



WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

# Preventing Harassment and Bullying in the Workplace Policy

Date	Version	Author	Origin of Change e.g. TU request, change in legislation	Changed by
11 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	V1	Director of Finance & Resources	Employment Rights Act 2025 effective 6 <sup>th</sup> April 2026	Director of Finance & Resources

This policy applies to Weston-super-Mare Town Council

Date policy adopted	
Review cycle	Bi - annually
Review date	

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## 1. Policy Statement

Weston-super-Mare Town Council is committed to providing a working environment in which councillors, employees, contractors, volunteers and members of the public are treated with dignity, fairness and respect. Bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and victimisation are unacceptable and will not be tolerated in any aspect of council activity.

The Council has legal and ethical responsibilities to ensure that those working with or for the Council can do so in a safe and respectful environment. Behaviour that undermines the dignity or wellbeing of others can damage working relationships, affect the effectiveness of local governance and have a negative impact on individuals and the wider community.

The Council will therefore take reasonable steps to prevent harassment and to address inappropriate behaviour where it occurs. This includes the duty placed on employers to prevent sexual harassment under the **Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023**.

The Council expects all individuals involved in council business to demonstrate professionalism, courtesy and respect in their conduct and communications.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals involved in council activities. This includes council employees, elected councillors, contractors, agency workers, volunteers and, where relevant, members of the public interacting with the Council.

The policy applies to behaviour occurring in any context connected to council business, including:

- Council offices or workplaces
- Council or committee meetings
- Training sessions and conferences attended on behalf of the Council
- Council events or community activities
- Written or verbal communications relating to council business, including email, online meetings and social media.

The Council operates within close community settings, interactions between councillors, employees and members of the public may occur in both formal and informal contexts. Regardless of the setting, individuals representing the Council are expected to maintain appropriate professional standards.

## 3. Legislative and Guidance Framework

This policy is informed by relevant UK legislation and recognised governance guidance.

Key legislation includes:

- Equality Act 2010
- Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Human Rights Act 1998

- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Local Government Act 1972
- Localism Act 2011
- Employment Rights Act 2025

The policy also reflects recognised guidance and best practice including:

- Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) Code of Practice on Employment
- ACAS guidance on bullying and harassment at work
- ACAS Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures
- Governance guidance issued by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and county associations.

## **4. Definitions**

### **Harassment**

Under the Equality Act 2010, harassment is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Protected characteristics include:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Harassment may occur through behaviour, spoken words, written communication, images or gestures and may take place in person or through electronic communication.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

The Council has a duty to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees, including harassment carried out by councillors, colleagues, contractors or members of the public.

### **Bullying**

Bullying is generally understood as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour or an abuse or misuse of power that undermines, humiliates or injures the person experiencing it.

Examples may include persistent criticism, hostile behaviour during meetings, undermining individuals, or inappropriate communications.

### **Victimisation**

Victimisation occurs where an individual is treated unfairly because they have made or supported a complaint under discrimination or harassment legislation.

## **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

The Council as a corporate body is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively. This includes promoting a respectful workplace culture, ensuring appropriate governance arrangements are in place and responding appropriately to concerns when they arise.

Councillors are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of conduct in their role as elected representatives. Councillors must comply with the Councillor Code of Conduct and treat staff, fellow councillors and members of the public with courtesy and respect.

The CEO/Town Clerk, and other senior officer where applicable, plays an important role in supporting the implementation of this policy. The CEO/Town Clerk will normally act as a first point of contact for staff concerns and may provide guidance to councillors regarding appropriate conduct.

Employees are expected to contribute to maintaining a respectful working environment. They should treat colleagues, councillors and members of the public with dignity and professionalism and raise concerns where inappropriate behaviour occurs.

### **Councillor–Staff Working Relationships**

The Council operates within a clear distinction between the strategic role of councillors and the operational responsibilities of staff.

Councillors collectively determine council policy and direction, while employees are responsible for implementing those decisions and managing the day-to-day operations of the council.

To maintain good governance, councillors should not attempt to direct or manage individual employees. Instructions to staff should normally be communicated through the CEO/ Town Clerk or the appropriate line manager. Concerns regarding staff performance should be addressed through the council's personnel procedures rather than through direct criticism.

Maintaining clear and respectful boundaries between councillors and staff supports effective governance and protects employee wellbeing.

## **6. Training and Awareness**

The Council recognises that awareness and understanding are essential in preventing harassment and bullying.

Councillors and employees should therefore be familiar with the standards of behaviour expected within the Council and understand how concerns can be raised.

Training may be provided through induction, governance training programmes or through training opportunities offered by organisations such as the National Association of Local Councils, county associations or ACAS.

Promoting open discussion about standards of behaviour can help build a positive and respectful workplace culture.

## 7. Reporting Concerns

Harassment/sexual harassment and victimisation are unlawful and will not be tolerated. The law requires employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of workers in the course of their employment. All staff are encouraged to report any harassment/sexual harassment or victimisation they are a victim of, or witness, in accordance with this policy. Workers are also entitled to raise concerns about sexual harassment through the whistleblowing procedure instead if they reasonably believe the matter is in the public interest. Harassment/sexual harassment or victimisation may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal without notice if they are committed:

Concerns may normally be raised with:

- the CEO/ Town Clerk
- the Chair of the Council
- the Personnel or Staffing Committee.

Where a concern relates to the behaviour of a councillor, the matter may also be referred through the Code of Conduct complaints procedure administered by the principal authority.

The Council will aim to ensure that concerns are handled sensitively, fairly and without unnecessary delay.

Protection and support for those involved

Staff who make complaints, report that they have witnessed wrongdoing, or who participate in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Any disclosure that sexual harassment has occurred, is occurring, or is likely to occur may amount to a protected disclosure under the rules on whistleblowing if you reasonably believe the matter is in the public interest. Workers may raise concerns about sexual harassment under this policy or under our Whistleblowing Policy.

## 8. Procedures

When a concern is raised, the Council will seek to address the matter in a fair and transparent manner consistent with the Council's disciplinary and grievance policy and procedures.

In some circumstances it may be appropriate to attempt an informal resolution. This may involve discussion between the parties or mediation where both individuals are comfortable with this approach.

Where informal resolution is not appropriate, or where the issue is more serious, the Council may undertake a formal investigation. This may involve gathering relevant documentation, reviewing communications or meeting records and speaking with individuals involved or witnesses.

Following the investigation, the Council will consider the findings and determine whether any further action is necessary.

Depending on the circumstances, outcomes may include informal resolution, disciplinary action in relation to employees, or referral of councillor conduct concerns through the relevant standards process.

All investigations will be conducted as promptly and fairly as possible.

## **9. Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

The Council recognises that concerns relating to harassment and bullying can be sensitive and potentially distressing.

As far as possible, information relating to complaints will therefore be handled confidentially. Information will normally only be shared with individuals who need to be involved in investigating or resolving the matter.

However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where disclosure is necessary to properly investigate concerns or where information must be shared in accordance with legal obligations.

Personal information will be handled in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.

## **10. Related Policies**

This policy should be read alongside other relevant council policies, including:

- Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure
- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Whistleblowing policy

## **11. Monitoring and Review**

The Council will review this policy bi-annually to ensure that it remains compliant with legislation and reflects current best practice in employment and local council governance.

Reviews may take place following legislative changes, governance issues or where operational experience indicates that improvements to the policy may be required.



WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

# Leave of Absence Policy

<b>Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Origin of change e.g. change in legislation</b>	<b>Changed by</b>
<b>6th April 2025</b>	<b>V1</b>	<b>Government issue</b>	<b>The Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act 2023</b>	<b>H Morton</b>
<b>May 2026</b>	<b>V2</b>	<b>Government issue</b>	<b>Employment Rights Act 2025</b>	<b>Director of Finance &amp; Resources</b>

This policy applies to Weston-super-Mare Town Council.

Date policy adopted	
Review cycle	Annually
Review date	

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## **1. Introduction**

1.1 This policy sets out the Council procedures for managing leave of absence when you are unable to attend work, are taking annual leave or need time off, for the management of such absence in a fair and consistent way.

1.4 We wish to ensure that the reasons for absence are understood in each case. In addition, where needed and reasonably practicable, measures will be taken to assist those requiring change in a considered and meaningful way.

1.5 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and it may be amended at any time. We may also vary the procedures set out in this policy, including any time limits, as appropriate in any case.

## **2. Scope and purpose**

2.1 This policy covers all employees at all levels and grades regardless of status except those employees who are in their probationary period.

2.2 The purpose of the policy is to ensure that staff understand the Council's expectations in terms of attendance at work. In applying this policy, we aim to ensure that attendance is managed appropriately and consistently and that employees receive relevant support, minimising the disruption caused to services and staff from absences.

## **3. Medical Appointments**

In general, appointments to see a GP, dentist or optician should be made for outside working hours. Paid leave will not normally be granted for non-emergency visits. The Council appreciates that it is not always possible to avoid appointments during the working day and will judge each case individually in deciding whether any paid time off should be granted. In most cases, employees will be required either to use part of their annual holiday entitlement or to make up any lost time.

Employees who have a medical condition which will require regular appointments during the working day should discuss their situation with their line manager so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

You may be required to provide evidence of any appointment for which time off is needed.

Necessary paid time off will be granted for cancer screening.

## **4. Ante-natal Care/Adoption Appointments**

We recognise that some of our colleagues may not identify with the term 'maternity', so we have added the term 'pregnant parent' into this policy to ensure inclusivity. However, for simplicity, and in line with legislation, the term 'maternity' will still be used in our forms and systems, including payroll, so please note that where used, this term includes all pregnant parents.

## **5. Pregnancy Related Appointments**

Employees who are pregnant are entitled to paid-time off to attend ante-natal appointments provided that attendance is based on medical advice. For second and subsequent appointments you may be required to produce an appointment card or similar evidence of the date and time of the appointment.

While there is no limit on the number of appointments that an employee can attend, the Council does have the right to refuse time off where it is reasonable to do so. Employees are therefore expected to take reasonable steps to arrange antenatal appointments at a time that will require the minimum amount of time off.

Part-time workers should attempt to arrange appointments for days when they are not required to work and all employees should try to avoid appointments in the middle of the working day in order to minimise disruption.

If your partner is pregnant or you are a pregnant parent, you are entitled to unpaid time off for up to two antenatal appointments. If you wish to exercise this right you should notify your line manager of the date and time of the appointment. You may be asked to provide written evidence that an appropriate appointment has in fact been made.

## **6. Adoption Appointments**

Employees who are adopting on their own, or have elected to be the primary adopter may take paid time off to attend up to five adoption appointments in certain circumstances.

If you are the partner of the primary adopter, you may take unpaid time off on up to two occasions to attend an adoption appointment.

## **7. Maternity/ Pregnant Parent Leave**

As a pregnant parent you are entitled to take maternity leave which lasts for a maximum of 52 weeks. This applies to surrogate birth parents too. Employees with at least six months' service will also be entitled to be paid Statutory Maternity pay (SMP) for up to 39 weeks of their absence. Because this is a statutory payment there are a number of procedural requirements that must be met in order to make sure that an employee qualifies. The most important requirements are set out below, but if you have any doubts about the rules that apply you should speak to the CEO/Town Clerk or your line manager who will make sure that you have all the appropriate information.

### **Notification**

To qualify for maternity leave you must provide the Council, no later than the end of the 15th week before your Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC) (when you are approximately 6 months' pregnant) with the following information:

- a) that you are pregnant;
- b) the date of the week your baby is due (your expected week of childbirth or EWC);
- c) when you intend your maternity leave to start (this date can be changed later – see below); and
- d) you must provide the Council with the Application for Maternity Leave form (available from HR) and the MATB1 form from your doctor or midwife sometime after the 21st week of your pregnancy – please check that it's been signed no earlier than 20 weeks before your due date. You need to give this to your manager as soon as possible.

In some circumstances, the Council may be able to accept other medical evidence of when your baby is due, so if there is any difficulty in providing the MATB1 certificate you should discuss this with your line manager. If you intend to take advantage of the right to shared parental leave, you should inform the Council of this fact at the same time as you notify the intended start date of your leave.

### **Start of Maternity Leave**

Generally, it is up to you to decide when to start your maternity leave. However, your leave cannot begin any earlier than the beginning of the 11th week before your EWC. Where it is safe to do so, you may choose to continue working right up to your child's birth.

However, your maternity leave will begin automatically if you are off sick for a pregnancy-related reason at any stage in the four weeks immediately before your EWC.

If your baby is born before the date that you have notified as the start date for your maternity leave then your maternity leave will begin on the day following the birth.

You may change the date on which you intend to start your maternity leave, but you must notify the Council of your new start date at least 28 days before the original date given (or the new date, if that is sooner). If there is a reason why you cannot give this notice then you should explain the situation to an appropriate line manager and the

Council will attempt to accommodate your changed circumstances. However, the Council may need to insist on delaying the start of your leave until at least 28 days have passed since your notification of a changed date.

When your baby is born you should inform the Council of this fact as soon as is reasonably practicable.

### **Duration of Maternity Leave**

The standard length of maternity leave is 52 weeks. Once you indicate the intended start date of your leave, the Council will send you a written notification of your expected date of return.

Unless you give due notice to the Council of an earlier date of return, it will be assumed that you intend to take your full 52-week entitlement and you will not be expected back at work before your leave ends. You do not then have to give any notice of your return although it would be sensible to contact your line manager some time in advance to discuss any arrangements that may need to be made.

At the end of your maternity leave you are generally entitled to return to the same job as you had before your leave began. If you are away for more than 26 weeks, however, there may be circumstances in which that is not reasonably practicable. In that case, the Town Council will provide you with a suitable and appropriate role at the same level of seniority and on no-less favourable terms and conditions

### **Dismissal or Resignation**

While on maternity leave you remain employed by the Town Council and bound by your contract of employment. If you decide that you want to leave your employment you will need to submit your resignation in the normal way.

The Town Council will not dismiss you for any reason related to your pregnancy or your exercise of any right which arises from it. However, if separate circumstances require your dismissal (for instance, because of redundancy) then that will bring your maternity leave to an end.

If your position becomes redundant during your maternity leave then you will be offered any suitable alternative work that is available.

### **Maternity Pay**

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) is paid to employees who have at least 26 weeks' service immediately before the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth and whose pay is above the Lower Earnings Limit for paying National Insurance Contributions (this changes each year). Employees who earn below that amount may be entitled to a state benefit called Maternity Allowance. The Town Council will provide you with an appropriate form to help you claim this, where appropriate. However, if you have more than one year's continuous local government service immediately before the 11th week before your expected week of childbirth, additional rights apply, see below.

To pay SMP, the Town Council needs to be given at least 28 days' notice that you intend to claim it. This will normally be given when you inform the Town Council of your intended start date for maternity leave. If it is not possible to give 28 days' notice, you should give as much notice as is reasonably practicable.

SMP is paid for a maximum total of 39 weeks. The first 6 weeks are paid at 90 per cent of your normal weekly earnings<sup>1</sup> and the remaining 33 weeks are paid at a flat rate specified in legislation (this changes each year). Where you have more than one year's continuous local government service as referred to above, you will be eligible to be paid by the Town Council 90 per cent of your normal weekly pay for the first six weeks (offset against any MA payable) even if you are not eligible to be paid SMP.

1. This is based on an average of your total earnings in the eight weeks immediately preceding the 14th week before your expected week of childbirth

2. For these purposes, a week's pay is as stated in the contract of employment for normal working hours or, where there are no normal working hours, the average over the last 12 working weeks.

Where you have more than one year's continuous local government service as referred to above, and you declare in writing to the Town Council an intention to return to work after your maternity leave for at least three months, then, after the first six weeks of maternity leave, you will be paid for the next 12 weeks half a week's pay per week in addition to SMP or MA, subject to a maximum payment per week of your normal weekly earnings.

In the event that you do not return to work for three months following your leave period, you will be required to repay the Town Council any payments made to you in the 12-week period in excess of SMP or MA, or such part thereof as the Town Council may decide.

Your entitlement to SMP will be affected if you undertake any paid work (other than 'Keeping in Touch' days, described below) or are taken into legal custody at any time during your period of SMP entitlement. You should inform the Town Council immediately of any such change in your circumstances.

a) This is based on an average of your total earnings in the eight weeks immediately preceding the 14th week before your expected week of childbirth

b) For these purposes, a week's pay is as stated in the contract of employment for normal working hours or, where there are no normal working hours, the average over the last 12 working weeks.

### **Returning to Work Early**

Not every employee will want to take the full 52 weeks of maternity leave. Some may simply want to return to work early and others may wish (with their partner) to take advantage of the right to shared parental leave (see below).

In order to plan to accommodate an early return the Town Council is entitled to ask for 8 weeks' notice of the new date, and if that is not given, may delay your return until 8 weeks have passed since your notification.

In any event the law requires that you must not be permitted to return to work during the two weeks immediately following the birth.

### **Returning to Work**

On your return to work after a period of maternity leave you will have regular 1-2-1 meetings with your line manager in order to assess individual needs and enable workplace integration support levels.

### **Returning to Work Late**

Following your maternity leave, you are required to return to work on the date notified to you as your expected date of return. If you are unwell on that date then you should follow the sickness absence procedure set out in Section 6.2 of this handbook.

If you are entitled to begin some other period of leave (such as annual leave or parental leave) then you should ensure that you have followed the appropriate procedure for taking such leave as set out in this handbook.

### **Maternity Suspension (Health and Safety Reasons)**

Depending on the nature of your job, there may be circumstances in which it is unsafe for you to continue working while you are pregnant. In some circumstances the law requires a pregnant employee to be suspended on full pay or transferred to alternative duties. Jobs which may come under this category are identified in the risk assessments that the Town Council has carried out under its health and safety policy. If you are affected by any health and safety issues connected with your pregnancy then the Town Council will discuss any detailed arrangements that need to be made until it is safe for you to return to your original duties.

### **Adoption Leave**

Employees who are matched with a child for adoption may be entitled to take up to 52 weeks' adoption leave. Adoption leave is also available to individuals fostering a child under the "Fostering for Adoption" scheme.

Where two parents are adopting a child, only one of them may take adoption leave, and the other (whether a man or woman) is entitled to take paternity leave. If both adoptive parents qualify, they may each take shared parental leave.

The arrangements for taking adoption leave are similar to the arrangements for taking maternity leave, but there are several important differences. The key ones are set out below, but if you believe you are entitled to adoption leave you should discuss the situation with an appropriate line manager who will ensure that you have all the necessary information.

## Notification

If you intend to take adoption leave you should notify the Town Council of this within seven days of being notified that you have been matched with a child for adoption (or as soon as is reasonably practicable).

Your notification should set out:

- a) the date when the child is expected to be placed with you; and
- b) the date when you want to start your adoption leave.

As with maternity leave, you can change your mind about the start date provided the Town Council is given at least 28 days – or as much notice as is reasonably practicable.

The Town Council is entitled to require proof of the adoption which usually takes the form of a matching certificate provided by the agency placing the child.

Adoption leave is the same in duration as that of maternity leave and will last for 52 weeks unless you choose to return early or take advantage of shared parental leave. You may choose to start the leave from the date when the child is placed with you or at any time in the preceding two weeks.

If, for any reason, the placement is brought to an end – for example because the match turns out to be unsuitable – then adoption leave will continue for 8 weeks beyond the end of the placement. After that period of time you will be expected to return to work as normal.

## Adoption Pay

The arrangements for statutory adoption pay are similar to those for SMP (set out above). If you have more than one year's continuous local government service by the week in which you are notified that you have been matched with a child, additional rights apply in line with the maternity pay provisions above.

## Returning to Work Following Adoption Leave

Your return to work at the end of your adoption leave is on the same basis as for the end of maternity leave (set out above).

## 8. Paternity Leave

Employees with ~~six months' service will be~~ **are** entitled to take paternity leave if they expect to have parental responsibility for a child and they are either the mother's partner or one of the adoptive parents. The purpose of the leave must be either to care for the child or to provide support for the child's mother or adoptive parent.

For births or adoption placements before 6 April 2026, you will only qualify for paternity leave if you have 26 weeks' continuous service, either ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth or ending the week in which the agency notified you have been matched with a child. This qualifying period does not apply to births where the baby is due on or after 5 April 2026 but is born prematurely, or in any case where the mother or primary adopter has died.

There are a number of administrative requirements that must be met in relation to taking paternity leave and employees should discuss their plans with their line manager at as early a stage as possible. The following paragraphs set out the basic requirements, but there are additional requirements that must be met when adopting a child from overseas and employees in this position should talk to their line manager who will make sure that full information is provided.

Employees entitled to take paternity leave are entitled to take ~~either one or~~ two weeks of leave. ~~If two weeks are~~ which can be taken as consecutive or two non-consecutive blocks of one week and no individual days can be taken except with the agreement of the Town Council.

Paternity leave cannot start before a child is born or placed and must be taken at some stage within the first ~~eight weeks~~ year following birth (except when the child is born prematurely in which case the leave must be taken within the ~~eight weeks~~ 52 weeks following the expected week of childbirth).

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

In order to qualify for paternity leave you must notify the Town Council at least 15 weeks before the expected week of your child's birth and give at least 28 days' notice before the date you would like to take each period of leave or within 7 days of having been notified that a child will be placed for adoption. As an exception to this, if your expected week of childbirth falls between 5 April and 25 July 2026 and you had less than 26 weeks' continuous employment at the end of the 15th week for the expected week of childbirth, 28 days' notice can be given before the date you would like to start paternity leave in order to qualify for paternity leave. Your notification should specify how much leave you intend to take and when you intend the leave to begin. Should your plans change, you will need to give the Town Council 28 days' notice of any revision.

Statutory paternity pay (SPP) is payable during paternity leave, provided you have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment ending with the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth or the week in which the adoption agency notified you of a match, and your average earnings are not less than the lower earnings limit set by the government each tax year. Paternity leave is payable at the statutory rate, which is subject to change every year or 90% of your average weekly earnings (whichever is lower). You can check the most up-to-date figure with the CEO/Town Clerk or your line manager.

Where an expectant mother nominates a Town Council employee to assist in the care of her child and to provide support to the mother at or around the time of birth, the Town Council may grant the employee paid Maternity Support Leave. The employee may take up to 5 days' time off at or around the time of childbirth, as agreed with the CEO/Town Clerk or their line manager. There is no requirement to have a specific period of service to be eligible for this leave.

However, if you have more than one year's continuous local government service additional rights apply and you will be eligible for one weeks paid leave.

## **9. Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave**

This policy is intended to reflect the statutory provisions and provides guidelines only. If there is any conflict between this policy and the statutory provisions, the latter will prevail.

Employees are entitled to take statutory bereaved partner's paternity leave (BPPL) if a child's mother/primary adopter has died within 52 weeks of the child's birth/adoption placement and the employee is the child's father or partner of the mother/primary adopter and they have the main responsibility for the child's upbringing and be taking the leave to care for the child.

Leave can start at any time after your bereavement and be taken as a single period that can last up to 52 weeks after the date of birth/adoption placement. If the bereavement takes place at any point in the last two weeks of that 52-week period, you can take the leave for up to two weeks after the bereavement.

### **Notification**

To start BPPL in the first eight weeks after the bereavement

You, or someone on your behalf as necessary, need only give notice to us to do so before you are due to start work on the first day of leave. Notice can be given verbally or in writing. You must tell us: the bereavement date; the child's date of birth/adoption placement; and the leave start date. If you have already started work, then officially your leave period will start on the following day.

In addition, and no more than eight weeks after the bereavement and at least one week before the return date, you must tell us in writing how long you intend to be absent and the date you intend to return to work. If you intend to return to work more than eight weeks after the bereavement, you must also include, in this written notification, the child's date of birth/adoption placement and a declaration that you meet the necessary relationship condition to the child or to the mother/primary adopter and that you are taking the leave to care for the child.

If you want to cancel starting such leave or change the start date to another date also falling within the first eight weeks after the bereavement, you can do so by giving notice no later than the day before it was due to start or the day before the

new date (if earlier). If you want to change the start date to a date falling more than eight weeks after the bereavement, the notice must be in writing and given before it was due to start and at least a week before the new date.

To start BPPL more than eight weeks after the bereavement

To do so, you need to give us at least a week's written notice which contains all the information above, namely: the bereavement date; the child's date of birth/adoption placement; the leave start date; how long you intend to be absent; the date you intend to return to work; and a declaration that you meet the necessary relationship condition to the child or to the mother/primary adopter (including having the main responsibility for the child's upbringing) and that you are taking the leave to care for the child.

You can cancel starting such leave, or change the start date, with at least a week's written notice before it was due to start or before the new date (if earlier).

Changing the return to work date

You can change your return to work date by giving us one week's, or eight weeks' where it was more than eight weeks after the bereavement, written notice before that date or before the new date (if earlier). Your return date cannot be later than 52 weeks after the date of birth/adoption placement.

Pay and other leave

BPPL is unpaid, save for, if you are entitled to statutory paternity pay and have not yet claimed it, you may do so during your BPPL. Please see our Paternity Leave policy.

If you are eligible for statutory shared parental leave and pay, this is likely to be more beneficial than BPPL. Please see our Shared Parental Leave policy.

Compassionate, Bereavement or Dependants leave may be available, at our discretion, under our separate policies.

## **10. Parental Leave**

Parental leave is a flexible form of unpaid leave designed to help employees spend time caring for their children. Parental leave can be taken up until the child's 18th birthday and is available to employees **who have at least one year's service** and who have formal parental responsibility for a child.

The basic entitlement is for 18 weeks of unpaid leave in respect of each child. Parental leave must usually be taken in blocks of one week or more and no more than four weeks' leave will be granted in a single year. However, more flexibility is available in respect of disabled children and you should discuss your requirements with the CEO/Town Clerk or your line manager if this applies to you.

A request to take parental leave should be submitted 21 days in advance. While the Town Council will always try to accommodate requests for parental leave, it has the right to postpone any leave for up to six months in order to accommodate the needs of the organisation.

No postponement will be required if you choose to take your first instalment of leave immediately after the birth or adoption of your child. In such circumstances you need only inform the Town Council of your intention 21 days before the expected date of birth or placement. The leave will then begin automatically when your child is born or placed with you.

Parental leave is an entitlement that can be transferred from one employment to another. You may therefore join the Town Council with some outstanding parental leave attaching to a particular child. In such circumstances you should be aware that the qualifying period for taking parental leave still applies and you will need to have been employed for at least one year before you can resume taking parental leave.

### **Shared Parental Leave**

Shared parental leave is a flexible form of leave available to both parents designed to encourage shared parenting in the first year of a child's life. It allows a more flexible pattern of leave than the traditional arrangement under which the mother takes extensive maternity leave and the father takes a short period of paternity leave.

Employees who give birth or adopt remain entitled to take the full 52 weeks of leave if they choose to do so and the arrangements described above for maternity and adoption leave continue to apply. However, an employee may choose to share part of that leave with their partner provided that certain qualifying conditions are met. When leave is shared in this way, there is no need for the 'primary' leave taker to have returned to work. Both parents can be on leave at the same time, provided that the combined amount of leave taken by the parents does not exceed 52 weeks and provided that all of the leave is taken before the end of 52 weeks following the birth of the child or its placement for adoption.

Generally, parents will qualify for shared parental leave provided that both are working and that each has at least 26 weeks' service with their respective employers. To exercise the right, both parents must inform their employer that they intend to take shared parental leave – usually at the same time as the employer is notified that an employee is pregnant or plans to adopt. They must also give an indication of the pattern of leave that they propose to take.

A parent proposing to take a period of shared parental leave must give the Town Council 8 weeks' notice of any such leave. Depending on the circumstances, it may be possible for the Shared Parental Leave to be taken in intermittent blocks, with one parent returning to work for a time before taking another period of shared parental leave. Such an arrangement can only be made with the agreement of the Town Council. While every effort will be made to accommodate the needs of individual employees, the Town Council may insist on shared parental leave being taken in a

single instalment. Any decision as to whether to permit intermittent periods of leave is entirely at the Town Council's discretion.

An employee absent on shared parental leave will be entitled to a weekly payment equivalent to the lower fixed rate of SMP. The number of weeks for which payment will be made will vary depending on the amount of SMP paid to the mother while on maternity leave. Essentially, if the mother ends (or proposes to end) her leave with 10 weeks of SMP entitlement remaining, the parent taking shared parental leave will be entitled to be paid for the first 10 weeks of leave.

Because of the number of options available, shared parental leave can be quite a complicated entitlement. If you want to take advantage of shared parental leave you should discuss this with the CEO/Town Clerk or your line manager who will check that you qualify and help guide you through the procedure.

### **During Maternity/Adoption or Shared Parental Leave**

The Town Council is keen to keep in touch with employees who are on extended periods of leave, to inform them of any news and consult them over any changes which may take place in the organisation. However, we appreciate that many employees would prefer to be left alone at this very important time in their lives. In order to get the balance right, the CEO/Town Clerk or your line manager may, before your leave begins, discuss with you how best we can keep in touch while you are away.

Please be aware, however, that if an important issue arises on which you need to be consulted, the Town Council may have a legal obligation to discuss the issue with you and keep you informed.

## **11. Keeping in Touch Days**

Employees during a period of maternity, adoption and bereaved partner's paternity ~~or shared parental~~ leave are entitled to 10 keeping in touch days (KIT days). These allow the employee to attend work to catch up on the latest developments, undergo training or some other development activity, or to take part in important meetings without losing their right to subsequent pay entitlements. Employees on shared parental leave are entitled to a further 20 KIT days.

These 'keeping in touch days' are entirely voluntary and employees will not be required to take part, nor is the Town Council under any obligation to arrange for keeping in touch days. Any payment for attending work on such days will be agreed between the Town Council and the employee at the time the keeping in touch day is arranged. There is no legal requirement to receive pay for these days.

### **Pregnancy Loss**

Here at the Town Council we know that pregnancy loss can be a devastating experience whether it happens to you, your partner or the surrogate having your baby. We know that sadly it's more common than people may think and that the challenges at work are often misunderstood.

If you are reading this because you have been affected, we are sorry for your loss. We want you to know that we understand that for some, pregnancy loss whenever or however it happens is a type of bereavement and that getting the right support at work is crucial. The Town Council are committed to giving all affected colleagues the support that they need.

The purpose of this policy is to define what types of pregnancy loss are covered and give you information about what leave you can take.

What is pregnancy loss?

- Miscarriage – the spontaneous loss of a pregnancy during the first 24 weeks. If a miscarriage happens in the first 24 weeks of pregnancy, any sickness absence the birth mother needs to take is likely to be considered a 'pregnancy-related illness'. 'Pregnancy and maternity' is a 'protected characteristic' under the **Equality Act 2010**.
- Stillbirth - the loss of a baby from 24 weeks, during labour or birth
- Ectopic pregnancy – when a fertilised egg develops outside the womb
- Molar pregnancy – when an abnormal fertilised egg implants in the uterus
- Neonatal Loss – the loss of a live-born baby up to 28 days after the birth
- Embryo transfer Loss – when an embryo transfer during fertility treatment doesn't result in pregnancy
- Abortion or termination of pregnancy- a medical or surgical procedure to end a pregnancy

### **Pregnancy loss from 24 weeks (Stillbirth and Neonatal loss)**

The law and your rights are different if you are affected by pregnancy loss from 24 weeks.

If you are the pregnant parent and experience a stillbirth or neonatal loss you are entitled maternity benefits and do not need to use this policy.

As from 6th April 2020 colleagues who experience the loss of a child under 18 (including stillbirth and neonatal loss) are entitled to 2 weeks leave and statutory bereavement pay. This includes all parents including adoptive parents, foster parents and intended parents.

### **Time off**

All colleagues who have been affected by pregnancy loss (including partners and those affected by loss through fertility treatment from the point of embryo transfer) will be eligible for full paid leave if they are not able to access either Maternity or Parental Bereavement Leave. This includes whether it happens to you, your partner or the surrogate having your baby. There is no limit on the number of times you can take it if you are affected by more than one loss.

We won't assume to know how much leave you might need as everyone's situation is different. This Policy isn't about creating a one-size fits all approach. It's about

highlighting all the different ways that we can support you – so you can decide what works best for you.

It doesn't matter how long you've worked here or how many hours you work; all colleagues are entitled to this leave with full pay. As a guide, we'll generally give up to 5 days paid leave – but some situations may need more, or less.

It's important that you contact your manager as soon as possible if you are affected by pregnancy loss, so that we know what's happening and how we can support you. If you don't feel like you can speak to your manager remember we have an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) who can provide colleagues with support.

We would encourage you to let your manager know so that they can support you during this difficult time and help you return to work, however if you would prefer not to tell anyone please use the Absence Policy instead. Just so you know, any sickness absence that is recorded as pregnancy related does not count towards absence triggers.

If you have been affected as a family member (as a grandparent for example) and need time off to support your loved one, please discuss with the CEO/Town Clerk.

## **Neonatal Care**

The **Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act 2023** came into effect on 6 April 2025, providing a new leave and pay entitlement for parents with a baby in neonatal care.

Neonatal care leave ('NCL') is intended to support employees whose baby is receiving, or has received, neonatal care. In line with changes made to other forms of family leave in the Employment Rights Bill, employees can benefit from NCL from day one of their employment.

At the birth of the baby, the employee must be one of:

- the baby's parents,
- the baby's intended parents (applicable to surrogacy),
- partner to the baby's mother (who are unrelated and living with them in an enduring family relationship) with the expectation they will have responsibility for raising the child.

If adopting, similar principles as above apply.

To qualify for NCL, the baby must be born on or after 6 April 2025.

NCL must be taken to provide care for the baby. In the very sad circumstances where the baby dies after NCL has been accrued, employees are still able to take the leave as this care requirement is disapplied.

Neonatal care must have taken place or begun within the first 28 days of birth (counting from the day after the baby is born) and care must continue for a period of at least 7 continuous days (beginning on the day after neonatal care starts).

There are three narrow categories of medical care which will count as “neonatal care”:

- any medical care received in a hospital;
- medical care received elsewhere following discharge from hospital. Such care must be under the direction of a consultant and includes ongoing monitoring and visits to the child by healthcare professionals; or
- palliative or end of life care.

The length of NCL will be dependent on how long the baby receives neonatal care but is capped at a maximum of 12 weeks. Parents will be able to take one week of leave in respect of each week the baby receives neonatal care without interruption. An uninterrupted week of care begins on the day after care started, which means that the baby must have been receiving uninterrupted care on 8 consecutive days (including the day that care started) for a parent to be entitled to one week of NCL. The earliest NCL can start is the ninth day following the start of the baby’s uninterrupted care.

The week begins on the day after care started.

For parents of twins or other multiple births, neonatal leave cannot be claimed in respect of babies who are receiving care at the same time. For example, if both twins were to receive care for a period of 6 weeks, the parents would only be entitled to 6 weeks of leave. The maximum amount of leave remains 12 weeks.

Any leave must be taken within 68 weeks of the baby’s birth (or placement or entry to Great Britain in the event of adoption). The basic idea of NCL is that it will be tagged onto the end of the employee’s family leave. This is because an employee whose baby is admitted for neonatal care is highly likely to be on some other family leave at that time – typically maternity or paternity leave. The idea is then that they would be able to take NCL at the end of their planned family leave, so that the time their baby spent in neonatal care is compensated for.

The Town Council also needs to cater for those emergency situations when the employee isn’t already on leave whilst the baby is in neonatal care. This is most likely to be because a father or partner’s paternity leave has run out while the baby is still in hospital.

As a result of this effort to provide flexibility and reduced notice requirements, there is a distinction between the time the leave is used, referred to as tier 1 or tier 2 periods.

If NCL is taken whilst the baby is receiving care (and up to a week post discharge), this will be classed as a tier 1 period. Tier 1 leave can be taken in non-continuous blocks of a minimum of one week at a time.

All other leave falls within the tier 2 period and must be taken in one continuous block.

In line with other parental leave, employees are expected to provide notice of their intention to take NCL stating:

- Their name
- The baby’s date of birth (or date of placement/entry to Great Britain if adopting)
- The start date or dates of neonatal care
- The date neonatal care ended (if applicable)

- The date on which the employee wants to take the leave
- The number of weeks of NCL the notice is being given for
- That the leave is being taken to care for the baby
- Confirmation that the employee is eligible to take the leave due to their relationship with the baby

The required length of notice differs depending on when the leave is taken.

It should be noted that the Town Council and employee can agree to mutually waive any notice requirements.

The right to receive statutory neonatal care pay ('SNCP') requires 26 weeks of service and earnings on average of at least £123 a week. This mirrors the entitlement to maternity and shared parental leave pay.

An employee will generally take NCL at the end of their other parental leave entitlement (unless interrupted). Whilst the underlying intention is to extend the overall period of leave that can be taken, the Town Council may find that some eligible employees choose to end their maternity leave once statutory maternity pay ends at 39 weeks and then move to NCL and SNCP for 12 weeks. This would allow for almost a whole year of paid leave (albeit at statutory rates for employers who do not enhance).

## **12. Jury Service/Other Time Off**

There are a number of circumstances in which employees have a right to time off from work either with or without pay. These include jury service and certain public duties such as serving as a local councillor, magistrate or school governor. Where a need for such time off arises, you should discuss the matter with the CEO/Town Clerk or your line manager who will consider what arrangements should be put in place.

While the Town Council will do its best to accommodate time off in these circumstances, the requirements of an employee's role may mean that the amount of time off granted may be limited.

Where serving on a jury would lead to a level of absence that would be detrimental to the organisation, the Town Council may require you to seek a deferment.

## **13. Compassionate/Bereavement Leave**

In the event an employee suffers a bereavement in their immediate family (mother, father, brother, sister, spouse, civil partner, partner, child) the Town Council will exercise its discretion to allow reasonable time off immediately after the death and to attend a funeral. What is reasonable will be determined on a case by case basis and the type of leave, whether paid or unpaid, will depend on the circumstances and the relationship the employee had with the individual.

As from 6th April 2020 parents will be entitled to two weeks' if they lose a child under the age of 18 (including a still birth after 24 weeks of pregnancy).

In addition, there may be occasions where it may be necessary for an employee to take compassionate leave. Again, this will be considered on a case by case basis and dependent on circumstances, may be paid or unpaid.

An employee will not be eligible to receive paid bereavement or compassionate time-off benefits while off, or absent from work because of holiday, sickness (paid or unpaid) or for any other reason.

## **14. Emergency Time Off for Dependants**

The Town Council recognises that situations arise where you need to take time off work to deal with an emergency involving someone who depends on you. Your spouse, partner, civil partner, child or parent, or someone living with you as part of your family can all be considered as depending on you. Others who rely solely on you for help in an emergency may also qualify.

For further detail as to who counts as depending on you and guidance on individual circumstances, please speak to the CEO/Town Clerk or your line manager.

Provided the reasons for such a request are genuine and you inform the Town Council as soon as possible that you need this time off, you will be allowed reasonable unpaid time off work to deal with such emergencies.

The right to time off only covers emergencies. If you know in advance that you are going to need time off, you will not qualify for this type of leave and you therefore should arrange this with the Town Council by taking another form of leave, such as annual leave, parental leave etc.

If an emergency occurs and it is not possible for you to inform your line manager in advance of any absence you should contact a Senior manager as soon as possible to inform them of the situation. Appropriate arrangements may then be put in place.

If you suffer some other personal emergency you should talk to the CEO/Town Clerk or your line manager who will discuss what arrangements can be made to grant you compassionate leave. These arrangements will always be at the discretion of the Town Council and will depend on the circumstances of the case and the impact that any absence on your part may have on the organisation. However, the Town Council will be sympathetic to your need for time off (which may be paid or unpaid at our discretion) to deal with the situation and make any arrangements that may be necessary.

## **15. Time Off in Lieu**

Permission to work extra hours and the granting of Time Off in Lieu (TOIL) will be considered on a case by case basis but the following principles will apply:

1. Where it is agreed or required that you work outside of your normal hours you will, subject to these conditions, be granted an equal amount of TOIL but you must gain permission in advance from your line manager, or in the case of the CEO/Town Clerk, the Chairman of Personnel, to work or take TOIL.

2. Although Management will take note of hours worked in addition to your contractual hours, you must also log this time on the People First system to avoid any discrepancies

3. The maximum amount of TOIL which can be accrued by staff is 15 hours in total (other than in very exceptional circumstances approved in advance by the CEO/Town Clerk). This will apply on a pro-rata basis for part time staff.

4. TOIL should be taken within three calendar months of being accrued.

5. Management will try to allow TOIL to be taken at times agreeable to you however where a mutually acceptable time cannot be agreed Management will inform you of when TOIL must be taken.

## 16. Annual Leave

Your individual holiday entitlement, including the calculation of any holiday pay, is set out in your contract of employment. This section of the handbook outlines the general approach taken by the Town Council to requests for annual leave.

All annual leave must be agreed in advance with your line manager. You should not make firm travel plans or commitments until a request for leave has been granted and the Town Council will not take such plans into account when dealing with conflicting holiday requests.

All requests for leave should be made at **least two weeks in advance**. The means of requesting leave may change from time to time and you should comply with whatever procedure is in place at the time of the request.

Your line manager may refuse any request for leave if it would result in the workplace being understaffed or otherwise prejudice the organisation. Leave is likely to be refused if it is requested for a particularly busy period or a time when other employees have already had leave approved.

Certain times of year are particularly popular times for requesting holiday. Generally, subject to the needs of the organisation, leave will be granted on a first come first served basis, but exceptions may be made in the interests of ensuring that holiday is spread through the year on a fair and equitable basis.

All employees are encouraged to take their full holiday entitlement during the holiday year which runs from 1 April to 31 March. However, it is your responsibility to schedule your holiday so that it can be taken at an appropriate time.

Employees will not usually be permitted to carry over more than **five working days** of their annual holiday entitlement into the following holiday year. [If you have been prevented from taking it in the relevant holiday year by one of the following: a period of sickness absence or statutory maternity, paternity, adoption, shared parental, parental, parental bereavement, carer's, or neonatal care, or bereaved partner's paternity, leave. In cases of sickness absence, carry-over is limited to four weeks' holiday per year less any leave taken during the holiday year that has just ended. Any](#)

such carried over holiday which is not taken within eighteen months of the end of the relevant holiday year will be lost.

Employees who leave their employment during the course of a holiday year will be entitled to a pro-rata payment reflecting leave accrued but not taken. Where an employee has, at the time their employment ends, taken a larger proportion of their leave entitlement than the proportion of the holiday year that has expired, then a deduction will be made from the final payment of salary to reflect the holiday which has been taken but not accrued.

The Town Council may insist on annual leave being taken at particular times, depending on the needs of the organisation and these are set out in your contract of employment. We will give reasonable notice of any such requirement (the length of the notice given will be at least twice the duration of the leave the Town Council requires the employee to take).

If you become sick or injured during a period of annual holiday, you must follow the sickness absence notification and certification procedures set out in section 5 of the Absence Review Policy, though you must obtain a doctor's certificate no matter how long the absence. You will be regarded as being on sick leave from the date of a doctor's certificate and you may take such days as annual holiday at a later date.

The Town Council may refuse to allow or require annual leave to be taken during the notice period of any employee who has resigned or been dismissed.

## **17. Reserve Forces**

The Town Council supports employees who are also member of the reserve forces. Such employees have specific entitlements relating to time off including arrangements for them returning to work after a period of deployment. Employees who are members of the reserve forces or who are considering joining should discuss the implications with the CEO/Town Clerk or their line manager.

## **18. Review of policy**

17.1 This policy is reviewed **annually** by the Town Council and where materially amended is consulted on, where necessary. We will monitor the application and outcomes of this policy to ensure it is working effectively.



**WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL**

# Lone Working Policy

Date	Version	Author	Origin of Change e.g. TU request, change in legislation	Changed by
April 2020	V1	Town Clerk		
19 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	V2	Director of Finance & Resources	Updated to include Employment Rights Act 2025 effective 6 <sup>th</sup> April 2026	Director of Finance & Resources

This policy applies to Weston-super-Mare Town Council

Date policy adopted	
Review cycle	Bi - annually
Review date	

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## 1. Purpose

This policy sets out the arrangements for managing the health, safety and welfare of employees who work alone. It reflects current UK legislation and guidance from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and is aligned with best practice for town and parish councils.

## 2. Definition of Lone Working

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

## 3. Legal Framework

There is no general prohibition on working alone. However, legislation requires employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees, including lone workers. Relevant legislation includes:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013
- Equality Act 2010 (where relevant to risk considerations)

Some specific activities may legally require more than one person or a defined safe system of work.

Under the Management Regulations, councils must: - Carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments - Identify hazards - Assess risks - Implement safe systems of work

## 4. Risks Associated with Lone Working

Risks are increased when working alone due to lack of immediate assistance. These may include:

- Slips, trips and falls
- Violence, aggression or threatening behaviour
- Working outside office hours or during darkness
- Inspections of remote locations
- Vehicle breakdowns or unreliable transport

## 5. Prohibited Lone Working Activities

Employees must never work alone in the following situations:

- Where risks are assessed as unacceptable
- In confined spaces
- Over or near water
- On live electrical equipment
- In areas designated as “no lone working”

## 6. Situations Where Lone Working Should Be Avoided

Where risk assessments indicate, lone working should be avoided in:

- Known or potentially violent situations
- Enforcement duties, particularly during pregnancy
- Remote locations
- Derelict or empty buildings
- Hazardous environments (e.g. cliffs, confined spaces)
- Live roads
- Use of ladders requiring footing or support
- Near demolition work

## 7. Risk Assessment and Planning

Before lone working is permitted, the following must be considered:

- Is the workplace and access safe?
- Does the task require more than one person?
- Are the risks too high for one individual?
- Does the employee have sufficient training and experience?
- Is there a risk of violence?
- Are there specific risks relating to the individual (including gender considerations where relevant)?
- Is the individual medically fit and suitable to work alone?

Working alone should not be routine practice and must be justified through risk assessment.

Where possible, work away from the office should be undertaken by two or more people. Lone working may be permitted where:

- Risks are low and controlled

- The employee is competent
- Other persons are nearby or visible

Precautions must ensure:

- Awareness of hazards
- Ability to respond to emergencies
- Systems to raise the alarm if overdue

## 9. Procedures for Lone Working

All lone workers must:

- Inform a responsible person of their location, task and expected return time
- Maintain regular contact where necessary
- Carry a suitable communication device (e.g. mobile phone, radio)

Failure to return or check in must trigger escalation procedures, including contacting emergency services if necessary.

## 10. Pre-Work Precautions

Before working alone, employees must:

- Assess whether the destination is hazardous
- Check site rules and requirements
- Ensure safe systems of work are in place
- Confirm equipment can be safely handled alone
- Ensure safe access and egress
- Carry a charged communication device at all times
- Wear appropriate clothing and PPE
- Carry a torch when working in low light
- Ensure electrical systems are isolated where applicable
- Only undertake tasks they are trained and competent to perform

## 11. Responsibilities

The CEO/Town Clerk and Senior Management Team are responsible for:

- Ensuring this policy is implemented
- Ensuring staff are aware of procedures
- Monitoring compliance

Employees must:

- Follow risk assessments and safe systems of work
- Not take unnecessary risks
- Report hazards and concerns
- Ensure their whereabouts are known
- Secure work areas appropriately

## 12. Visits to External Locations

This applies to visits to:

- Other premises
- Remote locations
- Unoccupied or derelict buildings

Before the Visit

Employees must:

- Define the purpose of the visit
- Identify required equipment and PPE
- Determine if assistance is needed
- Discuss hazards with colleagues or site contacts
- Inform a responsible person of plans and return time

On Arrival

Employees must:

- Report to reception or site management
- Follow site rules and procedures
- Observe warning signs
- Wear appropriate PPE

During the Visit

Employees must:

- Follow safe systems of work
- Report hazards to site management

On Leaving

Employees must:

- Sign out or report departure
- Return borrowed equipment

- Confirm safe departure to a responsible person

### 13. Emergency Arrangements

Where lone working is required in higher-risk environments (e.g. remote or hazardous locations), arrangements must include:

- Agreed check-in procedures
- Escalation if contact is lost
- Access to emergency services

### 14. Training and Review

Employees must receive appropriate training in:

- Risk awareness
- Conflict management (where relevant)
- Use of communication equipment

### 15. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually and updated in line with legislative changes and HSE guidance.



WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

# Whistle Blowing Policy

Date	Version	Author	Origin of Change e.g. TU request, change in legislation	Changed by
April 2020	V1	Deputy Town Clerk		
19 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	V2	Director of Finance & Resources	Updated to include Employment Rights Act 2025 effective 6 <sup>th</sup> April 2026	Director of Finance & Resources

This policy applies to Weston-super-Mare Town Council

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Review cycle	Bi - annually
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## 1. Policy Statement

The Council is committed to maintaining the highest standards of openness, probity, and accountability in accordance with its statutory duties, Standing Orders, and Financial Regulations, and in line with recognised best practice within the local council sector. This policy reflects the principles set out in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and guidance issued by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).

The Council encourages any person working for or on behalf of the authority to raise concerns about wrongdoing or malpractice at any level within the organisation. Wrongdoing in this context includes any breach of a legal obligation, risks to health and safety, criminal offences, miscarriages of justice, sexual harassment occurring or likely to occur, damage to the environment, misuse of public funds, or any attempt to conceal such matters.

Concerns raised in the public interest will be taken seriously and dealt with in accordance with the Council's adopted procedures. Any individual raising a concern in good faith will be protected from victimisation or detriment, provided they reasonably believe the information disclosed to be true. Protection will apply even where concerns are not substantiated following investigation. However, any deliberately false or malicious allegation may be treated as gross misconduct and dealt with under the Council's disciplinary procedures.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, elected members, contractors, agency workers, and volunteers working for or on behalf of the Council. It applies to matters arising from the Council's statutory functions, services, governance arrangements, and compliance with its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

## 3. Legislative and Guidance Framework

This policy operates within the framework of relevant legislation and governance documents applicable to local councils, including the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, the Employment Rights Act 1996, the Localism Act 2011, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, and the Data Protection Act 2018 together with UK GDPR requirements. It should be read alongside the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, and guidance issued by the National Association of Local Councils.

## 4. Definitions

Whistleblowing is defined as the disclosure of information in the public interest relating to suspected wrongdoing or dangers. Such wrongdoing may include criminal offences, failure to comply with legal obligations, financial mismanagement or fraud, breaches of Standing Orders or Financial Regulations, breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct, risks to health and safety, environmental damage, corruption, or the deliberate concealment of any such matters.

A whistleblower is any individual who raises such a concern under this policy.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

The Council, as a corporate body, is responsible for promoting a culture of openness and ensuring that this policy is implemented, monitored, and reviewed in accordance with its governance framework.

The CEO/Town Clerk to the Council, as Proper Officer, is responsible for receiving concerns, maintaining appropriate records, and ensuring that matters are dealt with in accordance with Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, and relevant procedures.

Where a concern relates to the CEO/Town Clerk, the matter should be referred to the Chair of the Personnel Committee or the Chair of the Council, who will ensure appropriate oversight and compliance with the Council's governance arrangements.

The Monitoring Officer of the principal authority is responsible for dealing with allegations relating to breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct.

All employees and members are expected to raise concerns in good faith and to cooperate fully with any investigation.

## 6. Reporting Concerns

Concerns should be raised at the earliest opportunity and in accordance with the Council's lines of management and governance structure. In the first instance, matters should normally be reported to the CEO / Town Clerk or the individual's line manager. Where this is not appropriate, concerns may be raised with the Chair of the Personnel Committee or the Chair of the Council, who will ensure that the matter is properly considered and addressed in accordance with Standing Orders.

Where the concern relates to councillor conduct, it may be referred to the Monitoring Officer of the principal authority in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.

Concerns may be raised verbally or in writing and should include sufficient detail to enable the matter to be properly understood and assessed.

## 7. Procedures

Upon receipt of a concern, the Council will acknowledge the matter and undertake an initial assessment in accordance with its governance procedures to determine the appropriate course of action. Where necessary, an investigation will be conducted in a fair, proportionate, and timely manner, having regard to the Council's Standing Orders and relevant employment procedures.

Any individual who is the subject of an allegation will be informed of the nature of the concern and provided with a full opportunity to respond. No disciplinary action will be taken unless and until a full investigation has been completed in accordance with the Council's disciplinary procedures.

Following investigation, appropriate action may be taken, which may include internal disciplinary measures, referral to external agencies, reporting to the Council, or the implementation of improved procedures or controls.

The individual raising the concern will be kept informed of progress where this is appropriate and lawful. Where a whistleblower is dissatisfied with the outcome, they may escalate the matter to an appropriate external body.

## 8. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

The Council will make every reasonable effort to protect the identity of any individual raising a concern. Information will only be disclosed where it is necessary for the purposes of investigation, to comply with the Council's statutory obligations, or where required by law. All information will be handled in accordance with data protection legislation and the Council's adopted policies.

## 9. Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Code of Conduct for Members, Disciplinary and Grievance Policy, Complaints Policy and Data Protection Policy.

## 10. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by the Council, or sooner if required, to ensure it remains compliant with current legislation, Standing Orders, and recognised best practice.

## Appendix 1 – Reporting Flow





WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

## **Personnel Committee 6<sup>th</sup> May 2026 Job Descriptions for Approval following Evaluation Report from the Director of Finance & Resources**

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### **Purpose and Background of Report**

In October 2025 a proposal was put forward to this committee for the creation of an internal Cleaning team for the Museum, 32 Waterloo Street and the Old Town Quarry from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026 as the current cleaning contract had been challenging with the standard of cleaning not at an acceptable level. It was felt that would be achievable with Councillor Martin Williams offering to supply free training to the new team and the team being overseen by the Senior Customer Services Officer who had capacity to do this. This was approved and the process for drafting of descriptions followed.

In drafting the job descriptions it was felt that rather than just cleaning the staff could support in other ways and the title of Housekeeper would be more appropriate.

The draft job descriptions for a Housekeeping Supervisor and 2 Housekeepers were sent to CHRGS consultants who evaluate the job descriptions to align the content with the appropriate pay scale as per the requirements evaluate all new JD's made by previous resolution.

Following evaluation job descriptions are brought back to this Committee for approval and these can be viewed in appendix 1 and 2 below. (Committee terms of reference)

The benefits of having an internal Housekeeping Team means that we can direct the team as needed and embed the expectations of quality needed to support the Council's services

### **1. Members are recommended to:**

To approve:

- the evaluated job descriptions (Appendix 1 and 2) to allow recruitment to commence with immediate effect.

**Helen Morton**

Director of Finance & Resources

Drafted 21<sup>st</sup> April 2026

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WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

## **Appendix 1 (Housekeeping Supervisor)**



WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

### **JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Job Title:**

Housekeeping Supervisor

**Department:**

Finance & Resources Directorate

**Grade:**

LC1 (scale point 7-12)

**Hours:**

16 hours per week

**Contract:**

Part time

### **DESIGNATION**

Responsible to:

Director of Finance & Resources

Responsible for:

Team of 2 other housekeeping staff

Other Relationships:

- Director of Community Services
-



WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

- Community Operations & Resources Manager
- Weston Museum Services Manager

## **JOB PURPOSE**

### **OVERVIEW**

Working under the general direction of the Director of Finance and Resources ensure the provision of housekeeping services necessary to meet the defined standards and qualities essential for a hygienic, healthy and safe working environment across 32 Waterloo Street Head Office, Weston Museum and The Old Town Quarry sites.

### **MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **Specific Daily Housekeeping Duties**

To clean the following areas at the Old Town Quarry between 6:30am – 8 am (Monday to Sunday)

**Public toilets** – for all four toilets (internal and external) replenishment of hand soap, toilet rolls, clean all toilets pans and seats, clean all surfaces and floor areas within the toilet block but also the outside area in front of the toilets.

**Shop area** – Sweep/ mop the floor area and empty any rubbish bin. Clean inside and outside of the shop windows.

**Communal areas** – Make sure that the front door to the main building is clear of debris. Sweep and mop the lobby area outside shop and the main corridor floor area in the main building.

**Offices within the Barn** – Daily Hoover through of the offices. Emptying of any rubbish bins. Wipe across desks and welfare areas. Clean telephone handsets

**Learning Hub** – Sweep/ mop the floor. Clean sink areas and wipe across all surfaces.

#### **Responsibilities**

**Key holding** - For key holding and opening up of the main building Monday to Sunday

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**Management of stock** - Maintain stock and COSHH records of cleaning materials for 32 Waterloo Street Head Office, Weston Museum and The Old Town Quarry sites and have responsibility for ensuring that sufficient supplies are always available to meet the needs of the Council.

### **Supervision of other Housekeeping staff**

In consultation with the Director of Finance & Resources, supervise the employment and deployment of other housekeeping staff including supervising their day to day tasks, rotas, cover, overall performance review and learning and development needs.

### **Undertake Health and Safety duties**

Carry out agreed safe checks and risk assessments (as and when required) and ensure that all identified health and safety risks are dealt with as quickly and effectively as possible. Reporting to the Director of Finance & Resources any situation which potentially poses a danger to any staff in the Council.

### **General**

- Comply with Weston Town Council's policies and procedures to include (but not limited to), Equal Opportunities, Equality and Diversity, Health & Safety, Safeguarding, GDPR, Volunteers
- Undergo such training as is identified by the Director of Finance & Resources or Senior Management Team
- Undertake any other duties as reasonably requested by the Director of Finance & Resources

### **PHYSICAL DEMANDS**

Due to the nature of this role there will be elements of; display screen equipment usage, manual handling, sitting and/or standing for extended periods of time.

In addition to housekeeping duties some lifting is required for the movement of equipment and furniture.

### **WORKING CONDITIONS**

This position is for 16 hours a week Mon – Fri and will be based primarily at the Weston-super-Mare Town Council Offices but will also be expected to cover holidays and absences for other members of the housekeeping team.

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## **SELECTION CRITERIA/PERSON SPECIFICATION**

The successful candidate will show;

Excellent organisational skills

- A willingness to learn IT systems for record keeping
- High levels of communication both written (to include email/electronic communication) and verbal
- The ability to work as part of a team
- Excellent customer service and the ability to respond to sensitive enquiries appropriately

## **EDUCATION, QUALIFICATION AND KNOWLEDGE**

### **Essential**

No formal qualifications required but previous experience of housekeeping in an office and public space environment is essential

Experience of supervising other housekeeping staff/ teams

Understanding of COSHH Regulations and record keeping

### **Desirable**

Experience working within an operational service department.

### Personal Qualities and Attributes

#### **Essential**

- The ability to remain calm under pressure
  - Good interpersonal and organisational skills
  - The ability to work on own initiative and as part of a team
  - Good verbal communication and customer service skills
  - Enthusiasm
  - Good standard of written communication skills to receive and respond to written instructions and to keep written records if required.
-



WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

### **Conditions to note**

Protective clothing will be provided and must be worn at all times whilst working with materials, equipment or apparatus.

### **Candidates**

When completing your application form please address your answers directly to each of the selection criteria below. This enables the panel to assess your ability to meet each criterion. It is essential that you give at least one example of your ability to meet each of the 7 values and behaviours.

Selflessness

Integrity

Objectivity

Accountability

Openness

Honesty

Leadership

### **Recruiting Managers**

The following values and behaviours are essential criteria in each post and must be addressed directly by the candidates. The guidance notes on values and behaviours for managers give example questions to probe candidates in their interview and application stages of the recruitment process.

### **Values and Behaviours**

Weston Town Council has identified 7 key behaviours and values (as above) that should be demonstrated by all Council employees. Successful candidates will show the ability to meet these behaviours. Candidates applying for managerial/leadership roles should also demonstrate 2 additional leadership behaviours.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Weston-super-Mare Town Council is an Equal Opportunities employer and has an Equal Opportunities Policy with which you are expected to comply at all times. The Council condemns all forms of harassment and is actively seeking to promote a workplace where employees are treated with dignity, respect and without bias,

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irrespective of disability, race, religion or beliefs, nationality, ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation, gender or marital status

**Appendix 2 (Housekeepers x 2)**



WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Job Title:**

Housekeeper

**Department:**

Finance & Resources Directorate

**Grade:**

LC1 (scale point 5-6)

**Hours:**

16 hours per week

**Contract:**

Part time

**DESIGNATION**

Responsible to:

Housekeeping Supervisor

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WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

## **JOB PURPOSE**

### **OVERVIEW**

Working under the general direction of the Housekeeping Supervisor provide housekeeping services as necessary to meet the defined standards and qualities essential for a hygienic, healthy and safe working environment across 32 Waterloo Street Head Office or Weston Museum sites.

### **MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **Daily Operations**

#### **Specific Housekeeping Duties**

#### **Weston Museum (Tuesday to Saturday 6:30am – 9:45am)**

##### **Entrance Foyer & Reception –**

- Vacuum all floors removing all hair and debris & mop floors.
- Clean all doors, door handles, light switches, skirting and glass
- Clean and shine exterior of entrance door, including glass, door surround/frame and door handle
- Clean skirtings, edges and frames

##### **Toilets –**

- Empty waste bin, remove to designated point and replenish liner
- Replenish toilet paper, soap, paper towels and air fresheners
- Clean, and sanitise, toilet seats, lids and bowls
- Clean and shine mirrors
- Clean Tiles
- Descale and sanitise basins, taps, around sink
- Clean skirtings, edges and frames
- De-cobweb corners, edges and ceilings
- Use Scrubber Dryer on floors in place of mop after vacuuming

##### **Shop -**

- Empty all waste bins, remove to designated point and replenish liner
  - Vacuum all floors removing all hair and debris & Mop floors
  - Clean and shine all reception desk
  - De-cobweb corners, edges and ceilings
  - Clean all fixtures and fittings
-



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## **Café -**

- Vacuum all floors & sides - to removal of all hair & mop floors
- Clean radiators/heaters
- Clean all doors, door handles, light switches, skirting & pictures
- Courtyard –
- Brush all floor areas
- Clean all doors, door handles, light switches, skirting
- Clean and shine exterior of entrance door, including glass, door surround/frame and door handle
- Clean skirtings, edges and frames
- Clean radiators/heaters

## **Learning Space –**

- Vacuum all floors removing all hair & mop floors (periodically polish floor)
- Clean and shine exterior of entrance door, including glass, door surround/frame and door handle
- Clean sink area
- Upstairs Galleries area –
- Vacuum/brush all floors areas, Including Stairs
- Mop Hard Floors
- Clean glass on display cabinets

## **Main office -**

- Empty all waste bins, remove to designated point and replenish liner
  - Clean and shine all tables, chairs, side units etc .Where possible remove cups to kitchen area
  - Vacuum all floors removing all hair & mop floors
  - Clean and shine exterior of entrance door, including glass, door surround/frame and door handle
  - The Hub -
  - Vacuum all floors removing all hair & Mop floors
  - Clean and shine exterior of entrance door, including glass, door surround/frame and door handle
  - Clean desk
  - Clean radiators/Heaters
  - Clara's Cottage
  - Vacuum all floors removing all hair & Mop floors
  - Clean skirtings, edges and frames
  - Clean glass on display cabinets
  - Clean Stairs
-



WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

**32 Waterloo Street (Monday to Friday 6:30am – 9:45am)**

**Ground floor**

**Reception area and Hans Price Room**

- Sweep and mop hard floors
- Empty rubbish bins and replace liners
- Clean all surfaces and reception desk

**Toilets –**

Replenishment of hand soap, toilet rolls, clean all toilets pans and seats, clean all surfaces and floor areas.

**Chamber –** Hoover through all areas, polish display cabinet glass, clean through kitchen area (empty rubbish bins and replace liner, empty and refill dishwasher when needed)

Hoover through rear corridor area and stairs to next floor

**2<sup>nd</sup> floor**

Hoover through offices/ staff room and corridors

Clean all surfaces and desks

Empty rubbish bins and replace liners

**Kitchen –** clean and tidy sink area and all surfaces, clean fridges, empty rubbish bins

Hoover stairs to next floor

**3<sup>rd</sup> floor**

Hoover through offices/ corridors

Clean all surfaces and desks

Empty rubbish bins and replace liners

**Toilets-** replenishment of hand soap, toilet rolls, clean all toilets pans and seats, clean all surfaces and mop floor areas.

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WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

## **General**

- Comply with Weston Town Council's policies and procedures to include (but not limited to), Equal Opportunities, Equality and Diversity, Health & Safety, Safeguarding, GDPR, Volunteers
- Undergo such training as is identified by the Housekeeping Supervisor
- Undertake any other duties as reasonably requested by the Housekeeping Supervisor.

## **PHYSICAL DEMANDS**

Due to the nature of this role there will be elements of; manual handling, standing for extended periods of time.

In addition to housekeeping duties some lifting is required for the movement of equipment and furniture.

## **WORKING CONDITIONS**

This can be either a morning or evening role.

## **SELECTION CRITERIA/PERSON SPECIFICATION**

The successful candidate will show;

Excellent organisational skills

- The ability to work as part of a team
- Excellent customer service

## **EDUCATION, QUALIFICATION AND KNOWLEDGE**

### **Essential**

No formal qualifications required but previous experience of housekeeping in an office and public space environment is essential.

Ability to work with limited direct supervision

### **Desirable**

Experience working within an operational service department

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WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

Training will be given in basic housekeeping methods and the use of materials and equipment and this must be undertaken during the initial period of employment.

## Personal Qualities and Attributes

### Essential

- The ability to remain calm under pressure
- Good interpersonal and organisational skills
- The ability to work on own initiative and as part of a team
- Good verbal communication and customer service skills
- Enthusiasm

### **Conditions to note**

Protective clothing will be provided and must be worn at all times whilst working with materials, equipment or apparatus.

### **Candidates**

When completing your application form please address your answers directly to each of the selection criteria below. This enables the panel to assess your ability to meet each criterion. It is essential that you give at least one example of your ability to meet each of the 7 values and behaviours.

Selflessness

Integrity

Objectivity

Accountability

Openness

Honesty

Leadership

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WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

## **Recruiting Managers**

The following values and behaviours are essential criteria in each post and must be addressed directly by the candidates. The guidance notes on values and behaviours for managers give example questions to probe candidates in their interview and application stages of the recruitment process.

## **Values and Behaviours**

Weston Town Council has identified 7 key behaviours and values (as above) that should be demonstrated by all Council employees. Successful candidates will show the ability to meet these behaviours. Candidates applying for managerial/leadership roles should also demonstrate 2 additional leadership behaviours.

## **Equal Opportunities**

Weston-super-Mare Town Council is an Equal Opportunities employer and has an Equal Opportunities Policy with which you are expected to comply at all times. The Council condemns all forms of harassment and is actively seeking to promote a workplace where employees are treated with dignity, respect and without bias, irrespective of disability, race, religion or beliefs, nationality, ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation, gender or marital status.

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