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INTRODUCTION

This Employee Handbook summarises the main council policies and procedures that affect you as an employee. It includes all the policies in the corporate Personnel Handbook, as well as other important policies and codes such as fire evacuation, Data Protection, other IT policies and equalities policies. We negotiated and agreed all the policies, procedures and codes with the recognised trade unions.

The policies apply to all employees, except teachers, including people on temporary contracts although there are some exceptions for those on contracts of 13 weeks or less. Many of the policies also apply to contractors and consultants working on behalf of the Council. If you are not sure whether a policy applies to you, check the full version in the Personnel Handbook. There is a Personnel Handbook in every team, unit or council building, which is freely available for all employees to access. Make sure you know where it is so you can refer to it if you need to.

Your first point of contact about any policy in this handbook should be your **manager** or your departmental **staffing officer**. Your staffing officer and your Departmental Personnel Officer, DPO, will have a Personnel Handbook and the other Council policies, codes, procedures or information packs mentioned in the handbook. Some are available on the IT system in Outlook under Public Folders.

There is a glossary reference section and a 'useful contacts' section with advice and helpline numbers at the end of this handbook

Saying you didn't know about a policy is not a defence if we take disciplinary action against you for breaching any of them. If you have any questions or doubts about anything in this handbook, please don't guess; ask your manager or staffing officer.

DEPARTMENTAL PERSONNEL OFFICERS, DPOs, AND OTHER CONTACTS

Chief Executive's Department	25 8488 - DPO
Commercial Services	71 6404 - DPO 71 6641- Personnel Officer
Development and Cultural Services	25 5921 - DPO
Education Service	71 6824 - DPO
South Team	Schools Personnel, 71 6843
West Team	Schools Personnel, 71 6913
North Team	Schools Personnel, 71 6904
Social Services	Personnel Manager Principal Personnel Officer 71 6790

ABUSE, AGGRESSION AND VIOLENCE CODE

We define abuse, aggression or violence as ‘**any incident in which you feel you have been abused, threatened or attacked in a work related incident in or out of work**’. Under this code, the Council will act to deal with any type of work-related violent or threatening incident, including:

- physical attack, regardless of whether there is an injury or not
- animal attack, including when an animal is used as a threat
- verbal abuse – when you **feel** threatened
- attack or damage to property, either your own or the Council’s
- any work-related incident involving you away from the work place.

You have a duty to take reasonable care of yourself, and others, at work and to co-operate with all safe working procedures. Under this code you are also responsible for reporting all incidents, no matter how trivial it may seem at the time. By reporting it, you are protecting others as well as yourself from it happening again or escalating.

The Council has a legal duty to employees to minimise the risk of violence. Your manager has specific responsibilities such as risk assessment, taking preventative action, reporting aggressive incidents, supporting you and making sure you know about safe working practices relevant to your particular work area.

If you feel at risk, talk to your manager and read the full code with information on:

- reception areas, interview rooms and site visits
- cash handling and cash carrying
- dealing with violent incidents including verbal abuse or animal attack
- reporting procedure including incidents related to gender, race, sexuality, HIV/AIDS or age
- legal aspects and the power of the courts
- compensation, sickness payments and injury allowances
- counselling and other support after an incident.

ACCIDENTS, DISEASES AND DANGEROUS OCCURRENCES

The Council has a legal duty to protect your health, safety and welfare and people affected by our work such as tenants, service users, contractors, pupils and anyone using our facilities. It also has a legal duty to report certain work-related accidents, incidents or illnesses to the Health and Safety Executive, HSE.

You have a **legal** duty to report accidents, incidents or certain diseases as well as taking care of yourself and others at work. The ‘Accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences reporting code’, in the Personnel Handbook, explains in detail:

- what to report – including death, injuries, violent incidents, reportable diseases, potential dangers, incidents on public roads or involving machinery, scaffolding, dangerous substances
- who is responsible for reporting each incident, and to whom

- how to report it, including completing the report form.

Make sure you know what you must do if there's an accident, an incident or a reportable disease at work. Don't guess – read the full policy and talk to your manager, department's safety officer or Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare.

ACHIEVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT SCHEME – A and D

This policy requires managers to arrange to meet you and discuss how your work duties fit into what the team or unit, the department and the Council has to achieve. The A and D Scheme covers most employees, but where it would be difficult to organise because of work duties, working hours or shift patterns, some departments have adapted it to suit, such as 'job chats' or 'Ad Lib' meetings.

The scheme, and variations to it such as job chats and Ad Lib, makes sure:

- you are clear about what you should be doing
- why you are doing it – how it fits into the 'big picture'
- that your training and other development needs are identified
- you have the chance to discuss problems and explore solutions
- your manager gets the information they need to monitor business plans
- you understand your own objectives and wider ones.

Your manager will arrange an A and D, job chat or AD Lib meeting with you and will give you a copy of 'An Employee's Guide to the Achievement and Development Scheme' leaflet, but please don't wait for a meeting to raise any concerns or discuss ideas.

ADOPTION LEAVE

If you intend to adopt children, get advice as early as possible from your DPO. We will support you with paid, and optional additional unpaid, Adoption Leave. Briefly, you are entitled to adoption leave if you:

- are the child's adopter
- are adopting through an approved adoption agency such as a local authority
- have 26 weeks' continuous service by the end of the week the adoption agency officially notifies you of being matched with a child
- have formally agreed a date of placement with the adoption agency.

If a couple is adopting jointly, only one is entitled to adoption leave; the other can apply for paternity leave. Adoption leave does not apply if the child is not newly matched for adoption, such as if you are a step-parent and are adopting your partner's children. You are only entitled to one period of adoption leave regardless of the number of children placed with you at the same time.

Adoption leave - you have a legal entitlement to adoption leave of 26 weeks' ordinary adoption leave with pay and up to 26 weeks' additional unpaid adoption leave, providing it follows the ordinary adoption leave without any break.

You should use annual or flexi leave for any sessions that you have to attend in work time as part of the adoption process before matching happens. If you are required to be at home as part of this, before adoption leave starts, apply for parental leave.

Adoption leave pay – is split into two elements, statutory adoption pay and occupational adoption pay. The amount of State and occupational adoption pay depends on your level of earnings, length of continuous local government service and your intentions about returning to work.

Pension contributions - you still have to pay your normal pension contributions during paid adoption leave, and unpaid adoption leave of 30 calendar days or less. If you take more than 30 calendar days unpaid adoption leave, you have the option to pay pension contributions, and Payroll will contact you about this.

Requesting adoption leave – complete an adoption leave application and pass it to your manager, giving 28 days' notice, but we know this isn't always possible. You can choose to begin adoption leave either from the date the child is placed with you or up to 14 days beforehand. If you need to change the date of the start of your adoption leave, complete a new adoption leave form and mark it 'second application'. We will notify you whether your adoption leave has been approved within 28 days.

Adoption placement disrupted – if something disrupts the adoption placement, tell your manager immediately and they will inform your staffing officer. Your adoption leave will end eight weeks after the end of the week the disruption happened. Your staffing officer will confirm this and give you details about support, if you need it.

Returning to work

If you come back after taking only the ordinary adoption leave, you are entitled to return to the job you did before your leave began, with the same terms and conditions. If you take additional adoption leave of more than four weeks, you are entitled to return to the same job or, if this isn't practicable, to another suitable and appropriate job. If this isn't possible you have the opportunity to be placed on the Redeployment Register. See also Right to Request Flexible Working Policy.

During both ordinary and additional adoption leave your contract of employment remains in force, and the absence is not classed as a break in service for statutory and contractual purposes. Additional adoption leave is counted as continuous service for the Sickness Scheme and Annual Leave entitlement.

If you want to return to work before the end of your approved additional adoption leave, you must give 28 days notice.

Read the full Adoption Leave Policy in the Personnel Handbook and these related policies – Annual Leave, Caring for Dependants Leave, Maternity Information Employee Guide, Parental leave, Paternity Leave and Right to Request Flexible Working Policy.

ALCOHOL AND DRUG RELATED PROBLEMS

We will offer practical help and information if you have a drug or alcohol addiction problem, as we recognise that this will affect both your health and your work. See the full policy. Under this policy, the Council will:

- actively encourage you to get help or treatment
- grant authorised paid time off for you to attend an agreed treatment
- consider redeployment, or changes to your work duties, if necessary
- keep your personal records and any other information confidential.

In return, you must co-operate with any agreed treatment programme. If you know, or suspect, that you may have an addiction problem talk to your manager, your DPO, Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare or to your trade union representative.

Important – you could be prosecuted for possessing and/or supplying illegal drugs or for offences committed while under the influence of drugs or other substances. If this happens, we will take disciplinary action. If you suspect another employee has an addiction problem, tell your manager, or your DPO, who will arrange for it to be investigated in strict confidence.

ANNUAL LEAVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Annual leave year – in most departments this is from 1 April to 31 March but, in some, it runs 1 January to 31 December. Departments can decide whether to show annual leave as days or as hours, in consultation with trade unions. Read the full policy in the Personnel Handbook or ask your staffing officer if you have any questions.

Annual leave entitlement – is based on full-time hours for a full leave year. Part-time, job share and alternate working patterns is proportionate to full-time entitlement. Starting work or completing five years' service part way through the leave year is proportionate to full entitlement.

Pay grade	Basic annual leave	After 5 years' service
Craft	21 days	26 days
up to scale 6	20 days	25 days
SO level	22 days	27 days
PO level	23 days	28 days
Chief Officers, other JNC officers	25 days	30 days

Extra days - your two extra statutory holidays and two concessionary holidays, proportionate to part time workers, are normally taken at the Christmas New Year break, unless your department has specific arrangements for service cover.

Retirement – if you reach retirement age, retire on ill health or length of service you get your full annual entitlement regardless of your actual retirement date.

Changing jobs or hours – your leave will be recalculated if you change jobs or hours or are on protection of earnings to a lower pay grade.

Booking leave – give as much notice as possible and get it authorised beforehand on your Annual Leave Record. Your manager will consider leave requests in the order they get them. Plan ahead so you get the benefit of your annual leave and don't have a large chunk left to take at the end of year. Keep a record yourself.

Carrying leave over – your manager may approve that you carry over up to five days' outstanding leave if you're full-time, and a proportionate amount if you are part-time or job share. In exceptional circumstances, you can ask to carry over up to ten days. Your manager will consider the impact of this, make a recommendation and pass your request to their manager for a decision. You will lose any outstanding leave of more than ten days or any that has not been approved to be carried over.

Bringing leave forward – in exceptional circumstances you can ask to bring forward up to ten days from the next leave year using the carrying leave over procedure.

Sickness while on leave – if you are ill you must get a doctors certificate for your leave to be treated as sickness absence – see Attendance Management Policy.

ANNUAL LEAVE DURING ABSENCE

If you are absent because of illness, or because you have been suspended or are on unpaid leave you are entitled to apply to take your annual paid leave entitlement. You must give your manager reasonable notice so that we can calculate it accurately and pay it at the correct time. In all of the circumstances listed, we'll make sure you have a full copy of the relevant policies, which are all in the Personnel Handbook.

Sickness absence - we will remind you that you have outstanding leave - either at a review meeting under the Ill Health Procedure or by writing to you at home after you have been off for three months. You need not submit regular medical certificates during your annual leave. But you must follow the guidance by getting a medical certificate covering you for the last day before annual leave starts and the first day after annual leave, including non-working days such as Saturday or Sunday.

Unpaid absence – your manager will meet you and encourage you to arrange when you will take any outstanding leave before your unpaid absence begins.

Suspension – the investigating officer, together with the officer who suspended you, would consider your request for annual leave. It would only be granted for times when you are not required to attend any meeting or hearing associated with being suspended. If you had more than ten days' leave outstanding at the end of a leave year you could apply jointly to the Chief Personnel Officer and your own Chief Officer to carry over more than ten days.

Services terminated – we calculate entitlement up to last day of service for the current leave year and arrange payment in lieu for any outstanding leave not taken.

ANTI-VIRUS POLICY

There are now 45,000 different computer viruses, which are a threat to all organisations, including the Council. Sometimes the damage to files and PCs means weeks of work are lost if data has not been backed up. Repairing the effects of viruses wastes time too. See the Data Protection Act Policy, E-mail and Internet User Policy, Information Security Policy and the eGuide for computer users.

This policy applies to all employees; including temporary staff and contractors or consultants with authorised access to our IT systems. It explains the things you should, or should not, do to minimise the risk of virus infection. Read the full policy – it's in Outlook under Public Folders or contact the IT Security Officer on 25 6262. We may take disciplinary action if you do not comply with this policy.

A virus - is an IT program designed to replicate and spread on its own by attaching itself to another program, usually without the user's knowledge. Viruses can be introduced to a PC through disks or CDs from other departments or from home, by e-mail messages as well as attachments or by downloading files from the Internet. An indication of virus infection includes inexplicable changes to data, total failure of PC, lost files, slow response time or files greatly increasing in size.

Virus hoaxes – are often 'urgent virus warning' e-mails falsely reporting new undetectable viruses urging you to forward the warning to as many people as possible. This overloads the system. Another is an e-mail telling you to look for and delete certain files then e-mail everyone in your electronic address book. The usual consequence is that you delete files necessary to run your PC.

We've installed anti-virus software on all Council PCs and on our firewall system. Your responsibility is to follow these basics to keep virus infection to a minimum:

- don't load software that hasn't been agreed by your IT Liaison Officer
- don't leave a disk in your PC when switching off
- don't open e-mail attachments from unknown external sources
- virus scan incoming disks and CDs before use, including those from home
- take regular backups of files on your hard drive
- log any virus or suspected incident with your IT Liaison Officer, with Capita Helpdesk or the IT Security Officer.

If your PC becomes infected with a virus:

- stop using it immediately
- freeze the movement of all disks and CDs; recalling any that you have shared
- report it immediately
- don't use your PC until it's been certified virus free by a Capita engineer.

ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT

This guide summarises the Sickness Notification and Attendance Management procedures. Refer to the full policy for precise details.

Sickness notification - if you are ill you, or someone on your behalf, must contact your manager, or their deputy, within **one hour** of your normal contractual start time with the reason for your absence and expected return date. Tell your manager if your absence is due to an injury at work, a third party accident or if it is related to your disability. They will complete Sickness Form 'A', and forward it to your Staffing Officer. On your eighth day of sickness you must get a doctor's certificate.

Return to work - on your first day back, complete a Sickness Form B and give it to your manager who will sign it and forward it your Staffing Officer. If you have been off sick for more than 14 days, you must get a 'fit to return' medical certificate from your doctor. Send it to your manager before you return, or bring it with you.

Part day sickness absences - if you work less than half your shift record half a day sick absence, or more than half of your shift as one day's sick absence.

Support – the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Officers will offer help and welfare support.

Attendance Management Procedure - you may be interviewed if you hit one of the trigger points of **five** absences in any rolling twelve months or **ten** working days lost over two or more occasions in any rolling twelve months. The trigger points are adjusted for part-time employees in proportion to hours worked. If you are interviewed you will get five days' notice, have the right to be represented and will get a copy of your relevant sickness record and the Attendance Management Procedure.

If you have been off sick for **three** weeks due to **stress** or mental related illness, your manager will refer you to one of the Welfare Officers who will visit you at home.

Pregnancy or disability related sick absence - we don't include these absences in any trigger calculations because this would be discriminatory. Managers will help and support you, for example by discussing reasonable adjustments with you.

Medical examinations – we may require you to be examined by the Council's doctor, who may need a report from your own doctor and/or consultant. We will give you a copy of the 'Access to Medical Reports, Your Rights' leaflet and ask you to complete the Access to Medical Reports consent form. If you don't agree to have a medical, you may lose your entitlement to sick pay.

Disability related sickness absence - if you are protected by the Disability Discrimination Act, and your illness directly relates to your disability, record your absence using the standard forms and supply medical certificates the same as other sickness absences. Record the cause of sickness absence as 'disability related' so that it is not included in the Attendance Management Procedure trigger points.

Disability leave - this is not sickness absence if you are covered by the Disability Discrimination Act for short-term absences because of your impairment, rehabilitation and assessment or to attend medical appointments. Complete a request for Disability Leave, available from your manager or Staffing Officer.

Phased return to work - one way to support you back to work is for you and your manager to agree a phased return, if recommended by your doctor on your medical certificate. You'd work reduced hours for an agreed period – normally up to a maximum of six weeks. You increase your hours each week until you reach your contractual working hours and meet your manager regularly during this period.

You will either be recorded off sick for the hours or days you're not working normal hours. You get full pay for the hours/days you're at work and your current sick pay entitlement for the hours/days you are absent. If you have accrued unused annual leave, you could use this to cover the period when you're at work. You get full pay for the days/hours you've been approved to use leave.

Once your working pattern is agreed, your manager will complete a 'Return to Work after Sickness Absence Agreement' form which you both sign before your return. Before the end of your phased return period, you must get a medical certificate from your doctor indicating that you are fit to return to your normal working hours.

Return to work interviews - after every absence, regardless of length, when you return your manager will arrange to meet you to help and support you.

Ill Health Procedure - this procedure supplements the Attendance Management Procedure. It explains how managers deal with long and short-term absences when attendance management interviews have not improved attendance.

Sick pay – entitlement is determined by length of service, calculated on a rolling year basis, as:

- first year of service – one month's full pay and, after completing four months' service, two months' half pay
- second year of service – two months' full pay and two months' half pay
- third year of service – four months' full pay and four months' half pay
- fourth and fifth year – five months' full pay and five months' half pay
- after five years service – six months' full pay and six months' half pay.

Abusing the Sickness Scheme – we will use the Disciplinary Procedure if you abuse the Sickness Scheme. We may also suspend sick pay if you abuse the scheme, or are absent because of sickness due to, or attributable to, deliberately prejudicing recovery, misconduct or neglect, active participation in professional sport or injury while working in your own time privately or for another employer.

If this happens, we'll tell you of the grounds for suspending sick pay and you have the right to raise a grievance. If the Council decides that the grounds for suspending sick pay are justified, you will not be paid for that period of absence. Managers must get advice from their DPO beforehand if they are considering suspending sick pay.

BAD WEATHER ARRANGEMENTS

When the weather is bad we still expect you to make reasonable arrangements to get in to work as normal. If you can't get in, phone in as soon as possible. In bad

weather, your Chief Officer will decide whether to allow you to go home early, or not report in for work without losing pay, or work from home if practicable.

Chief Officers take advice from the Police, County Highways, the AA and the RAC on whether roads are blocked and the Chief Executive, together with Chief Officers and Executive Members, decides whether to close Council buildings. If work is available, and the weather is bad but roads are open:

- record **actual** start and finish times if you're late or leave early
- if you are on flexi-time, you can break into core time without penalty or take the day as flexi leave
- if you are not on flexi-time and arrive late, you will be paid from **normal** start time, not actual and paid up to the actual time you leave
- you may take the day as annual leave if you decide not to attend.

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE AND URGENT LEAVE

If someone close to you dies we will do our utmost to support you and make sure we respect your religious beliefs and culture. We are now revising this policy to include Compassionate Leave to offer further support. Meanwhile, read the current policy in the Personnel Handbook and the Death in Service Policy in this handbook.

Briefly, under the Bereavement Policy you are entitled to:

- **one** day's paid leave if you have to attend the funeral of a close relative, partner or dependant – see policy for definition of dependant
- **three** days' paid leave if you have to arrange the funeral **or** deal with the affairs of the deceased, as well as attend the funeral
- **five** days' paid leave if you have to **arrange** the funeral **and** deal with the affairs of the deceased as well as attend the funeral
- bereavement leave for each **individual** death in the unfortunate case of multiple death, such as a car crash

For a more distant relative's funeral, you would use your annual leave.

We recognise that some religions have more than one ceremony when someone dies and that the funeral itself can vary in length with ceremonies at different locations. We will consider all this sympathetically when you request Bereavement Leave.

To apply, complete a Bereavement Leave application with details of the funeral arrangements and give it to your manager, who will seek approval from your Chief Officer. Each Chief Officer may grant an **additional** five days' Bereavement Leave, after considering your circumstances. In exceptional cases, the Chief Personnel Officer can authorise more leave than this.

Talk to your manager or your DPO if you have had a bereavement and the circumstances are unusual. Remember that the Welfare Officers in Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare can also provide help and support.

Urgent unforeseen personal, domestic leave – we are reviewing this to include compassionate leave. Meanwhile, your Chief Officer can grant paid leave of up to **five** days if you have a sudden personal emergency and a further **five** days unpaid leave, not necessarily taken consecutively, depending on the circumstances.

If you need more than ten days, the Chief Personnel Officer will discuss it with your Chief Officer and they will decide together. See the full policy and talk to your DPO.

BREASTFEEDING GUIDELINES

The Council recognises that it is against the law to refuse to accommodate breastfeeding under the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act, and supports the right of mothers to breastfeed. There are guidelines for managers, employees and the public in the Personnel Handbook, and the Maternity Policy, briefly detailed here.

We will do our best to help employees returning to work after having a baby to continue breastfeeding and will try to provide a private, clean place at work for this, where possible. More usually a mother may prefer to go to wherever her baby is being cared for to breastfeed. They will be able to treat this absence as authorised unpaid leave or use flexitime or, if they are on fixed hours, make up the hours later if it's practical to do this. We allow reasonable paid time off during work hours for mothers to express their milk.

We make it clear that the public are welcome to breastfeed on Council premises by displaying posters. We will help mothers by offering a chair and by letting them use somewhere private if they prefer, if available. If people object to breastfeeding mothers in public places we will explain that the Council supports breastfeeding.

CARING FOR DEPENDANTS LEAVE

This policy allows you to take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off to deal with emergencies for dependants such as illness, injury, death, unexpected breakdown of normal care arrangements, an incident involving your child at school or to make any necessary long-term arrangements. By dependants we mean:

- husband, wife or partner, including same sex partner
- child, including stepchildren who live with you
- other dependants living with you such as an elderly aunt or stepparent
- parents, grandparents
- someone who reasonably relies on you for help or for making arrangements for them if they were ill or injured – such as an elderly neighbour living alone.

A dependant would not include tenants or boarders living in your home, or household employees such as a live-in housekeeper or nanny.

There is no set limit on the amount of time you can take off under this policy in any leave year, but a few days should be sufficient in most cases. You could apply for different types of leave to deal with the same circumstances. If you take unpaid leave of 30 days or less you must pay your normal pension contributions but if you

take more than 30 days' unpaid leave, you have the option, and Payroll will arrange this.

All employees are eligible for this leave, regardless of whether they are full or part-time, permanent or temporary. To apply, complete a request form and pass it to your manager. If you haven't time to complete the form, tell your manager as soon as possible. Managers will consider this type of request immediately.

Your Departmental Personnel Officer will give you more advice on this policy, which is in full in the yellow Personnel handbook.

CAR LOANS

We have a Car Loan Scheme to help you buy a car if you need to use one in your job. The Finance Directorate manages the Scheme and you will find guidelines on what sort of car and how much you may borrow in the Personnel Handbook. For an application, or more details, contact the Tax and Admin Section on 25 5337.

CHILD PROTECTION

The Child Protection Procedure is being revised but meanwhile please follow these guidelines. The Council has a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. You must be alert to, or may be told of, situations affecting children's safety and well-being and you have a responsibility:

- to report your concern to your manager straight away, who will contact Social Services
- to record what you saw or heard and note the action you took
- to get medical help in the case of emergency
- not to discuss the details with colleagues, friends or relatives as this may undermine any subsequent investigation.

No matter how concerned you are, do not investigate the incident yourself.

CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING CODE

Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something wrong at work, but may hesitate to say anything. The Confidential Reporting Code is to encourage you to raise serious concerns **within** the Council rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside. It means you can do this in confidence, without being disadvantaged. The relevant legislation is the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which protects workers who speak out in the public interest about fraudulent, criminal or dangerous activities, wrong doings or malpractice at work.

The Confidential Reporting Code covers major concerns about breaches of the law or the conduct of officers or councillors. It may be about something that makes you feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards, or something that is against the Council's Constitution and policies, or anything that amounts to improper conduct.

We recognise that deciding to report something can be difficult and we will take appropriate action to protect you if you raise a concern in good faith.

Confidentiality - we will keep confidential anything you tell us. We will not reveal your identity, if that is what you wish, but you may need to come forward as a witness at an appropriate time.

Anonymous allegations - we encourage you to put your name to your allegation because anonymous ones are much less powerful. But we don't ignore anonymous reports. They would be investigated at the discretion of the Council.

Untrue allegations - if you voice a suspicion in good faith, but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you. But if the investigation concludes that you fabricated allegations, we may take disciplinary action.

Raising a concern – you would normally talk to your manager about any worries but this may not be appropriate. It depends on how serious your allegation is, so follow the guidelines in the full procedure, which is in the Personnel Handbook.

You can raise it orally or do a written report. Include the background, with relevant dates if possible, and your reasons for being particularly concerned. We do not expect you to prove beyond doubt, but you need to show that there are reasonable grounds for your concern. Consider discussing it with a colleague first as you may find it easier to raise if there are two, or more, of you with the same concerns.

The officer responsible for this Code is the Council's Monitoring Officer, the Director of Corporate Services. You can get advice on how to pursue concerns from the Chief Executive, the Director of Corporate Services, the Director of Finance or the Head of Audit.

How the Council will respond – we will make initial enquiries to decide whether an investigation is appropriate and, if so, how it should be done. When we investigate it we may then refer it to the Police or to the external auditor, arrange an independent inquiry, or refer it to the Standards Board if a councillor is the subject of the allegation – whichever is appropriate. Sometimes concerns can be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation. If urgent action is required, we will take this before any investigation.

Within ten working days of you raising a concern, the Director of Corporate Services will acknowledge it, indicate how he proposes to deal with it and estimate of how long it will take to give a final response. We may ask you for more information and, subject to legal restraints, will inform you of the outcome of any investigation.

We will give you details of employee support and will make sure we minimise any difficulties you may experience as a result of raising a concern. For instance, if you are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, we will advise you about the procedure and arrange for someone to attend for support if you have not arranged your own.

Taking it further – we hope you will be satisfied with any action taken but, if you feel it right to take the issue outside the Council, you could contact the external auditor, your trade union, the Citizens Advice Bureau, the relevant professional or regulatory

organisation, a relevant voluntary organisation or the Police. If you do take it further, make sure that you do not disclose confidential information.

Before reporting anything you are concerned about, read the full policy.

CONFIDENTIAL WASTE DISPOSAL

Follow this revised procedure so you comply with confidentiality and Data Protection legislation when disposing of confidential or sensitive waste in the Council House.

- Put waste into black plastic bags, available from the General Assistants, but **don't** overfill them.
- Seal bags and mark 'For General Assistants', **not** 'confidential waste for shredding'.
- Ring 5382 or e-mail General Assistants, COR for the bags to be collected.
- **Don't** leave bags in corridors - keep them in your office until the General Assistant collects them. This could be up to 36 hours following your request. The General Assistants will dispose of bags securely.

COUNSELLING SERVICE

We are reviewing the counselling service that has operated for some years but meanwhile, if you have a problem, regardless of whether it is related to work or personal, we will do our best to help you. Talk to a Welfare Officer in Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare, to your manager, to your DPO, Staffing Officer or a trade union representative. There are some helpline numbers at the end of this handbook.

Derby Council for Voluntary Services, CVS, has an excellent directory listing over 600 help groups ranging from things such as bereavement, family problems, abuse, gambling, health problems, HIV, depression or sex or sexuality. Our Equalities Unit has a CVS Directory but you can access it on line at www.cvsderby.co.uk, or ring their Information Officer on 227730, textphone 341576.

DATA PROTECTION ACT POLICY

For the Council to operate effectively, it must process information about its employees and customers – data subjects - which it does under the Data Protection Act 1998 and other related legislation. This policy applies to all employees and those acting on the Council's behalf. The Data Protection Officer is responsible for monitoring compliance with this Policy. If you do not comply with it, we may take appropriate action under the Disciplinary Procedure.

The Council, acting as a holder - known as custodian - of personal data, recognises its moral duty to make sure that data is handled properly and confidentially, whether it's held on paper or electronically. This covers the whole lifecycle, including obtaining, using, storing, securing, disposing or destroying personal data. The Council also has a responsibility to make sure data subjects have appropriate access, under the 1998 Act, to their personal information if they request it in writing.

Action - by following and maintaining strict safeguards and controls, the Council will:

- acknowledge the rights of individuals to whom personal data relates and make sure that they can use these rights in accordance with the 1998 Act
- make sure that collecting and using personal data is done in a way that recognises the Fair Processing Code, which means that personal data is obtained fairly and lawfully
- only obtain and process personal data as specified in its notification
- collect and process personal data on a '**need to know**' basis making sure it is accurate, not excessive and disposed of at a time appropriate to its purpose
- make sure that it takes the correct security measures, both technically and organisationally, to protect against loss, damage or abuse of personal data
- make sure that any movement of personal data is done legally, both inside and outside the Council, and that it has suitable safeguards at all times.

Enablers - to support these actions, the Council will:

- have a **Data Protection Officer** responsible for gathering and distributing information and issues relating to information security, the Data Protection Act and other related legislation
- make sure that line managers are responsible or, where necessary, delegate responsibility to a nominated **Data Protection Liaison Officer**, for communications and issues relating to information security, the Data Protection Act and other related legislation within their own department
- make sure that all activities that relate to personal data processing have the correct safeguards and controls to ensure information security and compliance with the 1998 Act
- make sure that all contracts and service level agreements, SLAs, between the Council and external organisations, including contract staff – where personal data is processed - refers to the 1998 Act where necessary.

The Council will also:

- make sure that all employees, including contract staff acting on its behalf, understand their responsibilities on information security under the Act
- make sure they receive appropriate training, instruction and supervision so they can perform these duties effectively and consistently
- make sure they can only access personal information necessary to duties
- make sure that all others acting on the Council's behalf can only access personal information that is necessary to their duties and no more.

The Council will:

- handle any requests for access to personal data courteously, promptly and appropriately, making sure that either the data subject or their authorised representative have the proper right to access under the 1998 Act
- make sure that information provided is clear and explicit

- work towards adopting, as best practice, the key principles of BS7799 – the **British Standard for Information Security**
- review this policy and the safeguards and controls that relate to it once a year to make sure that they are still relevant, efficient and effective.

DEATH IN SERVICE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

We recognise that it can be a difficult time for all concerned when an employee dies and we will do our utmost to support both the family and work colleagues. We have compiled this policy with the welfare officers, trade unions and equalities advisers. The full policy, in the Personnel Handbook, has procedures for managers and DPOs to follow if an employee dies in service. Here is a summary.

If there has been a serious accident at work the first thing managers must do is move everyone - employees and the public- to a safe place quickly. They will then contact the emergency services, inform the health and safety adviser and the DPO. They will tell the next of kin which hospital they have been taken to and give them a contact number at the Council for support. Next of kin details are on personal files.

Under no circumstances should anyone at work tell the next of kin that an employee has died, no matter how close they were to you. This will be certified by a doctor, who will inform relatives.

If you are an immediate colleague, your manager will look after you and your colleagues by giving you the chance to discuss what has happened, contact the welfare officers in case any of you need further support, make sure you feel safe to get home or make suitable arrangements to get you home if not.

After this, the procedure is the same whether an employee has died at work or elsewhere, such as at home or in hospital. The DPO contacts the bereaved family to arrange support from our welfare officers, follows this up in writing with a letter of condolence from the Chief Officer and organises all other practical details.

The manager will contact the family to enquire about funeral arrangements, inform the Chief Officer so that they, or a senior manager, can attend and let the employee's colleagues know. You can request authorised absence to attend the funeral and your manager will consider all requests sympathetically.

We know it takes time to come to terms with what has happened, so after the funeral your manager will talk to all of you from time to time and arrange further welfare support if necessary. See also Bereavement Leave and Urgent Unforeseen Leave.

DISABLED PEOPLE WORKING AT THE COUNCIL

Disabled people have legal employment rights under the Disability Discrimination Act, DDA, and the Equalities Unit has produced appropriate guidelines for managers and disabled employees. See relating procedures - Attendance Management, Ill Health and Return to Work. Here is a summary of the guidelines.

The Disabled People Working at Derby City Council guidelines cover:

- defining disability
- reasonable adjustments
- attendance management
- the Access to Work Scheme
- frequently asked questions
- useful contacts.

Defining disability – the Council supports the **social** model of disability, meaning we accept that ‘disability’ is discrimination caused by barriers - physical, communication and social - that stop disabled people having equality in all aspects of life. The DDA uses the **medical** model of disability, meaning it defines disability by using people’s impairments rather than focussing on the barriers.

Despite this, the definition is very wide and people meeting the DDA definition of disability are protected by law. The DDA says someone is disabled if they have **‘a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’**.

Reasonable adjustments – means that, legally, we must not discriminate against disabled employees by any physical features or employment arrangements at work. Reasonable adjustments could include modifying premises, equipment, procedures, duties or work hours, providing training or other support, allowing appropriate absences or transferring the disabled employee to an existing vacancy.

Attendance management – we have a separate procedure, Disability Leave, in our Attendance Management Procedure for disabled people who are off work because of their impairment. Disability Leave is not sickness absence and it is discriminatory to ask a disabled employee to improve their attendance if their absence is impairment related. Sickness absence that is not impairment-related is not covered by the DDA.

Access to Work Scheme – this helps individual disabled people to meet the cost of help they might need to do a particular job and is managed externally by Jobcentre Plus. It includes things such as paying for a communicator, a reader or other support worker, extra travel costs or providing equipment or altering premises costs. The disabled employee usually deals direct with an Access to Work Adviser.

Frequently asked questions – see the guidance for a full list but here are answers to some commonly asked questions . . .

Q How do I know if I’m covered by the DDA?
A Read ‘defining disability’ in the guidelines or ask the Equalities Unit for advice.

Q Do I have to let my manager know about my impairment?
A It’s difficult for the Council fulfil its legal obligation under the DDA if we don’t know, so please tell your manager or your DPO. You needn’t give full details but you need to tell us why you need reasonable adjustments.

Q Are the same attendance triggers used for disabled employees?
A Impairment related illnesses are not counted but you must follow the Attendance Management Procedure when applying for disability leave.

- Q** How can I find out if anyone else at the Council has a similar impairment?
- A** You could put an article in GoldRush newsletter. Contact the GoldRush editor on 25 8458 or ask the Equalities Unit to help with this.
- Q** Who else could I discuss my impairment with?
- A** Derby Council for Voluntary Services, CVS, has a self-help directory of over 600 groups offering help and support. Ring them on 227730 or go into the directory on-line at www@cvsderby.co.uk.
- Q** What about general safety and access arrangements?
- A** If you have difficulty getting out of the building in an emergency, or hearing the fire alarm, you must have a **Personal Evacuation Plan**. Talk to your departmental safety officer and your manager will discuss it with the Council's Access Officer. Remember that reasonable adjustments are about **equality** for disabled people and shouldn't be seen as a 'health and safety' issue.

For further advice contact the Equalities Adviser, 25 5384 or textphone 25 8427. Also, see 'useful contacts' section of this handbook.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

As a Council employee, you are trusted to behave responsibly, honestly and above reproach. If you do not meet the high standard we expect, disciplinary action will follow. The Disciplinary Procedure makes sure that all departments deal with disciplinary situations promptly, fairly and consistently, and follow the procedure to the letter. We negotiated and agreed it with the trade unions. Read the full version as ignorance is not a defence, but here are brief details of:

- the sort of behaviour that would result in disciplinary action
- the disciplinary warnings or other action that would result
- an overview of the various stages of the procedure.

Examples of misconduct:

- breaching safety regulations
- not complying with reasonable, lawful management instructions
- negligence or deliberately damaging Council property or equipment
- theft, fraud or misappropriating Council property
- abusing your position as a Council employee
- disclosing confidential or personal information or breaching the 1998 Data Protection Act or the IT Security Policy
- breaching the Council's e-mail and Internet Policy
- communicating with the media on Council issues without permission
- poor time-keeping or attendance, abusing sickness absence, using work time for non-Council activities
- falsifying records - qualifications, time or bonus sheets, travel claims
- fighting or assault
- victimising, bullying or harassing others or breaching equalities policies
- coming to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs or smoking.

The list is not exhaustive – these are only examples – if in doubt, ask.

Levels of disciplinary action

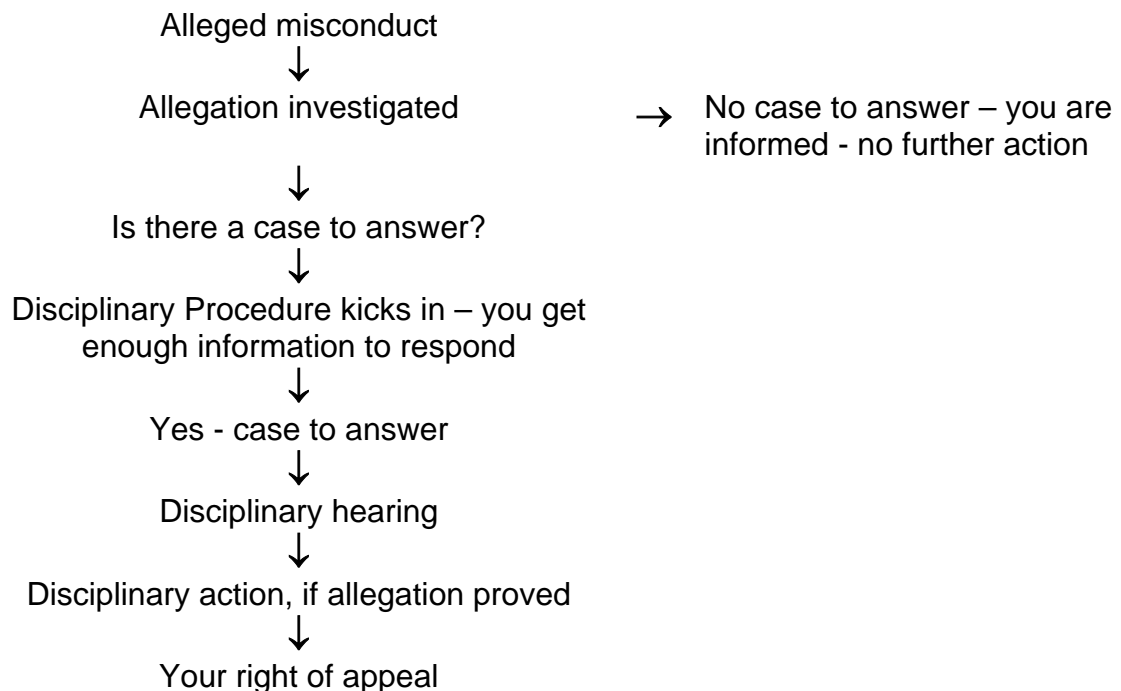
Informal action – a reprimand

Formal action could be:

- an oral warning for a minor offence, recorded on your personal file,
- a first written warning for more serious misconduct, or a repeat of a minor offence
- a final written warning for serious misconduct, or repeat of a previous offence
- dismissal - for gross misconduct or for further misconduct after a final written warning.

There is no such thing as being ‘sacked on the spot’. Dismissal would only happen after all we had followed all the stages of the procedure. However, you could be suspended if staying at work would mean we had condoned the alleged misconduct, or if the investigation might be hindered or if there was the possibility you might be a risk to yourself or others. Being suspended is **neutral**. It does not imply guilt.

Overview of the Disciplinary Procedure stages:



At all stages you have the right to be informed of allegations, about any action and to be represented by someone of your choice, usually a trade union representative. If there is an allegation of misconduct made against you, we will give you a full copy of the Disciplinary Procedure and remind you of your right to be represented.

DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT CODE

If you use a computer or display screen as a significant part of your work you must report any health, eye or fatigue problems to your manager under this code. Read the full code or ask your safety officer for the leaflet 'Working with VDUs'.

Your manager, or departmental Display Screen Assessor, is responsible for minimising risk by assessing your work environment, equipment, your desk, chair, lighting and work space under the 1992 Health and Safety DSE Regulations.

Our Display Screen Equipment Code includes information about:

- eye tests and the Council's voucher scheme
- daily routines, workloads, screen time and taking regular breaks
- positioning equipment, keyboards, screens and chairs
- basic exercises you can do to avoid aches and pains.

E-MAIL AND INTERNET USER POLICY

The Council provides Information and Communications Technology, ICT, so that you have the necessary tools to do your job efficiently. For Internet access, you need your manager's authorisation that it is needed specifically for your job.

Monitoring – we monitor and log e-mail and Internet activity. We also use ICT technology to block unsuitable access or use. We expect you to use ICT facilities responsibly. If you misuse them we will restrict your access and may take disciplinary action. Follow these summarised guidelines and read the full policy.

Personal use – we allow you limited personal use of e-mail and the Internet providing that you:

- only use it **out** of work hours – meaning before your start time, after your finish time, during lunch breaks or by using flexi leave
- don't incur direct costs to the Council
- don't damage the Council's interests, disrupt the service or others' work
- don't send or receive offensive or obscene items
- stay within the law – particularly the Data Protection, Sex Discrimination, Protection from Harassment, Disability Discrimination, Race Relations, Human Rights and Obscene Publications Acts.

You must not:

- promote commercial ventures, causes or organisations unless authorised
- sell personal things or promote social activities not connected with the Council
- lobby, campaign or publicise any political party or interest
- visit websites or share or retrieve information or software that discriminates or intimidates anyone at work based on sex, race, sexual orientation, or religious or political beliefs in the work environment

- send messages that are obscene, pornographic, sexually orientated, derogatory, offensive, threatening, insulting, harassing or harmful to recipients
- copy, distribute or receive copyrighted or confidential items without the owner's consent
- describe techniques for criminal terrorist acts
- represent views contrary to any Council policy
- break through security controls – know as 'hacking'
- deliberately access or transmit a computer virus
- block or interrupt networks, including sending junk or chain e-mails
- hide your identity or pretend to be someone else
- download entertainment software – games, screensavers, images or videos
- pay for Council goods or services on the Internet, until notified otherwise
- download or distribute pirated software
- libel or defame anyone or make false statements that could result in you or the Council being liable for damages to the victim
- read, delete, copy or change the contents of anyone else's e-mail mailbox without their permission.

E-mails

Confidentiality – e-mail is not a secure way of exchanging private, confidential, personal or sensitive information. Be aware of your responsibilities under the Data Protection Act – see policy. Don't put anything on an e-mail that you wouldn't put on official headed paper. Before you click 'send', imagine how your words might sound if read out loud as evidence in court or at a disciplinary or grievance hearing.

You must:

- keep e-mail and network passwords secure. Change them regularly and don't share them with others.
- arrange for others to access your e-mail inbox when you're on leave
- disconnect Internet access when not using it and log off your PC if you leave it unattended for any length of time
- get permission before sending 'all user' e-mails
- get your manager's permission before subscribing to any bulletin board, newsgroup or other Internet services.

Contact the IT Security Officer on 25 6262 with any questions about this policy. Contact your departmental IT liaison officer for other queries – see the full policy and related ones – Data Protection, Information Security, Confidential Disposal.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

The Council is committed to promoting equality and diversity at work and in the community. Here is a summary of the main points of our policy.

Discrimination - the Council is committed to doing its best to prevent employees and the people it serves from unfair discrimination because of age, class, disability, employment status, ethnic or national origins, race or colour, living with HIV/AIDS,

marital status, religious or political beliefs, responsibility for children or dependants, gender or gender identity, sexuality, trade union activities, unrelated criminal convictions or any other unjustified grounds.

How it affects employees and job applicants – it makes sure that you are treated fairly at work in an atmosphere free from discrimination, bullying or harassment. It applies to all employees and job applicants and you are responsible for putting it into action in your job. The Equality and Diversity Policy underpins **all** other policies such as recruitment, training and disciplinary and grievance procedures. Breaching it will lead to disciplinary action.

The policy promotes a diverse workforce with:

- employees from a variety of racial, cultural and religious backgrounds
- women and men well represented at all levels
- career opportunities for younger and older people
- encouragement and practical support for disabled people
- a culture where a worker's sexuality is irrelevant to their career development.

The trade unions have been involved in developing and agreeing the policy. They support it and are key partners in promoting it and helping to make sure everyone complies with it across all services and departments.

How it affects services – we aim to provide appropriate, accessible services to all of the community without prejudice or bias. Briefly, the policy makes sure that we:

- work with, and include, all sections of the community and provide clear information about our services in a variety of ways and in appropriate languages
- encourage and support people to participate in community life and celebrate the variety of cultures in Derby
- monitor services to make sure they don't discriminate, and make improvements where necessary
- investigate complaints from the public
- comply with relevant laws.

Target areas – the Council is committed to equality for everyone, but because some groups face more discrimination than others, is tackling issues concerning:

- anti poverty for low income families
- disabled people – social, practical, employment
- minority ethnic communities
- religious beliefs and cultural needs
- women
- crime and disorder
- age discrimination, affecting both young and older people
- people living with HIV/AIDS
- lesbians, gay men
- people who are bi-sexual
- trans people.

The law – the Council, and you as an employee, must comply with the relevant legislation and statutory codes of practice including the Sex Discrimination Act, Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act, Human Rights Act, Sex Discrimination Gender Reassignment Regulations, Race Relations Amendment Act 2000.

We have adopted the Commission for Racial Equality, CRE, Standard for Local Government and each department is developing a race equality plan to achieve as high a level of the standard as possible.

If you feel unfairly treated or would like advice on any aspect of equality and diversity at work, contact the Equalities Unit on 25 8433 textphone 258427

FIRE EVACUATION

All council buildings have a fire evacuation code to protect employees, visitors, service users and contractors and you have a legal duty to comply with procedures. We've included the Council House evacuation procedure here because many of you visit for meetings or training but, in your own building, follow the specific procedure.

General rules in the Council House

- Keep internal fire doors closed and report faulty ones on 25 5382.
- Only use external fire exits in emergency by pushing the bar to open.
- Don't obstruct fire doors.
- **Fire marshals** in each department are trained in emergency procedures and have specific duties if there's a fire alert. Do as they tell you.
- If you're a new employee you must read and sign the fire evacuation procedure as part of induction. After that, you must read and sign it periodically to prove you know what to do in an emergency.
- **Main reception** - employees on duty will open both the Corporation Street double doors so people can get out quickly. Main reception employees assemble at the Corporation Street entrance in an emergency.
- The **General Assistants** will attend the fire control panel at the Derwent Street entrance, will make sure the gate from the car park to the River Gardens is open and that the car park grille is up.
- **Members Services** officers are trained fire marshals and will evacuate people attending meetings in committee rooms.
- **Communications Unit** officers will deal with enquiries from the Press and from the public in liaison with the Council House Fire Evacuation Officer.
- **Regular visitors** to the Council House and **disabled employees** will have a personal evacuation plan, formulated by a designated fire marshal.

If you discover a fire, during **normal office hours**, at the Council House:

- break the glass on the nearest fire alarm button to sound the alarm – there's one opposite each staircase
- dial 2222 and report it
- don't fight the fire unless it's safe to do so and you are trained.

When the alarm rings continuously:

- evacuate the building immediately – don't use the lift
- assemble in the River Gardens, taking any visitors with you
- stay at your assembly point and wait for further instructions from the Council House Fire Evacuation Officer, or from the Fire Brigade.

Outside office hours - always sign in at Derwent Street. If you discover a fire:

- sound the alarm by breaking the glass of the nearest fire alarm button
- dial 9-999 and report it
- don't fight the fire unless it's safe to do so and you are fully trained
- leave by the nearest fire exit and assemble in the car park
- stay there and await instructions.

FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS

If flexible work hours are part of your conditions of employment, your staffing officer will give you a Flexible Working Hours Employee Guide. Under our Work Life Balance initiative there are project groups piloting variations to the standard flexi scheme. This summarises the main principles of the **standard** scheme.

Conditions of the Flexi Scheme

Service needs have priority and there must be adequate cover.

Bandwidth – the earliest start time is 7.30am, latest finish time is 6.30pm.

Core time – when all employees must be on duty - is 10am to 11.30am and 2.30 to 4pm weekdays, 3.30pm on Fridays.

Cover arrangements – we must be operational throughout normal opening hours – 8.30am to 5pm, 4.30pm on Fridays – without closing at lunch times. Your manager has the right to ask you to cover periods outside core time for adequate cover.

Hours – a full-time standard week is 37 hours, unless your contract of employment states differently. A standard day is seven and a half hours, seven on Fridays. You must take a minimum 30-minute lunch break and may take up to a maximum of two hours.

Time counted is 'on duty' time, not simply time spent on the premises. Time spent on official visits including travelling to and from the visit counts as 'on duty' time.

You don't qualify for **overtime** payments for hours worked within the bandwidth of 7.30am to 6.30pm. Overtime payments outside bandwidth need Chief Officer approval. If you're contractually required to attend evening meetings or to work outside bandwidth, your existing conditions of employment apply.

Working period – during each four-week accounting period of 148 hours you may carry forward a 12-hour debit or credit to the next accounting period if you work full-time or proportionately if you work part-time or job share.

Flexi leave – you may take up to four periods of flexi leave in each accounting period, up to a maximum of 12 hours but only one full day flexi. Entitlement is not automatic - approval depends on adequate cover levels, and service needs.

Absences – when you're off for an authorised reason such as holiday, sickness, training or approved duties you will be credited with standard work hours. If you are absent, arrive late or leave early because of bad weather you can use accrued flexible leave or annual leave – see Bad Weather Policy.

Medical visits – make doctor or dentist appointments outside core time but, if you have no alternative, you need your manager's approval. Record actual arrival or departure times. You can't credit hours taken for the medical appointment. The only exceptions are antenatal appointments, non-routine or urgent hospital appointments, well men or well woman appointments or if you are covered by the DDA. See Maternity Policy, Ill Health Policy, Disability Discrimination Act Policy.

Personal emergencies – credit for time off depends on the circumstances and needs approval – see Bereavement and Other Urgent Leave Policy.

Leaving the Council – you must clear all debits or credits before you leave. We will deduct any debit not cleared from your final pay.

Your responsibility is to:

- recognise that service needs take priority over your personal needs
- co-operate with your manager and colleagues to ensure adequate cover
- make sure your working hours meet your job requirements
- work normal hours if your manager requires this for a specific reason
- get approval from your manager before you take any flexi leave
- understand your manager has the right to refuse it in the interests of service
- record accurate start, finish times, lunch break times and total daily hours
- enter brief information in the absence reason column, when applicable
- clear all debits or credits if you leave the Council
- operate the scheme responsibly
- realise that if you abuse the scheme we will take disciplinary action for misconduct. You could be dismissed for falsifying flexi time sheets.

Managers are responsible for:

- managing the scheme appropriately
- giving service needs priority and making sure of adequate cover levels
- asking employees to work normal hours if necessary – for example if there's no work available at 7.30am, if it's not practical, for a specific task or to provide cover
- refusing flexi leave requests if it is not in the interest of the service
- making sure employees operate the scheme properly, including spot checks
- taking appropriate action if employees abuse the scheme.

GOOD SERVICE GUIDE

We are committed to providing services to the highest possible standard and expect you to follow the guidelines, summarised here. The 'First Impressions Good Service

Guide' replaces the out-of-date customer care guides. New employees get this booklet at induction. For extra copies, contact the Communications Unit on 25 8458.

Image – be aware that people get their impressions of the Council from reception areas, public buildings, all vehicles, letters and notices, schools, libraries and from public areas such as parks. Make sure it's a professional image.

Out and about – if you are wearing a Council name badge, corporate uniform or are in a vehicle with our logo remember you're a clearly visible ambassador for the Council. Be prepared for any type of enquiry – don't say you don't know – find out.

Face to face – be tolerant, constructive, helpful and professional.

Phones – answer promptly and make sure you sound professional, confident and welcoming. Follow the instructions in the internal phone book for transferring calls.

Letters, leaflets, posters and forms – make sure they are in plain English – get advice on this and on corporate layout from the Communications Unit, reply to letters within agreed response times, offer other formats to meet people's needs.

Difficult people – some people are rude, abusive, angry or frustrated when they contact us but it's still your job to respond in a professional way. Hear them out, try to negotiate a solution, take action and keep them informed. But don't put yourself at personal risk – follow the Abuse, Aggression and Violence Code.

Culture and religion – be aware of our diverse population. Respect cultural differences and beliefs, especially when visiting. Read the full booklet or get advice.

Home visits – make and keep to appointment times, show your identity, be aware of the needs of disabled service users and offer help but don't impose it.

Vulnerable people – be extra patient and reassuring with children, older people, people with mental ill health problems or learning difficulties and people who are confused or distressed. Make sure they get help from the appropriate service.

Complaints – when people complain, take them seriously. Try to sort the problem out. If they're still not satisfied offer a complaint form and explain how to use it.

Remember – **you** are personally responsible for providing good service.

GREEN WORK GUIDE

The Council's Green Team has developed this guide to reduce the Council's impact on the environment. For a copy ask your departmental Green Team representative or contact the Green Team Chair on 25 6276. Briefly, this is what we're asking **you** to do at work to help our environment.

- **Save electricity** - use natural daylight, only turn on what you need. Switch lights off in bright weather or when you're out. Be sparing with appliances. Switch PCs off when not in use. Use the stairs if you can, not the lift.

- **Save water** - use the plug, not running water and report dripping taps.
- **Save heat** - turn radiators down or off if you're too warm rather than opening a window. Wear appropriate clothes. Don't use portable heaters. If you're cold at work or too hot, report it to your building manager and get it sorted.
- **Save paper** - use e-mail, if you have it, and don't automatically print copies. Double-side photocopy. Use single side waste paper as scrap pads but make sure there's nothing confidential on the printed side. Use coloured paper sparingly and use old envelopes for internal mail. Specify re-cycled paper for all flip chart pads and for internal or external printing. Recycle paper waste.
- **Travel intelligently** – change your travel for **one** day a week and make 20% difference! Walk, bus or cycle. We have cycle parking spaces, a cycle allowance, cycle mileage rate and showers at some buildings. You can get discounts at local bike shops and an employee loan to help you buy a bike. Share a car or organise a car pool, plan your journeys to avoid peak traffic.
- **Waste** – follow the **three Rs** to reduce the amount of waste at work . . .
 - Reduce** - think of ways to cut down the amount of waste you produce
 - Re-use** - items and avoid buying disposable ones
 - Recycle** - check your bin. Can you reduce, re-use or recycle next time?

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If you feel aggrieved at work you have the right to raise a grievance. Follow this procedure to raise it, which must be within three months. A grievance would be something such as allocation of work, duty rotas, work hours, pay allowances, or feeling you have been unfairly treated by a manager. You can't use the Grievance Procedure for appeals against salary grading, disciplinary issues, bullying or harassment or trade union disputes because these are all covered by other policies.

- 1 Discuss it with your manager. If this is not appropriate, discuss it with another manager in your department. The manager must try to resolve your grievance informally at this stage.
- 2 If it is not resolved to your satisfaction, put your grievance in writing to a senior manager in your department. They will meet you within five days to try and resolve it.
- 3 If you're not satisfied, your grievance then goes to your Chief Officer, who will meet you within five days.
- 4 If your Chief Officer couldn't resolve it to your satisfaction, you can move on to the final stage, to councillors. Councillors would arrange a hearing within 20 days to decide whether your grievance is justified.

The procedure usually ends here but, if both sides agree that there is an important principle involved in your grievance, it could go to regional or national level stage.

At all stages you have the right to be represented by someone of your choice, usually a trade union representative. And, until your grievance is settled, the circumstances around it must stay the same as they were before you raised it. Read the full procedure, or contact your DPO or a trade union representative.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

The Council has a legal duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of employees, service users and contractors working with us.

You have a legal responsibility to:

- take reasonable care of your own health, safety and welfare
- co-operate with health and safety issues, instructions and procedures
- make sure that other people are not at risk by what you do, or fail to do
- use equipment properly, as trained and instructed
- tell your manager or safety officer immediately about any situation, working practice or equipment that might be dangerous or about any problems with health and safety arrangements
- report accidents, ill health or aggressive work-related incidents – see the Abuse, Aggression and Violence Code and the Accidents, Diseases and Danger Reporting Code.

Your manager is legally responsible for:

- promoting health and safety at work and for setting a good example
- explaining health and safety policies, standards and work procedures and for making sure you follow them by monitoring, inspections, spot checks and safety audits
- doing risk assessments for work activities, in consultation with you
- making sure you are trained properly to follow health and safety procedures and for making sure you are adequately supervised at work
- making sure work related accidents, incidents and ill health are reported, investigated and for taking remedial or preventative action.

Your Chief Officer has a legal duty for managing health and safety within your department, which means:

- making sure adequate resources are available for safe working
- making sure that health and safety has equal priority with other management functions and is included in the business plan
- supporting and promoting continual improvement to health and safety.

The **Chief Executive**, together with the **Chief Personnel Officer**, is legally responsible for making sure the Council:

- has proper arrangements for health and safety
- operates health and safety policies consistently across departments
- has a programme of health and safety audits, inspections and monitoring
- takes positive action to improve safety when problems are identified.

Everyone is responsible for health and safety – there is no opting out. Breaching the health and safety policy is a disciplinary offence. Don't take risks. If you are worried about anything at all to do with health, safety or welfare at work, or have suggestions

to improve safety, talk to your manager, your department's health and safety officer or anyone in Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare.

HIV AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES GUIDE

Under safety regulations, the Council has a legal duty to minimise risk from exposure to body fluids containing viruses and bacteria. For certain employees, such as people working in residential homes or with clinical waste disposal, risk of infection is a known hazard and their departments have specific procedures for safe working. For other Council employees, exposure is likely to be accidental or very occasional but you must still read the full HIV and Infectious Diseases Guide, summarised here.

- If you do come into contact with body fluids including blood, urine or faecal matter, always:
 - cover skin cuts or wounds with an elastoplast before touching anything
 - avoid using anything sharp that could cause a cut or puncture wound
 - wear latex disposable gloves, turn them inside out before taking them off, then dispose of them immediately. There are disposable gloves in every department's first aid boxes.
 - use goggles, waterproof clothing or other protection – an apron – and rubber boots if the floor is contaminated
 - use good hygiene practices – wash hands thoroughly
 - dispose of everything safely – see 'disposal' section
 - ask your manager or your own doctor about immunisation against infections such as Hepatitis.
- Deal with spillages safely:
 - wipe up small spills, using gloves, with paper towels soaked in disinfectant, put used towels in a clinical waste bag for incineration and then wash your hands thoroughly
 - cover large spills with paper towels, flood the area gently with disinfectant and leave it for two minutes before wiping up. Wash the area with water and detergent and dispose of towels and gloves safely.
 - follow COSHH – Control of Substances Hazardous to Health – instructions for disinfectants that might be dangerous.
- If your clothes are badly contaminated incinerate them, but if they are only lightly soiled either wash them on a hot setting or get them dry cleaned, informing the dry cleaners of possible contamination.
- Treat all needles as 'contaminated' – don't touch them with your bare hands and dispose of them properly, using the 'sharps procedure'.
- Report any incident to your manager.

Please read the comprehensive HIV – Preventing Infections Guide and instructions in the yellow Personnel Handbook. If you don't know, ask. Don't guess.

HOSPITALITY GUIDELINES

This summarises the guidelines about accepting gifts or hospitality from suppliers or others who might wish to influence a Council decision. Generally, you:

- should only consider accepting offers of gifts and hospitality when it can clearly be regarded as normal and reasonable
- should follow the rule of not accepting anything. In **exceptional** cases, if the hospitality or gift is modest and you consider it normal or reasonable, get clearance beforehand. We may take action under the Disciplinary Procedure if you don't get clearance.
- must not, under any circumstances, seek any gift, benefit, hospitality or other advantage from anyone doing business with the Council
- should only consider accepting small gifts of little value, such as diaries and calendars with a value of, say, £25 or under
- can regard working lunches and other similar occasions as, sometimes, a proper way of doing business, provided there is no extravagance
- must realise that soliciting or receiving any benefit or advantage from any individual or organisation with whom the Council has dealings, or failing to notify the department of a finance interest in a contract, may constitute gross misconduct and could result in dismissal
- must **declare an interest** in any contract or proposed contract, either **direct** involving you as employee, or **indirect** involving your spouse, partner, family, close friend, or any company in which you are involved
- should be alert to the **timing** of any offer of hospitality or gift, particularly if there may be a possible connection between the offer and granting a contract
- be cautious when offered hospitality or a gift. Ask yourself why it's being offered. Unless there's a justifiable reason to accept, refuse all gifts.
- must **never** accept hospitality or gifts from a tenderer anyway, but especially in the immediate period before tenders are invited or in the period between invitation to tender and acceptance.

ILL HEALTH PROCEDURE

This procedure applies if you have had a lot of sickness absence or if your health makes it impossible to do your job properly. It supplements the Attendance Management Procedure. If you're worried about not being able to do your job properly because of illness, talk to your manager. If this is not appropriate, contact your trade union representative as trade unions have their own welfare services.

Full details are in the Attendance Management Procedure or you could get advice from the Equalities Unit.

In extreme circumstances, if there are concerns about your health, safety or welfare you may be temporarily suspended, but your manager would discuss this with you and involve your trade union. The procedure makes sure you are treated fairly, have the right to be supported and represented and that all facts, medical or otherwise are considered before we make a decision. However, the ultimate decision may be that, if you are can't do your job because of illness, you may be redeployed to another job, have your employment terminated or have to retire on health grounds.

Read the full procedure if you are concerned, but here is a summary of it.

- If attendance-management interviews have not helped to improve your attendance, or were not appropriate because of, for instance, long-term absence or urgent circumstances, your manager will contact a designated authorised manager in your department.
- The authorised manager, after following all the procedure stages such as investigating reasons for absence, getting medical advice and giving you chance to improve, would agree a formal hearing. You get ten days notice beforehand, in writing, with full details, including a reminder of your right to be represented, usually by a trade union representative.
- The hearing would be to establish the reasons for your absence, to see what we, or you, could do to improve it, considering the circumstances. You get details of the result in writing. It may be an offer of support, help to return to work, a review period or a formal warning that your contract may be terminated unless your attendance improves. This means that if you can no longer satisfy your side of the employment contract - attend work and do your job satisfactorily - your contract will end.
- Once you have had a formal warning, the authorised manager will monitor your attendance every three months, which you must improve and maintain for a year. If it does not improve we will inform your trade union representative and arrange another hearing to consider terminating your contract.
- If the outcome is dismissal, this will be immediate.
- If the Council's doctor decides that the outcome is retirement because of ill health he will complete a declaration about your inability to do your job, or other comparable work, up to the age of 65.
- If you have a formal written warning that your contract will be terminated, you have the right of appeal.

This procedure is very complicated so, if you are in this situation, you must talk to someone about its various implications. The Council's aim is to help you attend work and to help you if you cannot because of illness. We would not consider dismissal without helping you at every stage and have agreed this with the trade unions.

IMPROVING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

This procedure applies if you are not doing your job to the expected standard. Your manager will apply it if you don't have the skills to do your job or your aptitude deteriorates. We do not use it if there are worries about your health, if you have

been deliberately negligent or careless or if you've become disabled. There are other Council policies covering all of these. It covers all employees except teachers, people on probation or on short contracts 13 weeks or less.

Your manager is responsible for making sure you are trained to do your job, to supervise you and monitor your performance at work. If your performance isn't up to standard, your manager will discuss this with you. They must give written notice of the meeting beforehand, details of poor performance and remind you of your right to be accompanied, usually by a trade union representative, at all stages.

At this preliminary stage meeting your manager will:

- specify what's wrong with your work performance and explain what is required
- give you chance to explain.
- agree an action plan to help you get your work up to standard within a set period, during which your performance is monitored.

Actions to help could be further training, increased supervision, welfare support or rearranging your workload. Your manager will confirm it in writing so there is no misunderstanding on either side. During this monitoring period, which could be between one to three months, you and your manager will meet regularly so you get feedback and arrange a review meeting at the end. If your performance has **improved** we'll notify you in writing that there will be no further action.

If your work performance hasn't improved, or been sustained, then formal action begins. This follows a similar pattern to the preliminary stage - an initial meeting, a set monitoring period, regular feedback meetings, a final meeting - but it is **formal** and is run by a designated officer from your department and another officer.

If your performance **improves** to a satisfactory standard you will be interviewed to tell you this and remind you that you must maintain it, all confirmed in writing.

If it **doesn't** improve after a final review, your job is now at risk and you are in a serious situation. At all stages we will try to help you with constructive action such as, if appropriate, redeployment. But the bottom line is you could be dismissed with pay in lieu of notice. You have the right of appeal. Read the full policy.

INFORMATION SECURITY POLICY

This policy applies to all employees including temporary staff, contractors and consultants with authorised access to Council IT systems.

The policy is to protect the Council's assets, reduce the risk of security incidents and demonstrate that we collect, handle and store personal information securely within the law and e-government guidelines. It's put into practice through appropriate controls, which are a combination of policies, procedures, standards, guidelines and physical or hardware and software measures.

It covers the safekeeping of all information to protect its confidentiality, integrity and availability and includes anything stored on PCs, sent across networks, printed, written or spoken.

Responsibilities – the Director of Finance is responsible for defining security standards and procedures. You, if you are an authorised user of the Council's IT system, are responsible and accountable for complying with our standards and procedures. Your manager will make sure that you are adequately trained on:

- operating the system
- security risks
- security features
- protecting your password
- security of your PC and other assets
- preventing the spread of viruses
- identifying and protecting important, sensitive, personal or confidential data
- identifying and reporting security incidents.

Compliance - IT security is not optional – we are legally and contractually required to keep a certain level of security under the 1998 Data Protection Act, the 1988 Copyright Designs and Patents Act, the 1990 Computer Misuse Act and the 2000 Freedom of Information Act. We may take appropriate action under the Disciplinary Policy if you are an authorised IT user and do not comply with this policy.

Incidents - you must log all security incidents with the Capita Helpdesk and inform the IT Security Officer. We monitor and investigate all incidents, take appropriate action and then record them so we can learn lessons from them.

Business continuity – the Council has plans in place to recover critical business data and restore systems under Risk Assessment procedures. There are nominated officers responsible for up-to-date business continuity plans in each department.

If you're not sure of your responsibilities, contact the IT Security Officer on 25 6262 or read the full policy on Outlook under Public Folders. See related policies - Data Protection, E-mail and Internet, Anti Virus and eGuide for computer users.

JOB SHARING POLICY

Under this policy two, or more, people share the duties of a full time job with the same pay, conditions and basic rights as full-time employees, but in proportion. Most jobs are potentially suitable for job sharing, but for some jobs it isn't appropriate. Delivering services and the need for continuous cover takes priority.

Working arrangements could be half a week, mornings or afternoons, alternate days or alternate weeks. You can't start job share until a job share partner has been found, and if no partner is found you must stay working full-time until one is recruited.

If a job sharer resigns, the remaining partner must be told:

- that they will be offered the job on a full-time permanent basis or, if this isn't acceptable, on temporary basis until a suitable job sharer is found

- that the job sharing vacancy will be advertised
- that if a partner can't be found, they will be placed on the Redeployment Register. Management may consider filling the vacant half of the job temporarily, but there's no guarantee of the same working arrangements.

If a job sharer can't cover the job full-time while we seek a second job sharer, the manager will allocate the workload so the existing job sharer isn't overloaded.

See the full Job Sharing Policy in the Personnel Handbook and talk to your Departmental Staffing Officer, but here is a summary of the main implications.

Pay - as a job sharer you're paid the same rate as a full-time employee, in proportion to the hours you work. If you share a career-graded job, you and your job partner could be on different grades. You would be on an incremental point relevant to your qualifications, age and experience, which could be different for your job sharer.

Bonus schemes - if your job includes a bonus scheme, you'll get proportionate payment to the hours you worked, calculated on the performance of the team.

Overtime - if you work over your hours, but within the standard working week, you would be paid plain time rates or could discuss having lieu time off with your Chief Officer. Any additional time worked must be authorised in advance.

Sick pay - if you are off sick you would receive the proportionate sick pay.

Pension - your benefits reduce if you work fewer hours, as they're based on amount of service. For example, if you work half-time for a year you pay half the pension contributions and would be credited **six months** for pension purposes, not a year.

Maternity leave - job sharers have the right to maternity leave in accordance with the national agreement. Ask your staffing officer for a copy of the Maternity Policy.

Parent leave – up to a maximum of three half days.

Training - for internal training, your manager will try to arrange for you to attend in your work hours but, if this isn't possible, you'll be paid to attend on an off duty day.

Qualification training – attending college and exam leave is in proportion to your work pattern but fees are paid in full, once the course is approved.

Promotion - you will be considered in the same way as full-time colleagues.

Flexi time – applies to job sharers, subject to the needs of the service.

Car allowance - if the job requires essential car user status, you will get the same lump sum as a full-time worker. Your mileage allowance will be according to the miles travelled on Council business, based on the conditions for full-time employees.

Holiday entitlement - is in proportion to the hours you work and length of service.

Public holidays - because most bank holidays are on Mondays, entitlement is in proportion. Agree to share public holidays with your job partner but, if this is not possible, your manager can apportion the holidays to ensure equality.

LEAVE AND TIME OFF

This summarises, in alphabetical order, types of leave and time off. Some depend on individual circumstances so discuss it with your manager or your DPO.

Adoption leave – See the full policy but, briefly, you are entitled to both paid and unpaid adoption leave.

Annual leave – see Annual Leave Policy and Procedure

Bereavement leave - see Bereavement Leave and Urgent Unforeseen Leave.

Election candidate leave – maximum of 20 days' unpaid leave, subject to the Chief Personnel Officer's approval, if you stand in a Parliamentary or district election or act as an Election Agent. The 20 days includes any paid or unpaid leave you have taken for bereavement or urgent, unforeseen domestic leave in that year.

Extended leave – to visit relatives abroad you can accumulate leave under the 'carry over/bring forward' conditions. The maximum, subject to the Chief Personnel Officer's approval, is 40 days and must include your annual leave entitlement.

Interview leave – time off with pay for job interviews within local government but not the Civil Service, Health Service or other statutory organisations.

Medical screenings – paid time off for appropriate medical screening.

Parent leave – see Parental Leave Policy and Paternity Leave Policy.

Professional organisation attendance – the Chief Personnel Officer can approve paid leave, and may authorise appropriate travel and subsistence, if you serve on a relevant committee of a professional organisation, subject to service needs.

Religious minority holidays – at the start of a leave year you can designate up to two days as religious holidays if you belong to a religious minority group. If you then have to work on these days you'll get enhanced pay. You don't get enhanced pay if you work the equivalent statutory holidays such as Good Friday or Easter Monday. See Religious and Cultural Needs Policy.

Relocation leave – if eligible, up to two days' paid leave for house hunting/moving.

Service in the non-regular forces leave – up to two weeks' paid leave if you are a volunteer attending annual training camp.

Special Constabulary leave – up to ten days' paid leave for duties and training.

Sport leave – up to ten days paid leave if you represent the County or UK in a sporting event, depending on circumstances and Chief Personnel Officer approval.

Time off for public duties leave – up to 36 half days' paid leave if you are a magistrate, a member of a statutory tribunal, Police Authority, Board of Prison Visitors or prison visiting committee, Environment Agency, Health Authority or an education body including school governors. Up to 208 hours paid leave if you are elected to another local council. If you are elected Chair of another council you are exempt from the 208 hours limit.

Training course leave – see the Training Courses, Conferences and seminars Policy, Training Policy and the Qualification Training Scheme. Part-time workers, job sharers and shift workers have the right not to be treated less favourably than full-time workers.

Unpaid leave – Chief Officers can approve up to five days' unpaid leave and the Chief Personnel Officer up to 40 days' unpaid leave. But this includes any paid or unpaid leave you have taken for bereavement or emergencies in that leave year.

LONE WORKING CODE

We developed this Code with trade unions, and consulted trade union **safety** representatives in particular. All public sector workers face some risk but, if you work in an isolated building or away from colleagues, you may be exposed to greater risk. The Health and Safety Executive defines lone workers under two categories.

- 1 Fixed establishments** – people working away from colleagues in small workshops, sports centres, community centres, museums, libraries, isolated establishments and out of hours workers such as cleaners, caretakers.

- 2 Mobile workers** – for example home care workers, visiting officers, social workers, couriers, housing wardens, enforcement officers, inspectors, surveyors, repairs workers and welfare officers.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires the Council to ensure your health, safety and welfare. The 1999 Management of Health and Safety at Work regulations extend this, requiring the Council to assess risks at work, including lone working, and to introduce ways of reducing or removing these risks.

You and your manager have responsibilities under the Code, summarised here.

Managers' responsibilities:

- lone working risk assessments in consultation with employees
- devise and implement safe procedures and emergency arrangements
- make sure employees have sufficient training and information to work safely
- monitor and review the assessments and procedures regularly
- implement effective supervision and communication procedures
- report accidents or aggressive incidents, investigate and implement action to prevent recurrence.

Employees' responsibilities:

- help with risk assessment process
- follow the procedures devised to protect lone workers
- participate in training identified as part of the risk assessment process
- raise concerns about lone working procedures with manager
- take care of own safety and make sure work activities don't harm others
- report accidents or aggression
- tell colleagues where you are, what you are doing and when to expect you back.

Your manager must complete a service specific Risk Assessment, involving and consulting you at all stages. Here is **your** checklist.

Have **you**:

- been given clear written information about safe working procedures?
- been trained to do your job safely?
- checked whether there are any additional risks linked to your workplace, such as extreme temperatures or ongoing construction work?
- checked case histories and aggression and violence lists before visiting?
- taken extra care if there are known problems with a service user, if you are giving bad news to someone or are doing enforcement activities?
- left details with your manager of:
 - where you will be going and when you will be there?
 - emergency contact numbers?
 - any plans to go straight home from your last job?
- arranged to inform your manager about any possible changes of plan?
- told your manager of any worries about lone working, including any new hazards encountered, and problems with procedures or equipment?

- told your manager of any medical condition that may affect your safety?
- checked that your equipment, such as radio, telephone or personal alarm works properly? Replaced batteries or charged them up before they fail? Replaced faulty or spent equipment straight away?
- checked transport arrangements, such as routes or timetables?
- done pre-start vehicle checks to make sure it won't let you down?

Before you set off, have you got:

- your official identification card?
- any equipment you may need?
- emergency and standard contact numbers readily to hand?
- medicines, inhalers or treatments you may need?

The list is not exhaustive. If you work alone read the full policy and talk to your manager, your safety representative, Staffing Officer or Personnel Officer.

LONG SERVICE AWARDS

Once you've achieved 25 years' service, the Council awards a certificate and £100 worth of gift vouchers from a local store of your choice. Your department will organise a Mayor's presentation for groups of eligible employees four times a year.

You'll be invited, with a partner, relative or friend, into the Civic Suite for a drink. The Mayor will formally present you with your certificate and vouchers and will present a bouquet or a civic pen to your partner or friend. A light buffet follows, where you can socialise with your colleagues, show your friend or partner round the Civic Suite and take photos. Your department will arrange for your presentation photograph to be framed and sent on to you.

If you choose not to attend the formal presentation your department will send your certificate from the Mayor, and your vouchers, by post.

You can count continuous service for a long service award if you transferred over to us from the County Council in 1997 under Local Government Reorganisation or transferred from other organisations under a TUPE transfer. But we don't recognise service with other local councils for this award. For full details talk to your DPO.

MATERNITY INFORMATION

Please contact your staffing officer for up-to-date information as legislation has changed. The full Maternity Information Pack has important information about health and safety while you are pregnant – yours and that of your baby. Even if you're not pregnant yet, but are considering it, it's worth reading it because it includes important pre-pregnancy health and safety guidance. Here is a summary.

First - tell your manager as soon as you find out you are pregnant, and confirm it in writing by completing the Expectant Mother form 1, EM1. You must notify us so that

you get all your maternity benefits and so you can have authorised time off for antenatal appointments and other pregnancy associated medical visits.

Your manager will discuss with you how your pregnancy affects your job, and will arrange a risk assessment to see if any adjustments are needed. If you don't feel able to do your job while you are pregnant, and didn't discuss this during the risk assessment, tell your manager and we will arrange for the occupational nurse to see you. The nurse will assess your duties and make appropriate recommendations.

If you are unable to work certain hours while pregnant, you must get a medical certificate from your doctor or midwife stating this, and we will look at options.

Maternity leave – depends on your length of service. All employees are entitled to 26 weeks ordinary maternity leave. If you have 26 weeks continuous local government service at the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth, you can have an additional 26 weeks maternity leave, making 52 weeks in total. You can't start maternity leave earlier than 11 weeks before your Expected Week of Childbirth, EWC, unless your baby arrives early which will trigger the start of your maternity leave. If you're well enough, you can work up until your baby is due but all employees must have two weeks' compulsory maternity leave after the birth. If things go wrong and the pregnancy ends in sadness, please tell us and we will organise support and appropriate information to help you.

The **crucial** thing is to complete the EM2 Expectant Mother Form and give it to your manager, with your MATB1 certificate, at 26 weeks or no later than 28 days before you intend to start maternity leave because we can't pay entitlement without these. We will write to you within 28 days to confirm when we expect you to return from maternity leave, if you take your full entitlement.

Maternity pay - is split into two elements, **statutory** and **occupational**. The amount of State and occupational maternity pay you are entitled to, depends on:

- your level of earnings
- your length of continuous local government service
- your intentions about returning to work .

See the full policy for more details about this and about incremental progression, pay awards, essential car user allowance, first aider payments and pension contributions.

Illness - if you're off work through a non-pregnancy related illness, this will be treated as sickness absence. If it's pregnancy related it won't be an Attendance Management Procedure trigger point but, if it's four weeks before your EDC, it will mean the automatic start of your maternity leave. If you're ill towards the end of your maternity leave, and are due to return to work, notify your manager or staffing officer.

Returning to work – we will assume that you will take your full amount of maternity leave. If you want to return to work earlier, you will need to give notice. You must give us at least seven days' notice if you are entitled to 26 weeks' ordinary maternity leave, or at least 21 days' notice if you are entitled to 52 weeks' maternity leave.

While you're on maternity leave, if you reserved your right to return to work, we'll keep your job open, unless there's a redundancy situation, in which case the Redeployment and the Protection of Earnings policies apply. This may also be the case if your job has changed because of a reorganisation while you have been on maternity leave.

If you would rather work more flexibly when you return to work, complete the form and return it to your manager. We will reply within 28 days, and will do our best to meet your needs. See Right to Request Flexible Working Policy.

Attending college - you can continue attending college while on maternity leave and you're eligible to claim any travel that you would normally be entitled to.

NOTICE PERIODS

You are entitled to these notice periods from the Council, based on complete years of continuous service. The minimum entitlement is one week.

	Notice entitlement
Weekly paid employees , including former manual and craft:	
One month or more but less than two years' service	1 week
Two years or more but less than 12 years' service	1 week for each year
12 years or more service	12 weeks.
Monthly paid employees:	
During probationary period	1 week
After probationary period but less than five years' service	4 weeks
Five years or more but less than 12 years' service	1 week for each year
12 years or more service	12 weeks
SO1 to PO6:	
Up to eight but less than nine years' service	8 weeks
nine years or more but less than 12 years service	1 week for each year
12 years or more service	12 weeks
Chief Officers and those on Chief Officer conditions	3 months

Giving your notice - you must give these periods of notice, in writing, regardless of length of service. Earlier release dates need Chief Officer agreement.

Weekly paid: 1 week.

Monthly paid:

up to and including Scale 6 SCP 4-28	4 weeks
SO1 to PO6	8 weeks
Chief Officers and those on Chief Officer conditions	12 weeks

OVERPAYMENTS

You are responsible for completing your time sheets accurately and sending them in on time so you're paid correctly. Mistakes sometimes happen so you're also responsible for checking your pay is correct and reporting errors to Payroll at once. Legally, the Council can recover money overpaid, regardless of how it happened or whose fault it is, but we make sure we do this without causing unnecessary hardship.

Once an overpayment is identified, Payroll will act immediately to stop further overpayments. They will contact you straight away with details of how it happened, how much was overpaid and send you a full breakdown and a copy of the overpayment procedure. If Payroll can't contact you, they will notify your manager and copy all details to your Departmental Personnel Officer.

Recovering the money – you have two options to repay – directly from your pay or by invoice. Payroll will agree with you how you want to repay and over what timescale. If you opt for deductions from pay, you would sign a letter authorising Payroll to do this. If you'd rather repay by invoice, Finance will send an invoice for the net amount after tax and National Insurance.

Difficulties repaying – you can ask for a meeting with your DPO, Payroll and a representative of your choice to discuss how to repay. Even after agreeing a repayment schedule, if you have difficulty repaying you must tell Payroll about it and the officers who agreed the terms will review the arrangements.

Reduced pay - if your pay reduces because of maternity leave or illness, you may ask for repayments to be suspended until you're back on full pay. If you leave the Council before returning to full pay, and still have outstanding repayments, we deduct the amount from your final pay. If final pay is insufficient, we will invoice you.

If you are eligible for any state benefits during the repayment period, Payroll will contact the Department of Social Security direct.

Aggrieved – if you are not happy with the proposed recovery arrangement you have the right to raise a grievance, explaining why your case should receive special consideration. Normally this would go through your manager but, in the case of an overpayment, it goes straight to your Chief Officer. You have the right to be represented, usually by a trade union representative, at all stages.

PARENTAL LEAVE

Parental leave is authorised unpaid time off work to look after a child or to make arrangements for a child's welfare. It is so that you can spend more time with them in their early years, care for them if they're sick, be with them in hospital, settle them into new childcare arrangements or so that the family can spend more time together, such as taking the child to stay with grandparents.

Eligibility - you are entitled to parental leave if you are the child's parent, adoptive parent or matched prior to placement, step-parent, legal guardian or foster parent, or grandparent with a significant parenting role. You don't have to be living with the child.

Entitlement – if you're full-time you are entitled to 13 weeks, 481 hours, for each child. If your child is disabled with disability living allowance you are entitled to 18 weeks, 666 hours, for each disabled child. If you work part-time, entitlement is in proportion to your working hours. If you change your hours, we'd recalculate your entitlement.

If your child was born or adopted on or after 15 December 1999, you'd have to take parental leave by their eighth birthday or, if adopted, by the eighth anniversary of the

placement date or their 18th birthday, whichever is the sooner. If your child was born or adopted between 15 Dec 1994 and 14 December 1999 you'd have to take it by 31 March 2005 or, if adopted, by their 18th birthday if this is sooner.

Pay and pension – parental leave is unpaid. If you take 30 calendar days or less you pay your normal pension contributions. If you take more than 30 calendar days you have the option to pay them and Payroll will contact you about this.

If you take parental leave in a full block following Maternity Leave, you are not required to refund money under this section unless you don't return for a period of at least three months at the end of the parental leave.

Taking leave – complete an application, giving seven days notice if possible, and give it to your manager who will either approve you take it immediately or agree other dates, within three months.

Returning to work – your contract of employment stays the same and your absence is not classed as a break in service for statutory or contractual purposes, for the sickness absence scheme or annual leave entitlement. If your parental leave is less than four weeks you have the right to return to the same job. If it's more than four weeks, you return to the same job or, if this is not reasonably practicable, to a suitable alternative one.

Read the full policy in the yellow Personnel Handbook or talk to your DPO.

PATERNITY LEAVE

Here are brief details of the Paternity Policy enabling eligible employees to take two weeks' leave to care for a new baby or an adopted child. Read the full policy for full details of entitlement, pay, unusual circumstances, what to do and when. Also read these related policies – Adoption Leave, Annual Leave, Caring for Dependants Leave, Maternity Information, Parental Leave and Right to Request Flexible Working.

The most important thing is to complete an application for Paternity Leave and give it to your manager 28 days before the date the baby is expected, although we know this isn't always possible. You can change your request by completing another application, marking it 'second'.

You can take Paternity leave in separate days, two separate weeks or a single block, providing you take it within six months from the date the baby is born.

Birth parent – you are entitled to two weeks' paternity leave with pay if you are the father or partner of the expectant mother, have 26 weeks continuous service by the end of the fifteenth week before the expected birth and have responsibility for bringing up the child.

Adoptive parent – similarly, you are entitled to two weeks' paid paternity leave if you are the partner of the child's adopter, expect to have responsibility for bringing up the child and have 26 weeks continuous service by the end of the week you are notified of being matched with a child.

PAY AND PAYMENTS

Annual increments – these are usually paid on 1 April each year until you reach the top of your scale. If there was an adverse report on performance, your increment could be withheld, but you have the rights of appeal. If you are appointed or regraded in the first half of the financial year, you'd get your next increment the following April. If appointed between 1 October and 31 March, your increment would be six months from your actual appointment date.

Accelerated increments – need consultation and agreement between your Chief Officer and the Chief Personnel Officer.

Honoraria – your Chief Officer can authorise an honorarium payment of up to £2,000 if you are asked to take on an additional workload, to do extra duties of a higher graded post or a specific project or complex task above your level of responsibility. The Chief Personnel Officer, together with your Chief Officer, can approve honoraria payments above £2,000.

Acting up payments – you are entitled to the appropriate salary if you are asked to take on the duties of a higher graded post for at least four weeks, for reasons other than annual leave. We would issue a temporary contract. Your department must get advice from the Chief Personnel Officer and it must meet the Equalities Policy.

Career graded posts – increments are not automatic and depend on you passing the relevant qualification plus experience of, and availability of, work at the higher graded level. Career grade requests need the Chief Personnel Officer's approval.

Overtime – applies in exceptional circumstances when the work can't be done at any other time. It needs Chief Officer approval. If you are Scale 6 or below, on Flexi-time, you only claim for working half an hour beyond bandwidth – before 7.30 am and after 6.30 pm. If you are SO1 or above, you may only claim time off in lieu.

Payments for damage or theft – your Chief Officer may authorise a payment of up to £200 in any one case for damage to, or loss of, your personal property or clothing.

PERSONAL FILES

All employees have a separate, confidential, personal file. We have strict procedures for storing them securely or transferring them if you move department. Your personal file usually contains your:

- home address and emergency contact details
- job description
- appointment references, unless the referee requests it remain confidential
- all correspondence relating to your employment
- disciplinary records, if relevant.
- absence records, medical reports, accident reports
- training records and qualification details, including expense claims.

Accessing your file – you have the right, under the 1998 Data Protection Act, to see information held about you, including personal files - see Data Protection Policy. Only your DPO, staffing officer or authorised administration officers can access your file, for legitimate work-related reasons only. Your trade union representative may access your file when pursuing an issue, providing you give written permission.

Reading your file - complete an application and give it to your manager who will arrange for you to see the file within five working days. You may look through it in a private room but someone else must be there – your manager or other authorised senior officer and, if you wish, your trade union representative.

Amending it - you must not write on any document or remove anything from your file but you can arrange for photocopies. If you are not happy with what is on your file, discuss it with your manager and, if necessary, raise a grievance. If the information is wrong, providing you supply proof, you have the right to have it corrected under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Medical information – this is covered by the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988. Your staffing officer has a guidance leaflet, explaining you full rights on this. Briefly, under this law, a doctor may not consent to you seeing part of a medical report if they believe the information might harm you, harm others or identify another person.

PLAIN ENGLISH CODE

The Council introduced a Plain English Code in 1990, supported by regular practical training courses, plain English editing advice and a corporate Plain English Guide. Get advice from the Communications Unit on 25 8458.

Under the Council's **Plain English Code**, you should:

- use everyday English that is easy to understand
- avoid abbreviations, acronyms and Latin
- avoid technical terms and jargon unless they are essential, in which case explain them in full
- use correct grammar and punctuation
- use short sentences of 15-20 words, with a maximum of 35
- use active verbs by putting the 'doer' early in the sentence, for example 'The committee decided' instead of 'It was decided'
- use 'I' 'we' and 'you' to make the writing more personal
- give clear instructions so people understand what they must do
- help the reader by using headings, lists and plain numbers – not Latin ones
- cut out unnecessary words and phrases and avoid old-fashioned language.

PRIVATE PHONE CALLS

We have an honesty policy on private phone calls and you must **not** use Council facilities for making private calls without paying. We understand you may sometimes need to make urgent 'phone calls while at work but, if you use a work 'phone, you must **record** and **pay** for all private calls at the current rate. This arrangement relies

on your honesty and integrity. Using Council facilities without authorisation is a disciplinary offence.

Your staffing officer has telephone record forms or you can complete it electronically. You then pay at the cash office or by deduction from your pay. You can have private calls logged and charged directly to your home phone by using a BT charge card.

PROTECTION OF EARNINGS

The Council is committed to making sure employees have continuity of employment with its Redeployment Policy and the Protection of Earnings Policy fits in with this. It applies to employees with two years continuous service with the Council, including those who transferred over from the County at local government reorganisation and people transferring under TUPE. Protection of earnings does not apply if you unreasonably refuse suitable alternative employment under redeployment.

It does **not** apply to teachers, employees on fixed term contracts and people being redeployed because of incapacity due to lack of skill, ability, aptitude or misconduct. Neither does it apply if you decide to apply for a lower graded or part-time job.

If you are redeployed to another job with lower pay we will protect your earnings for **three years** and you will get national pay awards and incremental progression, where appropriate, on your protected pay. Your original employing department has responsibility to pay protection of earnings, not the department to which you are redeployed. Within the three-year period, once the pay in your new job matches your original job, protection of earnings no longer applies.

After three years you would get the rate of pay for the new job, or sooner if the pay in the new job is higher than your protected earnings. If you are redeployed to a lower grade it will be to the maximum of the lower grade.

If you were redeployed because of an industrial injury protection of earnings applies as long as you remain in the lower paid job, not time limited to three years.

For more details, refer to the relevant policies, in the Personnel Handbook, including Pay and Payments, Protection of Earnings Policy and the Redeployment Procedure.

QUALIFICATION TRAINING SCHEME

The Council is committed to train and develop you to improve your knowledge and skills in line with agreed objectives. We will support employees under the QTS, Qualification Training Scheme, if the qualification is relevant to their current or near future duties or when it allows for realistic career development within the Council. We will encourage you to study approved educational training courses leading to recognised vocational qualifications, usually agreed with your manager at your Achievement and Development, Job Chat or Ad Lib meeting.

The full policy, explaining the responsibilities of Chief Officers, managers, departments and employees, is in the Personnel Handbook. You can get more information, advice and a QTS Employee Guide explaining the procedure from your

department's nominated Qualification Training Scheme Officer. See also Training courses, conferences and seminars.

Applying for support - discuss your training and development needs with your manager. If you both agree that studying for a qualification is appropriate, you are responsible for finding out the course details and completing the QTS1 Application form. Your manager and/or QTS officer will help you but you need to find out:

- the full course title, course length, attendance day and times
- the stage or year for which you are eligible, enrolment date and start date
- total costs including tuition fees, registration and exam fees
- details of any residential leave or exam leave you will need.

Get this information well in advance of the summer, when colleges are difficult to contact. Then complete a QTS1 Application, give it to your manager for authorising and make sure your QTS officer gets it by 31 July if the course starts in the autumn. Keep a copy.

Approval – your QTS officer will seek final approval from your Chief Officer. The Director of Finance must approve all financial qualification applications because they require practical work experience, which impacts on the Finance Directorate.

You are liable for course fees if you register at a college before getting formal approval so don't enrol until you have a fee authorisation from your QTS officer, but you could book a **provisional** place to make sure of a place.

Each application is considered in terms of the relevance of the course to your work duties or future development needs, training budgets, releasing you to attend college and your previous record of QTS support.

Conditions – you sign an agreement requiring you to make every effort to gain the qualification or re-sit if you fail and, in some circumstances, repay fees if you fail without good reason or leave before completing a qualification.

Fees and expenses – the Council usually agree to pay tuition, registration and exam fees, 50% of the cost of essential books, a contribution to your travel costs but you can't expect **every** expense to be reimbursed. See QTS Employee Guide.

Essential visits or residentials – need written approval beforehand.

Paid leave - is granted to attend lectures and organised college events. If there are no scheduled lectures you must return to work. If you are taking end of year exams you are granted exam leave, and, with your manager's approval, study leave of up to one and a half days before the exam to revise. If you are a job sharer, part-timer or evening or night worker, paid leave is in proportion to your work pattern.

Open University and correspondence courses – paid leave will be given up to a maximum of ten days each year, usually for three years. This includes exam and exam study leave, but not essential residential leave, for which you need approval.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

For any aspect of recruitment or vacancies please talk to your DPO or Staffing Officer or contact Corporate Recruitment on 25 5582.

The main principles of the Council's recruitment and selection procedure are:

- promoting equality of opportunity for existing and potential employees to make sure that recruitment criteria and promotion are based solely on people's merit, and ability, to do the job.
- strict guidelines for advertising vacant posts. All adverts, application forms and job descriptions must be in plain English and checked by Personnel.
- managers are trained in recruitment and selection procedures and two out of three interview panel members must have attended a recognised recruitment and selection course within the last five years.
- the whole recruitment process is scrutinised by the Equalities Unit.

The full recruitment and selection manual includes guidelines on:

- preparing to fill a vacancy, advertising, writing job descriptions and person specifications
- sending information out to applicants
- police checks, references
- shortlisting, interviewing applicants, selecting
- what to do after the interview
- induction, probationary periods
- exit interviews
- equalities issues and employment legislation.

REDEPLOYMENT POLICY

This policy aims to redeploy people whose job is at risk to a similar job within the Council whenever possible, with earnings protected for three years. It applies to all employees with two years continuous service with the Council, except those on fixed term contracts. It doesn't apply to teachers, although we would use the same principles. If your job is at risk we'd give you a full copy of the policy but, briefly, the need for redeployment could happen because of:

- reorganisation or restructuring
- medical capability, incapability
- misconduct
- reasonable adjustments under the Disability Discrimination Act.

The Chief Personnel Officer has overall responsibility for redeployment, but all departments must co-operate, and employees at risk must identify possible redeployment opportunities themselves.

How redeployment works

If your job is under threat, you are entitled to be considered for suitable alternative employment for a minimum of 12 weeks, which includes your contractual notice period. Employees whose redundancy is imminent take priority. Your Chief Officer must look for suitable redeployment opportunities in your department and will notify the Chief Personnel Officer so that you are included on the Redeployment Register.

The procedure - the Chief Personnel Officer will allocate a Redeployment Officer to liaise with all departments on your behalf, be your main point of contact and help and support you through all stages. We will discuss suitable alternative jobs with you and get details of your experience, skills and qualifications. Your trade union representative may come with you to all redeployment meetings, if you wish.

You get details of vacancies **before** they are advertised and **priority** consideration for any suitable ones at the same grade, or lower. The Chief Personnel Officer can delay advertising certain jobs if they are suitable redeployment opportunities. If the job identified would mean promotion, you wouldn't usually get priority consideration.

You must consider all identified suitable jobs. If you unreasonably refuse an interview or a job offer you are disqualified from the redeployment procedure, from earnings protection and may lose entitlement to redundancy pay.

For suitable vacancies, we arrange an interview and, providing you meet the essential criteria, or would meet them with reasonable training, you would be appointed on a three-month trial. If you are not appointed, the Chief Officer must put the reasons in writing to the Chief Personnel Officer.

Once your three-month trial is up, if your performance is satisfactory, you would then be confirmed in post. The three-month trial period can be varied, by agreement, to resolve any problems and make sure the redeployment is successful.

If the redeployment doesn't work out, we would consider using the redeployment procedure again. If you are redeployed temporarily with protected earnings, the employing department will review your case every six months.

Your original department has responsibility to pay protection of earnings for three years until your pay in the new job matches that of your original one.

REGRADING PROCEDURE

The Regrading Procedure is in the Personnel Handbook with and self-explanatory application. To apply, complete the application summarising why you think your job should be regraded. Attach your current job description and send it to your Chief Officer who will acknowledge it and pass it to the Chief Personnel Officer.

The Chief Personnel Officer assesses your application and will interview you, with a trade union representative if you wish, and then interview your manager.

The Chief Personnel Officer, together with your Chief Officer, will recommend accepting or rejecting your application. If you are successful, the regrading takes

effect from the date of application and you will sign to accept your revised job description. Your salary will normally start from the minimum point of the new grade.

If your application is rejected, you have the right of appeal to the Council's Appeals Committee. You, and your trade union representative if you wish, must lodge an appeal in writing within three months of being notified of the decision.

RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL NEEDS

The Council treats all employees with respect and will respond to requests on religious and cultural needs sensitively. Get a copy of 'Religious Cultures in Derby' from the Equalities Unit and a multi faith calendar. There is full guidance for managers in the Personnel Handbook, briefly summarised here.

Prayers – if you need to pray during work time please discuss it with your manager who will try to make reasonable arrangements for you, inform other employees to make sure your prayers are not disrupted and explain how you can make up the time – possibly through flexi time.

Cultural dress – we will respond sensitively to requests to wear cultural dress, providing it's appropriate to your job and doesn't affect safety requirements. Some jobs mean you need to wear uniform but we allow trousers instead of a skirt.

Leave for religious or cultural events – you can use annual leave, time off in lieu, flexi-time and unpaid leave and we will consider all requests sensitively, fairly and consistently. Talk to your manager at the start of each leave year so they can plan for your needs in advance and make sure of adequate service cover.

Religious minority holidays – at the start of the leave year you can designate up to two days as religious holidays if you belong to a religious minority group. If you then have to work on these days you'd get enhanced pay. But you don't get enhanced pay if you work equivalent statutory holidays such as Good Friday or Easter Monday.

Fasting – providing you work your contractual number of hours we allow flexibility in start, finish and lunch times. You can use flexi-time, time off in lieu or annual leave.

RETIREMENT

The normal retirement age for all employees is 65. If a Chief Officer wishes to employ, or extend the service, of someone over retirement age they must submit a report to the Chief Personnel Officer.

Ill-Health Retirement – if you have been declared permanently unfit to do your work duties we will give you notice of retirement on the grounds of ill health. Whenever possible, the notice should be within the period ending when sick pay entitlement expires. During the contractual statutory notice period, you will get full pay less the state sickness benefit you receive.

Replacing employees who are retired on ill health - in a 'key' post where the delay in appointing a replacement seriously affects the service, the post may be filled before the expiry notice, subject to Chief Officer approval.

Retirement gratuity - this is being reviewed because of the 1996 Local Government Discretionary Payments Regulations.

Annual leave in retirement year - all employees reaching normal retirement age, retiring on ill health or retiring under length of service provisions are entitled to their full annual leave entitlement in their retirement year regardless of their retirement date. Payment in lieu will only be made in exceptional circumstances, with approval beforehand from the Chief Officer and the Chief Personnel Officer. Employees retiring early for other reasons are excluded from the provisions and we will calculate their leave in proportion to their retirement date.

RETURN TO WORK AFTER SICKNESS ABSENCE

When you come back to work after being off ill, your manager will discuss your return to work with you. After a short absence this would be a brief chat on your first day back – either face to face, or by 'phone if this isn't practical.

If you've been off for more than 14 days you can't start back without giving your manager a certificate from your doctor stating you are fit to return and on what basis. If you've been off ill for five weeks or more your manager will arrange to meet you before you return to talk about what support you may need to help you back to work. We may agree a phased return, if recommended by your doctor, to gradually ease you back into work. The sort of phased return depends on circumstances, which your manager would discuss with you, your DPO and/or the Welfare Officer who has been visiting you. See the guidance in the Personnel Handbook for details of how reduced hours on phased return can be covered.

To make sure you feel supported your manager will meet you regularly to review workloads, assess your progress and amend your phased return plan, if necessary.

You may need adjustments to your work under the Disability Discrimination Act. Your manager will get advice about this from the Equalities Unit and from your DPO.

RIGHT TO REQUEST FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

You can apply to work flexibly to care for a child, if you:

- are the child's birth or adoptive parent, legal guardian or foster parent
- are married to, or partner, including same sex partner, of one of these and live with the child
- are responsible for bringing up the child
- are applying to work flexibly so you can care for the child
- have 26 weeks continuous service, not including previous continuous service with other local government organisations.

If eligible, and your child is under 18, you **may** apply to change the hours and the times you work, including requesting working from home. If your child is under six, or under 18 if disabled, you have a **legal right** to apply under new regulations of the Employment Rights Act.

If agreed, the change would be permanent and affect your terms and conditions. You have no right to revert to your former working arrangements so it's vital, before you apply, to read the full policy, including the Employee Guidance section of it, in the Personnel Handbook. You can formally withdraw your application at any stage but, if you do this, are not eligible to re-apply for 12 months.

To apply, complete an application and give it to your manager, who will formally acknowledge it. Your manager has 28 days to investigate how to accommodate your request and will get advice from your DPO, ask others if they wish to cover any extra hours, consider redesigning the work and assess any cost implications or the effect on the service.

They will then invite you to a meeting to discuss your request and try to reach a decision. You have the right to be represented or accompanied by a trade union representative or a colleague. Prepare for the meeting yourself by making sure you know the policy facts and different types of flexible working. Be prepared to be as flexible as possible and open to suggestions for other working patterns.

Consider agreeing a trial period with your manager, bearing in mind that it would be a permanent change and a flexible working pattern of fewer hours will reduce your pay.

Your manager has 14 days to reach a decision. If your request is accepted, they will write to you formally and arrange for your staffing officer to issue you with a new contract of employment, if appropriate. Your manager can only reject your request for one of the eight reasons listed in the policy, and must write to tell you which one and explain why.

You can appeal, providing you do so on the correct form within 14 days, stating your reasons. Your appeal would go to your chief officer and if rejected and you wish to appeal further, to councillors.

SICK PAY and SICK LEAVE

If you are off work through illness or with an industrial injury or disease, follow the Sickness Notification Procedure and the Attendance Management Employee Guide to make sure we calculate your sickness benefit entitlement correctly. Your Staffing Officer will help you with this but you are responsible for notifying us at all stages.

Paid sick leave is determined by length of service. Allowances, calculated on a rolling year basis, are:

- during first year of service - one month's full pay and, after completing four months' service, two months' half pay
- during second year of service - two months' full pay and two months' half pay
- during third year of service - four months' full pay and four months' half pay

- during fourth and fifth year of service - five months' full and five months' half pay
- after five years of service - six months' full pay and six months' half pay.

Read the full Sick Pay and Sick Leave section in the Personnel Handbook for entitlement if you are on a casual, temporary or fixed term contract.

Damages from a third party – you would sign a form, from your staffing officer, promising to repay any sick pay from any damages once your case is settled.

Industrial injury - we calculate industrial injury sickness absence as a separate entitlement. Previous absences recorded as normal sickness absences in the 12 months immediately before the date of the injury are not taken into account.

You must complete the necessary accident form and accident book. When the period of incapacity is more than 90 days, 15 weeks, it is your responsibility to inform the Benefits Agency. You must get an industrial accident form from the Benefits Agency who have separate forms for different injuries. This means your entitlement to Industrial Disablement Benefit can be considered, if appropriate.

SMOKING POLICY

The Council operates a no smoking policy in all offices and buildings.

STRESS MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Council is responsible for your health, safety and welfare while you are at work. We acknowledge that this includes your mental well-being as well as physical health and have devised this policy. It's in the Personnel Handbook and has details of symptoms, behaviours, common stress triggers and advice on how to reduce it.

The Health and Safety Executive, HSE, defines stress as *'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them.'*

We are mainly concerned with workplace stress but we know that other problems will affect you at work so we will do our best to help, no matter what the cause. We aim to reduce harmful levels of stress at work by assessing risk, taking appropriate action, monitoring stress indicators and dealing with problems.

Managers – must identify early signs of stress, arrange risk assessments with employees and trade union health and safety representatives and offer support. They must use the Attendance Management Procedure and Ill Health Procedure and refer any employee off with stress for three weeks to Corporate Welfare. They must take appropriate action to reduce stress and consistently use all the personnel procedures designed to protect vulnerable employees.

All employees – you have a responsibility to discuss your own stress-related issues with your manager or a Corporate Welfare Officer so we can offer support early on. You must try to minimise your own stress and change your behaviour if it causes stress to other people. You must help your manager minimise the effects of workplace stress and co-operate with all risk assessments.

Help and support – the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Team will advise on treatment and rehabilitation for people suffering ill health through stress and help with phased return to work. They will also offer support and suggest other sources of help. In your own department you can get advice from your health and safety adviser and your trade union health and safety representative. We will also arrange stress management training, as appropriate. See ‘useful contacts’ section.

TELEPHONE ALLOWANCE SCHEME

If your duties warrant the use of a phone at home, the Council will pay the installation charge for one line and one phone. We will pay the quarterly rental and pay for 500 local calls a year for Chief Officers, 250 local calls a year for other employees.

Your department must justify the need for a phone, in writing to the Chief Personnel Officer, with a copy to the Chief Legal Officer. If approved, the Telecommunications Officer will arrange installation and we will reimburse the installation charge to you. We pay telephone allowances with salary, plus a refund for income tax. If you resign, you keep the phone and are responsible for paying all telephone accounts. If you don't pay and the phone is disconnected, you are responsible for any charges incurred. If you are off work ill for more than six months, we suspend the call allowances but continue to pay the rental.

TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP

You have the right to join a trade union and the Council encourages you to do this. The Council supports the system of collective bargaining and negotiation and believes in resolving industrial relations problems by discussion and agreement. Your staffing officer has details of all the trade unions representing employees on the appropriate negotiating body and the named representatives in your department.

TRADE UNION TIME OFF FACILITIES

The Council recognises that it shares responsibility with trade unions to maintain good industrial relations including:

- having effective arrangements for negotiating and consulting
- resolving grievances and disputes
- making sure that agreements and procedures are observed and used
- working together in a spirit of mutual trust and co-operation.

As well as encouraging employees to join a trade union, the Council supports accredited trade union representatives with an agreement for paid time off and other facilities for trade union activities. See the full agreement - brief details are . . .

A trade union '**official**' is an employee elected in accordance with the rules of the union to represent its members. '**Lay officials**' are branch officers, shop stewards, departmental trade union representatives and safety representatives appointed to represent members in their unit or section.

There are two groups – **workplace** representatives and **senior** representatives. Senior representatives include convenors, chairs, vice chairs and secretaries of departmental or corporate consultation. Departmental consultation committees are known as Joint Consultative Committees, JCCs, and the corporate one as the Corporate Joint Committee, CJC.

The Council has specific agreements allowing time off for:

- dealing with industrial relations or health and safety issues in departments
- attending a trade union annual conference
- being a member of a union's national executive
- attending local government consultation meetings
- attending approved training, conferences or seminars.

Facilities – the Council provides a private office and appropriate equipment at the Council House, at London Road and at Stores Road. It also allows reasonable use of phones, the internal mail system, notice boards and photocopying facilities.

TRAINING COURSES, CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

Your Chief Officer has the authority to approve your attendance on a training course, conference or seminar.

Your staffing officer has a request form for you to complete, which your manager signs before passing it to your Chief Officer for approval.

TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE

We are reviewing this, in consultation with trade unions, so talk to your staffing officer or DPO for current guidelines.

VACANCY LIST

You can view the weekly vacancy list online on www.derby.gov.uk, the Council's website. Once you're on our website, click on 'Job Shop' then click on 'List all Vacancies' or just browse the particular type of vacancies you are interested in.

It's updated every Friday so, if you've got a PC at home, the best viewing time is weekends. If you haven't got a PC at home, and don't have access to one at work, you can access it at any of our libraries.

We print 1,180 copies of the Vacancy List each week and distribute them to departments for notice boards, all Council buildings, schools, community centres, post offices, libraries and so on. We know that if you work off site you don't always see the vacancy list. If you have difficulty, access it online or bring it to the notice of your departmental focus group to see if there is a better way your department could get the information to you.

VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY, EARLY RETIREMENT, EFFICIENCY RETIREMENT

The rules on redundancy and early retirement, and associated payments, are very specific so if you are in that situation your DPO will guide you through it. There are comprehensive guidelines in the Personnel Handbook and a ready reckoner to calculate payments. This summary briefly describes the options but does not apply to teachers who have different terms and conditions.

Voluntary redundancy – if there is a redundancy situation the Council will accept applications from employees but maintaining services takes priority. The redundancy scheme is discretionary, not a right, and applications are subject to approval by the appropriate Executive Member. Redundancy pay depends on age, length of service, being a member of the local government pension scheme and other factors such as other job offers within local government.

Voluntary early retirement applies to employees over 50 who are in the local government pension scheme with at least two years' pensionable service. It is discretionary, must be in the interests of the service and each case needs approval.

Early retirement '85' rule – the Council's policy to requests from employees aged between 50 and 59 to have their pension paid early is that it must be in the Council's interest or on compassionate grounds.

Redundancy payments, pension entitlement and minimum notice periods are quite specific so please contact your departmental Staffing or Personnel Officer for advice.

GLOSSARY AND REFERENCE SECTION

This reference section is in alphabetical order. Look in the left hand column for what you want and the other column tells you where to find it.

AA – Alcoholics Anonymous	see 'useful contacts' in next section
Absence	see Attendance Management Procedure and Annual Leave Entitlement During Absence
Access to medical records	see Attendance Management
Access to personal files	see Personal Files
Acting up	see Pay and Payments
Adoption Leave	see Leave and Time Off
Aggression	see Abuse, Aggression and Violence
Annual Leave entitlement	see Leave and Time Off
Ante Natal appointments	see Parent Leave also Maternity Policy
Attendance on professional bodies	see Leave and Time Off
Attending conferences or seminars	see Training courses, conferences and seminars
Birth Leave	see Parent Leave, Paternity Leave, Maternity Policy
Bomb alert procedure	contact Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare
Bullying	being revised – contact Equalities Unit
Capability	see Improving Employee Performance
Career grades	see Pay and Payments
Carrying over annual leave	see Leave and Time Off
Cash handling risks	see Abuse, Aggression and Violence Code
Clinical waste	see HIV Guide
College attendance	see Qualification Training Scheme
Compassionate leave	see Bereavement and Unforeseen Urgent Leave
Compensation	see Abuse, Aggression and Violence Code and Pay and Payments
Computer screens	see Display Screen Equipment
Conferences	see Training courses, conferences, seminars
Confidentiality	see Confidential Reporting Code and Data Protection and IT Security
Contamination	see HIV Guide
Continuous service leave accrual	see Leave and Time Off
Counselling and support	see Stress Management Policy
Criminal offences	see Disciplinary Procedure
Cultural needs	see Employees' Religious and Cultural Needs
Cycling scheme	being revised
Damage to personal property	see Abuse, Aggression and Violence Code and Pay and Payments
Damage/theft personal belongings	see Pay and Payments
Dangerous occurrences	see Accident Reporting
Disability Discrimination Act	see Attendance Management and Disabled People Working at Derby City Council
Disability Leave	see Attendance Management and Disabled People Working at Derby City Council
Disclosure of information	see Confidential Reporting Code, Disciplinary Procedure and Data Protection Policy

Discrimination
 Dismissal
 Domestic leave
 Diversity
 Drug problems
 Early retirement
 Earnings protection
 Efficiency retirement
 Election candidate leave
 Employee counselling
 Employee development
 Environmental Policy
 Equality
 Expense claims
 Extended leave
 Eye tests
 Giving blood
 Giving notice
 Harassment Code
 Hepatitis B
 Holidays
 Honoraria
 Hypodermic needles
 Ill health retirement
 Impairment-related absence

 Incapability
 Inclement weather
 Incremental progression
 Industrial injury
 Infectious diseases
 Injury at work
 Internet use
 Interviews
 Jury service
 Maternity
 Medical records
 Medical screening
 Medical visits
 Misconduct
 Needle disposal
 Oral warning
 Overpayments
 Overtime
 Panic alarms
 Part-timers' training
 Personal computers, PCs
 Personal unforeseen leave
 Phone calls
 Physiotherapy

 contact Equalities Unit in Policy Directorate
 see Disciplinary Procedure
 see Bereavement and Unforeseen Urgent Leave
 see Equality and Diversity Policy
 see Alcohol and Drug Related Problems
 see Voluntary Redundancy and VER
 see Protection of Earnings
 see Voluntary Redundancy and VER
 see Leave and Time Off
 see Stress Management Policy
 see Achievement and Development Scheme
 see Green Work Guide
 see Equality and Diversity Policy
 see Travel and Subsistence- being revised
 see Leave and Time Off
 see Display Screen Equipment
 see Flexible Work Hours full Employee Guide
 see Notice
 being revised - contact Equalities Unit
 see HIV Guide
 see Leave and Time Off policy
 see Pay and Payments
 see HIV Guide
 see Retirement also Sick Pay and Sick Leave
 see Attendance Management and Disabled
 People Working at Derby City Council
 see Improving Employee Performance
 see Bad Weather Arrangements
 see Pay and Payments
 see Accident Reporting also Sick Pay
 see Accident Reporting also HIV Guide
 see Accident Reporting Code and Sick Pay Policy
 see E-mail and Internet User Policy
 see Leave and Time Off
 see Leave and Time Off
 see Maternity Information
 see Attendance Management
 see full Flexible Work Employee Guide
 see full Flexible Work Employee Guide
 see Disciplinary Procedure
 see HIV
 see Disciplinary Procedure
 see Overpayments Procedure
 see Pay and Payments
 see Lone Worker Code
 see Job Share also see Qualification Training
 see Display Screen Equipment Code
 see Bereavement and Unforeseen Urgent Leave
 see Private Phone Calls
 see the full Flexible Hours Employee Guide

Post Entry Training	see Qualification Training Scheme
Pregnancy	see Maternity Information
Protective clothing or equipment	see HIV Guide
Public duties	see Leave and Time Off
Redeployment	see also Protection of Earnings
Redundancy	see Voluntary Redundancy
Religious holidays	see Leave and Time Off also see Employees' Religious and Cultural Needs
Religious needs	see Employees' Religious and Cultural Needs
Relocation	see Leave and Time Off
Reportable diseases	see Accident Reporting Code
Resignation	see Notice Periods
Return to work	see Return to Work after Sickness Absence
RIDDOR 95	see Accident Reporting
Samaritans	see 'useful contacts' section
Security systems	see Lone Worker Code
Self certified sickness absence	see Attendance Management
Seminars	see Training courses, conferences and seminars
Service in non-regular forces	see Leave and Time Off
Sickness notification	see Attendance Management
Sickness on annual leave	see Attendance Management and Annual Leave Entitlement During Absence
Special constables	see Leave and Time Off
Sporting leave	see Leave and Time Off
Statutory Sick Pay - SSP	see Attendance Management
Stopping Harassment Code	contact Equalities Unit in Policy Directorate
Subsistence	see Travel and Subsistence – being revised
Suspension from duties	see Disciplinary Procedure
Territorial Army, TA, service	see Leave and Time Off
Third party sickness absence	see Caring for Dependants Leave and Attendance Management Policy
Training attendance	see Training courses, conferences and seminars, Qualification Training also Leave/Time Off
Training courses	see Qualification Training Scheme
Travel and subsistence	being revised – see your staffing officer
Unpaid leave	see Leave and Time Off, Caring for Dependants Leave, Bereavement and Urgent Leave
Urgent leave	see Bereavement and Urgent Leave
Verbal abuse	see Abuse, Aggression and Violence Code
Violent incidents	see Abuse, Aggression and Violence Code
Viruses	see HIV Guide
Witness in court	see Leave and Time Off
Workstations	see Display Screen Equipment
Written warning	see Disciplinary Procedure

USEFUL CONTACTS

Internal
Access Officer –25 5925. Textphone 256666
Council House Attendants – 25 5362
Equalities Unit 25 8433.Textphone 258427
GoldRush newsletter and One to One newsletter – Communications Unit 25 8458
Green Team –25 6276
Health and Safety Advisers: Chief Exec's 25 8452 Commercial Services 71 6462, Development and Cultural Services 25 5991 Education 71 6874 Social Services 71 6747
IT Security Officer 25 6262
Unison office, Council House 25 5192
Trade union representatives: AEEU GMB-MPO TGWU UCATT UNISON
Trade union Health and Safety representatives: UNISON GMB - MPO TGWU UCATT AMICUS TGWU NUT NASUWT NAHT SHA
Welfare Officers

Some useful external contacts:

ACAS – Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service 0115 9693355 or www.acas.org.uk

Action on Elder Abuse, AEA Helpline 080 8808 8141 www.elderabuse.org.uk

Addaction – drugs or alcohol – Becket Street, Derby 373700 www.addaction.org.uk

Age Concern 020 8765 7200 www.ageconcern.org.uk

Alcoholics Anonymous – Derbyshire Helpline 0115 941 7100
www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

Alcohol concern 020 7928 7377 www.alcoholconcern.org.uk

Alzheimer’s Society Helpline 0845 3000366 www.alzheimers.org.uk

Andrea Adams Trust to reduce **workplace bullying** helpline 01273 704 900
www.andreaadamstrust.org

Asian counselling service, ACS in Leicester 0116 262 7149, e-mail adm@acserve.org

BBC Health website www.bbc.co.uk/health

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, BACP in Warwickshire
0870 443 5252 www.bacp.co.uk or www.counselling.co.uk

British Dyslexia Association, BDA Helpline 0118 966 8271 www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk

British Heart Foundation Helpline 0808 800 1234 www.bhf.org.uk

CancerBACUP Helpline in Nottingham 0115 840 2650 www.cancerbacup.org.uk

Carers UK supporting carers Helpline 020 8316 7866 www.carersonline.org.uk

Child Death Helpline 0800 282 986 www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk

Citizens Advice Bureau, CAB in Sitwell St Derby 08451 203714, www.derbycab.org.uk

City Hospital 340131

Commission for Racial Equality, CRE, in London 020 7939 0000, www.cre.gov.uk

Community Legal Services, CLS. www.justask.org.uk

Cruse Bereavement Care 0870 167 1677 www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

Daycare Trust childcare information 020 7840 3355 www.daycaretrust.org.uk

Derby Council for Voluntary Services CVS 346266 Textphone 341576

Derby Women’s Centre 341633

Derbyshire Carers at Ripley 01773 743 355

Derbyshire County Council at Matlock 01629 580000

Depression Alliance charity in London 0207 6333 0557 www.depressionalliance.org

Diabetes careline 020 7424 1001 www.diabetes.org.uk

Disability Alliance to improve living standards 020 7247 8776 www.disabilityalliance.org.uk

Disability Direct – local advice 227 Normanton Rd 01332 299449, textphone 368585
www.disabilitydirectderby.co.uk

Disability Employment Advisers – based at Jobcentre Plus, Employment Service,
10 Normanton Road 01332 714431. Textphone 714444

Disability Rights Commission in Stratford on Avon 08457 622633 www.drc-gb.org

DRI 347141

Drugscope information service in London 020 7928 1211 www.drugscope.org.uk

Eating Disorders Association adult helpline 0845 634 1414, Youthline 0845 634 7650
www.edauk.com

Equal Opportunities Commission, EOC, in Manchester 0845 601 5901 www.eoc.org.uk

Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays Helpline 01454 852 418 www.fflag.org.uk

Families Anonymous mind altering substances helpline 0845 1200 660
www.famanon.org.uk

Families Need Fathers support for single parents of either sex 0207 613 5060
www.fnf.org.uk

Family Planning national helpline 0845 310 1334 www.fpa.org.uk

Gamcare helpline for problem gamblers 0845 6000 133 www.gamcare.org.uk

Government services www.ukonline.gov.uk
Gingerbread support for lone parents 0800 018 4318 www.gingerbread.org.uk
Hadhari Nari advice centre 270101
Health and Safety Executive, HSE , in Nottingham 0115 971 2800 www.hse.gov.uk
Help the Aged helpline 0808 800 6565 www.helptheaged.org.uk
International Stress Management Association 07000 780430 www.isma.org.uk
Home-start support for families national helpline 0800 686368 www.home-start.org.uk . Local 01332 206646 or e-mail home-startderby@derby152.fsnet.co.uk
Manic Depression Fellowship 020 7793 2600 www.mdf.org.uk
Marriage Care helpline 0845 660 6000 www.marriagecare.org.uk
Mind – mental distress charity in London 020 8519 2122 www.mind.org.uk Derby Mind 127 Clarence Rd 01332 772300
National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders, NACRO national helpline 0800 0181 259 www.nacro.org.uk . In Derby 01332 273703 or 384414
National Debtline 0808 808 4000 www.nationaldebtline.co.uk
National Drugs 24-hour helpline, NGH 0800 77 66 00 www.ndh.org.uk
National Family Mediation, NFM www.nfm.u-net.com . Locally – Chesterfield 01246 277422
National Friend support for sexuality issues helpline in Nottingham 0115 934 8485 www.friend.dircon.co.uk
National Health Service NHS Direct 0845 4647 www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
No Panic charity in Shropshire 01952 590005 or www.no-panic.co.uk
NSPCC national 24-hour child protection helpline 0808 800 5000 www.nspcc.org.uk . Local NSPCC in Ripley 01773 744877
Parentline Plus helpline 0808 800 2222 www.parentlineplus.org.uk
Post natal illness helpline 020 7386 8885 www.apni.org
Quit to help you stop smoking 0800 00 22 00 or www.quit.org.uk
Radio Derby 361111
Rape Crisis Centre in Nottingham helpline 0115 941 0440 or www.rapecrisis.co.uk
Rape and sexual abuse – women’s helpline 01962 848024, Men’s Helpline 01962 848027
Relate relationship counselling local 01332 349 177 e-mail relate.derby@talk21.com
Rethink – schizophrenia national advice line 020 8974 6814, or www.rethink.org
Samaritans in Derby 364444, national helpline 08457 909090, e-mail jo@samaritans.org
SANE mental illness 01625 429050 or SANELINE 0845 7678000 www.sane.org.uk
Teacher support line 0800 562 561 www.teacherline.org.uk
Terence Higgins Trust to promote sexual health and reduce the spread of HIV direct Helpline 0845 1221 200 www.tht.org.uk
Trade Union Congress, TUC 202 7636 4030 www.tuc.org.uk
Tranquilliser addiction helpline 0151 949 0102
University of Derby 622222
Victim Support in Derby 01332 349956 www.victimsupport.org.uk
Wilmorton College 757570
Winston’s Wish support to bereaved children helpline 0845 2030 405 www.winstonswish.org.uk