



31st March 2026

Dear Councillor,

I hereby summon you to attend a meeting of the **Governance & Performance Committee** on **Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2026** in the **Council Chamber, Shotton Hall, Peterlee, SR8 2PH**, at **10.00 am**

Mr I Hall  
Town Clerk

**Membership:** Councillor R. Moore (Chairman),  
Councillor I Pygall (Vice-Chairman); and  
Councillors P Brown, M Cartwright, S Franklin and A Laing

Members of the public are very welcome to attend our meetings. We have a limited number of designated public seating in our Council Chamber and so any members of the public wishing to attend to observe the meeting are advised to contact the Council in advance so that we can reserve a seat for you: [council@peterlee.gov.uk](mailto:council@peterlee.gov.uk) or (0191) 5862491.

## AGENDA

### 1. Apologies for Absence

### 2. To receive declarations of interest

Members are reminded of the need to disclose any interests in items on this agenda, whether pecuniary or otherwise. Please seek advice from the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk **prior to the meeting** if in doubt. Members are reminded that they can check their published declaration of interests here: <https://bit.ly/2wVyeLA>

### 3. Reviews of Policies

To review the Council's following policies (Copies attached):

- a) AED Policy
- b) CCTV Policy
- c) Data Protection Policy
- d) IT Policy
- e) Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

- f) Dismissal Policy
- g) Document retention and Disposal Policy
- h) Health & Safety Policy
- i) Maternity, Paternity, Adoption & Surrogacy Policy
- j) Mental Wellbeing in the Workplace Policy
- k) Redundancy Policy
- l) Whistle Blowing Policy
- m) Sexual Harassment Policy
- n) Shared Parental Leave Policy
- o) Pandemic Response Policy



# PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATOR POLICY

Version 4: February 2026

## ABSTRACT

To ensure the safe, effective, and accessible use of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) managed or supported by Peterlee Town Council, and to outline responsibilities for their maintenance, registration, and emergency use.

Neighbourhood Services Manager

Please think before printing this document.

Where printing is necessary, please ensure that it is printed double sided and in greyscale.

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## Purpose

To ensure the safe, effective, and accessible use of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) managed or supported by Peterlee Town Council, and to outline responsibilities for their maintenance, registration, and emergency use.

## Scope

This policy applies to all AEDs:

- Owned by the council
- Installed on council premises
- Funded or supported by the council in public or community locations

## Policy Statement

Peterlee Town Council is committed to supporting community health and safety by ensuring AEDs are:

- Publicly accessible where possible
- Properly maintained and regularly checked
- Registered with emergency services via The Circuit – National Defibrillator Network

## Responsibilities

AED Coordinators: **Pavilion Sports & community Manager (Pavilion)**  
**Neighbourhood Services Officer (Woodhouse Park)**  
**Resources Manager (Shotton Hall)**

- Conducts monthly checks (battery, pads, cabinet)
- Maintains a log of inspections and incidents
- Ensures replacement of expired or used components
- Provides access to the AED

## Location and Access

AEDs are located at:

- Pavilion
- Woodhouse Park
- Shotton Hall

AEDs are housed in clearly marked cabinets, accessible 24/7 where possible.

## Training

AEDs are designed for use by untrained bystanders. The council offers First Aid and AED awareness training for Peterlee Town Council staff.

## Maintenance and Checks

Monthly checks include:

- Visual inspection of AED cabinet/Lock
- Battery status and pad expiry
- Cabinet and signage
- All checks are logged in the AED Maintenance Register.
- Pads and batteries are replaced before expiry or after use.

## Registration

All AEDs must be registered with The Circuit, ensuring visibility to 999 call handlers. Any changes in location or status must be updated promptly.

## Emergency Use Procedure

- Call 999 immediately.
- Retrieve the AED and follow voice prompts.
- Begin CPR if advised.
- Do not remove the AED from the casualty until emergency services arrive.

## Incident Reporting

Any AED use must be reported to the AED Coordinator. A post-incident review will be conducted to assess response and identify improvements.

## Review

This policy will be reviewed annually

If an AED leaves a site, it does not always mean it has been used, however, checks must be carried out.

1. Check Pads
2. Check consumable kit (razor, scissors etc)
3. Check battery

If an AED has not been returned to its normal location, contact the local ambulance service. Once the AED is back and checks have been carried out, the responsible person/site manager is required to log in to 'The Circuit' and update the defibrillator's status so that the ambulance service know it is ready to be used again in an emergency.

## Appendix 3: AED Risk Assessment



### Automated external defibrillator (AED) RISK ASSESSMENT

**Completed by:**  
Neighbourhood  
Services Manager

**Date:** 11.02.2026  
**Review date**  
11.02.2027

TASK/ACTIVITY: Use of automated external defibrillator (AED) to persons suffering a cardiac arrest				
What are the hazards? What could happen? Please list	Who is particularly at risk?	What precautions or existing control measures are presently taken?	Risk of accident/dangerous occurrence High/Medium/Low	If High or Medium, what addition precautions or control measures need to be taken to reduce risk to low?
AED not working (battery/pads expired) AED fails during emergency	Staff, members and public	Monthly checks, expiry log, replacement schedule	Medium	AED Coordinator assigned to manage checks and logs
AED used and not returned AED unavailable for next emergency	Staff, members and public	Incident reporting, cabinet signage	Low	
Cabinet damage or vandalism AED inaccessible or stolen	Staff, members and public	Secure cabinet, regular inspections	Medium	CCTV in place
Inability to access equipment Delay in locating AED	Staff, members and public	Well-lit area, clear signage, accessible location	Low	
Slips/trips near AED site - Injury while accessing AED	Staff, members and public	Ground maintenance, salt in icy conditions, hazard checks	Low	
Electrical supply failure (heated cabinet) - Battery degraded in cold weather	Staff, members and public	Backup battery, visual checks, temperature monitoring	Low	





# CCTV POLICY

Version 2: 6th February 2026

## ABSTRACT

This Policy sets out the Council's approach to managing its CCTV systems for the security and safety of the staff, public, and the Town Council assets and property.

Author

Neighbourhood Services Manager

Please think before printing this document.

Where printing is necessary, please ensure that it is printed double sided and in greyscale.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Location of cameras

This Policy must be read in conjunction with the Information Commissioner's 'CCTV Code of Practice<sup>1</sup>' and the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice pursuant to Section 29 of the Protection of Freedoms Act.

A Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) System is in operation at the Shotton Hall, The Pavilion, Woodhouse Park, Eden Lane Depot and Peterlee Cemetery. The CCTV system comprises cameras installed at fixed internal and external locations.

The CCTV system generally consists of mobile, fixed lens cameras and a number of fully functional (pan, tilt, zoom) cameras located for surveillance in the following areas:

	Shotton Hall	Pavilion	Cemetery	Woodhouse Park	Eden Lane Depot
External areas/car parks	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reception and entry/exit points/public areas	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Corridors and circulation areas	✓	✓			✓
Communal spaces	✓	✓			
Admin/Finance Office	✓	✓			

The cameras are either fixed or with pan, tilt and zoom facilities and deliver colour images.

### 1.2 Definitions

Data Controller means Peterlee Town Council

Owner means Peterlee Town Council

System Manager means The Town Clerk or another delegated Officer

<sup>1</sup> see <https://ico.org.uk/media/1542/cctv-code-of-practice.pdf>

Details of key personnel, their responsibilities and contact points are shown in Appendix 1 to this Code.

### 1.3 Statement in Respect of the Human Rights Act 1998

It is recognised that Peterlee Town Council and those carrying out the functions of CCTV surveillance are required to observe the obligations imposed by the Human Rights Act 1998.

It is considered that the use of CCTV in Shotton Hall, The Pavilion, Woodhouse Park, Eden Lane Depot and the Cemetery is a necessary, proportionate and suitable tool to assist in the security and safety of the staff, public, and the Town Council assets and property.

Section 163 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 creates the power for local authorities to provide closed circuit television coverage on any land and/or their owned premises for the purposes of safety, security and victim welfare.

It is also considered necessary towards their duty under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

The CCTV systems shall be operated with respect for all individuals, recognising the right to be free from inhuman or degrading treatment and avoiding discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, the system will be operated in such a way as to avoid infringement of individual privacy.

The Council recognises that it is responsible for ensuring that the scheme should always comply with all relevant legislation, to ensure its legality and legitimacy.

The scheme will only be used as a proportional response to identify problems and be used in so far as necessary, in the interests of security and safety, the prevention and detection of crime, the protection of health and morals or for the protection of the rights of the freedom of others.

The Code of Practice and observance of the Operational Procedures contained in the manual shall ensure that evidence is secured, retained and made available as required such that there is absolute respect for everyone's rights.

### 1.4 Objectives of the System

The objectives of the scheme are:

- To assist in the management of Council buildings, property and premises.
- To help deter and detect acts of anti-social or criminal behaviour
- To enhance safety and assist in developing a sense of well being
- To monitor visitors and behaviour
- To enhance general site security
- To assist in supporting civil or criminal proceedings

- To enhance public, employee and client's safety

Within this broad outline, the Data Controller may draw up specific key objectives (which will be scheduled for a review annually) based upon specific concerns.

## 2. Statement of Purposes and Principles

### 2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to state how the Council and the managers intend to use the CCTV System, (hereafter referred to as 'The System') to meet the objectives and principles outlined in Section 1.

### 2.2 General Principles of Operation

The System will be operated in accordance with all the requirements and the principles of the Human Rights Act 1998.

The operation of the System will also recognise the need for formal authorisation of covert surveillance as required by the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, in particular Part 2 of the Act.

The System will be operated in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations 2018 at all times.

The System will be operated fairly and lawfully and only for the purposes for which it was established and is identified within this Policy, or which is subsequently agreed in accordance with this Policy.

The System will be operated with due regard to a general right to respect and privacy to the individual.

Any public interest in the operation of the System will be safeguarded by ensuring the security and integrity of operational procedures.

Throughout this Policy it is intended, as far as reasonably possible, to balance the objectives of the CCTV System with the need to safeguard an individual's rights, while safeguarding our people and our property.

Every effort has been made throughout the Policy to indicate that a formal structure has been put in place, including a complaints procedure, by which it can be identified that the System is not only accountable, but is seen to be accountable.

Participation in the System by any other organisation, individual or authority assumes an agreement by all such participants to comply fully with this Policy and to be accountable under the Policy.

### 2.3 Copyright

Copyright and ownership of all material recorded by virtue of The System will remain with the Data Controller.

### 2.4 Cameras and Area Coverage

This Policy refers to those areas within the responsibility of the Council.

All cameras within the System will be positioned in an agreed area and will be suitably signed to alert their presence. Details of the location of all cameras will be recorded and is shown in Appendix 2 of this Code.

### 2.5 Monitoring and Recording Facilities

All cameras are connected to a secure dedicated network and can be controlled and monitored.

All images captured by the System are continuously recorded throughout every 24-hour period by the System's digital recording equipment.

### 2.6 Human Resources

Staff will be suitably trained and authorised visitors will not have access to the monitoring area without an authorised member of staff being present.

### 2.7 Processing and Handling of Recorded Material

No recorded material, whether recorded digitally, in analogue format or as a hard copy video print, will be released from the monitoring area unless it is in accordance with this Policy.

### 2.8 Operators Instructions

Peterlee Town Council will provide operating instructions for use by Town Council staff.

### 2.9 Changes to the Policy

Any changes to the Policy, will take place only after consultation with and upon the agreement of Peterlee Town Council.

### 3. Privacy and Data Protection

#### 3.1 Public Concern

Although most of the public at large may have become accustomed to 'being watched', those who do express concern, do so mainly over matters pertaining to the processing of the information, (or data) i.e. what happens to the material that is obtained.

In this case this may relate to the privacy of visitors and to those affected by cameras placed at the perimeter of the facility that may overlook other private property or public space.

All personal data obtained by virtue of the System, shall be processed fairly and lawfully and shall only be processed in the exercise of achieving the stated objectives of the System. In processing personal data, a person's right to respect and where applicable to their private and family life and their home will be fully considered.

The processing, storage and security of the data will be strictly in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and additional locally agreed procedures.

#### 3.2 Data Protection Legislation

Peterlee Town Council is registered on the Information Commissioner's Office Public Register of Fee Payers under the registration number ZA049762

The 'data controller' for the System is Peterlee Town Council. Day to day responsibility for the data will be devolved to the Town Council or other delegated Officers.

All data will be processed in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018 which in summarised form is that:

- All personal data will be processed fairly and lawfully.
- Personal data will be obtained only for the purposes specified.
- Personal data held will be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose for which the data is processed.
- Steps will be taken to ensure that personal data is accurate and where necessary, kept up to date.
- Personal data will be held for no longer than is necessary.
- Individuals will be allowed access to personal data, in accordance with an individual's rights
- Procedures will be implemented to ensure security measures to prevent unauthorised or accidental access to, alteration, disclosure, or loss and destruction of information.

#### 3.3 Request for Information

Any request from an individual for the disclosure of personal data which he or she believes is recorded by virtue of the System will be directed in the first instance to the Town Clerk at Shotton Hall Peterlee SR8 2PH.

The principles of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 shall be followed in respect of every request. Individuals whose image is captured on CCTV, but who are not the target of the surveillance are not entitled to make an access request, if the request cannot be complied without identifying another individual. Permission from that individual must be obtained unless it is reasonable in all the circumstances to comply with the request without the consent of that individual.

Any person making a request must be able to satisfactorily prove their identity and provide sufficient information to enable the data to be located.

### 3.4 Exemptions to the Provision and Information.

In considering a request made under the provisions of Section 7 of the Data Protection Act 2018, reference may also be made to exemptions allowed by section 29 of the Act which includes, but is not limited to, Personal data processed for any of the following purposes:

- The prevention or detection of crime
- The apprehension or prosecution of offenders are exempt from the subject access provisions in any case to the extent to which the application of those provisions to the data would be likely to prejudice the matters referred to above.

## 4. Accountability and Public Information

### 4.1 The Public

For reasons of security and confidentiality, access to the CCTV monitoring area is restricted in accordance with this Policy.

A member of the public or others wishing to register a complaint about any aspect of the System may do so by contacting the Town Clerk's office.

All complaints shall be dealt with in accordance with Peterlee Town Council complaints procedure (as appropriate), a copy of which may be obtained from the Council offices.

Any performance issues identified will be considered under the relevant Council disciplinary procedure to which all employees, including CCTV personnel are subject.

### 4.2 System Manager

The nominated Manager, named at Appendix 1 will have day-to-day responsibility for the System as a whole.

The appointed System Manager will ensure that every complaint is acknowledged within ten working days which will include advice to the complainant of the enquiry re the procedure to be undertaken. A record of all complaints will be kept and reported to the Council annually.

#### 4.3 Information

- Policy

A copy of this Policy will be made available to anyone on request.

- Signs

Signage (indicating that the area is subject to CCTV surveillance) will be placed at the main site entrance points and in those areas made available to visitors.

The signs will indicate:

- The presence of CCTV monitoring
- The 'ownership' of the System
- Contact name and if appropriate the telephone number for the System.

#### Shotton Hall Sign

#### Pavilion Sign



**Woodhouse Park Sign**



**Eden Lane Sign**



## 5. Assessment of the System and Policy

### 5.1 Evaluation

The System will, periodically, be evaluated to establish whether the purpose of the System is being complied with and whether objectives are being achieved.

### 5.2 Monitoring

The Town Clerk will accept day to day responsibility for the monitoring and operation of the System and the implementation of the Code of Practice.

The Town Clerk shall also be responsible for maintaining full management information as to the incidents dealt with by the monitoring room area as they arise, for use in the management of the System and in future evaluations.

### 5.3 Audit

There will be regular audits of the operation of the System and the compliance with the Code of Practice. Audits, which may be in the form of irregular spot checks, will include examination of the monitoring area records, media histories and the content of recorded material.

## 6. Human Resources

### 6.1 Staffing of the Monitoring Area

CCTV operators will not be permitted to use the CCTV system until they have received suitable basic training and are familiar with this Policy.

Every person involved in the management and operation of the System will be personally issued with a copy of this Policy. They will be required to sign confirming that they fully understand their obligations to adhere to these documents and that any breach is likely to be considered a disciplinary offence. They will be fully conversant with the contents of the Policy and appropriate procedures, which may be updated from time to time, and with which he / she will be expected to comply.

In the event of serious allegations or incidents arrangements may be made for a police officer, or other necessary person to be present in the monitoring area at certain times, subject to locally agreed protocols. Any such person must also be conversant and comply with this Policy and associated procedures.

### 6.2 Discipline

Every individual with any responsibility under the terms of this Policy and who has any involvement with the System to which it refers, will be subject to the Town Council's disciplinary code. Any breach of this Policy or of any aspect of confidentiality will be dealt with in accordance with the relevant disciplinary procedure.

The Town Clerk will accept primary responsibility for ensuring there is no breach of security and that the Policy is complied with. He or she has day to day responsibility for the management of the control or operating room/area, and for ensuring compliance with the Code of Practice and procedures.

## 7. Control and Operation of Cameras

### 7.1 Guiding Principles

Any person operating the cameras will always act with utmost probity.

Cameras will not be used to investigate private residential property, or public spaces not owned by Peterlee Town Council, unless surveying an event that is in the interests of Peterlee Town Council or the wider public.

Camera operators will be mindful of exercising prejudices, which may lead to complaints that the System is being used for purposes other than those for which it is intended. Any operators may be required to justify their interest in, or recording of, any individual, group of individuals of property at any time by virtue of the audit of the system or by the System Manager.

### 7.2 Operation of the System by the Police

Under extreme circumstances the Police may make a request to assume direction of the System to which this Policy applies. Only requests made on the written authority of a police officer of Sergeant rank or above will be considered. Any such request will only be accommodated on the personal written authority of the Town Clerk, or designated deputy of equal standing.

In the event of such a request being permitted, the monitoring or control area will continue to be staffed and equipment operated by only those personnel who are authorised to do so and who fall within the terms of Sections 6 and 7 of this Policy, who will, then operate under the direction of the police officer designated in the written authority.

In very extreme circumstances a request may be made for the Police to take total control of the System in its entirety, including the staffing of the monitoring or control room area and personal control of all associated equipment, to the exclusion of all representatives of the Town Council. Any such request must be made to the Town Clerk. A request for total exclusive control must be made in writing by a police officer of the rank of Sergeant or above.

### 7.3 Maintenance of the System

To ensure compliance with the Information Commissioners Code of Practice and that images recorded continue to be of appropriate evidential quality the CCTV System shall be maintained under a maintenance agreement. The maintenance agreement will make provision for regular periodic service checks on the equipment which will include cleaning of any all-weather domes or housings, checks on the functioning of the equipment, and any minor adjustments that need to be made to the equipment settings to maintain picture quality.

The maintenance will also include regular periodic overhaul of all the equipment and replacement of equipment which is reaching the end of serviceable life.

The maintenance agreement will provide for 'emergency' attendance by a specialist CCTV engineer on site to rectify any loss or severe degradation of image or camera control and will define the maximum periods of time permitted for attendance by the engineer and for rectification of the problem depending upon the severity of the event and the operational requirements of that element of the System.

It is the responsibility of the Town Clerk to ensure appropriate records are maintained in respect of the functioning of the cameras and the response of the maintenance organisation.

## 8. Management of Recorded Material

### 8.1 Guiding Principles

For the purposes of this Code 'recorded material' means any material recorded by, or as the result of, technical equipment which forms part of the System, but specifically includes images recorded digitally, or on videotape or by way of video copying, including video prints.

Every video or digital recording obtained by using the System has the potential of containing material that may need to be admitted in evidence at some point during the period of its retention.

Visitors, the Public and the Staff of the Council must have total confidence that information recorded about their ordinary everyday activities by virtue of the System, will be treated with due regard to their individual right to respect.

It is therefore of the utmost importance that irrespective of the means or format (e.g. paper copy, digital tape, CD, or any form of electronic processing and storage) of the images obtained from the System, they are treated strictly in accordance with this Policy from the moment they are received by the monitoring room until final destruction. Every movement and usage of this data or recorded material will be meticulously recorded.

Access to and the use of recorded material will be strictly for the purposes defined in this Policy only.

Recorded material will not be copied, sold, otherwise released or used for commercial purposes or for the provision of entertainment or otherwise made available for any use incompatible with this Policy.

### 8.2 Recorded Material – Retention

Recorded material will be retained for a period of one calendar month before re use or destruction. Any physically recorded material will either be mechanically destroyed or magnetically erased in full accordance with any manufacturer's requirements. Digital or server-based recording will be set to overwrite automatically.

At the conclusion of their life recorded material used within the CCTV System will be destroyed.

### 8.3 Recorded Material – Use for Monitoring and Training

The CCTV System will be used as a monitoring tool to further improve practice where relevant.

#### 8.4 Register of Recorded Material

Each discrete item of recorded material (tape, CD, DVD etc.) will be registered and monitored from the time it is produced, until it is destroyed, whilst it is within the control area.

Records will be retained for at least three years

#### 8.5 Release of recorded material.

If recorded material is released in accordance with this Policy, a record must be kept which identifies the basis of that release, and to whom. Records will be retained for at least three years.

#### 8.6 Prints of recorded material

Prints, subject to Data Protection, will be treated in the same way as other recorded information identified above. They will not be released outside the control centre except as permitted by this Policy, and any release will be recorded.

Where prints, which contain personal data, are taken for use within the control centre, they should not be kept for longer than reasonably justified and should be regularly reviewed. Prints that are no longer required should be securely destroyed.

#### 8.7 National Standard for the Release of Data to a Third Party

Every request for the release of personal data generated by this CCTV System will be channelled through the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk will ensure the principles contained within Appendix 3 to this Code of Practice are always followed.

In complying with the national standard for the release of data to third parties, it is intended, as far as reasonably practicable, to safeguard the individual's right and to give effect to the following principles:

- Recorded material shall be processed lawfully and fairly, and used only for the purposes defined in this Policy
- Access to recorded material will only take place in accordance with the standards outlined in Appendix 3 and this Policy

Members of the police service or other agency having a statutory authority to investigate and/or prosecute offences may, subject to compliance with Appendix 3, release details of recorded information to the media only to identify alleged offenders or potential witnesses. Under such circumstances, full details will be recorded. If material is to be shown to witnesses, including police officers, for the purpose of obtaining identification evidence, it must be shown in accordance with Appendix 3.

<b>Author of Policy;</b>	<b>Neighborhood Services Manager</b>
<b>Date effective from;</b>	<b>February 2026</b>
<b>Policy review;</b>	<b>February 2029</b>
<b>Version Control;</b>	<b>V2</b>

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

#### System Owners and Operators

##### System Owners

The CCTV System is owned by Peterlee Town Council and is operated by Peterlee Town Council, who bears the responsibility for maintaining the System.

Peterlee Town Council  
Shotton Hall Banqueting Suites  
Old Shotton  
Peterlee  
Co Durham  
SR8 2PH  
Tel: 0191 5862491      Email [Council@peterlee.gov.uk](mailto:Council@peterlee.gov.uk)

##### Owners Responsibilities:

- Ensure the provision and maintenance of all equipment forming part of the Pavilion, Shotton Hall, Woodhouse Park and Cemetery CCTV Systems in accordance with contractual arrangements, which the owners may from time to time enter
- Maintain close liaison with the site or relevant manager
- Ensure the interests of the Town Council and other organisations are upheld in accordance with the terms of this Policy
- Agree to any proposed alterations and additions to the System and/or this Policy.

##### Operational Management

The Town Clerk  
Peterlee Town Council  
Shotton Hall Banqueting Suites  
Old Shotton  
Peterlee  
Co Durham  
SR8 2PH  
Tel: 0191 5862491      Email [Council@peterlee.gov.uk](mailto:Council@peterlee.gov.uk)

##### Responsibilities:

- The Town Clerk is the 'manager' of the CCTV System
- He/she has delegated authority for day-to-day management on behalf of the Town Council
- To maintain day to day management of the System and staff
- To accept overall responsibility for the system and for ensuring that this Policy is complied with

## Appendix 2

### System Location of the Cameras

Access to the latest list of CCTV cameras and locations of the cameras may be obtained from the system owner and/or system manager upon request. It should be noted however that the premises are operated as a secure unit and as such, access and disclosure of this information will be strictly controlled to prevent exposure to the public in the interest of protecting the integrity of the service being provided.

<b>PAVILION</b>	
<b>INTERNAL – GROUND FLOOR</b>	
3.	FRONT FOYER
4.	RECEPTION LOBBY
5.	CHANGING ROOMS CORRIDOR
6.	FIRST LIFT LOBBY(GROUND FLOOR)
7.	BOTTOM CORRIDOR
8.	FIELD EXIT CORRIDOR
9.	GROUND FLOOR SERVICE LIFT LOBBY
10.	BISTRO
12.	MANAGERS OFFICE
14.	CELLAR
<b>INTERNAL UPSTAIRS</b>	
15.	FUNCTION ROOM (WILLIAM JEFFREY ROOM)
16.	FIRST FLOOR BAR CORRIDOR
<b>EXTERNAL HDMI LINK</b>	
1. PTZ	FRONT, COVERING CAR PARK & GRASS CRETE ROAD
2. PTZ	REAR COVERING PATIO & CRICKET PITCH
11.	BIN COMPOUND
13.	BISTRO EXTERNAL
<b>VGA LINK</b>	
1.	FIRST FLOOR MAIN STAIRWELL
2.	FIRST FLOOR LIFT LOBBY
3.	FIRST FLOOR TOILET LOBBY
4.	FIRST FLOOR CORRIDOR
5.	MAIN HALL REAR *
6.	MAIN HALL FRONT *
7.	MAIN HALL SHUTTER
8.	MAIN HALL REAR ENTRANCE
9.	FIRST FLOOR OFFICE (HARRY BENNETT ROOM)
10.	HORSEFIELD BAR SINK
11.	BAR TILL (MAIN HALL)
12.	BAR
13.	BAR 1 TILL
14.	FIRST FLOOR BAR (BEHIND BAR)
15.	FIRST FLOOR BAR CORNER
16.	BAR CORNER (FRONT BAR ENTRANCE)

*	LABELLED INCORRECTLY WITH REAR & FRONT WRONG WAY ROUND
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### SHOTTON HALL

#### INTERNAL

6.	BRANDLING SUITE
7.	BURDON SUITE
8.	BRANDLING BAR
9.	BURDON BAR
10.	BURDON CELLAR
11.	BRANDLING BACK BAR
12.	BRANDLING FOYER
13.	BURDON FOYER
14.	ADMIN OFFICE
15.	RECEPTION

#### EXTERNAL

1.	MAIN HALL
2.	MAIN CAR PARK
3.	BURDON EXIT
4.	BURDON CELLAR
5.	REAR GROUNDS
16.	ROOF TOP

### EDEN LANE

#### INTERNAL

6.	WORKSHOP
7.	SMALL GARAGE
9.	BIG GARAGE

#### EXTERNAL

1,2 & 3.	BIG POLE
4.	OFFICE FRONT DOOR
5.	FRONT YARD
8.	PLAYAREA
10 & 11.	CEMETERY

### WOODHOUSE PARK

#### INTERNAL

1.	OFFICE
----	--------

#### EXTERNAL

2.	TOILETS
3.	FRONT DOOR
5.	REAR DOOR
6.	CAR PARK
7.	PLAYAREA

## Appendix 3

### National Standard for the Release of Data to Third Parties

#### Introduction

CCTV is one of the most powerful management tools to be developed during recent years to assist with surveillance, security, safety and to combat crime. Equally, it may be regarded by some as the most potent infringement of people's liberty. If users, owners and managers of such Systems are to command the respect and support of individuals and the public, the systems must be always used with the utmost probity. In addition, they must be used in a manner which stands up to scrutiny and is accountable to the very people they are aiming to protect.

Peterlee Town Council are committed to the principle that everyone has the right to respect for his or her private life. Although the use of CCTV cameras has become widely accepted as an effective security tool, those people who do express concern tend to do so over the handling of the information (data) which the System gathers. Peterlee Town Council accept that the nationally recommended standards be generally adopted.

#### General Policy

All requests for the release of data shall be processed in accordance with the below. All such requests shall be channelled through the data controller or their nominated representative.

#### Primary Request to View Data

a) Primary requests to view data generated by a CCTV System are likely to be made by third parties for any one or more of the following purposes:

- Providing evidence in criminal proceedings.
- Providing evidence in civil proceedings or tribunals
- The prevention of crime
- The investigation and detection of crime (may include identification of offenders)
- Identification of witnesses

b) Third parties, who are required to show adequate grounds for disclosure of data within the above criteria, may include, but are not limited to:

- Police
- Statutory authorities with powers to prosecute (e.g. Customs and Excise; Trading Standards etc.)
- Solicitors

- Claimants in civil proceedings
- Accused persons or defendants in criminal proceedings
- Other agencies, (as agreed by the Data Controller and notified to the Information Commissioners) according to purpose and legal status.

c) Upon receipt from a third party of a bona fide request for the release of data, the data controller shall:

- Not unduly obstruct a third-party investigation to verify the existence of relevant data
- Ensure the retention of data which may be relevant to a request, but which may be pending application for, or the issue of, a court order or subpoena. A time limit shall be imposed on such retention, which will be notified at the time of the request

d) Where requests fall outside the terms of disclosure and Subject Access legislation, the data controller, or nominated representative, shall:

- Be satisfied that there is no connection with any existing data held by the police in connection with the same investigation
- Treat all such enquiries with strict confidentiality

#### Secondary Request to View Data

a) A 'secondary' request for access to data may be defined as any request being made which does not fall into the category of a primary request. Before complying with a secondary request, the data controller shall ensure that:

- The request does not contravene, and that compliance with the request would not breach current relevant legislation, (e.g. Data Protection Act 2018, Human Rights Act 1998, section 163 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, etc.)
- Any legislative requirements have been complied with, (e.g. the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018)
- Due regard has been taken of any known case law (current or past) which may be relevant
- The request would pass a test of 'disclosure in the public interest'

b) If in compliance with a secondary request to view data, a decision is taken to release material to a third party, the following safeguards shall be put in place before surrendering the material:

- In respect of material to be released under the auspices of 'crime prevention', written agreement to the release of the material should be obtained from a police officer, not below the rank of Inspector. The officer should have personal knowledge of the circumstances of the crime/s to be prevented and an understanding of the CCTV System Policy.
- If the material is to be released under the auspices of 'public well-being, health or safety', written agreement to the release of the material should be obtained from a senior office

within the Local Authority. The officer should have personal knowledge of the potential benefit to be derived from releasing the material and an understanding of the CCTV system Policy.

c) Recorded material may be used for bona fide training purposes such as police or staff training. Under no circumstances will recorded material be released for commercial sale of material for training or entertainment purposes.

#### Individual Subject Access under Data Protection Legislation

a) Under the terms of Data Protection legislation, individual access to personal data, of which that individual is the data subject, must be permitted providing:

- The request is made in writing
- The data controller is supplied with sufficient information to satisfy him or herself as to the identity of the person making the request.
- The person making the request provides sufficient and accurate information about the time, date and place to enable the data controller to locate the information which that person seeks, (it is recognised that a person making a request is unlikely to know the precise time. Under those circumstances it is suggested that within one hour of accuracy would be a reasonable requirement)
- The person making the request is only shown information relevant to that search and which contains personal data of him or herself only, unless all other individuals who may be identified from the same information have consented to the disclosure.

b) In the event of the data controller complying with a request to supply a copy of the data to the subject, only data pertaining to the individual should be copied, (all other personal data which may facilitate the identification of any other person should be concealed or erased).

c) The data controller is entitled to refuse an individual request to view data under these provisions if insufficient or inaccurate information is provided, however, every effort should be made to comply with subject access procedures and each request should be treated on its own merit.

d) In addition to the principles contained within the Data Protection legislation, the data controller should be satisfied that the data is:

- Not currently and, as far as can be reasonably ascertained, not likely to become, part of a 'live' criminal investigation

- Not currently and, as far as can be reasonably ascertained, not likely to become, relevant to civil proceedings
- Not the subject of a complaint or dispute which has not been actioned
- The original data and that the audit trail has been maintained
- Not removed or copied without proper authority
- For individual disclosure only (i.e. to be disclosed to a named subject)

#### Process of Disclosure

- 1) Verify the accuracy of the request
- 2) Replay the data to the requestee only, (or responsible person acting on behalf of the person making the request.)
- 3) The viewing should take place in a separate room and not in the control or monitoring area. (Only data which is specific to the search request shall be shown)
- 4) It must not be possible to identify any other individual from the information being shown, (any such information will be blanked-out, either by means of electronic screening or manual editing on the monitor screen)
- 5) If a copy of the material is requested and there is no on-site means of editing out other personal data, then the material shall be sent to an editing house for processing prior to being sent to the requestee.

#### Media Disclosure

- a) In the event of a request from the media for access to recorded material, the procedures outlined under 'secondary request to view data' shall be followed. If material is to be released the following procedures shall be adopted:
  - The release of the material must be accompanied by a signed release document that clearly states what the data will be used for and sets out the limits on its use, and indemnifies the partnership against any breaches of the legislation
  - The release form shall state that the receiver must process the data in a manner prescribed by the data controller, e.g. specific identities/data that must not be revealed
  - It shall require that proof of any editing must be passed back to the data controller, either for approval or final consent, prior to its intended use by the media (protecting the position of the data controller who would be responsible or any infringement of Data Protection legislation and this Policy)
  - The release form shall be considered a contract and signed by both parties.

## Appendix 4

### Staff Declaration of Confidentiality

I....., am employed by Peterlee Town Council and undertake monitoring of the CCTV System.

I have received a copy of the Policy in respect of the operation and management of that CCTV System.

I hereby declare that:

I am fully conversant with the content of that Policy and understand that all duties which I undertake in connection with Peterlee Town Council CCTV System must not contravene any part of the current Policy, or any future amendments of which I am made aware.

If now, or in the future, I am, or become unclear of any aspect of the operation of the System or the content of the Policy, I undertake to seek clarification of any such uncertainties.

I understand that it is a condition of my employment that I do not disclose or divulge to any individual, firm, company, authority, agency or other organisation, any information which I may have acquired in the course of, or for the purposes of, my position in connection with the CCTV System, verbally, in writing or by any other media, now or in the future, (including such time as I may no longer be retained in connection with the CCTV System.)

In appending my signature to this declaration, I agree to always abide by the Policy. I also understand and agree to maintain confidentiality in respect of all information gained during my duties, whether received verbally, in writing or any other media format – now or in the future.

Signed.....

Print Name.....

Witness.....

Position.....

Date .....

## Appendix 5

### Application of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA)

Advice and Guidance for Control Room/Area Staff and Police Inspectors in respect of CCTV and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000

The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 relates to surveillance by the police and other agencies and deals in part with the use of directed covert surveillance. Section 26 of this act sets out what is Directed Surveillance.

It defines this type of surveillance as:

Subject to subsection (6), surveillance is directed for the purposes of this Part if it is covert but not intrusive and is undertaken-

- a) For the purpose of a specific investigation or a specific operation
- b) In such a manner as is likely to result in the obtaining of private information about a person (whether or not one specifically identified for the purposes of the investigation or operation) and
- c) Otherwise, then by way of an immediate response to events of circumstances the nature of which is such that it would not be reasonably practicable for an authorisation under this Part to be sought for the carrying out of the surveillance

The impact for staff in Police control rooms/areas and CCTV monitoring centres, is that there might be cause to monitor for some time, a person or premises using the cameras.

In most cases, this will fall into sub-section (c) above i.e. it will be an immediate response to events or circumstances. In this case, it would not require authorisation unless it were to continue for some time.

In cases where a pre-planned incident or operation wishes to make use of CCTV for such monitoring, an authority will almost certainly be required.

Slow time requests are authorised by a Superintendent or above.

If an authority is required immediately, an Inspector may do so. The forms in both cases must indicate the reason and should fall within one month of the following categories:

An authorisation is necessary on grounds falling within this subsection if it is necessary:

- (a) In the interests of national security
- (b) For the purposes of preventing or detecting crime or of preventing disorder
- (c) In the interests of the economic well-being of the United Kingdom
- (d) In the interests of public safety
- (e) For the purpose of protecting public health
- (f) For the purpose of assessing or collecting any tax, duty, levy or other imposition, contribution or charge payable to a government department

(g) For any purpose (not falling within paragraphs (a) to (f) which is specified for the purposes of this subsection by an order made by the Secretary of State.

In cases where there is doubt as to whether an authorisation is required or not, it may be prudent to obtain the necessary authority verbally and then in writing by way of the forms.

Any authority given should be recorded appropriately for later reference. This should include the name of the officer authorising.

Forms should be available at the CCTV monitoring area and are included in the procedural manual.

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Appendix 6  
Subject Access Request Form

Request to View CCTV Footage

Request made by:

Date:

Incident Details		
Location	Date:	Time Frame: From: To:
Description of Incident:		

Authorised by Manager

Signature.....Date.....Time.....

Authorised by CCTV Manager

Signature.....Date.....Time.....

Viewed by.....Date.....Time.....

Viewed by.....Date.....Time.....

Viewed by.....Date.....Time.....







# DATA PROTECTION POLICY

Version 1 March 2026

## ABSTRACT

This policy outlines how Peterlee Town Council collects, uses, stores, and protects personal data in compliance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Resources Manager

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DRAFT

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## Purpose

This policy explains how Peterlee Town Council collects, uses, and protects your personal data in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018, and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025. This Data Protection Policy should be read alongside the Council's **Privacy Notice**, which explains how we collect, use and share personal data, and the **Document Retention & Disposal Policy**, which outlines how long we keep information and how it is securely disposed of. These documents form part of the Council's overall data protection and information governance framework.

## Scope

This policy applies to all employees, councillors, contractors, volunteers, and anyone else who processes personal data on behalf of the council.

## Data Protection Principles

The council commits to processing personal data in accordance with the following principles:

- Lawfulness, fairness, and transparency
- Purpose limitation
- Data minimisation
- Accuracy
- Storage limitation
- Integrity and confidentiality
- Accountability

## Roles and Responsibilities

- **Data Controller:** Peterlee Town Council and its elected councillors may act as data controllers in different contexts, depending on the nature of their role and the purpose for which personal information is processed. When acting as a member of the council or committee participant, the council itself is the registered data controller. In these circumstances, personal information held by the council will not be used for political purposes unless both the council and the individuals concerned have given their consent.  
When councillors act as representatives of their ward residents, for example, when handling complaints or residents' casework, they are considered individual data controllers. While in most instances councillors are exempt from paying the Information Commissioner's Office registration fee, they must assess the context in which personal data is collected to ensure its use is fair and lawful, in line with the first data protection principle.
- **Data Protection Officer (DPO):** Ian Hall, Town Clerk
- All staff and councillors must follow this policy and report any breaches or concerns to the DPO.

## Lawful Basis for Processing

The council will only process personal data where a lawful basis applies, including:

- Consent
- Contractual necessity
- Legal obligation
- Vital interests
- Public task
- Legitimate interests (where applicable)

## Data Subject Rights

Individuals have the right to:

- Access their data
- Rectify inaccurate data
- Erase data (where applicable)
- Restrict processing
- Object to processing
- Data portability
- Withdraw consent at any time

## Data Collection and Use

The council collects personal data for:

- Service delivery
- Employment and HR
- Council meetings and communications
- Community engagement
- Legal and regulatory compliance

## Data Sharing

Personal data may be shared with:

- Government bodies
- Service providers
- Legal representatives
- Only when necessary and with appropriate safeguards

## Data Retention & Disposal

We will only keep data for as long as it is required and in accordance with the Document Retention and Disposal policy.

## Security Measures

- Password protection and encryption
- Secure storage and disposal
- Access controls
- Staff training

## Data Breaches

All breaches must be reported to the DPO immediately. Serious breaches will be reported to the ICO within 72 hours.

## Contact Information

For further information or to report an incident, please contact: Resources Manager 0191 5862491

<b>Author of Policy;</b>	<b>Resources Manager</b>
<b>Date effective from;</b>	<b>March 2026</b>
<b>Policy review;</b>	<b>March 2029</b>
<b>Version Control;</b>	<b>V1</b>





# IT POLICY

Version 1: March 2026

## ABSTRACT

This policy outlines the guidelines and responsibilities for the appropriate use of IT resources and email by council members, employees, volunteers, and contractors.

Resources Manager

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DRAFT

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DRAFT

## Introduction

Peterlee Town Council recognises the importance of effective and secure information technology (IT) and email usage in supporting its business, operations, and communications.

This policy outlines the guidelines and responsibilities for the appropriate use of IT resources and email by council members, employees, volunteers, and contractors. Council members must additionally comply with the Councillor Email & Device Policy.

## Scope

This policy applies to all individuals who use Peterlee Town Council's IT resources, including computers, networks, software, devices, data, and email accounts.

## Acceptable use of IT Resources and Email

Peterlee Town Council IT resources and email accounts are to be used for official council-related activities and tasks only. All users must adhere to ethical standards, respect copyright and intellectual property rights, and avoid accessing inappropriate or offensive content. The use of personal devices (including personal phones, tablets, or computers) for council business is strictly prohibited. This measure is designed to:

- Prevent potential viruses from personal devices compromising the Council's Microsoft tenancy
- Ensure personal data is not stored on any unmanaged devices
- Allow Document Solutions to retain control over accounts and devices in the event of loss, theft, or departure from the Council

Council business emails and confidential documentation that is not in the public domain must NOT be forwarded to personal email accounts or stored on external electronic media.

## Device and Software Usage

Where appropriate, authorised devices, software, and applications will be provided by Peterlee Town Council for work-related tasks.

- Council may access devices and accounts at any time.
- Devices can be requested back at short notice.
- Passwords must be provided for audit.
- Browsing on the internet and use of personal email on the device is forbidden. The council may monitor the use of the internet for legitimate business reasons.
- Unauthorised installation of software on authorised devices, including personal software, is strictly prohibited due to security concerns.
- Devices are not permitted to be taken abroad.

## Data Management and Security

All sensitive and confidential Peterlee Town Council data should be stored and transmitted securely using approved methods. Regular data backups should be performed to prevent data loss, and secure data destruction methods should be used when necessary.

## Network and Internet Usage

Peterlee Town Council's network and internet connections should be used responsibly and efficiently for official purposes. Downloading and sharing copyrighted material without proper authorisation is prohibited.

## Email Communication

Email accounts provided by Peterlee Town Council are for official communication only. Emails should be professional and respectful in tone. Confidential or sensitive information must not be sent via email unless it is encrypted.

Be cautious with attachments and links to avoid phishing and malware. Verify the source before opening any attachments or clicking on links.

## Password and Account Security

Peterlee Town Council users are responsible for maintaining the security of their accounts and passwords. Passwords should be strong and not shared with others. Regular password changes are encouraged to enhance security.

## Mobile Devices and Remote Work

Mobile devices provided by Peterlee Town Council should be secured with passcodes and/or biometric authentication. When working remotely, users should follow the same security practices as if they were in the office.

## Email Monitoring

Peterlee Town Council reserves the right to monitor email communications to ensure compliance with this policy and relevant laws. Monitoring will be conducted in accordance with the Data Protection Act and GDPR.

## Retention and Archiving

Emails should be retained and archived in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements and the Document Retention & Disposal Policy. Regularly review and delete unnecessary emails to maintain an organised inbox.

## Reporting Security Incidents

All suspected security breaches or incidents should be reported immediately to the Town Clerk for investigation and resolution. Report any email-related security incidents or breaches to the IT administrator immediately.

## Training and Awareness

Peterlee Town Council will provide regular training and resources to educate users about IT security best practices, privacy concerns, and technology updates. All employees and councillors will receive regular training on email security and best practices.

## Compliance and Consequences

Breach of this IT and Email Policy may result in the suspension of IT privileges and further consequences as deemed appropriate.

## Contact Information

For further information or to report an incident, please contact:

The Town Clerk or The Resources Manager 0191 5862491

<b>Author of Policy;</b>	<b>Resources Manager</b>
<b>Date effective from;</b>	<b>March 2026</b>
<b>Policy review;</b>	<b>March 2029</b>
<b>Version Control;</b>	<b>V1</b>

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# ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) POLICY

Version 1 March 2026

## ABSTRACT

This Policy sets out the principles and procedures for the safe, responsible, and ethical use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within Peterlee Town Council. It ensures that any use of AI supports the Council's commitment to transparency, accountability, and service to the public.

Resources Manager

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## Introduction

This Policy sets out the principles and procedures for the safe, responsible, and ethical use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within Peterlee Town Council. It ensures that any use of AI supports the Council's commitment to transparency, accountability, and service to the public.

## Scope

This policy applies to:

- Council officers and councillors using AI tools for council business.
- Contractors, consultants, or third parties providing AI-driven services on behalf of the Council.
- AI systems used for communication, document generation, data analysis, or public engagement.

## Definition

For the purposes of this Policy, AI includes but is not limited to:

- machine learning tools (e.g. predictive analytics)
- generative AI (e.g. ChatGPT, Copilot, Claude)
- Natural Language Processing systems (e.g. virtual assistants, chatbots)
- automated decision-making tools

## Guiding Principles

The use of AI within the Council must be:

- a) Transparent – AI assisted content or communications must be clearly labelled or explained if relevant to public-facing work.
- b) Ethical and inclusive - AI must not be used in ways that discriminate, mislead, or reinforce bias. The Council will seek fair and inclusive outcomes in its use of technology.
- c) Human-centred - AI will assist, not replace, human judgement. Council officers remain responsible for reviewing and approving AI-generated outputs.
- d) Compliant with Data Protection Law - All AI use must comply with the UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018, and Freedom of Information Act. No personal data should be entered into publicly available AI platforms without appropriate safeguards.

## Permitted use

Peterlee Town Council may use AI for:

- drafting reports, minutes, and publicity materials (with human review).
- analysing trends in local feedback or surveys.
- supporting accessibility (e.g. speech-to-text tools, translation).
- improving efficiency of internal processes.

## Prohibited uses

AI must not be used for:

- making decisions that have legal or significant effects on individuals.
- any form of surveillance or facial recognition.
- generating or spreading misinformation.
- entering sensitive or confidential data into unsecured or public AI platforms.

### Oversight and training

The Town Clerk will oversee AI-related use and compliance.

Council staff and councillors will receive guidance/training as needed.

Any significant AI implementation must be approved by the Council.

### Public transparency

The Council will maintain openness about its use of AI and respond to public queries accordingly.

AI-generated content that is published or shared with the public will be marked or acknowledged as appropriate.

### Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to changes in regulation or technology. Breaches of this policy may lead to restrictions on AI use or disciplinary action, where applicable

### Contact Information

For further information or to report an incident, please contact:

Resources Manager 0191 5862491

<b>Author of Policy;</b>	<b>Resources Manager</b>
<b>Date effective from;</b>	<b>March 2026</b>
<b>Policy review;</b>	<b>March 2029</b>
<b>Version Control;</b>	<b>V1</b>



# DISMISSAL POLICY

Version 1: March 2026

## ABSTRACT

This policy sets out the Council's procedure on the process of employee dismissal.

Resources Manager

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## Introduction

### What is the policy about?

This policy is designed to ensure that managers conduct dismissals in a fair and equitable manner. Employers are required to follow a fair procedure to end an employee's contract that allows for notification and consultation although this is no longer a statutory requirement.

The three-step procedure enables notification and consultation to take place and consists of a written statement, a hearing, and an appeal meeting. This process should be followed for dismissals outside the disciplinary procedures. Failure to follow the correct procedure when bringing a contract to an end would not result in the dismissal being deemed to be automatically unfair at an Employment Tribunal. However, it could lead to compensation if a tribunal determines that the employer acted unreasonably in the circumstances.

### Who does the policy apply to?

This policy covers all employees of Peterlee Town Council.

The procedure applies to all employees who have been continuously employed for two years, however Peterlee Town Council recommends that the procedures are followed as best practice, even where the employee has less than two year's continuous service.

From January 2027 the procedure applies to all employees who have been continuously employed for six months, in line with the Employment Rights Act 2025.

This policy should be used to make dismissals in the following circumstances:

- Non-renewal of a temporary contract e.g. maternity or sickness absence cover
- End of fixed term contract by reason of redundancy e.g. end of funding or completion of a specific task (but only where the employee has less than two year's continuous service\* (6-months from January 2027))
- Unsatisfactory probationary period

\* Where an employee has more than two year's continuous service, (6 months from January 2027) the manager should seek advice from the HR Advice and Support Team.

## Responsibilities

Managers are responsible for informing employees that a contract is due to come to an end. Managers should consult with the employee about the proposal to terminate the contract and give them an opportunity to discuss the situation.

Managers are also responsible for notifying via the Resources Manager the Pay, Reward and Employment Services Team (PES) of the termination of the contract.

## **Informal stage**

### **Temporary/Fixed term contracts**

Managers should review fixed term and temporary contracts on a regular basis and make a determination regarding whether a contract will continue or come to an end at least two months prior to the end date of the contract to allow sufficient time for consultation with the employee to take place.

The manager should ensure that they informally notify the employee as soon as possible if it is not possible to renew the contract.

Where managers are not sure whether the contract will cease (e.g. waiting for the outcome of a grant application), the manager should begin the formal process and pull back on the proposal rather than fail to properly consult with the employee if the funding is not approved.

### **Unsatisfactory probationary period**

Before considering using this process, it is essential for the manager to have raised the issue of poor performance with the employee and to have put the necessary support mechanisms in place to help the employee improve to a satisfactory standard. Poor performance could include poor attendance or conduct issues which may have an impact on their suitability for the post, although this is not an exhaustive list. Managers may want to consider extending an employee's probationary period if they feel they need further time to assess their suitability in the post. Further information can be found in the Probationary Period Policy.

Where there are concerns with employee's attendance regarding a condition under the Equality Act then reasonable adjustments must have been considered to help the employee during their probationary period.

If, despite this additional support, the employee has failed to reach a satisfactory standard of performance by the end of their six-month probationary period, or the end of the extension of the probationary period, then this process should be followed.

## **Formal stage (3 step process)**

There are three main stages that should be followed when dismissing an employee using this process:

- Written statement
- Formal meeting

- Right of appeal

It is important that managers follow this procedure correctly, as failure to follow the process may result in a grievance being submitted or subsequent financial penalties at an Employment Tribunal.

### **Step 1 – Written statement**

The manager will write to the employee advising them of the proposal to terminate their contract and detailing all the reasons and circumstances leading to this proposal. Where the dismissal is as a result of an unsatisfactory probationary period, the manager should include as much evidence as possible to explain why it is proposed to terminate the employment contract e.g. action plan.

The letter will include an invitation to a meeting to discuss the proposal in more detail. It is recommended that the employee is given seven calendar days' notice of the meeting to provide the employee with the opportunity to prepare a response and to arrange representation, if required.

The employee has the right to be accompanied to the meeting by a trade union representative or a work colleague. If the person accompanying the employee cannot attend on the date suggested, the manager should suggest another date, not more than five working days after the original date.

### **Step 2 – Formal meeting**

The manager will meet with the employee (and their representative, if required) to discuss the reasons for the proposal to terminate the employee's contract of employment and will give the employee the opportunity to respond to the information provided by the manager and raise any concerns.

Following the meeting, the manager will write to the employee confirming the outcome of the meeting and the termination date of the contract. Contractual or statutory notice must be given whichever is the greater. A leaver form must be sent via the Resources Manager to the DCC Payroll Team.

### **Step 3 – Right of appeal**

An employee who is dismissed under these procedures has a right to appeal, in writing, to the appropriate line manager, detailing the grounds of appeal, within ten working days of receipt of the decision.

The appeal will be heard by the Town Clerk, who has had no previous involvement in the case. The Town Clerk will write to the employee inviting them to discuss their concerns. It is recommended that the employee is given seven calendar days' notice of the meeting to provide the employee with the opportunity to prepare a response and to arrange representation, if required.

Following the meeting, the Town Clerk will write to the employee confirming the outcome of the meeting. The decision of the Town Clerk is final.

### **Exit interviews**

Managers should follow the process and complete an exit interview with the employee leaving the council.

### **Maternity and sickness absence**

When an employee is on maternity, adoption, or long-term sick leave, it is essential that all stages of the dismissal procedure are followed carefully.

In such circumstances, please contact the Resources Manager in advance of the contract end date for guidance on the appropriate method of conducting the consultation process.

<b>Author of Policy;</b>	<b>Resources Manager</b>
<b>Date effective from;</b>	<b>March 2026</b>
<b>Policy review;</b>	<b>March 2027</b>
<b>Version Control;</b>	<b>V1</b>





# DOCUMENT RETENTION AND DISPOSAL POLICY

Version 3: March 2026

## ABSTRACT

This policy sets out the minimum requirements for the retention and disposal of documents as listed in the Retention Management System guidelines for local authorities.

Resources Manager

Please think before printing this document.

Where printing is necessary, please ensure that it is printed double sided  
and in greyscale

DRAFT

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## Introduction

The guidelines set out in this document support the Town Council's Data Protection Policy and assists us in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Management of Records (Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000). and other associated legislation. Peterlee Town Council default position is to adopt the Retention Management system guidelines for local authorities.

It is important that the Council has in place arrangements for the retention and disposal of documents necessary for the adequate management of services in undertaking its responsibilities.

This policy sets out the minimum requirements for the retention of documents and sets out the requirements for the disposal of documents. However, it is important to note that this is a live document and will be updated on a regular basis.

Peterlee Town Council will ensure that information is not kept for longer than is necessary and will retain the minimum amount of information that it requires to carry out its functions and the provision of services, whilst adhering to any legal or statutory requirements.

## Aims and Objectives

It is recognised that up to date, reliable and accurate information is vital to support the work that the Council do and the services that we provide to our residents. This document will help us to:

- Ensure the retention and availability of the minimum amount of relevant information that is necessary for the Council to operate and provide services to the public
- Comply with legal and regulatory requirements, including the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004
- Save employees' time and effort when retrieving information by reducing the amount of information that may be held unnecessarily.
- This will assist them as they carry out their daily duties, or if searching for information requested under the Freedom of Information Act; and,
- Ensure archival records that are of historical value are appropriately retained for the benefit of future generations.

## Scope

For the purpose of this Strategy, 'documents' includes electronic, microfilm, microfiche and paper records.

Where storage is by means of paper records, originals rather than photocopies should be retained where possible.

## Standards

The Council will make every effort to ensure that it meets the following standards of good practice:

- Adhere to legal requirements for the retention of information as specified in the Retention Management System guidelines. This document provides a framework for good practice requirements for retaining information.
- Personal information will be retained in locked filing cabinets within the Corporate Services Manager's Office and access to these documents will only be by authorised personnel
- Disclosure information will be retained in a locked cabinet in the Corporate Services Manager Office
- Appropriate measures will be taken to dispose of information that is no longer required
- Appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that confidential and sensitive information is securely destroyed
- Information about unidentifiable individuals is permitted to be held indefinitely for historical, statistical or research purposes e.g., Equalities data
- Wherever possible only one copy of any personal information will be retained and that will be held within the Corporate Services Manager's Office.

## Breach of Policy and Standards

Any employee who knowingly or recklessly contravenes any instruction contained in, or following from, this Policy and Standards may, depending on the circumstances of the case, have disciplinary action, which could include dismissal, taken against them.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The Town Clerk has overall responsibility for the policy.

The Town Clerk is responsible for the maintenance and operation of this policy including ad-hoc checks to ensure compliance.

Senior Managers are responsible for ensuring their records are kept and destroyed in line with this policy.

The individual departments areas are responsible for ensuring that the guidelines set out in this policy are adhered to and to ensure that any documents disposed of are done so in accordance with their 'sensitivity' (i.e. whether they are normal waste or 'Confidential Waste').

## Confidential Waste

Fundamentally any information that is required to be produced under the Freedom of Information Act or Environmental Information Regulations, is available on the website or is open to public inspection, should NOT be treated as confidential waste.

However, any information that is protected by the Data Protection Act or as Confidential under the Council's Constitution should be treated as confidential waste for disposal purposes.

Examples of what constitutes confidential waste:

- Exempt information contained within committee reports
- Files containing the personal details of an individual and files that predominantly relate to a particular individual or their circumstances - e.g., completed application forms and letters

- Materials given to the Council on a 'confidential' or on a limited use basis e.g., material provided by contractors or the police.
- Examples of what does not constitute confidential waste:
- Documents that are available to the public via the Council website or by submitting an appropriate search request to the Council for general information
- All reports and background papers of matters taken to Committee in public session unless specifically exempt.

## Disposal of Documentation

Confidential waste which clearly shows any personal information or information which can be identified using the parameters set out in 7.3 will be taken away in a sealed bag by document management company (L&R Storage) and shredded.

All information which appertains to children is to be shredded.

Information placed in the blue bin in the print room, inside the Council Offices is shredded by the contractor.

All other documents requiring disposal are to be placed in the recycling bins in the various locations on the offices and will be disposed of as general paper waste for recycling purposes.

No records will be destroyed if they are subject to an active request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004, or a Subject Access Request under the Data Protection Act 2018. Destruction must be suspended ('legal hold') until the request is fully resolved.

All destruction of records will be recorded in a destruction log, including the record type, date destroyed, method of destruction, and the officer authorising disposal.

## Retention

Retention and disposal decisions will follow the UK GDPR principles of data minimisation, storage limitation, purpose limitation and accountability.

Throughout retention the conditions regarding safe storage and controlled access will remain in place.

Disclosure information appertaining to Disclosure and Barring Checks must be kept securely in a locked cabinet. Only those entitled to see it in the course of their duties should have access. The security and confidentiality of all Disclosure information is closely registered under the Police Act 1997.

Disclosure information must not be retained for a period of more than six months and must be destroyed in a secure manner using the shredder in the main office.

Any unauthorised employee accessing or attempting to access Disclosures or Disclosure information or personnel records will be dealt with under the Council's disciplinary procedures.

The attached 'Appendix A' shows the minimum requirements for the retention of documents as determined by those officers responsible for the management of these particular documentation types. Officers holding documents should exercise judgement as to whether they can be disposed of at the end of those periods detailed in the attached 'Appendix'.

## Storage and Access

Disclosure information is kept with the personnel files and in securely lockable, non-portable cabinet with access strictly controlled and limited to the **Town Clerk, and Resources Manager.**

## Handling

The Council complies with s124 of the Police Act 1997, so that Disclosure Information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. The Council maintains a record of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure Information has been revealed and recognises that it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

Personal information will only be available to those who are authorised officers.

Customer details and information will be kept up to date and reviewed annually by an authorised officer.

## Usage

Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's/employee's consent has been given. Disclosure Information will be shared between different departments of the Council, if necessary.

Where Disclosure information is shared with anyone other than the Town Clerk and the direct Manager, the employee must be given a reason why this information is being shared.

Any queries regarding this Policy please contact **the Town Clerk, [clerk@petelree.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@petelree.gov.uk) or telephone 0191 5862491.**

<b>Author of Policy;</b>	<b>Resources Manager</b>
<b>Date effective from;</b>	<b>March 2026</b>
<b>Policy review;</b>	<b>March 2029</b>
<b>Version Control;</b>	<b>V3</b>

## APPENDIX A

### Recommended Document Retention Timescales

The retention period should be the number of years specified plus the current financial period (i.e. three years plus the current period, therefore at least three years documentation will always be retained at any given point in time).

This list is not exhaustive, if you are unsure about any document contact the Town Clerk or Corporate Services Manager for clarification.

For the document retention timescales please click on this link [Retention-Guidelines-for-Local-Authorities.pdf](#)

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# HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

Version 4: February 2026

## ABSTRACT

Peterlee Town Council, (PTC), recognises and accepts its health and safety duties for providing a safe and healthy working environment”.

Neighbourhood Services Manager

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## Introduction

Peterlee Town Council, (PTC), recognises and accepts its health and safety duties for providing a safe and healthy working environment.

This document sets out the Council's approach to managing health and safety. Any questions about the content of this document should be directed to a Senior Manager or the Chief Officer.

For information about reporting health and safety concerns please refer to the <http://www.HSE.gov.uk> web site.

All incidents can be reported online but a telephone is also provided for reporting fatal/specified incidents only – call the Incident Contact Centre on 0345 300 9923 (opening hours Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm).

## Statement

Peterlee Town Council, (PTC), recognises and accepts its health and safety duties for providing a safe and healthy working environment (as far as is reasonably practicable) for all its workers (paid or volunteer) and other visitors to its premises under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, other relevant legislation and common law duties of care.

Throughout this Statement, terms such as “staff”, “workers”, “employees”, include both paid and volunteer workers.

It is the policy of the Town Council (PTC), to promote the health and safety of the committee members, volunteers, staff and of all visitors to the Groups/Organisation's premises (“the Premises”) and to that intent to:

- Take all reasonably practicable steps to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of all personnel on the premises.
- Provide adequate working conditions with proper facilities to safeguard the health and safety of personnel and to ensure that any work which is undertaken produces no unnecessary risk to health or safety.
- Encourage persons on the premises to co-operate with the Organisation in all health safety matters, in the identification of hazards which may exist and in the reporting of any condition which may appear dangerous or unsatisfactory.

- Ensure the provision and maintenance of plant, equipment and systems of work that are safe.
- Maintain safe arrangements for the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances.
- Provide and maintain adequate welfare facilities.
- Provide sufficient information, instruction, training, and supervision to enable everyone to avoid hazards where reasonably practicable and contribute to their own safety and health.
- Provide specific information, instruction, training and supervision to personnel who have particular health and safety responsibilities (e.g. a person appointed as a Health and Safety Representative).
- To identify a health & safety representative from each department to sit on the councils “Health & Safety Working Group” which will bring council staff and Members together to discuss health and safety policy, process and incidents.
- Make, as reasonably practicable, safe arrangements for protection against any risk to health and safety of the general public or other persons that may arise for the PTC’s activities.
- Make suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the health and safety of employees and of persons not in the employment of PTC arising out of or in connection with PTC’s activities.
- Make specific assessment of risks in respect of new or expectant mothers and young people under the age of eighteen.
- Provide information to other employers of any risks to which those employer’s workers on PTC’s premises may be exposed, for instance by providing site risk assessments when requested. This will be signed by the designated Manager.

### Statutory Duty of PTC

PTC will comply with its duty to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of its workers and of visitors to its premises and, in general, to:

- Make workplaces safe and minimise any risks to health.
- Ensure plant and machinery are safe and that safe systems of work are set and followed.
- Ensure articles and substances are moved, stored and used safely.
- Give volunteers/ workers the information, instruction, training and supervision necessary for their health and safety.
- In particular, PTC will:  
Assess the risks to health and safety of people accessing its facilities, events and services (including volunteers/workers/visitors/customers/Members)
- Make arrangements for implementing the health and safety measures identified as necessary by this assessment.  
Record the significant findings of the risk assessment and the arrangements for health and safety measures.
- Draw up a health and safety policy statement; including the health and safety organisation and arrangements in force and bring it to the attention of its workers.
- Appoint someone competent to assist with health and safety responsibilities (currently DCC).
- Set up emergency procedures and ensure that emergency procedures are in place for premises and buildings.
- Provide adequate First Aid facilities.
- Make sure that the workplace satisfies health, safety and welfare requirements, e.g. for ventilation, temperature, lighting and for sanitary, washing and rest facilities.
- Make sure that work equipment is suitable for its intended use as far as health and safety is concerned, and that it is properly maintained and used.
- Prevent or adequately control exposure to substances that may damage health. specifically in relation to the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) 2002 and maintain a register of all substances hazardous to Health, used within the premises and buildings by PTC staff, volunteers,

customers, and members and ensure that training has been provided to anyone expected to use substances.

- Take precautions against danger from flammable or explosive hazards, electrical equipment, noise or radiation.
- Avoid hazardous manual handling operations and, where they cannot be avoided, reduce the risk of injury.
- Provide health surveillance as appropriate.
- Provide free any protective clothing or equipment, where risks are not adequately controlled by other means.
- Ensure that appropriate safety signs are provided and maintained.
- Report certain injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences to the appropriate health and safety enforcing authority under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013.

## Statutory Duty of the employees of PTC

All employees defined responsibilities under The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 in that they have a duty to take care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions at work. PTC request that volunteers carrying out any supporting work on behalf of PTC or on PTC premises also observe these.

Employees also have legal duties, and the PTC confidently requests non-employed (voluntary) workers also to observe these. They include the following:

- To take reasonable care for their own health and safety, and that of other persons who may be affected by what they do or do not do.
- To co-operate with PTC on health and safety.
- To use work items provided by the PTC correctly, including personal protective equipment, in accordance with training or instructions.
- Not to interfere with or misuse anything provided for health, safety and welfare purposes.

- To report at the earliest opportunity injuries, accidents or dangerous occurrences at work, including those involving the public and participants in activities organised by PTC.
- Health and Safety law applies not only to employees in the workplace, but it also applies to organisations and people who occupy or use community buildings to which members of the public have access.

What you must do:

1. Follow the information, instruction and training you have received when using any work items your employer has given you.
2. Take reasonable care of your own and other people's health and safety.
3. Co-operate with your employer on health and safety.
4. Tell someone (your employer, supervisor, or health and safety representative) if you think the work or inadequate precautions are putting anyone's health and safety at serious risk.

### Policy for Visitors and Contractors

On arrival all visitors should be directed to the duty Manager, or a representative of the user/hirer of the building. This person is to take responsibility for the visitor(s) and assist in their evacuation from the building during an emergency or arrange help in the event of an accident.

On arrival, all visitors, including contractors and/or their workers, must sign a record of the date and time of their arrival and, before leaving, should further record their time of departure. Where it is hirer for training etc or an exercise class, a record of this in attendance shall be kept by the organiser/hirer/instructor.

Contractors working in the building should report any concerns relating to their own safety or suspected unsafe working practices to the Duty Manager who will investigate and report to the Town Clerk.

There will be slight variations to these arrangements at each building.

## Organisation of Health and Safety

### Health and Safety Working Group

PTC will appoint a Health and Safety Working Group, including representation both of elected Members and of staff:

- To have a broad overview of Health and Safety matters.
- To keep the PTC's Health and Safety policy and procedures under review, (this is delegated to the SMT in the first instance).
- To ensure that risk assessments are carried out, including assessments regarding substances hazardous to health (COSHH Regulations).
- To take such action as may be required to ensure that the Organisation's responsibilities for Health and Safety are fulfilled.
- Maintain and implement a schedule of site visits for the Council's main sites and operations.
- To report to the Council on their performance of these responsibilities.
- Contractors working in the building should report any concerns relating to their own safety or suspected unsafe working practices to the Duty Manager who will investigate and report to the Town Clerk.

### Manager responsibilities

All Senior Managers have specific responsibilities for Health & Safety across their department/service areas written into their job descriptions/statements of particulars.

### Health and Safety Rules

In line with the Council's officers code of conduct, all workers must exercise due care and attention to avoid accidents in their activities at work.

### Accident/Near miss Forms and Book

An accident form is completed immediately. A copy is sent to Shotton Hall (Town Clerk), and it is then recorded.

Any injury suffered by a worker or visitor in the course of employment or otherwise on the PTC, however slight or even a "near miss", must be recorded, together with such other

particulars as are required by statutory regulations, on an accident form maintained by PTC.

All accidents/near misses will be investigated by the line manager of the injured person or the responsible manager of the area the accident/incident occurred to identify actions to prevent reoccurrence. Details of all accident/investigation data will be kept confidential, and findings used by management teams for statistical purposes and to ensure measures applied to prevent reoccurrence are effective.

Accidents and near misses will be reviewed at least on an annual basis by the Health & Safety Working Party. The Working Party will consider any trends or serious incidents/near misses that warrant further action or investigation and will refer these to Council for discussion and decision.

#### Fire Precautions

All personnel must familiarise themselves with fire escape routes and procedures and follow the directions of the Group/Organisation in relation to fire.

Managers responsible for premises/areas will ensure fire information is provided to staff following any changes from inspections, audits, risk assessments etc.

#### Equipment and Appliances

No equipment or appliance may be used other than as provided by or specifically authorised by or on behalf of PTC and any directions for the use of such must be followed precisely.

#### Safety Clearways

Corridors and doorways must be kept free of obstructions and properly lit.

#### Maintenance

Defective equipment, furniture and structures must be reported as such without delay.

#### Hygiene and Waste Disposal

Facilities for the disposal of waste materials must be kept in a clean and hygienic condition. Waste must be disposed of in an appropriate manner and in accordance with any special instructions relating to the material concerned.

The following items shall be covered with site specific risk assessments along with appropriate training: -

- **Food hygiene**
- **Display Screen Equipment**
- **Safeguarding**
- **Manual handling**
- **COSHH**

#### Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco

As included in PTC's Code of Conduct, smoking within the premises and the use of Drugs (except under medical supervision) on the premises are prohibited at all times. The use of intoxicants (alcohol) is prohibited during working hours, and no employee/volunteer may undertake his/her duties if under the influence of alcohol or drugs (except under medical supervision).

#### Arrangement and Procedures

Each service area has developed its own procedures which are reviewed regularly. Proposed updates and changes will be discussed and agreed by SMT and referred to Council for approval if required. There are arrangements in place for the Manager of each site/activity to have responsibility for the procedures to cover the following activities:

- First Aid and Accident Reporting
- Fire Drills and Evacuation Procedures
- Bomb Warnings
- COSHH
- staff training, including First Aid at Work, manual handling, food safety

## APPENDIX A – ACCIDENT REPORTING

Certain incidents are RIDDOR reportable and must be notified to the HSE Incident Contact Centre (ICC) by The Town Clerk or Resources Manager using the quickest practicable means. These incident categories are as follows and show the set reporting routes and time frames that must be followed:

### Requirement – Online and within 10 days

- Any person not at work, involved in an incident arising out of or in connection with work, that suffers an injury and is taken from the scene of the incident to hospital for treatment (this refers to and includes pupils, members of the public and service users); and
- Dangerous occurrence (see 5).

Requirement – By phone asap and followed up online within 10 days

- The death of any persons as a result of a work-related accident, including an act of physical violence to a worker.
- Someone who is at work suffers a specified injury as a result of an accident. (See Section 6).

### Requirement – Online within 15 days

- For any incident resulting in injury and continuous over-seven-day absence, not defined as a specified injury.

Where a reportable injury has led to the death of the employee (but not more than one year after the incident), then this must be reported to The Town Clerk or Resources Manager, the HST must be informed so that the HST and not the Service Teams can notify the HSE in writing. This must be done whether or not the original injury had been reported.

#### 1. Accidents

All H&S related incidents/accidents/near misses that occur on PTC premises or during PTC activity or events must be recorded using the approved accident forms

#### 2. Accidents to Workers or Contractors

a) For ALL Accidents

**Complete Accident Form and give to your line Manager/Duty Manager**

b) **For accidents reportable to the Health & Safety Executive** (for contractors see c)

If accident results in incapacity for work for more than 7 calendar days, then complete the online form with copies to the Town Clerk.

If accident results in fatality, fracture, amputation or other specified injury (see section 4, below) **then immediately notify:**

Health & Safety Executive on HSE's Infoline Tel: 0345 300 9923 **And** the Town Clerk.

**Follow up within ten days** with completed online form with copies to the Town Clerk.

c) If a reportable accident involves a contractor's employee and the premises are under the control of someone other than the contractor then the person in control of the premises is responsible for reporting the accident.

If a contractor's employee is at work on premises under the control of the contractor, then it is the contractor or someone acting on his/her behalf who is responsible for reporting the accident.

### 3. Accidents to Members of the Public

#### 1. For ALL Accidents

Complete Accident Form and give to Duty Manager

#### 2. For accidents reportable to the Health & Safety Executive

If an accident results in fatality, fracture, amputation or other specified injury (see section 4 below) then **immediately notify:**

Reporting under RIDDOR is done online or by telephone

**And** the Town Clerk

Some injuries may not be fully identified until the casualty has been to hospital. It is therefore essential that, if it is known that an individual has gone to hospital as a result of an accident, follow up action is carried out.

### 4. Definition of Specified Injuries to workers

- fractures, other than to fingers, thumbs and toes
- amputations
- any injury likely to lead to permanent loss of sight or reduction in sight
- any crush injury to the head or torso causing damage to the brain or internal organs
- serious burns (including scalding) which – i.e. covers more than 10% of the body

- causes significant damage to the eyes, respiratory system or other vital organs
- any scalping requiring hospital treatment
- any loss of consciousness caused by head injury or asphyxia
- any other injury arising from working in an enclosed space which:
  1. leads to hypothermia or heat-induced illness
  2. requires resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours

**The Town Council's default position is IF IN DOUBT, REPORT IT.**

## 5. Dangerous Occurrences

In the event of any of the following: -

- the collapse, overturning or failure of load-bearing parts of lifts and lifting equipment.
- plant or equipment coming into contact with overhead power lines:
- the accidental release of any substance which could cause injury to any person.
- Collapse of scaffolding
- Electrical incidents causing explosion or fire

**Notify the Town Clerk immediately**

**The Town Council's default position is IF IN DOUBT, REPORT IT.**

## 6. Occupational Diseases

Only upon receipt of a written diagnosis from a Doctor, report the work-related disease using online form F2508A to: [hse.gov.uk/riddor/report.htm](https://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/report.htm) **And** the Town Clerk

- carpal tunnel syndrome.
- severe cramp of the hand or forearm.
- occupational dermatitis.
- hand-arm vibration syndrome.
- occupational asthma.

- tendonitis or tenosynovitis of the hand or forearm.
- any occupational cancer.
- any disease attributed to an occupational exposure to a biological agent.

Full details of Dangerous Occurrences and Occupational Diseases can be found at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/occupational-diseases.htm>

**The Town Council’s default position is IF IN DOUBT, REPORT IT.**

## Telephone

All incidents can be reported online but a telephone service is also provided for reporting fatal/specified incidents only - call the Incident Contact Centre on 0345 300 9923 (opening hours Monday to Friday 8.30 am to 5 pm).

## Reporting out of hours

The HSE and local authority enforcement officers **are not an emergency service.**

More information on when, and how, to report very serious or dangerous incidents, can be found by visiting the HSE web site HSE.gov.uk. If you want to report less serious incidents out of normal working hours, you can always complete an online form.

Author of Policy;	Neighbourhood Services Manager
Date effective from;	February 2026
Policy review;	February 2029
Version Control;	V4

## Appendix B – Accident Form

## 1. DETAILS OF PERSON WHO HAD THE ACCIDENT

Name:

Age:

Address:

Postcode:

Contact No:

Email:

## 2. DETAILS OF THE ACCIDENT/INCIDENT

Date:

Time of Accident:

Location: (Venue/Room/Area)

Description of what happened?

Description of any injuries: (Please give as much detail as possible)

Brief Description of first aid given:

Was the injured person sent to hospital? \*YES/NO

Was the person advised to go to hospital? \*YES/NO

Was an ambulance called? \*YES/NO

## 3. DETAILS OF WITNESS(S)

**WITNESS 1**

NAME:

ADDRESS:

CONTACT NO:

**WITNESS 2**

NAME:

ADDRESS:

CONTACT NO:







# Maternity / Paternity/Adoption & Surrogacy Policy

Version 8: March 2026

## SUMMARY

This document sets out the support and guidance Peterlee Town Council have in place for employees during Maternity/Paternity/Adoption and Surrogacy.

Resources Manager

Please think before printing this document.

Where printing is necessary, please ensure that it is printed double sided and on a greyscale.

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## Introduction

Peterlee Town Council recognises the need to balance family responsibilities with paid work. We recognise the need for adequate maternity provision to provide pregnant employees with peace of mind and to ensure their and the child's health and welfare during the maternity period.

### What is the Policy About?

The Council is committed to ensuring that working parents have a greater choice in balancing work and family life.

This policy provides guidance on the Council's Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Surrogacy provisions. This includes risk assessment, leave and pay arrangements and provisions for return to work.

### Who Does the Policy Apply to?

This policy covers all employees.

## Maternity, Paternity, Adoption & Surrogacy

Frequently used terms/abbreviations

AML/AAL	Additional maternity/adoption leave - the last 26 weeks of a maximum of 52 weeks maternity/adoption leave
EWC	Expected week of childbirth - the week beginning on a Sunday, in which the doctor or midwife expects your child to be born
KIT Days	Up to a maximum of 10 days during maternity leave where an employee, by mutual agreement with their manager, carries out work or attends work related events, without bringing their maternity leave to an end (paragraphs 63-67)
LEL	Lower Earnings Limit. To be entitled to statutory payments (SMP or SAP) the employee must have earnings of not less than the LEL. This is calculated based on the average normal pay prior to the 15th week before the baby's birth date.
MATB1	A form given to a woman by their doctor or midwife after the 20th week of pregnancy that provides medical evidence of pregnancy and shows the expected date of childbirth.
MA	Maternity Allowance – an allowance usually paid to mothers who don't qualify for statutory maternity pay (SMP) A claim form is available at the UK Government website <a href="https://www.gov.uk/maternity-allowance">Maternity Allowance: Overview - GOV.UK</a> or Job Centre Plus.
OML/OAL	Ordinary maternity/adoption leave – the first 26 weeks of a maximum of 52 weeks maternity/adoption leave.
Partner	Your spouse, civil partner or someone living with you in an enduring family relationship but who is not a relative of the mother/primary adopter (sibling, child, parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, niece, or nephew)
Primary Adopter	A person who has been matched with a child for adoption and who has elected to be the main carer for the child
Primary Parental Order Parent	A person in a legal surrogacy arrangement who is entitled to and intends to apply for a Parental Order under the Human Embryology and

	Fertilisation Act 2008, and who has elected to be the main carer for the child.
SMP/SAP/OMP	Statutory Maternity/Adoption Pay – a legal entitlement to a certain amount of statutory pay to qualifying employees which lasts for up to 39 weeks. For more information, please refer to <a href="#">Maternity pay and leave: Pay - GOV.UK</a> OMP is Occupational Maternity Pay, weeks 7-18 50% of the weekly earnings will be paid on the condition the employee returns to work for a period of 3 months following the end of the maternity leave
Qualifying week	The 15th week before the EWC

## Leave Entitlement

All pregnant employees and primary adopters (the parent who has elected to be the main carer of the child, usually the child's adoptive mother) have the right to 52 weeks leave, regardless of the number of hours they work or their length of service. This period of leave is made up of 26 weeks Ordinary Maternity/Adoption Leave (OML/OAL) and 26 weeks Additional Maternity/Adoption Leave (AML/AAL). Where a couple are adopting; only one parent, the primary adopter (main carer), can request adoption leave.

Adoption leave is also available to the primary carer in a legal surrogacy arrangement (primary Parental Order parent) for babies due on or after 5 April 2015 who has applied for, or intends to apply for, a Parental Order in respect of the child under the Human Embryology and Fertilisation Act 2008.

Employees starting maternity or adoption leave may also wish to consider Shared Parental Leave. Further details can be found in the separate policy on Shared Parental Leave.

### Maternity

It is up to each employee to choose when to start maternity leave and how long to stay off work, subject to the following restrictions:

Maternity leave can start no earlier than 11 weeks before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC), as confirmed by the employee's MATB1 certificate.

An employee cannot return to work during the 2 weeks after giving birth, this is compulsory maternity leave.

If an employee has not started their maternity leave, it can be automatically triggered by either childbirth or pregnancy related absence during the 4 weeks before the EWC.

### Adoption and Surrogacy

Only one person in an adopting or surrogate couple is entitled to take adoption leave. The other partner may be entitled to take paternity leave and/or maternity support leave/shared parental leave if they meet the qualifying criteria (see paragraphs 19 and 20).

Adoption leave can be taken by the primary adopter for any child placed for adoption up to the age of eighteen via an official adoption agency; however, only one period of adoption leave can be taken at any time, regardless of the number of children being adopted.

Adoption leave is not available in circumstances where the child is not newly placed for

adoption i.e. a stepparent adopting a partner's child. Leave can also be taken by the primary parent in a legal surrogacy arrangement.

It is up to each employee to choose when to start adoption leave and how long to stay off work, subject to the following restrictions:

For UK adoptions, adoption leave can start no earlier than 14 days before the date the child is expected to be placed and up to the date the child is placed with the family.

For Overseas adoptions, adoption leave can start when the child arrives in the UK or within 28 days of this date.

For surrogacy arrangements it can start no earlier than 14 days before the expected date of birth of the surrogate child and up to the date the child is born.

An employee cannot return to work during the first 2 weeks of adoption leave.

Dual approved prospective adopters (sometimes referred to as fostering to adopt) may be eligible for adoption leave and pay where they have agreed to have a child placed with them in accordance with section 22C of the Children Act 1989 with a view to them adopting that child.

## Pay Entitlement

Pregnant employees with over one year's local government service at the 11th week before the EWC plus 26 week's continuous service with Peterlee Town Council at the 15th week before the EWC, plus earnings over the national insurance lower earnings limit are entitled to:

- 90% of average weekly earnings for the first 6 weeks
- OMP is Occupational Maternity Pay, which is paid in weeks 7-18, 50% of the weekly earning. This will be paid on the condition the employee returns to work for a period of 3 months following the end of the maternity leave.
- SMP will be paid for the remainder 19 to 39 weeks.

During weeks 7 – 18 if employees have provided written notification that they will return to work, they also receive half their normal pay (OMP). These will be without deduction unless the combined half pay and SMP exceed full pay in which case the half pay will be reduced accordingly. **(This pay will be reclaimed if the employee does not return to work for at least three months)**

Statutory maternity/adoption pay (SMP/SAP)

The Council pays SMP/SAP to employees on behalf of the Government, where certain qualifying conditions are met. SMP is paid for up to 39 weeks during an employee's maternity or adoption leave as follows:

Pregnant employees with less than one year's local government service at the 11th week before the EWC but more than 26 week's continuous service with Peterlee Town Council at the 15th week before the EWC, plus earnings over the national insurance lower earnings limit are entitled to:

- 90% pay (i.e. higher rate SMP) for the first 6 weeks
- Basic rate SMP for the remaining 33 weeks.

Pregnant employees with less than 26 weeks service at Peterlee Town Council at the 15th week before the EWC and earnings over the national insurance lower earnings limit may be entitled to:

- 39 weeks Maternity Allowance (Length of service insufficient to qualify for SMP)

Pregnant employees with more than 26 week's service with Peterlee Town Council but below the national insurance lower earnings limit may be entitled to:

- 39 weeks Maternity Allowance (Earnings insufficient to qualify for SMP)

Details of the current SMP/SAP rate can be found by visiting [Adoption pay and leave: Overview - GOV.UK](#)

To qualify for SMP/SAP the employee must have:

Average weekly earnings (before tax and NI) at least equal to the Lower Earnings Limit [Maternity pay and leave: Pay - GOV.UK](#). Given the appropriate notice.

In addition, the following qualifying conditions apply depending on the particular situation:

#### Maternity

26 weeks' continuous service by the 15th week before the EWC.  
Provided proof of pregnancy including EWC (MATB1 certificate).

If an employee does not qualify for SMP then her original MATB1 form will be returned to her along with an SMP1 form which explains why she cannot receive SMP within 7 days of the Council making their decision. If an employee does not qualify for SMP, they may qualify for Maternity Allowance (MA) which can be accessed via Job Centre Plus or via a claim form on the UK Government website [Maternity Allowance: Overview - GOV.UK](#)

#### Adoption

26 weeks continuous service by the week the adopter is notified of being matched with a child.

- provided official proof of the date of placement e.g. letter from the adoption agency.
- provided a copy of the matching certificate provided by the adoption agency.
- for overseas adoptions only, provided proof of the date the child arrives in the UK.

#### Surrogacy

26 weeks' continuous service by the 15th week before the EWC.

- provided proof of pregnancy including EWC (copy of birth mother's MATB1 certificate).
- the intended parents must have applied for, or intend to apply for, a Parental Order and expect to obtain this.
- provided a copy of the parental order within 6 months of the child's birth.

If requested must provide a 'statutory declaration' (written statement signed in the presence of a legal professional) confirming you have applied or will apply for a parental order in the 6 months after the child's birth.

### Maternity and Surrogacy

More than one year of continuous service at the start of the 11th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC).

### Adoption

More than one year of continuous service by the date notice is given that they are matched with a child.

### Notification requirements

If the employee does not give the required notification, they lose their right to start maternity/adoption leave on their chosen date. The only exception to this is where it is not reasonably practicable for the employee to give notice any earlier e.g. if the baby is born much earlier than expected.

If the employee changes their mind and wishes to change the start date of their leave, they must give 28 days' notice.

Written confirmation of the end date of their maternity/adoption leave will be sent to the employee within 28 days of their notification form being received. It will be assumed that the employee is taking 52 weeks leave unless they have given a different end date in their notification.

### Maternity

Pregnant employees are advised to notify their manager of their pregnancy as soon as possible, however, as a minimum employees are asked to notify their manager, in writing, no later than 28 days before they want to commence their maternity leave. This form includes the following information:

Confirmation of the pregnancy and the EWC. This is usually via a MAT B1 certificate.  
The date they wish to commence maternity leave.

As soon as is practicable after the birth, the employee should notify their manager of the baby's date of birth in writing.

If maternity leave is triggered by the birth of the child or pregnancy related absence during the 4 weeks prior to the EWC the maternity leave will start on the day following the first day of sickness absence or the day of childbirth. The employee must inform their manager of the date of birth as soon as reasonably practicable, and any absence should be reported to their manager in line with the sickness reporting procedures.

## Adoption

The primary adopter should advise their manager as soon as possible; however, as a minimum, employees should notify their manager, in writing, within 7 days of being told that they have been matched with a child, which includes the following information:

Confirmation of the adoption i.e. through the provision of a matching certificate.

- The date the child is to be placed with the employee.
- The date they wish to commence adoption leave.

## Surrogacy

The primary surrogate parent is advised to notify their manager of the surrogate's pregnancy as soon as possible, however, as a minimum, employees are asked to notify their manager, in writing, no later than 28 days before they want to commence their adoption leave. This form includes the following information:

- Confirmation of the birth mother's pregnancy and the EWC. This is usually via a copy of the birth mother's MATB1 certificate.
- The date they wish to commence adoption leave.

A Parental Order parent is also required to provide a copy of the Parental Order within 6 months of the adoption leave/pay commencing. The Council reserve the right to reclaim any payment made and to be compensated for leave taken, if the employee fails to provide a copy of the Parental Order within 6 months of the start of the adoption leave/pay.

Adoption leave would be triggered for parents in a surrogacy arrangement if the child were born earlier than the adoption leave start date.

As soon as is practicable after the birth, the employee should notify their manager of the baby's date of birth in writing.

## Other Time Off

This section details entitlement to time off for pregnant employees, primary adopters, and primary parental order parents.

Employees must produce evidence of all appointments if requested to do so.

## Antenatal Care/Appointments

All pregnant employees, regardless of hours worked, pay or length of service are entitled to reasonable paid time off for antenatal appointments.

Antenatal appointments may include any of the following, provided they have been recommended by a doctor or midwife:

- medical appointments
- parent craft
- relaxation classes

All time off will be paid at the employee's normal hourly rate of pay. Where an employee does not have normal working hours, the rate of pay during any time off should be the average rate in the last twelve complete weeks prior to the time off.

### Pre-adoption Leave

The primary adopter is entitled to paid time off to attend up to five pre-adoption appointments after they have been matched with a child.

A maximum of up to 6.5 hours is allowed per appointment.

### Pre-surrogacy Leave

Employees in a legal surrogacy arrangement have the right to unpaid time off to attend two antenatal appointments with the surrogate mother.

A maximum of up to 6.5 hours is allowed per appointment.

### Sickness

If an employee has not started their maternity leave, it can be automatically triggered by a pregnancy related absence during the 4 weeks before the EWC, however, before this time, a pregnancy related absence would not automatically trigger maternity leave to start. Occupational sick pay or SSP may still be allowable during the 4 weeks before the EWC if the absence is due to anything other than a pregnancy related condition.

Employees who are sick during their maternity/adoption leave period are not entitled to sick pay as they will be receiving SMP/SAP, unless they end their maternity leave. Where an employee cannot attend work at the end of their maternity/adoption leave due to sickness, the normal contractual arrangements for sickness absence will apply.

### Risk assessments

The Council's responsibility for the health and safety of our employees comes into sharp focus when considering the requirements for an expectant or new mother and therefore it is important that the manager carries out a formal risk assessment for an employee when she declares her pregnancy. A New and Expectant Mothers Risk Assessment form is attached.

The risk assessment should be reviewed on a regular basis throughout the pregnancy and upon her return to work to ensure the operating environment is considered. Where risks that may adversely affect the health and safety of the employee or their baby are identified, the manager should consider temporary adjustments to the employee's working conditions and/or hours or offer suitable alternative work, if available.

The employee's normal rate of pay continues during any period of adjustment. Managers should be aware that if adjustments are not deemed to be feasible, the employee is entitled to paid leave for as long as necessary to protect her and/or the child's health and safety.

The following are examples of the type of risks that can arise in the workplace:

For pregnant women or women who have had a caesarean section, lifting heavy items can lead to injury therefore the amount of physical work should be reduced, or suitable aids supplied physical fatigue from standing or poor posture position for long periods of times can lead to miscarriage, premature birth and low birth weight. Potential remedies include avoiding excessive volume and hours of work, seating being made available, longer rest breaks or workstations being adjusted. Work involving substantial vibration or movement may lead to miscarriage, therefore tasks should be avoided if they risk whole body vibration or jolts to the abdomen. Exposure to radiation, chemical and biological agents, lead, infectious diseases, work related stress or extremes of cold and heat should also be avoided.

The following table gives some examples of the aspects of pregnancy that may lead to changes in the work environment:

<b>Aspect of Pregnancy</b>	<b>Work Factor to Consider</b>
Morning sickness	Early shift work, exposure to nauseating smells
Backache	Standing, manual handling, posture
Varicose veins	Standing, manual handling, posture
Haemorrhoids	Working in hot conditions
Frequent visits to toilets	Difficulty in leaving work area
Increasing size	Use of protective clothing, work in confined spaces, manual handling, speed of movement and reach
Tiredness	Overtime, evening work
Balance	Working on uneven, wet, or slippery surfaces

## Breastfeeding

Should you be continuing to breastfeed your child when you return to work, you should notify your manager in writing prior to your return. A risk assessment can then be carried out, prior to your return to work.

The Council has limited suitable rest facilities for breastfeeding mothers. However, employees are not entitled to take time off to breastfeed.

Employees should arrange for childcare close to work, and/or enable breastfeeding to take place before and after work. The Council does not provide facilities for breastfeeding employees to express and store milk.

## Special Circumstances

### Premature Births

If an employee has their baby prematurely, the Council will consider each case on an individual basis as to what assistance may be relevant. For example, it may be appropriate to extend the maternity leave arrangements.

### Stillbirth and Miscarriage

In the unfortunate event that the baby is stillborn or lost through miscarriage after 24 weeks, the employee is entitled to take maternity leave.

Where a miscarriage or termination takes place before 24 weeks the Council will give sympathetic consideration to the individual circumstances. Where necessary, sick leave or other leave may be appropriate, depending on the needs of the employee and any medical opinion.

### Adoption Placement Ends

Adoption leave will end where the adoption placement does not take place or breaks down or where the child dies. The adoption leave will end 8 weeks after such an event.

### Parental Order is Refused

Where the intended parents' application for a Parental Order is refused by the court, the employee's entitlement to adoption leave will end 8 weeks later or at the end of the adoption leave, whichever is earlier.

For surrogacy arrangements the Council reserves the right to reclaim any payment made and to be compensated for leave taken, if the employee fails to provide a copy of the Parental Order within 6 months of the adoption leave/pay commencing.

### Keeping in Touch (KIT) Days

All employees on maternity or adoption leave can participate in up to 10 KIT days where an employee can work without bringing their leave to an end. KIT days are not limited to the employee's normal job and can include attending training events, appraisals, meetings, as well as enabling an employee to return to work gradually at the end of their leave.

Any KIT days must be mutually agreed, therefore just as an employer cannot insist that work is carried out during a maternity or adoption leave period, an employee cannot insist on working during the period.

Working any part of a day will count as one full day for the purpose of calculating the number of KIT days taken or pay received. The employee's normal rate of pay offset against any SMP or SAP received will be paid for such days. Payment per day will be based on the number of days in the month the KIT Day is worked i.e. 1/28th, 1/29th, 1/30th or 1/31st of the person's monthly full-time equivalent salary.

Payment arrangements should be discussed and clearly understood and agreed before any work is undertaken and efforts should be made to ensure both the employee and manager are fully aware of the work to be carried out on the day.

Where an employee has multiple posts within the Council only 10 KIT days can be taken in total as they are allocated per person, not per job. In addition, in the case of employees on maternity leave, KIT days cannot be taken during the first two weeks following the birth.

### Returning to Work Following Maternity/Adoption Leave

It will be assumed that an employee will take their full 52 weeks of maternity or adoption entitlement and will return to work at the end of their AML/AAL, unless they have stated otherwise on their notification form. If the employee intends to return to work sooner than this, they must

notify their manager at least 8 weeks before the date they intend to return. If less than 8 weeks' notice is given, the Council can postpone the return to ensure there is 8 weeks' notice, although any postponement cannot go beyond the end of the 52-week maternity or adoption leave period.

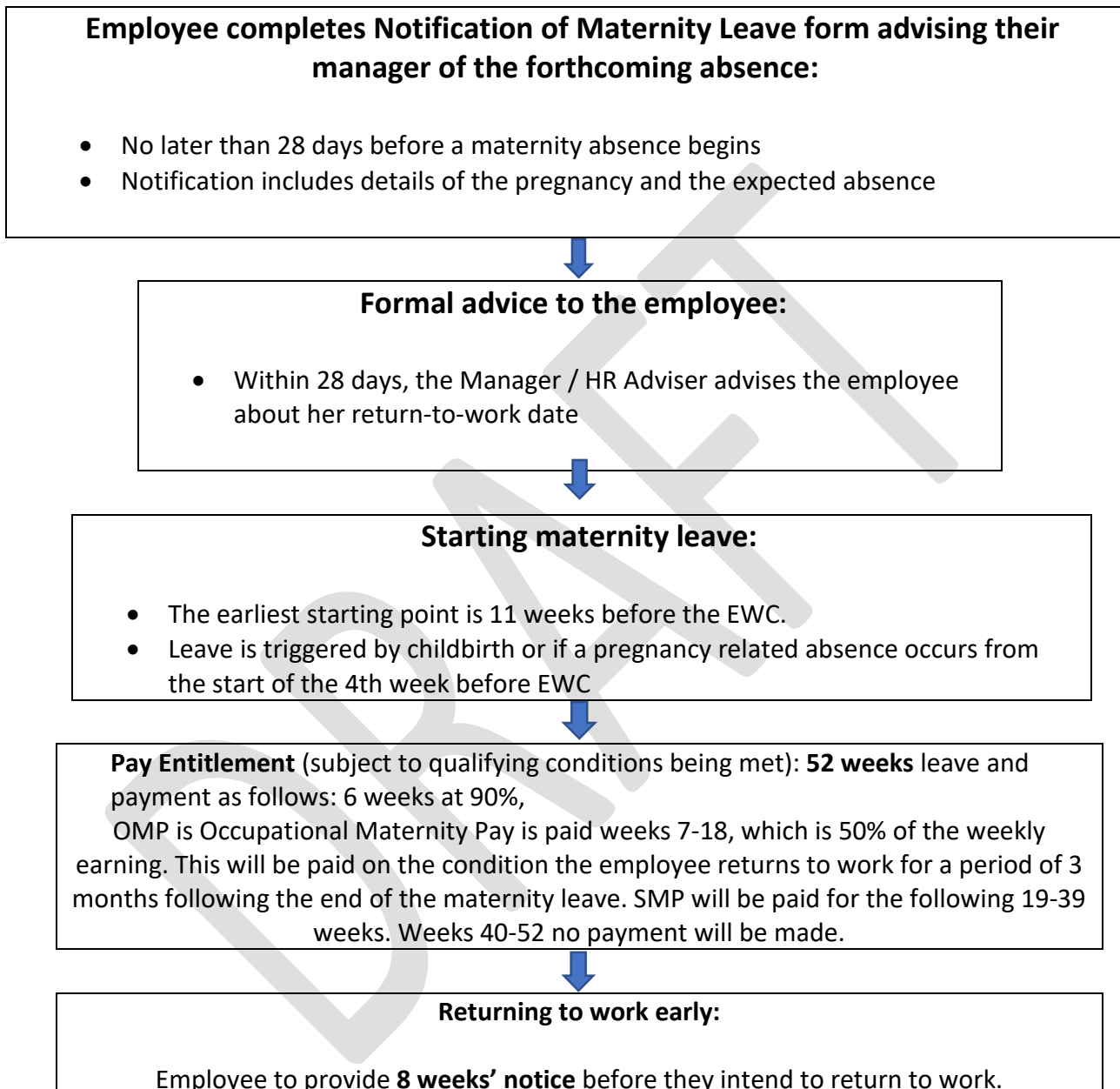
If the employee does not want to return to work after their maternity/adoption leave, they are required to give the Council notice in line with their contract of employment.

The manager should ensure they meet with the employee either prior to their return or immediately upon their return to aid their smooth return to the workplace and discuss any particular needs or wishes they may have e.g. changes to the working environment to assist with breastfeeding (see above).

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## Maternity Leave Flowchart/Timeline

This timeline provides a helpful summary of the main times to be aware of where a maternity situation occurs within the workplace.



## Adoption /Surrogacy flowchart/ timeline

This timeline provides a helpful summary of the main times to be aware of where an adoption situation occurs within the workplace.

### Employee completes Notification of Adoption Leave form advising their manager of the forthcoming absence:

- No later than 7 days after being notified of being matched with a child or for surrogacy, within 28 days before adoption absence begins.
- Notification includes details of the adoption matching certificate and expected absence



### Formal advice to the employee:

- Within 28 days, the Manager/HR Adviser advises the employee about her return-to-work date



### Starting Adoption leave:

- For adoption, on the date the child is placed or another predetermined date which should be no more than 14 days before the date the child is expected to be placed ☒
- For surrogacy, on the date the child is born or no earlier than 14 days before the birth



**Pay Entitlement** (subject to qualifying conditions being met): **52 weeks** leave and payment as follows: 6 weeks at 90%, OMP is Occupational Maternity Pay is paid weeks 7-18, which is 50% of the weekly earning. This will be paid on the condition the employee returns to work for a period of 3 months following the end of the maternity leave. SMP will be paid for the following 19-39 weeks. Weeks 40-52 no payment will be made.



### Returning to work early:

Employee to provide **8 weeks' notice** before they intend to return to work.

## Paternity Leave Policy Introduction

Peterlee Town Council recognises that employees may wish to take time off work to support the mother of a baby or look after the baby.

## Who Does the Policy Apply to?

The policy applies to all Peterlee Town Council employees.

## Authority

The Town Clerk is accountable for the proper application of the Paternity Leave Scheme.

## Legal Framework

These provisions take account of the framework of statutory rights as set out in the Employment Rights Act 1996, as amended by the Employment Relations Act 1999 and the Employment Act 2002. The details of these rights are set out in supporting regulations: The Paternity and Adoption Leave Regulations 2002, as amended by the Paternity and Adoption Leave (Amendment) Regulations 2006, The Children and Families Act 2014 and The Paternity and Adoption Leave (Amendment) (no 2) Regulations 2014.

## Provisions

The Council provides one type of paternity leave, Ordinary Paternity Leave

### Ordinary Paternity Leave

To be eligible for Ordinary Paternity Leave an employee must be one of the following:

- father
- husband or partner of the mother (or adopter)
- child's adopter
- intended parent (if they're having a baby through a surrogacy arrangement)
- Employees must also:
  - be [classified as an employee](#) (paternity leave only)
  - be employed up to the date the child is born (or placed with the adopter) (paternity pay only)
  - be on your payroll and earn [the minimum amount per week](#) in an 8 week 'relevant period' (paternity pay only)
  - give you the [correct notice](#)
  - be taking time off to look after the child or their partner
  - be responsible for the child's upbringing

From 6 April 2026, employees will be eligible for Paternity Leave from their first day of employment. To allow for this change, from 18 February 2026 until 25 July 2026, some employees will not need to give the usual 15 weeks' notice of their baby's due date.

An employee does not need to give 15 weeks' notice if both of the following apply:

- their baby is due between 5 April 2026 and 25 July 2026
- they'll have been employed for less than 26 weeks up to any day in the 'qualifying week'

The qualifying week is the 15th week before the baby is due. This is different if the employee is adopting.

An employee adopting a child must:

- have been continuously employed by you for at least 26 weeks up to any day in the week they were matched with a child (UK adoptions)/by either the date the child arrives in the UK or when they want their pay to start (overseas adoptions)
- confirm that their partner is getting Statutory Adoption Pay in writing or by giving you a copy of their partner's form SC6
- meet the other eligibility conditions for paternity leave or pay

They'll still need to give 28 days' notice of when they want their leave to start and how much leave they want to take.

If the baby is due on or after 26 July 2026, both the usual notice periods will apply.

Employees may choose to take leave (as outlined below) any time up to 8 weeks after the date of birth. The leave is based on the employee's normal working week, pro rata for part time employees. one or two whole weeks.

## Process

Employees must complete the Application for Ordinary Paternity Leave Form (Appendix 1), arrange for it to be authorised by their line manager and return it to: Resources Manager by the 15th week before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC). From 6 April 2026, employees will be eligible for Paternity Leave from their first day of employment. To allow for this change, from 18 February 2026 until 25 July 2026, employees will not need to give the usual 15 weeks' notice of their baby's due date.

If the baby is born early the employee can choose to take their leave any time between the actual date of birth and the end of an 8-week period running from the Sunday of the week the baby was originally due.

Where the employee has chosen to start his/her leave on the date the child is born and he/she is at work on this date, his/her leave will begin on the following day.

The employee must notify the Line Manager of the date the child was born, as soon as is reasonably practicable.

The employee may change the proposed date providing he/she gives 28 days' notice.

## Payment

Employees will receive Statutory Paternity Pay for each week of their Paternity Leave. This will be the lower of 90% of average weekly earnings or the current SPP rate. The employee must have average weekly earnings which are no less than the current National Insurance lower earnings limit in the 8 weeks prior to the qualifying week.

## Shared Parental Leave

Shared Parental Leave (SPL) is a new legal entitlement for eligible parents of babies due, or children placed for adoption, on or after 5 April 2015. It provides both parents with the opportunity to consider the best arrangement to care for their child during the child's first year. The amount of leave available is calculated using the mother's entitlement to maternity/adoption leave, which

allows them to take up to 52 weeks' leave. If they reduce their maternity/adoption leave entitlement, then they and/or their partner may opt-in to the SPL system and take any remaining weeks as SPL.

**From 6 April 2026, you'll be able to take Paternity Leave after you take Shared Parental Leave.**

More details on shared parental leave can be obtained by reading the Shared Parental Leave Policy.

### Time Off for Ante-Natal Appointments

An expectant father or partner of a pregnant woman is entitled to take unpaid time off work to accompany the woman to up to two of her ante-natal appointments.

Employees and qualifying Agency Workers (workers are required to have been doing the same kind of job for the Council for at least 12 weeks) are entitled to time off to accompany an expectant mother to her ante-natal appointments if they are:

- The baby's father
- The expectant mother's spouse, her civil partner, or partner (of either sex) in an enduring relationship; or
- Intended parents of a child in a surrogacy arrangement if they expect to be entitled to and intend to apply for a parental order in respect of that child.

Employees are entitled to unpaid leave for 1 or 2 appointments. The time off is capped at 6.5 hours for each appointment.

The employee is not required to provide evidence of such appointments, as they are considered the property of the expectant mother attending the appointment. However, the employee should complete the attached declaration (Appendix 2) stating the date and time of the appointment, that they qualify for the unpaid time through their relationship with the mother or child and that the time off is for the purpose of attending the ante-natal appointment.

There is no qualifying period for employees – they are entitled to receive this entitlement from day one, providing they meet the qualifying criteria.

### Contractual Benefits

You are entitled to the benefit of your normal terms and conditions of employment, except for terms relating to wages or salary throughout your paternity leave. You may however be entitled to SPP for this period.

You will continue to remain bound by any obligations arising under your contract of employment.

### Return to Work After Paternity Leave

You are entitled to return to the same job following no more than two weeks' paternity leave. If, however, you take two or more consecutive periods of statutory leave (which could include additional adoption leave or parental leave of more than four weeks), you will be entitled to return to the job in which you were employed before your absence or, if that is not reasonably practicable

for the Council, then to return to another job which is both suitable and appropriate in the circumstances.

You have the right to return:

- with your seniority, and similar rights
- on terms and conditions not less favourable than those which would have applied if you had not been absent.
- You will not be subject to any detriment by the Council because you took or sought to take paternity leave.

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## Appendix 1

PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL

## Application for Ordinary Paternity Leave

Part A to be completed by the member of staff - Please complete the form in BLOCK CAPITALS.

Title: Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms	
First Name	
Surname	
Job Title	
Department/Section	
Home Address	
Tel Number (Work)	
Tel Number (Home)	Mobile:

I wish to inform you that I intend to take Ordinary Paternity Leave as follows:

Expected date paternity leave period to commence\* \_\_\_\_\_

Expected return to work date \*\* \_\_\_\_\_

Partner's Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC) or expected date of placement for adoption:

\*Your paternity leave cannot begin prior to the baby's birth/date of placement for adoption, but you can state that you wish your paternity leave to start on the day your child is born.

\*\*Ordinary paternity leave must be taken in blocks of either one or two weeks

## I declare that I:

- am the baby's biological father / married to the mother / living with the mother in an enduring family relationship, but am not an immediate relative (please delete as applicable)
- will have responsibility for the child's upbringing ☐
- will take time off work to support the mother or care for the child.
- have provided a copy of my partner's MAT B1/matching certificate with this form

Signed:

Date:

Please ensure you have discussed this application with your Line Manager and provided them with a copy of this form.

This form must be returned to the Resources Manager 15 weeks before your baby's due date, (From 6 April 2026, employees will be eligible for Paternity Leave from their first day of employment. To allow for this change, from 18 February 2026 until 25 July 2026, employees will not need to give the usual 15 weeks' notice of their baby's due date) or within 7 days of receiving a matching certificate for adoption.

Section to be completed by Line Manager

Approved by: Manager Signature:

Date:

Employee informed of approval by:

Date:

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## Appendix 2

PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL

Request for time off to accompany a pregnant woman at an antenatal appointment

Title: Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms	
First Name	
Surname	
Job Title	
Department/Section	
Home Address	
Tel Number (Work)	
Tel Number (Home)	Mobile:

Date of appointment: ..... Time of appointment: .....

I have the following relationship with the pregnant woman I am accompanying to an antenatal appointment or her expected child (please tick as appropriate)

- I am the husband/Civil partner
- I live with the pregnant woman in an enduring family relationship
- I am the father of the expected child
- I am the intended parent in a surrogacy situation

**Section B:** I declare the following to be true (please tick each box)

- My purpose in taking time off is to accompany the above pregnant woman at an antenatal appointment
- The ante-natal appointment has been made on the advice of a medical practitioner, midwife or nurse

Employee Signature:

Date:

**Section to be completed by Line Manager**

Approved by (Manager Signature)

Date:

Employee informed of approval by:

Date:

## Appendix 3

## Risk Assessment for New and Expectant Mothers

<b>Name of New/Expectant Mother:</b>	<b>Department, Division:</b>	<b>Location:</b>
<b>Job Title:</b>	<b>Details of work activities:</b>	
<b>Date of initial assessment:</b>	<b>Review 1 (between 14 &amp; 26 weeks):</b>	<b>Assessment carried out by:</b>
<b>Review 2 (after 27 weeks):</b>	<b>Return to work review:</b>	

Review the Hazard Profile for the Worker Type (job title above) and consider whether the controls in place are adequate to protect new & expectant mothers. Work through the table below, which highlights some particular risks to consider.

**NB in all cases where it is not possible to adequately reduce risks by making changes to the working conditions or hours of a new or expectant mother, she must be suspended from work on full pay for as long as necessary to protect her health & safety and that of her baby.**

**Has the new or expectant mother's Doctor or Midwife identified any health issues that may affect her work?  
If yes, please detail below.**

THE HAZARDS (to Mother/Baby/Foetus)	CONTROLS	Please Indicate Y/N or N/A	PLEASE DETAIL ACTION TAKEN/ NEEDED TO CONTROL THE RISK
--	----------	----------------------------------	---

<b>PHYSICAL RISKS</b>			
<b>Movement and Posture</b>			
<b>How will you reduce the risks to a new &amp; expectant mother due to standing or sitting for long periods of time? e.g. dizziness/faintness/fatigue/thrombosis/embolism</b>	Allow regular rest breaks		
	Allow changes in activities, i.e. alternating between standing and sitting		
	Adjust workstation		
	Arrange alternative work		
<b>What adjustments can you make to the New &amp; expectant mothers' workstation to take into account of increased size?</b>	Redesign layout of office/workstation to allow sufficient room		
<b>Manual Handling</b>			
<b>How will you eliminate the need for the new/expectant mother to carry out manual handling tasks with risk of injury?</b>	Review Manual Handling Assessments		
	Provide lifting/handling equipment		
	Eliminate the need for MH – allocate tasks to others		
	Arrange alternative work		

THE HAZARDS (to Mother/Baby/Foetus)	CONTROLS	Please Indicate Y/N or N/A	PLEASE DETAIL ACTION TAKEN/ NEEDED TO CONTROL THE RISK
<b>Working at Heights</b>			
<b>How will you eliminate the need for the new/expectant mother to work at heights e.g. ladders, MEWPS?</b>	Eliminate the need to work at height – allocate jobs to others		
	Arrange alternative work		
<b>Extremes of Heat/Cold</b>			
<b>What will you do to control any exposure to extremes of temperature?</b>	Ensure sufficient rest/refreshment breaks are possible.		
	Ensure there is an unrestricted supply of drinking water.		
	Arrange alternative work.		
<b>RISK OF INFECTION</b>			
	Many biological agents can affect the unborn child during pregnancy or pass from mother to child during childbirth or breastfeeding.		
<b>How will any risk of infection be eliminated?</b> e.g. Hepatitis B, HIV, Herpes, Syphilis, Chickenpox, Typhoid, Rubella (German measles) & Toxoplasma	Review Infection Control Risk Assessment		
	Additional hygiene controls		
	Arrange alternative work.		

THE HAZARDS (to Mother/Baby/Foetus)	CONTROLS	Please Indicate Y/N or N/A	PLEASE DETAIL ACTION TAKEN/ NEEDED TO CONTROL THE RISK
--	----------	----------------------------------	---

<b>CHEMICAL AGENTS</b>			
<b>Hazardous Substances</b>	A number of substances have hazardous properties indicated by Risk Phrases (cancer risk, genetic risks, harm to the unborn child etc.)		
<b>How will you eliminate the risk from exposure to substances hazardous to health?</b> Those labelled R40 (limited evidence of carcinogenic effect), R45 (may cause cancer), R46 (may cause heritable genetic damage), R49 (may cause cancer by inhalation), R61 (may cause harm to the unborn child), R64 (may cause harm to breastfed babies) & R68 (possible risk of irreversible effects) e.g. mercury; lead; carbon monoxide, and those listed 'Sk' – absorbed through the skin.	Review COSHH assessments		
	Eliminate risk by substituting substances		
	Arrange alternative work		
	<b>Once pregnancy is confirmed, women must be suspended from the work that exposes them significantly to lead.</b> The ACOP Control of Lead at Work sets out exposure limits for women of reproductive capacity, to prevent harm to a foetus before a pregnancy is confirmed.		

THE HAZARDS (to Mother/Baby/Foetus)	CONTROLS	Please Indicate Y/N or N/A	PLEASE DETAIL ACTION TAKEN/ NEEDED TO CONTROL THE RISK
<b>WORKING CONDITIONS</b>			
<b>Facilities</b>			
<b>What facilities are there for new &amp; expectant mothers to rest?</b>	Somewhere for new & expectant mothers to sit or lie down		
	Adequate access to drinking water		
	Some flexibility in frequency & timings of breaks		
<b>How will you provide adequate hygiene facilities for new &amp; expectant mothers?</b>	Easy access to toilets (& associated hygiene facilities)		
	Facilities for breastfeeding mothers to express & safely store milk		
<b>Working hours</b>			
<b>How will the risk to new/expectant mothers from working long hours or night shifts be controlled?</b>	Rearrange shift patterns		
	Shorter shifts		
	Arrange alternative work		
	<b>If a medical certificate is received from the employee's doctor/midwife stating night work is affecting her H&amp;S or that of her unborn child, alternative day work must be organised.</b>		

THE HAZARDS (to Mother/Baby/Foetus)	CONTROLS	Please Indicate Y/N or N/A	PLEASE DETAIL ACTION TAKEN/ NEEDED TO CONTROL THE RISK
<b>Lone Working</b>	Pregnant women are more likely to need urgent medical attention.		
<b>How will lone working be eliminated for the expectant mother?</b>	Review Lone Working Risk Assessment		
	Arrange alternative work		
<b>Violence &amp; Aggression</b>			
<b>How will any risk of violence or aggression at work be eliminated?</b>	Review Personal Safety Risk Assessment		
	If the risk of violence cannot be <b>Significantly</b> reduced, new or expectant mothers should be offered suitable alternative work		
<b>Work Equipment</b>	Some work equipment may be uncomfortable or unsafe for use e.g. where mobility, dexterity or co-ordination is impeded by pregnancy		
<b>Have you considered any potential problems with the new/expectant mothers use of work equipment?</b>	Review your work Equipment Risk Assessments, taking into account changes in risks as pregnancy progresses.		
	Arrange alternative work.		

THE HAZARDS (to Mother/Baby/Foetus)	CONTROLS	Please Indicate Y/N or N/A	PLEASE DETAIL ACTION TAKEN/ NEEDED TO CONTROL THE RISK
<b>Other Hazards</b>			
Please indicate which other hazards are applicable and how they are controlled	Significant exposure to noise		
	Shocks/vibration		
	Radiation (ionising or non-ionising)		
	Occupational Stress		
	Passive smoking		
	Personal Protective Equipment (suitability)		
	Travelling for work		
	Other (please list)		

**ACTION PLAN**

Summary of steps to be taken, if any, as a result of this risk assessment, to reduce level of risk for the mother, foetus, or baby (continue on a separate sheet if required)

Ref.	Action	Responsibility	Completion Date

**Have the controls implemented, reduced the risk to an acceptable level? (please indicate)**

**If 'no,' please seek further advice from DCC Health & Safety.**

**Action plan completed by:**

**Position:**

**Date:**



## Appendix 4

### Maternity/Adoption Leave Notification Form

Please discuss your plans for maternity/adoption leave with your line manager before completing this form and please send them a copy of this form, along with the MAT B1/SAP 1 certificate by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> week before the Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC). If you have not received the MAT B1/SAP 1 Certificate you should send it once received. Please ensure that you have read the Maternity/Paternity/Adoption & Surrogacy Policy before completing this form.

**Incomplete forms will not be accepted, please ensure all sections are fully completed.**

Employee Details (please enter the following details)			
Title		First Name	Surname
Home Address			
Contact Number			
Email Address			
Payroll number			
Job Title			
Dates for Maternity/Adoption Leave			
Date Baby Due			
Expected start date of Maternity/Adoption Leave			
A MAT B1 Certificate confirming the above details			
Your doctor or midwife will give you a MAT B1 certificate which will give you the expected week of childbirth (EWC). You must provide a copy of the original form to your line manager days before you wish to start your maternity leave.			
Expected Return date (back on payroll)			
I understand that if I am taking less than the full 52 weeks' maternity/adoption leave entitlement, I should provide at least 8 weeks' notice in writing if I wish to return to work earlier or later than the date agreed above with my line manager, and I will need to complete a Return-to-Work Form.			
Maternity Pay			
Employees are eligible for Contractual Maternity/Adoption Leave and Pay if they have continuously worked for Peterlee Town Council for 26 weeks at the beginning of the 15 <sup>th</sup> week before EWC. If I am paid Occupational Maternity Pay in weeks 7-18, I agree to return to work for a minimum period of 3 months following my maternity leave. Failure to do so will result in the money being reclaimed back.			
Declaration of Employee			
I wish to apply for maternity/adoption leave, as set out above and I confirm the information provided is correct. I understand that should I wish to take annual leave in the standard leave year, I will book this in the usual manner. Any holiday hours left on commencement of your maternity/adoption leave will be carried over into the next holiday year.			
Name		Position	
Signature		Date	



# MENTAL WELLBEING IN THE WORKPLACE POLICY, PROCEDURE AND TOOLKIT

VERSION 4: March 2026

## ABSTRACT

Peterlee Town Council recognises that its employees are its most valuable asset and that only through their development in a healthy and safe working environment can they contribute fully to its aims and objectives. As a good employer Peterlee Town Council wishes to promote the physical, psychological and social well-being of all its employees.

Resources Manager

Please think before printing this document.

Where printing is necessary, please ensure that it is printed double sided and in greyscale.

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## Policy outline

### What is the policy about?

Peterlee Town Council (the Council) recognises that its employees are its most valuable asset and that only through their development in a healthy and safe working environment can they contribute fully to its aims and objectives. Whilst the Council has little control over external factors, as a good employer the Council wishes to promote the physical, psychological and social well-being of all its employees.

### Who does the policy apply to?

This policy applies to all Council employees.

### Responsibility

All Council employees have a responsibility to ensure that they comply with this policy and any subsequent processes that are developed to support it.

Everyone involved in implementing this policy and any subsequent processes that are developed to support it, is responsible for ensuring that it is fairly implemented and must:

- not breach the policy or any related processes;
- seek advice from the Town Clerk (or nominated representative), if unsure of how to implement the policy; and
- deal with any issues arising equitably without direct or indirect discrimination on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or trade union membership.

### Monitoring

Data in relation to 'work-related stress', (**defined as 'mental well-being and mental ill-Health'**), will be gathered through a range of management information used for recording and reporting data, e.g. attendance management interviews, accident reporting, grievances etc. in line with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) best practice.

This data will be reviewed within the Council to identify the impact of work-related mental ill-health and used to develop any further mechanisms to address significant issues.

### Confidentiality

All information will be handled sensitively and used only for its proper purpose. However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed as information might have to be disclosed where an issue results in formal proceedings.

Under the Data Protection Act 2018 individuals have the right to see their own personal data held subject to the rights of confidentiality of any third parties involved in that information.

## Dealing with abuses of the policy

Employees who attempt to abuse this policy may face disciplinary action. The Council takes false or misleading accusations very seriously which may result in further action taken through the Disciplinary Procedure. This will not include ill-founded allegations that were made in good faith.

## Publicising/distribution of the policy

A copy of this policy is available from your manager. A copy will be made available to employees via cloud storage.

New employees should be informed of the existence of this policy during recruitment and induction information processes.

## Reviewing the policy

The Town Clerk (or nominated representative) will keep the operation of this policy under review and will make such changes to the policy as deemed appropriate.

## Procedure

### Policy statement

The Council is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of its employees and recognises that mental health issues in the form of 'work-related mental ill-health' is a management issue. The Council acknowledges the importance of identifying and reducing workplace stressors and aims to:

- promote the health and well-being of its employees through, for example, the promotion of opportunities to lead healthier lifestyles.
- work towards the Stress Management Standards as identified by the HSE (a summary of the standards is provided in Section 3.4).
- identify workplace stressors and conduct risk assessments to eliminate or control as far as is reasonably practicable, the risks from work-related mental ill-health. These risk assessments will be regularly reviewed.
- provide access to confidential counselling for employees affected by work-related mental ill-health where appropriate; and
- provide adequate resources to enable managers to implement this policy.

## What is mental ill-health and how can it be addressed?

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) define mental ill-health (stress) as *“an adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them”*.

This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be positive if managed correctly and stress which can be detrimental to health.

Symptoms of mental ill-health can manifest as either physical and/or psychological effects. A summary of such may include:

- physical effects – headaches, muscle tension, stomach problems, bowel and bladder problems and increased heart rate; and
- psychological effects - irritable, anxious, mood swings, short tempered, constant worrying, low self-esteem and poor concentration.

Workplace interventions to address mental ill-health related problems can be implemented at one of three levels:

1. **Individual Level** – where an employee raises significant work-related mental ill-health concerns or is experiencing related symptoms. Employee focused interventions can include:
  - counselling, support and advice referral to health practitioner;
  - specific work-related training and management support; and
  - processes to explore the extent to which their experience of work can reasonably and sustainably be adapted to address their concerns.
2. **Management Level** – employees in all forms of employment may experience work-related mental ill-health concerns. Workplace support structures, work training and mechanisms for such concerns to be raised, and acted on at an early stage, can address problems before any overt health or well-being concerns arise.
3. **Organisational Level** – an Organisational Risk Assessment involves the periodic collation of Council-wide data that indicates potential ‘hot spots’ of work-related mental ill-health problems. Subsequent organisational interventions and ongoing audit measure the effectiveness of the risk management approaches taken.

## Roles and responsibilities

### Senior managers/ Town Clerk/ Elected members

Senior managers, the Town Clerk and elected members are responsible for:

- Actively supporting the implementation of the policy by promoting good mental health and wellbeing in all aspects of council activity;
- Promoting a positive attitude to mental health and wellbeing within the Council;
- Ensuring managers understand their duty of care for employees;
- Ensuring advice and information about how to access support is provided to all employees;
- Ensuring stress, which is likely to lead to ill-health, is reduced as far as practically possible.

## Managers

All managers and nominated supervisors are required to:

- Advise and inform their team(s), in order to increase awareness and understanding, of the policy and any related issues;
- record any work related mental ill-health on the Corporate Accident/Incident/Ill Health or Near Miss Form which is available from the manager in each department or from the Town Clerk (or nominated representative). The completed form should be given to the Town Clerk marked 'Private and Confidential.' In the case of the Town Clerk, the completed form should be given to the HR subcommittee;
- attend training as requested, (or arranged for them as part of their role), in good management practice and health and safety;
- ensure good communication between management and employees, particularly where there are service, organisational and procedural changes;
- ensure that all forms of actual or perceived bullying and harassment are not tolerated within their areas of operational control, (see the Council's Grievance Policy);
- ensure that concerns, actions and issues are recorded, and information passed to SMT;
- manage absence in accordance with policy, liaising with HR and Occupational health to maximise support to employees who have mental or physical issues;
- identify training requirements and ensure employees are appropriately trained and understand their role;
- ensure employees are provided with relevant developmental opportunities through the appraisal scheme and other training initiatives;
- monitor workloads to ensure that employees are not overloaded;
- monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that employees are not overworking;
- monitor holidays to ensure that employees are taking their full entitlement;
- be vigilant and offer additional support where appropriate to employees experiencing mental ill-health outside work; and
- ensure that employees are made aware of the opportunities to participate in health improvement activities and give reasonable support to employees to access them.

When work-related mental ill-health, or personal stressors (impacting on work-life balance), are raised by employees, or are identified through the attendance management procedures, the manager must clarify the nature of the employee's concerns. They should then provide the employee with any practical options to reduce these stressors.

Where interpersonal issues perceived by either party may hinder the effectiveness of attempts to resolve workplace issues, the manager will facilitate the steps above to be completed by another manager, acceptable to all parties.

## Employees

All employees are required to raise issues of concern regarding work-related mental ill-health with their manager in the first instance.

If an employee feels that they can't raise the issue with their manager, they should approach another appropriate manager (manager's line manager), seek advice from the Town Clerk (or nominated

representative), or their Trade Union. In the case of the Town Clerk, advice should be sought from the HR subcommittee.

If unsure of how to deal with issues seek help and advice on policies and procedures from their manager, Town Clerk (or nominated representative) or Trade Union.

Employees should:

- Support approaches made by managers and supervisors, to eliminate or reduce the effects of work related mental ill-health they are experiencing;
- Consider pursuing opportunities for counselling and training when offered;
- Recognise that they have a responsibility for their own personal mental ill-health and try to help themselves where possible, e.g. by attending planned training, taking appropriate meal breaks, planning their work where possible, raising concerns over workloads with managers;
- Make full use of external support arrangements available for non-work-related mental ill-health management, e.g. their Unions, Doctors, NHS services and charitable organisations such as Let's Connect, Rethink and Sane.

### Trade Union/Safety Representatives

Trade Unions / Safety Representatives will be:

- meaningfully consulted on any changes to work practices or work design to consider whether such changes could precipitate mental ill-health;
- meaningfully involved in the mental ill-health risk assessment and risk management process;
- provided with access to collective and statistical data;
- provided with paid time away from normal duties to attend any relevant Trade Union training in accordance with local conditions;
- allowed reasonable time in accordance with Council policy to conduct joint inspections of the workplace to ensure that environmental stressors are properly controlled: and
- Encouraging members to seek help where appropriate.

### Occupational Health Service

Occupational Health will:

- help support individuals who have been absent with workplace mental wellbeing related ill-health and advise them and their management on a planned return to work;
- provide support and advice to individuals who are at work but are experiencing workplace mental wellbeing related health problems;
- refer individuals to workplace mental wellbeing counsellors or specialist agencies as required;
- ensure maintenance of individual employee confidentiality in any data analysis; and
- promote local and regional public health and Council priorities as they relate to employee health and wellbeing.

### Telephone Based Counselling/Occupational Health Service (OHS)

Support for employees and managers can also be sought from Zurich Municipal by telephoning the helpline on **08003265061** or the Employee Assistance programme on **08000280199**.

It may be appropriate for a person who is suffering from mental ill-health to have the opportunity to have face-to-face access to a counsellor. In this case, the Council will give consideration to face-to-face counselling where appropriate.

## Managing Mental Wellbeing/ill Health

### Individual Level Interventions

The procedure for addressing work-related mental ill-health issues experienced by individual employees is detailed within the Mental Wellbeing Management Toolkit. See section 3.3, for the flowchart outlining the management process to be followed for both work and home related mental ill-health.

Tackling mental ill-health has been shown to have real financial and welfare benefits to organisations. It can for example, help improve employee morale and their commitment, reduce costs associated with absence management and in turn bring higher productivity and lower absenteeism.

The HSE has identified six broad categories of risk factors for work-related stress (see section 3.4). The 'Mental ill-health Toolkit' provides a structured approach to individual risk assessment which includes:

- identification of the mental ill-health hazards/risks perceived by the employee;
- evaluation of the risks and recording of what needs to be done in an action plan; and
- review the assessment and actions taken.

### Management Level Interventions

The HSE Stress Management Standards essentially represent aspects of good organisational and management practice.

Good standards of management practice can eliminate or reduce the effect of work-related stressors experienced by employees and its negative impact on service delivery. Aspects of good practice include open lines of manager/employee communication, to ensure mental ill-health related problems can be raised at an early stage.

The purpose of using the Mental Wellbeing Toolkit is to further clarify the nature of work-related concerns and the extent to which employees may be open to reasonably practicable workplace modifications. These conclusions must be put to the employee for their consideration. It is recognised that manager beliefs and behaviours may themselves be a source of mental ill-health to employees.

### Organisational Level Interventions

Organisational interventions are considered a key element in good workplace mental health management by the HSE. No ideal method exists to determine whether existing control measures to prevent harm from mental health related factors are sufficient. However, a suitable and sufficient standard of risk assessment at the organisational level is considered, by the HSE to include:

- a continuous quality improvement audit cycle;
- the collation of routinely available data considered potential markers of mental health problems (e.g. sickness absence rates, turnover rates, incident data and so on),
- data to be presented in an organisationally meaningful manner that can identify potential 'hot spots' and allow consideration by senior managers for organisational development and priority setting;
- processes to further clarify specific issues of concern in 'hot spots' to inform senior management intervention;

- processes to develop and adopt solutions that are ‘reasonably practicable’, with an emphasis on prevention and organisational solutions; and
- documented and communicated workplace mental wellbeing action plans for all employees.

## Equality and diversity

The Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and ensuring discrimination, harassment or victimisation is not tolerated.

Our policy is to treat people fairly, with respect and dignity. We also comply with legal requirements in relation to age, disability, gender, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

## Contact details

If you would like any further advice or would like the document in an alternative format, please contact the Town Clerk or Resources Manager

<b>Author of Policy;</b>	<b>Resources Manager</b>
<b>Date effective from;</b>	<b>March 2026</b>
<b>Policy review;</b>	<b>March 2029</b>
<b>Version Control;</b>	<b>V4</b>

# Toolkit

## Mental Wellbeing Management Toolkit

### Who is this toolkit for?

This Toolkit provides advice and guidance to both managers and employees on when and how to use the Mental Well-being Questionnaire (MWQ) and Mental Well-being Action Plan (MWAP).

### When should I consider using this toolkit?

The Health and Safety Executive define 'six standards' to describe the most common aspects of work that contribute to mental well-being.

If an employee does not feel these standard definitions are true for them, in relation to their work, then this may contribute to psychological stress and/or physical ill-health.

Consider using this Toolkit when:

- such work-related psychological stressors are identified as a problem by the employee or observed by a manager or colleague. These stressors can be an important barrier to employees providing regular and effective service, but may often be 'hidden' or 'undeclared'; and
- in appropriate situations, to raise and discuss work related stressors with an employee, such as at Attendance Management Interviews and Return to Work Interviews.

The following points are intended to help managers recognise situations when they should consider raising the possibility of work-related stress with an employee. Such stressors are often a significant contributory factor acting to:

- **reduce employee psychological well-being** - you or colleagues of your employee may notice behavioural and mood changes;
- **contribute to performance or behavioural concerns;** and
- **increase sickness absence** – this can be long or recurrent short-term absence or attributed to physical symptoms (particularly long-term) as well as mental health related.

This Toolkit should be used alongside other policies such as the Attendance Management Policy and Procedure.

Employees should be offered a copy of the 'Tackling Mental Health Problems: An Employee Guide' Leaflet (Section 3.6). This includes details of the range of additional employee focused support available through the Council and NHS Services. This is also useful for employees who experience psychological distress not associated with work.

### What training do I need as a manager?

Managers play a vital role in the identification and management of stress within the organisation. They are likely to see the problems causing the stress first-hand, will be in the best position to notice changes

in employees behaviour that may indicate a stress-related problem and will often be the first point of contact when an employee feels stressed.

However, managers also need to think about their behaviour, and how it can either add to the stress their employees experience or help alleviate the problem. Management behaviour is often highlighted as a major factor by those suffering from work related stress.

### My employee may have a work-related stress problem, how do I clarify it?

Ask the employee to complete the MWQ. This helps narrow down the work-place problems the employee is experiencing using the HSE stress standards as a guide. This will help focus attention on the specifics of any stressors and provide appropriate options for support.

Give the employee enough time and privacy to complete the MWQ but try to ensure you have received it prior to any subsequent planned meeting to complete the MWAP so you can give consideration to viable support options.

The experience of stress is subjective it cannot be measured reliably and cannot be eliminated entirely from day-to-day working life.

As the manager you may not see things the same way as your employee but the purpose of the MWQ is to enable you to understand the way your employee sees the problem, not a basis for debate of the 'reality' of these perceptions.

Remember, all instances of work-related mental ill-health must be recorded and on the Corporate Accident / Incident / ill health / near miss report form.

### What if my employee finds it difficult to discuss these problems with me?

Employee perceptions of interpersonal difficulties with line managers are a well-recognised potential stressor within the workplace. In such circumstances it may be appropriate for the responsibility of implementing this Toolkit to be undertaken by another officer.

Alternatively, the process can be completed by the normal manager and employee, but with the option for a Trade Union representative or workplace colleague in attendance, and the meeting supported by an appropriate HR Officer.

The employee should be given the opportunity to raise any concerns about being able to engage in a meaningful discussion with their manager, and if such concerns apply, alternative management meeting arrangements described above, should be offered.

### How do I prepare an Action Plan in response to a Questionnaire?

As the manager you should arrange a meeting with the employee within **2 weeks** of receipt of the completed MWQ.

The main purpose of the meeting is to discuss the employees MWQ responses and devise an action plan which addresses the root causes, specifically looking at areas of concern that need to be discussed, addressed and documented.

The completion of the MWQ should help you work together to develop a MWAP that recognises, prioritises and provides effective solutions, where possible, to the issues raised in the MWQ

A jointly developed and agreed MWAP should:

- Help set realistic goals to work towards – prioritising the main stressors will help identify the most effective interventions;
- Help to identify any actions that are required – operational feasibility must be considered, and timescales should be noted;
- Demonstrate the Council is serious about addressing the employee’s concerns – the employee and line manager must sign the action plan once completed;
- Provide something to evaluate and review against in the future – the action plan should be regularly reviewed until actions are complete.

Once the interventions have been discussed, the MWAP needs to be agreed between you and the employee and, if involved, the HR representative and/or employee’s trade union representative. You and the employee must sign the MWQ and MWAP on completion.

### What is the Desired Outcome of the Mental Well-being Action Plan (MWAP)?

The purpose of this policy, procedure and toolkit is to ensure that the Council has done all that reasonably can be done, accepting the organisational demands and resource issues, to address the sources of psychological stressors for the individual employee as far as practicable.

Once this situation has been established the employee experiencing mental health related concerns will be able to judge whether they feel able to continue in the role.

Remember, the MWQ and MWAP are intended as a guide for managers and employees when discussing the management of mental health and may need to be adapted to suit individual circumstances.

### What happens after the Action Plan is completed?

It is essential that the manager and employee review and evaluate any changes made to tackle work-related mental ill-health. At least one review meeting will be required, after a maximum of **4 weeks** from when the action plan was implemented.

Managers should periodically check that agreed actions are being undertaken e.g. that agreed meetings are being held, or that there is evidence that key actions have taken place.

It is important to ask the employee whether they feel the solutions are having the desired effect and review the MWAP with the employee if appropriate, noting key changes.

If you have needed to use the Managing Mental Wellbeing Toolkit to address work related ill-health experienced by employees, you should raise this in future meetings with your manager, in order that possible team or service level stressors can be identified and proactively managed.

## When would the toolkit be inappropriate to manage stress?

Whilst this toolkit is the preferred method of managing work-related stressors and resulting mental ill-health, it is recognised that there may be some occasions when the toolkit is not appropriate and may serve to create further unnecessary stress for those concerned.

If other management actions are the underlying trigger for the employee's psychological stress, e.g. disciplinary procedures or a suspension, timely resolution of these may prove to be more effective instead of the use of this toolkit.

In these circumstances, the option of deferring completion of this toolkit (if still considered relevant by the employee) until after the other management procedures are concluded would be a reasonable course of action.

## What if the process does not resolve the employees concerns?

Where the employee is absent from work, and the conclusion of the process described above does not result in a return to work, or the employee continues to raise concerns in relation to health and work, Occupational Health Service referral through the Attendance Management Policy and Procedure should be made. This MUST include a signed copy of the completed MWQ and MWAP.

## Ensure continuous mental ill-health management for colleagues

It is important to assess the impact that workplace mental health related problems could have on the team. Losing one colleague for an extended period with a mental health related illness could have dramatic impact on the workload and morale of the rest of the team.

By taking action to tackle the causes of workplace mental ill-health early, it can help prevent or reduce the impact of these problems on the team and the organisation.

## The Mental Well-being Questionnaire (MWQ) and Action Plan (MWAP)

### (Part 1) Mental Well-being Questionnaire – For Completion by Employee

Please read and answer the following questions by indicating to what extent you feel that the following factors have influenced your wellbeing, effectiveness or attendance at work.

Following the completion of the questionnaire please provide further details/examples of the source of mental ill-health you have identified in the ‘**employee response**’ section of the action plan (part 2) prior to returning it to your manager or representative. Your manager will discuss with you, your responses and jointly consider with you any resulting actions.

If you would prefer your responses to be considered by somebody other than your manager then please raise this with them.

#### Note to Employee

From the list of statements in the table below please consider which best describe the difficulties you are experiencing in the workplace.

Employee Name.....

Team..... Manager.....

Please place a ‘tick’ in the left or right hand columns as appropriate

Cause of mental ill-health	Possible Stressors	This is a major concern for me, and is impacting on my sense of well-being and ability to work to my full potential.	Not a significant concern for me
<b>(1) Demands</b>	Different people at work demand things from me that are hard to combine		
	I have unachievable deadlines		
	I have to work very intensively		
	I have to neglect some tasks because I have too much to do		
	I am unable to take sufficient breaks		
	I feel pressured to work long hours		
	I feel I have to work very fast		
	I am under unrealistic time pressures		

Part 1 continued...

Cause of mental ill-health	Possible Stressors	This is a major concern for me, and is impacting on my sense of well-being and ability to work to my full potential.	Not a significant concern for me
<b>(2) Control</b>	I am not able to decide when to take a break		
	I don't feel I have a say in my work speed		
	I don't feel I have a choice in deciding how I do my work		
	I don't feel I have a choice in deciding what work I do		
	I don't feel I have a say over the way I do my work		
	I feel my work time could be more flexible		
<b>(3) Support (Manager)</b>	I don't feel I am given enough supportive feedback on the work I do		
	I don't feel I can rely on my manager to help me with a work problem		
	I don't feel I can talk to my manager about something that upset or annoyed me at work		
	I don't feel my manager supports me through emotionally demanding work		
	I don't feel my manager encourages me enough at work		

<b>(4) Support (Peers)</b>	I don't feel my colleagues would help me if work became difficult		
	I don't feel I get the help and support I need from colleagues		
	I don't feel I get the respect at work I deserve from my colleagues		
	My colleagues are not willing to listen to my work related problems		
<b>(5) Relationships</b>	I have been harassed, in the form of unkind words or behaviour		
	There is friction or anger between colleagues		
	I am bullied at work		
	Relationships are strained at work		

Part 1 continued...

Cause of mental ill-health	Possible Stressors	This is a major concern for me, and is impacting on my sense of well-being and ability to work to my full potential.	Not a significant concern for me
<b>(6) Role</b>	It is not clear what is expected of me at work		
	I do not know how to go about getting my job done		
	I am not clear about what my duties and responsibilities are		
	I am not clear about the goals and objectives for my department/team		

	I do not understand how my work fits into the overall aim of the organisation		
<b>(7) Change</b>	I do not have enough opportunities to question managers about changes at work		
	I don't feel consulted about change at work		
	When changes were made at work, I was not clear about how they would work out in practice		
<b>(8) Other issues</b>	Is there anything else that was a source of mental ill-health for you, at work or at home, which may have made it harder to cope with demands at work that you would normally be able to cope with?		

**Please submit the completed questionnaire and the employee response section of the action plan to your manager.**

**Signed: ..... (Employee)**

**Date.....**

**Date received by manager: .....**

**(A meeting will be arranged within 2 weeks of the Mental ill-health Questionnaire being submitted to discuss the issues raised)**

**(Part 2) Mental Health Management Action Plan – For Completion by manager in collaboration with employee**

Employee Name ..... Team ..... Manager .....

<p><b>Summary of Employee Response</b></p> <p>Summarise and provide examples and details of the areas of concern identified in the Mental Well-being Questionnaire</p>	<p><b>Action</b></p> <p>List approaches that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• can be reasonably implemented, given operational constraints and the resources of the Service. Specify the timescale over which the intervention can be maintained</li> <li>• cannot be reasonably implemented due to operational constraints and the resources of the Service</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timescale for achievement</b></p>
<p>Demands</p>		
<p>Control</p>		

<p><b>Summary of Employee Response</b></p> <p>Summarise and provide examples and details of the areas of concern identified in the Mental Well-being Questionnaire</p>	<p><b>Action</b></p> <p>List approaches that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• can be reasonably implemented, given operational constraints and the resources of the Service. Specify the timescale over which the intervention can be maintained</li> <li>• cannot be reasonably implemented due to operational constraints and the resources of the Service</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timescale for achievement</b></p>
<p>Support</p>		
<p>Relationships</p>		

<p><b>Summary of Employee Response</b></p> <p>Summarise and provide examples and details of the areas of concern identified in the Mental Well-being Questionnaire</p>	<p><b>Action</b></p> <p>List approaches that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• can be reasonably implemented, given operational constraints and the resources of the Service. Specify the timescale over which the intervention can be maintained</li> <li>• cannot be reasonably implemented due to operational constraints and the resources of the Service</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timescale for achievement</b></p>

Part 2 continued...

Role		
Change		

Other		
Date of review meeting:.....		

Signed: .....(Employee)

Date.....

Signed: .....(Manager)

Date.....

Signed: .....(Town Clerk or nominated representative)

Date.....

**(Part 3) Mental Health Management Action Plan Review – for Completion by manager in collaboration with employee**

Name..... Team..... Manager.....

Actions identified	Summary of outcomes/ Further Action

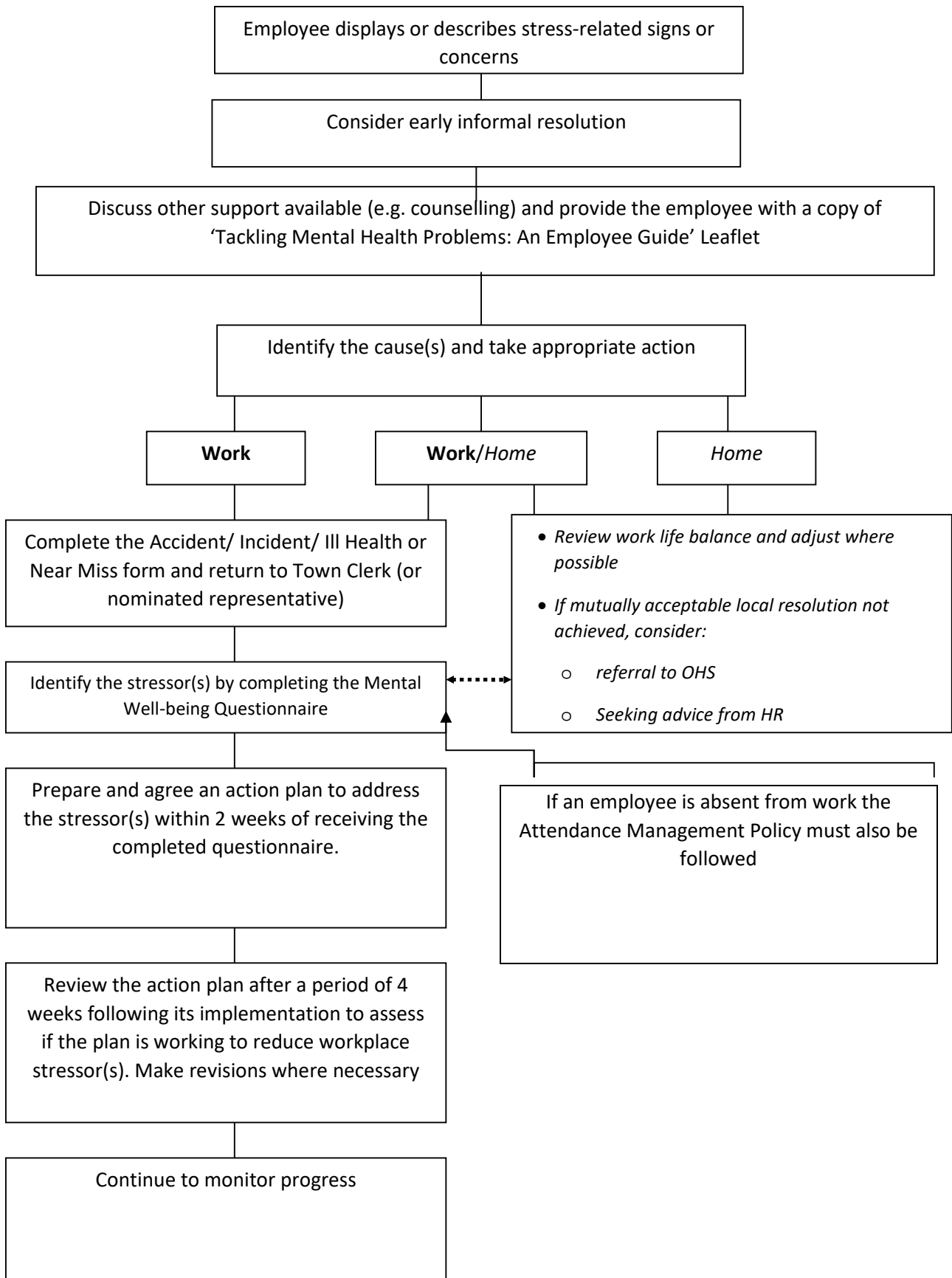
Signed: ..... (Employee)

Date.....

Signed: ..... (Manager)

Date.....

# Mental Wellbeing Management Procedure Flow Chart



## Stress Management Standards-Summary

The HSE defines the following six elements as the primary triggers for stress. Each one is listed with the 'preferred states' intended to help avoid work related stress.

These are simple summaries, more detailed advice on possible interventions, when an employee believes these states are not true for them, is provided at section 3.5.

### Change

- Employees indicate that the organisation engages them frequently when undergoing any organisational change
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns

### Demands

- Employees indicate that they are able to cope with the demands of their jobs
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns

### Control

- Employees indicate that they are able to have a say about the way that they do their work
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns

### Support

- Employees indicate that they receive adequate information and support from their colleagues and managers/supervisors
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns

### Relationships

- Employees indicate that they are not subjected to unacceptable behaviours e.g. bullying at work
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns

### Role

- Employees indicate that they understand their role and responsibilities
- Systems are in place locally to respond to any individual concerns

## Possible Interventions

### Demands

- Hold regular team meetings to discuss the anticipated workload for the forthcoming week(s)
- Develop personal work plans to ensure employees know what their job involves
- Allocate sufficient resources for employees to be able to do their jobs (time, equipment etc.)
- Provide adequate training (formal or informal) and resources to help employees prioritise, or provide information on how they can seek help if they have conflicting priorities
- Consider changes to start and end times to help employees cope with pressures external to the organisation (e.g. childcare, commuting etc.)
- Allow regular breaks, especially when the work is complex or emotionally demanding
- Provide realistic deadlines
- Don't ask people to do tasks they are not trained to do

### Control

- Agree systems that enable employees to have a say over the way their work is organised or undertaken, e.g. through project meetings, team briefings etc.
- Hold regular discussion forums during the planning stages of projects to talk about the anticipated output and methods of working
- Allocate responsibility to teams to take projects forward:
  - discuss and define teams at the start of a project
  - agree objectives
  - agree roles
  - agree timescales
  - agree provision of managerial support, e.g. through regular progress meetings
- Talk about the skills people have and if they believe they are able to use these to good effect. How else would they like to use their skills?
- Allow and encourage employees to participate in decision making
- Allow employees some control over the pace of their work

### Support

- Hold regular team meetings to discuss emerging issues or pressures
- Include 'work related mental ill-health/emerging pressures' as a standing item for staff meetings
- Ask how employees would like to access managerial support – 'open door' policies, agreed times when managers are able to discuss emerging pressures, etc.

- Use flexibility in the workplace procedures to enable employees to cope with domestic commitments
- Develop training arrangements and refresher sessions to ensure training and competencies are up-to-date and appropriate for the core functions of employees' jobs
- Talk about ways the organisation could provide support if someone is experiencing problems outside of work
- Ensure that employees receive sufficient training to undertake the core functions of their job
- Provide opportunities for career development

## Relationships

- Communicate and display the Councils policy's for dealing with unacceptable behaviour e.g. grievance, discipline procedures
- Select or build teams which have the right blend of expertise and experience for new projects
- Provide training to help employees deal with and defuse difficult situations
- Encourage good communication and provide appropriate training to aid skill development e.g. listening skills, confidence building etc.
- Discuss how individuals work together and how they can build positive relationships
- Identify ways to celebrate success e.g. informal lunches/wash-up meetings at the end of the project
- Create a culture where colleagues trust and encourage each other
- Agree which behaviours are unacceptable and ensure that people are aware of these

## Role

- Hold regular team meetings to ensure that individuals are clear about their role and know what is planned for the coming months
- Agree specific standards of performance for jobs and individual tasks and review periodically
- Introduce or revise job descriptions to help ensure that the core functions and priorities of the post are clear
- Ensure all new employees receive a thorough induction and that all members of the team understand the roles and responsibilities of the new recruit
- Define work structures clearly, so that all team members know who is doing what, and why

## Change

- Ensure all employees are aware of why the change is happening – agree a system for doing this
- Define and explain the key steps of the change. Ensure employee consultation is a key element of the programme

- Agree methods of communicating e.g. meetings, notice boards, letters, emails and the frequency e.g. weekly, monthly etc.
- Ensure that employees are aware of the impact of the change on their jobs
- Involve employees in discussions about how jobs might be developed and changed. Review team and individual work plans after the change to ensure team and individual objectives are clear
- Explain what the organisation wants to achieve and why it is essential that the change(s) takes place

# Tackling Mental Health Problems: An Employee Guide



## Introduction

Mental ill-health is an important issue for both employers and employees. Peterlee Town Council has a policy in place and is committed to developing and implementing practices to prevent and reduce workplace mental ill-health.

This leaflet aims to help you understand the triggers and effects of workplace mental ill-health, what to do about it and what support is available.

## What is Mental ill-health?

The Health and Safety Executive defines mental ill-health as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them.” It can be triggered by circumstances at work, home or both. Pressure can be a good thing; it often leads to improved performance. However, when demands and

pressure become too much this leads to mental ill-health. Work-related mental ill-health is not an illness but if intense and prolonged it can be associated with mental and physical ill health.

## Individual Differences

There are a number of factors that influence an individual’s vulnerability to mental ill-health and these include:

Personal – personality, coping strategies, and training;

Social – life events and social support; and

Biological – inherited factors, injury or disease, medication.

## Work-related Triggers of Mental ill-health:

- Workload
- Lack of control over work
- Excessive time pressures
- Excessive or inflexible working hours
- Inadequate training
- Poor work/home balance
- Difficult relationships at work or home
- Lack of support and information
- Organisational or personal change
- Lack of clarity about role.

## Effects of Mental ill-health

### Physical:

- Muscular tension
- Headaches
- Excessive tiredness
- Difficulty sleeping
- Digestive problems
- Blurred vision.

### Physiological/Behavioural:

- Anxiety and low mood
- Irritability at work and home
- Loss of appetite/overeating
- Increases smoking and drinking
- Difficulty planning, concentrating and controlling workload
- Poor relationships.

## What Can You Do?

### At Work:

- If possible talk to your manager. If they don’t know there is a problem, they can’t help
- In some cases employees may not feel confident in speaking to their managers about the issues of importance to them, or they may want confidential advice on how their concerns may potentially be addressed in general terms without initially involving their manager. If this

applies to you, your Trade union can provide further guidance

- Be clear about what is happening in your area of work and how that may affect you
- Be clear about your roles and responsibilities
- Be involved in, and understand, the decision making processes in your work area
- Ask for feedback on how you do your job. If you get criticism ask for suggestions on how to improve
- Agree priorities and expectation for your work
- Discuss developing your skills with your manager
- Manage your time as effectively as possible
- Be organised – untidiness can create extra pressure
- Discuss with your manager the possibility of altering your job to make it less stressful for you; recognising you and your colleagues needs
- Delegate where appropriate
- Take regular breaks, especially at lunchtime, to recharge your batteries
- Give feedback to the organisation when given the opportunity through surveys etc.
- Seek further help as soon as you have a problem, don't wait.

#### **At Home (Lifestyle):**

- Look after your health – reduce tea, coffee, and alcohol consumption. Quit smoking. These activities provide only temporary relief from mental ill-health symptoms, will not solve the problem, and can be harmful in themselves
- **Speak to your GP if you are worried about your health, don't wait for things to get worse**
- Eat well – take time to enjoy meals and make them healthy and well balanced. Eat five portions of fruit and vegetables every day
- Take some exercise – go for a walk at lunchtime or in the evening, or go for a swim. This can make you feel relaxed, stretched and energetic. It's good for the mind and the heart
- Take time to relax – spend a short time alone in the day or evening to give you a sense of calm and well-being.
- Consciously make time for whatever helps you relax
- Do something you enjoy – take time and make the effort to do something that you have chosen
- Find out about complementary therapies
- Get the best out of your time – prioritise tasks both at work and home, be realistic about what you can achieve, do one thing at a time
- Allow sufficient time for journeys and pace

yourself. Make some time for yourself

- Try learning relaxation techniques – some people find it helps them cope with life's pressures and stresses

#### **Further Help**

If you are unsure of how to deal with issues seek help and advice on policies and procedures from your manager, the Town Clerk (or nominated representative) or Trade Union.

#### **Telephone Based Counselling Helpline:**

Support for employees and managers can be sought from Zurich Municipal by telephoning the helpline on **08003265061**.

#### **Useful Links**

**NHS** provides a range of advice on mental health for all UK residents.

[ACAS Stress Management](#) with useful advice on identifying and dealing with Mental ill-health.

Human Resources – Advice & Guidance

Provide advice and guidance on all HR issues to managers and employees.

[HRAdviceandGuidance@durham.gov.uk](mailto:HRAdviceandGuidance@durham.gov.uk)



# REDUNDANCY GUIDANCE

April 2026: Version 5

## ABSTRACT

This guidance identifies the stages involved in managing a redundancy exercise, outlines the relevant consultation requirements and provides guidance on the implementation of redundancies.

Resources Manager

Please think before printing this document.

Where printing is necessary, please ensure that it is printed double sided and in greyscale.

DRAFT

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## Introduction

### What is the guidance about?

Peterlee Town Council will consider all ways and means of maintaining employment for employees to ensure security of employment as far as practically possible. However, it has to be recognised that there may be changes in the operation of the Council which may affect staffing levels.

In order to ensure consistency and fairness in dealing with all redundancies within the Council, this guidance identifies the stages involved in managing a redundancy exercise, outlines the relevant consultation requirements and provides guidance on the implementation of redundancies.

If it becomes clear redundancies are required, the Town Clerk should contact the HR Advice and Support Team in the first instance. The redundancy guidance should only be followed after all other alternatives have been exhausted, e.g. deleting vacancies, recruitment freeze, restructure (further examples are detailed in the Redundancy policy).

### Stage 1 – Planning and approval

Before the formal consultation period can commence, a period of planning will be required, with support from HR Advice and Support, during which specific timescales will be agreed.

Where the Council is proposing to make 20 or more redundancies at one establishment within a rolling 90-day period, collective consultation requirements apply.

In these circumstances, consultation must begin:

- At least 30 days before the first dismissal where 20–99 redundancies are proposed at one establishment; or
- At least 45 days before the first dismissal where 100 or more redundancies are proposed at one establishment.

These timeframes reflect the current legal requirements under the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 and remain in force until updated by forthcoming regulations.

From 6 April 2026, the maximum protective award for failing to consult collectively will increase from 90 days' pay to 180 days' pay per affected employee.

### Initial meeting

The Town Clerk will meet with a HR Advice and Support Team representative to consider options and formulate the initial proposals in a context statement. The discussion will take place around:

- current organisational structure of the team.

- current staffing establishment, workload and priorities.
- posts to be potentially removed from the establishment.
- design principles that reduce tiers and flatten organisational structures.
- informing employees who are absent from work e.g. sickness or maternity leave.
- casual employees.
- timescales for planning, consultation and implementation.
- early retirement/voluntary redundancy (ER/VR) expressions of interest.
- how individual representations will be made.
- evaluation of new and revised posts (if appropriate).
- ring-fence and slot-in proposals (if appropriate - see section 2.4 for further guidance).
- selection criteria where applicable.
- how employees may challenge the proposals.
- equality impact assessment

The Town Clerk will provide to elected Members for agreement:

- current establishment.
- current and proposed structure diagrams.
- job descriptions and person specifications

If the Council is intending to make 20+ employees redundant then a Section 188 notice must be issued to recognised Trade Unions formally notifying them of the potential collective redundancies, in accordance with the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act (1992). This means that you must discuss redundancy changes with both recognised elected representatives and individual employees in collective redundancies.

In addition, the Council also have an obligation to inform the Secretary of State of the proposed redundancies via a HR1 form (Advanced Notification of Redundancies). Further information can be obtained from the HR representative.

In most cases, the Council will be intending to make less than 20 employees redundant, and there is therefore no legal requirement to issue a Section 188 (statutory notification to trade unions of the proposed redundancy) notice, however it is still essential that you undertake “meaningful” consultation with your employees and Trade Unions. A consultation letter should therefore be issued to recognised Trade Unions notifying them of the potential redundancies and copied to employees who may be affected by the proposals.

It is essential that any affected employee who is absent from work e.g. maternity, sickness, paternity, adoption etc is kept informed and can fully participate in the consultation process. It is advisable to inform the HR representative if there are any employees who are on maternity leave who are affected by the proposals so that additional advice can be provided regarding Regulation 10 of the Maternity and Parental Leave Regulations 1999.

Following the agreement to the proposals by elected Members, the Town Clerk supported by their HR Advice and Support representative will prepare a S188 letter (if applicable). The S188 or consultation letter will include:

- reasons for the redundancy proposals.
- employees proposed for redundancy.
- new posts created –if appropriate.
- method of selecting employees for redundancy.
- details of consultation process and meetings.
- right of appeal

In all cases, the Town Clerk will prepare a context statement to be issued with the redundancy notification letter. The context statement should include:

- introduction.
- background.
- rationale for proposed redundancies.
- current and proposed structures.
- new job descriptions – if appropriate.
- finance information.
- ring-fence and slot-in proposals - if appropriate.
- where applicable a draft of the proposed selection criteria.
- details of the consultation process and timescales.

The Town Clerk will conduct an Equality Impact Assessment on the proposal and will need to arrange for any new and/or revised posts to be job-evaluated.

### **Early Warning Letter**

Prior to the above documents being issued it may be appropriate for the Town Clerk in conjunction with the HR Advice and Support Team to issue an 'Early Warning Letter' to trade unions and affected employees to inform them that there is a review of the workforce within the Council and to ask for any suggestions to resolve the issue, i.e. ER/VR or flexible working options. This letter should be issued one week before the

agreed date to distribute the redundancy consultation documentation. (A template letter can be obtained from the HR representative).

### Redundancy documentation

Once approval has been provided by elected Members, the Town Clerk in conjunction with the HR Advice and Support representative, will collate the following information in a consultation pack, to share with trade unions and employees. This pack will include:

- notification letters to trade unions and employees
- context statement (as detailed above)
- job descriptions and person specifications for new and/or revised posts – if appropriate
- frequently asked questions
- project timeline

### Timescales

The S188 letter or consultation letter and project timeline will detail the dates for consultation meetings in the process.

It is the Town Clerk's responsibility to agree the dates of these meetings with their HR Advice and Support representative.

### Ring-fence and slot in guidance – if appropriate

If the redundancy relates to a closure of a Council service and/or where there are no ring-fence proposals, this section will not apply.

Where there are new posts created as part of the redundancy consultation and a restructuring exercise is proposed, details of ring-fence and slot in proposals should be included in the consultation documentation.

Ring-fence and slot in proposals should be formulated based on an employee's substantive post, therefore temporary posts, honoraria and temporary acting up arrangements should not be taken into consideration.

### Slot in

For a slot in to be proposed, there must be a clear demonstration that the scope, functionality and level of responsibility of the postholder's substantive role remain extensively the same. This is usually indicated by the substantive grade of the post. In addition, the individual must be the **only** person eligible to fill that post.

The postholder must also meet the requirements of the job description and person specification, although, in some circumstances qualification requirements may be waived.

Employees who meet the criteria for a slot in and then wish to be considered for a ring-fenced post elsewhere in the restructure exercise will lose the right to a slot in. This would not be the case should an employee wish to apply for a vacancy advertised through the normal recruitment process.

### **Ring-fence**

Where it is not possible to identify a slot in for a post, a ring-fencing process should be considered. Eligibility of an employee for a ring-fence will be assessed based on their qualifications, skills and experience, primarily demonstrated through a comparison of their substantive job description and that of the new post. This process will establish a pool of employees to be ring-fenced for each post.

An interview process will need to be carried out in line with an agreed recruitment procedure to identify suitable appointees.

An employee may be eligible to be included in more than one ring-fence and may be asked to table preferences for posts.

Where an employee is unsuccessful in their initial ring-fence(s) at one layer, they will not automatically drop into the layer below. In order to be included, the employee must be eligible to be ring-fenced to both layers based on their substantive job description.

### **Temporary employees**

Temporary employees (including fixed term employees) can only be considered for slot in or ring-fence if they meet the following criteria:

- have two years continuous service in that post.
- appointed following a competitive selection process.
- are not covering a substantive postholder in the temporary post.
- would otherwise be at risk i.e. do not have a substantive post elsewhere.

As stated previously, permanent employees who are in a temporary post at the time of the restructure will be included in any ring-fence or slot in proposals based on their substantive post, not their temporary position.

Where there are no substantive postholders at risk, it may be appropriate for a permanent employee who is covering a position on a temporary basis to relinquish their substantive post and be considered for a ring-fence or slot in based on the post they have been covering. In order to do this, they must have at least two years continuous service in the post at the date ring-fence or slot in confirmation letters are issued.

### **Selection Criteria**

Where the use of selection criteria is proposed, as an alternative method of selection, the criteria will be established by the Town Clerk in liaison with a Human Resources Adviser. The selection of those

employees potentially at risk of redundancy will be undertaken using objective selection criteria, which will be consistently applied, transparent and fair and based on the existing and foreseeable business needs of the Council.

The chosen criteria must be consistently applied, and particular care should be taken to ensure that it does not directly or indirectly discriminate on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

An appropriate timescale to assess relevant skills and experience should be agreed. This proposed period can be determined by the elected Members prior to the commencement of consultation.

Affected employees will be asked to provide information regarding how they meet the proposed criteria and are awarded points for each of the subheadings and these points are then ranked.

Affected employees and trade unions and/or employee representatives will be consulted on the selection criteria.

The selection criteria will consist of a range of factors and may include:

- qualifications and skills.
- specialist knowledge.
- aptitude.
- efficiency.
- work performance records (such as quality of work).
- timekeeping and attendance (attendance record over a reasonable period, for example 2 years considering the reasons for and extent of any absences but excluding absences related to pregnancy, childbirth or disability, as defined in the Equality Act 2010); and/or
- disciplinary record.

The proposed selection criteria will be included with the consultation documents together with all other supplementary information provided at the start of the consultation period.

## **Stage 2 – Consultation**

On the agreed date, the Town Clerk will circulate the consultation documents to the trade unions, which starts the formal consultation period. The Town Clerk should circulate the documents to the affected employees **the following day**. Consultation documents should be sent to all employees, including those who may be on leave e.g. long-term sickness, maternity/adoption leave etc.

### Consultation meetings

The Town Clerk, with support from HR Advice and Support, will meet with both the trade unions and employees at the meetings scheduled in the S188 letter/consultation letter or Context Statement. The trade unions and employees can make representations and/or ask questions about the proposals and also propose alternative options to make the required financial savings or to assist with the redundancy process e.g. reduction in hours.

The consultation response letters should be issued separately, ideally with the trade union consultation response letter being issued prior to the employee consultation meeting so the affected employees can see the response to the representations prior to their meeting.

An employee may request an individual consultation meeting to discuss their own personal circumstances, and, in this case, an individual response letter will need to be produced. The employee is entitled to trade union representation at any individual meeting.

During the consultation period, the manager should consider any expressions of interest in ER/VR.

### Close of consultation

Unless there is a specific requirement to extend the consultation period, it will come to a close at the end of the agreed timescale.

Where changes to the new roles have been agreed during consultation, the Town Clerk will need to arrange for any new or revised posts to be evaluated.

The Town Clerk will confirm final details with elected Members. Once any changes have been finalised with elected Members, the Town Clerk will issue a determination letter accompanied by a final context statement, structure and revised job descriptions if appropriate and selection criteria/submission forms where applicable to trade unions and affected employees.

If a restructure is proposed, the employee will also receive notification of their individual slot in or ring-fence proposals. An acceptance form will be enclosed and affected employees will be advised that they have 5 days to accept or decline the slot in or ring-fence proposals or to raise any issues.

If an interview process is not proposed and selection criteria are to be used, the Town Clerk will confirm the date for the submission of the selection criteria forms from the affected employees.

If a restructure is not proposed the Town Clerk will progress to the 'At Risk' section (4.2 of this guidance).

### Stage 3 - Implementation

All employees who are applying for a ring-fence post are required to complete an application form. If an individual is eligible for more than one ring-fenced post, they will only be required to complete one application form, although supplementary information relevant to each separate post can be provided.

Employees should be given a minimum of 5 days to complete their application form. Appointments to posts in the new structure will be on a layered basis, with appointments to the more senior posts first.

It is acknowledged that some employees may be absent from the workplace e.g. due to sickness, maternity, adoption or annual leave etc., throughout the restructure exercise. Whilst efforts must be made to support attendance at interview, it is important that the recruitment process and the implementation of the new structure are not unduly delayed. The Town Clerk should seek advice from their HR Advice and Support representative in these circumstances to ensure any potential discrimination issues have been adequately considered.

### **Appointment process**

The Town Clerk should follow the principles of the Recruitment and Selection Guidance when appointing to posts during a restructure exercise.

The main principle of the filling of posts during a restructure process is of retaining the employee. The Town Clerk will take into consideration the employee's potential to undertake the post. It will not necessarily be the case that the best person for the post will be appointed but the best person from within the ring-fence. All interview panel members should be aware of the above restructure principles when appointing to posts.

During a restructure process a shortened selection process may be used, for example, an interview only. One reference only may be requested. Should the referee be on the interview panel, then this should be delegated where possible.

Any complaints concerning the recruitment process should be made to the Town Clerk in accordance with the Council's Recruitment and Selection procedure, either verbally or in writing.

The Town Clerk should notify their HR Advice and Support representative of the outcome of any appointment exercise prior to any decision being communicated to the employees, particularly where there are any unfilled posts. Following this, the Town Clerk should confirm the outcomes verbally with the employees.

Confirmation of appointment letters and new statements of particulars, where appropriate must be provided to affected employees.

### **Application of the selection criteria**

Where the selection criteria process is applied to the redundancy exercise the Town Clerk must evaluate the information provided by employees in their submission forms against the agreed criteria. The employee(s) with the lowest score at the end of the process will be the employee(s) identified and proposed for redundancy.

Once a decision is made, it is recommended that the outcome is relayed verbally to the employee(s) identified and then confirmed in writing.

Confirmation of appointment letters and new statements of particulars, where appropriate must be provided to affected employees.

### **At risk**

Where an employee is not appointed to a post or if there are no posts available for the employee, the Town Clerk will invite them to an 'at risk' meeting to discuss their personal situation. A HR Advice and Support representative will also attend the meeting and will advise the employee on the next steps.

### **Redundancy payment**

The Employment Rights Act 1996 provides that employees must have **two years' continuous service** with the same employer to qualify for a statutory redundancy payment at the relevant date of redundancy. Redundancy payments will be issued in line with the agreed procedure at the time of the relevant date of redundancy.

Currently, an eligible employee, based on their age, is entitled to:

- Under 22 years old - half a week's pay for each full year of service.
- 22 years or older, but under 41 years - one week's pay for each full year of service.
- 41 years or older - one and a half week's pay for each full year.

Your weekly pay is the average you earned per week over the 12 weeks before the day you got your redundancy notice. The length of service is capped at 20 years. There is a weekly pay cap, and a maximum statutory redundancy pay cap. The redundancy payment calculation should be checked with the Council's payroll provider. The latest government guidance on redundancy calculations is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/redundancy-your-rights/redundancy-pay>

Redundancy pay (including any severance pay) under £30,000 is not taxable but the Council will deduct tax and National Insurance contributions from any wages or holiday pay owed.

Guidance on redundancy payment calculations is also available at ACAS at <https://www.acas.org.uk/your-rights-during-redundancy/redundancy-pay>

Employee(s) must be advised in writing how their redundancy pay has been worked out.

### **Suitable alternative employment**

The Council will take reasonable steps to find suitable alternative employment for the 'at risk' employee with the Town Council. Suitable alternative employment will depend on how similar the work is to the substantive post (terms offered including pay, status, hours and location).

An employee has the right to a 4-week trial period for any alternative employment offered. An employee(s) will not be entitled to statutory redundancy pay if the Council offers suitable alternative employment which is refused without good reason.

## Notice

Notice letters will be issued to employees proposed for redundancy. Statutory notice will be given; however, contractual notice will be honoured where it is greater than this. Statutory notice is:

- one week's notice if employed between one month and 2 years.
- one week's notice for each year if employed between 2 and 12 years.
- 12 weeks' notice if employed for 12 years or more.

Employees will be required to work through the notice period, but consideration may be given to pay in lieu of notice. If payment is made in lieu of notice, employment will be ended without notice although an employee will receive all the pay, they would normally have received during the notice period. Tax and National Insurance contributions are payable on an employee's notice pay, regardless of whether this is worked or paid in lieu.

The notice letter will also detail how the employee can appeal against the redundancy.

## Appeal

The identified employee(s) has the right of appeal against the decision. When an employee submits an appeal, the Town Clerk will prepare the appropriate documentation for a meeting of the appropriate Appeals Committee of the Town Council. The Committee will be provided with a report which will cover an explanation of the procedure to date, including:

- how the problem was identified.
- what proposals were made and why.
- how the Committee viewed any representations made.
- how the Committee made its identification.
- how the Committee dealt with any representations on identification.

Members of the Appeals Committee must not have had any involvement in the redundancy exercise and, as far as is reasonably practicable, should have had no previous involvement in or knowledge of the process, or have been members of the interview panel. The Appeals Committee must reach its decision only on information presented at the appeal hearing.

There are two broad areas for redundancy appeals committees to consider:

1. Does the Appeal Committee consider that there is a genuine need for redundancy?
2. Has the process followed been applied fairly and reasonably? For example. was the pool of selection fair, were the criteria applied in a fair manner?

### **Assistance with job seeking**

An employee who has been continually employed with the Council for 2 years by the date the notice period ends, will be allowed a reasonable amount of time off to look for another job or to arrange training to help find another job.

### **Annual leave**

Employees will be expected to use any outstanding accrued annual leave prior to the date of termination of their employment. Payment for untaken accrued annual leave may be made subject to and in accordance with the terms of their contract of employment.

### **Pension benefits**

Any access to pension following voluntary or compulsory redundancy will be in line with the Local Government Pension Scheme rules.

### **Further information**

#### **Confidentiality**

All information will be handled sensitively and used only for its proper purpose.

Under the Data Protection Act 2018 individuals have the right to see their own personal data held subject to the rights of confidentiality of any third parties involved in that information.

#### **Dealing with abuses of the guidance**

Employees who attempt to abuse this guidance may face disciplinary action. The Council takes false or misleading accusations very seriously which may result in further action taken through the disciplinary procedure. This will not include ill-founded allegations that were made in good faith.

#### **Equality and diversity**

Peterlee Town Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and ensuring discrimination, harassment or victimisation is not tolerated.

Our guidance is to treat people fairly, with respect and dignity. We also comply with legal requirements in relation to age, disability, gender, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

#### **Contact details**

If you would like any further advice or would like the document in an alternative format, please contact the Town Clerk (or Resources Manager) on Tel: 0191 586 2491.

<b>Author of Policy;</b>	<b>Resources Manager</b>
<b>Date effective from;</b>	<b>April 2026</b>
<b>Policy review;</b>	<b>April 2029</b>
<b>Version Control;</b>	<b>V5</b>

**DRAFT**



# Whistle Blowing Policy

March 2026: Version 5

## ABOUT THIS POLICY

This Whistle Blowing Policy sets out how the Town Council will deal with disclosures made by employees, contractors, volunteers or Members, of malpractice, illegal acts or omissions of work.

Town Clerk

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Where printing is necessary, please ensure that it is printed double sided  
and in greyscale

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## 1. Introduction

The word 'whistleblowing' in this policy refers to a disclosure made in good faith and in the public interest by employees, contractors, volunteers or Members, of malpractice, illegal acts or omissions at work.

A whistleblower is a witness and not a complainant. Whistleblowing is not the same as making a complaint or raising a grievance, where the individual is saying that they have been personally poorly treated. A whistleblower is usually not directly or personally affected by the matter concerned.

## 2. Statement of Commitment

Peterlee Town Council is committed to achieving the highest possible standards of service and practice, and the highest possible ethical standards in public life. As such, the Council takes malpractice and wrongdoing very seriously and will take all reasonable steps towards its prevention and detection.

Peterlee Town Council recognises that in many cases the Council's employees, Members, volunteer helpers or contractors will be the people most likely to become aware of wrongdoing or malpractice. In light of this, the Council encourages its staff, Members, contractors and volunteers to use the mechanisms set out in this policy to report potential malpractice without having to worry about being victimised, discriminated against or disadvantaged in any way as a result.

Where Council employees or Members are aware of or suspect malpractice, the Council expects them to report their suspicions. Employees are explicitly required to report suspicions of malpractice or breaches of policy under the staff Code of Conduct. The Council will treat failure to report wrongdoing or malpractice as a serious matter.

Peterlee Town Council will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation of a whistle-blower (including informal pressures) and will treat this as a serious disciplinary offence.

Appropriate disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.

## 3. Legal Framework

Under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, workers who raise genuine concerns about a range of misconduct or malpractice at work have statutory protection against victimisation and dismissal.

An employee who 'blows the whistle' will be protected by the Act if the disclosure is made in good faith about any of the following:

- a criminal act.
- failure to comply with a legal obligation.
- miscarriages of justice.
- danger to health and safety.
- any damage to the environment; or,
- an attempt to cover up any of the above.
- **Sexual Harassment**

A whistleblower will not be protected under the Act if they break the law when making a disclosure.

#### 4. Scope of this Policy

Peterlee Town Council has a range of policies and procedures in place to deal with standards of behaviour at work, including a Grievance Policy, Disciplinary Policy, Dignity at Work Policy and a raft of other specific policies. Employees are encouraged to use the provisions of these procedures when appropriate.

Service users should make complaints or raise concerns through the Council's Complaints Procedure.

Therefore, this Whistleblowing Policy should not be used to deal with complaints that employees may have about their employment in most circumstances. The aim of the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure is to enable employees, Members, contractors and volunteers to report an issue if they feel that it cannot be done using the existing procedures, particularly if the matter is not about their personal employment position. Whistleblowing refers to issues that are of such importance that the public interest is served by reporting the issue.

The following is a list of examples when this policy may be used (please note that this list is not exhaustive):

- When any unlawful act, whether criminal or a breach of civil law, has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed.
- suspected corruption or fraud.

- disregard for legislation, particularly that of health & safety at work.
- a breach of a code of conduct.
- misuse of assets, including stores, equipment, vehicles, buildings, computer hardware and software.
- causing damage to the environment.
- From 6 April 2026, disclosures relating to sexual harassment are protected disclosures under whistleblowing legislation, meaning workers are protected from detriment and unfair dismissal when raising concerns in the public interest.
- breach of financial regulations.
- showing undue favour over a contractual matter or to a job applicant.
- breach of, or failure to implement or comply with, any policy determined by the Council.
- failure to take reasonable steps to report and rectify any situation which is likely to give rise to a significant avoidable cost, or loss of income, to the Council or would otherwise seriously prejudice the Council.
- abuse of power, or the use of the Council's powers and authority for any unauthorised or ulterior purpose; or
- deliberately concealing information in relation to any of the items on this list.

Whilst volunteers are not covered by the Public Interest Disclosure Act, this Council's policy has been written to encompass Members and volunteers.

## 5. How to Disclose Information

### 5.1 The Town Council

The *Public Interest Disclosure Act* directs workers towards raising matters internally within the Town Council in the first instance, and to use the internal whistleblowing policy.

For a disclosure to be protected by law, a whistle-blower must:

- make the disclosure in good faith.
- reasonably believe that the information is substantially true

## 5.2 A Legal Advisor

A disclosure of information for the purpose of obtaining legal advice is protected.

## 5.3 Prescribed Persons

Whilst the Town Council strongly encourages disclosures to be made internally, if a whistleblower feels unable to use the procedure outlined within this policy, they can make a disclosure to other people/organisations as prescribed by government. The most relevant prescribed people relating to the Town Council are:

- The Health and Safety Executive and Durham County Council for health and safety risks.
- The Environment Agency.
- The Serious Fraud Office.
- Inland Revenue.
- Customs & Excise.
- National Audit Office; and,
- Information Commissioners Office (ICO).

To make a protected disclosure to a prescribed person, the whistleblower must:

- make the disclosure in good faith.
- reasonably believe that the information is substantially true; and,
- reasonably believe that the information is being disclosed to the right person or organisation.

## 6. Wider Disclosures

A whistleblower would also be protected under the Act if they made wider disclosures, e.g. to a professional body, the Police or an MP etc., if the whistleblower:

- makes the disclosure in good faith.
- reasonably believes that the information is substantially true.
- does not act for personal gain; and,
- acts reasonably considering the circumstances.

In order to make a protected wider disclosure, the whistle-blower must either:

- reasonably believe that the Council would treat them unfairly if they made a disclosure internally or to a prescribed person.
- reasonably believe that an internal disclosure would result in the destruction or cover-up of evidence; and,
- have previously disclosed the same or very similar information internally or to a prescribed person.

## 7. Whistleblowing Procedure

### 7.1 Confidentiality

If the whistleblower requests confidentiality, the Council will not reveal the whistleblower's name or position without their permission. It is, however, easier to pursue and verify complaints if the whistle-blower provides his/her name. Unsupported, anonymous complaints and allegations will be treated with caution.

There may be circumstances when the Council is legally obliged to disclose the name of a whistleblower, e.g. when ordered to by a court.

### 7.2 Protection for Whistleblowers

If an employee, Member, volunteer or contractor raises a concern which they believe to be true, the Council will take appropriate action to protect the individual from harassment, victimisation and bullying. Employees who raise a genuine concern under this policy will not be at risk of losing their job.

However, a whistleblower will not be protected from the consequences of making a disclosure if, by doing so, they commit a criminal offence.

### 7.3 Involvement of Trade Unions

Peterlee Town Council recognises the right of whistleblowers to be advised and represented by their union when raising concerns under the whistleblowing procedure.

### 7.4 Designated Officer

The Town Clerk is the Designated Officer to be a point of contact for concerns raised under this procedure.

### 7.5 Raising a Concern

An employee should normally raise their concerns about wrongdoing or malpractice with their immediate line manager. Whilst the whistleblower is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation or to investigate the matter themselves, the whistleblower should have a reasonable belief and some evidence to back it up before raising their concerns. The manager will notify the Designated Officer within two working days whenever possible.

Where it is not appropriate to go via normal management reporting channels, because the matter is serious and sensitive (e.g. if the whistleblower believes that his or her manager is involved), he/she should contact the Designated Officer. Members, volunteers and contractors should contact the Designated Officer.

The Designated Officer must take all concerns seriously.

Where, exceptionally, the concern is about the Town Clerk, the concerns should be reported to the Chairman of the Council, who will decide how the investigation will proceed. This may include an external investigation. In normal circumstances the Chairman will consult with Durham County Council's Internal Audit and Fraud Manager in the first instance.

### 7.6 Employer's Response

Within ten working days, the Town Clerk will arrange an initial interview to ascertain the nature of the whistleblower's concern. The interview will be confidential if requested by the whistleblower. The whistleblower has the right to bring a friend, colleague or union representative along with them. The friend must observe confidentiality.

At this stage, the whistleblower will be asked whether they wish for their identity to be disclosed and will be reassured about protection from possible reprisals or victimisation.

The whistleblower will be asked if they wish to make a written or verbal statement. In either case, the Town Clerk will write a brief summary of the interview, which will be agreed by both parties.

The Town Clerk will be responsible for the commission of any further investigation.

### 7.7 Investigation

The investigation may need to be carried out under strict confidentiality, i.e. the subject of the investigation will not be informed until, or if, it becomes necessary to do so. This may be appropriate in cases of suspected fraud. In most cases the investigation will involve consultation with Durham County Council's Internal Audit and Fraud Manager, and/or the County Council's Monitoring Officer (in the case of allegations involving an elected Member).

The Town Clerk will offer to keep the whistleblower informed about the investigation and its outcome.

If the investigation finds that there is a case to be answered by any employee, Peterlee Town Council’s Disciplinary Procedure will be used.

If the investigation identifies that there is no case to answer, but that the whistleblower held a genuine concern and was not acting maliciously, the matter will be closed. The Town Clerk will ensure that the whistleblower suffers no reprisals or victimisation.

If the investigation discovers that an employee has made false accusations with malicious intent, appropriate disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.

If the concern raised is very serious or complex, it may be necessary for an inquiry to be held. The Designated Officer may refer the issue to the police or other agencies in serious cases.

### 7.8 Following the Investigation

The Town Clerk will arrange a meeting with the whistleblower within ten working days of the conclusion of the investigation in order to feedback any action taken. This will not include details of any disciplinary action taken, as this is confidential.

If the whistle-blower is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, the whistleblower may make disclosures to prescribed persons, or wider disclosures, under the conditions outlined in section 5 above ‘How to Disclose Information’.

## 9. Policy Review

The policy will be reviewed on a regular basis. In the event that an incident of whistleblowing takes place, Peterlee Town Council will take the opportunity to examine its policy, procedures and working methods to see if they can be improved.

Any queries regarding this policy please contact Town Clerk, or Resources Manager, on Tel 0191 5862491

<b>Author of Policy;</b>	<b>Town Clerk</b>
<b>Date effective from;</b>	<b>March 2026</b>
<b>Policy review;</b>	<b>March 2029</b>
<b>Version Control;</b>	<b>V5</b>



# SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Version 2: March 2026

## ABSTRACT

This Policy is to raise awareness amongst staff of the effects of Sexual Harassment and the impact on themselves and the workplace of inappropriate use

Resources Manager

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## Introduction

This policy applies to all individuals working at or representing Peterlee Town Council, including employees, Councillors, contractors, volunteers and visitors.

Peterlee Town Council is committed to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for all employees, Councillors, volunteers, contractors and job applicants in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023.

This policy aims to prevent sexual harassment and provide guidelines for dealing with incidents that may arise. It covers conduct that occurs both in the workplace and outside, such as during Council related events or online communications.

## Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for them.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual advances.
- Unwanted physical contact.
- Inappropriate sexual comments or jokes.
- Displaying sexually explicit material.
- Online harassment, including through social media, email or messaging platforms.

Sexual harassment can occur regardless of the gender, sexuality or relationship of the individuals involved.

## Responsibilities

Peterlee Town Council is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all members of our organisation. We have a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment, and we firmly believe in maintaining a workplace where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

Sexual harassment in any form is unacceptable and will not be tolerated under any circumstances. This policy applies to all individuals within our organisation, regardless of their role or status, including employees, management, members, contractors, and volunteers.

Complaints or reports of sexual harassment will be taken seriously, handled promptly, and investigated thoroughly. We are committed to ensuring that no complaint is ignored or dismissed, and that appropriate action is taken to address the matter while protecting the rights and well-being of all involved.

## Reporting and Handling Complaints

Anyone who has experienced or witnessed sexual harassment should report the incident promptly. All complaints will be taken seriously and handled confidentially; reports can be made to:

- Town Clerk
- Resources Manager
- Line Manager

Raising concerns about sexual harassment may, in some circumstances, constitute a whistleblowing disclosure. Workers who make such disclosures in the public interest have legal protection from detriment and unfair dismissal.

Managers should acknowledge receipt of any complaints of sexual harassment, then follow Peterlee Town Council's Grievance Policy.

A complaint of sexual harassment can be dealt with informally or formally and the person making the complaint can usually choose how they want it to be dealt with, however some situations might be too serious to be dealt with informally.

An informal process would be:

- The parties involved discuss their concerns and try to resolve issues.
- Record the resolution (if achieved) and monitor workplace dynamics closely.

A formal process would be:

- A designated investigating officer is appointed.
- A formal investigation is carried out.
- The evidence is considered, and the outcome is determined.

Where a complaint contains issues that could constitute both a grievance and a whistleblowing disclosure, managers must ensure that both processes are handled appropriately and in accordance with ACAS guidance

A written response will be provided to the complainant, summarising the outcome of the sexual harassment investigation. They should also receive a copy of the investigation report.

The Lead Officer may feel that it is appropriate to arrange a meeting with the employee to talk through the findings and explain how they reached their decision

If the complaint of sexual harassment was raised against another employee, the Lead Officer should also prepare a letter for them, summarising the outcome of the investigation. The full report should **not** be sent to the employee who the complaint was raised against.

## Support for Employees

Support will be given to anyone who experiences sexual harassment including:

- People who have experienced or witnessed sexual harassment
- Managers dealing with sexual harassment complaints
- Anyone accused of sexual harassment

Support for employees and managers can be sought from Zurich Support Services 0800 326 5061 or [www.workplaceoptions.co.uk](http://www.workplaceoptions.co.uk).

### Confidentiality

All reports of sexual harassment will be treated with strict confidentiality. Information will only be shared with those directly involved in handling and resolving the complaint. Any breach of confidentiality may result in disciplinary action.

### False Allegations

Malicious or false allegations of sexual harassment are a serious offence. If a complaint is found to be deliberately false, Peterlee Town Council may take disciplinary action against the complainant.

### Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with current legislation. Feedback from employees will be considered in the review process.

### Contact Information

For further information or to report an incident, please contact:

Resources Manager 0191 5862491

## Preventative Steps for Managers to Avoid Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

### 1. Identify Workplace Risk Factors

- Assess work environments that may increase risks, such as isolated or unsupervised areas, power imbalances between staff, or work-related social events.
- Consider who staff are in contact with and if they are meeting third parties alone.

### 2. Open Communication

- Encourage staff to report any incidents of sexual harassment or situations where they felt at risk, even if nothing happened.
- Managers must proactively monitor workplace culture through 1:1s, exit interviews, surveys, and ongoing staff engagement

### 3. Educate and Train

- Ensure all staff undertake sexual harassment training on a regular basis
- Promote inclusivity and monitor workplace dynamics.

### 4. Encourage Accountability

- Establish clear expectations for behaviour at all levels of the organisation whilst at work or work-related social events.
- Make it clear to staff, contractors, service users and members that we will not tolerate sexual harassment.
- Managers must emphasise that harassment by third parties (e.g., customers, clients, service users) is also prohibited and will be addressed seriously.

### 5. Safe Workspaces

- No lone working (where possible), use a buddy system especially for late shifts or working in secluded areas.

### 6. Conduct Periodic Risk Reviews

- Regularly assess workplace dynamics and identify potential areas for improvement.
- Adjust policies and practices based on employee feedback and workplace observations.

### 7. Non-Disclosure Agreements

- Managers must not use NDAs to prevent staff from speaking up about sexual harassment

<b>Author of Policy;</b>	<b>Resources Manager</b>
<b>Date effective from;</b>	<b>March 2026</b>
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# SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE & PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY

Version 3: March 2026

## ABSTRACT

This policy explains the rights and arrangements available to eligible employees to take Shared Parental Leave (SPL) Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP) and Parental Leave

Resources Manager

Please think before printing this document.

Where printing is necessary, please ensure that it is printed double sided  
and in greyscale.

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## 1. Introduction

Peterlee Town Council complies with the Shared Parental Leave Regulations 2014, which provide a statutory right for an employee to take shared parental leave (SPL) in connection with the birth of a child, or placement of an adopted child born on or after 5th April 2015. This policy is supported by the maternity/Paternity/Adoption Policy to assist with work/life balance.

## 2. Aims

The aims of the policy are to explain:

- the provisions of shared parental leave
- who is eligible
- how to apply.

Please note that the principles behind Shared Parental Leave (SPL) are quite simple, the rules on how the system works can be very detailed and complex.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to full and part-time members of staff.

## 4. Compliance

This policy is governed by the:

- Employment Rights Act 2002
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Shared Parental Leave Regulations 2014

## 5. Principles

Shared parental leave (SPL) is available to all members of staff and allows a other/primary adopter and their partner to share the responsibility of working and caring for a child provided that the birth parent/mother/primary adopter returns to work prior to using all of her entitlement to maternity/adoption leave and/or statutory pay.

Shared parental leave is regarded as a period of unpaid leave. This may be taken at the same time or in different blocks.

## 6a. Eligibility for birth parents

To qualify for shared parental leave you must:

- be the child's birth parent/mother or primary adopter
- be the biological father of the child
- be the birth parent/mother's husband, or partner (including same sex relationships) or civil partner, or be the husband or partner (including same sex relationships) of the primary adopter
- have 26 weeks continuous service with Peterlee Town Council by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> week before their baby is due or their adoption match date

- Employees must meet the applicable [statutory earnings threshold](#) as set by the government at the qualifying date for 8 weeks before the 15<sup>th</sup> week of the expected birth or adoption match date
- still be working for Peterlee Town Council at the start of each block of leave taken

#### 6b Eligibility for Adopters or parents using a Surrogate

To be eligible for Shared Parental Leave (SPL) and Statutory Shared Parental Pay (ShPP), both adoptive parents or both parents using a surrogate must share responsibility for the child from:

- the child's due date or birth date if you're using a surrogate
- the date the child is placed with you, if you're adopting or fostering to adopt
- Both parents must also meet the work and earnings criteria. The criteria are different depending on which one of you wants to use the shared parental leave and pay
- Both parents must meet the same eligibility criteria.
- To be eligible for SPL and ShPP, you must stay with the same employer until you start your SPL. You must be employed continuously by them for at least 26 weeks, by either:
  - the end of the week you or your partner are matched with a child if you're adopting
  - the end of the 15th week before the due date if you're using a surrogate

To be eligible for SPL, you must be 'employees' (not 'workers') - check your [employment status](#). If either of you is a 'worker', you might be able to share ShPP but not SPL

#### 7. Entitlement

Eligible parents will be able to share a maximum of 50 weeks leave and 37 weeks statutory pay, for the purpose of caring for a child within the first year of the child's life or in the year after the child is placed for adoption.

Shared parental leave cannot be taken until after the birth/placing of the child and only applies to babies born or children placed on or after 5th April 2015.

From 6 April 2026, you'll be able to take Paternity Leave after you take SPL. For more information on Paternity Leave please see the Maternity, Paternity, Adoption and Surrogacy Policy.

Evidence of entitlement must be provided and include the following:

- a copy of the birth certificate
- the name and address of the partners employer (or a declaration that they have no employer)

Partners do not have to work for Peterlee Town Council, but they must satisfy minimum employment and earnings criteria (**continuity of employment test**), which include;

- worked for at least 26 of 66 weeks

- have earned at least £390 in total across any 13 of the 66 weeks (add up the highest paying weeks - they do not need to be in a row)

For either parent to get SPL, the birth parent or primary adopter must do one of the following:

- End their maternity or adoption leave and return to work
- Give their employer notice to end their maternity or adoption leave early

The birth parent must still take at least 2 weeks' maternity leave by law. If both parents are eligible, they can choose how to use SPL between them, however, workers, including agency workers and zero hours contract workers are not entitled to SPL but may be able to get **Shared Parental Pay**.

Statutory Shared Parental Pay (SSPL) is either of the following, whichever is the lower:

- The current rate of ShPP
- 90% of the employee's average weekly earning

## 8. Taking Periods of Leave

By law, each eligible parent has up to 3 times to either;

- Book a block of SPL (notice to take leave, form 2)
- Change the dates of booked SPL ('notice to vary leave', form 5)

Shared Parental Leave (SPL) must be taken in complete weeks. It can be taken:

- as one continuous block
- in multiples of complete weeks, the minimum that can be taken is 1 week

Provided that both parents qualify for SPL you can choose to take leave at the same time as your partner or you can take your leave separately.

You may take one or more periods of shared parental leave per pregnancy or adoption. You should discuss this with your manager in advance of submitting any formal period of leave notice. This will give more time to consider the request and hopefully agree a pattern of leave from the start. The request must be submitted at least 8 weeks before the requested leave date using the notification form 2

## 9. Cancelling Periods of Leave

Periods of leave may be cancelled by notifying us in writing at least 8 weeks before the start date in the period of leave notice and completing the cancel/vary form.

A notice to cancel/change a period of leave will count as 1 of your 3 periods of leave notice, unless the variation is a result of the child being born early or late.

If the employer requests the employee to change the dates of SPL booked and the employee agrees this would not count as a notice to vary leave.

### 10. Conditions of Employment

During a period of shared parental leave individuals will be entitled to the same terms and conditions that would have applied had they not taken the leave, with the exception of remuneration.

All shared parental leave will be:

- pensionable
- reckonable for incremental pay
- included in any probationary period.

### 11. Fraudulent Claims

The Council will, where there is a suspicion that fraudulent information may have been provided or where the Council has been informed by the HMRC that a fraudulent claim was made, investigate the matter further in accordance with the disciplinary procedures. It will also without acting in a discriminatory manner in relation to any of the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010.

### 12. Shared Parental Leave in Touch Days (SPLIT)

Whilst you are on leave we will keep you up to date with any relevant notifications, news or any updates you need to be aware of. You are entitled to up to 20 “shared parental leave in touch days” (SPLIT days), which need to be discussed and agreed with your line manager on how many you use and when you use them. These SPLIT days will be paid at your normal basic hourly rate of pay for the hours worked. These days can be useful for the employee to:

- keep up to date with work
- go to a work-related activity or training session
- work part of the week to help the team
- return from leave in a gradual way, i.e. taking 2 SPLIT days and working 3 days a week to start with

### 13. Right to Return

You have the right to return to the same job if you have been on shared parental leave plus any other type of leave for 26 weeks or less.

If you have been on leave for more than 26 weeks you have the right to return to the same job unless this is not reasonably practicable. If due to organisational change your role no longer exists, you would be managed in accordance with the organisational change policy.

## Unpaid Parental Leave

Parental leave is unpaid. You're entitled to 18 weeks' leave for each child and adopted child, up to their 18th birthday.

The limit per year for each parent is 4 weeks for each child.

You **MUST** take parental leave as whole weeks rather than individual days, unless your child is disabled. You do not have to take all the leave at once.

A 'week' equals the length of time an employee normally works over 7 days.

### Example

If an employee works 3 days a week, one 'week' of parental leave equals 3 days. If an employee works irregular weeks the number of days in a 'week' is the total number of days they work a year divided by 52.

### Carrying leave over from a previous job

Parental leave applies to each child, not to an individual's job.

### Example

An employee is entitled to 18 weeks. They've used 10 with a previous employer. They can use up to 8 weeks with their new employer [if they're eligible](#).

### Eligibility

Employees qualify if all of these apply:

- they're named on the child's birth or adoption certificate or they have or expect to have [parental responsibility](#)
- they're not self-employed or a 'worker', for example an agency worker or contractor
- they're not a foster parent (unless they've secured parental responsibility through the courts)
- the child is under 18
- they've been in the company for more than a year

From 6 April 2026, employees will be eligible for unpaid parental leave from their first day of employment. They still have to give the [correct notice](#) before the intended start date of their leave.

Peterlee Town Council can ask for proof (like a birth certificate) but they will not ask for proof each time an employee requests leave.

Employers can choose to offer parental leave to those groups who are not eligible. Employees can check this in their staff handbook.

### Notice Period

Employees must give 21 days' notice before their intended start date. If they or their partner are having a baby or adopting, it's 21 days before the week the baby or child is expected.

Employees must confirm the start and end dates in their notice by completing the 'Unpaid Parental Leave form' (appendix 9).

### Delaying leave

Leave cannot be postponed (delayed) if:

- Peterlee Town Council does not have a 'significant reason', for example it would cause serious disruption to the business
- it's being taken by the father or partner immediately after the birth or adoption of a child

- it means an employee would no longer qualify for parental leave, for example postponing it until after the child's 18th birthday

If it's postponed, Peterlee Town Council:

- must write explaining why within 7 days of the original request
- must suggest a new start date - this must be within 6 months of the requested start date
- cannot change the amount of leave being requested

<b>Author of Policy;</b>	<b>Resources Manager</b>
<b>Date effective from;</b>	<b>March 2026</b>
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<b>Version Control;</b>	<b>V3</b>

## Appendix 1

**Shared Parental Leave forms (Maternity)**

Forms for the birth parent or mother and their partner to confirm Shared Parental Leave (SPL) and Shared Parental Pay (SPP) entitlement with their employers.

<b>Forms below that need to be completed if...</b>			
	<b>both parents want to take SPL</b>	<b>just the birth parent wants to take SPL</b>	<b>just the partner wants to take SPL</b>
<b>Form 1</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Form 2</b>	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Form 3</b>	No	No	Yes
<b>Form 4</b>	Yes	No	Yes

- See advice on SPL and SPP at [www.acas.org.uk/spl](http://www.acas.org.uk/spl)
- Parents can use the calculator at [www.gov.uk/pay-leave-for-parents](http://www.gov.uk/pay-leave-for-parents)
- Parents and employers should keep a copy of any completed forms.
- Employers might have their own SPL forms for employees to use.
- If the birth parent is getting Maternity Allowance (MA), they need to notify Jobcentre Plus to curtail this entitlement.

**Abbreviations used in these forms:**

SPL	Shared Parental Leave
SPP	Statutory Shared Parental Pay
SMP	Statutory Maternity Pay
MA	Maternity Allowance

Appendix 2, Form 1, Curtailment of maternity leave and pay (for birth parent's employer – must be completed by birth parent/ mother)

<b>SECTION A: General (must be completed)</b>	
Please accept this as my notice to curtail my maternity leave and/or Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP). This form is accompanied by notification that either I or my partner intend to take SPL and/or SPP.	
I understand my maternity leave will end on the date given in Section B and my SMP will end on the date given in Section C. I understand that I can only reinstate my maternity leave if I revoke this notice before the curtailment date given in Section B.	
I understand that I can only reinstate any SMP that I am eligible for if I revoke this notice before the end date given in Section C.	
Birth parent/ mother's last name	
Birth parent/ mother's first name(s)	
Expected date of child's birth	
Actual date of child's birth (if born)	
<b>SECTION B: Curtailing maternity leave (must be completed)</b>	
Start date of statutory maternity leave	
End date of statutory maternity leave	
Total number of weeks of statutory maternity leave taken by the date statutory maternity leave ends	
<b>SECTION C: Curtailing statutory maternity pay (SMP) (only if claiming SPP)</b>	
Start date of SMP	
End date of SMP	
Total number of weeks of SMP paid by date SMP ends	
<b>SECTION D: Signature (must be completed)</b>	
Signature of birth parent/ mother	
Date signed	

Appendix 3, Form 2, Notification that birth parent or mother is intending to take SPL (for their employer)

<b>SECTION A:</b>	
<b>General (must be completed)</b>	
Please accept this as notification that I (the birth parent/mother) am entitled to and intend to take SPL (and SPP if section C is completed).	
Birth parent/mother's last name	
Birth parent/mother's first name(s)	
Partner's last name	
Partner's first name(s)	
Partner's address	
Partner's National Insurance number (put 'none' if no number is held)	
Expected date of child's birth	
Actual date of child's birth (if child not yet born, provide this as soon as possible after the birth and before taking SPL)	
<b>SECTION B:</b>	
<b>Maternity entitlement details (all answers that apply must be completed)</b>	
Start date of statutory maternity leave	
End date of statutory maternity leave	
Total number of weeks of statutory maternity leave that will have been taken at the date statutory maternity leave ends	
Start date of SMP or MA	
End date of SMP or MA	
Total number of weeks SMP or MA has been paid or will have been paid at date of curtailment	
Total number of weeks by which SMP or MA will be reduced (39 weeks less total number of weeks SMP or MA has been paid or will have been paid at date of curtailment)	
<b>SECTION C:</b>	
<b>Amount of SPL available (must be completed)</b>	
Total number of weeks of SPL created (52 weeks less total number of maternity weeks taken and any SPL from a previous notice and revocation)	
Total number of weeks of SPL I (the birth parent/mother) intend to take	
Total number of weeks of SPL my partner intends to take	

<b>SECTION D:</b> <b>Birth parent/mother's leave plans (must be completed but is not binding)</b>	
I (the birth parent/ mother) currently expect to take SPL as follows:	
[Note: It can help to answer this as 'from...to...']	
<b>SECTION E:</b> <b>Amount of SPP available (only if claiming SPP)</b>	
Total number of weeks of SPP created (39 weeks less total number of SMP taken and any ShPP paid from a previous notice and revocation)	
Total number of weeks of SPP I (the birth parent/mother) intend to take	
Total number of weeks of SPP my partner intends to take	
I (the birth parent/mother) currently expect to take SPP as follows:	
[Note: It can help to answer this as 'from...to...']	
<b>SECTION F:</b> <b>Birth parent/ mother's declaration (must be completed)</b>	
<b>The following points apply in all circumstances where a mother is entitled to maternity leave:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am giving notice that I am entitled to and intend to take SPL</li> <li>• I have, or will have, been continuously employed for 26 weeks at the end of the 15th week before the week in which the child is due</li> <li>• I will remain employed with this employer until any period of SPL that I intend to take</li> <li>• I had (or will have) the main responsibility for the care of the child at the time of the child's birth (along with my partner who has made the declaration below)</li> <li>• I am entitled to maternity leave, my maternity leave period is reduced and the remaining weeks are now available as SPL</li> <li>• I will inform my employer immediately if I am no longer caring for my child</li> <li>• I will give my employer a copy of my child's birth certificate or a declaration of the date and place of the birth where no certificate is available if my employer asks for this within 14 days of the date of this notice</li> <li>• I will give my employer the name and address of my partner's employer or a declaration that they do not have an employer if my employer asks for this within 14 days of the date of this notice</li> <li>• The information provided in this declaration is accurate and meets the notification requirements for SPL</li> </ul>	
<b>The following points only apply if Section E has been completed:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am giving notice that I am entitled to and intend to take SPP</li> <li>• I have been (or will be) paid at least the Lower Earnings Limit in the 8 weeks leading up to the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth</li> <li>• I am entitled to SMP in respect of the birth of our child, my maternity pay period is reduced and the period that remains is available as SPP</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I will be absent from work in each week in which I will be paid SPP and I will be on SPL in those weeks (if entitled to SPL)</li> <li>• I intend to care for my child in the weeks I receive SPP</li> <li>• I will remain employed with this employer until before the date of my first period of SPP</li> <li>• I will immediately inform the person who will be paying SPP if I revoke the curtailment of my SMP or MA</li> <li>• The information provided in this declaration is accurate</li> </ul>	
Signature of birth parent/ mother	
Date signed	
<p><b>SECTION G:</b>  <b>Partner's declaration (must be completed)</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am the father of the child, or at the date of the birth I was (or will be) the mother's spouse, the mother's civil partner and/or the mother's partner living with her and the child in an enduring relationship</li> <li>• I had (or will have) the main responsibility for the care of our child at the time of the birth (along with the child's mother)</li> <li>• I have been (or will have been) employed or self-employed in England, Scotland or Wales in 26 weeks of the 66 weeks before the expected week of birth</li> <li>• I have (or will have) earned in total at least £30.00 in 13 weeks of the 66 weeks before the expected week of childbirth</li> <li>• I consent to the amount of SPL which the mother intends to take, as set out in Section D above.</li> <li>• I consent to the mother's employer processing the information I have provided</li> <li>• I consent to the amount of SPP which the birth parent/mother intends to take, as set out in Section E above.</li> <li>• The information provided in this declaration is accurate</li> </ul>	
Signature of partner	
Date signed	

Appendix 4, Form 3, Notice confirming that partner is taking SPL but birth parent/mother is not (for birth parent/mother's employer)

<b>SECTION A:</b>	
<b>General (must be completed)</b>	
Please accept this as notification that I (the birth parent/ mother) do not intend to take SPL (or SPP where relevant) but that my partner will be.	
Birth parent/ mother's last name	
Birth parent/ mother's first name(s)	
<b>SECTION B:</b>	
<b>Confirmation</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am either not entitled to SPL (or SPP, where relevant), or I do not intend to take SPL (or claim SPP, where relevant)</li> <li>• I declare that my partner has given notice to their employer to take SPL and/or SPP</li> <li>• I consent to my partner's claim for SPL and/or SPP</li> </ul>	
<b>SECTION C:</b>	
<b>Signature (must be completed)</b>	
Signature of birth parent/ mother	
Date signed	

Appendix 5, Form 4: Notification that partner is intending to take SPL (for partner's employer)

<b>SECTION A:</b>	
<b>General (must be completed)</b>	
Please accept this as notification that I (the partner) am entitled to and intend to take SPL (and SPP if section C is completed).	
Partner's last name	
Partner's first name(s)	
Birth parent/ mother's surname	
Birth parent/ mother's first name(s)	
Birth parent/ mother's address	
Birth parent/ mother's National Insurance number (put 'none' if no number is held)	
Expected date of child's birth	
Actual date of child's birth (if child not yet born I will provide this information as soon as reasonably practicable following birth and before I take any SPL)	
<b>SECTION B:</b>	
<b>Maternity entitlement details (all answers that apply must be completed)</b>	
Start date of birth parent/ mother's maternity leave (if applicable)	
End date of birth parent/ mother's maternity leave (if applicable)	
Total number of weeks of maternity leave taken (or that will be taken) when maternity leave ends	
Start date of SMP or MA (if applicable)	
End date of SMP or MA (if applicable)	
Total number of weeks SMP or MA has been paid or will have been paid at date of curtailment	
Total number of weeks SMP or MA will be reduced by (39 weeks less total number of weeks SMP or MA has been paid or will have been paid at date of curtailment)	

<b>SECTION C:</b>	
<b>Amount of SPL available (must be completed)</b>	
The total number of weeks of SPL created depends on the birth parent/ mother's leave and pay entitlements.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the birth parent/ mother was/is entitled to maternity leave and SMP/MA, the total created will be 52 weeks less any weeks maternity leave taken</li> <li>• If the birth parent/ mother was/is entitled to maternity leave but not to SMP or MA, the total created will be 52 weeks less any weeks maternity leave taken</li> <li>• If the birth parent/ mother was/is not entitled to maternity leave but was entitled to SMP/MA, the total created will be 52 weeks less any weeks of SMP/MA that was paid</li> <li>• If the birth parent/ mother previously revoked her curtailment notice any SPL that was taken by the partner must be deducted</li> </ul>	
Total number of weeks of SPL created (50 max)	
Total number of weeks of SPL I (the partner) intend to take	
Total number of weeks of SPL the birth parent/mother intends to take (if applicable)	
<b>SECTION D:</b>	
<b>Partner's leave plans (must be completed but is not binding)</b>	
I (the partner) currently expect to take SPL as follows:	
[Note: It can help to answer this as 'from...to...']	
<b>SECTION E:</b>	
<b>Amount of SPP available (only if claiming SPP)</b>	
Total number of weeks of SPP created (39 weeks less total number of SMP/MA taken and any SPP paid from a previous notice and revocation)	
Total number of weeks of SPP I (the partner) intend to take	
Total number of weeks of SPP the birth parent/ mother intends to take	
I (the partner) currently expect to take SPP as follows:	
[Note: It can help to answer this as 'from...to...']	

**SECTION F:**

**Partner's declaration (must be completed)**

**The following points apply in all circumstances:**

- I am giving notice that I am entitled to and intend to take SPL
- I am the father of the child, or at the time of the birth I was (or will be) the birth parent/mother's spouse, civil partner and/or partner living with them and the child in an enduring relationship
- I have been (or will be) continuously employed for 26 weeks at the end of the 15th week before the week in which the child is due
- I will remain employed with this employer until any period of SPL that I intend to take
- I had (or will have) shared responsibility for the care of our child at the time of the child's birth (along with the child's birth parent/ mother who has made the declaration below)
- I will give my employer a copy of my child's birth certificate or a declaration of the date and place of the birth where no certificate is available if my employer asks for this within 14 days of the date of this notice
- I will give my employer the name and address of the birth parent/ mother's employer or a declaration that they do not have an employer if my employer asks for this within 14 days of the date of this notice
- I will inform my employer immediately if I am no longer caring for our child or if my partner revokes their notice to curtail her maternity leave or SMP/MA period
- The information provided in this declaration is accurate and meets the notification requirements for SPL

**The following points only apply if Section E has been completed:**

- I am giving notice that I am entitled to and intend to take SPP
- I have been (or will be) paid at least the Lower Earnings Limit in the 8 weeks leading up to the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth
- I intend to care for my child in the weeks I receive SPP
- I will be absent from work in each week in which I will be paid SPP and I will be on SPL in those weeks (if entitled to SPL)
- I will remain employed with this employer until before the date of my first period of SPP
- The information provided in this declaration is correct

Signature of partner

Date partner signed

**SECTION G:****Birth parent/ mother's declaration (must be completed)****The following points apply in all circumstances:**

- I had (or will have) the main responsibility for the care of the child at the time of the birth (along with my partner who has made the declaration above)
- I am entitled to maternity leave and/or SMP or MA in respect of the child and I have curtailed (or will curtail) my entitlement to maternity leave (or I have returned to work) and/or my entitlement to SMP or MA.
- I have, or will have, been employed or self-employed in England, Scotland or Wales in 26 weeks of the 66 weeks before the expected week of childbirth
- I have (or will have) earned in total at least £30.00 in 13 weeks of the 66 weeks before the expected week of birth
- I will immediately inform my partner if I revoke my notice to curtail my maternity leave or, if I am not entitled to maternity leave, my SMP or MA entitlement
- I consent to my partner's intended SPL as set out in Section D above
- I consent to my partner's employer processing the information I have provided
- The information provided in this declaration is accurate and meets the notification requirements for SPL

**The following points only apply if Section E has been completed:**

- I am entitled to SMP or MA, and I have reduced (or will reduce) the SMP or MA period and the remainder will be available as SPP
- I consent to my partner's intended SPP as set out in Section E above
- I will immediately inform my partner if I revoke the reduction of my SMP or MA
- I consent to the person who will pay SPP to my partner or the child's father processing the information I have provided
- The information provided in this declaration is correct

Signature

Date signed

Appendix 6, Form 5: Notice to cancel or vary a Shared Parental Leave booking

For a parent who's eligible for Shared Parental Leave (SPL), and wants to cancel or change the dates of their SPL with their employer.

You must give your employer 8 weeks' notice to vary or cancel SPL.

Date .....

Dear [name of manager or employer].....,

**[Note: use either A or B]**

A. I am writing to cancel Shared Parental Leave (SPL) I'd booked for the following dates: from .....[insert date/s].

I understand I have .....[insert remaining notices] of my 3 notices left to use.

To my understanding, I have ..... [insert weeks] of my total SPL entitlement remaining.

B. I am writing to change the dates of Shared Parental Leave (SPL) I have booked. The original dates were from [insert date/s] for [insert weeks leave]..... weeks after the birth or adoption placement of my child.

The new date/s I wish to book are [insert date/s].....

I understand this counts as 1 of my 3 notices and that I have [insert remaining notices] .....notices left to use.

To my understanding, I have ..... [insert weeks] of my total SPL entitlement remaining.

Yours sincerely,

.....

## Appendix 7, Notice to book continuous Shared Parental Leave

Date.....

Dear .....[name of manager or employer],

My current remaining entitlement to Shared Parental Leave (SPL) is ..... weeks.

This notice is to book a period of ..... weeks of SPL.

I will be taking a continuous period of leave from ..... to .....

My current remaining entitlement to Statutory Shared Parental Pay (SPP) is ..... weeks.

During my period of SPL I would like to receive ..... weeks SPP.

I would like this paid from ..... to .....

I understand this counts as 1 of my 3 notices to book leave and I have ..... notices remaining.

Yours sincerely,

.....

## Appendix 8, Notice to book discontinuous Shared Parental Leave

Date.....

Dear .....[name of manager or employer],

My current remaining entitlement to Shared Parental Leave (SPL) is ..... weeks.

I would like to take a discontinuous leave in the following blocks [add as many dates as you are requesting]:

- from ..... to .....

I understand that you do not have to agree to this and that if we do not reach an agreement within 14 days of the date I gave this notice, I must either withdraw the notice 15 days after the notice date or take the total amount of SPL requested in this booking as one continuous leave.

I understand my leave will begin on the start date of the first block of leave I requested unless I notify you within 19 days of the notice date of a different start date. [A new start date must be at least 8 weeks after the notice date.]

My current remaining entitlement to Statutory Shared Parental Pay (SPP) is ..... weeks.

During my SPL I would like to receive ..... weeks of SPP.

If the proposed period of SPL is agreed I would like to be paid SPP.....

[add as many dates as you are requesting]:

from ..... to .....

I understand this counts as 1 of my 3 notices to book leave and I have ..... notices remaining.

Yours sincerely,

.....

Appendix 9

PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL  
PARENTAL LEAVE REQUEST FORM

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

WEEKS REQUESTED \_\_\_\_\_

FROM \_\_\_\_\_ TO \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**MANAGER/LINE MANAGER: I HAVE APPROVED THIS LEAVE REQUEST.**

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**AN UNPAID PARENTAL LEAVE REQUEST FORM MUST BE SUBMITTED AND AGREED PRIOR TO ANY PERIOD OF LEAVE BEING TAKEN. THE TOWN CLERK RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REFUSE ANY LEAVE REQUEST DUE TO A 'SIGNIFICANT REASON'..**

**I UNDERSTAND I WILL NOT BE PAID FOR THIS LEAVE REQUEST.**

**THIS FORM WHERE POSSIBLE SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO ADMIN BEFORE 21 DAYS PRIOR TO ANY LEAVE BEING TAKEN. IF YOUR REQUESTS ARE RECEIVED AFTER THE 5<sup>TH</sup> OF THE MONTH, PAYMENT MAY BE DEDUCTED THE FOLLOWING MONTH.**





# PANDEMIC RESPONSE POLICY

April 2026 Version 1

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this policy is to ensure Peterlee Town Council responds safely, proportionately, and in full alignment with current UK Government and Public Health guidance during any future pandemic or infectious disease emergency.

Resources Manager

Please think before printing this document.

Where printing is necessary, please ensure that it is printed double sided  
and in greyscale

DRAFT

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DRAFT

## Policy Brief & Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure Peterlee Town Council responds safely, proportionately, and in full alignment with current UK Government and Public Health guidance during any future pandemic or infectious disease emergency.

The policy sets out how the Council will manage workplace health and safety, employee attendance, infection control measures, and communication when government-issued guidance requires people to stay at home, self-isolate, or take specific precautions.

## When This Policy Applies

This policy does not operate at all times.

It is *only activated when*:

1. The UK Government or UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) declares a pandemic, public health emergency, or significant infectious disease outbreak, and
2. Official guidance states that individuals who test positive, or show symptoms, should stay at home or limit contact with others.

When the government stands down the guidance, this policy automatically deactivates.

When the policy is activated Peterlee Town Council will:

- Follow all official government guidance exactly as published.
- Avoid creating stricter internal rules unless legally required or clearly necessary for operational continuity.
- Review updates regularly and communicate any changes promptly to staff.

Government guidance will always take priority over this policy. [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance and support - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19)

## Sick Leave Arrangements:

When this policy is activated:

- Employees should follow government advice on symptoms relevant to the specific infectious disease (e.g., COVID-19, flu, respiratory diseases).
- The Council will only require or provide tests if national guidance recommends testing.
- Employees should follow whatever testing approach the government sets out during the incident.

If government guidance states that people must or should stay at home when:

- testing positive,
- showing specific symptoms, or
- being advised to reduce contact,

then employees must follow that guidance and notify their line manager in line with normal sickness reporting procedures.

If guidance no longer requires staying at home, this policy section will not apply.

## Pay and Sickness Absence

Employees will receive sick pay in accordance with NJC terms and conditions.

Any government-specific rules on isolation pay, medical certification, or support will be followed and incorporated when published.

Absence triggers will be managed fairly and with consideration of any temporary national guidance.

## Working From Home

If the government advises staying at home due to infection risk:

- Employees who are well enough to work may request to work from home where feasible.
- This will depend on the role, service needs, and management approval.
- If an employee is too unwell to work, normal sickness absence applies.

## Workplace Measures

Where government guidance recommends or mandates measures such as:

- increased ventilation
- social distancing
- wearing face coverings
- enhanced cleaning
- limiting indoor gatherings

the Council will implement these as required for the duration of the outbreak.

Measures will be removed once government guidance changes.

## Communication

During any active pandemic the Council will:

- Provide updates by email or internal communication channels.
- Notify employees as guidance changes.
- Ensure all measures are clearly explained and time-limited.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Employees

- Follow government and Council guidance.
- Report absence in the usual way.
- Implement infection control measures when required.

Managers

- Ensure staff are aware of current guidance.
- Approve home-working where appropriate.
- Manage service delivery during outbreaks.

Resources Manager / Town Clerk

- Monitor official updates.
- Activate and deactivate this policy.
- Communicate changes in guidance.

Any queries regarding this Policy please contact either the Town Clerk, or Resources Manager,

on telephone 0191 5862491.

<b>Author of Policy;</b>	<b>Resources Manager</b>
<b>Date effective from;</b>	<b>April 2026</b>
<b>Policy review;</b>	<b>April 2029</b>
<b>Version Control;</b>	<b>V1</b>

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