

Staff Handbook Policy Updates

South West Councils (SWC) provide HR services to the Town Council, including template policies for the Staff Handbook. SWC have provided us with a series of updates to existing policies and new policies on NeoNatal Care, Menopause, Health & Wellbeing and Reasonable Adjustments. A summary of the changes are set out in the table overleaf.

Most of the changes to existing policies have been made to improve clarity around implementation for the benefit of employees and managers. Some very helpful flowcharts have been designed to assist with this.

The only significant procedural change is that the Absence Management Policy has been amended so that formal hearings would in the future be considered by the Town Clerk whereas currently they would be dealt with by a panel drawn from the Personnel Committee, with any appeal having to be dealt with by a separate appeals panel. This change will mean that in future there will only be the need for councillors to act at the appeals stage, which mirrors the procedure for hearings and appeals set out in the Council's disciplinary policy.

The committee has delegated authority to approve minor changes to the staff handbook. Members are therefore asked to consider both the nature and scale of the changes proposed to determine whether or not this matter can be dealt with under delegated authority or needs to be the subject of a recommendation to full Council.

Martin Ayres
Town Clerk
October 2025

Item 3 – Staff Handbook Policy Updates

Summary of Changes

Policy name	Date of Change (SWC)	Summary of change
Disciplinary Procedure	May 2024	Update to existing policy: Sections 3, 5 and 6 have been amended. Includes a process flow chart.
Grievance Policy	May 2024	Update to existing policy: Section 2 – new section Section 3 - Mediation added, and other paragraphs extended. Includes a process flow chart.
Absence Management Policy	August 2024	Update to existing policy: Updated to make the process of managing sickness absence clearer. Includes a process flow chart.
Bullying and Harassment Policy	December 2024	Update to existing policy: Section 4 - Policy updated to reflect the changes to sexual harassment legislation.
Bullying and Harassment Complaints Procedure	November 2024	Update to existing procedure: Section 5 has been amended. Section 9 added. Includes risk assessments.
Menopause Policy	November 2024	New policy: Sets out how to support individuals and to help them manage perimenopause and menopause symptoms at work.
Health and Wellbeing Policy	February 2025	New policy: Sets out the measures that the organisation will take to support their employees in managing and maintaining their general health and wellbeing at work.
Reasonable Adjustments Policy	February 2025	New policy: Sets out how to support individuals with reasonable adjustments for both physical and mental health conditions.
Neonatal Policy	April 2025	New policy: Neonatal care leave and pay in accordance with the new legislation which came into effect of 6 th April 2025.



Disciplinary Procedure

Swanage Town Council

1. Introduction

This procedure is designed to help and encourage all employees to achieve and maintain acceptable standards of conduct and job performance. The aim is to ensure consistent and fair treatment for the individual. This procedure sets out the framework for resolving issues relating to misconduct and unsatisfactory performance in accordance with the Employment Rights Act 1996, Human Rights Act 1998, and the ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary Procedures.

This procedure applies to all employees except where it conflicts with a contractual or statutory requirement, which takes precedence.

2. General Principles

The procedure is not a substitute for good management practices and should only be invoked when initial attempts to improve conduct have been made following discussions between the employee and their manager. However, where there has been gross misconduct or a serious breach of disciplinary rules, the formal procedure should be actioned immediately.

No disciplinary action will be taken against an employee until the circumstances have been fully investigated.

The employee will be advised of the nature of the complaint against them and will be given the opportunity to state their case at the appropriate stage.

The employee has the right to be represented at disciplinary hearings and appeals.

In all instances of alleged misconduct, the employee will be given at least 5 working days' notice of the requirement to attend a hearing or appeal. Should the employee fail to attend without an acceptable reason, then the Chair of the hearing or appeal may proceed in the employee's absence.

Any disciplinary action taken will depend on the nature of the offence, the past recorded behaviour of the employee concerned, the consequence to the Council of the offence, and any explanation presented by the employee.

Employees have the right to appeal against any disciplinary warnings and dismissal. It is important that employees read and understand this document. If employees are not sure about any part of it, they should ask their line manager, who will provide the necessary clarification.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

It is advisable to determine the roles and responsibilities of those potentially involved in the disciplinary procedure at the earliest opportunity so that those roles are not compromised.

3.1 Line Manager

The line manager is normally responsible for considering minor disciplinary issues and resolving them, if they can, without recourse to the formal procedure. The line manager could also be the Town Clerk.

Allegations of more serious misconduct or where a previous warning has been given but the required improvement has not been made should immediately be referred to the Town Clerk.

3.2 Town Clerk

The Town Clerk is normally responsible for managing the formal disciplinary procedure including appointing an appropriate Investigating Officer. Alternatively, they may appoint another individual to manage the process, if required.

3.3 Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee is normally responsible for managing the disciplinary process and appointing an appropriate Investigating Officer for misconduct which relates to the Town Clerk.

3.4 Investigating Officer

The Investigating Officer is responsible for collecting evidence and gathering all documentation in relation to the allegation. The Investigating Officer need not be the employee's supervisor or line manager, although this would normally be the case. Where appropriate, an external investigating officer may be used. The Investigating Officer who carries out an investigation should not participate in any subsequent decision to take action under the procedure.

3.5 Hearing Panel

The Panel for a hearing will normally comprise of the Town Clerk. For matters concerning the Town Clerk then the panel would normally comprise of three members of the Personnel Committee. The responsibilities and objective of the panel is set out in section 6.5.

The panel members hearing a case should not have been involved in the investigation beforehand. The panel must not include the Investigating Officer. An independent HR representative can be called upon to advise the panel, if appropriate.

3.5 Appeal Panel

The Appeal Panel will normally comprise of three members of the Personnel Committee. The responsibilities and objective of the appeal panel is set out in section 7.2.

The appeal panel members should not have had any previous involvement in the matter. An independent HR representative can be called upon to advise the panel, if appropriate.

3.6 Note Taker

During each stage of the disciplinary procedure, it is recommended that a note taker is present to capture the context of the meetings.

3.7 Authorisation to Issue Sanctions

Outcome	Who is authorised to issue sanction
Oral Warning	Line Managers and Town Clerk
First Written Warning	Line Managers and Town Clerk (or the Personnel Committee, in relation to matters concerning the Town Clerk)
Final Written Warning	Town Clerk (or the Personnel Committee, in relation to matters concerning the Town Clerk)
Dismissal with notice	Town Clerk (or the Personnel Committee, in relation to matters concerning the Town Clerk)
Dismissal without notice	Town Clerk (or the Personnel Committee, in relation to matters concerning the Town Clerk)

In exceptional circumstances, such as the absence of the Clerk or where the Clerk is involved in the disciplinary process, it may be appropriate for the Personnel Committee to be given delegated authority to issue any level of sanction required.

4. Representation

Employees have the right to representation, either by a trade union representative or a work colleague, at the hearing and appeal stages of the formal procedure.

Representatives have the right to address the hearing or appeal. They may also ask questions and present the employee's case. However, they have no right to answer questions on the employee's behalf.

5. Informal Procedure

5.1 Informal Advice and Guidance

Where a minor breach of acceptable/established standards of conduct occurs, which does not justify formal disciplinary action, the Line Manager (who could also be the Town Clerk) will advise the employee concerned of the conduct and the standard

expected in the future. In many cases, this will provide sufficient encouragement for the employee not to commit further acts of misconduct.

The employee will be offered guidance, support, and additional training – where appropriate – to achieve the necessary standards. Representation will not normally be appropriate. Managers should make a note of such informal advice and guidance and should set out in writing to the employee the required improvements and standards of conduct that are expected in the future. Records of informal advice/counselling should be kept on employee's personal files.

6. The Formal Procedure

The formal procedure will apply when:

- Previous informal advice or warnings have proved ineffective; or
- The allegation is of a serious nature; or
- A number of minor allegations are made which taken together could constitute a serious breach of discipline.

6.1 Suspension

In some circumstances, the Town Clerk (or the Personnel Committee, in relation to matters concerning the Town Clerk) may consider suspension with pay, pending further investigation or until the disciplinary hearing takes place. Suspension may be appropriate where:

- Cases potentially involve gross misconduct;
- Relationships have broken down; or
- There is a risk to the employer's property or to other people.

An employee should be advised that suspension in itself does not constitute disciplinary action.

An employee should be advised of the reasons for suspension in writing. The period of suspension should not normally last for more than 20 working days. However, this period can be extended where necessary.

The decision regarding whether or not suspension is necessary can be reviewed at any time during the disciplinary process.

6.2 Determining roles and responsibilities

Ahead of any investigation commencing, it is advisable to determine the roles and responsibilities of those involved. This would normally include:

- Appointing an investigating officer
- Appointing the person / panel who would hear the disciplinary if later required.
- Appointing the panel / panel who would hear the appeal, if later required.

Further guidance regarding roles and responsibilities is set out in section 3.

6.3 Investigation

Before any decision can be made about whether or not a disciplinary hearing is necessary, an investigation must take place. The Town Clerk (or the Personnel Committee, in relation to matters concerning the Town Clerk) will appoint an appropriate Investigating Officer – who could be an external adviser – who will report back with their findings and make recommendations as to whether a disciplinary hearing should be convened.

The responsibilities of the Investigating Officer are to collect evidence by interviewing any relevant witnesses and gathering all documentation. An Investigatory Interview will normally be held with the employee concerned. The purpose of the interview is to gather the employee's initial response to the allegations and to identify whether any further investigation is needed.

For the benefit of the employee and the Council, any investigation must be concluded within a reasonable timescale. If there is a delay in completing the investigation, it is the responsibility of the Investigating Officer to regularly update the employee or their representatives on the progress of the investigation.

Once the Investigating Officer has gathered all the relevant facts and reviewed the evidence, a report should be drafted to the Town Clerk (or Personnel Committee) recommending one of the following:

- Take no further action and inform the employee accordingly;
- Advise the arrangement of counselling, training, extra supervision, or written advice (as appropriate); or
- Arrange a disciplinary hearing.

6.4 Arranging a Hearing

If, following the recommendations of the Investigating Officer, the Town Clerk concludes that a hearing is required then the necessary arrangements should be made by the Town Clerk.

The employee will be given at least 5 working days' notice in writing. The letter to the employee should include a clear written statement of the allegation, state the potential outcome of the hearing and a reminder of the employee's right to be represented. Enclosed with the letter should also be the investigation pack which would normally include a copy of the investigation report, supporting appendices and the relevant policy.

The Investigating Officer is responsible for presenting the case and making arrangements for any witnesses that they rely upon to attend the hearing.

The employee is responsible for arranging any representation they choose to have and any witnesses that they may wish to call. Details of any witnesses the employee intends to call and a copy of all documents that the employee may wish to refer to at the hearing must be submitted to the Hearing Chair at least 3 working days prior to the hearing.

6.5 Conducting a hearing

The objective of the Hearing panel is:

- To hear the evidence in respect of the allegation, the employee's response, and to decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated; and
- If the allegation is substantiated, to determine the disciplinary sanction to be applied in light of the seriousness of the offence and having regard to previous relevant disciplinary history.

The procedure to be followed is:

1. Introduction of the Panel members and outline of their roles;
2. Statement of the purpose of the hearing and the allegation(s);
3. Presentation of the case by the Investigating Officer with witnesses called as necessary;
4. Questions by employee or their representative;
5. Questions by the Panel;
6. Presentation of the case by the employee or their representative with witnesses called as necessary;
7. Questions from Investigating Officer;
8. Questions from Panel;
9. Concluding statement by Investigating Officer;
10. Concluding statement by employee or their representative;
11. Adjournment of the Panel to make their decision;
12. The Panel reconvenes and the employee/representative is informed of the decision and, if necessary, their rights of appeal.

Requests for an adjournment can be made at any stage and it is up to the Chair to decide whether or not a request should be granted.

The decision of the Panel will be confirmed to the employee in writing within 5 working days. The letter should clearly set out:

- The Panel's decision;
- The length of time that any warning will be active for;
- The expected improvement in conduct;
- Any assistance that will be provided to achieve this; and
- The employee's right to appeal.

6.6 Levels of Disciplinary Action

In determining the appropriate disciplinary action, regard should be given to the employee's previous record, the gravity of the offence, and any explanation given.

Although the procedure implies a sequential approach, there may be certain circumstances where the matter needs to be considered immediately under Stages 2, 3, or 4.

Stage	Outcome	Description
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Stage 1	Oral Warning	For a minor offence, a formal verbal warning (confirmed in writing) making it clear that further misconduct will render the employee liable to further disciplinary action including more severe consequences.
Stage 2	First Written Warning	For a more serious offence or where a previous warning to the employee has not resulted in the required improvement to their conduct.
Stage 3	Final Written Warning	For a sufficiently serious offence, which might warrant only one written warning but is insufficiently serious to justify dismissal, or where previous warnings have been ineffective.
Stage 4	Dismissal with notice	For an act or acts of misconduct, other than gross misconduct, by an employee who is under a written or final written warning. The employee will be liable to dismissal with notice or pay in lieu of notice.
	Dismissal without notice	In cases where gross misconduct is established, the employee will be liable to summary dismissal, i.e. without notice or pay in lieu of notice.

6.7 Length of Warnings

Records of informal meetings and formal warnings will be kept on employee's personal files. An oral warning will be live for 6 months, written warnings for 12 months and final written warnings will be live for 2 years from the date of the disciplinary hearing..

7. The Right of Appeal

An employee has the right to appeal against disciplinary action resulting in a warning or their dismissal. Three members of the Appeal Committee will hear the appeal, providing that they have had no previous involvement in the matter, assisted by an independent adviser, if appropriate.

An employee who wishes to appeal must do so in writing to the Town Clerk (or Chair of the Personnel Committee, in relation to matters concerning the Town Clerk). This must be done within 10 working days of the disciplinary hearing informing them of the disciplinary action taken. The appeal letter must set out the grounds for the appeal, normally under one of the following headings:

- The severity of the disciplinary action;
- The findings of the Panel on a point of fact which is pertinent to the decision of the hearing; and
- A failure to adhere to the disciplinary procedure.

7.1 Arranging an Appeal

The date and time of the appeal will be organised by the Town Clerk (or Chair of the Personnel Committee, in relation to matters concerning the Town Clerk). It is the responsibility of each side to prepare themselves for the appeal, including arranging for any witnesses to attend.

The Chair of the original Panel and the employee or their representative will, where possible, agree papers for submission to the appeal 5 days prior to the hearing.

7.2 Conducting an Appeal Hearing

The objective is:

- To review the decision of the disciplinary hearing and decide whether that action is warranted or not; and
- If the action is not warranted, to determine what action if any is appropriate;

In doing so, the Appeal Panel will have regard to seriousness of the offence and any previous relevant disciplinary history.

The procedure to be followed is:

1. Presentation of the case by the Manager (the Chair of the previous hearing) who took the disciplinary action;
2. Questions by the appellant to the Manager;
3. Presentation of the appellant's case, including calling any witnesses;
4. Questions by the Manager to the appellant and their witnesses;
5. Questions by the Appeals Panel to both parties and their witnesses;
6. Concluding statements by the parties. No new information should be introduced at this stage and the appellant should have the opportunity to sum up last;
7. Adjournment of the Panel to make their decision;
8. The appeal is reconvened if possible and both parties are informed of the decision;
9. Written confirmation of the Appeals Panel's decision within 5 working days of the hearing.

The Appeals Panel has the right to call its own witnesses should it consider this to be of assistance in making its decision.

8. Trade Union Officials

In normal circumstances, no action will be taken against an officer of a recognised trade union until the matter has been discussed with a full-time officer of that union.

9. Disciplinary Rules

It is difficult to define all the acts of misconduct that might lead to disciplinary action. As a general principle, a test of reasonableness would be applied, i.e. would a reasonable person be aware that disciplinary action would result from a certain act or omission?

The following are examples of the types of conduct that are unacceptable and might lead to disciplinary action. The list is not exhaustive and other behaviour not listed may lead to disciplinary action.

- Poor time-keeping/ attendance;
- Unjustifiable absence from work;
- Waste, loss or damage of Council property through failure to take due care;
- Negligence or failure in performance of duty;
- Inappropriate or unauthorised use of e-mail, IT, or telephone facilities; or
- Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

9.1 Types of Gross Misconduct

Unacceptable conduct, which may be regarded as gross misconduct, is likely to lead to an employee's summary dismissal. This means dismissal without notice and occurs when the employment relationship between the Council and employee, and the trust which is inherent in that, is irrevocably broken.

The list below gives examples of matters likely to be regarded as gross misconduct and is not exhaustive.

- Refusing to follow reasonable management instructions;
- Theft from the Council, its Members, employees, or the public;
- Physical assault or verbal abuse;
- Fraud or deliberate falsification of records;
- Covert recording;
- Falsification of qualifications;
- Serious negligence which causes unacceptable loss, injury, or damage;
- Serious acts of insubordination;
- Serious breach of confidence;
- Use of privileged information for personal gain;
- Malicious damage to the Council's property;
- Sexual misconduct at work;
- Discrimination, victimisation, or harassment;
- Serious breaches of safety rules;
- Serious incapability through alcohol or drugs;
- Accessing or distributing pornography on the Council's IT facilities.

10. Training

Appropriate training will be given to the Town Clerk or any Members who might be involved in disciplinary or appeals meetings to ensure that they fulfil their responsibilities under this procedure.

Disciplinary procedure flow chart

Informal procedure (section 5)

- For minor breaches of acceptable/established standards of conduct.

The Line Manager (who may also be the Town Clerk) will advise the employee concerned of the conduct and the standard expected in the future.

The Line Manager should follow up the conversation with a letter ('management instruction') to the employee setting out the informal advice/guidance and the required improvements and standards of conduct that are expected in the future.

A copy of this letter ('management instruction') should be kept on the employee's personnel file.

Formal procedure (section 6)

- Where previous informal advice or warnings have proved ineffective; or
- The allegation is of a serious nature or;
- A number of minor allegations are made which taken together could constitute a serious breach of discipline.

Ahead of any investigation commencing, the roles and responsibilities for those potentially involved in the disciplinary process should be determined. (Section 3)

Step 1 – Investigation (section 6.3)

The nominated Investigating Officer will collect evidence by interviewing any relevant parties and gathering all documentation/evidence.

The Investigating Officer will produce an Investigation Report which will set all the relevant facts.

The Investigating Officer will send their completed Investigation Report including appendices to the individual nominated to manage the investigation process, who will review the information and decide whether to progress to a hearing.

If the decision has been made that a hearing is required, then the Town Clerk (or alternative nominated individual(s)) will make the necessary arrangements.

If the decision has been made that a hearing is not required, then the Town Clerk (or alternative nominated individual(s)) will notify the employee.

Step 2 – Hearing (section 6.4 & 6.5)

The Town Clerk (or alternative nominated individual(s)) will send a letter to the employee, inviting them to the disciplinary hearing with at least 5 working days' notice. This will include a clear statement of the allegation(s), details of the potential outcome and a reminder of the employee's right to be represented. A copy of the Investigation Pack should also be enclosed.

The objective of the hearing is:

- To hear the evidence in respect of the allegation and the employee's response;
- To decide whether or not the allegation is substantiated; and
- If the allegation is substantiated, to determine the disciplinary sanction to be applied in light of the seriousness of the offence and having regard to previous relevant disciplinary history

Following the hearing, the decision of the Panel will be confirmed to the employee in writing within 5 working days. This letter will also inform the employee of their right of appeal and identify to whom any appeal letter should be addressed.

Step 3 – Appeal (section 7)

An employee who wishes to appeal must do so in writing to the person nominated in the disciplinary outcome letter, within 10 working days of the notification of the outcome of the disciplinary hearing. The appeal letter must set out the grounds of the appeal.

The appeal hearing will be organised by the nominated person. The employee should be given at least 5 working days' notice in writing of the appeal hearing. The employee must submit any additional papers/evidence to the Chair of the Appeal Panel no later than 5 days prior to the hearing. Papers will be prepared and sent to all parties.

The objective of the appeal hearing is:

- To review the grounds of the appeal in order to determine if the outcome of the hearing was correct; and
- If the decision is overturned, to determine what action is appropriate.

The decision of the Appeal Panel will be confirmed to the employee in writing within 5 working days.

There is no further right of appeal.



Grievance Policy

Swanage Town Council

1. Policy Statement

The Council recognises that individual employees or groups of employees may, from time to time, feel they have been treated unfairly and wish to raise a concern about an aspect of their employment. The Council accepts that each employee has the right to raise a grievance and to expect that management will consider it and respond.

The purpose of the accompanying procedure is to provide a framework for dealing promptly and fairly with such grievances. The aim is to encourage communication between employees and managers to ensure that problems arising during the course of employment can be expressed and resolved at the earliest opportunity and minimise the need for escalation to formal stages of this process.

Matters appropriately dealt with under the Council's grievance procedure include all questions relating to the individual rights of employees in respect of their employment other than:

- Matters that have already been considered in accordance with this procedure;
- Matters arising from a disciplinary or capability process in which the employee is already involved and where there is an appeals procedure in place;
- Matters in respect of issues over which the Council has no control. e.g. external legislation;
- Matters that are already the subject of a collective grievance or dispute; and
- Matters relating to Councillors who have allegedly breached the Council's Code of Conduct. (See section 2 for further information regarding how these matters should be addressed).

The timescales shown in the following procedure may be altered by mutual agreement.

This policy and the following procedure will be the subject of periodic review.

2. Grievances Relating to Breaches of the Council's Code of Conduct by Councillors

A grievance or complaint which relates to a breach of the Council's Code of Conduct by one or more Councillors of Swanage Town Council can initially be addressed informally as described in 3.2. below. However, if this is not possible/successful then a complaint should be made to the Monitoring Officer at Dorset Council rather than being addressed via the formal stages of this Grievance Procedure. As a matter of courtesy the Town Clerk and the Mayor should be informed if the matter has been raised with the Monitoring Officer at Dorset Council.

Where only part of a grievance or complaint relates to a Code of Conduct complaint, consideration should be given to which part(s) can be addressed under the Council's Grievance Procedure and which must be referred to the Monitoring Officer.

A copy of the Councillor Code of Conduct may be accessed on the Town Council's website.

3. Procedural Guidelines

3.1 General Principles

The grievance procedure should not be used as a substitute for constructive dialogue between employees or difficult conversations between employees and managers.

Grievances will be handled as quickly and fairly as possible.

Throughout any investigation that takes place, the Town Clerk or other nominated point of contact will ensure that any employees affected by this process are informed of likely timescales.

All employees involved in a grievance process should respect confidentiality and the privacy of others at all times. Confidentiality breaches may result in disciplinary action being taken.

The Council will take all grievances seriously. However, where there is evidence to suggest that a grievance has been raised in bad faith and/or is malicious or vexatious this may be addressed as a disciplinary matter.

Where an employee raises a grievance during a disciplinary process the disciplinary process may be temporarily suspended in order to deal with the grievance. Where the grievance and disciplinary cases are related it may be appropriate to deal with both issues concurrently.

Employees may wish to seek the advice of a trade union representative or work colleague when considering raising a grievance or when doing so.

3.2 Informal Resolution

In many cases the most effective way to resolve a grievance is to do so quickly and informally. Employees are encouraged to try to do this wherever possible.

Grievances should be raised informally as soon as possible and, other than in exceptional circumstances, within **twenty working days** of the incident or event. However it is recognised that in some cases a recent grievance can include a series of directly related incidents which have had a cumulative effect and have happened over a longer time period.

Options include:

- The employee can discuss their grievance with the person/people who are the subject of those concerns in order to resolve the situation.
- The employee can have an informal discussion with their line manager to explain their grievance and ask them to assist in resolving it.

- The employee can have an informal discussion with the Town Clerk to explain their grievance and ask them to assist in resolving it.
- In a situation where the grievance relates to the Town Clerk, the employee can have an informal discussion with the Chair of the Personnel Committee to explain their grievance and ask them to assist in resolving it.
- Mediation (see below).

Where the employee approaches their line manager, the Town Clerk or the Chair of the Personnel Committee for assistance, those individuals should consider and seek to resolve the grievance within **ten working days**. Whether or not informal resolution proves possible, the employee should in every case be given relevant feedback.

3.3 Mediation

Workplace mediation is a voluntary and confidential process that can be used to attempt to resolve workplace conflict.

This option is available to the Town Council as a means to resolve the grievance informally, although mediation may also be used at any stage of the grievance process.

During mediation a trained, impartial mediator works with the parties to try to:

- clarify each person's concerns, perspectives and desired outcomes;
- support them to express this to the other party/parties in a safe and controlled environment;
- facilitate further discussion to explore the issues and reach a shared understanding;
- reach agreement about how things will work in future to resolve their differences and avoid future conflict.

3.4 Formal Resolution

If the aggrieved employee is not satisfied with the result of the informal process, they can take the matter up with the Town Clerk in writing, stating the nature of the grievance. This should be done within **ten working days** of receiving feedback on the informal process.

3.4.1 Review of grievance

Upon review of the formal written grievance submission, the Town Clerk will decide whether further investigation is needed or whether the grievance can proceed straight to a meeting.

Should the Town Clerk be unable to investigate or respond to a grievance, e.g. because they have been named as a witness, then the grievance should be sent to the Chair of the Personnel Committee as in Section 5 below.

3.4.2 Investigation

If it is decided that an investigation is needed, then the Town Clerk will appoint an appropriate investigator. This may be the Town Clerk, another manager or someone external to the Town Council.

The investigation may involve interviewing other parties. All evidence collected during the investigation may be collated into a report, which would then be presented at the meeting.

The investigation will be concluded as soon as reasonably practicable.

3.4.3 The Grievance Meeting

The Town Clerk will arrange a meeting with the employee to discuss the grievance as soon as possible and normally within five working days of receiving the formal written grievance. If this is not possible, for example because an investigation is being carried out, the employee should be informed of the reason for any delay.

It is not expected that other parties, such as those named within the grievance, would attend the meeting. However, if it is determined by the Town Clerk that their contributions would facilitate consideration of the grievance, they will be asked to make themselves available in order to respond to any matters raised by the aggrieved employee during the course of the meeting.

When an investigation has not been carried out in advance it is still possible that, during the meeting, the Town Clerk may decide that it is necessary to adjourn the grievance meeting to conduct an investigation. This would be undertaken as set out in 3.4.2 above.

When an investigation has been carried out in advance, it is still possible that the Town Clerk may decide during the meeting that further investigation is needed. The meeting would be adjourned to enable this to be undertaken, usually by the original investigator.

In either of these situations where the meeting has been adjourned to enable investigation, once this has been completed the Town Clerk will decide whether to:

- reconvene the meeting to confirm the outcome and follow up in writing as set out below

or

- confirm the outcome in writing as set out below without reconvening the meeting.

3.4.3 The Outcome

A formal written response to the grievance should be issued within 5 working days of either the initial or the reconvened grievance meeting taking place or following the conclusion of an investigation, as appropriate.

4. Appeal

If the employee is still aggrieved, there is a right of appeal to a panel of members of the Personnel Committee. The appeal should be submitted in writing within ten working days of receipt of the formal written response issued by the Town Clerk. The Appeal Panel shall consider the appeal within twenty working days of receipt of the written appeal.

There is no further right of appeal.

5. Grievances Relating to the Town/Parish Clerk

If the grievance relates directly to the action or omission of the Town Clerk, the grievance should be submitted in writing directly to the Chair of the Personnel Committee who will oversee the investigation process and respond to the grievance as outlined above. This will also be the case if the Clerk is unable to investigate or respond to a grievance, e.g. because they have been named as a witness.

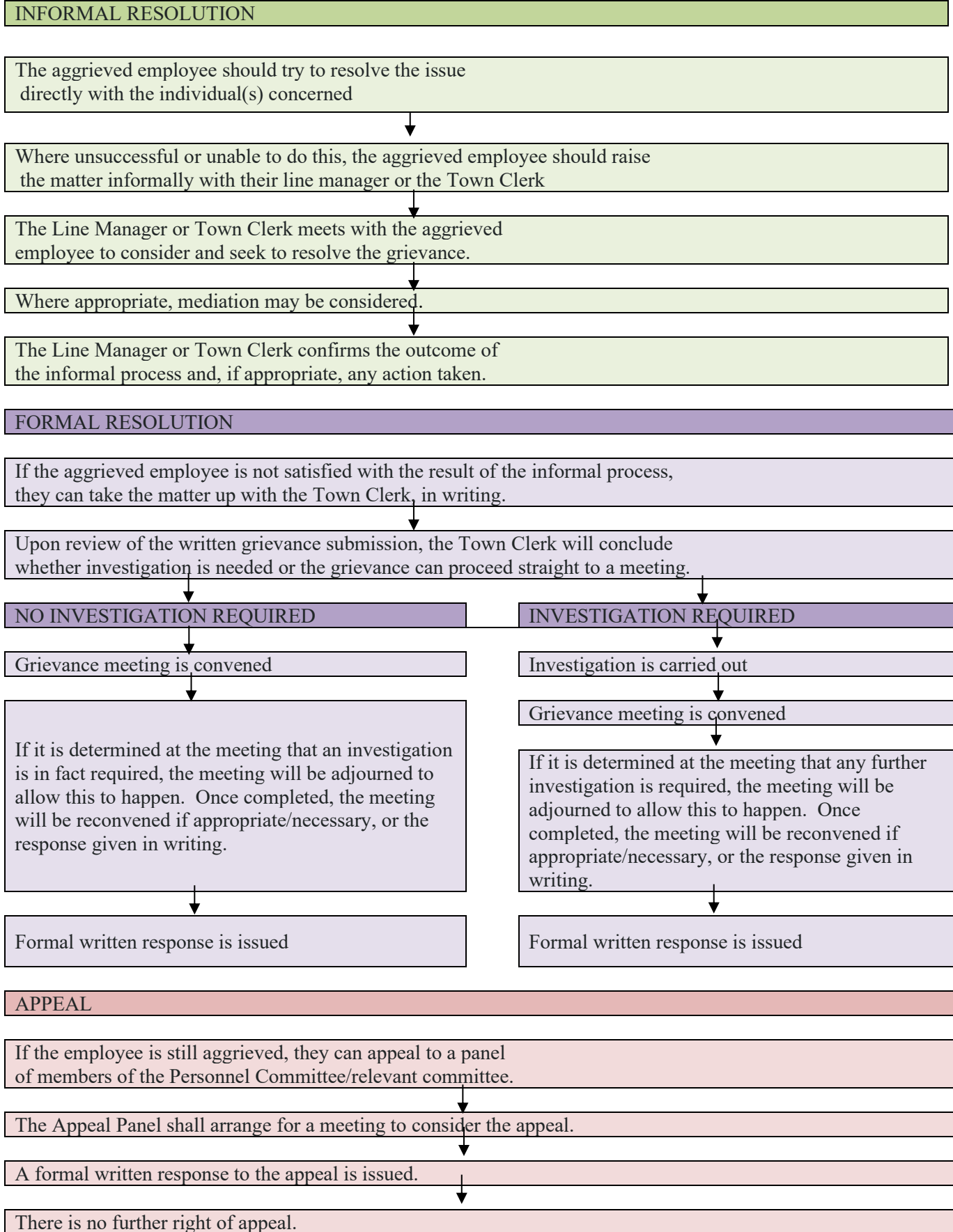
If the grievance is being raised by the Town Clerk the grievance should be submitted in writing to the Chair of the Personnel Committee as above.

6. Representation

An individual raising a formal grievance may be accompanied throughout the formal stages of the process by a trade union representative or work colleague of their choice.

Grievance procedure flow chart

If the grievance relates to the Town Clerk, See Section 5





Absence Management Policy

Swanage Town Council

1. Introduction

The Council is committed to providing effective, high-quality service to all its customers and to optimising the contribution of all employees. As part of this aim, it is essential that all employees are committed to maximising attendance.

The Council is concerned for the wellbeing of its employees and seeks to protect their health and safety by creating a safe working environment. In return, the Council expects all employees to take reasonable care of their own health, seek medical help whenever appropriate, and to attend work when fit to do so.

The Council recognises that genuine medical grounds will occasionally result in employee absence. It is the Council's policy to treat all such sickness absence in a fair, sensitive, and consistent manner across all areas of the workforce.

The Council must balance the sensitive management of genuine individual sickness against its need to be publicly accountable for its resource allocation and, as such, cannot sustain high levels of sickness absence. Action will therefore be taken to address recurrent short-term sickness or extended periods of absence as appropriate.

1.1 Aims

In order for the Council to meet its responsibilities, it will ensure that:

- It provides a supportive environment for those employees affected by ill-health;
- Managers and employees adhere to this policy and procedure; and
- Levels of sickness absence are the subject of routine monitoring.

1.2 Responsibilities

It is important that employees read and understand this document. If employees are not sure about any part of it, they should ask their line manager, who will provide the necessary clarification.

The onus for attending work on a regular basis and for reporting absence in accordance with the Council's agreed procedures rests with the employee. It is also an employee's responsibility to appropriately detail any periods of absence on their record of hours worked.

The responsibility for recording, monitoring, and managing absence on a day-to-day basis lies with the Town Clerk. It is therefore essential that they ensure that all employees are aware of the Council's Absence Management Policy and Procedures.

1.3 Miscellaneous

It is important that employees comply with this procedure so that:

- The Council can monitor sickness absence across the workforce and identify any intervention/support needed;
- The Council can provide assistance to individual employees where necessary; and
- Any sick pay to which the employee would otherwise be entitled is not withheld or refused.

If an employee wilfully abuses the sickness absence/payments provisions or absented themselves without permission, then this will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's disciplinary process.

Records retained in respect of sickness absence will be treated with sensitivity and confidentiality at all times, in accordance with the provisions of prevailing Data Protection legislation. The employee is entitled to access their records on request.

2. Absence Reporting

Employees who are unable to work due to illness/injury must contact their Line Manager as soon as possible or arrange for someone else to do this on their behalf. This should be no later than half an hour after the specified time of commencement of work on the first day of absence or the nearest working day. The employee should provide some indication of:

- The nature of the absence;
- The date the injury/illness began (including weekends and holidays);
- The expected duration of the absence; and
- Whether there are any immediate work commitments that need completing/reassigning during the absence.

If their Line Manager is unavailable, the employee should ensure that contact is made with the next appropriate person (as designated by their Line Manager) or the payroll team via the Town Hall reception.

The employee must maintain contact with his or her Line Manager during any period of sickness absence lasting longer than one day, so that the Line Manager is aware of any progress and the expected date of return to work. If the employee is unable to do so, they must arrange for someone else to do this on their behalf.

Failure to follow the sickness reporting process might lead to the absence from work being considered as unauthorised, resulting in loss of pay and possible disciplinary action.

3. Certification

3.1 Absence Period of up to Seven Days

Where the absence is for a period of up to seven days (including weekends) and not covered by a statement of fitness to work ("fit note"), the employee will be asked to complete a self-certification form on their return to work.

3.2 Absence Period Exceeding Seven Days

If the absence exceeds seven days and the employee has not already done so, they must provide medical evidence in the form of a fit note for the remainder of the absence. If the absence continues, the employee will need to ensure that the employer is always provided with a current fit note.

All fit notes must be certified by a healthcare professional who has assessed the employee's fitness for work. Healthcare professionals who are eligible to issue fit notes are doctors, nurses, occupational therapists, pharmacists and physiotherapists. The fit note should state whether or not the employee needs to see a doctor or other healthcare professional again before returning to work.

If the fit note states that the employee "may be fit for work", the employee should inform their Line Manager immediately. They will refer to the fit note and discuss with the employee whether there are any additional measures that may be needed to facilitate the return to work, taking into account the doctor's or healthcare professional's advice. This may take place at a Return-to-Work Interview or an Absence Review Meeting. If appropriate measures cannot be taken, the employee will remain on sick leave and the Line Manager will set a date to review the situation.

4. Return to Work Meetings

When the employee returns to work after any period of absence, the Line Manager will arrange to meet with them. This meeting will occur on the first day back or as soon as possible.

The purpose of the return-to-work meeting is:

- To provide an opportunity for the Line Manager to check that the employee is fit enough to return to work;
- To give the employee an opportunity to voice any concerns that they may have and/or to identify any domestic, welfare, or work-related problems in an appropriate forum;
- To ensure that the employee is aware of work-related matters that have occurred during their absence; and
- To fill out the Sickness Declaration Form.

Return to Work interviews should still be carried out following any absences that occur during any formal monitoring periods as set out below.

5. Short-Term Frequent Intermittent Absence

5.1 Absence Triggers

The Council will instigate a more formal review of attendance records and reasons for absence with an employee if there has been either (a) four episodes of absence or (b) a total of 10 working days' short-term sickness absence within any period of 12 months.

The number of days of sickness absence which constitutes the absence trigger point will be reduced pro rata for employees who work less than 5 days per week as follows:

Normal Days Worked Per Week	Absence Trigger – Total No. of Working Days
5	10
4	8
3	6
2	4
1	2

5.2 Action When Absence Triggers are Reached

The guidance in the following sections sets out the procedure for addressing short term absence when absence triggers are reached. A flow chart to support the guidance can be found at Appendix 2.

If an employee's level of attendance improves satisfactorily during a period of monitoring, then at the end of the monitoring period they will be informed that no further action will be taken.

There is, however, an expectation that a satisfactory level of attendance will then be sustained. If the employee's absence meets a trigger in situations where absence monitoring has recently ended or where an employee has repeatedly been subject to absence monitoring, consideration can be given to picking up the procedure at the next or most recent stage rather than starting the process from the beginning.

5.3 Stage 1 – Short-Term Absence Review Meeting

The relevant manager will arrange an absence review meeting with any employee whose absence record matches or exceeds the above criteria set out in 5.1 above. The employee will be invited in writing to attend the review meeting and notified of their right to be accompanied by a Trade Union Representative or colleague. The employee should be reminded that the aim of the meeting is to find ways to improve their attendance.

During the meeting, the manager should draw the employee's attention to their poor attendance record and the problems that their absences are causing for the Council and other employees. The manager and the employee should also consider any steps that can be put in place to help the employee to improve their attendance as well as signposting them to any additional support that can be accessed such as employee assistant programmes.

During the meeting, if the employee discloses an underlying health condition, then the advice in section 9 should be followed.

At the meeting, the employee will normally be advised that:

- They are being issued with a Stage 1 Short-Term Absence Warning, to inform them that if they are unable to sustain an improved level of absence then this procedure will continue to be followed.
- A 6-month monitoring period will be put in place.

- During that time their absence is not expected to exceed half the annual triggers set out in 5.1 above.
- The manager will meet them at the end of the 6-month period to review their absence levels.
- If they exceed the half-year triggers before the end of the 6-month monitoring period, the review meeting should take place at this point.
- If the half-year triggers are exceeded during the monitoring period, then a decision may be taken to move to Stage 2, as set out below.

This will be confirmed in writing and the employee will be notified of their right to appeal.

5.4 Stage 2 – Further Short-Term Absence Review Meeting

If the employee reaches the absence trigger set for their stage 1 monitoring period, the relevant manager will arrange a further absence review meeting. The employee should be reminded that the aim of the meeting is to find ways to improve their attendance. The employee will be invited in writing to attend the further review meeting and notified of their right to be accompanied by a Trade Union Representative or colleague.

During the meeting, the manager should remind the employee of the problems caused by their absences. The manager and the employee should also review any steps that may have been put in place to help the employee to improve their attendance and consider any further support that may be needed. The employee should also be reminded of any additional support that they can access such as employee assistant programmes.

During the meeting, if the employee discloses an underlying health condition which hasn't previously been raised then the advice in section 9 should be followed.

The employee will normally be advised that:

- They are being issued with a Stage 2 Short-Term Absence Warning, to inform them that if they are unable to sustain an improved level of absence then this procedure will continue to be followed and their employment may be terminated.
- A further 6-month monitoring period will be put in place.
- During that time their absence is not expected to exceed half the annual triggers set out in 5.1 above.
- The manager will meet them at the end of the 6-month period to review their absence levels.
- If they exceed the half-year triggers above before the end of the 6-month monitoring period, the review meeting should take place at this point.
- If the half-year triggers are exceeded during the monitoring period, then a decision may be taken to move to Stage 3, as set out below.

This will be confirmed in writing and the employee will be notified of their right to appeal.

5.5 Stage 3 – Final Short-Term Absence Review Meeting

Where an employee's attendance has still not improved to the required level, the relevant manager will arrange a final absence review meeting. The employee should be made aware

that the aim of the meeting is to review and discuss their attendance and for the manager to decide whether a Short-Term Attendance Hearing should be held to consider dismissal.

Although there is no statutory right to be accompanied at this meeting, the relevant manager may extend this offer to the employee as a supportive measure.

During the meeting, the manager should review the employee's absence record and remind the employee of the problems caused by their absences. The manager and the employee should also review any steps that may have been put in place to help the employee to improve their attendance and consider any further support that may be needed. The employee should also be reminded of any additional support that they can access such as employee assistant programmes.

During the meeting, if the employee discloses an underlying health condition which hasn't previously been raised then the advice in section 9 should be followed.

The manager should then inform the employee whether the decision has been made to proceed to an Attendance Hearing or not. Alternative options made include a further period of monitoring or a review of the trigger levels.

5.6 Attendance Hearing for Short-Term Absence

Where the decision is made to proceed to an Attendance Hearing, the employee will be invited in writing to attend the hearing and notified of their right to be accompanied by a Trade Union Representative or colleague.

The Panel for a hearing will normally comprise of the Town Clerk (or three members of the Personnel Committee, in relation to matters concerning the Town Clerk) and an independent HR representative to advise, as appropriate. The relevant manager will attend to outline the history of absence; details of absence monitoring carried out; support given; and other relevant information, including, where applicable, any medical advice received.

All paperwork relating to the hearing will be circulated 5 days in advance of the hearing to all parties attending.

Once the Panel has considered the manager's and employee's cases, and all other relevant information, it will adjourn to make a decision.

The decision to terminate the employee's employment may take place where the organisation can no longer tolerate the high level of absence.

The decision of the Panel will be confirmed to the employee in writing within 5 working days. The letter should clearly set out:

- 1) The Panel's decision:
 - a) If a stage 3 warning has been issued, the timescale for this (normally 6 months), the level of improvement required and any other measures/support put in place;
 - b) If the decision is to dismiss the employee, inform them of their relevant notice period and provide them with any relevant pension information; and
- 2) The employee's right of appeal.

6. Long-Term Absence

All cases of long-term absence will be treated sympathetically, and every assistance will be given to the employee to return to work.

6.1 Long-Term Absence Review Meetings

The Council will maintain contact with the employee and advise them that they should keep the Council informed of developments relating to their medical condition.

The Council will hold regular Absence Review Meetings with the employee during their absence, as appropriate. The purpose of the meetings is to keep the employee up to date, review the on-going absence, and offer support to the employee where appropriate.

Where an employee remains absent and a return to work is not foreseeable within a reasonable timescale, the line manager will arrange a Final Absence Review meeting which may lead to an Attendance Hearing to consider dismissal.

6.2 Final Long-Term Absence Review Meeting

Prior to an absence hearing being arranged for an employee on long-term sickness absence, the relevant manager will normally meet with the individual for a final absence review meeting.

The purpose of the meeting is to provide a final opportunity to review and discuss the employee's current situation and for the relevant manager to decide whether an Attendance Hearing should be held. Alternative outcomes from the final absence review meeting could include seeking further medical advice or setting a date for a further absence review (e.g. where a medical appointment is due).

In order to decide whether to proceed to an Attendance Hearing, the relevant manager will make sure that they have fully explored all the relevant information relating to the employee's absence. This would also be provided to the Attendance Hearing Panel if a decision is made to proceed to an Attendance Hearing.

This will depend upon the individual case, but may include:

- Relevant absence history and the date on which the current absence started;
- The reason for the employee's current absence;
- Details of absence review meetings and other communications during this absence;
- Any treatment/investigations being undertaken and the timescales for these to be completed;
- Whether there has been any recent improvement in the employee's condition and whether this is expected to continue;
- Whether there is any prospect of them returning to work within a reasonable timescale;
- Any reasonable adjustments or other support which would enable the employee to return to work within a reasonable timeframe;
- Any vacant roles within the organisation which the employee would be capable of performing and, where applicable, whether they would wish for this to be considered.

It is usually advisable to seek up to date medical reports from an Occupational Health provider or the employee's medical professional prior to an Attendance Hearing.

6.3 Long-Term Absence Hearing

Where the decision is made to proceed to a Long-Term Absence Hearing, the employee will be invited in writing to attend the hearing and notified of their right to be accompanied by a Trade Union Representative or colleague.

The Panel for a hearing will normally comprise of the Town Clerk (or three members of the Personnel Committee, in relation to matters concerning the Town Clerk) and an independent HR representative to advise, as appropriate. The relevant manager will attend to outline the history of absence and relevant information described in Section 6.2 above.

All paperwork relating to the hearing will be circulated 5 days in advance of the hearing to all parties attending.

Once the Panel has considered the manager's and employee's cases, and all other relevant information, it will adjourn to make a decision.

The decision to terminate the employees employment may take place where:

- An employee is declared permanently unfit for work;
- An employee is declared medically unfit for their work and alternative employment has not be found;
- The service can no longer support the employee's continued absence for operational/financial reasons.

The decision of the Panel will be confirmed to the employee in writing within 5 working days. The letter should clearly set out the Panel's decision:

- If the decision is not to take action at this point and to review again in a certain time period, the applicable timescale for this; or
- If the decision is to dismiss the employee, inform them of their relevant notice period and provide them with any relevant pension information; and
- The employee's right of appeal.

7. Appeals

Employees have the right to appeal against any decision to issue a formal warning or dismissal under this procedure. If an employee wishes to appeal, they should write to the Town Clerk setting out the grounds of their appeal. This must be done within 10 days of the date of the letter informing them of the outcome of the Attendance Hearing.

Appeals will be heard by a separate panel of members, who will normally be part of the Personnel Committee. An appeal hearing will be held where the employee can present their appeal. The Chair of the original panel will also attend to explain the original decision. Witnesses may be called.

Once the Appeal Panel has considered both the employee's appeal and the Hearing Chair's case, and considered all other relevant information, it will adjourn to make a decision.

The decision of the Appeal Panel is final and will be confirmed to the employee in writing within 5 working days. There is no further right of Appeal.

8. Occupational Health

In order to ensure that the Council has access to guidance and advice in respect of the best course of action to follow in relation to cases of absence, employees may be referred to the Council's Occupational Health Advisor.

Examples of when an employee may be referred to occupational health include to:

- establish when the employee might be able to return to work;
- ask for guidance on an employee's health condition;
- discuss any adjustments that could be considered in order to support the employee.

Where the Occupational Health Advisor makes a recommendation that might affect the employee's continued employment, the relevant manager will discuss the advice and options going forward at an Absence Review Meeting with the employee. Employees may wish to have the support of a trade union representative or a work colleague present during such a meeting, and this should be positively encouraged.

In certain cases, the Occupational Health Advisor might find that an employee is unfit to perform a particular job but fit enough to undertake other types of work. In such cases, full consideration will be given to the possibility of redeployment into alternative positions. Consideration will also be given to redeployment in cases where work in a particular place poses problems with attendance.

Where a return to work following a period of prolonged absence might be facilitated by temporary redeployment or phased re-introduction (e.g. reduction in hours) an employee can discuss these options with their manager and, if such measures are appropriate, the Council will ensure that the support mechanisms necessary for this to occur are provided. Such arrangements will be for a defined period and will be subject to joint review.

9. Underlying Medical Conditions

Where an employee and/or their manager identifies that the employee's attendance may be affected by an underlying medical condition, the line manager will give consideration whether to request that an Occupational Health referral is arranged.

This process would involve discussing with the employee the proposal to undertake a referral to the Council's Occupational Health Service. The purpose of this referral would be to obtain independent medical advice on:

- The nature of any underlying/recurrent condition;
- How to support the employee to improve their attendance, e.g. suggestions for reasonable adjustments to the employee's work, which the Council could consider.

Any agreed adjustments should be taken into account when applying the following procedure, which may need to be adapted accordingly.

Where appropriate, an employee may be referred to Occupational Health on more than one occasion e.g. when there has been a change to an employee's underlying health condition or prior to an attendance hearing.

10. Personal, Domestic, or Work-Related Problems

Where an employee reveals that their absence has been a consequence of personal, domestic, or work-related problems, the relevant manager should endeavour to discuss with them any relevant details that they wish to disclose.

Although an employee may have genuine concerns about revealing sensitive or personal information, they should be reminded that such matters will be treated confidentially and that the Council cannot assist them if it is not made aware of the problem. If an employee wishes to discuss matters with someone other than the relevant manager or the Town Clerk, the Chair of the Personnel Committee can be contacted for a confidential interview.

Once the problem has been clearly identified, appropriate assistance can be offered to the employee. In some circumstances, special leave, temporary adjustments in working arrangements, or referral to specialist agencies may be granted.

11. Alcohol/Drug Dependency

Where an employee discloses that their absences are a consequence of alcohol- or drug-related problems, they will be encouraged to seek help and treatment voluntarily through the Council's Occupational Health Service or through resources of their own choosing. Employees may be granted, if necessary, leave to undergo treatment and any such leave will be regarded as sick leave within the terms of the Council's sick pay scheme, with the monitoring of progress by the Occupational Health Service.

Should an employee refuse or discontinue any programme of assistance designed for them, then any unacceptable behaviour or inadequate standard of work will be dealt with on its merits through the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.

12. Welfare

If, as a consequence of medically related issues, the relevant manager has any concerns about an employee's ability to undertake the full range of duties and responsibilities associated with their post, they should encourage them to seek advice from their GP. If necessary, consideration could be given to suspending them with pay, or finding alternative duties whilst medical advice is sought from the Occupational Health Provider.

13. Monitoring of Absence Records

Monitoring is an important part of sickness absence management. In order for this to take place, it is important that all absence from the workplace is reported and recorded. All signed Sickness Declaration Forms and Return to Work Forms should be returned as soon as possible after the employee's Return to Work Interview has been conducted.

The Town Clerk will ensure that absence records are maintained for all employees. These records will provide the base data for the compilation, as required, of statistics showing the level of sickness absence across the Council.

The absence monitoring system will also enable the Town Clerk to identify individual cases where frequent or lengthy absences have occurred, or where patterns of absence have been identified. However, the manager should not rely on this as a substitute for pro-actively identifying and addressing problems or potential problems.

Managers should ensure that records of contact during and after absence are completed thoroughly and correctly stored on the employee's personnel record. These could include Sickness Absence Declaration forms, return to work meeting records, fit notes, notes of absence review meetings, correspondence and medical reports. These should be treated with sensitivity and confidentiality at all times. Employees will be entitled to access these records on request.

APPENDIX 1 – RETURN TO WORK DISCUSSION

Name:					
Date of Interview:					
Time of Interview:					
Period of Sickness Absence:	From		To		
Number of Working Days Absent					

* Self Certificate / fit note provided (*delete as appropriate) – Attached

Provide brief details of the content of the discussion:

Signed

Date.....

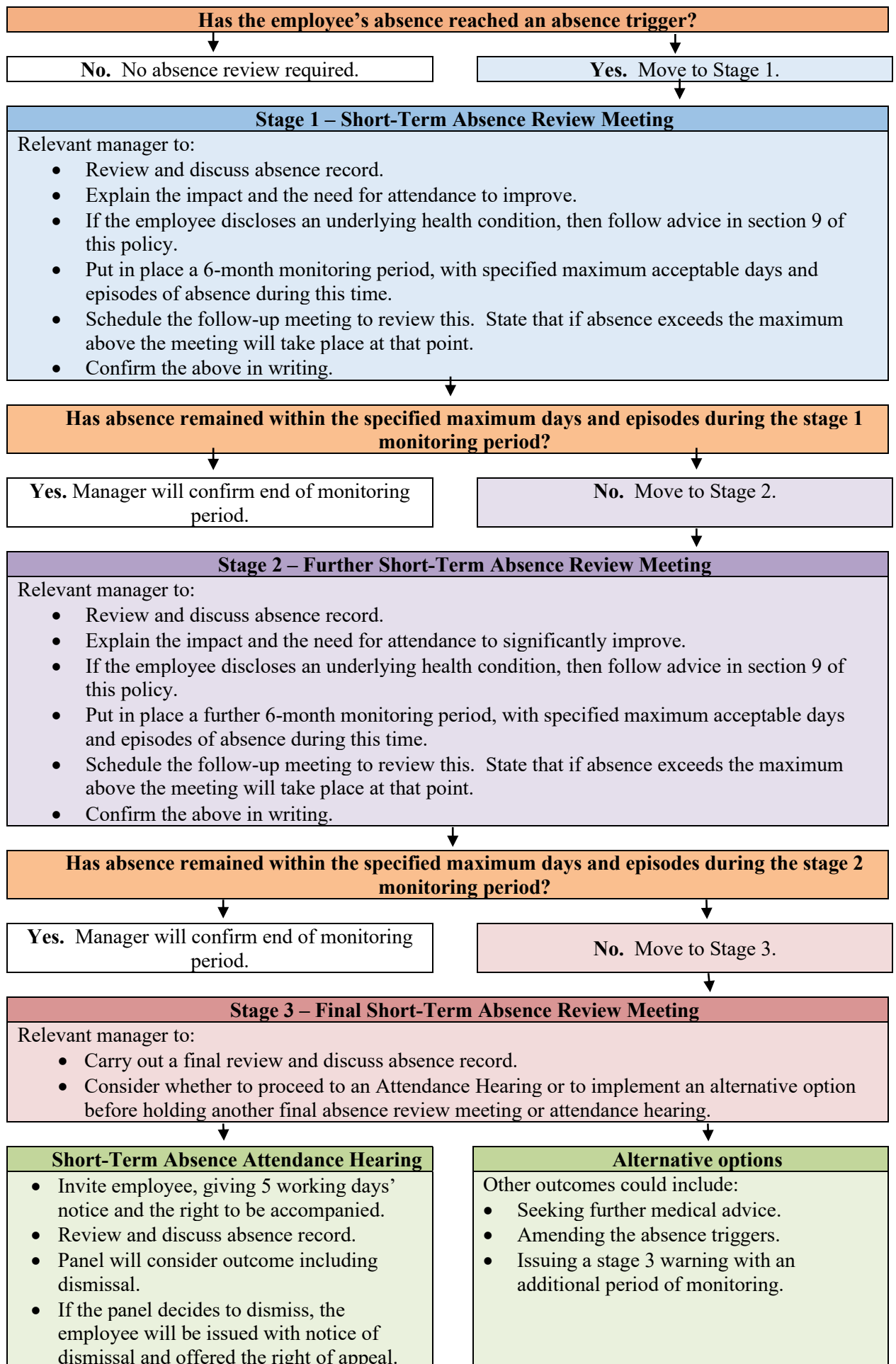
(Employee)

Signed

Date.....

(Line Manager)

APPENDIX 2 – MANAGING SHORT-TERM ABSENCE – FLOW CHART





Bullying and Harassment Policy

Swanage Town Council

1. Policy Statement

Employees are Swanage Town Council's most valuable and important resource, and the organisation has a legal, moral, and ethical duty to ensure that the environment in which they work enables them to contribute to their fullest potential and that they feel confident and comfortable about that working environment.

As well as considering the welfare of its employees, there is a strong business case for ensuring the elimination and prevention of harassment and bullying such as the financial impact (e.g. cost of reduced performance), health and safety (e.g. physical and emotional effects on employees), and recruitment and retention (e.g. people will not wish to join us or to remain with us). The organisation is also legally obliged to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of their employees in the course of their employment.

Swanage Town Council believes that all its employees have the right to be treated with dignity and respect, and that victimisation and all forms of harassment is totally unacceptable and unlawful. We therefore adopt a zero-tolerance approach to instances of bullying or all forms of harassment. This applies to everyone in the organisation, regardless of role or status. You should take the time to ensure you understand what types of behaviour are unacceptable under this policy.

The Council will deal effectively with any form of harassment or bullying and take any steps it sees fit to either stop or prevent it. This may include taking disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

2. Scope of the Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with other policies and procedures of the organisation, such as the Equal Opportunities Policy, Disciplinary Procedure and Grievance Procedure.

The policy covers harassment and bullying by Officers and Members of the Council. It does not cover harassment and bullying from the public or contractors, except for sexual harassment. However, the organisation has a duty of care towards its employees. Therefore, in all cases of bullying or harassment, employees should report any such behaviour to their line manager, who will decide upon the appropriate action.

3. Aims of the Policy

The information given below shows how harassment and bullying can affect both individuals and the organisation and demonstrates the need for a policy.

The aims of having a bullying and harassment policy are as follows:

- To ensure that all the organisation's employees are treated with dignity and respect.
- To ensure that harassment and bullying, including sexual harassment, is prevented and, if it does occur, that action is taken to stop it.
- To ensure that the working environment is such that each employee feels confident and comfortable about the way they will be treated whilst at work.
- To ensure that all the organisation's employees know what harassment and bullying are and what the organisation's policy is.
- To explain the responsibilities of Members, management, and employees.
- To explain the procedures for dealing with harassment and bullying.

4. Harassment

4.1 Who is protected from harassment?

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination because of certain protected characteristics. These are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- race (including ethnic origin, skin colour, nationality and national origin)
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

Pregnancy, maternity, marriage and civil partnership are not specifically protected under the legal provisions on harassment. However, the organisation also considers harassment on these grounds to be unacceptable. Any such harassment will be dealt with in the same way as for the characteristics above.

4.2 Definition of harassment

Harassment is defined by ACAS as 'unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of:

- violating an individual's dignity; or
- creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual'.

It is also unacceptable to harass any individual:

- Based on their association with another individual with a protected characteristic (e.g. an employee married to someone of a different ethnic origin); or

- Based on a perception that they have a protected characteristic (e.g. a heterosexual employee who is made fun of because their colleagues believe they are homosexual).

4.3 Examples of harassment

Harassment can, for example, take place:

- in a work situation.
- during any situation related to work, such as at a social event with colleagues.
- against a colleague or other person connected to the employer outside of a work situation, including on social media.
- against anyone outside of a work situation where the incident is relevant to their suitability to carry out the role.

Harassment can also occur in many forms. Examples include:

Sexual orientation harassment:

- Homophobic remarks, innuendos, jokes.
- Offensive actions.
- Physical attack.

Racial harassment:

- Embarrassing or derogatory remarks such as racist jokes, name-calling or nicknames.
- Deliberate isolation or different treatment.

Harassment on the grounds of disability:

- Name calling.
- Uninvited, patronising or unnecessary assistance.

Harassment on the grounds of religion or belief:

- Ridicule and religious jokes.
- Scorning of belief.

Age harassment:

- Negative comments generalising about the age group of the individual.
- Exclusion from informal groups such as social events due to the individual's age.

4.4 Sexual Harassment

Harassment may be sexual in nature. The law defines sexual harassment as:

- conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment; and
- less favourable treatment related to sex or gender reassignment that occurs because of a rejection of, or submission to, sexual conduct.

Examples of sexual harassment include:

- asking questions about someone's sex life or discussing their own sex life.
- making sexual remarks about someone's body, clothing or appearance
- telling sexually offensive jokes.
- making sexual comments or jokes about someone's sexual orientation or gender reassignment.
- overt staring, leering, whistling or making sexually suggestive gestures.
- displaying or sharing pornographic or sexual images, or other sexual content.
- making propositions and sexual advances.
- making promises in return for sexual favours.
- unwelcome touching or touching someone against their will, for example hugging, kissing or massaging.
- sexual assault or rape.

Sexual interaction that is invited, mutual or consensual is not sexual harassment because it is not unwanted. However, sexual conduct that has been welcomed in the past can become unwanted.

5. Bullying

ACAS states that bullying can be characterised as ‘offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient’.

It must be clearly understood that it is a manager's responsibility to set targets and review work performance; this is not bullying. It is also the manager's role to ensure that corrective processes are put in place when individuals do not reach targets. These discussions are sometimes difficult for both parties but need to take place to ensure employees work competently. In this context bullying will only occur when a manager abuses their authority.

It should be noted that bullying does not only occur in manager/subordinate relationships. It can occur when there is unacceptable peer pressure or pressure by others in a position of ‘authority’, e.g. elected Members.

Examples of bullying behaviour can include:

- Spreading malicious rumours.
- Making the employee the butt of jokes.
- Aggressive, insulting and unco-operative attitude.
- Destructive innuendo and sarcasm.
- Constant unjustified criticism.

- Unjustifiably removing responsibilities and replacing them with trivial tasks to do instead.
- Shouting at employees.
- Unreasonable refusal of requests (e.g. leave or training).
- Deliberately ignoring or excluding individuals from activities.
- Imposing unreasonable workloads and/or unjustifiably reducing deadlines.
- Constantly undermining an employee in terms of their professional or personal standing.
- Undervaluing an employee's efforts.
- Seeking to make an employee appear incompetent, or intentionally creating an unacceptable working environment, with the object of either achieving a dismissal or of making them resign.

Swanage Town Council recognises the fact that employees may initially submit to a particular instance of harassment or bullying, but this does not mean that they find the behaviour acceptable. For example, an employee who is the butt of jokes may not wish to object initially, but this should not prevent them from addressing the issue once they feel able to do so.

6. Complaints Against Councillors

If you perceive that you are being bullied or harassed by a councillor, please raise this with the Town Clerk or the chairman of the council in the first instance. They will then decide how best to deal with the situation, in consultation with you. There are two possible avenues for you, informal or formal. The Informal Resolution is as set out in Stage One of the Council's Bullying and Harassment Complaints Procedure. In certain circumstances the Council may be able to involve a neutral third party (a mediator) to facilitate a resolution of the problem. The Town Clerk will discuss this with you if it is appropriate.

Formal concerns regarding potential breaches of the Councillors' Code of Conduct must be investigated by the Monitoring Officer. Following the Ledbury case, the law is clear that any formal complaint about a councillor regarding a breach of the code of conduct must be referred to the Monitoring Officer for investigation (either by the complainant, or the Council with agreement of the complainant). During the investigation, it is critical to ensure that where an employee of the council has made the complaint, that the council agrees reasonable measures with the employee to protect their health and safety. Such measures may include a temporary change in duties, change of work location, not attending meetings with the person about whom the complaint has been made etc.

7. Victimisation

Any employee who makes a complaint or supports another employee who has done so must not be subjected to any victimisation or less favourable treatment as a result. Swanage Town Council will not tolerate any such behaviour and will take appropriate action to stop/prevent this, which may include disciplinary action.

8. Responsibilities of Managers, Town Clerk, Employees, Members and Third Parties

8.1 Managers

Managers will have the following responsibilities:

- Compliance with this policy.
- Creating/ensuring that there is a supportive working environment.
- Ensuring employees comply with this policy.
- Making sure that their employees know the details of this policy and the consequences of breaching this policy.
- Making sure that their employees know how to report bullying and harassment, including sexual harassment.
- Making sure that their employees know what standards of behaviour are expected of them.
- Taking allegations of harassment and/or bullying seriously and dealing with them as quickly as possible.
- Ensuring that victims of harassment and/or bullying receive appropriate support which might include counselling. (Note: consideration should be given as to whether the harasser/bully should also be given access to counselling, as the employee who has been accused of bullying/harassment can find this a stressful situation).
- Dealing with complaints under the Bullying and Harassment Complaints Procedure (see below).
- Ensuring that matters are dealt with confidentially and impartially.
- Ensuring that their employees attend any training requirement; and
- Liaising with the Town Clerk on how to deal with cases that arise.

8.2 Town Clerk

In addition to the above, the Town Clerk will have the following additional responsibilities:

- commitment to analysing data around allegations of bullying or harassment; reviewing this policy at regular intervals; monitoring its effectiveness; and implementing any changes that may be required.
- monitoring workplace culture to identify and address any issues in relation to bullying and/or harassment.
- Ensuring that risk assessments are undertaken to determine reasonable measures that can be implemented to minimise the risk of exposure to sexual harassment in the workplace and by third parties with whom you may have contact.
- ensuring that the organisation's zero approach to all forms of discrimination, and bullying and harassment, is communicated to all workers.
- reviewing this policy regularly and, if necessary, amending to ensure that it remains effective.

8.3 Employees

Employees will have the following responsibilities:

- Compliance with this policy.
- Treating their colleagues with dignity and respect.
- Having an awareness of their own standards of behaviour.
- Making it clear that they find harassment and bullying unacceptable.
- Reporting harassment and supporting management with the investigation of complaints.
- Intervening to stop harassment and/or bullying and give support to victims.

8.4 Members

Members will have the following responsibilities:

- Compliance with this policy.
- Treating employees with dignity and respect.



Bullying and Harassment Complaints Procedure

Swanage Town Council

1. Introduction

No employee need put up with bullying or harassment. Swanage Town Council recognises that making a complaint may be a distressing experience. However, all complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with in a sympathetic and sensitive manner.

If you feel that you are being bullied/harassed, the decision about how to pursue this will, in the first instance, rest solely with you. You have the right to redress through either the informal or formal procedure.

Only if the matter is brought to the attention of the alleged harasser/bully or your manager can action be taken to stop the behaviour.

In the interests of natural justice, a complaint should be made as close as possible to the date when the incident occurred. In a situation where, in your view, an accumulation of incidents merit a bullying/harassment complaint, this should be done as close as possible to the date when the 'final straw' incident took place.

Some acts of harassment may also amount to a criminal offence, in this situation we will speak to you about whether you wish for the matter to be reported to the police and support you to do so.

2. Stage One

If it is possible and appropriate to do so, you should ask the person who you feel is harassing or bullying you to stop such behaviour, making it clear that you find it offensive, and it is unwelcome. This can be done face-to-face or in writing.

If you feel that you cannot approach the alleged harasser/bully alone then you may wish to ask a work colleague or trade union representative to accompany you.

It is possible that some people may not have realised that their behaviour was offensive and alerting them to it will alter their behaviour.

3. Stage Two

If you feel unable to use the approach set out in Stage 1, or you feel that this is not appropriate, or if Stage 1 action fails to resolve your complaint, then you can raise this formally if you wish.

In this case you will need to put your complaint in writing to the Town Clerk (or in the case of the Town Clerk to the Personnel Committee), giving details of the specific actions/incidents about which you are complaining.

Once you have done this the matter will be investigated under the organisation's Grievance Procedure.

The Town Clerk (or in the case of the Town Clerk members of the Personnel Committee) will discuss your complaint with you. In line with the informal resolution stage set out in the Grievance Procedure, the Town Clerk will, if appropriate, explore with you whether there are any informal measures that you feel able to pursue in order to attempt to resolve the situation before requesting that formal action is taken. These could include meetings with the alleged harasser/bully facilitated by your line manager or the Town Clerk (or in the case of the Town Clerk members of the Personnel Committee), or more structured mediation.

The formal process must, however, be followed if the particular concern brought to the organisation's attention is serious. For example, where the offence could be considered a criminal matter.

If informal measures are not appropriate/successful or you wish to proceed straight to the formal process, the Town Clerk (or in the case of the Town Clerk members of the Personnel Committee), or their representative, will thoroughly investigate the complaint in accordance with the appropriate procedure which could be Grievance or Disciplinary Procedure.

Decisions made in accordance with the relevant policy could include taking disciplinary action against the alleged bully/harasser; issuing management instructions; arranging mediation if both parties are willing to participate; making changes to working arrangements; or taking no further action. In cases where there has been abuse of power over more junior staff by the alleged bully/harasser, consideration will be given to this when deciding what disciplinary action will be taken.

It should be noted that if disciplinary action is taken against the alleged bully/harasser, you will be informed that disciplinary action is being taken but will not be informed of the outcome of this or have a right of appeal against the decision of the disciplinary panel. Nor do you have the right to raise a grievance about any decision affecting the alleged bully/harasser following a disciplinary hearing or investigation.

4. Confidentiality

Any complaint received, either formally or informally, will be treated with as much confidentiality as possible. However, in order to enable your complaint to be investigated and/or resolved the individuals concerned will have to be made aware of your complaint, and it may not be possible to do this without identifying you.

The knowledge that a complaint has been made will be restricted to the minimum number of people necessary to investigate what happened. All those involved in any

complaint must respect this and ensure that they are sensitive to the needs of both the complainant and the alleged harasser/bully.

All involved in investigating a complaint will do so impartially and make no inferences that either party is at fault until the investigation is complete. Breaches in confidentiality may result in disciplinary action.

5. Complaints About the Town Clerk

If the matter involves a complaint against the Town Clerk, you should inform the Mayor who will determine the most appropriate means of dealing properly with the complaint.

6. Complaints About Members

If the matter involves a complaint in relation to a member's conduct, you should inform the Town Clerk, and consideration should be given regarding the need to consult the Monitoring Officer to establish the most appropriate way to deal with this matter.

7. Complaints Involving Third Parties

Bullying and harassment by third parties, such as customers, clients, suppliers and/or contractors, will not be tolerated.

If a matter involving a third party does occur, you should inform the Town Clerk who will determine the most appropriate means of dealing properly with the complaint.

Action may include warning the third party about their behaviour, banning a customer, reporting any criminal acts to the police or sharing information with other branches of the business.

8. Malicious/Unfounded Complaints

This procedure is designed to protect individuals who raise their concerns. It is accepted that some allegations may arise from genuine misunderstandings. However, making a malicious and unfounded complaint may itself constitute harassment and be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

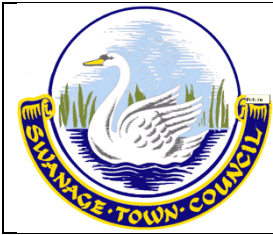
9. Support and Advice for Employees Affected by Bullying and Harassment, Including Sexual Harassment

If you would like further information about support and advice services available to you as the complainant or alleged harasser, you can contact:

- an employee assistance programme
- recognised trade unions (for union members)

You can also access external support and advice such as:

- the Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS).
- ACAS www.acas.org.uk/discrimination-and-bullying - For information and advice on all aspects of workplace relations and employment law.
- Rights of Women - [Sexual harassment at work advice | Rights of Women](#).
- Protect (the whistleblowing charity).
- local advice centres (The Focus Centre)
- helplines which have been set up to deal with specific forms of harassment (such as the helplines provided to deal with sexual harassment and Rights of Women in England and Wales).
- the EHRC (Equality and Human Rights Commission) have produced technical guidance in this area: Sexual Harassment and harassment at work: technical guidance 2024: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/guidance/sexual-harassment-and-harassment-work-technical-guidance> - responding-to-harassment.
- [Sexual harassment and harassment at work: technical guidance | EHRC](#).



Menopause Policy

Swanage Town Council

1. Introduction

Swanage Town Council are committed to creating an open and supportive culture in which employees feel comfortable to talk openly and without embarrassment about how menopause-related symptoms may be affecting them at work.

This is not just an issue for women. It will affect trans men and some non-binary people, and men will be affected by it indirectly.

Most individuals experience symptoms during perimenopause and menopause due to changes in hormone levels. With the right support and medical treatment for their symptoms, their experience at work will not be affected.

This policy sets out the guidelines for members of staff and managers on providing the right support to individuals to help them manage perimenopause and menopause symptoms at work.

In this policy, any reference to menopause also includes the perimenopause.

2. Symptoms of menopause

The menopause is a natural event during which a person stops having periods and experiences hormonal changes such as a decrease in oestrogen levels. Over 80% of women, trans men and some non-binary people experience symptoms due to changes in hormone levels. 25% of these experience symptoms which could be classed as severe and have a significant impact on their daily life.

There are four key stages:

Pre-menopause: the time in life before any menopausal symptoms occur.

Perimenopause: when menopausal symptoms occur due to hormone changes, but periods still happen (even if irregular).

Menopause: when there has been no period for 12 consecutive months. The menopause usually occurs between the ages of 45 and 55 but can happen earlier. Menopause typically lasts between four and eight years.

Post menopause: the time in life after 12 months with no periods.

While menopausal symptoms vary greatly, they commonly include:

- hot flushes;
- night sweats;
- anxiety;
- dizziness;
- fatigue & trouble sleeping;
- memory loss;
- depression;
- headaches or migraine;
- recurrent urinary tract infections;
- joint stiffness, aches and pains;
- reduced concentration and brain fog;
- heavy periods;
- loss of confidence and self-esteem.

3. Requesting support

Employees who are finding it difficult to manage at work because of menopausal symptoms are encouraged to speak to their line manager to discuss what support may be available. This could include temporary changes to an employee's working arrangements or working environment, or seeking external support, as set out below. Any health-related information disclosed by employees during discussions will be treated sensitively and in confidence.

Swanage Town Council encourages employees to be as open as possible about any particular issues that they are experiencing or adjustments that they might need to ensure that they are provided with the right level of support to improve their experience at work.

If for any reason employees feel unable to approach their line manager, they can speak to the Town Clerk.

3.1 Working arrangements

Employees who require a permanent change to working arrangements, such as changing contracted hours, should refer to the Council's Flexible Working Policy. However, the Council recognises that for individuals affected by menopausal symptoms, the option to work flexibly on a temporary (rather than permanent) basis may be appropriate. For example, this could include working from home, changing start and finish times, or taking more frequent breaks. This is not a definitive list.

Employees who feel that they would benefit from a temporary change to their working arrangements on an ad hoc basis because of sleep deprivation or other symptoms that may be impacting on their performance, should discuss and agree these with the relevant line manager.

The organisation will try to facilitate temporary flexible working arrangements wherever this is possible and will continue to review these to ensure that they meet the employee and the Council's needs.

3.2 Working environment

If an employee feels that their working environment is exacerbating their menopausal symptoms, they should raise this with their line manager.

There are a range of practical adjustments that the organisation may be able to consider in order to help make employees' working life easier, such as moving workstations to a cooler area, providing a fan or relaxing the uniform policy.

3.3 Employee assistance programme

Help and support is also available through our employee assistance programme (EAP). Employees can use the organisation's EAP to speak to an independent adviser on a confidential basis about any issue that is troubling them.

4. Sickness Absence relating to the menopause

If you are sick and unable to work, you should follow the procedure set out in the organisation's Absence Policy.

In some cases, the Council may refer an employee to Occupational Health so that they can advise on how the employee's symptoms are impacted at work and make recommendations on the types of adjustments that may be appropriate, where reasonably practical.

5. External Sources of help

There are various organisations that provide help and support on the menopause including the [NHS](#) where you will find a range of further information and advice.

The following organisations and websites also provide advice and guidance:

- [Balance by Newson Health](#)
- [The British Menopause Society](#)
- [Women's Health Concern](#)
- [Menopause Matters](#)
- [Daisy Network for premature menopause](#)
- [Menopause Cafe](#)
- [Queer Menopause for people who identify as LGBTQ+](#)



Health and Wellbeing Policy

Swanage Town Council

1. Introduction

Swanage Town Council are committed to creating a work environment that promotes good health and wellbeing and where staff can thrive and feel supported.

Swanage Town Council recognises that several factors can contribute to an employee's wellbeing, and can include:

- Physical health
- Emotional health
- Financial health
- Psychological wellbeing
- Social wellbeing

This policy sets out the measures that Swanage Town Council takes to support employees in managing and maintaining their health and wellbeing at work. This includes work related stress.

The policy does not form part of an employee's contract of employment, and the council reserves the right to amend it at any time.

This policy should be used in conjunction with the councils' other relevant policies including the Health and Safety Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Disciplinary Procedure and Grievance Procedure.

2. Role and responsibilities

2.1 Organisation

Swanage Town Council is responsible for ensuring, so far as reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all its employees.

In addition to reducing safety risks, this means operating the organisation's business in a way that manages health and wellbeing at work. Swanage Town Council will do this by ensuring that employees:

- are given the tools that they need to do their job, including appropriate training and support;
- have a say in the way that they do their work;
- have a reasonable workload;
- have a good work-life balance;
- are empowered to respond to change positively;
- are treated with respect by managers and colleagues; and
- are given appropriate working conditions.

2.2 Line managers

Line managers are responsible for supporting this health and wellbeing policy by:

- monitoring workloads to ensure that they are manageable;
- monitoring working hours and holiday to ensure that individuals work appropriate hours and take regular breaks;
- becoming familiar with policies and procedures that are likely to affect wellbeing;
- consulting individuals on changes that may have an effect on their health and wellbeing;
- becoming familiar with any employee-support services that the council offers;
- encouraging individuals to participate in wellbeing initiatives;
- liaising with the relevant professionals such as occupational health where relevant; and
- maintaining the confidentiality of any individuals that they are supporting.

2.3 Staff

Staff are responsible for supporting this health and wellbeing policy by:

- taking reasonable care of their own health and wellbeing and the health and wellbeing of the people with whom they come into contact;
- working appropriate hours, taking regular breaks, and building healthy working habits into their day;
- alerting line managers to health and wellbeing problems affecting their work;
- taking advantage of any counselling and training opportunities available; and
- getting involved in any wellbeing programmes made available.

3. Wellbeing programmes

The following services are available to help employees maintain their health and wellbeing:

- Confidential Employee Assistance Programme which provides information, advice and support

Further details can be found on the staff notice board in each department.

4. Requesting support

If an employee believes that their work, or some aspect of it, is putting their wellbeing at risk then they are encouraged to speak to their manager or the Town Clerk who will then consider what further action may be required.

In some cases, the council may refer the employee to Occupational Health for advice on the type of support that may be appropriate.

If for any reason employees feel unable to approach the Town Clerk, they can speak to the Chairman of the Personnel Committee.

5. Work Related Stress

Swanage Town Council recognises their legal obligation, in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, to protect their employees from the risks of stress at work.

Swanage Town Council acknowledges the impact that stress can have on individuals whether this is linked to daily lives in or out of work, some to the workplace and some to the actual job role. It also knows how individuals can react differently when experiencing stress. As such, we are also committed to the prevention and reduction of work-related stress and to the provision of support to any member of staff who may suffer stress.

To support its employees and to also fulfil its legal obligations, Swanage Town Council will:

- identify any risks to their employees' health and carry out regular risk assessments
- take reasonable steps to prevent or reduce work-related stress

To enable the organisation to help prevent or reduce work-related stress, employees are encouraged to approach their line manager or Town Clerk, as set out in section 4, if they feel that they are experiencing stress.

Employees who are absent from work due to stress, whether work related or not, should also refer to the organisation's absence management policy.

6. Employee assistance programme

As part of the wellbeing services that Swanage Town Council offers, help and support is also available through the organisation's employee assistance programme (EAP). Employees can use the organisation's EAP to speak to an independent adviser on a confidential basis about any issue that is troubling them. To access this support, contact 0800 111 6387.



Reasonable Adjustments Policy

Swanage Town Council

1. Introduction

Swanage Town Council are committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion for all our employees and for everyone who uses our services. This includes taking positive action to support individuals experiencing physical and mental health challenges.

This policy does not form part of an employee's contract of employment, and the organisation reserves the right to amend it at any time.

This policy should be used in conjunction with the organisation's other relevant policies including the Absence Management Policy.

2. The Law

2.1. Definition of a Disability

Under the Equality Act 2010, a person is considered to be disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' impact on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

'Substantial' is more than minor or trivial e.g. it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task like getting dressed.

'Long-term' means the impairment must last for at least 12 months or has been diagnosed as likely to last for at least 12 months e.g. a breathing condition that develops as a result of a lung infection, or its likely to last for the rest of their life.

'Day-to-day activities' includes anything someone would normally be able to do if they did not have a health condition e.g. getting dressed, shopping, reading or writing.

Mental health can affect how individuals think, feel and behave and can:

- happen suddenly, because of a specific event in someone's life
- build up gradually over time
- be hard to spot because everyone has different signs and signals
- be hidden because many people find it difficult to talk about their mental health

- fluctuate over time which means that an employee's ability to cope with the demands of the job might change

2.2. Definition of Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are changes that an employer makes to remove or reduce a disadvantage related to someone's disability. Reasonable adjustments are specific to an individual person. They can be for physical or mental health conditions. They can cover any area of work (see section 4.4).

2.3. Employers' responsibilities

The Equality Act 2010 says that employers must make reasonable adjustments for:

- employees and workers
- contractors and self-employed people hired to personally do the work
- job applicants

The Equality Act 2010 also says that employers are required to make reasonable adjustments when:

- they know, or could reasonably be expected to know, someone is disabled
- a disabled staff member or job applicant asks for adjustments
- someone who's disabled is having difficulty with any part of their job
- someone's absence record, sickness record or delay in returning to work is because of, or linked to, their disability

Employers must also:

- make reasonable adjustments for anything linked to someone's disability
- make sure other people do what's needed for a reasonable adjustment to work.

Swanage Town Council is aware that not all physical and mental health conditions will be classed as a disability. Where the condition does not constitute a disability, the employer is not legally required to make reasonable adjustments.

However, Swanage Town Council is committed to creating a work environment that supports the wellbeing of its employees and as such it aims to consider requests for support from all employees experiencing physical and mental health challenges.

3. Examples of Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are specific to an individual person. However, they can cover:

- changes to someone's physical working environment e.g. changing someone's work base, allowing someone to work from home to manage distractions or

engage in activities that allow them to manage their mental health or relocating someone's workspace to a quieter area to reduce sensory demands

- changing someone's working arrangements e.g. changing someone's working pattern or contracted hours
- finding a different way to do something e.g. giving someone more time to undertake a piece of work or test during an interview, providing accessible formats
- providing equipment, services or support e.g. providing adapted equipment such as chairs or phones
- changing someone's roles and responsibilities e.g. reviewing tasks or deadlines to help someone have a reasonable workload while managing their mental health or breaking down work into short term tasks to reduce the complexity of someone's work and to provide structure to the working day
- reviewing working relationships and communication styles e.g. agreeing a preferred communication method to help reduce anxiety.

4. Implementing Reasonable Adjustment

4.1. Requesting a meeting

Swanage Town Council recognises that everyone's experience of physical and mental health is different and can fluctuate over time. This means that identifying, agreeing, and monitoring reasonable adjustments can take time. It also relies on employers and employees talking openly so that everyone's needs are met.

If an employee wishes to discuss any reasonable adjustments, they should arrange to meet with the relevant line manager. If the individual feels unable to talk to their line manager, then they should talk to the Town Clerk or the Chair of the Personnel Committee.

If a request for reasonable adjustments has arisen during an absence review process, then the monitoring periods set out in the Absence Management Policy would continue to apply, unless otherwise agreed. Any requests for reasonable adjustments would then be considered alongside any absence reviews being carried out.

4.2. Preparing for the meeting

Swanage Town Council understands that some people may find it hard to talk openly about their health. Therefore, prior to the meeting the employee may find it helpful to:

- think carefully about what they want to disclose about their health
- consider how their health affects their work

- think about what reasonable adjustments may help them
- write down notes which can be referred to during the conversation

4.3. During the meeting

During the meeting, the Town Clerk and the employee should discuss any proposed reasonable adjustments and agree a plan.

The meeting might include:

- the employee explaining why they are requesting reasonable adjustments
- the employee explaining which reasonable adjustments they want to make
- discussing whether the suggested adjustments are reasonable (see section 4.4)
- agreeing the reasonable adjustments or adjourning to enable the adjustments to be considered further
- discussing the length of time the reasonable adjustments may be needed
- agreeing a plan to review and monitor the reasonable adjustments
- look at what ongoing support is available.

Where possible, notes should be taken during the meeting and kept as a record for both parties to refer back to.

4.4. Deciding what is ‘reasonable’?

The test of whether the requirements requested by a disabled employee/applicant are reasonable is an objective test. It is not about what an individual might personally think is reasonable.

When deciding if an adjustment is reasonable, the Equality Act 2010 sets out the following factors which the organisation must take into consideration:

- Will the adjustment remove or reduce the disadvantage?
- Is the adjustment practical to make?
- Is the adjustment affordable?
- Could the adjustment harm the health and safety of others?

4.5. After the meeting

After the meeting has taken place, the relevant manager should put in writing to the employee details of what was discussed during the meeting. This should include details of any plan / agreements made and a date for monitoring.

4.6. Monitoring

Swanage Town Council recognises that an employee's health can change over time. Therefore, the relevant line manager will regularly monitor any agreed reasonable adjustments whilst considering the needs of the employee and the organisation in case anything needs to change.

The manager will also keep a record of any changes made over time.

4.7. Permanent Changes

Employees who require a permanent change to their working arrangements, such as changing contracted hours, should refer to the organisation's Flexible Working Policy.

5. Occupational Health

At any stage of discussing reasonable adjustments for an employee's health the employer may seek support from an occupational health professional who may be able to give advice on what adjustments might be suitable.



Neonatal Policy

Swanage Town Council

1. What is Neonatal Care?

Babies may receive neonatal care for a variety of reasons. This can include because they have been born prematurely (before 37 weeks of pregnancy), they have a low birth weight, they are born with, or develop shortly after birth, a medical condition which needs treatment, or they experience a difficult birth.

2. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the term 'neonatal care' includes:

- medical care that a child receives in a hospital;
- medical care that a child receives in any other place providing:
 - the child was previously admitted to a hospital as an inpatient and needs continuing care after leaving the hospital;
 - the care is under the direction of a consultant; and
 - the care involves ongoing monitoring and visits from healthcare professionals arranged by the hospital where the child was an inpatient;or
- palliative or end-of-life care.

In this policy, the term 'partner of the child' can include someone, of whatever sex, who lives with the mother or the child in an enduring family relationship but who is not the mother's child, parent, grandchild, grandparent, sibling, aunt, uncle, niece or nephew.

3. To Whom This Policy Applies

This policy applies to employees employed by Swanage Town Council. It does not apply to workers, contractors, consultants or any self-employed individuals working for the organisation.

4. Neonatal Care Leave (NCL)

4.1 Entitlement to NCL (birth)

An employee has a statutory right from day one of their employment to take neonatal care leave if at the date of the child's birth:

- they are the child's parent and have responsibility for the upbringing of the child;
- they are the intended parent; or
- they are the partner of the child's mother and have main responsibility for the upbringing of the child (apart from the mother).

Additionally, the following conditions must be satisfied:

- the child was born on or after 6 April 2025;
- the child started receiving neonatal care within 28 days after the date on which they were born (the 28 days are counted from the day after the child is born);
- the neonatal care has lasted seven days or longer without interruption (the seven days are counted from the day after the neonatal care started);
- the employee is taking the leave to care for the child; and
- the employee has complied with the relevant notice and declaration requirements set out in this policy.

4.2 Entitlement to NCL (adoption)

In cases specifically related to adoption, an employee's entitlement begins either after the child has been placed for adoption (for adoptions within the UK) or after the child has entered Great Britain (for adoptions from overseas).

An employee has a statutory right from day one of their employment to take neonatal care leave if at the date the child is placed for adoption:

- They are the child's adopter and have or expect to have responsibility for the upbringing of the child;
- They are the child's prospective adopter (in a 'foster to adopt' arrangement) and have, or expect to have, responsibility for the upbringing of the child; or
- They are the partner of the child's adopter or prospective adopter and have main responsibility for the upbringing of the child (apart from your partner).

For adoptions from overseas, employees are entitled to neonatal care leave if at the date the child enters Great Britain:

- They are the child's overseas adopter and have or expect to have responsibility for the upbringing of the child; or
- They are the partner of the child's overseas adopter and have or expect to have main responsibility for the upbringing of the child (apart from their partner).

If the employee is having a child through a surrogacy arrangement, they are entitled to neonatal care leave if at the date of the child's birth:

- they have applied or intend to apply for a parental order within a period of six months;
- they expect the parental order to be granted; and
- they have or expect to have responsibility for the upbringing of the child.

Additionally, the following conditions must be satisfied:

- the child was born on or after 6 April 2025;
- the child started receiving neonatal care within 28 days after the date on which they were born (the 28 days are counted from the day after the child is born);
- the neonatal care has lasted seven days or longer without interruption (the seven days are counted from the day after the neonatal care started);
- they are taking the leave to care for the child; and
- they have complied with the relevant notice and declaration requirements set out in this policy.

4.3 Amount of NCL

Employees are entitled to one week of neonatal care leave for each qualifying period of one week that a child spends in neonatal care without interruption.

A 'week' is defined as a period of seven days.

The first qualifying period starts the day after the day on which neonatal care begins. For example, if the child started receiving neonatal care on 7 April, the seven-day count begins on 8 April. This means that the employee can start their neonatal care leave on any day from 15 April.

Subsequent qualifying periods start the day after the end of the preceding qualifying period. For example, if a child went into neonatal care on day one, the first qualifying period would start on day two and end on day eight, and the next qualifying period would start on day nine.

The minimum number of weeks that an employee can take as neonatal care leave is one week and the maximum number of weeks that an employee can take as neonatal care leave is capped at 12 weeks.

Employees can take only up to 12 weeks' neonatal care leave, even if multiple children from the same pregnancy require neonatal care.

Both parents of a child are entitled to neonatal care leave, including if they both work for Swanage Town Council.

4.4 How and When NCL Can Be Taken

Neonatal care leave is available to take in two tiers:

Tier 1

The tier 1 period runs from when the child starts receiving neonatal care until the seventh day after the day the baby stops receiving neonatal care.

Tier 1 NCL can therefore be taken from any point after the first week that the child has been in neonatal care until the seventh day after the neonatal care ends.

Tier 1 NCL can be taken in one continuous block or a number of non-continuous blocks of a minimum of one week at a time during this period. A maximum of 12 weeks in total can be taken.

Tier 2

The tier 2 period starts from the eighth day after the neonatal care ends and must end within 68 weeks of the child's date of birth.

Tier 2 NCL, consists of any remaining NCL that was not taken during the tier 1 period.

Tier 2 NCL must be taken in one continuous block.

For examples of tier 1 and tier 2 leave, see Appendix D.

4.5 Notice to Take NCL

Swanage Town Council understands that having a child in neonatal care is an incredibly difficult time for parents. Please be assured that if it is not possible to meet the timeframes for giving or withdrawing notice as set out in this policy, the organisation will accept later notice than this and, in some cases, we may waive the requirement to give notice altogether.

4.5.1 Notice during the tier 1 period

The employee must notify the Town Clerk for each week of tier 1 NCL that they wish to take. This can be done verbally or in writing.

Preferably the Town Clerk should be notified before the first day of absence in that week or as soon as is reasonably practicable to do so.

Following the initial request, the employee should then complete the Intention and Entitlement to Take Neonatal Care Leave form, which can be found in Appendix B (birth) or Appendix C (adoption).

There is no expectation that an employee should complete this form straight away while the child is receiving neonatal care. However, the organisation does request that the form is sent to the Town Clerk within 28 days of the first day of neonatal care leave, or if this is not possible, as soon as reasonably practicable.

4.5.2 Notice during the tier 2 period

The employee must notify the Town Clerk if they wish to take any remaining NCL not taken during the tier 1 period. This must be done in writing, using the Neonatal Care Leave form, which can be found in Appendix B (birth) or Appendix C (adoption).

If the employee wishes to take only a single week of neonatal care leave, then their notice should be received by the Town Clerk at least 15 days before the first date that they have chosen for their leave to start, or if this is not possible, as soon as it is reasonably practicable.

If the employee wishes to take two or more consecutive weeks of neonatal care leave, their notice should be received by the Town Clerk at least 28 days before the first date that they have chosen for their leave to start, or if this is not possible, as soon as reasonably practicable.

4.5.3 Amending notice to take NCL

If an employee has submitted a notice of intention and entitlement to take neonatal care leave during the tier 2 period but wish to cancel their leave, they must inform the Town Clerk as soon as reasonably practicable.

5. Neonatal Care Leave and Other Types of Parental Leave

Parents will have 68 weeks to take their neonatal care leave entitlement from the baby's date of birth, which means that they will be able to take their full entitlement to neonatal care leave in addition to other types of parental leave.

If an employee has already started a period of statutory leave, but subsequently becomes eligible for neonatal care leave, they can take their neonatal care leave after completing the other statutory leave, provided that their neonatal care leave is taken within 68 weeks of the child's birth date.

If the employee has already started a period of neonatal care leave during the tier 1 period but needs to begin another type of statutory leave (e.g. shared parental leave), their neonatal care leave will be temporarily paused immediately before the other statutory leave begins. They can then resume the remaining weeks of their neonatal care leave in one of two ways:

- if they are still within the tier 1 period - immediately after the end of the other period of statutory leave; or
- if they have transitioned into the tier 2 period - immediately after any other neonatal care leave taken during the tier 2 period.

Employees cannot take neonatal care leave in the tier 2 period if, at the time of giving notice, they are aware that the leave will overlap with another type of statutory leave.

5.1 Maternity Leave

Employees who qualify for maternity leave will need to take their neonatal care leave after their maternity leave ends, as maternity leave will be automatically triggered by the birth of the baby or babies and cannot be paused and restarted.

5.2 Adoption Leave

Employees who qualify for adoption leave will need to take their neonatal care leave once adoption leave has ended. Adoption Leave cannot be paused and restarted.

5.3 Shared Parental Leave

If an employee wishes to take shared parental leave then they can choose to take neonatal care leave either:

- straight after their maternity or adoption leave ends but before their shared parental leave starts; or
- in between/after periods of shared parental leave

provided that their neonatal care leave is taken within 68 weeks of the child's birth date.

5.4 Paternity Leave

Employees who qualify for paternity leave can take their neonatal care leave either before or after their paternity leave, provided that their neonatal care leave is taken within 68 weeks of the child's birth date.

6. Adoption Placement Disrupted

Employees who have accrued entitlement to neonatal care leave may still be entitled to take their neonatal care leave if their adoption placement is disrupted.

A placement is disrupted where:

- the child is returned after having been placed for adoption,
- ceases to live with the overseas adopter, or
- in the case of a surrogacy arrangement, the parental order does not proceed.

Employees should refer to the Adoption Policy and seek advice from the Town Clerk regarding entitlement to leave and other support that may be available.

7. Bereavement

Employees who have accrued entitlement to neonatal care leave can still take the neonatal care leave that they have accrued if their child passes away.

Employees may also be entitled to parental bereavement leave in these circumstances as set out in the organisation's Leave Policy.

In such cases, employees should speak to the Town Clerk so that their entitlement to leave and other support can be discussed.

8. Neonatal Care Pay (NCP)

The maximum number of weeks for which an employee can receive neonatal care pay is capped at 12 weeks.

Any periods of NCL taken will be paid at the current Statutory Neonatal Care (SNC) rate or at 90% of the employee's average weekly earnings (whichever is lower).

Employees may be eligible to receive Statutory Neonatal Care Pay if:

- They are entitled to take neonatal care leave;
- They have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with the organisation at the end of the relevant week;

They are still employed at the time of taking NCL

- Their average weekly earnings are not less than the lower earnings limit for national insurance contributions;
- they have complied with the relevant notice and evidential requirements and are able to provide the declarations as set out in this policy; and
- they have confirmed when they wish to start receiving statutory neonatal care pay using the appropriate paperwork.

In this policy "relevant week" means the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth if you are entitled to statutory maternity or paternity pay. In all other cases, it means the week before the neonatal care begins.

9. Keeping In Touch and Returning To Work

Employees should refer to the relevant parental leave policy (maternity, paternity, shared parental, adoption, and parental bereavement leave) for further details on keeping in touch days and returning to work.

10. Pension

The following information relates to employees who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

10.1 Employee Contributions During NCL

Employees will pay pension contributions at their 'normal' percentage rate during any period of paid leave.

Employees will not pay pension contributions during any period of unpaid leave. However, the employee can, if they wish, choose to enter into an age-related Additional Pension Contribution (APC) to cover the amount 'lost' during the unpaid leave. Information about this is set out in the employer's information below.

10.2 Employer Contributions During NCL

The Town Council will pay employer contributions on the employee's Assumed Pensionable Pay (APP). APP is calculated with reference to the average pensionable pay the employee received in the 3 months immediately preceding the period of reduced or nil pay. If, however, the employee's pay during their leave is higher than APP, the Town Council will pay contributions based on this higher amount.

APP does not apply during any unpaid period of NCL. The employee can, if they wish, choose to enter into an age-related Additional Pension Contribution (APC) to cover the amount of pension 'lost' during the unpaid leave.

If the employee notifies the Town Clerk in writing within 30 days of returning to work that they wish to enter into an APC then:

- The employee will pay 1/3 of the cost of the APC
- The employer will pay 2/3 of the cost of the APC.

If the employee notifies the Town Clerk of this decision later than 30 days after returning to work then the whole cost will be borne by the employee, unless the Town Council voluntarily agrees to contribute to the APC.

11. Continuous Service

Neonatal care leave counts as continuous service for statutory and contractual purposes.

12. Leave During Neonatal Care Leave

12.1 Annual Leave

Annual leave continues to accrue during neonatal care leave.

12.2 Bank/Public Holidays

Bank/public holidays continue to accrue during neonatal care leave.

13. Requesting Support

Employees finding it difficult to cope at work because their child is in neonatal care, are encouraged to speak to the relevant line manager.

Swanage Town Council realise that this may not be an easy subject to talk about. However, we urge you to be as open as possible about any particular issues that you are experiencing to ensure that you are provided with the right level of support.

Any information disclosed by you during discussions will be treated sensitively and in strict confidence.

To consider preliminary employee budget for the 2026/27 financial year

The purpose of this report is to give initial consideration to the estimated employee costs for the next financial year, including an estimate for the two years beyond, for submission to the Finance and Governance Committee meeting to be held on 17th December 2025 as part of the overall budget approval process.

2025/26 Forecast

The budget and forecast for 2025/26, with variances, are summarised in Table 1 below. The current forecast for the 2025/26 financial year shows a potential underspend of £79.8k.

Table 1: 2025/26 budget and projected outturn split by department

	2025/26		
Department	Budget	Forecast	Variance
	£	£	£
Car Parks	56,050	50,340	(5,710)
Parks & Operations (incl Beach Cleaner)	669,220	621,840	(47,380)
Beach Gardens	32,330	33,840	1,510
Beaches - Seafront Advisors	15,320	11,300	(4,020)
Market	6,470	7,460	990
Boat Park	17,900	17,050	(850)
Tourism	235,450	231,260	(4,190)
Central Services	418,610	398,450	(20,160)
Total	1,451,350	1,371,540	(79,810)

In estimating the employee costs for 2025/26, an increase of 4% was applied to all scale points. The actual pay award was 3.2% resulting in a general variance from budget.

Other variances have occurred due to vacant posts, reduced hours from flexible working requests and under employment in seasonal posts. The latter is due to several recurring factors, such as difficulty in recruiting to seasonal posts. Members may wish to review the allocation of hours for seasonal posts should it be deemed that over budgeting is resulting on a consistent basis.

2026/27 Budget Overview

A summary of the total staffing budget is set out below in Table 2, and each department will be reviewed individually. All staffing requirements have been discussed with departmental managers and are subject to Member approval.

Table 2: Employee budgets, forecast and actual costs and FTE posts

	<u>Actual 2024/25</u>	<u>Budget 2025/26 *</u>	<u>Forecast 2025/26</u>	<u>Estimate 2026/27</u>	<u>Estimate 2027/28</u>	<u>Estimate 2028/29</u>
Central Services	£348,060	£418,610	£398,450	£435,330	£414,700	£414,660
Operations	£623,835	£669,220	£621,840	£641,700	£661,660	£681,920
Enforcement	£48,025	£56,050	£50,340	£53,860	£55,480	£57,190
Visitor Services	£284,030	£307,470	£300,910	£319,700	£332,150	£342,350
Total Costs	£1,303,950	£1,451,350	£1,371,540	£1,450,590	£1,463,990	£1,496,120
Total FTE count	33.88	35.09	33.65	33.99	33.29	32.99

*revised following NI Increases

An increase of 3% has been applied to the payroll for 2026/27, and the 2 next financial years, and includes incremental uplifts where required.

The employer's pension contribution rate was set by the Pension Fund at 22% for the three financial years 2023/24 to 2025/26 and it is assumed that this will be the case for 2026/27, 2027/28 & 2028/29. Council should be informed by December 2025 of any change in the contribution rate, and any revisions will be incorporated into the draft estimates to be submitted to the Finance & Governance Committee on 17th December 2025.

The Employer National Insurance Contribution rate of 15% has been applied. Any changes announced in the November budget statement will also be applied if applicable.

In terms of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees i.e., 37 hours per week, the 2026/27 estimate has reduced by 1.1 FTE employees from the 2025/26 budget.

Departmental Review of Budgets

Central Services

Table 3: Employee budgets, forecast and actual costs and FTE count – Central Services

	<u>Actual 2024/25</u>	<u>Budget 2025/26</u>	<u>Forecast 2025/26</u>	<u>Estimate 2026/27</u>	<u>Estimate 2027/28</u>	<u>Estimate 2028/29</u>
Costs	£348,060	£418,610	£398,450	£435,330	£414,700	£414,660
FTE	7.10	8.20	7.90	8.20	7.50	7.20

The provisional budget for 2025/26 set at the personnel Committee in October 2024, was for 7.2 FTE posts. However, an additional post of Project Delivery Officer was added to the departmental budget for a 2 year period at the extraordinary meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 8th January 2025.

This post was recruited to in June 2025, resulting in a small variance in budget. A further variance has been realised following a flexible working request on reduced hours. These hours are currently anticipated to be fully utilised from Q4 2025/26.

Operations, including Beach Cleaning

Table 4: Employee budgets, forecast and actual costs and FTE count – Operations Department

	<u>Actual 2024/25</u>	<u>Budget 2025/26</u>	<u>Forecast 2025/26</u>	<u>Estimate 2026/27</u>	<u>Estimate 2027/28</u>	<u>Estimate 2028/29</u>
Costs	£621,580	£669,220	£621,840	£641,700	£661,660	£681,920
FTE	17.25	17.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25

This department has seen a reduction of one FTE post from 2024/25. Due to efficiencies that had been developed through purchasing new vehicles and equipment, it was deemed by the manager that the post could be removed without any detrimental effect on work capacity and has therefore not been included in future budgets.

This department now accounts for 16.25 FTE posts.

Enforcement Officers (Car Parks)

Table 5: Employee budgets, forecast and actual costs and FTE count – Car Park Enforcement

	<u>Actual 2024/25</u>	<u>Budget 2025/26</u>	<u>Forecast 2025/26</u>	<u>Estimate 2026/27</u>	<u>Estimate 2027/28</u>	<u>Estimate 2028/29</u>
Costs	£51,550	£56,050	£50,340	£53,890	£55,480	£57,190
FTE	1.52	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5

This department has a budget for 1.5 FTE posts, with a small reduction in winter hours being allocated in 2025/26 and it has been assumed that this will not change during the course of the period covered by these estimates.

Visitor Services:

For the 2024/25 budget it was agreed that a budget would be set with the intention of delivering an optimal service delivery.

Table 6: Employee budgets, forecast and actual costs and FTE count – Visitor Services

	<u>Actual 2024/25</u>	<u>Budget 2025/26</u>	<u>Forecast 2025/26</u>	<u>Estimate 2026/27</u>	<u>Estimate 2027/28</u>	<u>Estimate 2028/29</u>
TIC	£222,530	£235,450	£231,260	£242,220	£252,190	£259,930
Beach Gardens	£30,185	£32,330	£33,840	£35,800	£36,940	£38,080
Seafront Advisors	£7,830	£15,320	£11,300	£13,330	£13,830	£14,240
Market	£6,455	£6,470	£7,460	£8,250	£8,490	£8,760
Boat Park	£17,030	£17,900	£17,050	£20,100	£20,700	£21,340
Total Visitor Services Costs	£284,030	£307,470	£300,910	£319,700	£332,150	£342,350
Total FTE count	8.01	8.04	8.00	8.04	8.04	8.04

For 2026/27, the Visitor Services Manager has retained the same number of FTE posts and hours as for the 2025/26 budget. This department is naturally more fluid, being reactive to

consumer demands and needs to be more flexible due to the seasonal nature of some of the posts. As such, the visitor services budgets as a whole are a more accurate reflection of costs and employee numbers. Requested changes to the staffing structure for 2026/27 onwards are:

TIC:

- Recruit an additional permanent Visitor Services Assistant which will be 28 hours 1 April to 31 October & 21 hours 1 November to 31 March.
- Increase the hours for an existing post.

This will replace hours lost due to flexible working requests and the need for seasonal recruitment to the TIC.

Beach Gardens:

It is anticipated that additional hours will be required at Beach Gardens due to extended opening hours of the kiosk and the need to cover breaks in busy periods. It is not yet clear if this will require additional posts, or if this service can be delivered through existing posts.

Seafront/Boat Park/Market:

- Create a new seasonal Customer Services Assistant post which will cover the seafront, Boat Park and Market. This will replace a seasonal Boat Park Assistant post.
- Recruit two seasonal Beach Wardens, with the possibility of these posts covering Beach Gardens, as above.

Overall, there may be some requirement to restructure these posts. However, any changes will remain within the hours/budgets estimated above in total.

Training budget

A budget of £17,000 was provided for training during 2025/26. However, it is currently forecast that it will be underspent. The suggested training budget put forward for 2026/27 is:

Central Services: £4,000

General Operations : £8,000

Visitor Services: £2,000

Total: £14,000

Decision required

- To consider recommending to the Finance and Governance Committee on 17th December 2025 the staffing estimates for 2026/27, incorporating any revisions made in the meeting.
- To approve the training budget.

Alison Spencer
Finance Manager

October 2025