeamSK Thank You

Since the launch of #TeamSK Thank You in September 22, **over 900 nominations** have been made thanking colleagues for their hard work, achievements and support.



Thank you cards



Extra Leave

5

extra days annual leave after 5 years continuous service.

Long Service

There were 22 long service awards being given this financial year, celebrating 10, 20, 30 and 40 years at the Council.



Pay Award

Pay award given for 22/23 ranged from 11.6% to 3.88% depending on grade. New job evaluation process for transparency and fairness.

Our October winner...

Thank you Craig Dickinson (Planning).
Craig, like all the planners, is very busy with his workload, balancing that with Uni and life. However, Craig ALWAYS makes time for people. Not only does he answer the questions I have, he will go through the complete process so that I understand why it is the answer. He takes that extra bit of time to show me exactly what to do, so that I can do it next time. Nothing is too much trouble for Craig. Thank you. (Adam Knowles)

Nikki Johnson (Housing)
Working as the Decant Officer on the challenging Earlesfield Project Nikki always makes sure the tenants are informed and updated on the works and when they will be moving back home, a real asset. (Andy Evans)

Thank you Aleksandra Wasowski (Sheltered Housing).
Always works hard and is very helpful and supportive team member. (Triny)

Thank you Liam Page (Benefits).
Keeps the Benefits team's spirits up. (Deb Goodwin)

Thank you Adele Convery (Public Protection).
Adele is so efficient and a great support to our team, I really appreciate all she does. (Claire Watson)

Thank you Adam Knowles (Planning Enforcement).
Having only recently joined SK, Adam is already bringing great energy to support our wellbeing agenda and making an impact wider than his role. Thanks Adam for your ideas and support. (Fran Beckett)

Recruitment/
Workforce
Planning

Reward &
Recognition

Engagement

Equality,
Diversity &
Inclusion

Development

Wellbeing

Awards evening:

- 9th May 2024 – Staff Awards Evening.
- We received **more than 200 nominations** from colleagues and a panel of 14 from across the Council reviewed the nominations and determined the winners.



Outstanding Team Award	CCTV
Deputy Chief Executive's Award (1)	Neil Smith
Deputy Chief Executive's Award (2)	Nathan Wood
Making a Difference in our Community Award	Kati Conway
Directorate Award – Chief Exec Services	Amy Pryde
Empowering Manager Award	Jeremy Barlow
Directorate Award (Housing Technical Services)	Andy Garner
Directorate Award (Housing Tenancy Services)	Beth Randall
Makes us Smile Award	Jamie Moses
Excellence Award	Jane Jenkinson
Directorate Award – Growth and Culture	Michael Chester
SK Award	Molly-Mae Taylor-Pearson
Chief Executive Award 1	Rhys Page
Chief Executive Award 2	Ricky Szulz



Recruitment/
Workforce
Planning

Reward &
Recognition

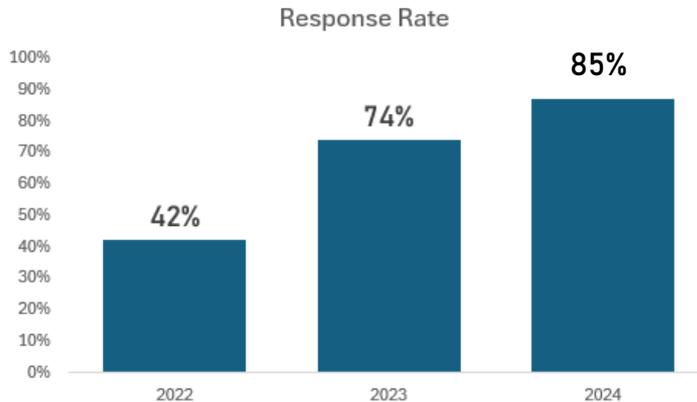
Engagement

Equality,
Diversity &
Inclusion

Development

Wellbeing

2024 Engagement Survey



KPI

YOY improvement in
response rate - achieved.



2023 Engagement Survey

- 51 questions were asked. 74% of staff responded.
- 84% said they found the work they do interesting and 72% said they would recommend working for SKDC (an increase of 18% on the year before).
- 83% said other members of their team support them with work when they need it.
- Positive responses increased year-on-year against all areas of the survey.
- More than 20 engagement sessions were facilitated by the Senior Team and HR with every team to discuss the survey responses and ask what actions they would like to see in response.
- Team and Council-wide action plans were built. Key actions are outlined on the following slide.



Recruitment/
Workforce
Planning

Reward &
Recognition

Engagement

Equality,
Diversity &
Inclusion

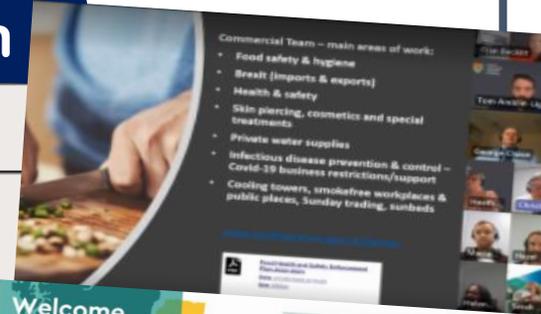
Development

Wellbeing

Examples of Actions in the Engagement Plan

Theme	Example Comment	Action	Status
Teamwork	"Lack of awareness of who is doing what. Don't get to know what other teams are doing."	Team Spotlight Calls introduced	Completed
Teamwork	"New starters need more in terms of a Council overview"	Induction process refreshed to include new brochures/guidance.	Completed
Teamwork	"There are changes and we don't know who new starters are"	Welcome email to all staff re new starters introduced	Completed
Teamwork	"It would be good to have more team socials to get to know people in other teams better."	Bowling Social - 90 attended BBQ/Rounders - 150 attended	Completed/Ongoing
Teamwork	"The East Midlands Challenge looked good and we...	TBC	

24



Best employee experience award and Best public sector company in December 2023

Recruitment/ Workforce Planning

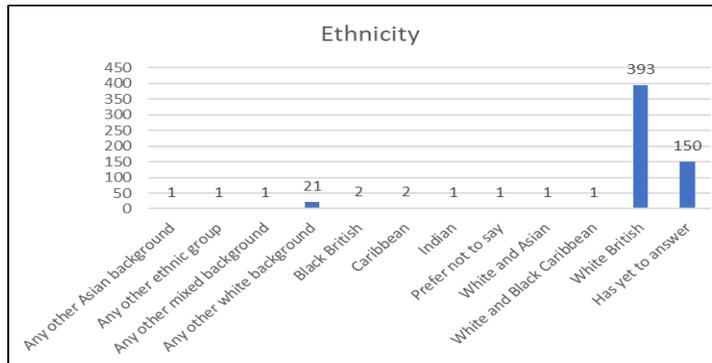
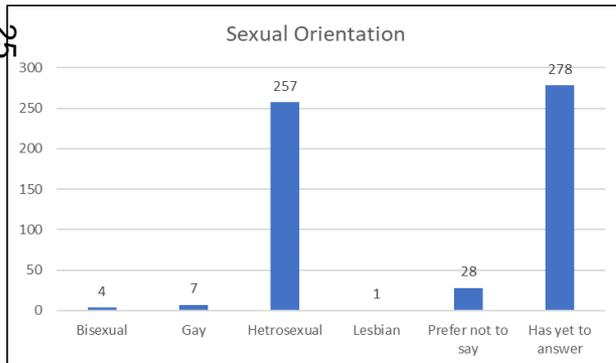
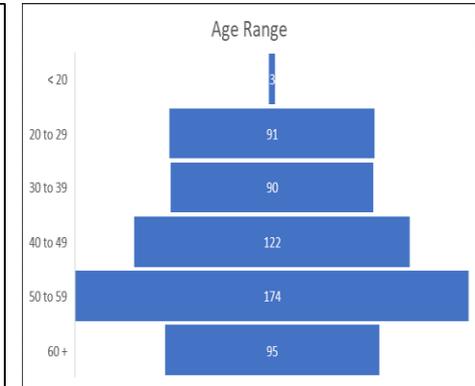
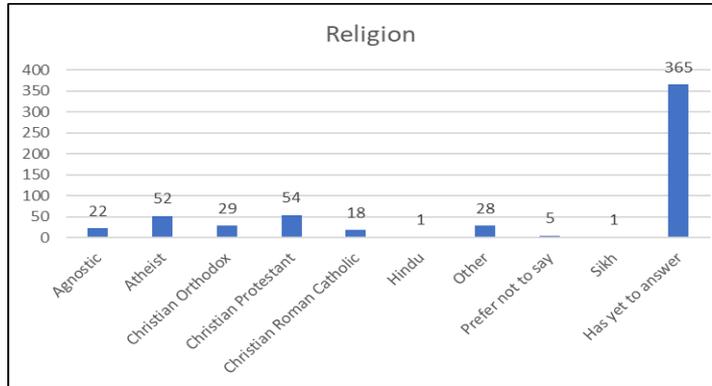
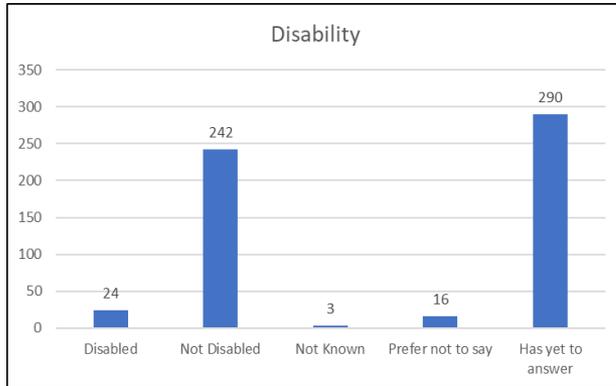
Reward & Recognition

Engagement

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Development

Wellbeing



-0.98%
mean pay gap

0% median
pay gap

Gender pay gap 2023
(2022 mean gender pay gap
-3.38%)

Activity

- The EDI plan explores how we reflect the community and ensure a diverse and inclusive internal environment.
- Focus on being an inclusive place to work including the holding the Menopause Café, launching a Carer's network and becoming an Age-Friendly employer.
- Blind recruitment – we have removed details from applications that may act as a trigger for unconscious bias.



Recruitment/
Workforce
Planning

Reward &
Recognition

Engagement

Equality,
Diversity &
Inclusion

Development

Wellbeing

Apprentices



0

21

10

- 21 Apprenticeships in topics ranging from Senior Leadership and Plumbing to Coaching and Planning.
- Network launched in Q3, useful first meeting.

Line Manager Forum



Line Manager Forum launched in June 23 supporting the development of 50+ managers across the Council.

4 sessions held in the 23/24 FY.

Appraisals



100% of appraisals completed and returned for 23/24.
Outputs built into the Workforce Development Plan.

Training



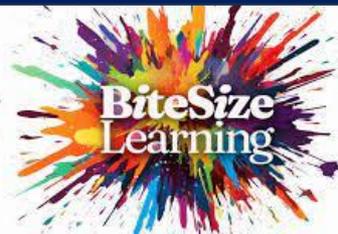
£104,183

485 Employees
attended events

104 Learning
Events

- Combination of paid for, free and internal courses.
- Learning Management System providing many online courses.

Bitesize Learning



- 15 training courses sharing knowledge and expertise within the Council.
- Recently included Presentation Skills and Budget Setting/Finance

Development Drive



- 'Learning Week' took place in Q3, providing a variety of courses, apprenticeship network meeting and development discussions



Recruitment/
Workforce
Planning

Reward &
Recognition

Engagement

Equality,
Diversity &
Inclusion

Development

Wellbeing

Sick Absence:

1704

23/24 total short
term sickness

3535

23/24 total long
term sickness

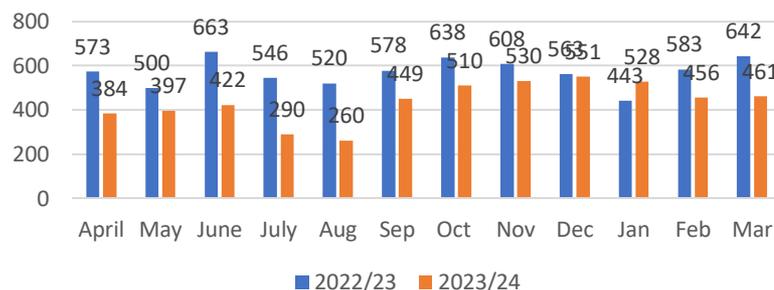
10.33

23/24 Average
Sickness per FTE

KPI

YOY reduction in absence
levels – achieved. ✓

FTE Days Absence 2022/23 v 2023/24



- 10.33 average days lost compared to 13.53 for the previous year.
- YOY reduction of 925 days long term absence and 645 days short term absence.
- Cases supported by Line Manager and HR.

FTE Equivalent Days Lost 2023/24



Recruitment/
Workforce
Planning

Reward &
Recognition

Engagement

Equality,
Diversity &
Inclusion

Development

Wellbeing

Sick Absence external benchmarking:

Long-term sickness among 16 to 64-year-olds

Millions



Source: ONS

Recruitment/
Workforce
Planning

Reward &
Recognition

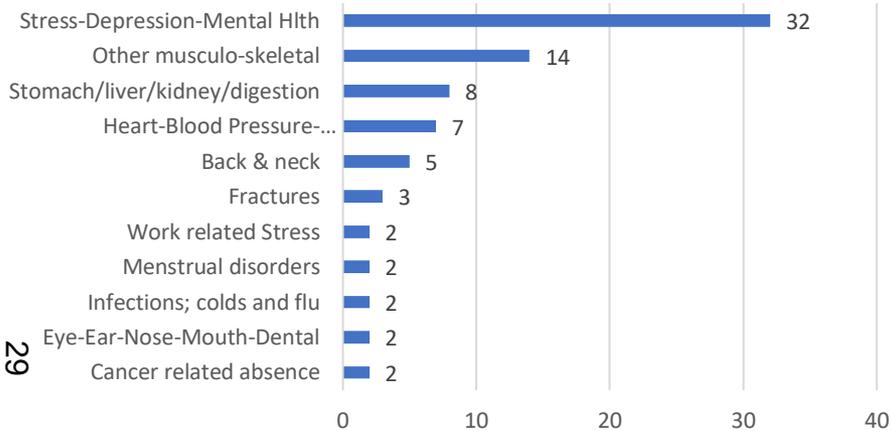
Engagement

Equality,
Diversity &
Inclusion

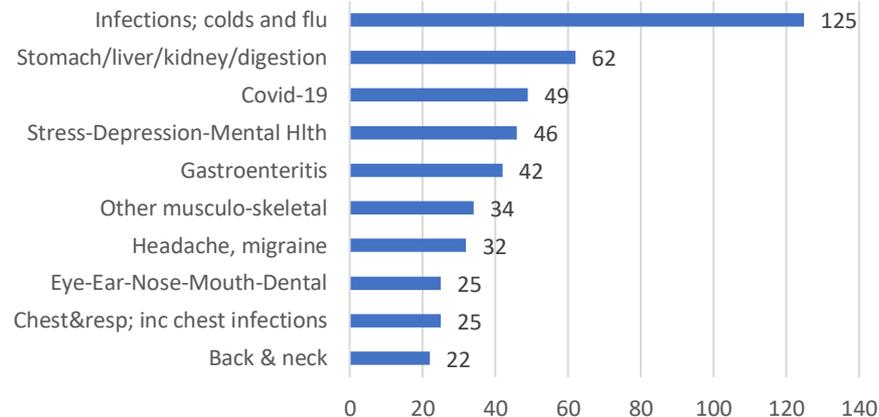
Development

Wellbeing

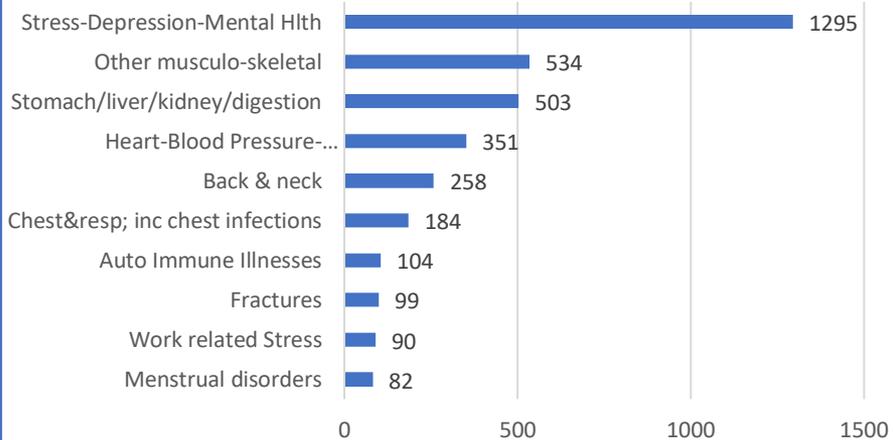
Top 10 Absence Reasons (Long Term)



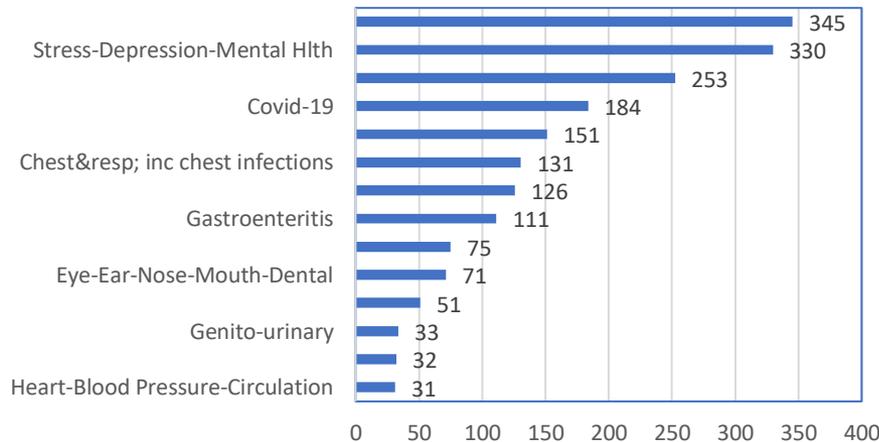
Top 10 Absence Reasons (Short Term)



Days Lost Due to Absence Reason (Long Term)



Days Lost Due to Absence Reason (Short Term)



Recruitment/
Workforce
Planning

Development

Engagement

Equality,
Diversity &
Inclusion

Reward &
Recognition

Wellbeing



Number of visits to
Employee Assistance
Programme 23/24:
48 Calls



100%

595 return to work
conversations completed
23/24



Number of visits to Mental
Health First Aiders 23/24 :
95

(23 Mental Health First Aiders)

Network meeting – April 2024

Activity

- HR partnering focuses on departments attendance management.
- Longest sick absence cases have been allocated HR support.
- Upskilling on Attendance Management is regularly delivered to team leaders and managers.

Recruitment/
Workforce
Planning

Reward &
Recognition

Engagement

Equality,
Diversity &
Inclusion

Development

Wellbeing

Feedback on Wellbeing

 COUNCIL

SKDC Employee Engagement Survey 2024

Welcome to the 2024 #TeamSK Survey!

Thank you for participating in this #TeamSK survey - we're really looking forward to hearing yr using your feedback to help shape change in the areas that matter most to you.

This survey is confidential and there is no way for managers to link responses to specific individuals. Some demographic questions at the start (e.g. age and gender) which we look at on a Council-wide basis to understand trends. Individual team reports do not include these demographics and instead provide feedback from the whole team only.

We're looking forward to hearing from you and working together to build actions in response to

If you have any questions, please contact the HR team at survey@southkesteven.gov.uk

- We regularly ask for feedback on wellbeing and build the plan based on this.

Mental Wellbeing



- MH Awareness week activities (May)
- Menopause Awareness cinema viewing of documentary (Oct)
- Stress Awareness workshop (Nov)
 - Webinars – Anxiety and Neurodiversity

Mental Health Week



- May 2024 – A range of activities to raise awareness, bring colleagues together and improve our mental health.

Physical Wellbeing



- Steps Challenges
- Staff Rounders (Sept)
- Know your numbers (Sept)
- Skipping Challenge (Oct)
- Football tournament (Nov)

50 Years of SKDC



- Celebrating our 50 year anniversary in May 2024 with a Member/Officer event.

Social Wellbeing



- Stroke fundraiser (May)
- Bowling social (May)
 - Staff BBQ (Sept)
- Macmillan coffee morning (Sept)
- Christmas 'fuddle' (Dec)

Recruitment/
Workforce
Planning

Reward &
Recognition

Engagement

Equality,
Diversity &
Inclusion

Development

Wellbeing

Disciplinaries

Q3 & Q4



Investigations

8



Disciplinaries

5



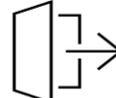
1st Written
Warning

1



Awaiting
Outcome

3



Dismissal

4

2023/24



Investigations

15



Disciplinaries

9



1st Written
Warning

1



Final Written
Warning

1



No
Action

2



Awaiting
Outcome

3



Left Council

1



Dismissal

7

Grievances



4

• None upheld but
recommendations have been
implemented as outcomes of
the cases.



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Employment Committee

Monday, 8 July 2024

Report of Councillor Rhea Rayside,
Cabinet Member for People &
Communities

SKDC Volunteer Policy – Update on Implementation

Report Author

Karen Whitfield, Assistant Director – Leisure, Culture and Place

 karen.whitfield@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To update the Employment Committee on the implementation of the Volunteering with South Kesteven District Council Policy.

Recommendations

That the Employment Committee:

1. Notes the progress on the implementation of the Volunteering with South Kesteven District Council Policy and requests any further information required at this time.

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Connecting communities
Which wards are impacted?	All Wards

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 The Volunteering with South Kesteven District Council Policy provides for the reimbursement of expenses incurred by volunteers whilst undertaking their role. This is subject to an authorisation process as detailed within the Policy, expenses paid are expected to be minimal and will be met from existing budgets.

Completed by: Paul Sutton Interim Head of Finance (Deputy 151)

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 The Volunteering with South Kesteven District Council Policy has provided a framework for volunteer engagement which safeguards both the Council and volunteers, with a view to creating a positive and legally compliant relationship.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Monitoring Officer

Health and Safety

- 1.3 The Council has a legal and moral duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of volunteers whilst performing duties on behalf of the Council or on Council property. The level of protection afforded to volunteers must be the same as the Council provides to employed staff, this includes volunteers and volunteer activity being covered by the Council's Employer's Liability Insurance.
- 1.4 The Volunteering with South Kesteven District Council Policy provides a framework to ensure that volunteers are provided with the appropriate level of training and

equipment as well as identifying procedures for reporting and addressing safety concerns.

Completed by: Phil Swinton, Health and Safety and Emergency Planning Manager

Human Resources

- 1.5 The successful implementation of the Volunteering with South Kesteven District Council Policy demonstrates the importance of engaging volunteers in a positive and constructive way and has ensured consistency and fairness in the Council's approach across service areas.
- 1.6 The Policy clearly sets out what volunteers can expect from the Council in relation to legal compliance, risk management and volunteer recruitment, and what the Council can expect from a volunteer in return.

Completed by: Fran Beckitt (Head of HR)

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 Within its Corporate Plan the Council has set an ambition to work in partnership with the voluntary, private, and public sectors to enable the delivery of community projects, and to provide responsive services to meet the needs of South Kesteven communities.
- 2.2 At a meeting of the Employment Committee held on 6 September 2023 the Members present considered a draft Volunteering with South Kesteven District Council Policy (the Volunteer Policy) and approved its adoption.
- 2.3 Prior to the development of the Volunteer Policy, although the Council engaged the services of volunteers, there were no formal arrangements in place or a consistent framework to govern the relationship and working arrangements between the Council and volunteers.

3. Implementation of the Volunteering with South Kesteven Policy

- 3.1 Since the adoption of the Volunteer Policy significant progress has been made in relation to its implementation, the Policy forming the basis of the relationship between the Council and volunteers across the Parks Service and Arts and Cultural Services.

Parks Service

- 3.2 The Council is responsible for the three parks in Grantham, these being Wyndham Park, Queen Elizabeth Park, and Dysart Park. As well as maintaining the parks to a high standard the Council is committed to the achievement of Green Flag status,

which is an international accreditation awarded to high quality publicly accessible parks.

- 3.3 The Wyndham Park Visitor Centre is a valuable community resource built with the support of grant funding received from Heritage Lottery. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic the centre was well utilised supported by a core group of volunteers. However, in more recent times the facility has remained under-utilised due to a significant number of volunteers who failed to re-engage following the extended period of closure.
- 3.4 In July 2023 the Council employed a Parks and Community Engagement Officer. A primary function of this role is to improve the activities offered across the Parks Service, and to engage a core group of volunteers to assist the Council with a range of roles and activities.
- 3.5 Since the adoption of the Volunteering with South Kesteven District Council Policy a total of fourteen volunteers have been recruited and are actively working across the Parks Service. As well as increasing the hours the Wyndham Park Visitor Centre can be available, this has transformed the range of activities offered at the Visitor Centre which now include:
- Weekly book club meetings
 - Building Better Opportunities coffee mornings in association with Grantham College
 - Grantham Deaf Group coffee mornings
 - Use of the Visitor Centre as a warm space
 - School holiday activities for children
 - Craft activities for adults
 - Monthly Lincolnshire Police drop in sessions
 - Self-defence classes
 - Talks and lectures in the Visitor Centre and around the Park.
- 3.6 The roles which volunteers now regularly perform include:
- Book club volunteers
 - Visitor Centre Assistants, providing a wide range of local information
 - Volunteering at events
 - General park volunteers (checking posters, flower beds/planters, signage and general park conditions)
 - Arts and craft facilitators
- 3.7 The re-introduction of volunteers in the Parks service has also assisted the delivery of events by other Council services. Earlier this year the Arts Team arranged an Easter Egg trail in Wyndham Park and the event was supported by five Park volunteers who helped set up the trail, register attendees, deal with queries, sell duck food, run craft activities and aid the clear up afterwards.

- 3.8 The Parks and Community Engagement Officer has received very positive feedback from volunteers regarding the Volunteer Policy which has been welcomed by existing and new volunteers. The comments made by volunteers have included that the Volunteer Policy recognises the value and importance of volunteering and how they contribute towards the daily operation of the Parks and Wyndham Park Visitor Centre.
- 3.9 The Council has also received a lot of positive comments resulting from the increased range of activities on offer. These have included comments from Park users that it is good to see the Visitor Centre not only reinstated as an information centre, but also as a place for learning, fun and community cohesion.

Wyndham Park Forum and Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park

- 3.10 The Wyndham Park Forum and Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park are independent organisations which operate within their own governance arrangements. Historically members of each organisation have undertaken volunteer activity in the two parks and offered advice and guidance to the Council on park related matters. Whilst they operate as two separate organisations the same three individuals are involved in key roles of each group.
- 3.11 Over a number of years the relationship between members of the two organisations and Council Officers has been difficult, primarily due to a lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities. For example, there have been instances where Council Officers, and contractors engaged on behalf of the Council, have been given instructions by members of the two volunteer organisations which is wholly inappropriate.
- 3.12 Following the adoption of the Volunteer Policy the two groups were contacted with a view to their members signing up to the revised policy document. As there was an initial reluctance to do so, as an alternative measure Officers developed a draft Terms of Reference which is provided at **Appendix One**. The draft Terms of Reference is based on the principles within the Volunteer Policy and aims to clearly set out the responsibility of the Council and the two respective organisations.
- 3.13 Despite protracted discussions, and as the Terms of Reference remained unsigned, a meeting was facilitated by the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council in April 2024 to discuss any reservations the groups may have, and to emphasise the importance of signing up to the principles of the Volunteer Policy.
- 3.14 Due to the lack of progress made following the meeting, the Leader wrote to the respective organisations to inform them that volunteer activity will need to be suspended if the Terms of Reference or individual volunteer forms remain unsigned.
- 3.15 The Leader has subsequently received a response which suggests that the two organisations do not wish to be treated as employees and would rather enter into a

Partnership Agreement with the Council. As detailed in paragraph 1.3 of this report the Council has a duty to afford volunteers the same level of protection as employees, and therefore the Deputy Leader is arranging a response to the letter, and to re-emphasise the need to either sign the Terms of Reference or individual volunteer forms.

Arts and Cultural Services

- 3.16 A total number of 45 volunteers are engaged at the Guildhall Arts Centre in Grantham and undertake a wide variety of roles which include meeting and greeting customers, undertaking usher duties, and checking tickets at performances. Following the adoption of the Volunteer Policy existing volunteers were asked to re-register and have also been very positive about the introduction of the policy.
- 3.17 Historically the services of volunteers have not been engaged at Stamford Arts Centre. However, there are now plans in place to develop a core of volunteers and, during the summer months, a drop-in session is planned to enable potential volunteers to have a tour around Stamford Arts Centre and to discuss the available opportunities.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 This report is presented in response to a request from Employment Committee for an update on the implementation of the Volunteering with South Kesteven District Council Policy. Therefore, no other options have been considered.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 Employment Committee are requested to note the update provided and request any further information which is required at this time.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1 Report to Employment Committee dated 6th September 2023 [Volunteering with South Kesteven District Council Policy](#)

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Draft Terms of Reference – Wyndham Park Forum and Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park

South Kesteven District Council

Wyndham Park Forum and Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose of the Document

To promote and facilitate a positive working relationship between South Kesteven District Council (the Council), the Wyndham Park Forum (WPF) and Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park (FQEP).

This document will form the basis of a mutually respectful relationship and aim to deliver beneficial outcomes through supporting each other in a positive working environment. It is proposed that the partnership between the Council and the two separate groups is based around the values of mutual co-operation, transparency, integrity, equality, accountability, efficiency and learning.

The Council recognises the unique and valuable contribution that the two stakeholder groups provide in ensuring that the respective Grantham parks continue to be highly valued community assets, by acting as the eyes and ears of the parks and taking ownership for the maintenance of agreed areas.

It is intended that this document will form the basis of a mutually beneficial partnership arrangement which aligns to the Council's Volunteer Policy, 'Volunteering with South Kesteven District Council 2023'.

2. SKDC Commitment

- The Council is committed to providing an agreed level of grounds maintenance to ensure that both Wyndham Park and Queen Elizabeth Park remain safe and attractive to visitors, maintaining the achievement of Green Flag status.
- The Council is solely responsible for the staff and contractors who are engaged in activities and work within the Parks.
- The Council will support and encourage the activities of the WPF and FQEP in assisting to maintain agreed areas of the Park. All works which are undertaken by the WPF and FQEP will need to be in accordance with an up-to-date risk assessment and through prior consultation and planning with the Senior Parks and Cemetery Officer, to ensure that the activity can be covered by the Council's insurance arrangements.
- The Council is committed to maintaining communications with the two parks groups and will host Park Stakeholder meetings throughout the year, with a representative from each stakeholder group being invited to attend.

3. Stakeholder Commitment

- To maintain agreed areas within Wyndham Park and Queen Elizabeth Park adhering to the risk assessments adopted, and not to undertake any works which have not been previously approved or agreed.
- To provide updated risk assessments to the Council's Team Leader Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces on an annual basis, or as soon as there are any changes to the risk assessment provided.
- To raise any concerns or request information through agreed routes into the Council.
- Not to do, or support any action which could bring the Council into disrepute, or have an adverse impact on attaining Green Flag status.
- To carry out tasks and activities in a way which corresponds to the Council's aims and values
- To respect the confidentiality of service users and staff.

4. Code of Conduct

- The Terms of Reference recognises that successful partnership working is based upon engagement, trust and cooperation between partners and the communities they serve and encourages such an approach to deliver positive outcomes.
- Officers of the Council and members of the two stakeholder groups will act with a high level of integrity at all times.
- Fair and equal access to services and support irrespective of race, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation, or disability will be provided by SKDC and the two stakeholder groups within all park activities.
- The parties agree to a spirit of collaborative working to promote a culture of reflection and learning to improve the Parks service.

5. Membership

- District Lead Officer – Assistant Director of Culture, Leisure and Place
- Liaison – Team Leader Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces
- Delivery – Street Scene Manager
- Members of Wyndham Park Forum and Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park.

Other members or Officers may be co-opted to attend as appropriate.

6. Meetings and Contact Points

- Park Stakeholder Meetings will be arranged and administered by the Council on a quarterly basis.
- The Council's Team Leader Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces will be the single point of contact for the members of the Parks stakeholder groups to report incidents or remedial issues to or to request service updates.



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Employment Committee

Monday, 8 July 2024

Report of Councillor Ashley Baxter,
Leader of Council and Cabinet Member
for Finance, HR and Economic
Development

Pay Award 2024/25

Report Author

Fran Beckitt, Head of Service (HR and Organisational Development)

 fran.beckitt@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is endorsement from Employment Committee to implement a pay award in line with the National Employers final offer effective from 1st April 2024.

Recommendations

That the Employment Committee:

1. Endorses the Head of Paid Service and Leader of the Council's decision to award a pay rise, effective from 1 April 2024, in line with the National Employers final offer:
 - £1290 (pro rata for part time employees) to be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on all pay points from SK2 – SK20.
 - An increase of 2.5% on all pay points above SK20.

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	All Wards

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 The budget assumptions that were built into the 2024/25 financial year included an assumed increase of 5% to the Council's salary budget. The increase proposals set out in the report are within the assumed increase levels and are therefore affordable without the need to adjust the current year's budget framework.

Completed by: Richard Wyles (Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer)

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 The proposed pay rise complies with the relevant legislation and regulations that govern the remuneration of local government employees including ensuring the bottom scale is above the predicted National Living Wage rates ahead of a rise next April 2025.

Completed by: Graham Watts (Monitoring Officer).

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The National Employers for Local Government are responsible for negotiating pay, terms and conditions of staff in many local authorities. They consult with Councils and make an offer to the Trade Unions.
- 2.2 On 16 May 2024, the National Employers for local government services announced a full and final offer for Council employees.
- 2.3 The offer is to pay an increase of at least £1,290 on the National Joint Council (NJC) pay scales from 1 April 2024.
- 2.4 South Kesteven District Council is **not** part of the national consultation process and the Council's pay scales are not on the National Joint Council (NJC) scales. Instead, SKDC consults locally with our Trade Union Representatives and aligns to local agreements. However, in previous years, the pay award has aligned to what has been offered in the national negotiations.
- 2.5 Aligning the national pay offer to South Kesteven District Council's pay scales, the offer amounts to:
 - £1290 (pro rata for part time employees) to be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on all pay points from SK2 – SK20.
 - An increase of 2.5% on all pay points above SK20.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 The proposal would achieve a bottom rate of pay of £23,526 with effect from 1 April 2024 and equates to a 5.785% increase for this grade (SK2).
- 3.2 Staff would receive a minimum 2.5% increase.
- 3.3 Following calculations of FTE against each grade on our pay scales, the proposed pay rise would be £201,633 under the budget allocated for a pay award this financial year. The General Fund/HRA split of this underspend is (£143,091) in the General Fund and (58,542) HRA.
- 3.4 The National Employers pay offer has not been accepted by the Unions and there is therefore a possibility this could change. If this were to happen, SKDC would review against budget and consult with our Trade Union representatives.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 Not implementing a pay award would have a significant impact on staff morale and employee relations, as well as effecting staff retention and our relations with the Trade Union.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 The staff award is a recognition of the hard work and dedication of our employees.
- 5.2 The proposed pay award is back dated to 1 April 2024, but holding off paying this could negatively impact some colleagues financially as receiving a larger lump sum can affect their benefit payments.
- 5.3 The Council has already budgeted for this pay offer.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 The Trade Unions have been consulted and are in agreement with offering the above pay award on behalf of their members.

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix A – Letter from the Employers

National Employers for local government services

**To: Chief Executives in England, Wales and N Ireland
(to be shared with HR Director and Finance Director)
Members of the National Employers' Side
Regional Employer Organisations**

16 May 2024

Dear Chief Executive,

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY 2024

I am writing to update you on the work the National Employers have been doing on your behalf on the local government pay round for 2024.

You will recall that on 29 February, UNISON, GMB and Unite lodged their pay claim for:

- *An increase of at least £3,000 or 10 per cent (whichever is greater) on all spinal column points*
- *Reviews of the gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps in local government*
- *A two-hour reduction in the working week, with no detriment*
- *An additional day of annual leave for personal or well-being purposes (with term-time only staff also receiving a full day rather than a pro rata amount, that they can use at any time, including term time)*
- *A phased approach to reaching a minimum pay rate of £15 an hour in a maximum of two years, sooner if possible*

During March, councils in each of the nine English regions, Wales and Northern Ireland were consulted at very well attended virtual pay consultation briefings; in total, more than 650 councillors and senior officers attended. The National Employers met initially on 16 April to discuss the key themes to come out of those briefings. They then adjourned for private political discussions before reconvening, in person, today.

As explained at the pay briefings, we are in familiar territory; whilst inflation has dropped from this time last year, when it was 8.70 per cent, little else has changed in terms of councils' financial challenges and how we deal with the relentless pressure from the proximity of the National Living Wage (NLW) to the bottom of the NJC pay spine. As such, the National Employers have again been faced with very difficult decisions when considering their response to the unions' claim.

The large response to our pre-briefing questionnaire was extremely helpful in assisting members' deliberations. I can assure you that every return was shared with the National Employer members.

Whilst the regional pay briefings are the most important part of a consultation process designed to provide the National Employers with councils' views, they are not, and never have been, intended to provide the employers with a negotiating mandate. The National Employers are tasked by their respective LGA political groups and the WLGA and NILGA

to come to a decision based on all the information available to them to pitch a pay offer at a level that they believe will attract the broadest political support and, ultimately, achieve a deal with the unions.

The National Employers considered very carefully a number of different possible pay offers, which included various options for percentage or cash figures, and all of which had pros and cons. The employers recognise that a third consecutive year of a cash offer, albeit at a lower level than agreed in 2022 and 2023, will receive a mixed reaction as there is no proposal that satisfies everyone. However, as explained at the pay briefings, the advantage of a cash offer is that it gets the bottom rate of pay to a level that will maintain headroom from the 2025 NLW (based on the current forecast) and preserves existing differentials between the spinal pay points, which should avoid the need for adjusting grade structures at local level.

The National Employers also considered it important that their offer, as set out below, should provide certainty from the outset to the unions' national committees and all union members, the wider workforce and local employers, that it is the maximum they are able to make. Conscious of the usual implementation date of 1 April and concerns raised by employers and employees alike when previous Agreements have been delayed, the National Employers therefore agreed that their offer should be full and final.

The National Employers met today and agreed by a majority to make the following one-year (1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025), full and final offer to the unions representing the main local government NJC workforce:

- **With effect from 1 April 2024, an increase of £1,290 (pro rata for part-time employees) to be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on all NJC pay points 2 to 43 inclusive**
- **With effect from 1 April 2024, an increase of 2.50 per cent on all pay points above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer (in accordance with Green Book Part 2 Para 5.4¹)**
- **With effect from 1 April 2024 an increase of 2.50 per cent on all allowances (as listed in the 2023 NJC pay agreement circular dated 1 November 2023)**

This offer would achieve a bottom rate of pay of £12.26 with effect from 1 April 2024 (which equates to a pay increase of 5.77 per cent for employees on pay point 2) and everyone on the NJC pay spine would receive a minimum 2.50 per cent pay increase.

The offer, if accepted, would increase the national paybill by 4.03 per cent. The National Employers of course accept that the increase to local paybills will vary from place to place, according to the profile of the local workforce and the number of employees on the lower pay points and recognise that this may not correlate with existing budget provisions in all cases.

¹ The Green Book Part 2 Para 5.4 provides that posts paid above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer are within scope of the NJC. The pay levels for such posts are determined locally, but once fixed are increased in line with agreements reached by the NJC.

This offer means an employee on the bottom pay point in April 2021 (then earning £18,333) will have received an increase in their pay of £5,323 (29.04 per cent) over the three years to April 2024. For an employee at the mid-point of the pay spine (pay point 22), their pay will have increased over the same period by 18.68 per cent and for those on pay point 43, at the top of the spine, 10.78 per cent.

The NLW pressure

As was conveyed at the regional pay briefings, since its introduction in 2014, the NLW has presented a huge challenge for local government in managing to maintain headroom between the bottom pay points and the statutory NLW.

When the NLW was introduced in 2014, the National Employers established a principle of always ensuring that the bottom rate of pay in local government should be higher than the NLW, as they do not believe the sector should be a minimum wage employer. Meeting that principle each year has proved to be a challenge, given the significant annual increases to the NLW rate.

The Chancellor, in his 2023 Autumn Statement, announced the largest ever one-year increase in the rate from April 2024: an increase of £1.02p (9.8 per cent) to £11.44, from its former £10.42 rate. In order for the government to achieve its policy for the NLW to reach two thirds of average earnings by 2024, there has been a rapid escalation in the rate since 2020: from £8.72 to £11.44 (£2.72, or 31.19 per cent).

As a result of the 2023 pay deal, the bottom rate of NJC pay is currently £11.59, which provides just 15p headroom over the 2024 NLW for the period from 1 April 2024 until an agreement is reached on pay for this year. As the 2024 NLW rate achieved the government's policy of the NLW reaching 66 per cent of average earnings, the government issued the Low Pay Commission (LPC) with a remit asking for evidence to inform future minimum wage policy, beyond 2024.

LPC submitted its advice at the end of 2023 and the government's response was published on 27 March 2024. The remit it has given the LPC asks it, *"to recommend the National Living Wage rate which should apply from April 2025 in order to maintain the bite at two-thirds of median earnings, and protect progress made to end low hourly pay for this group, without recommending any further revisions to the age threshold."*

[In its report, the LPC projects that a rate of £11.89](#) (with a range of £11.61 - £12.18) would be sufficient in 2025 to stay at two-thirds of median hourly pay. It should be noted that £12.18 is currently the hourly rate of pay point 5 on the local government pay spine.

Historically, actual NLW rates have tended to be towards the upper end of LPC's forecasts, which is why the National Employers have recognised this in their deliberations.

The pending general election this year means uncertainty remains over what a future government may do in this regard. The National Employers, therefore, have had to respond to the trade unions' pay claim without absolute certainty over the future of the NLW.

You will be aware that the 2023 pay award included an agreement that the NJC would negotiate a redesigned national pay spine. However, the current uncertainty about the future policy direction of the NLW means our negotiations cannot realistically get underway until we know the outcome of the forthcoming General Election and government's policy objectives for the NLW beyond 2025.

When the NJC last reconfigured the pay spine, the process took almost 18 months, with a further twelve months for councils to undertake all the work necessary to be ready to assimilate employees from the old spine to the new one on 1 April 2019. I would expect the next exercise to take a similar amount of time.

Conclusion

The National Employers are eleven senior elected members, many of whom are, or have been, Leader of their council. They are all acutely aware of the additional pressure this year's offer, which would need to be paid for from existing budgets, will place on already hard-pressed finances, especially for those councils and schools with large numbers of employees on the lower pay points. The National Employers also acknowledged the difficulties faced by councils in recruiting and retaining key staff across and above the pay spine. However, for the reasons set out above, they believe their offer meets the immediate NLW challenge and is fair to employees, given the wider economic backdrop.

The National Employers continue to wholeheartedly support the principle of the NLW but their remit is limited to securing pay agreements with the trade unions. Responsibility for making clear to government the cost to the sector of its NLW policy, lies with the LGA, in partnership with the WLGA and NILGA, all of whom have made clear that if additional funding is not forthcoming, jobs and services will be at risk as employers struggle to accommodate this additional cost when trying to balance their budgets.

You will note in the employers' offer letter they have urged the unions to try and synchronise the timing and duration of their membership consultations in order that a final agreement is reached so that employees, who continue to provide such critical support to their communities, can receive this award as soon as is practicable.

A copy of the letter sent to the NJC trade unions, along with a copy of the employers' media statement and details of the membership of the National Employers are set out on the following pages.

Please share this letter and subsequent updates on pay, with your colleagues in HR and Finance, and with elected members, as appropriate.

I shall continue to keep you informed of developments.

Yours sincerely,



Naomi Cooke
Employers' Secretary

**Mike Short, Sharon Wilde, Clare Keogh
Trade Union Side Secretaries
NJC for Local Government Services
c/o UNISON Centre
130 Euston Road
London NW1 2AY**

16 May 2024

Dear Mike, Sharon and Clare

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY 2024

Thank you for your pay claim, which was received on 29 February. Following its receipt, the National Employers consulted councils and then met initially on 16 April to discuss the key themes to come out of those sessions. They then adjourned for private political discussions before reconvening today.

The employers considered very carefully your request for 'meaningful negotiations'. Conscious of the usual implementation date of 1 April and concerns raised by employers and employees alike when previous Agreements have been delayed, the National Employers agreed that making a full and final offer would provide certainty from the outset to yourselves, your members, the wider workforce and local employers that their offer, set out below, is the maximum they are able to make.

The National Employers wish to make the following full and final, one-year (1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025) offer:

- **With effect from 1 April 2024, an increase of £1,290 (pro rata for part-time employees) to be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on all NJC pay points 2 to 43 inclusive.** *The equivalent percentage increases to each pay point are shown at Annex A*
- **With effect from 1 April 2024, an increase of 2.50 per cent on all pay points above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer** *(in accordance with Green Book Part 2 Para 5.4²)*
- **With effect from 1 April 2024 an increase of 2.50 per cent on all allowances** *(as listed in the 2023 NJC pay agreement circular dated 1 November 2023)*

The most important factor in formulating this response has been affordability. We have a duty to balance your claim against the interests of local residents, in terms of the level and quality of services provided by local authorities. The proposed increase will be difficult to fund in a number of local authorities and anything beyond that would take many more authorities well beyond their level of affordability.

We recognise that our offer falls short of your aspirations, but the effects of an unaffordable increase are inescapable: councils would have to make cuts in services, with a subsequent impact on jobs and council tax payers.

² The Green Book Part 2 Para 5.4 provides that posts paid above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer are within scope of the NJC. The pay levels for such posts are determined locally, but once fixed are increased in line with agreements reached by the NJC.

In response to other elements of your claim:

Your claim seeks, **Reviews of the gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps in local government.** You may be aware that the LGA monitors councils statutory reporting of the Gender Pay Gap, providing annual updates through the [LG Inform platform](#). This year, the LGA will be undertaking a programme of work which will include examining how councils report any pay gaps across their workforce, particularly in relation to employees with certain protected characteristics.

The National Employers propose the NJC Joint Secretaries discuss options for working together to capture pay gap information that will be of most benefit to the sector.

In response to the remaining elements of your claim:

- **A two-hour reduction in the working week, with no detriment**
The Employers reject this element of the claim in relation to a proposed 35-hour week (34 in London). Such a reduction would be out of line with norms in local government and would result in an increase in costs that would adversely affect local authority services.
- **An additional day of annual leave for personal or well-being purposes (with term-time only staff also receiving a full day rather than a pro rata amount, that they can use at any time, including term time)**
The Employers reject this element of the claim. All NJC employees currently receive a minimum of 23 days' leave (with a further three days after five years' service), plus two extra statutory days, plus public holidays. Many councils have a more generous basic leave entitlement.
- **A phased approach to reaching a minimum pay rate of £15 an hour in a maximum of two years, sooner if possible**
In order to achieve this objective would require increasing just the bottom pay point by 29.42 per cent over the period 2024-26. That would be prohibitively expensive for councils at any time, not least during the current difficult financial circumstances.

The National Employers of course respect that each of your unions will have its own processes and procedures to follow, but we urge you all to please try and synchronise the timing and duration of your membership consultations in order that a final agreement is reached so that employees, who continue to provide such critical support to their communities, can receive this award as soon as is practicable.

A prompt settlement this year would give us the necessary opportunity to begin negotiating a redesigned national pay spine, as was agreed by us all in the 2023 NJC agreement. The National Employers today recommitted to this objective, which will require intense and meaningful negotiations with the NJC unions.

Yours sincerely,



Naomi Cooke
Employers' Secretary

ANNEX A

SCP	Employer offer	Equivalent percentage
1	<i>Deleted wef 1 April 2023</i>	
2	£1,290	5.77%
3	£1,290	5.67%
4	£1,290	5.58%
5	£1,290	5.49%
6	£1,290	5.40%
7	£1,290	5.31%
8	£1,290	5.22%
9	£1,290	5.14%
10	£1,290	5.05%
11	£1,290	4.97%
12	£1,290	4.88%
13	£1,290	4.80%
14	£1,290	4.72%
15	£1,290	4.64%
16	£1,290	4.56%
17	£1,290	4.48%
18	£1,290	4.41%
19	£1,290	4.33%
20	£1,290	4.26%
21	£1,290	4.18%
22	£1,290	4.11%
23	£1,290	4.02%
24	£1,290	3.91%
25	£1,290	3.80%
26	£1,290	3.70%
27	£1,290	3.61%
28	£1,290	3.52%
29	£1,290	3.46%
30	£1,290	3.37%
31	£1,290	3.29%
32	£1,290	3.21%
33	£1,290	3.11%
34	£1,290	3.04%
35	£1,290	2.97%
36	£1,290	2.90%
37	£1,290	2.84%
38	£1,290	2.78%
39	£1,290	2.72%
40	£1,290	2.66%
41	£1,290	2.61%
42	£1,290	2.55%
43	£1,290	2.50%

PRESS RELEASE: 16 MAY 2024

Council employees' pay offer announced

Following the announcement of a full and final pay offer for council employees, Chair of the National Employers for local government services, Cllr Tim Roca, said:

“Council employees have been offered a pay increase of at least £1,290, which equates to 5.77 per cent for the lowest paid, from 1 April 2024.

For the lowest paid (currently earning £22,366 per annum), the offer means their pay will have increased by £5,323 (almost 30 per cent) over the three years since April 2021. For those on all pay points above the top of the pay spine, an offer of 2.50 per cent has been made.

The National Employers are acutely aware of the additional pressure this year's offer will place on already hard-pressed council finances, as it would need to be paid for from existing budgets. However, they believe their offer is fair to employees, given the wider economic backdrop.”

Notes to editors

The National Employers negotiate pay on behalf of 350 local authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland that employ around 1.5 million employees.

The total increase to the national paybill resulting from this offer would be £731.70m (4.03 per cent).

The National Joint Council for local government services negotiates the pay, terms and conditions of staff in local authorities. It agrees an annual uplift to the national pay spine, on which each individual council decides where to place its employees. Each council takes into account a number of factors such as job size and local labour market conditions when deciding an employee's salary. There are no nationally determined jobs or pay grades in local government, unlike in other parts of the public sector.

Separate national pay arrangements apply to teachers, firefighters, chief officers, chief executives and craftworkers.

-ENDS-

NJC LGS EMPLOYERS (incl JNC CRAFTWORKERS; JNC CHIEF EXECUTIVES; JNC CHIEF OFFICERS)

LGA NOMINATED

LABOUR: Cllr Peter Marland (Milton Keynes, S East)
Cllr Tim Roca (LB Westminster, London) **(Chair)**
Cllr Arooj Shah (Oldham, N West)
tbc

Sub: Cllr James Lewis (Leeds, Yorks & Humb)
Sub: Cllr Peter Mason (LB Ealing, London)

CONSERVATIVE: Cllr Lord Fuller OBE (South Norfolk, East of England)
Cllr Joanne Laban (LB Enfield, London)
Cllr Roger Phillips (Herefordshire, W Mids) **(Vice Chair)**

Sub: Cllr David Leaf (LB Bexley, London)

LIB DEM: Cllr Keith House (Eastleigh / Hampshire, S East)

Sub: Cllr Michael Headley (Bedford, S East)

INDEPENDENT: Cllr Doug McMurdo (Bedford, East of England)

Sub: Cllr Julian Dean (Shropshire, W Mids)

WELSH LGA NOMINATED

LABOUR: Cllr Anthony Hunt (Torfaen)

Sub: Cllr Jane Gebbie (Bridgend)

N IRELAND LGA NOMINATED

SINN FEIN: Cllr Christopher Jackson (Derry City & Strabane)

DUP: *Sub: Alderman Aaron Callan (Causeway Coast & Glens)*

NATIONAL ASSOC OF LOCAL COUNCILS NOMINATED

vacant

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SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Employment Committee

Monday, 8 July 2024

Report of Councillor Baxter, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for HR

Human Resources Policies

Report Author

Fran Beckitt, Head of Service (Human Resources and Organisational Development)

 fran.beckitt@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

This report seeks approval from Employment Committee for 7 (seven) refreshed Human Resource (HR) policies.

Recommendations

That the Committee approves the adoption of the amended South Kesteven District Council HR policies:

- **Disciplinary Policy**
- **Paternity Policy**
- **Probation Policy**
- **DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Policy**
- **Attendance Policy**
- **Recruitment Policy**
- **Flexi-time Policy**

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	All Wards

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 From a financial perspective, there is minimal budgetary impact by the adoption of these 7 new HR policies. The proposed Paternity Policy includes increasing fully-paid paternity leave from one week (current policy) to two weeks. As the amount of colleagues taking paternity is low, (15 in the last 5 years), the financial impact of this change predicted to be a yearly average of three weeks' pay, offset by claiming back statutory paternity pay which is currently £172.48).
- 1.2 The proposed Attendance Policy encourages employees to report and manage their absences more effectively as well as ensuring employees receive appropriate support and adjustments for their health and wellbeing which is therefore expected to reduce absence levels and the associated costs.

Completed by Richard Wyles (Deputy Chief Executive and S151 Officer)

Legal and Governance

- 1.3 The proposed HR policies comply with the relevant employment laws and regulations including recent changes to employment law regarding paternity leave.

Completed by: Graham Watts (Monitoring Officer)

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 In 2023, the Council began a review of HR policy to replace the existing handbook and instead have separate, clear HR policies which give colleagues comprehensive guidance and information.
- 2.2 The HR Hub was launched in May 2024 and is a central, online platform providing information, resources and support for colleagues. New policies are saved to the hub for easy access for employees.
- 2.3 The principles of the policy review are as follows:

(1) Succinct policies, in a user-friendly layout.
(2) Focus on informal resolutions where practical.
(3) Where relevant to go beyond statutory requirements to enhance the culture of SKDC.
(4) Provide clear guidance and support for managers and employees on the application of policies.
(5) Replace the wording in the handbook by clear policies so it is easy to locate the information required.
(6) Ensure consistency and fairness across all HR policies and procedures.
(7) Align with TeamSK values.
(8) Involve stakeholders in the policy development and review process through union representatives, the People Panel, CMT and Employment Committee.
(9) Update policies in line with the changing legal, regulatory and best practice frameworks.
(10) Ensure clear communication, transparency and access of policies.
(11) Regularly monitor and evaluate their effectiveness.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 The policies being proposed in this report are outlined below.
- 3.2 Disciplinary Policy (Appendix B) - We aim for SKDC to be a great place to work where all employees respect each other and the business by behaving in line with our business standards. This policy is designed to encourage all employees to maintain standards of conduct including behaviour. It also outlines the approach that will be taken if an employee does not meet the expected standards of conduct and behaviour.

- 3.3 Paternity Policy (Appendix C) – Supports colleagues in balancing work and family commitments through our paternity leave policy.
- 3.4 Probation Policy (Appendix D) – Details the probationary period at SKDC which ensures a fair and supportive process with consistent application.
- 3.5 DBS Policy (Appendix E) – The Council is committed to safeguarding the welfare of the public and ensuring that our services are delivered by suitable individuals. The purpose of this policy is to provide the framework to assess criminal records of current and potential employees.
- 3.6 Attendance Policy (Appendix F) – The purpose of this policy is to manage the attendance of employees in line with the values and culture of the Council and our commitment to provide the highest standards of service.
- 3.7 Recruitment Policy (Appendix G) – The Council has an ambitious People Strategy and aims to be an employer of choice with a positive reputation as a great place to work. This policy provides an overview of our approach to recruitment and selection at SKDC.
- 3.8 Flexi-Time Policy (Appendix H) – At SKDC, we are committed to maintaining a flexible working environment. Our flexi-time policy aims to provide colleagues with a framework for the operation and monitoring of the flexi-time scheme.
- 3.9 Appendix A provides the current policies and Appendices B-H are the proposed policies. The table below outlines the key proposed changes:

	What's proposed to change?
Disciplinary Policy	The process is largely staying the same, but this policy provides more details of what to expect in the event of a disciplinary. The timescales of warnings staying on an employee's file have been revised based (12 months for a first written warning and 18 months for a final written warning). We've also added a disciplinary outcome as an alternative to dismissal for gross misconduct cases – this additional outcome is for a final written warning with a compulsory transfer.
Paternity Policy	We want to improve the support to our employees when they go on paternity leave and are therefore proposing to increase the fully paid element of paternity leave from one to two weeks. This policy also incorporates recent changes to employment laws which give colleagues taking paternity more flexibility in when and how they take it.

Probation Policy	Our current probation policy is outlined in the employee handbook but this proposed refreshed version adds further information for new starters and their managers. In the uncommon event that a probation period could end in dismissal, we've added a 'Probation Hearing' to the process to ensure a fair process where the individual concerned is listened to and alternatives to dismissal are explored.
DBS Policy	DBS checks have been conducted for many roles at SK for years due to the nature of our jobs working with vulnerable people and sensitive information. We have recently changed how we do these checks and reviewed the roles that require one. This policy outlines the process.
Attendance Policy	The attendance policy provides details on the support, process and expectations when a colleague is unwell. This includes responsibilities to keep in touch, attend absence meetings and submit fit notes covering the absence period. The attendance procedure provides three formal stages plus an informal stage and reiterates our current policy on phased returns.
Recruitment Policy	Proposed policy contains further guidance and process information to guide through recruitment and the decision making.
Flexi-time policy	Nothing is proposed to change with the process of flexi-time – we are aware a lot of colleagues value the flexibility the current policy provides. This new policy just gives further details to help staff with the process.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 The Trade Union representatives have been consulted on the draft policies and they have been amended in line with this consultation.
- 4.2 The draft policies were sent to all staff to provide an opportunity for them to review, question and feedback on the proposals. The drafts were amended as a result of this feedback.

5. Appendices

- 5.1 Appendix A – Copies of current policies from the employee handbook
Appendix B – Proposed Disciplinary Policy
Appendix C – Proposed Paternity Policy
Appendix D – Proposed Probation Policy
Appendix E – Proposed DBS Policy
Appendix F - Proposed Attendance Policy
Appendix G – Proposed Recruitment Policy
Appendix H – Proposed Flexi-time Policy

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SKDC HR POLICY REVIEW

Copies of the current policies (from the Employee Handbook)

July 2024



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Disciplinary Policy



Current Disciplinary Policy

Disciplinary policy and procedure

Purpose

The procedure has been designed to help ensure employees achieve and maintain SKDC's standards of conduct. SKDC recognises that it is appropriate to distinguish between issues which are within the employee's control (such as inappropriate behaviour, breach of SKDC rules) and those that are outside the employee's control (such as health or capability). For this reason, SKDC operates a disciplinary procedure to address conduct related matters and a capability procedure to resolve capability issues.

The aim of the disciplinary procedure is to ensure consistent and fair treatment of all employees and as such the procedure applies to all employees.

Principles

No disciplinary decisions will be taken without a full investigation and the employee being given the opportunity to state their case. Employees may be suspended on full pay while investigations are carried out. Where an employee has been placed on suspension with pay and subsequently reports in sick, the suspension with pay period will be converted to sickness and normal sick pay entitlements will apply until the employee is technically fit to return to work, at which point the suspension on full pay will be reinstated. Suspension will be kept to a minimum whilst the investigation takes place and the employee will be kept informed if it is delayed. Regular contact (at least every two weeks) will be maintained with the employee during this difficult time. Disciplinary action under the procedure will normally be taken by the employee's manager. The manager will seek advice from or involve the HR team at every stage of the procedure. The manager may adjourn a disciplinary hearing in order to consider the case and any representations made by the employee before making a decision.

An employee has the right to be accompanied at a formal disciplinary stage by a fellow employee or trade union representative. It would not amount to a reasonable request for an employee to ask to be accompanied by a colleague whose presence would prejudice the hearing or who might have a conflict of interest. For the avoidance of doubt, the right to be accompanied does not extend to individuals not employed by SKDC (except for trade union officials) and would not therefore include legal representatives or family members. A management witness shall also be in attendance at the disciplinary hearing which may include a member of the HR team.

The procedure may commence at any stage where the alleged circumstances are sufficiently serious. Where the employee has already received a disciplinary warning then any further offence, whether or not it is of a different kind from that which led to the warning, may be dealt with at the next stage of the procedure.

Warnings will normally last for the periods prescribed within the disciplinary policy and procedure. In certain circumstances, SKDC may extend the duration of a warning. In some circumstances, other disciplinary penalties such as suspension without pay or demotion may be exercised, in addition to any warning issued.

Employees have the right to appeal against any disciplinary action in accordance with SKDC's appeal procedure.

Disciplinary procedure

Stage 1 - Informal warning

Where the issue is minor in nature, the employee will normally be spoken to on an informal basis by their manager.



Current Disciplinary Policy

Stage 2 - first written warning

A first written warning may be given, normally by the employee's manager, and may be necessary where there is unsatisfactory improvement following a recorded verbal warning or where there is a more serious first instance of misconduct. A record of the warning will be kept on the individual's personnel file and will remain "live" for a period of six months. The employee will be informed of their right to appeal.

Stage 3 - final written warning

A final written warning may be given, normally by the employee's manager, and may be issued where there is unsatisfactory improvement following a first written warning or as an alternative to dismissal. A record of the warning will be kept on the individual's personnel file and will remain "live" for a period of twelve months. The employee will be informed of their right to appeal.

Stage 4 - dismissal

If an employee's conduct still fails to improve the final step will be dismissal. A decision to dismiss may only be taken by a senior manager/director. The employee will be informed of their right to appeal.

Following the meeting, where the employee's employment has been terminated on disciplinary grounds, the employee will be provided, as soon as reasonably practicable, with written reasons for dismissal, the date on which their employment will terminate (in accordance with the employee's notice entitlement, where applicable), and the employee will be notified of their right of appeal.

Gross misconduct

SKDC reserves the right to dismiss without notice for a first offence, if it is established that there has been an act of gross misconduct. The following are non-exhaustive illustrations of gross misconduct offences which may lead to summary dismissal:

- Failure to carry out reasonable and proper instructions of management including serious insubordination
- Breach of SKDC's rules and regulations and/or those of any relevant regulatory authority
- Fighting, threatening or abusive behaviour towards, for example, another employee, service users or member of the general public
- Any conduct liable (or potentially liable) to bring SKDC and/or the employee in the capacity as a representative of SKDC into disrepute
- Serious negligence or gross incompetence which causes loss, damage or injury to SKDC or its service users including loss of SKDC property, e.g. vehicles, computer equipment, etc
- Serious breach of safety regulations including breach of no smoking rules
- A criminal conviction for action which makes an employee (or potentially makes an employee) unsuited to or incapable of carrying out their type of work
- Non-compliance with SKDC's information technology (IT) policy, including accessing internet sites containing pornographic, offensive or obscene material and breaching the General Data Protection Regulation
- Issuing inappropriate, offensive or slanderous comments about an employee, service users or SKDC on social networking sites/chat rooms
- Theft or unauthorised possession of property belonging to SKDC, another employee or any other person

- An undeclared conviction or dishonesty
- Fraud, falsification of records or making false statements to SKDC with regard to matters of employment, including application forms, references, shared parental leave and pay, expenses and other information supplied to SKDC on appointment or thereafter
- All forms of harassment or victimisation (including bullying) of other employees or service users
- Acts of incitement or discrimination on grounds of sex, sexual orientation, race, religion/belief, pregnancy/maternity, marriage/civil partnership, gender reassignment, disability or age
- Serious incapability at work during working time brought on by alcohol or illegal drugs and/or the consumption of or sharing of alcohol and illegal drugs during working time
- Deliberate or reckless damage to property
- Misuse of SKDC's property or name
- Disclosure of SKDC's confidential or commercially sensitive information to an unauthorised person
- Gambling on SKDC premises or during SKDC time and distribution of any literature without SKDC permission
- Behaving in such a way as to breach the trust implicit in your employment at SKDC or behaviour that results in the working relationship being no longer tenable
- Being bribed – accepting, agreeing to accept or requesting of a reward in return for performing a relevant function or activity improperly
- Bribing another person – the offering, promising or giving of a reward to induce a person to perform a relevant function or activity improperly



Paternity Leave Policy

CG



Current Paternity Policy

INTRODUCTION

This factsheet is prepared for both employees and managers of South Kesteven District Council ("SKDC") and relates specifically to paternity arrangements only.

It is designed to provide information for employees who are "fathers-to-be" or another qualifying person.

OVERVIEW OF BENEFITS

PATERNITY LEAVE

A statutory entitlement for the father, to one or two weeks of leave to be taken within 56 days after the baby's birth. The right also applies to fathers adopting and the definition of father also extends to same sex couples.

To initiate a Paternity Leave request, the employee will need to complete:

- *F005 Notification of Request to take Paternity Leave Form*

TIME OFF FOR ANTENATAL APPOINTMENTS

"Fathers-to-be" (or another qualifying person) have the right to unpaid time off to accompany a pregnant woman to two antenatal appointments. The total time off during working hours for each appointment should be no more than six and a half hours.

BEFORE COMMENCING YOUR PATERNITY LEAVE

Am I entitled to Paternity Leave?

To qualify for Paternity Leave you must satisfy the following conditions:

- Have been continuously employed by SKDC for at least 26 weeks by the end of the 15th week before the expected week of the child's birth (EWC)
- Be the father of the child, or the mother's husband or partner and
- Be fully involved in the child's upbringing and taking the time off to support the mother or care for the baby

Does the right to Paternity Leave apply to the adoptive "father"?

Yes

How much Paternity Leave am I entitled to?

You can take either one or two weeks. You cannot take individual days off, and if you take two weeks they must be taken together.

Do I receive pay for Paternity Leave?

You are entitled to one week at full pay and one week of Statutory Paternity Pay (SPP) subject to your earnings being above the lower earnings level.

How much notice must I give SKDC of my intention to take Paternity Leave?

You must provide SKDC with at least 28 days of notice of the date on which you want your Paternity Leave to start, by completing a F005 Notification of Request to Take Paternity Leave Form. Please send the completed form to the HR team.

When can I start my Paternity Leave?

You can start your statutory leave either:

- On the day the baby is born
- A number of days or weeks after the baby's born
- From a specific date after the first day of the week in which the baby is expected to be born

You cannot start your Paternity Leave before the baby is born.

When must I take my Paternity Leave by?

Your statutory leave must finish within 56 days of the baby being born.

What happens to my terms and conditions during a period of Paternity Leave?

All "non-cash" benefits will continue during the period of Paternity Leave.

How should a request to attend an antenatal appointment be made?

You need to confirm in writing the following information:

- You have a qualifying relationship (e.g. you are the baby's father, or a partner (of either sex) in an enduring relationship or intended parents of a child in a surrogacy arrangement)
- You are taking time off specifically to attend the antenatal appointment with her
- The appointment has been made on the advice of a registered medical practitioner, midwife or nurse
- The date and time of the appointment

If the information provided is found to be deliberately false or misleading, then there may be grounds for disciplinary action.

Can time off for antenatal appointments be refused?

Yes, where it is reasonable to do so, i.e. for operational reasons. However, all requests will be carefully considered before doing so.



Probation Policy



Current Probation Policy

Beginning employment

Documentation required to get you started

To help us get you started with SKDC, we need you to provide us with the following information as quickly as possible:

- Signed copy of your “Principal Statement of Main Terms and Conditions”
- F022 HMRC RTI Starter Declaration
- F041 Nomination of Death Benefits Form
- Proof of qualifications
- Driving licence
- Driving licence BETA check code
- Passport (to comply with the Immigration and Asylum Act)
- P45 from your last employer

Your induction programme on joining us

When you join SKDC, you will be provided with a comprehensive induction programme which aims to help you settle into your new role as quickly as possible and share with you the things you need to know. We will also ensure that you are issued with the equipment that you need to do your job as quickly as possible.

The probation period

All offers of employment by SKDC are made conditional upon completing satisfactorily a probation

period of six months. This period may be extended or reduced by us.

We will give you feedback during your first month, at twelve weeks and at 24 weeks on how you are doing and provide you with the opportunity to raise any questions or concerns that you may have.

We are confident that your decision to join SKDC is the right one. However, where we have concerns, after you have started employment, it is our aim to help you achieve the standards of performance and where appropriate, to provide you with support, should it be relevant.

During the six-month period we will monitor your performance against the following (although not exhaustive) criteria.

- Your performance to your job objectives
- Attitude and flexibility
- Attendance/timekeeping
- Relationships with colleagues and service users where appropriate
- Your fit with our culture



Attendance Policy



Current Attendance Policy

Employment shall be calculated on a pro-rata basis. This holiday allowance will increase by five days in the holiday year following your completion of five years of service.

Up to five days annual leave can be carried forward into the next holiday year by agreement with your line manager. SKDC operates an annual leave purchase scheme for eligible employees, allowing them to buy up to five working days, subject to management approval.

Sickness policy including reporting absence

SKDC operates a sick pay scheme providing payment for your sickness/injury. Periods of paid sickness are determined by length of service and are in accordance with the National Scheme. Allowances are as follows (see below):

Length of service at date of first day of current absence	Maximum benefit (including SSP) in preceding rolling 12-month period commencing from first day of current absence (pro rata for part-time)
Up to 4 months	1 month's full pay
5 months to 1 year	1 month's full pay and 2 months' half pay
1 year to 2 years	2 months' full pay and 2 months' half pay
2 years to 3 years	4 months' full pay and 4 months' half pay
3 years to 5 years	5 months' full pay and 5 months' half pay
5 years plus	6 months' full pay and 6 months' half pay



Current Attendance Policy

SKDC will pay, (where appropriate) any Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) in accordance with the rules and entitlements in force at the time. Sick pay and SSP will not be paid where the employee has failed to comply with SKDC's absence notification procedure.

The period of allowance will be calculated on a rolling year basis. All absences in the twelve months immediately preceding the first day of any sickness absence will be deducted from the maximum period of allowance. The balance of allowance will be allocated to the latest sickness absence. Entitlement to these periods of sick pay does not confer an entitlement for you to be continually employed for these periods.

As a matter of good practice, SKDC offers guidance to both employees and managers concerning absence. In certain circumstances sickness visits are undertaken by the HR team in consultation with line managers.

If you are unwell during a period of annual leave you must notify your manager or the nominated person on the day that you become unwell. You must obtain a fit note from your GP and submit this during your week of annual leave. Your annual leave record will then be amended. If you have to pay for this fit note, SKDC will reimburse the cost.

In the event of an absence arising from a third-party accident and the employee successfully recovering damages, the employee shall reimburse SKDC the cost of any sick pay paid by SKDC.

Further details regarding sickness absence and pay are contained within The National Scheme, a copy of which can be obtained from the HR team.

Absence notification procedure

This procedure covers time off work without prior approval from SKDC and absence due to sickness, accident or injury of the employee only.

If you are going to be absent from work, you should speak to your manager (or nominated person) personally by phone as soon as possible, preferably prior to the time that you start work, no later than one hour after your normal start time on your first day of absence, advising them of your reason for absence. If your absence is for reasons other than sickness this will be dealt with using the special leave policies.

During the first seven calendar days of absence, you should speak to your manager again at the end of each day of absence to advise whether you will be returning the following day. Texting, emailing, use of social media and asking a spouse or friend to ring on your behalf are not normally acceptable forms of communication. However, in very exceptional circumstances i.e. hospital admission it may be acceptable for someone to contact your manager on your behalf.

If you are absent for more than seven days including weekends, you must obtain a medical certificate (Fit Note) from your GP. This and any subsequent certificates should be forwarded to your manager as soon as possible. There may be occasions when your manager asks you to provide a fit note for an absence of less than seven calendar days. If your GP charges you for this SKDC will reimburse you the cost.

If your GP indicates you "may be fit for work" on a Fit Note, you will be invited to attend a meeting with your manager, before you are able to return to work.

On your return to work a "Return to Work" interview will be held.

Failure to comply with the above-mentioned notification procedure will invalidate any entitlement to sick pay.

Medical appointments

For normal doctor, dentist or other medical appointments, please notify your manager regarding the date and time. Appointments should be booked ideally outside of your normal working hours. Where this is not possible you may be asked to make the time up. This will be at the discretion of your manager. It will not count as sick leave unless you are absent for half a day or more. Reasonable paid time off for emergency treatment and hospital appointments will be allowed taking account of the nature and location of the appointment.

Managing absence in the workplace

In order to help us monitor and control absence in the workplace you will be required to attend a "Return to Work" interview with your manager upon your return to work from any period of sickness absence. Where an employee has an unacceptable level of short-term unrelated absences or an underlying long term medical condition, this will be discussed with the employee under the capability procedure. Further information on how absence is managed in the workplace can be found in the handbook factsheet below.

Handbook Factsheet 11 - Managing Absence at Work

Death in service benefit

SKDC provides you with a death in service benefit of a one-off payment of £1,500 to your next of kin within the rules of the scheme, if you are on a permanent contract. Please complete a F041 Nomination of Death Benefits Form on our intranet so that your wishes are recorded on your personnel file. Further details of the scheme can be provided on request from the HR team.

F041 Nomination of Death Benefits Form

Employee assistance programme

SKDC provides staff with access to a confidential employee assistance programme (EAP). The EAP is only available to the employees of SKDC. Information is available on our intranet or from your line manager.

Season ticket loans

After successful completion of the probationary period, employees are eligible to receive an interest free rail, underground or coach season ticket loan subject to the following conditions:

- Monthly repayment deductions will be made from your salary, the whole of the amount being repaid by the time the ticket expires
- The balance of the loan is immediately repayable at any time at SKDC's request
- The balance of any loan must be repaid or will be



Current Attendance Policy (Factsheet)

Handbook Factsheet 11

Managing Absence at Work



INTRODUCTION

All businesses need to monitor employee attendance closely and take the appropriate steps to ensure that absence issues are properly addressed.

Employee absence affects everyone – you, your work colleagues, the business and ultimately our customers. It is therefore important that we have a fair and consistent procedure that is designed to make sure that all absence issues are investigated properly, and that the appropriate action is taken to minimise the impact of high absenteeism. For this reason, South Kesteven District Council (“SKDC”) has introduced a set of procedures which are outlined below.

1. Absence Reporting

All employees are required to speak to their line manager prior to the time that they start work and no later than one hour after their normal start time, on their first day of absence, advising the reason for your absence.

During the first seven days of absence all employees must contact their line manager again at the end of each day of absence to advise whether they will be returning to work the following day.

Texting, emailing, the use of social media and asking a spouse or friend to ring on your behalf are not normally acceptable forms of communication. However, in very exceptional circumstances, i.e. hospital admission it may be acceptable for someone to contact your line manager on your behalf.

Where non-attendance is not reported pay will be deducted, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and may result in action being taken under SKDC’s disciplinary procedure.

2. GP Fit Note

Where an employee is absent for more than seven calendar days, they must obtain a Statement of Fitness for Work (Fit Note) certificate from their GP and forward to SKDC as soon as possible, but no later than the seventh day of absence if the Fit Note says the employee is “not fit for work”.

If the Fit Note indicates the employee “may be fit for work”, the employee should contact their line manager immediately and the manager should arrange to hold a meeting with the employee to discuss the GP’s suggested adjustments. At this meeting a decision will normally be reached on whether the advice of the GP can be accommodated. The advice of the GP is merely guidance and is subject to the employer’s agreement. Any adjustment will be temporary in nature and will coincide with the expiry date of the Fit Note.

The Fit Note will also stipulate if the employee is to be seen again by the GP at the end of the specified period. For any period of absence not covered by a fit note the absence will be treated as unauthorised and pay will be deducted. Action

under SKDC’s disciplinary policy may also be taken. It is the employee’s responsibility to ensure this occurs.

3. Return to Work Interviews

Upon your return to work (either normally or under a period of temporary adjustments), you will be required to attend what many companies refer to as a “Return to Work Interview”. The purpose of this meeting will be to review your absence, as well as discuss any work issues that have arisen during your absence. At the Return to Work Interview any trends in your absence pattern will also be discussed with you.

4. Medical Suspension

Where there are concerns about an employee’s fitness for work they may be suspended with pay on medical grounds until occupational health advice is obtained. This is to ensure that both the employee and SKDC are not exposed to an unnecessary risk. In these circumstances, managers will seek advice from the HR team.

5. Monitoring of Sickness Absence Levels

In order to ensure consistency in addressing absence issues and to help identify the best approach for dealing with high levels of absenteeism, it is essential that absence levels are monitored. SKDC will monitor absence on a rolling twelve-month period which will focus on:

- The number of occasions of absence in the rolling twelve-month period
- The number of days of absence in the rolling twelve-month period
- The reasons for absence
- Any particular patterns of absence e.g. Mondays

Where an employee has an above average level of absence SKDC will decide whether to invoke the Capability Procedure. The formal procedure will be instigated when any of the following trigger levels occur:

- Three periods of absence within the rolling six-month period
- Four periods of absence within the rolling twelve-month period
- Any period of absence of four weeks or more
- Any pattern of absence that gives cause for concern

Sickness absence that is pregnancy/maternity related will not count towards trigger levels.

6. Procedures for Addressing Unacceptably High Levels of Absence:

6.1 Short-Term, High Frequency, Unrelated Medical Absence

Where an absence pattern is made up of a series of short-term, high frequency, unrelated medical reasons the following procedure will be applied.

Informal Counselling

Where an employee’s absence record is becoming a concern to your line manager, you will be forewarned of this at your Return to Work Interview and advised that if there is no improvement the matter will be raised under SKDC’s Capability Procedure.

Handbook Factsheet 11

Managing Absence at Work



Stage 1 – First Formal Review

If a Stage 1 caution is issued following this meeting, one or more absences during the “live” period of this caution (six months) will trigger a Stage 2 – Second Formal Review meeting.

Stage 2 – Second Formal Review

If a Stage 2 caution is issued following this meeting, one or more absences during the “live” period of this caution (six months) will trigger a Stage 3 – Third Formal Review meeting.

Stage 3 – Third Formal Review

If a Stage 3 caution is issued following this meeting, one or more absences during the “live” period of this caution (twelve months) will trigger a Stage 4 Final Formal Review meeting.

Stage 4 – Final Review (Dismissal)

Where a Stage 4 meeting is held, the outcome will normally be dismissal.

Other points

At each formal stage of the procedure the employee has the right to be accompanied by a fellow employee and the right to appeal against any formal stage of the procedure. Each stage of the procedure will be recorded in writing and will also include the attendance of a SKDC witness.

6.2 Long-Term/Reoccurring Medical Conditions

Where the nature of an employee’s absence is either long-term or a reoccurring medical condition, the following principles will be applied.

- Consultation with the employee under SKDC’s Capability Procedure
- Medical reports from the employee’s GP/specialists, including referral to a SKDC appointed GP for a medical report where deemed necessary by SKDC
- Forewarning of the employee in writing where their employment is at risk of termination
- Consideration of alternative employment, where applicable and available
- Consideration of any reasonably practicable workplace adjustments, if appropriate
- The right of appeal against termination on ill health grounds

7. Other issues

The following attendance issues will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure:

- Lateness
- Failure to report any absence in line with SKDC’s Absence Reporting Procedure (see above)
- Self-inflicted absence, such as a hangover

- Fraudulently claiming to be sick will be treated as Gross Misconduct under the Disciplinary Procedure and will result in dismissal for a first offence

Where an employee has been placed on suspension with pay and subsequently reports in sick, the suspension with pay period will be converted to sickness and normal sick pay entitlements will apply until the employee is technically fit to return to work, at which point the suspension on full pay will be reinstated.



Recruitment Policy

73



Current Recruitment Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council has an ambitious People Strategy which aims to be an employer of choice with a positive reputation as a great place to work where people make things happen.
- 1.2 The Council recognises that its staff are fundamental to its success and needs to be able to attract and retain staff of the highest calibre and a strategic, professional approach to recruitment is essential to do this.
- 1.3 The purpose of this policy is to provide a flexible framework which promotes and supports the Council's corporate objectives, priorities and values and behaviours. It will take into account the need for new ideas and approaches and support the Council's commitment to ensuring a diverse workforce.
- 1.4 The Council is committed to promoting consistent good practice in the recruitment and selection of all employees. This policy and accompanying procedure is designed to assist those involved in the process to recruit the best candidate for the job on the basis of their skills, experience and aptitude.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to the recruitment and selection of all staff, including agency, temporary and casual staff, to the Council except the Chief Executive, the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer. These roles are appointed by the Council and separate arrangements apply in accordance with the Council's Constitution and any specific legislative requirements applicable.

3. OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 To enable the Council to meet business needs and provide a quality-driven, added-value service to customers.
- 3.2 To recruit the right people who share our values.
- 3.3 To meet the Council's operational requirements and strategic aims.
- 3.4 Aim to have a workforce reflective of the demographic make-up of the community it supports.

4. PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 Recruitment and selection is a key public relations exercise and should enhance the reputation of the Council.
- 4.2 All candidates will be treated fairly, equitably and efficiently, with respect and courtesy, aiming to ensure that the candidate experience is positive, irrespective of the outcome.
- 4.3 All policies, procedures and guidance concerning recruitment and selection are communicated clearly to all employees.
- 4.4 All recruitment practices will be legal, fair and objective and take account of statutory obligations.
- 4.5 Recruitment decisions will be made on an evidence based process and candidates should be assessed against agreed selection criteria based on relevant knowledge, skills, experience and qualifications.
- 4.6 Line managers are responsible for recruitment. Professional advice and support is available at all stages of the recruitment process from the Human Resources team.
- 4.7 If a member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or family relationship with an applicant they must declare this as soon as they are aware of the individual's application and avoid any involvement in the recruitment and selection decision-making process.
- 4.8 The Council is committed to employment practices which ensure that no potential or current employee is treated less favourably on grounds of sex, race, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership or pregnancy and maternity.
- 4.9 [No Title] Council is committed to diversity and equality of opportunity throughout all stages of the recruitment and selection policy.
- 4.10 Documentation relating to applicants will be treated confidentially and in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA 1998).
- 4.11 Recruitment procedures will be monitored and reported on to analyse candidate experience, examine equalities data and set targets for improvement.



Flexi-time Policy

6/



Current Flexi-time Policy

INTRODUCTION

The scheme is designed to assist employees to accommodate variations to their working day/week and also to their place of work. This scheme is a replacement of any previous guidance and "core hours" have been completely removed to ensure maximum flexibility can be given to employees whilst ensuring that managers are able to manage their services effectively

Employees and line managers need to communicate and discuss for this scheme to work in the most effective and efficient way for South Kesteven District Council ("SKDC"), their service, the team, employees and managers.

THE SCHEME

The normal working week is 37 hours and normal hours for a working day are:

Monday to Thursday	7.5 hours
Friday	7 hours

Office opening hours for the public are:

Monday to Thursday	08.45 to 17.15
Friday	08.45 to 16.45

To accommodate flexible working the office opening times are:

Council Offices

St Peters Hill 07:00 to 19:00

The Maltings 08:45 to 17:15

Bourne CAP 08:45 to 17:15

Mowbeck 06:30 to 17:15 (Monday to Thursday)

06:30 to 16:45 (Friday)

Limited space available in some areas so please ring first, if possible

Guildhall Arts Centre 07:30 till late
(depending on programme)

Stamford Arts Centre 07:30 till late
(depending on programme)

It is understood that all teams work differently and provide a vast range of services, and the flexibility that can be given is not the same, therefore there cannot be a consistent approach across SKDC.

However, there can be consistency within service areas and managers need to make a judgement and put into place what will work within their service.

Employees will be able to work flexible hours provided that the following guidelines are met:

- An effective service is maintained to the public/service users
- Employees must ensure accurate records are kept of working hours
- Flexible hours may not be suitable for all services
- One break of at least 30 minutes must be taken if the working day exceeds six hours
- There is no prescribed maximum length of break
- Working hours are recorded in four-week periods, carry over limits of +/- 7.5 hours should apply, however any exceptions to the carry over limits can be made for business need and by mutual consent of the employee and the line manager
- Up to one full day per four-week period will be available as flexi leave, one day being 7.5 Monday to Thursday (3.75 hours a half day), 7 hours on Friday (3.5 hours a half day) - any additional hours over and above 7.5 may be taken by mutual consent of the employee and the line manager
- Flexi leave may be taken subject to prior approval by the employee's line manager

SCHEME GUIDANCE

If employees are regularly exceeding the number of hours surplus or regularly in deficit, managers must arrange to discuss this with them to discover the reasons why and help the employee manage their working time effectively. If necessary alternative flexible working arrangements could be considered.

Any employee who abuses or manipulates the flexible working scheme may have the benefit removed permanently. Deliberate falsification of timesheets is a disciplinary offence.

No additional payments will be made for work outside normal working hours unless prior agreement by your line manager.

Where employees attend external training courses, site visits, conferences, etc., any additional hours may be recorded.

Time off for optician, doctor and dentist appointments should not be recorded as working time. Reasonable time off will be given for employees to attend hospital appointments.





Disciplinary Policy

We want SKDC to be a great place to work where all employees respect each other and the business by behaving in line with our business standards. This policy is designed to encourage all employees to maintain standards of conduct including behaviour. It also outlines the approach that will be taken if an employee does not meet the expected standards of conduct and behaviour.

Contents

1.0	Introduction.....	2
2.0	Scope.....	2
3.0	Guiding principles.....	2
4.0	Employee obligations.....	2
5.0	Approach to Disciplinary - Informal Resolution.....	2
6.0	Approach to Disciplinary - Formal.....	3
6.1	Seeking an Explanation.....	3
6.3	Fact finding.....	4
6.5	Disciplinary Outcomes.....	5
7.0	Gross Misconduct.....	5
8.0	Disciplinary Appeal.....	6

Related Guidance:

- [Manager guidance and templates](#)
- [Employee Code of Conduct](#)

If you have any questions about this policy or require any further support, please contact the HR team by emailing hr@southkesteven.gov.uk

For independent support, our Employee Assistant Support service offer a completely confidential helpline for employees. Call 0800 716 017 to receive support for mental health, legal signposting, practical help, manager coaching and much more.

1.0 Introduction

The Disciplinary Policy outlines the approach that will be taken if an employee does not meet the expected standards of conduct or behaviour. Resolving issues informally with support and guidance will be used where appropriate to encourage improvement. Where the issue is potentially more serious, formal disciplinary action will be considered as outlined in this policy.

2.0 Scope

This disciplinary policy applies to all employees of South Kesteven District Council with the exception of the Chief Executive and Chief Officers.

No formal disciplinary action will be taken against an accredited trade union representative until the case has been discussed by HR and the Branch Secretary (after obtaining the employee's agreement).

3.0 Guiding principles

- Employees should make every effort to meet the business standards of conduct and behaviour.
- Issues can be dealt with informally or formally depending on the nature of the issue.
- Where appropriate, minor conduct issues should be dealt with informally before they become more serious.
- No disciplinary decisions will be taken without a full investigation and the employee being given the opportunity to state their case.
- Cases will be handled in a timely manner and where delays occur, the employee will be notified of the reason and when a decision is to be made.
- Employees in a disciplinary process will be treated with respect and kept informed.
- Employees may be suspended on full pay while investigations are carried out.
- HR may support cases providing advice and guidance.
- The disciplinary process should remain confidential at all times.

4.0 Employee obligations

South Kesteven District Council expects all employees to:

- Take a responsible approach to their work, residents and fellow employees.
- Maintain standards of conduct appropriate to their role.
- Seek help as soon as they recognise that they are in a situation which could compromise their behaviour or if they have any concerns regarding their job.
- Notify SKDC as soon as possible if they are charged with a criminal offence.
- Follow reasonable instructions of their manager.

5.0 Approach to Disciplinary - Informal Resolution

Informal resolutions may be used where the act of misconduct is not serious and has a limited impact on the Council.

Informal resolution could involve:

- An informal discussion where the manager and the employee resolve the issue without needing formal action.
- Using a 'letter of concern' to confirm discussions and inform that a continued failure to adhere to the rules could result in formal action.

The objective of this informal stage is to resolve the matters of concern, and formal action should follow only where it becomes apparent during the discussion that the matter is more serious than was initially apparent, or where the issues discussed persist following the discussion.

6.0 Approach to Disciplinary - Formal

In more serious cases, it is necessary to proceed straight to the formal disciplinary process and the employee will be informed of this.

6.1 Seeking an Explanation

The manager should try to seek an explanation from the employee to get some facts as soon as possible after the incident happens or is reported. This may include briefly questioning the employee to understand the situation and determine what the next course of action should be. This may include asking the employee and/or witnesses for written statements. The individual would not usually have representation at this stage.

6.2 Precautionary Suspension and Alternative Arrangements

Precautionary suspension should only be considered when a serious incident occurs or is reported to a manager. The main circumstances when it may be appropriate to consider precautionary suspension are (but are not limited to):

- Alleged inappropriate behaviour, for example violent or threatening behaviour.
- Alleged serious breach of conduct for example suspected or admitted theft or fraud.
- There is a reasonable belief that the investigation may be hampered if the employee remains at work.

Prior to a potential suspension, the manager should meet with the employee to seek an explanation of the facts of the case (see section 6.1). If the manager believes that the incident is serious and there is reasonable belief that the serious breach could be repeated and/or there is a risk to people, property or the good image of the Council then the manager should suspend the employee.

Alternative options to suspension should be considered such as temporary redeployment or an adjustment to the role be undertaken that removes the risk of reoccurrence.

It is important that all cases of precautionary suspension only last as long as necessary and suspension cases must be kept under review. Employees on precautionary suspension may be asked to return to work whilst the investigation is ongoing if new information means there is no longer a risk of the above.

Precautionary suspension will be with pay.

6.2.1 'Cooling-off' Period

It may be appropriate to initiate a 24 hour 'cooling off' period where an employee is asked to go home. In this case, they will agree a time for a discussion with the manager within the 24 hour period. The manager may need to gather more facts in this time before making a decision as to whether a suspension is necessary, e.g. gathering witness statements. The employee will be communicated with within the 24 hour period to advise of the next steps.

6.2.2 Sick whilst Suspended

In the event an employee is unwell whilst suspended, they should follow the normal sick absences process in line with the Attendance Policy. The line manager will engage with the employee to try and support them in their recovery. The manager will also explore potential adjustments to continue and conclude the sick absence process such as the facility to provide written submissions or other additional support for the investigation meeting or hearing. Occupational Health may be approached for advice on fitness to participate in the process and guidance on assistance that may help support the employee during the disciplinary procedure.

6.3 Fact finding

Where a potential disciplinary matter arises, a prompt and detailed investigation of the facts will take place. Employees, including potential witnesses, may be asked to provide a written statement shortly after an incident.

The fact-finding stage will include:

- A fair and balanced view of the facts relating the disciplinary allegations.
- A fact-finding meeting where the employee has a right to be accompanied by their union representative or by a work colleague.
- Examination of relevant documentary evidence and physical evidence (if applicable).

The fact-finding investigation is usually completed by the line manager but could be an alternative appropriate Officer. HR may provide support in the fact-finding meeting.

During the course of the investigation, the employee will be given the opportunity to respond to all of the allegations/concerns which may mean that the employee is requested to attend an investigatory meeting on more than one occasion.

Notes of meetings will be shared with the interviewee either as typed notes or, if agreed by all parties, an audio recording.

Following the fact-finding investigation, consideration will be given as to whether the case can be dealt with informally, formally or closed if there is no case to answer.

If the Officer who conducts the fact-finding feels there is a case to answer, they pass the case to another manager, usually the second line manager in readiness for a Disciplinary Hearing.

6.4 Disciplinary Hearing

The manager hearing the case will invite the employee to attend a formal disciplinary hearing. The letter will include the allegation(s) and will provide the employee with at least 3 working days' notice. The employee will also be sent copies of notes or evidence that will be referred to in the hearing.

The employee has a right to be accompanied by their union representative or a work colleague.

Where an employee is repeatedly unable or unwilling to attend the hearing, the manager will come to a reasonable decision on how to proceed and may conclude that a decision will be made on the evidence available.

At the hearing, the employee will be given opportunity to present their case and respond to the allegations against them.

6.5 Disciplinary Outcomes

Disciplinary actions are dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Employees will always be notified in writing of any formal action as an outcome to a disciplinary.

Penalty	Authority	Timescale
First written warning	First line manager level or above	12 months
Final written warning	First line manager level or above	18 months
Final written warning with a compulsory transfer*	First line manager level or above	18 months (for warning)
Dismissal with notice	Second line level or above	N/A
Dismissal without statutory notice (summary dismissal)	Second line manager level or above	N/A

*This would be at the same grade as the individual's original role.

Employees will be informed of their right to appeal (see section 8).

7.0 Gross Misconduct

Some types of behaviour are so serious in nature that if proved, they would warrant dismissal without notice (summary dismissal) and without pay in lieu of notice. It is not possible to construct a definitive list of what constitutes gross misconduct and all cases will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. However, the following examples show some types of behaviour which could be judged to be gross misconduct:

- Fraud, falsification of records or making false statements to SKDC with regard to matters of employment including in application forms, references, expenses and other information supplied to SKDC on appointment or thereafter.
- Theft

- Violence
- Serious negligence or gross incompetence
- Bullying or harassment
- Acts of incitement or discrimination
- Being under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Gambling on SKDC premises, using SKDC's ICT, or during SKDC time.
- Criminal acts (e.g. against the Council or our employees) or a criminal conviction which makes an employee unsuited to or incapable of carrying out their role
- An undeclared conviction
- Dishonesty
- Failure to carry out reasonable instructions of management including serious insubordination
- Breach of SKDC's rules and regulations
- Any conduct liable, or potentially liable, to bring SKDC and/or the employee in the capacity as a representative of SKDC into disrepute
- Non-compliance with SKDC's information technology policy, including accessing internet sites containing pornographic, offensive or obscene material
- Breaching Data Protection regulations
- Issuing inappropriate, offensive or slanderous comments about an employee, service users or SKDC via any method, including on social networks.
- Behaving in such a way as to breach the trust implicit in your employment at SKDC or behaviour that results in the working relationship being no longer tenable.
- Being bribed – accepting, agreeing to accept or requesting a reward in return for performing an activity improperly. Or bribing another person.

8.0 Disciplinary Appeal

Employees have the right to appeal against a disciplinary policy. If the employee wishes to appeal, they should put this in writing or email to the manager who imposed the penalty and HR (hr@southkesteven.gov.uk) within 5 working days of receiving the written explanation of the penalty. Employees should state the reasons for their appeal.

A hearing will be arranged with a Senior Manager and the employee will be notified in writing of the time and place of the hearing at least 3 working days beforehand.

The employee has a right to be accompanied to the appeal by their union representative or a work colleague.

In the event of a successful appeal and consequential reinstatement, continuity of employment will be preserved.

For further information about this policy, please contact the HR Team at hr@southkesteven.gov.uk.

- This policy applies to all employees within South Kesteven District Council unless stated otherwise within the policy.
- This policy does not form part of contracts of employment.
- The Council reserves the right to amend this policy from time to time.



Paternity Leave Policy

Supporting colleagues in balancing work and family commitments through our paternity leave policy.

Contents

1.0	Policy Statement	2
2.0	Eligibility	2
3.0	Guiding principles.....	2
4.0	Entitlement.....	2
5.0	Notice of intention to take paternity leave.....	3
6.0	Antenatal Appointments	3
7.0	Additional Entitlements.....	3

Relevant forms and letters:

- [Notification of request to take paternity leave form](#)

Related policies:

- [Maternity Policy](#)
- [Shared Parental Leave Policy](#)

If you have any questions about this policy or require any further support, please contact the HR team by emailing hr@southkesteven.gov.uk

For independent support, our Employee Assistant Support service offer a completely confidential helpline for employees. Call 0800 716 017 to receive support for mental health, legal signposting, practical help, manager coaching and much more.

1.0 Policy Statement

This Paternity Leave Policy sets out the entitlements and procedures for colleagues who wish to take paternity leave to care for their new-born or newly adopted child. It is designed to support the well-being of our employees by recognising and facilitating their roles as parents and support them in balancing work and family commitments.

2.0 Eligibility

Paternity is available to employees who:

- Have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing
- Are the biological father of the child or the mother's spouse or partner, or be the child's adoptive parent where the other adoptive parent has elected to take adoption leave, or be the intended parent of a child in a surrogacy arrangement where a parental order applies.
- Have worked continuously for the Council for 26 weeks ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth, or the end of the week in which the child's adopter is notified of being matched with the child.
- Give the correct notice outlined in this policy document.
- Where a stillbirth occurs after the 24th week of pregnancy, or a child is born alive at any time but only lives for a short time, employees will qualify for paternity leave if they would otherwise have been eligible to take it.

3.0 Guiding principles

The council's paternity leave policy is based on the following guiding principles:

- SKDC aim to support the holistic well-being of our employees and acknowledge the significance of family life.
- Employees who apply for paternity leave will be supported and not subjected to a disadvantage or unfair treatment.
- We recognise and value the diversity of our workforce and the different family structures and needs of our employees.
- We aim to facilitate a smooth transition for our employees who return to work after paternity leave, and to provide them with the necessary support and resources.

4.0 Entitlement

Eligible employees are entitled to:

- Two weeks of paternity leave at full pay, which can be taken as a single block or two separate blocks of one week each.
- Choose to start their leave on any day of the week.

- Take their paternity at any point in the 52 weeks after the birth or adoption.

5.0 Notice of intention to take paternity leave

An eligible employee intending to take paternity leave should inform their line manager and HR of their intentions by the end of the 15th week before the mother's expected week of childbirth, or as soon as is reasonably practicable. To initiate a Paternity Leave request, the employee completes the '*Notification of Request to take Paternity Leave*' form which includes providing the following information:

- the mother's expected week of childbirth (or, if birth has already occurred, the date of the child's birth);
- the amount and pattern of leave they wish to take;
- when they want the period of leave to start.

To change the dates or duration of paternity leave, we would usually request at least 28 days notice in writing to the line manager and HR, unless this is not possible.

6.0 Antenatal Appointments

An employee can accompany a pregnant woman to two antenatal appointments (regardless of length of service). This will usually be unpaid leave or, if applicable to role, flexi-time can be used.

7.0 Additional Entitlements

An employee may be entitled to take Shared Parental Leave in addition to the two weeks Paternity Leave outlined in this policy. Please see the Council's policy on 'Shared Parental Leave' for more information.

For further information about this policy, please contact the HR Team at hr@southkesteven.gov.uk.

- This policy applies to all employees within South Kesteven District Council unless stated otherwise within the policy.
- This policy does not form part of contracts of employment.
- The Council reserves the right to amend this policy from time to time.

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Probation Policy

This policy details the probationary period at South Kesteven District Council which ensures a fair and supportive process with consistent application.

Contents

1.0	Policy Statement	2
2.0	Scope	2
3.0	Guiding Principles.....	2
4.0	Probation Review Meetings.....	2
4.1	Three Month Review Meeting	3
4.2	Six Month Review Meeting	3
5.0	Extending the Probation Period	3
6.0	Probation Hearing.....	4
7.0	Dismissal Appeal.....	4

Relevant forms and letters:

- [Probation Form](#)
- [Welcome Journey \(Induction\)](#)
- [New Starter Guidance](#)
- [Letter confirming successful completion of probation](#)

Related policies:

- [Recruitment Policy](#)

If you have any questions about this policy or require any further support, please contact the HR team by emailing hr@southkesteven.gov.uk

For independent support, our Employee Assistant Support service offer a completely confidential helpline for employees. Call 0800 716 017 to receive support for mental health, legal signposting, practical help, manager coaching and much more.

1.0 Policy Statement

The Council recognises that a supportive and developmental probation process is important.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that new employees are supported and assessed during their probationary period and that any issues or concerns are addressed in a timely and constructive manner. The policy also aims to reinforce our culture of continuous learning and development within the council.

2.0 Scope

Newly appointed employees to the Council will have a probationary period which will usually last 6 months. This policy applies to all new employees including full and part time colleagues, those on permanent and fixed term contracts and regardless of seniority within the Council.

This policy does not apply to employees who are new to the Council as a result of a TUPE transfer or those on casual contracts.

3.0 Guiding Principles

- The probationary period is a two-way process that involves regular communication, feedback and support between the manager and the employee.
- The Council is committed to ensuring newly hired employees undergo a thorough, informative and meaningful induction which is tailored to their specific role. This probation policy operates in conjunction with the induction process.
- Line managers will conduct regular 'check-ins' or 'one-to-one' meetings with new starters as an important support mechanism.
- The probation period ensures newly appointed colleagues work with their manager so all reasonable development needs are identified and addressed. It also ensures the new employee is capable of carrying out the role to which they have been appointed.
- Line managers are encouraged to address any concerns with a new employee promptly, without waiting for a scheduled one-to-one or probation review meeting.
- The Council emphasise fairness and transparency throughout the probation period.

4.0 Probation Review Meetings

Line Managers will hold regular meetings with new employees – depending on the role, these could be 'check-ins' or more formal one-to-one meetings. These are an opportunity for line managers to provide feedback and check new employees are receiving sufficient support and guidance.

Line Managers will also hold a formal review prior to month 3 and 6.

In cases where employees have a disability or when a disability becomes apparent, the line manager will consider reasonable adjustments with the employee and implement where appropriate. It may also be useful to refer to Occupational Health for guidance and/or complete a wellbeing plan.

4.1 Three Month Review Meeting

During the three-month probationary period, employees at the Council will undergo a review to assess their performance, adaptability, and alignment with the Council's values and objectives. This review serves as an important checkpoint for both the employee and the Council to evaluate mutual expectations and contributions.

Managers will conduct an assessment, considering factors such as job proficiency, work behaviours and adherence to the Council's policies. Feedback from both parties will be sought to ensure a transparent and constructive dialogue, facilitating adjustments if necessary. This process aims to support employees in their professional growth while allowing the council to make informed decisions regarding the continuation of employment beyond the probationary period.

4.2 Six Month Review Meeting

Before the end of a new starters probationary period, the line manager will meet with the employee to conduct a final review of performance, progress and suitability for the role. This meeting is a two-way discussion between the employee and their manager and is an opportunity to ensure clarity regarding the role, provide constructive feedback and discuss developmental plans.

The outcome of this meeting will be a decision to:

- Confirm the employee's permanent appointment or;
- Extend the probationary period (please see section 4.3), or;
- Invite the employee to a probationary hearing if the line manager considers that further support or training is unlikely to lead to a satisfactory standard of performance.

5.0 Extending the Probation Period

Under certain circumstances, the probation period may be extended beyond the six months. An extension would be for a maximum of three months. This could be (but is not limited to) the following reasons:

- Inability to assess performance due to the employee's absence from the workplace for an extended period.
- Concerns about performance along with evidence to suggest performance is likely to improve with an extension to the probation period.

This outcome would be confirmed in writing following the six month review meeting, explaining the grounds on which the decision was reached.

Shortly before the end of any agreed period of extension, the line manager will meet with the employee to conduct a final review of performance. The outcome of this meeting will be a decision to:

- Confirm the employee's permanent appointment, or;
- Invite the employee to a probation hearing

6.0 Probation Hearing

A probation hearing is most likely to occur following a six-month review or a review after an extension to the probation period. However, they can be held at any time within the probation period where there is justification to do so.

Employees invited to a probation hearing will be given at least 48 hours written notice and may be accompanied to the probation meeting if they wish (usually by a Trade Union representative or work colleague). An HR representative will also be present at this meeting.

The hearing serves as a platform for open communication and consideration of alternatives to dismissal.

If the employee does not attend the probation hearing, the hearing may either proceed in their absence or be adjourned taking into consideration the reasons for their non-attendance.

Where a manager decides to terminate employment, the employee would usually be dismissed with notice, unless an allegation of gross misconduct is upheld where dismissal without notice may occur. The employee will be informed of the outcome either at the probation hearing, or within 5 working days after the meeting. Confirmation of the termination will be provided in writing to the employee, with the reasons explained, along with details of their right to appeal.

7.0 Dismissal Appeal

Employees who are dismissed during their probationary period have the right to appeal against the decision. To do this, employees can lodge an appeal within 5 working days of being notified of a decision by emailing HR (hr@southkesteven.gov.uk).

An appropriate Appeals Manager will be appointed, usually either the relevant Head of Service, Assistant Director or the Second Line Manager. The Appeals Manager will arrange an appeal meeting to consider the matter which would normally be held within 14 days from receipt of the appeal. Employees may, if they wish, be accompanied to the appeal meeting and this would usually be a work colleague or Trade Union representative.

The employee will be informed of the outcome of the appeal no later than 10 working days after the appeal meeting.

This is the final part of the process and there are no further rights to appeal.

For further information about this policy, please contact the HR Team at hr@southkesteven.gov.uk.

- This policy applies to all employees within South Kesteven District Council unless stated otherwise within the policy.
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DBS Policy

The Council is committed to safeguarding the welfare of the public and ensuring that our services are delivered by suitable individuals. The purpose of this policy is to provide the framework to assess criminal records of current and potential employees.

Contents

1.0	Policy Statement	2
2.0	Scope	2
3.0	Guiding principles.....	2
4.0	What is a DBS check?.....	2
5.0	Process for new starters	2
6.0	The DBS Check.....	3
7.0	Renewing DBS Checks.....	3
8.0	Criminal Records	3
8.1	Current Employees Criminal Offences	3
8.2	DBS returned with Criminal Record - Current Employees...	4
8.3	DBS returned with Criminal Record – Job Applicant.....	4
9.0	Appeals of the DBS outcome.....	4
10.0	Data Protection	4

Relevant documents:

- [List of roles requiring DBS checks](#)

Related external links:

- [DBS Code of Practice \(External\)](#)
- [Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [Care Check](#)
- [DBS Service's Eligibility](#)

If you have any questions about this policy or require any further support, please contact the HR team by emailing hr@southkesteven.gov.uk

For independent support, our Employee Assistant Support service offer a completely confidential helpline for employees. Call 0800 716 017 to receive support for mental health, legal signposting, practical help, manager coaching and much more.

1.0 Policy Statement

The Council requires all employees who work in certain positions to undergo a basic Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check before they start their employment and every two years thereafter. Some roles, for example in CCTV, may require a different level of DBS check, alongside other vetting checks.

2.0 Scope

Employees and potential employees will be required to partake in a DBS check if they work in a role assessed as requiring one. The list of roles requiring a DBS is usually based on contact with children, vulnerable adults or sensitive information.

Different roles may require different levels of checks and the Council will use the Government's [DBS Service's Eligibility Tool](#) to determine which level of check is appropriate for which role. For the majority of positions in the Council which require a DBS check, it is a basic check which shows unspent convictions and conditional cautions.

The current list of roles requiring a DBS can be found [here](#). The Council reserves the right to request a DBS check for any other position that it deems necessary for the protection of the public or the Council's reputation.

3.0 Guiding principles

- The Council will treat all applicants and employees fairly and consistently throughout this process.
- The Council will comply with the DBS Code of Practice and Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, and will not discriminate against anyone on the basis of their criminal record.
- The Council will assess the relevance and proportionality of the DBS check requirement for each position and will only request a DBS check when it is necessary and justified.
- The Council will respect the privacy and confidentiality of the applicants and employees and will only use and share their DBS information for the purpose of making recruitment and employment decisions.

4.0 What is a DBS check?

DBS stands for Disclosure and Barring Service and is a process used to identify relevant offences in an individual's criminal record.

5.0 Process for new starters

Roles which require DBS checks will include this within the job advert and the conditional job offer letter provided to the successful applicant.

Individuals will be sent a link to complete the DBS check and will be supported to do so, alongside other new starter vetting processes.

Once the DBS check is returned, HR will record the outcome and confirm the check is complete. The offer of work may be withdrawn if the candidate does not engage in this process in an appropriate timeframe.

New employees would not normally commence work prior to the DBS check being received. However in exceptional circumstances and with authorisation from a Director, approval may be provided. In such cases, a risk assessment would usually be conducted by the manager and relevant mitigation measures put in place.

6.0 The DBS Check

South Kesteven District Council employ an external provider called Care Check to manage the process of DBS checks. This includes an ID check as they must ensure an individual's identity is properly verified.

Care Check will email a link and guidance to individuals asking them to submit the relevant information. The outcome will then be emailed back to the individual, as well as being shared with HR via a portal.

7.0 Renewing DBS Checks

All employees who are subject to this policy must renew their basic DBS check every two years from the date of issue.

When notified that a DBS needs rechecking, the employee should follow the process with Care Check to complete the renewal process.

Employees who hold a DBS undertaken by South Kesteven District Council will not require further clearance if they change position within the Council unless it has been more than two years since the previous DBS was undertaken.

8.0 Criminal Records

8.1 Current Employees Criminal Offences

Existing employees who are cautioned, charged, summonsed or convicted of a criminal offence should inform their line manager and HR immediately in writing (i.e. an email). This information will be reviewed by the line manager and HR, and consideration will be given as to whether such conviction or caution could affect an individual's ability to fulfil their contract.

Depending on the seriousness and circumstances of the criminal record and the job the employee is employed in, the Council may consider the offence as warranting a disciplinary process which could result in actions up to and including dismissal for gross misconduct.

Failure to disclose such information is likely to lead to disciplinary action being taken up to and including dismissal for gross misconduct.

8.2 DBS returned with Criminal Record - Current Employees

If a DBS check reveals a criminal record of a current employee, the Council will assess the relevance of the record to the position in question. A DBS risk assessment may be appropriate to identify the level of risk the criminal record poses. This may lead to a factfinding investigation in line with the Council's Disciplinary Policy. In the investigation, the nature of the offence, the time that has passed since the offence was committed and any other relevant information will be considered. The disciplinary process could result in actions up to and including dismissal for gross misconduct in line with the Council's disciplinary policy.

8.3 DBS returned with Criminal Record – Job Applicant

If a DBS check reveals a criminal record of a role applicant, the Council will assess the relevance of the record to the position in question. A DBS risk assessment may be appropriate and offers of employment may be withdrawn.

The Council will comply with the DBS Code of Practice and the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, and will not discriminate against anyone on the basis of their criminal record.

9.0 Appeals of the DBS outcome

The DBS Service provides a right to appeal if an individual feels that information revealed on the DBS certificate is incorrect or does not relate to them. More information can be found on the [DBS appeals and disputes page](#).

10.0 Data Protection

The Council will store personal data produced by this process securely and confidentially in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the DBS Code of Practice.

For further information about this policy, please contact the HR Team at hr@southkesteven.gov.uk.

- This policy applies to all employees within South Kesteven District Council unless stated otherwise within the policy.
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Attendance Policy

The purpose of this policy is to manage the attendance of employees in line with the values and culture of the Council and our commitment to provide the highest standards of service.

Contents

1.0	Policy Statement	2
2.0	Scope	2
3.0	Guiding principles.....	2
4.0	Absence Reporting and Keeping in Touch	2
4.1	Long Term Absence	3
4.2	Occupational Health.....	3
5.0	Pay during sickness absence	3
6.0	Supporting an employee’s return to work.....	4
6.1	Return to Work Meeting.....	4
7.0	Formal Procedure.....	5
7.1	Absence Triggers	5
7.2	Informal Attendance Review Meeting.....	5
7.3	Formal Attendance Review Meetings.....	5
7.4	Appeal.....	6
8.0	Accident/Incident at Work.....	7
9.0	Sickness and holidays	7
9.1	Sickness During Unpaid Leave.....	7
10.0	Medical Suspension.....	7
11.0	Changes to Duties.....	7
12.0	Redeployment.....	7
13.0	Leaving with Ill Health	8
14.0	Medical Appointments	8
15.0	Other Absence	8
16.0	Personal Conduct Matters	9
17.0	Employee Assistance Programme	9

Relevant forms and letters:

- [Absence letter templates](#)
- [Return to work guide](#)
- [Attendance procedure guide](#)
- [Occupational Health guide](#)

Related policies:

- [Equality Act 2010](#)

If you have any questions about this policy or require any further support, please contact the HR team by emailing hr@southkesteven.gov.uk

For independent support, our Employee Assistant Support service offer a completely confidential helpline for employees. Call 0800 716 017 to receive support for mental health, legal signposting, practical help, manager coaching and much more.

1.0 Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to manage the attendance of employees in line with the values and culture of the Council and our commitment to provide the highest standards of service.

The Council encourages attendance and will support employees where health issues impact on their ability to be at work.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all employees working for South Kesteven District Council.

3.0 Guiding principles

- Employees will be treated with dignity and respect and their attendance record considered on an individual basis.
- The Council wants to provide employees with the advice and support to help them achieve consistently good levels of attendance.
- Employees should make every effort to meet the attendance standards.
- SKDC wants to ensure employees are provided with clear and consistent guidelines for recording, monitoring and reporting absence, as well as for addressing any issues or concerns related to attendance.

4.0 Absence Reporting and Keeping in Touch

When an employee is unable to attend work due to being unwell, they should advise their manager, or an agreed alternative contact. This should be by telephone unless other contact arrangements have been agreed. Employees should only use a third party to report their absence in exceptional circumstances.

The notification should include the following wherever possible:

- reason for absence and expected length of absence
- phone number and other contact information so the manager can keep in touch
- details of any urgent or outstanding work that needs picking up during the absence.

For absences not covered by a fit note, the employee should speak to their line manager at the end of each day of absence to advise if they will be returning the following day. Absences of more than seven calendar days require a medical certificate (fit note).

Employees should continue to keep in touch with their manager (or an alternative nominated contact) throughout their absence. The manager and employee must agree arrangements for contact during sickness absence including the method and frequency of contact (for example, a weekly phone call and a face-to-face meeting after 4 weeks absence). Face-to-face meetings will usually take place in at an SKDC site but by exception, if the employee’s preference is for a home visit, this can take place where this is a reasonable distance for the manager.

These arrangements are intended to facilitate supportive conversations that can include:

- enquiring after the employee’s health and wellbeing
- keeping the manager up-to-date with progress in relation to the employee’s health
- planning for their return to work and identifying support which might aid this.

If the employee feels the reason for the absence is related to work, a supportive meeting will be put in place at the earliest opportunity to try and address any issues and support the employee.

Where the employee fails to notify or provide appropriate certification, this may result in loss of pay and referral to other workforce policies.

4.1 Long Term Absence

Long term sickness absence is where an individual is absent for a period of more than 4 weeks. During this absence, the manager will hold absence meetings regularly.

4.2 Occupational Health

Occupational health advice will be sought as appropriate to assist managers in making decisions and support employees in their recovery. Our Occupational Health provider offers an independent, objective specialist assessing and advising both the employee and employer in relation to an individual’s health and their work. It is expected that managers would normally implement OH advice but ultimately it is a matter for the manager to decide if implementation is reasonable and feasible.

Where an individual refuses to attend a medical assessment or refuses to give consent for the Council to receive a summarised report of the medical assessment, decisions will be made on the basis of the information available.

5.0 Pay during sickness absence

If the employee has fully complied with this policy, the Council will provide sick pay as outlined in the table below.

Length of service at date of first day of current absence	Maximum benefit (including SSP) in preceding rolling 12-month period commencing from first day of current absence
Up to 4 months	1 months’ full pay
Between four months and one year	1 months’ full pay and 2 months’ half pay
1 years to 2 years	2 months’ full pay and 2 months’ half pay
2 years to 3 years	4 months’ full pay and 4 month’s half pay

3 years to 5 years	5 months' full pay and 5 months' half pay
5 years plus	6 months' full pay and 6 months' half pay

The Council reserves the right to withhold or suspend sick pay at its discretion. The decision to do so is taken by the senior manager and Head of HR. Circumstances in which sick pay may be withheld include:

- the employee not following this Sickness Absence policy, including the absence reporting procedure and attending absence meetings without good reason.
- not providing a Fit Note when required.
- not engaging with Occupational Health or attending a scheduled appointment without good reason.
- where there is reasonable grounds to believe the employee is doing activities (other work, sports, hobbies, etc.) that may delay recovery or make the condition worse.
- undergoing elective cosmetic surgery, in which case the line manager will usually authorise annual leave to cover the absence.

The employee will usually be entitled to receive SSP when contractual sick pay is withheld or suspended, although the Council can withhold or suspend SSP if it is not satisfied that the employee is ill and no evidence of sickness is provided when required (e.g. a fit note). Employees will be given written notice if their SSP or contractual sick pay is being withheld or suspended.

6.0 Supporting an employee's return to work

Following a period of long term sick, the manager will usually meet with the employee prior to their return date to discuss and agree arrangements, taking into account any professional advice (e.g. from Occupational Health). Where necessary this may include a phased return to work or other adjustments. Subsequent meetings may take place following the employee's return to review the effectiveness of any support mechanisms.

For phased return to works, the first month of any agreed plan will be paid at full contracted salary. Phased returns will not normally continue beyond one month but where this is agreed, salary will be reduced on a temporary basis or alternatively annual leave/flexi time may be used to make up the shortfall in contracted hours.

A typical return to work plan is usually working the first 2 weeks at 50% of hours and build up to normal contracted hours by end of 4 weeks.

6.1 Return to Work Meeting

Return to work meetings are held with employees after any absence. These are usually held with the employee's line manager and they are a good opportunity to discuss the absence and whether there is any support or adjustments required. The manager will also update on any important information that the individual may have missed during their absence.

7.0 Formal Procedure

The formal process may be appropriate where support mechanisms have been unsuccessful in improving attendance, there is a continued pattern of absence and/or the absence management triggers indicate this is required.

7.1 Absence Triggers

Using absence triggers is an important way of managing attendance. The Council has a set of absence triggers to help us identify attendance records that give us cause for concern. These are:

- three or more absences in a rolling 6-month period.
- four periods of absence in a rolling 12-month period
- any period of absence of four weeks or more
- any pattern of absence that gives cause for concern

Where one or more of the above applies, an employee will be invited to an attendance review meeting. 3 working days' notice will be given prior to the meeting.

There are four types of attendance review meetings:

- Informal
- Formal stage 1
- Formal stage 2
- Formal stage 3 - consideration of dismissal

7.2 Informal Attendance Review Meeting

These informal meetings can take place at any time when a manager is concerned about an individual's attendance. Employees can also request an informal attendance review if they feel it would be beneficial to discuss something that may affect their attendance at work.

The meeting is a two-way discussion which may cover any concerns about absence levels as well what could help support the employee maintain attendance levels.

7.3 Formal Attendance Review Meetings

Formal attendance review meetings are a two-way discussion between the manager and employee to explore the reasons for absence in more detail, the impact it has on service delivery, identify any underlying issues and to discuss support in bringing attendance up to the required levels.

Employees may be accompanied by a work colleague or Union Representative to any formal attendance review meeting. A notetaker may also be in attendance. If agreed by all parties, an audio recording of the meeting may be taken.

The employee will receive confirmation in writing of the outcome to a formal attendance review.

The outcome could be:

	Trigger	Possible outcomes
Formal stage 1	One or more of the following has occurred: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • three or more absences in a rolling 6-month period. • four periods of absence in a rolling 12-month period • any period of absence of four weeks or more • any pattern of absence that gives cause for concern 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not issued • Issued - First written warning live on record for 6 months
Formal stage 2	Stage 1 has been issued and a further absence has occurred within the live period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not issued • Final written warning live on record for 52 weeks
Formal stage 3 – consideration of dismissal	Stage 2 has been issued and a further absence has occurred within the live period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not issued • Dismissal (with notice pay in lieu of notice) • Dismissal (working notice)

Pregnancy related illnesses will usually be excluded when calculating absence triggers.

Where absences are specifically related to a disability, a reasonable adjustment may include revised triggers.

7.4 Appeal

Employees have the right to appeal against any formal stage of the absence procedure.

Appeals should be submitted in writing (including via email) to the manager who issued the warning within 5 calendar days of receiving the outcome.

Appeals against a warning issued at stage 1 of the procedure will be paper-based. A manager not already involved in the case will review the appeal and communicate their outcome in a letter.

At stages 2 and 3, the second line manager or another manager at the equivalent level will invite the employee to a hearing. The employee may be accompanied by a work colleague or Union Representative at the appeal meeting.

Following the appeal hearing, the manager will send the outcome in writing. The outcome of the appeal is final.

8.0 Accident/Incident at Work

If a sick absence is linked to an accident/incident at work, it will be investigated in line with the Corporate Health and Safety policy.

9.0 Sickness and holidays

If an employee is off sick and has pre-booked holiday that they are too unwell to take, they can ask for the holiday to be cancelled so they can take it another time. If an employee is already on holiday and becomes so unwell that they wouldn't have been able to attend work and this seriously disrupts the holiday, they can ask for these holidays to be cancelled. In this case, the employee would need to follow the absence reporting procedure and get a Fit Note from their doctor covering the period of holiday in which they were unwell (including within the first seven calendar days).

Individuals that are on sick leave and want to go on holiday need to let their manager know. The manager may want to refer to Occupational Health to ensure going on holiday will not be detrimental to recovery. Where an absence is broken by a period of annual leave the sickness before and directly after the period of annual leave will be treated as a single absence.

When on sick leave, employees continue to accrue annual leave. They will not accrue bank holiday leave unless this would take the individual below your statutory leave entitlement of 5.6 weeks per year.

9.1 Sickness During Unpaid Leave

Employees who are sick during a period of authorised unpaid leave won't receive sick pay, for example, on career break.

10.0 Medical Suspension

If by being at work we believe an employee poses a risk to themselves or others, we may suspend on medical grounds. This is to allow the Council to obtain medical advice to confirm if an individual is fit to be at work. This is not a sanction against an employee, it is a precautionary measure on full pay.

11.0 Changes to Duties

The Council may also temporarily restrict or make reasonable changes to duties if we consider these necessary for the safety of an employee or others. This will be done in consultation with the individual and where relevant in accordance with occupational health advice.

12.0 Redeployment

If an employee is unable to return to their role for reasons associated with ill-health, the Council will scope redeployment. This may be related to both short and longer term sickness absence and may be for a temporary period.

When redeployment is being considered, individuals will be consulted with to discuss the possible options for alternative employment and any training needs. Where necessary, Occupational Health will be consulted with to determine suitability of proposed redeployment.

If a reasonable redeployment option is refused, the Council reserves the right to consider the termination of employment on health grounds.

13.0 Leaving with Ill Health

An employee may have to leave the Council on the grounds of ill health when:

- Medical advice suggests they are unlikely to return from long-term sick absence
- They meet the criteria for ill health under the relevant pension scheme.

If an employee is unable to return to work and undertake their duties, after all options have been explored and following consultation with the employee and Occupational Health, consideration will be given to terminating employment on the grounds of incapability due to ill health.

In such cases, a 'Leaving with Ill Health' meeting will be held with you. Employees will have the right to have representation at the meeting by a work colleague or union representative. They will also have the right of appeal against any decision to terminate employment.

Where an employee is a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme and subject to confirmation of permanent incapacity, this will be determined by an independent registered medical practitioner. A contributing employee of the Local Government Pension Scheme will be paid benefits in accordance with the ill-health provisions of those regulations.

Although the decision to terminate an individual's employment is a decision for the Council, the payment of benefits under the provisions of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Administration) Regulations 2008 requires confirmation of permanent incapacity from the Council's Occupational Health Provider an Independent Registered Medical Practitioner and the granting of benefits is not therefore automatic.

14.0 Medical Appointments

Where possible employees should arrange routine doctor and dentist trips outside of working hours. Where this is not possible, employees should discuss arrangements with their line manager which could include using flexi-time to cover the appointment or unpaid leave.

Reasonable paid time will be allowed for emergency treatment and hospital appointments.

15.0 Other Absence

Absence related to other people (for example illness, injury or death of a family member) should not be recorded as a sick absence unless covered by a fit note. Such absences are covered under the Special Leave policy.

16.0 Personal Conduct Matters

In some cases, the Disciplinary Policy may apply rather than, or as well as, the Sickness Absence Policy. Such conduct matters include, but are not limited to:

- Not following the absence reporting procedure.
- Not following the Keeping In Touch procedure.
- Reasonable grounds to believe that the sickness absence isn't genuine.
- Giving inaccurate or misleading information about a sickness absence.
- Reasonable grounds to believe an employee is doing activities (other work, sports, hobbies, etc.) that may delay their recovery or make your condition worse.
- Undertaking any other employment, whether paid or unpaid without prior consent.

17.0 Employee Assistance Programme

The Council understands that being unwell can be very difficult. The Employee Assistance Programme (or EAP) is a 24/7 helpline that offers both telephone and face to face support. This is a confidential service and more information can be found on the HR Hub.

For further information about this policy, please contact the HR Team at hr@southkesteven.gov.uk.

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Recruitment & Selection Policy

The Council has an ambitious People Strategy which aims to be an employer of choice with a positive reputation as a great place to work. This policy provides an overview of our approach to recruitment and selection at South Kesteven District Council.

Contents

1.0	Introduction.....	2
2.0	Scope.....	2
3.0	Guiding principles.....	2
4.0	Expectations.....	2
5.0	Approach to Resourcing	3
5.1	Identification of vacancy	3
5.2	Approval of a vacancy	3
5.3	Sourcing and attraction of candidates	3
5.4	Selection and assessment	4
5.5	Checks, job offer, appointment and onboarding.....	4
6.0	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.....	5
6.1	Guaranteed interview scheme	5
7.0	Safer Recruitment	5
8.0	Retention of Records.....	5

Related Guidance:

[Recruitment Guidance Intranet Page](#)

[Recruitment Framework](#)

[Safer Recruitment Guide](#)

[Job evaluation policy](#)

[Career Paths](#)

[Equality Act 2010](#)

Templates:

[Job Description Template](#)

If you have any questions about this policy or require any further support, please contact the HR team by emailing hr@southkesteven.gov.uk

For independent support, our Employee Assistant Support service offer a completely confidential helpline for employees. Call 0800 716 017 to receive support for mental health, legal signposting, practical help, manager coaching and much more.

1.0 Introduction

The Council is committed to promoting consistent good practice in the recruitment and selection of all employees. This policy is designed to assist those involved in the process to recruit the best candidate for the job on the basis of their skills, experience and aptitude.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to the recruitment and selection of all staff, including temporary and casual staff, to the Council except the Chief Executive, the Corporate Management Team, Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer where separate arrangements apply in accordance with the Council's Constitution and any specific legislative requirements applicable.

3.0 Guiding principles

- All candidates will be treated fairly, equitably and efficiently, with respect and courtesy, aiming to ensure that the candidate experience is positive, irrespective of the outcome.
- The Council is committed to diversity and equality of opportunity throughout all stages of the recruitment and selection policy. We will ensure our recruitment processes are fair, transparent and in line with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion practices.
- Recruitment and selection is a key public relations exercise and should enhance the reputation of the Council.
- The Council is committed to working with employees to support them in developing their career with us.
- All recruitment practices will be legal, fair and objective and take account of statutory obligations.
- Line managers are responsible for recruitment. Professional advice and support is available at all stages of the recruitment process from the Human Resources team.
- If a member of staff involved in the recruitment process has a close personal or family relationship with an applicant they must declare this as soon as they are aware of the individual's application and avoid any involvement in the recruitment and selection decision-making process.

4.0 Expectations

Individuals who manage, or who are involved in recruitment should apply the following principles:

- Ensure an appropriate process is used for the level of the role being recruited to.
- Make decisions that are fair and non-discriminatory and based on the performance and skills of the individual.
- Represent the Council positively during recruitment and maintain our standards.

5.0 Approach to Resourcing

Our typical recruitment process is outlined below:



The overriding objective of our recruitment process is to assist in building a sustainable, strong and engaged workforce.

5.1 Identification of vacancy

Before any role is resourced, consideration should be given as to whether the vacancy needs to be filled in a like-for-like manner, or whether existing resources can be refocused. It should then be considered if the Job Description is accurate and the correct grade allocated. All roles should have a job description and roles below senior management should be evaluated through the job evaluation framework.

5.2 Approval of a vacancy

Hiring managers should follow the approval process before starting the recruitment process by completing a requisition form and seeking the relevant authorisations. All new vacancy requirements should be supported by the rationale behind the decision to recruit in order to make sure that the need to resource a vacancy is clearly defined.

5.3 Sourcing and attraction of candidates

As part of our recruitment, we will usually review both the internal and external talent pools to identify and maximise the use of appropriate candidate sources for vacancies.

Our commitment to providing the best service possible means that we recruit on merit i.e. we choose the best person for the job from the available field. Usually, jobs are advertised openly so we reach the widest field of applicants and promote equality of opportunity to all applicants. However, there may be circumstances where with auditable Director approval, the approach would preclude the requirement to advertise the vacancy for example if:

- There are succession plans in place.
- Recruiting an individual on an internal development programme, such as apprentices or graduates, or as part of a talent development approach.
- There is an opportunity to side-step an individual into a comparable role. In this instance, expressions of interest could be considered rather than a full advert published.
- There's a redeployment opportunity.
- It may be in the Council's and our employees' best interests to recruit internally only.

In normal circumstances, the Council will not re-employ, or re-engage as a consultant, an individual who has left on a redundancy package, dismissed, or through termination by mutual agreement or equivalent. In exceptional circumstances, this may only be possible with the Chief Executive's approval.

5.4 Selection and assessment

Shortlisting should normally be carried out by the hiring manager and at least one other individual using the scoring matrix process. A fair and unbiased approach must be taken towards shortlisting. Candidates must be selected on their suitability for the job applied for based on their application form and/or their CV/supporting statement.

It is expected that internal candidates will have informed their line manager of internal roles they apply for.

Selection methods should be appropriate for the level of the role and effective in assessing the skills and behaviours required for the particular vacancy/role. A variety of selection tools can be used depending on the nature of the post.

An interview is most commonly used. Interviews should usually be conducted by a minimum of two individuals, one at least of whom has had relevant training and is aware of equality considerations applicable to recruitment.

5.5 Checks, job offer, appointment and onboarding

It is essential that 'Right to Work in the UK' ID documents are verified before employment commences. This will usually be conducted either:

- through a Home Office compliant identity service provider
- internal document check with a copy retained and annotated to certify the date the check has been completed
- Or via a 'share code'

Two references should be sought for all appointees, with one usually being their current or most recent employer. If the candidate is internal, the recruiting manager may have a conversation with the

internal referee (most recent line manager). By exception, if the hiring manager may decide to progress with one reference and they should confirm authorisation of this as a file note to HR.

Onboarding

Onboarding plays a key part in shaping the perspective of new employees. Managers of new employees should play a full role in the induction process. There are differing induction requirements dependent on the role but it is important arrangements are made in advance using the 'Induction Guidance' documentation on the HR Hub.

6.0 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The equality legislation protects people in the workplace and places responsibilities on employers to ensure this. This means that selecting people for jobs must be on merit, demonstrated through fair and transparent criteria and procedures, and that consideration should be given for the need for reasonable adjustments that may be necessary to ensure an applicant can engage in the process.

Under the Act, people are protected against discrimination because one or more protected characteristics, which are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

6.1 Guaranteed interview scheme

The Council is committed to enhancing employment opportunities for military veterans/service leavers, care leavers and those with a disability. One way of doing this is by guaranteeing an interview to individuals who fall into one of these categories and who meet the essential criteria for the role.

7. Safer Recruitment

Some roles within the Council are subject to a Safer Recruitment process. This process includes a DBS check and a deeper level of reference collection. Please see the Safer Recruitment guide for more information.

8. DBS Checks

DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Checks are necessary for a range of roles at the Council to ensure the public, particularly vulnerable adults and children, are properly protected. This consists of a search for any unspent criminal convictions or conditional cautions. This section explains how the Council will undertake DBS checks as part of recruitment checks and thereafter during the course of a person's employment in order to protect the safety of our service users.

9. Retention of Records

In line with GDPR compliance, applications forms and interview notes should be kept for each candidate for 12 months to support the recruitment decision. Notes for unsuccessful candidates should then be destroyed securely.

For further information about this policy, please contact the HR Team at hr@southkesteven.gov.uk.

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Flexi-time Policy

At SKDC, we are committed to maintaining a flexible working environment. Our flexi-time policy aims to provide colleagues with a framework for the operation and monitoring of the flexi-time scheme.

Contents

1.0	Policy Statement	2
2.0	Scope	2
3.0	What is flexi-time?	2
4.0	Guiding principles.....	2
5.0	Recording flexi-time	3
6.0	Monitoring of flexi-time	3
7.0	Flexi-leave.....	3
8.0	Flexi-leave request process.....	4
9.0	Leavers	4

Relevant forms and letters:

- [Flexi-time Sheets](#)
- [Flexi-time guide sheet](#)

Related policies:

- [Flexible working](#)
- [Working time directive](#)

If you have any questions about this policy or require any further support, please contact the HR team by emailing hr@southkesteven.gov.uk

For independent support, our Employee Assistant Support service offer a completely confidential helpline for employees. Call 0800 716 017 to receive support for mental health, legal signposting, practical help, manager coaching and much more.

1.0 Policy Statement

South Kesteven District Council recognises the provision of flexible working arrangements, such as flexi-time, are important to employee motivation and wellbeing. This policy aims to provide employees with a framework to accommodate variations in their working day or week by giving them the opportunity to take additional hours accrued in periods of high workload or contracted hours not completed to be made up, at a later date.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to employees across all sites of South Kesteven District Council not subject to delivering their role within standard working hours.

Some eligible employees will, however, be restricted in their degree of working hour flexibility due to, for example, the stipulation of core working hours within their department to ensure the services they provide continue to be delivered effectively.

3.0 What is flexi-time?

Flexi-time is a scheme in which eligible employees have the ability to set their own working hour arrangements, namely start and finish times, within parameters agreed by their line manager such that business need continues to be met but they have greater freedom to accommodate day to day variations in their home and working lives.

Flexi-time facilitates employees accruing 'additional' worked hours when work load is high that can then be taken, subject to line manager approval, as flexi leave at a later date.

To accommodate employees flexible working hours, council building opening times are:

Council Building	Open hours
The Picture House	07:00 – 18:15
SK House	07:00 – 18:15
Bourne CAP	07:00 – 18:15
Mowbeck	06:30 - 17:15 (Monday to Thursday) 06:30 – 16:45 (Friday)
Guildhall Arts Centre	08:30 – Late (Depending on programme)
Stamford Arts Centre	08:30 – Late (Depending on programme)
Turnpike	07:30 – 17:15 Mon-Thurs 07:30 – 16:45 Fri

4.0 Guiding principles

- SKDC recognises the positive impacts of flexible working through flexi-time to:
 - Create a positive and inclusive environment

- Improve employee motivation
- Promote employee wellbeing and reduce sickness absence
- This policy is underpinned by the council's core values: Trust, Empowerment and Accountability. For flexi-time to function effectively, all colleagues must behave responsibly and with consideration for the other members of their team to ensure effective service delivery is maintained.
- Managers must ensure business need has priority when approving and implementing flexi-time arrangements within their team. Similarly, employees should not consider their eligibility for flexi-time an automatic right to accumulate additional leave hours. Hours completed by employees should reflect their contractual requirement, workload and service area demand.

5.0 Recording flexi-time

Eligible employees should document all hours worked on their [flexi-time sheet](#). It is the individuals' responsibility to ensure this sheet is regularly updated and that any documented hours accurately reflect their working day.

Deliberate falsification of timesheets is a disciplinary offence.

Where employees attend external training courses, site visits, conferences etc., any additional hours incurred may be recorded as working time.

Time off for opticians, doctor and dentists appointments should normally be deducted from time on the flexi-sheets. Managers will, where possible, ensure reasonable time off will be given for employees to attend such appointments.

6.0 Monitoring of flexi-time

All individuals flexi-time sheets will be periodically monitored by their manager to review:

- Their working pattern and hours continue to fit the organisations business need.
- Hours worked are not to the detriment of the employees' health. For example, will not lead to overtiredness or burn out.
- Individuals are not abusing the flexi-time arrangement.

Managers reserve the right to review, and if necessary, instruct the employee to change their working patterns.

7.0 Flexi-leave

The accrual of flexi-leave (additional worked hours) is automatically calculated by and recorded on an employee's [flexi-time sheet](#).

Employees are permitted to take up to 1 day (7 hours and 30 minutes) flexi-leave per working period (pro rata for part time). This can be taken, subject to managerial approval, as 1 full day, a respective morning and afternoon, or as a short breaks in the working day over the 4 week period.

Employees are also permitted to carry over up to one day accrued flexi-hours into the next working period. Any additional accrued flexi-time will be lost unless otherwise agreed with the line manager.

8.0 Flexi-leave request process

Requests to take accrued flexi-leave should be made in writing to an individual's line manager.

Managers will then consider each request for flexi-leave on a case-by-case basis. They will review the employees' flexi-time sheet for the period to confirm the required number of flexi-hours have been reasonably accrued. They will also consider current team workload and the potential adverse effects on service delivery of the employees absence at the requested time.

Managers reserve the right to reject requests if business performance would be affected.

9.0 Leavers

The council encourages hours to be used prior to the employees' departure date. If this cannot be accommodated due to business need, the employee may receive payment in their final salary for unused flexi-time if agreed by their line manager. SKDC will usually deduct salary equivalent to any unresolved hour debits of leavers, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

For further information about this policy, please contact the HR Team at hr@southkesteven.gov.uk.

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Employment Committee Work Programme 2024 – 2025

Chairman: Councillor Anna Kelly

Vice-Chairman: Councillor Gloria Johnson

Subject	Purpose	Outcome sought
4 September 2024		
Staff Engagement Survey	Share the results of the 2024 Engagement Survey	Employment Committee to note the findings of the 2024 Engagement Survey
Refreshed HR Policies	Continuation of the policy review, new policies for approval.	Refreshed policies for approval by the Employment Committee.
Subject	Purpose	Outcome sought
13 November 2024		
HR People Plan and Dashboard (6 monthly update)	Reporting on HR metrics for the first half of the 2024/25 financial year.	For consideration by the Employment Committee.
Items to be allocated in 2024-2025		
Chief Executive's Appraisal	Annual Appraisal (March 2025)	The Committee to note the Chief Executives Annual Appraisal.
Gender Pay Gap	Annual reporting of gender pay gap	The Committee to note the gender pay gap report.

117

Agenda Item 8

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