

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Employment Committee
Date: 10 December 2018
Report for: Information
Report of: Sara Saleh, Corporate Director of People

Report Title

Revised HR Policies.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that Employment Committee notes the content of this report and approves the following revised policies so they can be implemented: Adoption; Volunteering, and; Fertility Investigation and Treatment and approves the following new policy so they can be implemented: Annual Leave.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

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Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	This proposal aligns with the council's Corporate Priority 'Reshaping Trafford Council'.
Financial	None.
Legal Implications:	The policies have been revised in accordance with ACAS guidelines and with relevant case law in mind.
Equality/Diversity Implications	None.
Sustainability Implications	None.
Staffing/E-Government/Asset Management Implications	The revised policies are more comprehensive and clear and so it should be easier for managers and staff to use them.
Risk Management Implications	None.
Health & Wellbeing Implications	None.
Health and Safety Implications	None.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The current versions of 3 of these policies were due full reviews and one policy has been changed slightly and we are proposing a change to a further policy. Also 1 new policy has been developed.

2.0 REVIEW PROCESS

- 2.1 The approach taken depended on the policy and includes the following as appropriate: research on the subject areas; benchmarking with other local authorities; checking on any statutory guidance and/or ACAS guidelines, and; reviewing our internal processes and current practice. The policies have been drafted or revised on this basis and we have used simple language to make them more accessible to all.
- 2.2 The first drafts of the policies were reviewed internally by the HR management team. They were then considered by the policy review group which comprises representation from our Unions, Unison and GMB and also several managers. The group were sent the revised policies and information highlighting the key changes in advance of meeting so they could absorb the information. Then the group met to go through the key changes and had a discussion and agreed any changes as appropriate. The Corporate Director for People undertook a final review.

3.0 KEY CHANGES/CONTENT OF THE POLICIES

- 3.1 The policies have been streamlined and simplified with more use of plain English and with reduced usage of HR terminology, wherever possible, to make them easier to understand and follow.
- 3.2 The policies have been created in a generic template. It has a contents table so that staff and managers can find the section that they want easily. It also has a version control table so that there is a clear audit trail of different changes and versions of the policy.
- 3.3 Adoption

The key changes to the policy are:

Current Version	Revised Version
Eligibility section doesn't include dual approved prospective adopters.	Mention of this scenario has been included.
Eligibility section has information about circumstances where adopters will not qualify for adoption leave or pay.	This section has been updated in line with national guidance.
	Ordering changed – 'Pre-adoption arrangements' section is now before 'Notification of intention to take Adoption

	Leave’.
Notification section has process where employee writes to their manager to notify.	Process is via the ‘adoption application form’ submitted via the GMSS portal.
Adoption Leave section ‘starting adoption leave – no mention of fostering to adopt.	Details that leave can start while the dual approved prospective adopters are fostering the child.
Where arrangements changes employees are advised to notify their manager.	Employee should notify their manager in writing of the new start date and also notify GMSS.
Adoption Pay (SAP) section includes qualifying criteria.	This has been amended so it is in line with national guidance – for example reference to the qualifying week and also now mentions the position for Parental Order parents.
Occupational Adoption pay - currently details the fact that staff can receive the 12 weeks of half pay spread over any mutually agreed period.	This is now detailed as 3 options in line with how GMSS will arrange the payments and the forms reflect this. Option 1 – half pay is paid over the normal 12 weeks, option 2 – half pay is paid over 33 weeks, option 3 – half pay is deferred and received when the employee returns to work.
Reference to Additional Paternity Leave and Shared Parental Leave	Reference to Additional Paternity leave has been taken out as now there is only Shared Parental leave instead.
Adoption Placement Ending section is quite brief.	This has been expanded to give scenarios which mean that adoption ends early.

3.4 Volunteering Policy

This policy is currently in a toolkit format rather than a policy and so a comparison between the current version and the new version hasn’t been undertaken.

The key changes are:

- Move from 12 hours of paid leave for volunteering to 2 days.
- Move from the Workforce Strategy team co-ordinating volunteering opportunities to the onus being on the employee.
- Now includes existing volunteering commitments, as it is fair that staff who were volunteering already can access the scheme.
- Application process changed so staff can apply through submitting a web form and using MiTrent with management approval.

3.5 Fertility Investigation and Treatment Policy

The key changes to the policy are:

Current Version	Revised Version
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Title is Assisted Fertility.	Now Fertility Investigation and Treatment as this is what it covers.
Implied that for all staff including men and women.	Make explicit for the avoidance of doubt.
Just details types of assisted conception procedures.	Includes different types of treatments for infertility which includes assisted conception.
Scope of policy details that it is for all staff including those in same-sex partnerships or single people.	No need to state this as it is a given.
3 days of special leave for treatment (inclusive of 1 day for investigations).	4 days for treatment which covers medical, surgical and assisted conception. This is linked to requirements for assisted conception – for egg removal it tends to be one day for procedure and 1 day recovery and again the same for implantation. Male procedures tend to be within these timescales as well.
States that leave should be recorded as 'special leave' rather than 'pregnancy related).	We have a code for fertility leave so detailed that this should be used. Take out reference to pregnancy related' as this is insensitive and not appropriate. Changed process so that if employee is on MiTrent they request themselves and if not manager does GMSS form.
Additional support section had old EAP provider and Occupational Health and the maternity policy	Now has new EAP provider and have taken out reference to OH as unlikely that a referral would be required. Taken out reference to the Maternity policy as insensitive and also if employee does become pregnant they'll know to look for the relevant policy.

3.6 Annual Leave Policy

Information about annual leave is currently on an intranet page rather than a formal policy and so a comparison between the current version and the new version hasn't been undertaken. The policy covers what annual leave is; entitlement; calculating leave; leave application procedure; unused annual leave; new members of staff; staff leaving the Council.

The key changes are:

- More comprehensive information and guidance.
- Move to annual leave being quoted in hours rather than days and inclusive of bank holidays.
- Recording process through MiTrent for services with access to self-service.

3.7 Grievance Policy

The Council's Grievance policy has never included matters relating to pay and grading of posts, however when last revised this exemption was taken out in error. Benchmarking has been taken within GM which confirms that other authorities don't allow grievances for pay and grading. On the basis that the

policy previously didn't include this, nor do other authorities, it is proposed that a sentence is added into the scope section of the policy as follows:

The procedure does not apply to matters covered by statutory provision such as income tax, national insurance or pension schemes or issues relating to the pay and grading of posts.

This change has UNISON and GMB support.

3.8 Recruitment Policy/Guaranteed Interview Schemes

The Council has had a guaranteed interview scheme in place for many years for individuals who have a disability. This means that if an applicant with a disability meets the essential criteria for a post they will be interviewed. This measure helps to reduce the disadvantage that those with disabilities face when trying to secure employment so that they have a chance to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and experience at interview.

As part of the Council's wider aims to improve employment outcomes for certain groups who may face more disadvantage than the general population, it has been proposed, and agreed by CLT, that the Council should offer a guaranteed interview scheme to other priority groups. The groups to be included in the scheme are all at an evidenced disadvantage, in securing enduring employment. The groups are:

- Ex-service personnel.
- 'Working Well' clients – long term unemployed.
- Care leavers.

The scheme will operate in a similar manner to the current disability scheme and individuals in these groups, provided they meet some criteria linked to the group and meet the essential criteria for the role, will be interviewed.

4.0 **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

- 4.1 We plan to implement the new policies on 1st January 2019 (with the exception of the Guaranteed Interview Scheme in the Recruitment policy). On this date they will go live on the relevant intranet page with the contents of the pages being updated. The web pages will have information to make it clear that the revised or new policy has been launched.
- 4.2 As the key principles or processes for these policies haven't changed there isn't a critical issue regarding ensuring that there is a transition process for employees using the current version to the new version. However communications will go on the 6 boxes so that staff are aware that they have been updated, which will also increase awareness of them generally. We will however specifically promote the Volunteering Policy as we would like to encourage staff to support the Trafford community by volunteering.
- 4.3 In respect of the Guaranteed Interview scheme for priority groups, the implementation of these schemes will form part of the Resourcing review and no specific date has been agreed for the changes to be made. However when the schemes are live the Recruitment Policy will be amended accordingly.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Employment Committee are recommended to support the new and revised policies and the implementation plan.

Appendix 1

4 policies.