

AGENDA FOR EMPLOYMENT PANEL



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To: All Members of Employment Panel

Councillors : M Walsh, T Tariq, L Smith, D Green,
D Hill, K Hussain, A Quinn, S Thorpe (Chair) and
A Arif

Dear Member/Colleague

Employment Panel

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Employment Panel which will be held as follows:-

Date:	Monday, 20 July 2026
Place:	Microsoft Teams
Time:	7.00 pm
Briefing Facilities:	If Opposition Members and Co-opted Members require briefing on any particular item on the Agenda, the appropriate Director/Senior Officer originating the related report should be contacted.
Notes:	

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Employment Panel are asked whether they have an interest in any of the matters on the agenda and, if so, to formally declare that interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING *(Pages 3 - 10)*

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2026 are attached for approval and accuracy.

4 WORKFORCE POLICY REVIEW *(Pages 11 - 156)*

The Workforce Policy Review report and appendices are attached.

5 EMPLOYMENT PANEL TRAINING

Tim Normanton, Assistant Director of HR to deliver a training session on the Employment Appeal Hearings.

6 URGENT BUSINESS

Any other business which by reason of special circumstances the Chair agrees may be considered as a matter of urgency.

Minutes of: EMPLOYMENT PANEL

Date of Meeting: 25 June 2026

Present: Councillor Thorpe
Councillors M Walsh, T Tariq, D Green, D Hill, K Hussain,
A Quinn, S Thorpe and A Arif

Also in attendance: Tim Normanton - Assistant Director of HR, Kate Waterhouse – Executive Director for Strategy and Transformation, Catherine King – People, Policy and Organisational Development Manager, Kelly Barnett – Democratic Services

Public Attendance: No members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor L Smith

EP.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence are noted above.

EP.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

EP.3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was agreed that the notes of the meeting held on 3 February 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

EP.4 APPOINTMENT OF CORPORATE PARENTING CHAMPION

The Employment Panel considered the appointment of a Corporate Parenting Champion for the 2026/27 municipal year.

It was agreed:

1. Councillor A Arif be appointed as the Corporate Parenting Champion for the Employment Panel Committee.

EP.5 WORKFORCE POLICY REVIEW

Tim Normanton presented a report detailing proposed revisions to a number of workforce policies.

Consultation Procedure

The Employment Panel considered revisions to the Consultation Procedure.

Members were advised that the procedure had not been reviewed for some time and required updating to reflect recent legislative changes. Tim Normanton outlined the

introduction of a three-tier approach to consultation, including a new streamlined procedure for smaller-scale changes affecting up to nineteen employees.

The revised procedure also reflected changes arising from the Employment Rights Act 2025 and proposed consultation periods aligned more closely with statutory requirements whilst retaining flexibility for more complex reviews.

Councillor Walsh expressed concern that tracked changes had not been provided with any of the policy reviews, making it difficult to identify all amendments. Tim Normanton advised that previous tracked changed versions of policy reviews had proved difficult to follow and that key amendments had therefore been highlighted within the accompanying report. Members were advised that the changes had been reviewed by the Council's employment solicitor and discussed with UNISON. In response, Councillor Walsh declared that she would abstain from voting on any unclear policies presented for review.

In a response to a question around engagement with Employee groups, Catherine King advised that sessions had been arranged with employee groups to discuss revised policies and gather employee feedback in relation to any issues that they may be facing.

In response to a question around the Local Authority having an Employee Handbook, Catherine King explained that there is a handbook which sets out the local conditions of services and that staff members do use this.

It was agreed:

1. That the revised Consultation Procedure be approved.

Vote: 6 in favour, 1 abstention.

Trade Union Consultation Framework

The Employment Panel considered amendments to the Trade Union Consultation Framework.

Tim Normanton advised that the amendments reflected current working practices and meeting arrangements, facilitating more effective engagement with UNISON and increasing the frequency of the Health and Safety Committee.

It was agreed:

1. That the revised Trade Union Consultation Framework be approved.

Vote: 6 in favour, 1 abstention.

Family Leave Policy

The Employment Panel considered proposed amendments to the Family Leave Policy.

Members were advised that the principal amendments reflected national pension regulation changes affecting periods of unpaid leave. Tim Normanton also highlighted the extension of maternity support leave arrangements to allow leave to be taken within 52 weeks of birth, aligning the policy with paternity leave provisions.

In response to a Member's question regarding the pension scheme, Tim Normanton confirmed that the changes related to the Local Government Pension Scheme and its current career average arrangements.

It was agreed:

1. That the revised Family Leave Policy be approved.

Vote: 6 in favour, 1 abstention.

Fixed Term Contracts Policy

The revised Fixed Term Contracts Policy was presented to The Employment Panel.

Members were advised that the existing policy had not been comprehensively reviewed since 2013 and that the proposed revisions improved clarity and alignment with the Recruitment and Redeployment Policies.

In discussing recruitment challenges, a member raised questions relating to market supplements and recruitment difficulties across the authority. Tim Normanton advised that those matters were addressed separately through the Market Supplement Policy and were not directly connected to fixed-term employment arrangements. Recruitment to posts on a fix term contract is not something that is done frequently.

It was agreed:

1. That the revised Fixed Term Contracts Policy be approved.

Vote: 6 in favour, 1 abstention.

Flexible Working Policy

The Employment Panel considered proposed changes to the Flexible Working Policy.

Tim Normanton explained that the policy has been amended to reflect pension contributions which applies to the purchasing of annual leave and periods of unpaid leave; and that requests of careers breaks when people are off long-term sick will not be approved.

Members discussed the revised wording relating to career breaks and long-term sickness absence. A Member expressed concern that the policy stated career breaks "should not" be used in such circumstances rather than "must not", creating potential ambiguity. Catherine King advised that flexibility had been retained to accommodate exceptional circumstances, particularly where employees had significant caring responsibilities.

In response to a member's question around having a policy outlining carers leave, Catherine King explained that you can take carers leave in different ways and this can be done through the special leave policy and family related policies.

Following discussion, Members agreed that the wording needed changing around carer breaks and sickness absence and it was suggested that the policy be brought back to the next meeting to consider.

It was agreed:

1. That consideration of the Flexible Working Policy be deferred pending further review and clarification.

Vote: 6 in favour, 1 abstention.

Local Conditions of Service – Section 1: Appointments, Transfers and Leavers

Members considered revisions to Section 1 of the Local Conditions of Service.

Tim Normanton advised that the amendments improved consistency with other workforce policies, removed outdated provisions and strengthened links to current guidance and procedures.

It was agreed:

1. That the amendments to Local Conditions of Service – Section 1 be approved.

Vote: 6 in favour, 1 abstention.

Local Conditions of Service – Section 4: Hours and Leave

The Employment Panel considered revisions to Section 4 relating to hours and leave.

Tim Normanton outlined recent national developments relating to term-time working and annual leave entitlement calculations. Members were advised that the revised policy clarified arrangements for employees working less than 38 weeks per year and proposed a proportionate annual leave approach for part-year workers.

It was agreed:

1. That the amendments to Local Conditions of Service – Section 4 be approved.

Vote: 6 in favour, 1 abstention.

Market Supplement Policy

Tim Normanton presented the revised Market Supplement Policy.

It was explained that market supplements provided a mechanism for addressing recruitment and retention difficulties. Examples were provided of specialist roles where external market rates significantly exceeded evaluated salaries.

Members discussed recruitment and retention challenges, succession planning, pension implications and competition from neighbouring authorities. In response, Tim Normanton explained that the Market Supplement was time limited by the fact the market is regularly changing and must be tested against the market every 2 years. There is a risk for the candidate that the supplement is time limited, and it would be up to the candidate if they wanted to take this risk when applying for a position. Tim Normanton confirmed that this policy applies to all employees, and it is a long-standing policy that has been agreed by the Trade Unions.

The Chair commented that, whilst not perfect, market supplements remained an important tool to help attract and retain appropriately skilled staff.

It was agreed:

1. That the revised Market Supplement Policy be approved.

Vote: 6 in favour, 1 abstention.

Recruitment Policy and Redeployment Policy

The Employment Panel considered the revised Recruitment Policy alongside associated amendments to the Redeployment Policy.

Tim Normanton explained that in relation to the recruitment policy, concerns were raised by a former employee who was subject to redundancy, around the need for strengthened links between recruitment and redeployment arrangements. Tim Normanton confirmed that all vacancies will be advertised on the Greater Jobs recruitment platform and reinforced the requirement to prioritise redeployees before progressing external recruitment.

A discussion took place regarding the effectiveness of redeployment arrangements and the need for evidence demonstrating positive outcomes.

In response to members questions around advertising roles on Greater Jobs and discretion on suitability for a redeployee, Tim Normanton outlined the process for approving a vacancy and explained that the vacancy will be circulated to redeployees to consider first, prior to the formal recruitment process, where all jobs are advertised on the Greater Jobs website. Prior to this policy there were a mix of internal only and external vacancies. HR can make a judgement as to whether a role may be suitable for someone but ultimately, it is up to the employee to decide whether a role is suitable for them and advised of the employment law being complex around suitability.

A member requested more meaningful performance information and evidence in relation to redeployment activity, noting that The Employment Panel should be able to assess whether policy changes were delivering tangible improvements. In response, Tim Normanton advised that seven employees had been successfully redeployed during the previous eighteen months. Whilst historical recording had limitations, new monitoring arrangements had now been implemented and improved data would be available in future. It was also advised that some people who had been made redundant, did not want to engage with the redeployment process.

The Chair requested that information regarding redeployment outcomes and measures of success be brought back to the Employment Panel on a six-monthly basis.

Members discussed the importance of workforce planning, internal development opportunities and organisational culture.

Members also discussed the provision of training to support employees entering redeployment arrangements. Tim Normanton confirmed that reasonable training and development opportunities would continue to be considered where appropriate.

It was agreed:

1. That the revised Recruitment Policy be approved.
2. That the revised Redeployment Policy be approved.
3. That reports regarding redeployment activity and outcomes to be considered through the Employment Panel on a 6 monthly basis.
4. The Chair to update the former employee who raised concerns around the redundancy policy and the recruitment policy not aligning, of the discussions surrounding the revised policies.

Vote 6 approved, 1 abstention

Secondments Policy

The Employment Panel considered the revised Secondments Policy.

Tim Normanton advised that the amendments clarified responsibilities for managers, employees and HR and provided greater clarity in relation to secondment arrangements and returning to substantive posts.

It was agreed:

1. That the revised Secondments Policy be approved.

Vote 6 approved, 1 abstention

Sponsorship Policy

The Employment Panel considered revisions to the Sponsorship Policy.

Tim Normanton advised that changes to immigration rules had significantly reduced the number of roles eligible for sponsorship. The proposed policy therefore retained the Council's sponsorship licence but ceased the issue of new Certificates of Sponsorship, whilst continuing to support existing sponsored employees where appropriate.

Members discussed workforce planning, skills shortages and the importance of investing in local talent through apprenticeships, graduate programmes and training opportunities.

It was agreed:

1. That the revised Sponsorship Policy be approved.

Vote: Unanimously approved.

EP.6 EMPLOYMENT PANEL TRAINING

Tim Normanton delivered a training session around the recruitment of Chief Officers. Due to time constraints, it was agreed that the training around the Employment Appeal Hearings will be delivered at a later date.

EP.7 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

COUNCILLOR THORPE
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 9.00 pm)

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Classification**Item No.**

Open

Meeting:	Employment Panel
Meeting date:	20th July 2026
Title of report:	Workforce Policy Review
Report by:	Cllr. Sean Thorpe, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services
Decision Type:	
Ward(s) to which report relates	All

Executive Summary:

A key component of the Council's HR improvement and modernisation programme is the review of core HR systems, processes and policies to ensure they are fit for purpose, reflective of modern HR practice and align with the organisational culture described by the LET'S values.

This report sets out proposals for a number of new, changed, reviewed and replaced policies. Trade Union colleagues have been fully engaged in this work.

Recommendation(s)

That the Employment Panel agrees the following documents:

1. A new Leave Policy
2. A new Flexible Retirement Policy
3. An updated Salary Loans procedure
4. A revised Time Off for Reservists Policy
5. An updated Facilities Time Policy
6. A new Dignity at Work Policy
7. A revised Grievance Procedure
8. A revised Flexible Working Policy (revised following June Employment Panel)
9. Briefing Note – Equality Staff Networks

The documents will then go for endorsement to the Council's Corporate Joint Consultative Committee on 21st July 2026 and subject to approval will then be published on the Council's intranet pages and communicated to staff.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Leave Policy

Background

Currently, the Council has a number of different policies and documents in place which cover the various types of leave:

- Annual leave FAQ document - last updated in January 2025
- Bank holiday guidance notes – last updated in 2012
- Special Leave guidance notes - last updated in June 2018
- Flexi-time – currently appendix J of the Local Conditions of Service - last updated in September 2021
- TOIL guidelines - last updated in May 2015

Policy Headlines

This policy brings together, in a single easy to understand document, the main provisions relating to employee leave, including annual leave, bank holidays, special leave, flexi-time and time off in lieu (TOIL). The existing documents listed above will be withdrawn. Other types of leave that are referred to in the Local Conditions (Section 4) are also referenced, so they can be found if further information is needed.

The policy has been developed to support a modern, flexible, and agile workforce, recognising the changing ways of working, particularly since COVID and the introduction of working in a more agile way. It reflects the Council's commitment to promoting employee wellbeing, enabling a healthy work-life balance, and supporting flexible working arrangements.

The Council's service needs and operational requirements remain the overall priority. All leave arrangements are subject to these requirements, ensuring that services are effectively delivered and that services are appropriately resourced to meet requirements.

The following changes/adjustments have been made to existing practices:

Annual leave

- If requesting a period of 3-weeks or more requires additional approval from the relevant Head of Service or equivalent. This is following a number of queries HR receive from Managers when employees request a longer period of leave
- Stating how annual leave should be booked to ensure iTrent is kept up to date and relevant. There have been instances where leave may not be recorded, resulting in an inaccurate record.
- Stating when employees have until to take any banked leave they may have

Special leave

- Including special leave may be granted in circumstances where an employee is affected by domestic abuse or domestic violence, in line with organisational support arrangements. This is following a discussion at JCC in December 2025.
- A more detailed explanation of special leave and the different categories (A & B). Managers often query with HR what category special leave should be recorded as.

Authorised absence

- A specific section on authorised absence has been included, as there are currently no dedicated guidelines for this within policy.
- The benefit of an Occupational Health referral has been added, to help gain a better understanding of any long-term conditions employees may have, resulting in using authorised absence.

Flexi-time

- Recognising that different services may operate during different hours, depending on individual service needs and requirements, caveating that work outside of the current bandwidth 7.00am-7.00pm may be possible with prior agreement from management.

Quick reference guidance document

The policy is supported by a new guidance document, which provides examples and scenarios explaining what type of leave should be used in which circumstances. This is aimed at assisting managers with commonly experienced situations but is not exhaustive of all scenarios.

2. Flexible Retirement Policy

Background

Flexible retirement was previously included in the Voluntary Exits Policy, but this was withdrawn in 2025.

Policy Headlines

A new Flexible Retirement Policy has been created so that employees can continue to make use of this opportunity. It enables them, subject to a business case which will result in salary savings and capital costs being repaid over 3 years, to reduce their hours or move to a lower graded job and draw their pension at the same time. They must however retire fully within 3 years.

3. Salary Loans Procedure

Background

The Council has offered salary loans to support employees with emergency financial circumstances since c.2022. These are payments of up to 2 weeks' net salary in advance, with a maximum repayment period via salary deductions of 12 months. However, it has become apparent that some employees are becoming overly reliant on the loans, taking another one out as soon as the first loan has been paid off.

Policy Headlines

To support employees to manage their finances and hopefully to move away from a reliance on loans, the Policy has been amended to state that '*only one salary loan is available in any rolling 18-month period*'.

Alongside this, and given our commitment to tackling socio-economic disadvantage, the Council is also revising its workforce wellbeing offer to further enhancing the financial wellbeing support and information it provides to staff. This currently already includes the Employee Assistance Programme helpline, Ask Bill money advice, Angel Advance debt advice, and Money Helper money and pensions guidance, plus links to a range of local and national organisations.

4. Time Off for Reservists Policy

Background

The Time Off for Reservists Policy sets out how Bury Council supports employees who are members of the Reserve Forces, including arrangements for paid time off, mobilisation, demobilisation and return to work. The policy was last reviewed in October 2013 and has now been refreshed and updated in May 2026 to align with current Armed Forces Covenant guidance, improve accessibility and remove outdated content.

Policy Headlines

A number of minor amendments have been made throughout the policy to ensure Bury Council is aligned with the Armed Forces Covenant expectations of supporting Reservists under the Gold Award criteria. Terminology has been refreshed to remove gender-specific pronouns and information to signpost employees to the correct support has been updated.

Overall, the review has streamlined the policy, improved readability and ensured employees who are reservists have access to clear, up-to-date guidance on their rights, responsibilities and available support.

5. Facilities Time Policy

Background

The Facilities Time Policy forms Appendix K of Local Conditions of Service, and sets out the facilities time arrangements for trade union representatives who are employed by the Council. It also acts as a guide for managing arrangements for time off for trade union duties and activities. It was last amended in January 2026.

Policy Headlines

Further changes have been made, linked to the Employment Rights Act 2025, to remove the references to publishing facilities time data. Public sector organisations no longer have to do this from 2026.

6. Dignity at Work Policy**Background**

The Dignity at Work policy has been drafted as part of the council's commitment to zero tolerance of unwanted, inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours. This supports the corporate plan objectives of becoming an anti-racist organisation and a neuroinclusive employer. Dignity at Work policies are widely viewed as best practice in providing a framework for understanding, reporting and addressing unacceptable behaviours towards staff in the workplace.

Policy Headlines

The policy describes unacceptable behaviours and expectations of all employees in the course of their work. It sets out a clear and supportive process for reporting unacceptable behaviours and how these reports can be addressed informally. The policy links into existing disciplinary and grievance procedures where there is a need to take a formal approach to addressing behaviours.

7. Grievance Procedure**Background**

The Grievance Procedure takes account of the ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures and replaces any previous procedures that were in place. The procedure covers all employee concerns, problems or complaints.

The procedure is designed to deal with either individual or collective grievances. Collective grievances can be raised either by a Trade Union representative or a member of staff nominated to do so by those raising the complaint.

Policy Headlines

Due to the introduction of a sole Dignity at Work Policy, all reference to Dignity at Work within the Grievance Procedure has now been removed.

8. Flexible Working Policy

Background

The Flexible Working Policy provides choices to help employees achieve a healthier work/life balance and enables them to combine their work responsibilities with other commitments or personal aspirations. Services benefit too with more flexibility, extended opening/cover arrangements and supported employees with increased morale and motivation who are more productive. It was last updated in February 2024.

Policy Headlines

The following minor changes have been made to the policy:

- General process related updates throughout.
- Section 5.10 has been updated to reflect amendments to the LGPS Regulations with effect from 1 April 2026. It now reads:

“LGPS 2014 Regulations state that pension contributions are compulsory for any authorised period of unpaid absence of less than 15 consecutive days. If the period of authorised unpaid leave is more than 14 days no pension contributions will be made. Therefore, if flexible working options result in unpaid periods of absence greater than 14 days pension benefits will be reduced. Active members of the Scheme can recoup lost benefits by paying Qualifying Additional Pension Arrangements (QAPAs)”

Previously, no pension contributions were paid for unpaid absence.

- Part 7.6.3 updated to clarify that career breaks should not be used to cover long term sickness absence.

Following Feedback provided at June’s Employment Panel, wording has been amended on Part 7.6.3, regarding Long Term Sickness and a Career Break.

9. Briefing Note – Equality Staff Networks

Background

Bury has four staff equality networks which meet regularly and contribute to workplace culture at the council. The networks have a combined membership of approximately 90 staff from the four directorates and their departments, led by leads elected by network members. There is no structured protected time for network leads or members to lead the network or deliver network activities.

Headlines

Staff equality networks play an important role in supporting inclusion, employee voice and equitable service delivery across the council. Network leads and members currently undertake most network activity on a voluntary basis and often in their own time, limiting the networks’ capacity to deliver strategic activity, maintain engagement, develop action plans and contribute fully to the council’s inclusion objectives.

Providing protected time for network activity would enable networks to operate more effectively and increase their contribution to corporate priorities. It is therefore recommended that staff network activity is recognised, with up to two hours per month for members to participate in network meetings and activities, and an additional half day per month for network leads to undertake leadership responsibilities.

Community impact/links with Community Strategy

A modern and effective employee policy framework is essential to ensuring the effective operation of the organisation and, in turn the delivery of our commitment to the Community Strategy.

Equality Impact and considerations:

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;*
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;*
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.*

The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.

Equality Analysis Please provide a written explanation of the outcome(s) of either conducting an initial or full EA.

No negative impact identified.

Assessment of Risk:

The following risks apply to the decision:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Trade Union objection to policy changes	Prior discussions have taken place with Unison

Consultation:

All of the above proposed changes have been shared with the Trade Unions, and where appropriate there have been consultations with HR colleagues, managers, the EDI Manager and the Legal Team.

Legal Implications:

There are no immediate legal implications

Financial Implications:

There are no immediate financial implications

Report Author and Contact Details:

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Background papers:

Leave Policy and Guidance

July 2026

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1. Purpose and Scope of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear framework for the management and use of employee leave arrangements. It sets out the principles, expectations, and responsibilities that support consistent and fair application across the Council.

This policy applies to all Council employees unless otherwise stated, subject to Section 4 of the Local Conditions of Service and individual contractual arrangements. It aims to support employee wellbeing, promote work-life balance, and ensure a healthy and productive workforce, while maintaining the effective delivery of services.

All leave and working arrangements under this policy are subject to service requirements and operational need, which will take precedence at all times.

This policy is supported by a guidance document – Time Away from Work Guidance - which outlines the main types of leave and the provisions that apply to each. This table is intended as a guide only and does not include every possible circumstance or example of leave. The full policy should be referred to for detailed guidance, and advice from HR should be sought if there are any uncertainties.

2. Key Principles

The Council is committed to supporting a healthy, engaged, and productive workforce through the provision of a range of leave arrangements.

While these provisions are designed to promote employee wellbeing, work-life balance, and fairness, the effective delivery of services to the public remains the Council's primary responsibility. As such, service requirements and operational needs will take precedence when considering and approving all forms of leave and working arrangements.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that adequate service cover is maintained at all times and for communicating clear expectations to employees regarding availability, attendance, and operational priorities. Employees are expected to take a responsible and proactive approach to managing their working time and leave, ensuring that requests are made in a timely manner and with regard to service demands.

All leave arrangements should be managed in a fair, consistent, and transparent way, supporting both individual wellbeing and the collective needs of the service. The Council encourages employees to take appropriate leave, recognising that this contributes to a healthier, more resilient, and effective workforce.

3. Annual Leave

Entitlement

- 3.1 Council employees under NJC terms and conditions are entitled to a basic entitlement of 24 days annual leave (pro rata for part-time, term-time and temporary appointments).
- 3.2 Craft Workers are entitled to a basic entitlement of 23 days (pro rata for part-time, term-time and temporary appointments).
- 3.3 For Chief Officers, annual leave entitlements are set out in other provisions rather than the standard framework described in this policy.
- 3.4 An award of five extra days' annual leave is granted to employees with five years continuous Local Government service, inclusive of continuous service with an employer that is part of the Greater Manchester Continuous Service Commitment.
- 3.5 Annual leave entitlement is calculated from the actual start date for new starters and to the actual leaving date for leavers.

Booking annual leave

- 3.6 Annual leave must be requested in advance by employees and approved by their Line Manager.
- 3.7 Annual leave must be booked using the iTrent self-service application, which can be found on the Intranet here: [iTrent User Information](#)
- 3.8 A requested period of 3-weeks (pro rata) annual leave, or more, requires additional approval from the relevant Head of Service or equivalent. It is the Line Managers responsibility to take advice and obtain approval from the Head of Service once an employee has requested this, before confirming the response to the employee.
- 3.9 All requests for annual leave will be considered in line with Service Requirements, although every effort will be made to approve requests.
- 3.10 Line managers should be mindful when approving annual leave for their employees, and ensure they monitor annual leave entitlement, to avoid all, or most, of the entitlement being taken early or late in the leave year.

Carry-over of annual leave

- 3.11 Employees are able to carry over up to and including 5 days leave (pro rata) at the end of a leave year and will not require approval to do so.
- 3.12 Requests to carry over more than 5 days will need the approval of the relevant Head of Service or equivalent. Such requests will not normally be agreed other than in exceptional circumstances and will also be subject to service requirements.
- 3.13 Any requests to carry over leave due to maternity/adoption/parental leave/sickness absence, should be dealt with in accordance with the appropriate policy.

Christmas closure

- 3.14 Most Council services will be open as usual during the Christmas period, with the exception of Christmas day, Boxing Day and any Bank Holidays.
- 3.15 Employees who are not required to work over the Christmas period will be required to take annual leave, unless they wish to work. If an employees' usual place of work is closed for Christmas, and working agilely or from home is not possible, an alternative workplace should be agreed with the Manager.

Outstanding leave

- 3.16 Any outstanding annual leave should be that which is outstanding in the leave year in which they left the Council's employment.
- 3.17 If an employee has been absent from work due to a long-term sickness absence and then leaves the Council, outstanding leave will be paid in accordance with the Managing Attendance Policy.
- 3.18 If an employee has been unable to take their annual leave due to high service demand, and their Manager supports this, all accrued and outstanding leave will be paid upon termination. Although, it is encouraged for employees to take any outstanding leave prior to leaving the organisation and where possible, Managers should support this dependent upon service needs.
- 3.19 If an employee has been dismissed from employment, all accrued and outstanding leave within the dismissal year will be paid, up until the termination date.
- 3.20 Employees will not normally be paid for any banked leave they have; this must be taken prior to leaving the Authority. Only in exceptional circumstances will this be paid, i.e. dismissal, leaving following a long-term sickness absence, etc. Please seek advice from HR if there are any uncertainties.
- 3.21 Where an employee has purchased any additional annual leave and is subsequently unable to take some, or all, of that leave due to a period of sickness absence, any requests for reimbursement will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by management, HR and payroll.

NB: The banked leave provision ceased in 2023. Employees have until the end of the 2027-28 leave year to draw down their banked leave and ensure this is taken. Details of how to do this can be found here: [Banked Leave Process](#)

4. Bank Holidays

- 4.1 All employees will have the bank holiday entitlement of hours included in their full leave entitlement which is accessible on iTrent.
- 4.2 The bank holiday entitlement is 1/5th of employees' total working weekly hours multiplied by the number of bank holidays there are in the relevant leave year.

- 4.3 If a bank holiday falls on an employees' usual working day, the number of hours an employee is expected to work on that day will automatically be deducted from their leave entitlement, regardless as to whether they are full-time or part-time.
- 4.4 If an employee is required to work on a bank holiday, their line manager must mark the bank holiday as 'not taken' on iTrent. Guidance on how to do this can be found here: [Manager Annual Leave and Bank Holiday Guide](#)
- 4.5 If an employee is absent from work through sickness on the bank holiday, they should be recorded as sick in the usual way, and their line manager should reduce their leave entitlement on iTrent for the bank holiday.
- 4.6 Where a member of staff is not due to work on a bank holiday, they may use the hours leave allocated for the bank holiday where they choose and in agreement with their line manager.

5. Special Leave

Definition

- 5.1 Special leave is not an automatic entitlement and exists for genuinely difficult circumstances when an employee may need to be absent from work.
- 5.2 Special leave is for caring and supporting a close relative in difficult situations. Special leave is not for attending personal appointments.

Close relatives

- 5.3 A close relative includes the following family members in either your family, or the family of your partner (including same sex partner):
- Partner
 - Mother / Father
 - Son / Daughter
 - Brother / Sister
 - Grandmother / Grandfather
 - Grandson / Granddaughter
 - Aunt / Uncle
 - Nephew / Niece

Adopted or step relations are also included within the definition of close relatives.

The definition also includes nominated 'carer' or nominated 'next of kin' subject to written confirmation of the relationship from the employee at the time of the request.

A partner (including same sex partner) is defined as someone who is not an immediate relative and lives with their partner (including same sex partner) in an enduring family relationship. It does not apply to partners (including same sex partners) who do not live at the same address.

Subject to written confirmation of the relationship, other relatives may be included and approved at the discretion of the Director or their representative.

Appendix H within the Local Conditions which defines Close Relatives, can be accessed here: [APPENDIX H-DefinitionOfCloseRelative-Apr2015](#).

Categories of Special Leave

5.4 Special leave is split into two categories – Category A and Category B.

Category A

Up to a maximum of three days in any leave year (pro rata for part time employees) may be granted if there is a sudden illness or emergency and the presence of an employee is immediately required, to give assistance to a close relative as outlined above.

Category B

Up to a maximum of five days in any leave year (pro rata for part time employees) may be granted in the following circumstances:

- To attend the funeral of a close relative, as outlined above, or of a close personal friend.
- To settle the affairs of a close relative, as outlined above, or of a close personal friend.
- To accompany, where necessary, a close relative as outlined above who is required to attend a hospital, medical practitioner or dental surgery appointment, and the relative cannot attend the appointment alone. In the circumstance where more than one carer/parent/guardian works for the authority, special leave will not normally be granted to both employees.
- To attend an appointment with a legal practitioner in respect of a matter affecting a close relative as outlined above, and the relative cannot attend the appointment alone.
- To attend one's own graduation ceremony in circumstances where the Authority has financially contributed towards any course fees and qualification as a requirement of the post.
- To attend interviews in connection with appointments to public service authorities, if an employee has completed one years' service with the authority.

The above list is not exhaustive. In exceptional circumstances there may be discretion to authorise special leave for reasons not listed above.

Special leave may be granted in circumstances where an employee is affected by domestic abuse or domestic violence, in line with organisational support arrangements. Employees who are experiencing domestic abuse or domestic violence are encouraged to speak to their line manager or HR, who will provide confidential support and discuss appropriate arrangements, including access to special leave.

Applying for Special Leave

5.5 Wherever possible, applications for special leave should be made in advance. Applications should be submitted via the iTrent self-service system, which can be accessed here: [iTrent User Information](#)

5.6 In cases of special leave category A, employees should contact their line manager within one hour of their normal starting time if possible, or as soon as possible to

verbally request special leave. Upon the employees return to work, this should then be recorded on the iTrent self-service system.

5.7 The employee should provide the following information when requesting special leave under category A and/or category B:

- First full day of special leave
- The length of the special leave
- The reason for the special leave
- The relation the absence applies to
- If possible, evidence of any appointments
- Expected return date and/or time

5.8 Special leave can be booked in days, or hours and minutes, and employees are able to state the exact time they require special leave for.

5.9 Special leave allowance should only be used for the duration of the appointment, or time afterwards if the relative requires company following their appointment.

5.10 If employees wish to take the full day off, and some of this time falls outside of the scope of special leave, employees can request to take the remainder of the day off via other means, such as annual leave or flexitime.

5.11 Special leave is not to be used for employees' standard medical appointments, such as routine dental or doctors appointments, please see the Time Away from Work Guidance for further information. Where possible, these appointments should be taken through provisions such as annual leave or flexitime. Please also refer to Section 6 within this policy for more information around Authorised Absence.

5.12 Special leave is not for childcare purposes. If an employee experiences issues with their childcare arrangements, they should try to find alternative arrangements. Special leave may be granted on the first day issues have arisen (category A) to enable the employee to care for their child and make arrangements for any time after this.

5.13 The birth of your child (if not the mother) does not come under special leave, as this is covered by the Family Leave Policy. However, if the birth is unexpected and an employee is required to leave work, this will be recorded as special leave category A.

5.14 IVF treatment is not specifically covered by the special leave scheme, but appointments attended with a close relative may be covered under category B of special leave, if the presence of an employee is required.

5.15 If a close relative is in the hospital, then special leave will normally only be granted if it is a requirement for the employee to be there. However, when a close relative has been discharged from hospital and if an employee is required to care for them at home; special leave (category B) will normally be granted.

5.16 Special leave (category A) will be granted to employees if they need to be at home, a hospital, or a hospice to be with a close relative who is sadly at end of life, or receiving end of life care.

- 5.17 Due to the nature of special leave, the provisions cannot be exhaustive, so if there are any queries, please contact your departmental HR contact for further advice and guidance.

6. Authorised absence

- 6.1 Authorised absence is primarily used for employees who may need to attend a medical appointment, that falls outside of those that can be scheduled by the employee themselves. These can be appointments such as hospital appointments, routine appointments to monitor an illness. Routine medical appointments should be made in the employee's own time using the flexibility of the flexi-time scheme (where this applies).
- 6.2 If an employee has requirements such as these, they must speak to their line manager to make them aware of such appointments at the earliest opportunity.
- 6.3 Where possible, employees must provide evidence of the appointment, such as a letter from the hospital, a text confirming the appointment, etc.
- 6.4 It may be beneficial for the employee to undertake an Occupational Health appointment, especially if appointments will be / are ongoing, which their line manager can refer them to. Details of how to do this can be found on the intranet, here: [Optima & myOHportal](#)
- 6.5 Authorised absence may only be given for the duration of the appointment time. If an employee wishes to take more time off, then this should be requested through other provisions, such as annual leave or flexi-time.

7. Flexi-time

Definition

- 7.1 Flexi-time applies to the majority of Council employees, however there may be specific job roles or service areas which do not allow for the provision of flexi-time. Where employees are unsure if this applies to them, they should speak to their line manager in the first instance to understand the service requirements.
- 7.2 It is the Managers responsibility to ensure Working Time Regulations are complied with. Employees should work no more than 6 hours without a break of least 20 minutes and no more than 48 hours a week. Young workers (under 18) should work no more than 4.5 hours without a break of at least 30 minutes, and no more than 8 hours a day, 40 hours a week.
- 7.3 The flexi-time bandwidth is 7.00am – 7.00pm, and hours should be worked between these times as standard. It is recognised that different services may operate during different hours, depending on individual service needs and requirements. Work outside of the current bandwidth may be possible with prior agreement from management. Managers must set out clear expectations regarding attendance, availability, and service requirements for their teams and employees. Employees are

expected to work in a manner that meets these operational needs and supports service delivery.

Working arrangements and time recording

- 7.4 A standard working day for employees based on a 37-hour week, is 7 hours and 24 minutes, and a standard half day is 3 hours and 42 minutes.
- 7.5 Flexi-time should be recorded over a designated period of four consecutive weeks, by the end of which employees should have worked their contractual number of hours (148 hours for an employee who works 37 hours per week). There will be thirteen settlement periods each year. The flexi-time log template can be found here: [Flexisheet Template.xlsx](#). Employees must ensure their flexi-sheet is submitted to their manager at the end of each settlement period and is readily available for them to access if required.

Balances and Limits

- 7.6 Employees are permitted to carry forward a limited number of working hours into the next settlement period. The carry over should normally be no more than the equivalent of two standard working days (pro rata).
- 7.7 Employees are permitted to be in a debit of one standard working day (pro-rata). This can be carried over into the next settlement period.
- 7.8 On each settlement period of flexi, there should be a credit of no more than two standard working days (pro-rata), or a debit of no more than one standard working day (pro-rata). If any of these are exceeded, the employee must speak to their manager. It may be more appropriate for required additional hours worked outside of the agreed flexi-time bandwidth to be claimed via different means if relevant, i.e. TOIL or overtime. An employee must speak to their manager in these instances and seek approval and agreement from them.

Taking flexi-time

- 7.9 In agreement with their manager, employees can use their flexi at their discretion, this may be to finish early, take a full-day or half day off, take a longer than usual lunch break, etc. Employees must gain approval from their manager before taking flexi, so service planning and cover can take place if needed, and this must be logged on their flexi-time log.
- 7.10 Employees must book any flexi-time via the self-service portal, which can be accessed here: [iTrent User Information](#)

Governance and Compliance

- 7.11 If an employee who is working within the flexi-time scheme fails to adhere to the provisions of the scheme, it may be necessary to take action in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
- 7.12 If, for any reason, an employee is suspended or excluded from using the scheme, they will be required to work a standard working day agreed with their manager. Working hours should still be recorded to ensure requirement are being met.

- 7.13 Employees should not enter any Council buildings outside of normal opening hours (usually 7.00am until 7.00pm), unless prior agreement has been sought from both their manager and the relevant Building Manager.
- 7.14 Flexi-time will not be paid if an employee is unable to take this on a general basis. Only in exceptional circumstances, i.e. if an employee leaves the authority through sickness or disciplinary and has a substantial amount of authorised flexi-time built up, will this be considered.
- 7.15 The flexi-time scheme does not apply to Chief Officers. These roles by nature work in a more outcome-based manner, and they will have access to alternative flexibilities subject to agreement.

8. Time off in Lieu (TOIL)

Definition

- 8.1 Time off in lieu or 'TOIL' is time that employees can take off work in recompense for working time accrued where an employee has worked their contracted hours and accrued the maximum hours permitted within the Council's flexible working hours scheme or outside normal working bands (as defined within the flexible working hours scheme).
- 8.2 Wherever possible, employees should utilize the flexi-time scheme. However, it is recognised that all services may not be able to use this scheme if more of a 'set hours' approach is needed due to the nature of the service.

TOIL Guidelines

- 8.3 The following guidelines are to be used in conjunction with service requirements in relation to taking TOIL:
- Where possible work should be managed within the flexi-time scheme, but where there are periods of anticipated additional work this should be discussed between the manager and employee.
 - TOIL should be recorded and subsequent time off requested on the TOIL Record sheet.
 - Records should show the date additional hours were worked, for what reason and the date the time was taken in lieu.
 - Where TOIL is accrued employees are entitled to the equivalent amount of time in compensation.
 - TOIL should normally be taken within eight weeks from the date of working the additional hours. If TOIL is not able to be taken within eight weeks, consideration may be given to payment of overtime instead by the appropriate Manager. In exceptional circumstances where otherwise agreed between the appropriate

Manager and employee, TOIL maybe taken at a later date than the end of the eight-week period.

- Paid overtime working (where agreed) should not be recorded under the TOIL arrangements.
- TOIL should be monitored by line managers to ensure employees are not exceeding the Working Time Regulations.
- TOIL does not apply to lunch periods. If lunchtime meetings are necessary then employees should utilise the flexi-time scheme to have a late or early lunch, for example.
- TOIL cannot be taken in advance of it being earned and can never be a minus balance.
- TOIL must be taken in such a way that does not prevent the employee from taking their full annual leave entitlement as well.
- TOIL is not intended to be used to accumulate extra leave.
- It is the responsibility of the line manager to agree and formally monitor TOIL records in regular supervision sessions held with the employee and to ensure that an employee is not accruing an excessive amount of TOIL.
- Any employee suspected of abusing the TOIL scheme may have it withdrawn and may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
- If an employee leaves employment, outstanding TOIL will not be paid and needs to be utilised prior to leaving the authority. Only in exceptional circumstances, i.e. an employee leaving the authority due to sickness, will payment be considered.

9. Other types of leave

In addition to the types of leave outlined in this policy, there are other forms of leave available to employees, including:

- Leave for Bursaries and Seconded employees
- Leave for Year out students
- Additional Leave or Leave for other reasons (incl. Unpaid Leave)
- Attendance at Meetings of Outside Bodies
- Leave for Trade Union purposes
- Leave for attendance at Joint Consultative Committees
- Leave for Service in Volunteer Reserve Forces
- Leave for Service as a member of another Council
- Leave for Emergency Planning duties

- Leave for Public Duties
- Leave for attendance at Court
- Leave for Attendance at Employment Tribunals / Employment Appeals Tribunals
- Leave for Employees Elected to Professional Institutes
- Paid Breaks

Details of these provisions can be found within:

- Local Conditions of Service, Section 4 (Hours and Leave) which can be accessed here: [Section 4 - Hours and Leave](#).
- Family Leave Policy, which can be accessed here: [Family-Leave-Policy-Feb-26.docx](#).

Reservists Policy which can be accessed here [Reservists - Policy on Time off for Reservists](#)

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Time away from work guidance

A guide to time away from work

This guide has been produced to aid the consistency of approach when employees request time away from work during working hours.

In considering requests for time off for medical appointments managers need to see an appointment letter and be assured that the employee has made every attempt to book an appointment outside of working hours.

The guide is not exhaustive and has been developed to provide broad examples of time away from work. Further advice should be sought from your HR Business Partner and Advisor if there are any uncertainties.

** Special leave is not an automatic entitlement; it exists for genuinely difficult circumstances and is subject to approval. Please refer to the relevant Guidance for more detail.*

	Authorised absence	Special leave	Flexi	Annual leave	Sickness	
General Medical appointments						
Attendance at doctor/dentist/optician etc for routine appointment			✓	✓		There will be no time credited for employees for routine medical appointments. These must

e.g. dental check up						be made and taken in the employee's own time.
Attendance at physiotherapy or counselling appointments arranged privately			✓	✓		There will be no time credited for privately organised physiotherapy or counselling appointments. Employees will need to use their own leave such as flexi-time or annual leave and discuss with their Line Manager in the first instance.
Attendance at a hospital appointment where an appointment time is specified by the hospital	✓					
Attendance at an appointment to undergo significant or emergency medical procedures where preparation or recovery time is required	✓		✓	✓	✓	In the case of a significant medical procedure, authorised absence would be granted for any appointments prior, and for the day of the procedure. If recovery time was needed, this would then be another form of leave e.g. sickness absence. Employees should speak to their Line

						Manager in the first instance.
Attendance at an appointment to undergo elective surgery in cases where this is not recommended by a medical practitioner as treatment for a recognised condition			✓	✓		
Occupational Health						
Attendance at physiotherapy or counselling appointments referred through the organisation	✓					
Occupational Health referral appointment	✓					
Regular or recurring appointments						
Attendance at hospital for regular appointments in association with the monitoring of ongoing long term medical conditions e.g.	✓					It is recommended to process an Occupational Health referral for the employee in these circumstances to support

6 monthly consultant appointments following a recovery						the requirement for authorised absence, especially if appointments will be ongoing.
Absence in relation to Pregnancy and IVF						
Attendance at appointments in relation to pregnancy/ante natal care, including scans	✓					Please refer to the Family Leave Policy.
Accompany partner to routine appointments in relation to pregnancy/ante natal care, including scans			✓	✓		
Attendance at hospital in relation to IVF treatment or scans	✓					
Absence from work due to sickness relating to IVF					✓	Please refer to the Family Leave Policy.
Absence in relation to adoption						

Attendance at preparatory groups. This includes pre-adoption training	✓					Please refer to the Family Leave Policy.
Employees intending to adopt a child have the right to paid time off to attend up to five appointments for any purpose connected with the adoption.	✓		✓	✓		Joint adopters (i.e. adopting with a partner) where both are qualifying employees of the Council, will need to choose which member of the couple will take paid time off to attend up to five appointments, while their partner may take unpaid time off to attend up to two appointments. If appointments exceed the allowance, other forms of leave may need to be used, such as flexi-time or annual leave.
Absence in relation to Gender Transitioning						
Specialist appointments relating to transitioning	✓					

Recovery time from medical procedures			✓	✓	✓	Employees should speak to their Line Manager for support and advise on types of leave they are able to use.
Absence following a bereavement						
The day of the death of a close relative		✓				Please see within this Policy and Appendix H of the Local Conditions for the definition of a close relative.
To attend the funeral of a close relative		✓				
To attend the funeral that falls outside the definition of a close relative			✓	✓		In exceptional circumstances, special leave may be granted. Employees should speak to their Line Manager in the first instance.
Other absences						

To care for a close relative following hospitalisation, where they are unable to care for themselves		✓				Production of evidence to support the request may be required.
If, as a result of illness or another emergency the presence of the employee is required to give assistance to a close relative		✓				Employees may be entitled to one day special leave to cover the day of the emergency, if further time off is required, other forms of leave may need to be used. Employees should speak to their Line Manager in the first instance.
To accompany a close relative to a medical appointment		✓				Production of evidence to support the request may be required.
To collect a sick child from school or nursery		✓				Employees may be entitled to one day special leave to cover the day of the illness of the child. If further time off to care for the child is required, other forms of leave may need to be used. Employees should speak to

						their Line Manager in the first instance.
To care for your child for the first day due to an unexpected school closure		✓				This does not apply where the school closure is known in advance, e.g. a teachers strike, when employees will need to take another form of leave.
To attend an interview with another public service authority		✓				After one years' service.
To attend own graduation ceremony when the Council has contributed to course fees and the qualification gained is a requirement of the post		✓				



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Flexible Retirement Policy

July 2026

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out the Council's flexible retirement offer, which enables employees to reduce their hours or move to a lower graded job and draw all of their pension. It supports them to enhance their work life balance whilst easing more gradually towards full retirement. Employees can also then continue to build up pension benefits in their new role.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies equally to all employees who are members of the Greater Manchester Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and have at least 2 year's total membership.

3. Principles

- 3.1 The Council is opposed to re-employing an individual who has received any form of voluntary exit package from Bury Council including flexible retirement.
- 3.2 Applications for flexible retirement must be agreed by the employer and will only be considered if they are in the interests of efficiency of the service and to the Council's financial benefit.

4. Approach

- 4.1 Flexible Retirement gives members of the LGPS with at least 2 years membership the option to start receiving their pension benefits from their current membership from an earlier age, which is currently 55 years and over at the date of the Flexible Retirement as per the LGPS regulations (but may be subject to change), whilst allowing them to continue working until a specified retirement date, subject to a reduction in their working hours or grade.
- 4.2 Employees are able to prepare for retirement by 'stepping down' into a less demanding and lower paid role.
- 4.3 Employee's will be required to reduce their working hours and/or grade to ensure that the flexible retirement does not result in an increase in their monthly earnings (i.e. the combined total of their reduced monthly salary plus pension must not be greater than their salary at the effective date of the flexible retirement).
- 4.4 Actual retirement date must be specified at the point the flexible retirement is agreed. The employee must retire within 3 years. During this period the employee is expected to hand over essential knowledge, skills and

experience and then retire. In exceptional circumstances an extension may be granted by the Assistant Director of People & Inclusion and Cabinet member for Customer Services, Communications and Corporate Affairs.

- 4.5 The business case for flexible retirement must result in the salary savings (inclusive of on-costs) paying back any capital cost over a 3-year period.
- 4.6 At the point they 'retire' the employee may qualify for a long service award or redundancy payment (based on reduced salary) depending on the circumstances.
- 4.7 Each flexible retirement request will be considered on its merits and will only be agreed if it is in the employer's economic and/or operational interests to do so.
- 4.8 Following a change in role, hours or salary, pension benefits may be affected and advice should always be obtained from the Pensions Team on how the employee's future pension benefits might be affected. Working part-time or in a lower grade prior to the normal retirement age may also affect an employee's ill-health benefits or redundancy payments in the future.

5 Process

- 5.1 Any employee who is considering flexible retirement should first discuss the proposal with their line manager.
- 5.2 Managers should request an estimate of benefits from the Pensions team pensions@bury.gov.uk.
- 5.3 Discussions must then take place, including with HR, so that the manager can determine whether or not a business case exists.
- 5.4 The employee should complete an application form and the manager would write the business case.
- 5.5 If the proposal is supported in principle, the application will be considered by the Executive Director and must have their support before it can proceed.
- 5.6 When considering whether to support applications Executive Directors will take a rounded view considering, for example, the following:
 - Whether there is any detrimental effect on service delivery
 - If there is available alternative work at the lower grade (if stepping down is requested)
 - That the arrangement is fair and equitable to other team members
 - If it may help to avoid redundancies and the associated strain on pension fund costs and redundancy payment costs
 - If it enables the transfer of skills/knowledge
 - If it would be advantageous to the employee's wellbeing and the service

- 5.7 In cases where a request is not supported by the Executive Director the decision and supporting rationale will be confirmed to the employee in writing.
- 5.8 Supported applications should be forwarded to the Assistant Director of People and Inclusion for further consideration before being submitted to the Executive Director of Finance and, ultimately, the Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Communications and Corporate Affairs for approval. Costs exceeding £100,000 are subject to approval by full Council.

Appendix 1: Flexible Retirement Application Form

FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT APPLICATION

Name	
Date of Birth	
Length of Service	
Pay Reference	
Department	
Service	
Job title	

I would like to apply for flexible retirement, with a proposed effective date of _____

If you have accrued an occupational pension elsewhere, is there a transfer pending?
YES / NO

If YES: Date transfer requested _____

Please note the following statements:

- The Council are looking for an overall saving in the event of this application being granted.
- The Council is opposed to re-employing retired employees.
- If you take flexible retirement you must continue to meet the criteria of the scheme if you change job role/hours/grade during the period (up to 3 years) before you actually retire. In these circumstances your pension plus your new salary should not be more than your salary in the original job you were employed in; with a little discretion to allow for inflation etc.

I confirm I have discussed my request with my line manager and have understood the statements above and all points within the policy.

Signed _____ Date _____

This form, when completed, should be forwarded by the manager with the business case to Human Resources.

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Salary Loans Policy

July 2026

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council offers all employees a high-quality pay and reward package, in line with its commitments to being a Real Living Wage Employer. However, it is understandable that at times, some employees may still struggle financially for a wide variety of reasons.
- 1.2 A range of interventions are available to support employees' financial wellbeing, including via the EAP and Credit Union, but in exceptional circumstances the Council is willing to offer salary loans.

2. Scope

- 2.1 Salary loans are potentially available to all direct Council employees, irrespective of grade. They are not available to casual workers or contractors.

3. Salary loans

- 3.1 A salary loan is a payment of up to 2 weeks' net salary in advance, without any negative impact on the employee or their employment. Their maximum repayment period is 12 months, but this will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- 3.2 Salary loans are only for exceptional circumstances where other reasonable options have been exhausted or are unavailable.
- 3.3 Only one salary loan is available in any rolling 18-month period.

4. Application process

- 4.1 Employees wishing to apply for a salary loan must complete this online form OR complete the form at Appendix 1 and email it to Payroll@bury.gov.uk
- 4.2 Employees must outline their circumstances and advise why they are looking for a salary loan.
- 4.3 Payroll will then:
 - Check that no other loans have been provided within the last 18 months
 - Check that the repayments wouldn't mean that the employee would earn less than the real living wage
 - Calculate the repayment amounts and length of period for repayment
- 4.4 This information is then shared with the Assistant Director for People and Inclusion who will approve or decline the request based upon the following criteria:

- 4.5 If the request is declined, alternative support measures can be discussed.
- 4.6 If the request is accepted, the employee must confirm in writing that they agree to the terms of the repayment plan. The provision is an exception, and a written record of it will be held confidentially.
- 4.7 Although the salary loan will be paid back over a mutually agreed period, the employee may opt to pay it all back in one payment as a protracted repayment period may impact their circumstances in a negative way.
- 4.8 Should the employee leave the authority before the agreed repayment term has been completed, then the outstanding balance will be deducted from their final salary and any excess invoiced accordingly.
- 4.9 It is important to differentiate between a salary loan and a salary advance. Typically, salary advance requests occur when a new employee starts work but has missed the first pay day and requires payment prior to the next pay day. Advances are usually repaid in one instalment from the first available pay day. Staff members should initially contact their line managers for salary advances.

Appendix 1: Application Form

Employee Name	
Payroll Number	
Job Title	
Service Area	
Department	
Please tell us why you need a salary loan.	
Please outline how you have already exhausted all other ethical options, including seeking advice through the EAP and applying for a Credit Union loan.	
Have you previously received a salary loan from Bury Council?	
Please state the salary loan amount you wish to acquire? (Based on a maximum of 2 weeks salary)	
Please tell us the length of repayment period you are looking for (maximum 12 months).	

Please return the completed form to Payroll@bury.gov.uk

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Salary Loan Application Form

Employee Name	
Payroll Number	
Job Title	
Service Area	
Department	
Please tell us why you need a salary loan.	
Please outline how you have already exhausted all other ethical options, including seeking advice through the EAP and applying for a Credit Union loan.	
Have you previously received a salary loan from Bury Council?	
Please state the salary loan amount you wish to acquire? (Based on a maximum of 2 weeks salary)	
Please tell us the length of repayment period you are looking for (maximum 12 months).	

Please return the completed form to Payroll@bury.gov.uk

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Time off for Reservists

May 2026

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out how Bury Council will support staff who are reservists. The reserve forces include the Royal Naval Reserve, Royal Marines Reserve, Territorial Army and Royal Auxiliary Air Force.
- 1.2 Bury Council recognises that many of the skills that reservists gain during their training are transferable to the workplace. The Council will assist reservists as far as possible in meeting their obligations.
- 1.3 This policy brings together in one document the work-life balance initiatives currently available for employees of Bury Council that are particularly relevant for reservists and details the legal requirements placed on employers of reservists.

2. The Legal Context

- 2.1 The Reserve Forces (Safeguard of Employment) Act 1985 (SOE 85) provides reservists who have a liability to be mobilised with two types of protection:
- Protection of employment: the Act provides protection from unfair dismissal and makes it a criminal offence for an employer to terminate a reservist's job without their consent solely or mainly because they have a liability to be mobilised; and
 - Rights to reinstatement: the Act provides a legal right to reinstate the reservist to their former job, subject to certain conditions.
- 2.2 The Reserve Forces Act 1996 (RFA 96) details the four main powers under which mobilisation of reservists can take place:
- If it appears that national danger is imminent, a great emergency has arisen or if there's been an actual attack on the United Kingdom Sections 52 (mobilisation) and 68 (recall);
 - If it appears that warlike operations are in preparation or progress (s54);
 - If it appears necessary or desirable to use our Armed Forces on operations outside the UK for the protection of life or property; or on operations elsewhere in the world for the alleviation of distress or the preservation of life or property in time of disaster or apprehended disaster (s56);
 - if it appears necessary or desirable to use our Armed Forces for urgent work of national importance (s56)
- 2.3 Legally, all mobilisations are compulsory. The Armed Forces use a process known as 'Intelligent Selection' to identify the most appropriate people for call out. This allows reservists to be selected according to their individual skills and specialisations and allowing a unit to take into account a reservist's personal and employment circumstances.
- 2.4 Occasionally, however, when there are very short operational deadlines, for example, the Ministry of Defence cannot meet its requirements by identifying willing and available individuals. Under these circumstances a reservist may be mobilised without taking account of personal, welfare and employment issues.

3. What is a Reservist?

- 3.1 Volunteer reservists are called out to supplement the Regular Forces whenever Operational demands require it. If they're mobilised they'll carry out the same roles to the same high standards as their Regular counterparts. They also receive the same world-class training and develop the same skills.
- 3.2 Reservists make up around **17.54%** of the nation's total defence capacity which in turn makes them an essential part of our defence strategy. They are called upon as individuals for their specific skills or as ready-formed units to serve alongside the Regular Forces whenever required.
- 3.3 Training commitments vary between the three Reserve Forces, but in most cases include:
- **Weekly training** - most Reservists train at their local centre for around two-and-a-half hours, one evening a week.
 - **Weekend training** - all Reservists are expected to attend a number of training weekends which are spread throughout the year.
 - **Annual training** - this is a **2 week** ~~45 continuous days~~ annual training course, sometimes referred to as 'Annual Camp'. This may take place at a training establishment, as an attachment to a Regular Unit, a training exercise or a combination of any of these. Training normally takes place within the UK, although each year some Reservists train overseas.

4. Information Requirements for Reservists

- 4.1 Bury Council asks that new recruits who are already reservists or existing staff who become reservists should inform their line manager as soon as possible that they are, or intend to become, reservists so that the necessary support can be given and any practical implications can be addressed.

5. Time off for activities in the Reserves forces.

- 5.1 Local Conditions of Service provide an entitlement of a maximum of 18 days' leave with pay in any period of twelve months for attendance with Volunteer Reserve forces with prior agreement of the employee's Director (or their representative).
- 5.2 Reservists should make a request to utilise this provision in the normal way they would request annual leave, tagging the request as "military reserve

leave". Whilst the Council will endeavour to accommodate any request for leave for activities in the reserve forces, it cannot guarantee that a reservist's request for leave will be given priority. To avoid reservists being unable to take time off when needed, they should apply for leave as soon as possible after they are informed that they need to take time off.

- 5.3 Paid leave in line with Local Conditions of Service can only be approved on the production of evidence, for example a letter from their Commanding Officer, that the time off is needed as a reservist; at the time they are booking the leave. Leave cannot be used for days when a reservist is not undertaking reservist activities (for example to recover from the physical demands of a weekend away with the reserve forces).

~~5.3 All holiday/leave dates must be approved in advance by the Reservist's line manager. It is important that reservists follow the usual procedure for requesting leave.~~

6. Flexibility with Annual Leave

- 6.1 Reservists seeking to balance their permitted leave with their commitments to the reserve forces should be aware that they also have the option of: -

- Carrying forward a maximum of five days' holiday (~~pro rata 3/5ths of a normal working week~~ for part time staff) to be carried over from one holiday year to the next, ~~in line with Section 4 (Hours and Leave), with the prior approval of the employee's line manager. Requests to carry forward in excess of 3 days will not normally be agreed other than in exceptional circumstances and will be subject to the exigencies of the Service;~~
- ~~Banking leave. From 1st April to 31st December employees can apply to bank up to a maximum of five days or the equivalent in hours each leave year up to a maximum of 25 days.~~
- Purchasing up to a maximum of ten days (two weeks) days in one leave year and reducing their salary accordingly. – please refer to the Flexible Working Policy. The amount of entitlement that can be bought will be pro-rata dependent upon hours worked.

~~6.2 The reduction in salary will be spread evenly over the year in either monthly, weekly or four weekly payments if applied for before the start of the financial year. If employees apply part way through the financial year for leave to be taken in the same year the deduction in salary will be spread over the remaining months in that financial year.~~

- ~~6.23 All requests should be agreed by your manager prior to being sent through to Departmental HR sections for the amendment of annual leave entitlement to be actioned. All requests should be agreed by your manager prior to being sent through to HR Operations for the amendment of annual leave entitlement to be actioned.~~
- 6.34 Once requests have been agreed and deductions have commenced, it will not be possible to refund any additional days not taken.
- ~~6.5 Details of all the flexible working opportunities available for employees to request can be found on the Council's Work-Life Balance intranet page via the following link:—~~
- ~~<http://intranet.bury.gov.uk/CE/PersonnelDivision/CorpHumanResources/PersonnelWorkLifeBalance.htm>~~

~~7. Unauthorised Absence~~

- ~~7.1 Bury Council will treat any instances of unauthorised leave as a serious disciplinary matter that could result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Employees should be aware that, if they take a period of leave that has not been approved, they will be subject to disciplinary action on their return to work.~~

7. Reservist Call up

- 7.1 Each of the Reserve Forces follows a strict procedure when mobilising reservists. This includes notifying both the employer and their Reservist of the date when they are required to report for duty and a period of pre-mobilisation training.
- 7.2 Where ever possible the Ministry of Defence aims to give at least 28 days' notice of mobilisation, although for operational reasons it can sometimes be less. There is no statutory requirement for a minimum period of notice of mobilisation. Mobilisation is likely to last up to 12 months.
- 7.3 As soon as a reservist receives a call-out notice, they should inform their employer. Their employer should also receive an information pack, which sets out the date and possible duration of mobilisation as well as their statutory rights and obligations (see Paragraph 2.1) and how to apply for financial assistance.

- 7.4 When a reservist is called up financial assistance is available to employers from the Ministry of Defence. The Council may apply to the Ministry of Defence for an award in respect of any costs incurred in replacing the employee that exceed the reservist's earnings, although there is a set cap on the daily amount awarded.
- 7.5 An employer cannot refuse to permit an employee who has been called up on military service to go. However, where it believes that the employee's absence on military service is likely to do serious harm to the business or undertaking it may apply for an exemption, deferral or revocation of mobilisation. "Serious harm" includes serious loss of sales, markets, reputation or goodwill or other financial harm; damage to the employer's ability to produce goods or provide services; or demonstrable harm to research projects or the development of new products, services or processes.
- 7.6 More details of how the Council can seek an exemption, deferral or revocation and the financial assistance that is available to it can be found on the Ministry of Defence **SaBRE** website by visiting: <http://www.sabre.mod.uk/>
<https://www.gov.uk/employee-reservist/financial-support-for-reservists>

8. Reservists Rights during Mobilisation

- 8.1 There is no requirement for the Council to pay the reservist during their absence on military operations. During this period the reservist receives service pay from the Ministry of Defence, along with a standard award to make up any difference (up to the statutory limit) between their service pay and normal average weekly earnings.
- 8.2 The Ministry of Defence also pays the employer contributions to the reservist's occupational pension scheme (as long as the reservist gives an undertaking to continue paying their own contributions to the scheme).
- 8.3 During the period of mobilisation the Reservist will continue to accrue rights to occupational sick pay. Should a Reservist become sick or injured during mobilisation they will be covered by Defence Medical Services and any financial assistance, including pay, will continue until demobilised. If the sickness or injury results in early demobilisation, the Reservist will remain covered by Defence until the last day of paid military leave. After this time The Reservist will be covered by the Council's sickness arrangements in place at that time.

9. Reservists Demobilisation

- 9.1 Reservists do not return to their employer directly following a tour of duty as the Armed Forces have in place a series of procedures in place to help them readjust to civilian life. Once reservists arrive back in the UK, they're taken to their demobilisation centre. As well as all the necessary post-operative administration procedures, such as handing back their uniforms, they undergo a series of medical assessments, and receive further briefings on stress, their return to work, welfare guidance and advice. One-to-one and specialist sessions are available throughout the reservist's remaining time in service, and will continue for as long as needed.
- 9.2 The reservist is then formally demobilised and free to start their post-operational leave. All reservists are entitled to a period of leave and reservists continue to be paid by the MOD during this period. (This usually works out at an average of around 30 days.) Post-operational leave allows them time to fully readjust and prepare for civilian life. It's also an ideal time to get in touch with the employee if you haven't done so before. Regular contact with your reservist will help make their return to work that much smoother and easier. Their final day of post operational leave is known as their last day of whole-time service, and the last day they receive full military pay.
- 9.3 Regardless of the length of the military action, the mobilised reservist has the right to be reinstated in their former job within six months of demobilisation, on terms and conditions that are no less favourable to those that would have been in place but for the enforced absence from the organisation.
- 9.4 If it is not reasonably practicable to reinstate the reservist to their former job, the Council must re-engage their in the most favourable occupation and on the most favourable terms and conditions that are reasonable and practicable in the circumstances.
- 9.5 A reservist's last day of whole-time service signals their final day of full military pay. They must write to their employer formally, to state their readiness to return to work no later than the 3rd Monday following their last day of whole-time service. The start date for your reservist's return to work should be within around 6 weeks of their last day of whole time service but must be within the following 13 weeks. The initial 13-week period may be renewed for a further 13 weeks if circumstances such as illness or injury prevent the reservist's return during the initial period. However, the Reservist forfeits their right to return to work with the organisation if they fail to do so within 26 weeks of demobilisation.
- 9.6 Once the Reservist has been reinstated, the organisation will continue to employ the employee in that same occupation (and on the same terms and conditions) for:
- the following 26 weeks;

- 52 weeks if the reservist had been employed for a consecutive period of at least 52 weeks at the time they were called up for military operations; or
- a minimum of 13 weeks if the employee was employed for fewer than 13 weeks immediately prior to mobilisation.

10. Welcoming Reservists Back to Work

- 10.1 Regular contact with reservists during their post-operational leave will help ease their transition back to work. Most employers find it really useful to keep managers and colleagues informed during this period, and to have an informal interview with their Reservist on their return. This will give them the opportunity to talk about their experiences and for you to update them on what's been going on in their absence.
- 10.2 Sometimes reservists may need refresher training on their return to work, or be given time to re-familiarise themselves with processes and procedures back at work. Financial assistance is available for retraining if it's required as a direct result of their mobilisation, although you can't claim for any training courses they would have undertaken anyway. There's no cap on the amount you can claim for, but you'll have to provide evidence of the costs, and show that the reservist couldn't reach the required standard by any other means, such as workplace experience.
- 10.3 Reservist employees may grow in terms of leadership, planning and training others and that these are skills that can be put to good use within your organisation. They'll also have acquired stress management, resilience and technical skills which could prove advantageous. On their return, if you feel it is appropriate, discuss with them how any new skills acquired could be utilised in their role.
- 10.4 Reservists return to civilian life with a huge variety of new skills and accomplishments which can be of great benefit to employers. They can also face challenges too. If you have any concerns about a reservist employee's ability to reintegrate into the workplace, or changes to their usual behaviour, there is help and support available (see useful contacts).

11. Continuity of Employment

- 11.1 The continuity of the reservist's period of employment is not broken by a period of mobilisation, if they are reinstated to their former employment within six months of demobilisation.
- 11.2 When calculating the employee's total period of continuous employment, the organisation will discount the number of days falling in the period between the date on which the reservist is called up for military operations and the day immediately preceding the day on which they return to work.

12. Useful Contacts

- 12.1 Useful contacts outside of the Authority are listed below:
- Your reservist's chain of command - Unit Admin, Welfare, Pastoral and Medical Staff
 - Navy Personal and Family Service and Royal Marines Welfare (www.rncom.mod.uk)
 - Army Welfare Services (www.army.mod.uk/welfare-support)
 - Forces Help RAF (www.rafcom.co.uk)
 - Veterans and Reserves Mental Health Programme (in partnership with the NHS referred via GP) 0800 032 6258
 - Combat Stress (www.combatstress.org.uk/veterans/support-for-reservists/)
 - ~~Bury Council, Armed Forces Personnel Support~~
~~(<https://www.bury.gov.uk/armed-forces-personnel>)~~
- 12.2 For further information about the Policy on Time Off for Reservists please:
- Email us at HRBusinessManagement@bury.gov.uk HRSsupport@bury.gov.uk

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14. Linked Procedures

14.1 The following procedures are linked to the Policy on Time Off for Reservists:

- ~~Work Life Balance Booklet - Achieving a Healthy Work Life Balance~~
- ~~Section 4 of Local Conditions of Service - Hours and Leave~~

15. Review

~~15.1 This procedure will be reviewed after one year, and thereafter every three years. Representatives of the Authority will consult with the appropriate Trade Unions where alterations or amendments to the procedure may be required.~~

~~For further information about the Policy on Time Off for Reservists please:~~

~~✉ Email us at HRSupport@bury.gov.uk~~

~~✉ Write to us at Policy & Compliance, Corporate Core, Town Hall, Knowsley Street, Bury BL9 0SW~~

Document Version Control

Document Version Control	
Issue Number	Date
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Appendix K: Facilities Time Agreement

~~January~~ July 2026

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This agreement, between Bury Council and the Bury Branch of Unison, sets out the facilities time arrangements for trade union representatives who are employed by the Council. It also acts as a guide for managing arrangements for time off for trade union duties and activities ~~and for the recording and publishing of required data.~~
- 1.2 It aims to support effective industrial relations by enabling trade union representatives to carry out their duties efficiently while balancing the operational needs of the Council.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 The agreement relates to trade union representatives and union learning representatives who can be accredited or unaccredited. Accredited Representatives can be:
- A member of the Unison Executive Council or National/Regional Body of Unison or Annual Conference delegate for the period of the Conference
 - Elected officers of the Branch, departmental representatives, shop stewards and appointed Safety representatives.
- 2.2 Trade Union Representative: An employee who has been elected or appointed, in accordance with the rules of an independent trade union (Unison), to represent all or some of the members within the workplace where the trade union is recognised for collective bargaining purposes.
- 2.3 Union Learning Representative: An employee who has been elected or appointed, in accordance with the rules of an independent trade union (Unison) to be a learning representative of the union in the workplace where the trade union is recognised.
- 2.4 Facilities Time: Paid or unpaid time off during working hours granted by the employer to trade union representatives to carry out trade union duties or activities. This includes time for negotiations, representation, consultation, and training.
- 2.5 Trade Union Duties: Duties carried out by trade union representatives that relate to industrial relations between the employer and employees. These are set out in detail in the [ACAS Code of Practice for Trade Union Duties and Activities](#) and include, but are not limited to:
- Negotiating, providing advice and accompanying/representing employees, in matters relating to terms and conditions of employment/policies/procedures, including:
 - disciplinary, capability, grievance, redeployment, managing attendance issues

- allocation of work or duties
- flexible working arrangements, hours/rotas and work-life balance issues
- job evaluation and pay and grading
- physical conditions in the workplace
- Consulting on organisational change/restructures and redundancies (as identified under s.188 of TULR(C)A) or TUPE transfers (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006)
- Attending meetings with management
- Preparing for and attending joint consultative committees
- Safety representatives carrying out their functions under Health and Safety Regulations
- Training to enable trade union duties to be carried out

2.6 Trade Union Activities: Activities that trade union members or representatives may undertake to support the functioning of the union. These are generally unpaid unless otherwise agreed and include:

- Attending workplace meetings to discuss union matters e.g. Monthly meetings of the Unison Branch Executive
- Voting in union elections
- Participating in union conferences

3. Facilities to be provided

- 3.1 Whilst on secondment, Unison officers will be located at the Bury Branch of Unison, 17 Knowsley Street, Bury, which is wholly owned by Unison. Unison will ensure that the premises and ancillary equipment including desks, chairs, filing cabinets, telephones, photocopier, PC's etc. are maintained in a manner that provides a safe working environment. All of the above items are purchased by and maintained by the Branch except for the telephony system which is provided by the Council.
- 3.2 Workplace stewards and representatives will be granted reasonable access to external telephones for the purpose of carrying out their duties.
- 3.3 Should accommodation be required in Council buildings, this will be provided subject to Unison giving adequate notice to enable rooms to be booked etc.
- 3.4 Free use of the Council's internal mail systems is permitted with any external post and use of the Council's photocopiers being chargeable to Unison.
- 3.5 Notice boards to display Unison information/notices can be erected in admin buildings by agreement.

4. Union subscriptions – deductions of contributions at source (DOCAS)

- 4.1 Unison subscriptions can be deducted from employees' salaries and paid to the trade union as an alternative to employees paying by direct debit in accordance with the jointly developed, agreed and signed service level agreement.

5. Time off for branch officers and trade union representatives

- 5.1 The Council has agreed time off for unison branch officers equating to 2.5 full-time equivalent (fte) employees' working time. There is also an established post of Branch Secretary. The allocation and distribution of these hours will be wholly at the discretion of the Branch Secretary who will advise the Chief Executive annually of the names, designation, proportionate hours and the disbursement allocated to each branch officer.
- 5.2 Time off for trade union duties: In addition to the above, reasonable time off during working hours will be granted to all branch officers and accredited trade union representatives to undertake their trade union duties. Where there is no option for the meeting to be held in normal working hours, or where it is in the benefit of the organisation that the meeting is carried out in the representative's normal non-working time, then TOIL may be granted with prior agreement.
- 5.3 Both parties to this agreement accept the need to be flexible within this process and recognise their duties and obligations. The parties will seek to agree a mutually convenient time for the duties or activities, with minimum disruption to the service. If possible, the union will consider arranging workplace meetings towards the end of the working week or near break times.
- 5.4 Time off for training: The Council will grant trade union representatives reasonable paid time-off during working hours to undertake training (including e-learning) relevant to the carrying out of their duties as a trade union representative as identified in this agreement.
- 5.5 Time off for trade union activities: Reasonable time off during working hours for trade union activities will be granted to all branch officers and accredited trade union representatives.
- 5.6 Time off for union learning representatives: The Council will grant union learning representatives reasonable time off for training and to undertake their duties in relation to:
- analysing learning or training needs
 - providing information, advice and guidance on learning and training

- preparing for and promoting learning and training
- consulting on activities or preparing to undertake activities

If a trade union representative or union learning representative undertakes training outside of his/her normal working hours, he/she will not be paid any additional hours.

- 5.7 Reasonableness of requested time off: The determination of reasonableness will depend ultimately on the needs of the service at the time of the request and the union is aware that managers need to take this into account. Each application for time off will be assessed on its own merit; however, the Council will give consideration to:
- the nature and timing of the request
 - the amount of time off previously granted or planned for the future
 - the number of representatives or members seeking time off within a given period
- 5.8 Consideration will be given to the number of hours an employee is due to work in a week on both Council and trade union duties, e.g. training on trade union duties during normal working hours would be considered as part of the working week.
- 5.9 If reasonable time off cannot be agreed, this will be referred to the Branch Secretary and the Chief Executive for determination. If no decision is reached the matter shall be referred to the Joint Consultative Committee in the first instance.
- 5.10 Trade union representatives and union learning representatives must follow the procedure set out in Appendix 1 when informing their line manager of their wish to take paid time off to carry out their duties away from their normal workplace.

~~6. Trade Union (Facilities Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017~~

~~7.~~

~~8.~~

~~9. 6.1 The Council is required to record and publish data related to the usage and spend on trade union facility time by 31st July each year.~~

~~10.~~

~~11. 6.2 Trade union representatives and union learning representatives must therefore ensure that they follow the procedure set out in Appendix 1 of this agreement for informing their line manager of their wish to take paid time off to carry out their duties and for recording the time away from the workplace.~~

~~12.~~

~~Representatives must ensure that all such paid time off is accurately recorded) and passed to the Branch Secretary on a monthly basis, or as soon as is practical. The Branch Secretary will agree and collate the records, then forward details to the HR Business Manager each year to support the required publication of Facilities Time data.~~

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13.6. **Review**

- | ~~76~~.1 The arrangements will be reviewed in 3 years' time in accordance with the usual policy review arrangements, or sooner if legislation changes.

Appendix 1: Process for requesting time off for trade union duties and activities

1. Day-to-day trade union activities should normally be agreed verbally or by email/in writing between the representative and their line manager as soon as practically possible. As much notice as possible should be given and representatives should state:
 - the reason for the request (while preserving personal confidentiality, for example for those individuals who are involved with discipline or grievance procedures)
 - the location of the activity and
 - the time and duration of the meeting or activity
2. The line manager will consider the request having due regard for the provisions of the Trade Union & Labour Relations Act and give a response as soon as possible to the employee. Time taken to respond may vary depending on the nature of the request and the demands of the service.
3. For more formal requests/requests for time off for training:
 - requests and responses should be sent by the employee to the Branch Secretary
 - the Branch Secretary will write to the ~~HR Business~~People Policy and Organisational Development Manager formally asking for agreement

Following liaison between HR and the service, the request will be formally agreed or any issues e.g. service capacity, will be discussed with the Branch Secretary.

4. Should it not be possible to resolve any issues, the request will be referred to the Chief Executive for consultation with the Branch Secretary for a decision.
5. The trade union representative will record their time off and send details to the Branch Secretary each month.

Dignity at Work Policy

July 2026

1. Aim

The Council is committed to ensuring a supportive, safe, and inclusive working environment and culture. This includes ensuring all colleagues are treated with dignity and respect in the workplace and in the course of their work.

The Council values the contribution everyone makes to the provision of quality services. This contribution is most effective in conditions which are free from unnecessary anxiety, stress and fear, and where everyone is valued as an individual. The council takes a zero tolerance approach to behaviours and actions which are discriminatory or constitute harassment, bullying or victimisation.

The overall purpose of this policy is to:

- Maintain a zero tolerance approach to discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation at work
- Help identify behaviours and actions which amount to discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation at work
- Detail support available to colleagues who experience discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation during the course of their work
- Provide a process and guidance to colleagues and managers on how to report, respond, investigate and address behaviours which are discriminatory, harassment, bullying and victimisation

Employees are expected to maintain high standards of professional conduct at all times. This includes times when they are not at work but are in a situation where their conduct may potentially bring the Council or their profession into disrepute.

This policy works alongside other council policies and procedures and takes account of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) Code of Practice. It also replaces any previous policies and procedures that have been in place.

The aim is to ensure consistent and fair treatment for everyone at work.

This policy does not form part of any contract of employment or other contract to provide services.

2. Equalities Statement

In applying this policy, the council gives due regard for the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and provide for good relations between people of diverse groups, in particular on the grounds of the following characteristics protected by the Equality Act (2010); age, disability, gender reassignment (including non binary), marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, in addition to unpaid carers, care experienced children and care leavers, military veterans and those who are considered socio-economically vulnerable.

3. Scope

This procedure supports the resolution of unwanted, unacceptable and inappropriate behaviours experienced by council employees only. Third party complaints regarding the behaviours of council employees should be directed through the council's complaints procedures.

This procedure applies to all employees of the Authority except:

- Employees in locally managed schools where there are separate arrangements.

The Council will not take any action under this procedure against a Shop Steward or other accredited Trade Union representative (including safety representatives) until the circumstances of the case have been discussed with a full-time official of the Trade Union concerned, after obtaining the employees agreement.

4. Responsibilities

Everyone at Bury Council has a responsibility to help create and maintain an environment free from discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

All colleagues have the right to:

- Be treated with dignity and respect in the course of their work
- Have equitable access to this policy and procedures
- Be able to challenge or report unwanted or unacceptable behaviours without fear of reprisal
- Have their concerns heard fairly and without prejudice

Managers

It is the responsibility of all managers to:

- Implement the Dignity at Work policy and ensure the colleagues they manage are aware of the requirements of the policy
- Ensure the work environment they manage is non-threatening and supportive
- Take a zero-tolerance approach by challenging and addressing unwanted or unacceptable behaviours set out in this policy
- Have respect for the personal dignity of everyone they work with as set out in this policy
- Behave and act in a way that is not hostile or offensive to others
- Challenge and address behaviours they witness themselves in line with this policy
- Treat reports of behaviours and actions under this policy seriously, sensitively and in line with policy
- Ensure colleagues making a report have access to the support and assistance set out in this policy
- Ensure reports are logged and documented appropriately in line with this policy

In addition, service leads/chief officers should:

- Ensure dignity at work is factored into service risk assessments to reduce the exposure of colleagues to unwanted and unacceptable behaviours
- Ensure managers and colleagues are aware of necessary departmental/service level safeguards and reporting external to this policy

Colleagues

It is the responsibility of all colleagues to:

- Have respect for the personal dignity of everyone they work with as set out in this policy
- Behave and act in a way that is not hostile to or offensive to others
- Support the council's commitment to zero tolerance by reporting or challenging (where appropriate) unwanted or unacceptable behaviours set out in this policy

People, Inclusion and Culture Team

It is the responsibility of the People, Inclusion and Culture Team to:

- Ensure this policy remains compliant with relevant legislation and council objectives, reviewing and amending the policy where appropriate
- Ensure the policy is accessible to all colleagues
- Advise, support and guide managers and colleagues to ensure consistent and appropriate application of the policy
- Own and maintain a log of reports and actions arising from reports in line with this policy
- Monitor and analyse logs of reports and actions arising from reports to identify trends and ensure a consistent application of this policy

4. Unwanted, Inappropriate or Unacceptable Behaviours

The Equality Act 2010 identifies protected characteristics that are protected from discrimination, harassment and victimisation in law. Furthermore, the Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies including Bury Council to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation as an employer, a service provider and commissioner.

Protected Characteristics

The nine protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010 are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment (including non binary identities)
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion and Belief
- Sex

- Sexual Orientation

Bury Council recognises four additional characteristics to which it gives the same consideration and protection, these are:

- Carers
- Care Experienced Children and Care Leavers
- Military Veterans
- Socio-Economically Vulnerable

All protected characteristics are equal; unwanted behaviours towards one protected characteristic based on another is unacceptable behaviour.

A table of examples of unwanted, inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours based on protected characteristics is detailed in **Appendix 1**.

Discrimination

Discrimination is where a person or group are treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic.

Treating someone or a group less favourably includes disadvantaging them or treating them unfairly or inequitably when compared to people who do not have the protected characteristic.

A person or group can experience **direct discrimination** if they are treated less favourably because they have a protected characteristic.

A person or group can experience **indirect discrimination** when a policy or rule applied to everyone creates a disadvantage because of a protected characteristic they have.

A person or group can experience **associative discrimination** if they are treated less favourably because they have an association or link to a person or group with a protected characteristic.

A person or group can experience **perceived discrimination** if they are treated less favourably because they are perceived or thought to have a protected characteristic when they do not.

Harassment and Bullying

Harassment is where a person or group of people experience unwanted conduct that has the effect of violating their dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment because they have a protected characteristic, have an association to people or a group with a protected characteristic or are perceived to have a characteristic when they do not.

Bullying is where a person or group of people experience the same unwanted conduct, but this is not related to a protected characteristic

Acts of harassment or bullying can be single, multiple and/or sustained acts of unwanted conduct.

It is important to note that bullying does not consist of a manager legitimately carrying out their management responsibilities in a proper and reasonable manner.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unwanted and inappropriate harassment/behaviour towards a person which is of a sexual nature.

Examples of sexual harassment include:

- sexual comments or jokes
- displaying sexually graphic pictures, posters or photographs
- suggestive looks, staring or leering
- propositions and sexual advances
- making promises in return for sexual favours
- sexual gestures
- questioning about a person's private or sex life or a person discussing their own sex life
- sexual posts or contact on social media
- spreading sexual rumours about a person
- sending sexually explicit emails, text messages or online messages
- unwelcome touching, hugging, massaging, kissing or being in someone's personal space

Sexual harassment can also occur if a person experiences unfavourable or unfair treatment through rejecting unwelcome and uninvited behaviours or rejecting behaviours which were previously welcome, invited or consensual but are no longer welcome, invited or consensual.

A person can experience sexual harassment from someone of the same or different sex or gender identity.

Victimisation

Victimisation is where a person or group of people are treated less favourably because they have, or are thought to have:

- Made an allegation of discrimination, harassment or sexual harassment
- Made a report or complaint of discrimination, harassment or sexual harassment
- Taken action to address or prevent discrimination, harassment or sexual harassment
- Have contributed to any of the previous points
- Have a connection or link to a person or group who has been involved in any of the previous points

False, Vexatious or Malicious use of this Policy

Making a deliberately false, vexatious, or malicious allegation, report or complaint under this policy is unacceptable and may result in disciplinary action.

5. Preventing Unwanted, Inappropriate or Unacceptable Behaviours

The council has a legal duty to prevent and eliminate unwanted, inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours and takes preventative measures that contribute to this duty. These include:

- Mandatory equalities training for all colleagues and managers
- Equality impact analysis of policies, procedures, strategies and projects
- Dignity at work policy and procedures
- Risk assessing exposure of colleagues and residents to unwanted behaviours in delivering our services
- Monitoring and analysing reports of unwanted, inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour relating to dignity at work

6. Support for colleagues affected by Dignity at Work

It is recognised that experiencing and the processes of reporting and addressing unwanted, inappropriate and unacceptable behaviours can be difficult for everyone involved whether this is the person or group the behaviour is directed at, witnesses or colleagues alleged to have breached dignity at work.

Sources of support include:

- Access to Occupational Health
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Equality staff networks
- Trade Union and/or professional bodies

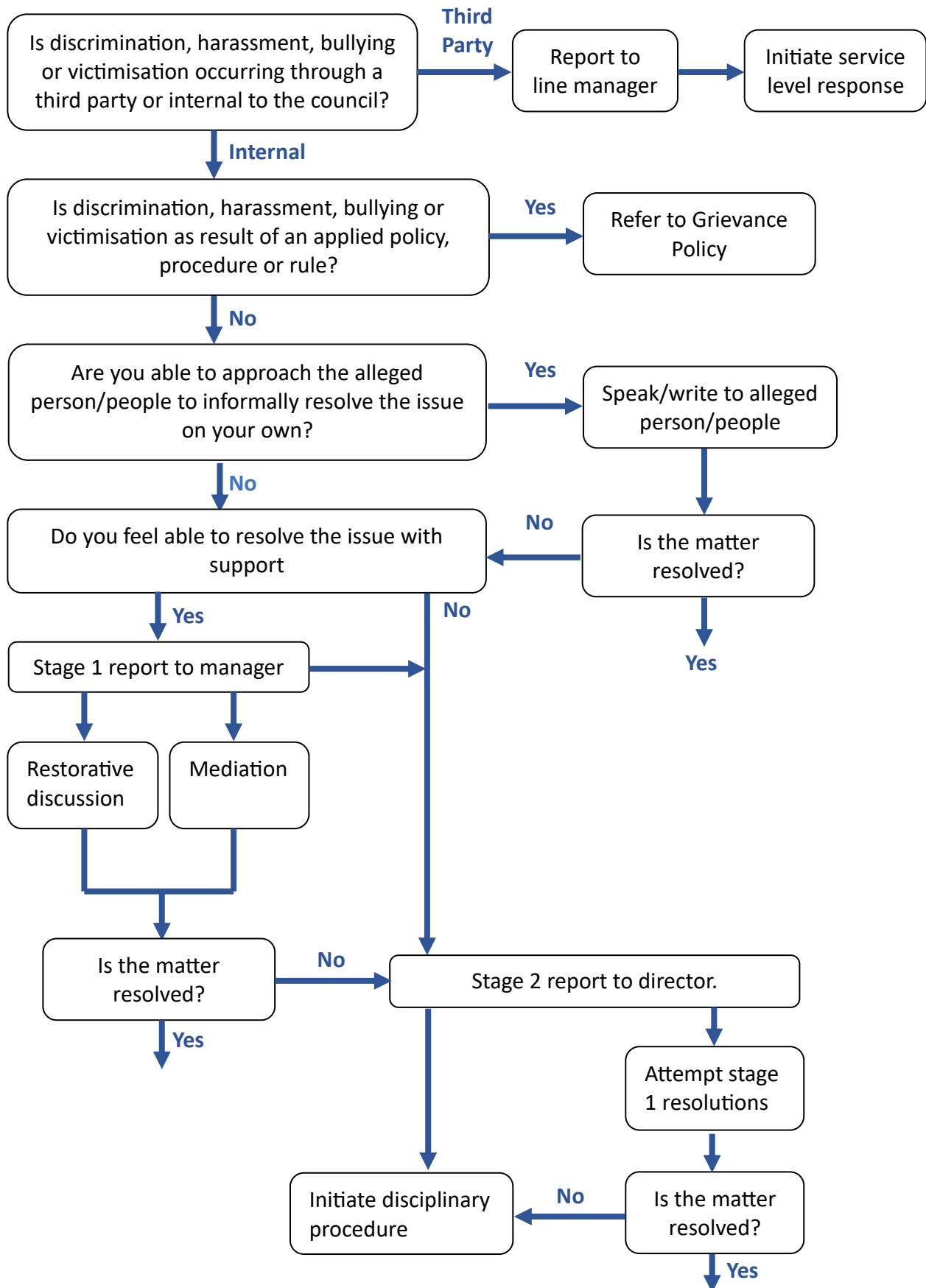
7. Procedure for Dealing with Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying or Victimisation

Allegations of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation must be dealt with in a sensitive and timely manner, ensuring minimal stress for both the complainant and the person/people the complaint is about, also allowing a degree of flexibility appropriate to the individual circumstances of each case.

If, at any stage in the procedure, an individual does not receive a response as required within this policy, or where the response is considered inappropriate, the individual is entitled to raise a grievance in the usual manner.

An individual who believes they are experiencing discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation is advised to keep a personal record of the event(s). Such records should include details of the date, time and place of incidents, the name of the alleged person/people, details of the incident, names of any witnesses and any action taken to attempt to remedy the problem. These records should be made as soon as practicable after the event(s) occurred.

This flowchart summarises the different options for dealing with allegations of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation. Detailed guidance is set out on the subsequent pages.



Confidentiality

Every effort will be made to ensure reports, records and proceedings arising from this procedure will be kept as confidential as possible. This includes anonymising names of victims and witnesses where requested and this is possible.

It should be noted that confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed following a report of unwanted, inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour. It may be necessary to share information with additional colleagues to resolve issues informally or as part of investigating incidents. Additionally, if behaviours are serious enough to put a person's or group's health, safety, security or wellbeing at risk, additional colleagues and/or appropriate third parties may have to be informed to safeguard anyone at risk.

A log of stage 1 and stage 2 reports will be kept and maintained by the People, Inclusion and Culture team, this log will detail the nature of the report, the service area the incident(s) occurred in and relevant outcomes of these reports. No names will be recorded on this log. The log will be used for monitoring and reporting purposes, as part of monitoring and reporting, no individuals will be identifiable.

Third Party Unwanted, Inappropriate or Unacceptable Behaviour

If the person/people alleged of the unwanted, inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour is a third party such as a resident, service user or a client. The person or people experiencing this behaviour should report this to their line manager.

The line manager should initiate corporate or service level policy and protocol to address and resolve the issue.

The incident should be recorded on the corporate Dignity at Work log via the People, Inclusion and Culture team.

In cases of sexual harassment, line managers must take all steps to ensure this does not happen again to the same colleague or other colleagues.

Internal Unwanted, Inappropriate or Unacceptable Behaviour

If a council colleague or group of colleagues are alleged to have demonstrated unwanted, inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour towards another colleague or a group of colleagues, the following process should be followed which includes attempts to self resolve, stage 1 reporting and/or stage 2 reporting for serious breaches of Dignity at Work.

Self Resolution

In most cases the colleague(s) alleged to have demonstrated unwanted, inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour will not have acted with malicious intent and will be unaware of the effects of their behaviour. It is important to remember that the impact of behaviours always outweighs intent.

Sometimes the person/people experiencing the alleged behaviour may feel unable to approach alleged person/people demonstrating the unwanted, inappropriate or

unacceptable behaviour directly if this has been significant, of a threatening nature or has caused considerable upset.

If the person/people experiencing the unwanted, inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour feels confident and able, they are encouraged to try to resolve the issue respectfully by speaking or writing to the people/person alleged to have demonstrated the behaviour to explain how this behaviour has affected them.

Before approaching the person/people they allege to resolve the issue, the person/people experiencing the unwanted, inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour should:

- Be clear of how specific behaviours have affected them
- Have clear specifics about incidents of the behaviours (when it happened, where it happened, frequency) where possible
- Keep a diary to help log sustained/frequent behaviours

When approaching the people the allege, the person/people experiencing the unwanted, inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour should:

- Clearly describe the behaviour(s) and the impact this is having on them with as much detail as possible
- State this is unwanted and/or inappropriate and/or unacceptable
- Describe what should be changed about the alleged person/people's behaviour
- Seek agreement for how the issue can be resolved

If the person/people experiencing the unwanted, inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour does not feel confident in self resolution or, the attempt at resolving the issue through self resolution is not satisfactory, a stage 1 report should be made to a manager.

Stage 1 Report

A stage 1 report can be made to any manager where the person/people experiencing the unwanted, inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour feels they are unable to resolve the issue alone or without support.

The person/people making a report can be supported to make a report by other colleagues, witnesses, staff equality network leads or members or their trade union representatives.

The report can be made in person or in writing (email/teams/letter) explaining that the person/people wish to make a stage 1 report under the Dignity at Work policy.

The manager to whom the report is made should ensure the immediate safety of the people/person making the report and arrange to meet with the person/people making the report as soon as possible within one week of the report being made.

The person/people making the report can be accompanied at this meeting by a colleague, staff equality network member or their trade union representative for support.

At the meeting, the person/people making the report should:

- Clearly describe the behaviour(s) that they have experienced and by whom with clear examples
- Provide specific details (who was involved, where did this happen, what time did this happen, any witnesses)
- Describe how this has made them feel
- Detail whether an attempt at self resolution has been made and the outcome if this has not been satisfactorily resolved and why
- Detail whether they feel able or not to resolve the issue with support

The manager should:

- Make notes with the permission of the reporting person/people
- Ask questions for clarification
- Be non judgemental
- Not attempt to justify or explain the alleged behaviour
- Explain the Dignity at Work process and next steps

The manager will need to log the stage 1 report with the People, Inclusion and Culture team.

The manager should arrange a meeting to speak with the people the report is about to talk through the allegation(s) using the details from the meeting with the person/people who made the report. The people who the allegations are about may be accompanied by a colleague or their trade union representative at this meeting for support.

At this meeting the manager should:

- Explain that a report has been made through the Dignity at Work policy
- Detail the allegation including specifics
- Explain how this has made the person/people experiencing the behaviour feel
- Ask the people the allegation is about for their own version of events
- Make notes of the alleged people's version of events including specifics
- Establish if the alleged people are willing to meet with the person/people who made the report
- Explain that they will consider next steps considering all the details that have been given by the person/people making the report and the alleged perpetrator(s)

If the manager feels there is conflicting or missing information, they can arrange to speak to any witnesses if these have been detailed by either the person/people making the report or the alleged person/people. They can also take additional advice on how to proceed from a People, Inclusion and Culture team officer.

Stage 1 Report Outcomes

Once the manager has spoken to all parties, including witnesses where appropriate, they should consider the information collated and make a recommendation to resolve or progress the stage 1 report.

If the person/people making the report feels the behaviour was threatening or significant and the manager agrees considering the information gathered from all parties, the manager can decide to progress the matter to a stage 2 report.

The manager can also decide to progress the matter to a stage 2 report in the following circumstances:

- The alleged behaviour was likely of a serious nature that would ordinarily be referred to a fact find investigation in line with the council's disciplinary procedure
- The alleged person/people have existing conduct warnings/documented discussions on file
- The alleged behaviour was likely to have happened and the alleged person/people have shown little or no remorse and/or willingness to resolve the issue
- The alleged behaviour has or is likely to bring the council into disrepute

Alternatively, the manager can recommend a restorative conversation or mediation as a resolution if they feel this is achievable. Both parties need agree to enter into either one of these as part of the recommendation to resolve the issue.

The manger will need to ensure the suggested outcome log of the stage 1 report is updated with the People, Inclusion and Culture team.

Restorative conversation

A restorative conversation brings both parties together to have a conversation facilitated by a manager to try to restore working relationships and/or detriment to how people are feeling.

At the request of either party, an HR Officer can be present to support the manager to facilitate the conversation, ensure that the process is conducted fairly and to advise all parties in respect of HR policy and procedure.

The conversation must be informal and confidential, with all parties willing to find a way forward. The focus of the conversation should not be on apportioning blame. No record of the meeting is required beyond setting out what future actions or behaviours have been agreed. The record should not contain any implied decision that unwanted, inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour has or has not taken place.

If during the discussion it becomes obvious that the matter is more serious, the discussion should be adjourned. All parties should be advised that the matter could be continued with mediation or progressed to a stage 2 report.

The discussion should follow these formats:

Where the alleged person/people have acknowledged their behaviour and wish to apologise:

- Manager outlines the format of the discussion and the intention is to restore working relationships and/or detriment to how people are feeling
- Allow the alleged person/people to speak first to acknowledge their behaviour, apologise and outline future actions or changes they will make
- The person/people making the report are asked if they accept the apology and the future actions or changes
- The person/people making the report can suggest how they feel working relationships can be restored if they do not accept the apology or the future actions
- The alleged person/people are given an opportunity to respond to the suggestions from the person/people making the report

Where the alleged person/people have not previously acknowledged their alleged behaviour and have not indicated they wish to apologise:

- Manager outlines the format of the discussion and the intention is to restore working relationships and/or detriment to how people are feeling
- The person/people making the report are asked to explain the behaviours, how these are unwanted, inappropriate or unacceptable to them and how this has made them feel
- The alleged person/people are asked if they acknowledge or accept this or have any questions that might help them understand the point of view of the person/people making a report
- The person/people making the report are asked if they can suggest changes or actions that would restore the working relationship or detriment to how they are feeling
- The alleged person/people are asked if they accept the suggested changes or actions

If there is agreement that the matter is resolved at the end of the restorative conversation, the matter is considered resolved and the manager should log the outcome with the People, Inclusion and Culture team.

If there is no agreed resolution at the end of the restorative conversation, the manager can suggest mediation as a final attempt to resolve the matter at stage 1. Otherwise, the matter should be referred to stage 2 for a formal fact find investigation.

The manager will need to ensure the outcome log of the stage 1 report is updated with the People, Inclusion and Culture team.

Mediation

Mediation can be a valuable resource in helping to resolve reports of unwanted, inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour. It can be used where informal discussions have failed to resolve the matter satisfactorily or where a person/people making a report feels the matter needs raising more formally.

Both parties must agree to mediation and either side has the right to withdraw during the process. The manager the report is made to will need to arrange mediation through the Council's Mediation Service which can be commissioned via the People, Inclusion and Culture Team

If there is agreement that the matter is resolved at the end of mediation, the matter is considered resolved and the manager should log the outcome with the People, Inclusion and Culture team.

If mediation does not resolve the matter, the matter should be referred to stage 2 for a formal fact find investigation.

Stage 2 Report

A stage 2 report should be made to a director or assistant director in the following circumstances:

- Where the person/people experiencing the unwanted, inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour feels threatened, unsafe or the behaviour is too significant to resolve through self resolution or a stage 1 report
- Where a manager receiving a stage 1 report feels the behaviour is too significant to resolve at stage 1
- Where attempts to resolve the matter at stage 1 have not been successful

The person/people making a report can be supported to make a report through other colleagues, witnesses, staff equality network leads or members or their trade union representatives.

The report should be made in writing (email/teams/letter) explaining that this is a stage 2 report under the Dignity at Work policy.

If the report is received directly from the person/people experiencing the unwanted, inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour, The director/assistant director to whom the report is made should ensure the immediate safety of the people/person making the report and arrange to meet with them as soon as possible and within 1 week of the report being made.

At the meeting the person/people making the report should:

- Clearly describe the behaviour(s) that they have experienced and by whom with clear examples
- Provide specific details (who was involved, where did this happen, what time did this happen, where there any witnesses)
- Describe how this has made them feel
- Detail whether an attempt at self resolution has been made and the outcome if this has not been satisfactorily resolved and why
- Detail whether or not they feel able to resolve the issue with support

The director/assistant director should:

- Make notes with the permission of the reporting person/people
- Ask questions for clarification
- Be non judgemental
- Not attempt to justify or explain the alleged behaviour
- Confirm the person/people making the report feel stage 1 would not resolve the matter
- Explain the Dignity at Work process and next steps

If the stage 2 report is a referral from a manager following attempts to resolve at stage 1. The director/assistant director should arrange a meeting with the stage 1 manager to discuss the matter and detail the steps taken at stage 1. If appropriate the director/assistant director can also speak to the person/people who have experienced the unwanted, inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour before deciding on how to proceed.

The director/assistant director can recommend/decide to proceed with the following:

- Recommend stage 1 resolutions if these have not been attempted and there is agreement from the person/people making the report to attempt these
- Proceed to the council's disciplinary procedure if the alleged behaviour is significant or attempts at stage 1 resolutions have not been successful

A log of the stage 2 report and recommended action should be made through the People, Inclusion and Culture team.

8. Appeals

There is no appeals procedure in direct relation to this policy as this policy provides a framework for informal resolution of dignity at work issues. This policy refers into the council's disciplinary policy and procedures where informal resolution has not been possible and where it is considered appropriate. Once referred into the disciplinary policy and procedures, appeals can be lodged and heard in line with the disciplinary policy.

If a colleague/colleagues feel that procedures under this Dignity at Work policy have been erroneously applied, they are encouraged to initially discuss this with the stage 1 manager or stage 2 director to resolve. A member of the People, Inclusion and Culture team may also be consulted to support resolution. If this attempt at resolving the matter fails, colleagues can refer the matter through the council's grievance policy and procedures.

Appendix 1 – Examples of unwanted, inappropriate or unacceptable behaviours

Examples include (but are not limited to):

AGE	• Considering someone as too young or too old for promotion • Derogatory remarks or assumptions about someone's ability based on age • Pressuring someone to retire.
DISABILITY	• Derogatory language about disability or neurodiversity • Mimicking • Invasive personal questions • Ostracising, avoiding or excluding people • Making assumptions about someone's ability based on disability • Unwanted highlighting or disclosing a person's disability.
GENDER/SEX	• Unwelcome sexual advances • Unwanted touching, standing too close or leering • Sexual jokes • Displaying pornographic photographs, drawings or images • sending emails with material of a sexual nature • Unwanted or derogatory comments about clothing or appearance • Sending sexually explicit emails, text messages or online messages
CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN& CARE LEAVERS	• Refusing to recognise the effects of adverse childhood experience (ACE) • Invasive questions about homelife and childhood experiences.
CARERS	• Assumptions that carers want extra time off work. • refusing reasonable flexible working and special leave requests
GENDER INDENTITY	• Transphobic comments. 'jokes' and name calling • verbal or physical abuse or intimidation; • Refusing to recognise correct gender identity • Failing to address a person by their given name and pronouns • Outing a person as transgender/non-binary without their consent or spreading rumours (this may also be a criminal offence); • Excluding a person from conversation or activities; • Asking personally intrusive questions • Using other protected characteristics to justify opinions and actions that are anti-transgender
RACE	• Derogatory comments and language based on race

	• Mimicking or belittling people based on their race • Displaying or sharing racially offensive imagery • Refusing to work with someone because of their race • Ostracising someone because of their race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin;
RELIGION OR BELIEF	• Mocking or deriding people's religious or other beliefs • Unwanted comments on appearance or dress • Unnecessary prevention of people observing their religious needs • Pressure to participate in political/religious groups.
SOCIALLY ECONOMICALLY VULNERABLE	• Expecting contributions to funds for birthdays and special events • intrusive questioning about homelife and finances • Ostracising people for not taking part in social activities outside work
MILITARY VETERANS	• Assuming veterans are unable to learn new ways of working
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	• Language, insults, threats or 'jokes' that are homophobic or biphobic in nature • Unwanted outing or speculation about a person being LGB • Ostracising someone because they are LGB; • Using other protected characteristics to justify anti-LGB opinions and actions

Equality Impact Analysis

This equality impact analysis establishes the likely effects both positive and negative and potential unintended consequences that decisions, policies, projects and practices can have on people at risk of discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The analysis considers documentary evidence, data and information from stakeholder engagement/consultation to manage risk and to understand the actual or potential effect of activity, including both positive and adverse impacts, on those affected by the activity being considered.

To support completion of this analysis tool, please refer to the equality impact analysis guidance.

Section 1 – Analysis Details (Page 5 of the guidance document)

Name of Policy/Project/Decision	Dignity at Work Policy
Lead Officer (SRO or Assistant Director/Director)	Lee Cawley
Department/Team	People, Inclusion and Culture
Proposed Implementation Date	Aug 2026
Author of the EqIA	Lee Cawley
Date of the EqIA	18/06/2026

1.1 What is the main purpose of the proposed policy/project/decision and intended outcomes?
The council doesn't currently have a dignity at work (DAW) policy, DAW reporting and management is determined within the current grievance policy which provides a process to follow for handing complaints of DAW but doesn't identify fully what DAW is, or provide a consistent approach to DAW. This new policy, details the council's approach to DAW, expectations of staff, teams and management and a process for reporting and addressing reports that is effective, consistent and promotes a culture of zero tolerance to DAW issues. The policy supports the council to meet commitments under several inclusion standards and frameworks the council is mandated to adopt. These include • LET's Do It! • Bury Council EDI strategy • GM People Inclusion Standards • GM Race Equity Framework

- SC-WRES

Section 2 – Impact Assessment (Pages 6 to 10 of the guidance document)

2.1 Who could the proposed activity likely have an impact on?

Employees: **Yes**

Community/Residents: **Yes**

Third parties such as suppliers, providers and voluntary organisations: **Yes**

If the answer to all three questions is 'no' there is no need to continue with this analysis.

2.2 Evidence to support the analysis. Include documentary evidence, data and stakeholder information/consultation

Documentary Evidence:



Dignity%20at%20Wo
rk%202026%20DRAF

[Let's Do It! strategy - Bury Council](#)

[Greater Manchester People Inclusion Standards - Greater Manchester Combined Authority](#)

<https://www.bury.gov.uk/asset-library/bury-council-edi-strategy-2024-2028.pdf>

[Greater Manchester Race Equity Framework - Greater Manchester Combined Authority](#)

[Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standard](#)

Data:



Annual%20Equality%
20Report%202025%2

Stakeholder information/consultation:

People with low incomes **No**

Geographical areas of deprivation **No**

Does the activity include services or functions that will be based in localised areas (Wards/LSOAs)? **No**

If yes, which What is the Index of Multiple Deprivation score for these areas?

If score is 3 or higher, has consideration been given to basing the service/function in a more deprived area? **No**

How could the activity contribute to the reduction of deprivation in the local area or for low-income people affected?

The policy can support people with incidental low incomes however is not likely to contribute directly or in directly to the reduction of deprivation.

If physical spaces/locations are involved, are they fully accessible?	NA
If geographical locations are involved are these serviced by varied and affordable transport links	NA
Are the opening times/availability of the service varied and flexible?	NA
Is there suitable access and usage provision for those who are digitally excluded? The policy can be printed or verbally read out for digitally excluded people	Yes
Do all related documents/webpages meet the council's Accessible Document Standards? Policy has been checked against these standards	Yes
Is there access to translation or interpretation (including instant BSL) services where required? Translation services are available where appropriate	Yes

Veterans	Consider these statements in relation to the characteristics. Mark the relevant box if the statement applies to the characteristic. Marked boxes indicate a potential impact. Detail this impact, evidence to demonstrate the impact, mitigations and impact level in section 2.6 Could the activity:
Sexual orientation	
Sex/Gender	
Religion & belief	
Race	
Pregnancy & Maternity	
Marriage & CP	
Transgender	
Disability	
Care Leavers	
Care exp. children	
Carers	
Age	

Cause disadvantage/worsening of access, experience or outcome of any services, healthcare, transport, buildings or environments?													
Cause advantage/improvement of access, experience or outcome of any services, healthcare, transport, buildings or environments?	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Cause disadvantage/worsening of health (physical or mental) and/or wellbeing?	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Cause advantage/improvement of health (physical or mental) and/or wellbeing?	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Prevent/improve access to education, employment or training opportunities?													
Increase or decrease the safety or risk of hate towards a group?	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Affect public attitudes towards an equality group?													
Prevent or improve participation in the democratic running of the council or society?													

2.6 Characteristic	Describe the potential impact	Evidence (from 2.2) to demonstrate this impact	Mitigations to reduce negative impacts or improve activity	Impact level with mitigations Positive, Neutral, Negative
All	The policy is intended to provide a positive structure to resolving and correcting DAW issues based on characteristics			Positive
All	The policy could contribute to poorer health, safety and wellbeing if not appropriately		Planned briefing sessions for staff and managers Intranet guidance	Neutral

	interpreted and applied		Managers and staff support from People, Inclusion And Culture team	
All	Policy can support improvements in health, safety and wellbeing by resolving and preventing DAW issues			Positive

Actions required to mitigate/reduce/eliminate negative impacts or to complete the analysis

2.6 Characteristics	Action	Action Owner	Completion Date
All	Briefing sessions and lunch and learn sessions to be created and delivered at launch of policy	LC	Q4 2026-2027

Section 3 - Impact Risk

Establish the level of risk to people and organisations arising from identified impacts, with additional actions completed to mitigate/reduce/eliminate negative impacts.

3.1 Identifying risk level (Pages 10 - 12 of the guidance document)

Impact x Likelihood = Score			Likelihood of negative impact			
			1	2	3	4
			Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Very likely
Negative Impact	4	Very High	4	8	12	16
	3	High	3	6	9	12
	2	Medium	2	4	6	8
	1	Low	1	2	3	4
	0	Positive / No impact	0	0	0	0

Risk Level	No Risk = 0	Low Risk = 1 - 4	Medium Risk = 5 – 7	High Risk = 8 - 16
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3.2 Level of risk identified	4
3.3 Reasons for risk level calculation	In initial stages it is possible the policy may be misinterpreted and applied which could have a medium impact on staff involved in DAW incidents.

Section 4 - Analysis Decision (Page 11 of the guidance document)

4.1 Analysis Decision	X	Reasons for This Decision
There is no negative impact therefore the activity will proceed		
There are low impacts or risks identified which can be mitigated or managed to reduce the risks and activity will proceed	x	This is likely to be low risk and can be managed on a case by case basis with appropriate care and attention
There are medium to high risks identified which cannot be mitigated following careful and thorough consideration. The activity will proceed		

with caution and this risk recorded on the risk register, ensuring continual review		
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Section 5 – Sign Off and Revisions (Page 11 of the guidance document)

5.1 Sign Off	Name	Date	Comments
Lead Officer/SRO/Project Manager	L.Cawley	18/06/2026	
EDI			

EqIA Revision Log

5.2 Revision Date	Revision By	Revision Details

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Grievance Resolution Procedure

July 2026

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1. Policy Overview

Scope

This procedure takes account of the ACAS Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures and replaces any previous procedures that were in place. ~~It also supports the Authority's obligations under the Equality Act 2010, including the legal duty on employers to take reasonable steps to prevent the sexual harassment of workers, which came into force in October 2024.~~

This procedure applies to all employees of the Authority except schools' employees where a local policy will be in place as agreed by the relevant Governing Body.

The procedure covers all complaints made by an employee which are either:

- Concerns, problems or complaints that employees raise with their employers. (A grievance)
- ~~Allegations of discrimination, bullying, harassment, and victimisation. (Dignity at Work).~~

~~On the whole, the procedure outlined applies equally to both circumstances. Where there are differences, these are set out within the detail of this procedure.~~

This procedure is designed to deal with either individual or collective grievances. Collective grievances can be raised either by a Trade Union representative or a member of staff nominated to do so by those raising the complaint.

Purpose

The Council believes that every employee has the right to be treated with dignity and respect in the workplace and is committed to providing a supportive working environment. ~~where employees are free from bullying and harassment. It is recognised that threatening or intimidating work environments can interfere with job performance, undermine job security and can cause undue stress.~~

This procedure sets out a framework to resolve any grievances quickly and fairly.

This procedure cannot be used in relation to:

- Complaints against an agreed Council policy or procedure
 - Matters covered by ongoing action under other procedure or process (e.g. disciplinary, capability, restructuring/redundancy, pay and grading and absence management) as separate procedures/policies are in place for these matters.
 - Appeals against any decision to terminate employment whether on grounds of ill-health, incapacity, redundancy, poor performance or other grounds.
 - Complaints about matters which are more than three months old (though this shall not prevent an employee referring to matters more than three months old in relation to a current grievance).
-

The Council shall not usually seek to resolve grievances raised after an employee has ceased their employment with the Council through this procedure. Any issues will ordinarily be dealt with under the Complaints Procedure.

Support

It is recognised that support may be required for all employees involved in a grievance regardless of whether they are making the complaint or the complaint is about them. ~~This may be particularly the case in relation to Dignity at Work-related issues.~~ All employees can access the Council's confidential Employee Assistance Programme. Other methods of support will be considered according to the circumstances.

2. Procedure

Stage 1

Employees are encouraged to talk to their line manager in the first instance about any work-related issue or complaint they may have as concerns can often be addressed. If a concern involves an individual's line manager the employee should discuss the matter with their line manager's manager. The staff members Trade Union representative, or HR are available for advice.

It is important that managers keep an open mind when dealing with such complaints and the manager should listen carefully to what the employee is saying, not make assumptions, and consider how the alleged actions may have made them feel.

The manager will need to consider the most appropriate action to take to resolve the situation. ~~If appropriate, this may be a quiet word with the person who has been complained about, explaining their conduct was inappropriate and outlining how it made that person feel, or maybe an apology from that person, if they are willing to consider this.~~

~~Depending on the situation, the manager may think it is appropriate to arrange a meeting with both parties. Before arranging this, the manager should meet with everyone separately to ensure they are all willing to meet to try to resolve the complaint.~~

~~It may be more appropriate for mediation to take place with an independent and qualified mediator. Mediation can help to resolve disputes between two or more parties. It can be used where initial discussions have failed to resolve the matter satisfactorily or where a complainant feels that the matter needs to be resolved independently. Mediation can only be used if both parties agree to it and either party has the right to withdraw during the process. Employees are strongly encouraged to explore this as an option where appropriate. It may also be appropriate to consider external mediation. Further information about Mediation is attached at Appendix 3.~~

Managers can seek support and advice from HR or the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Manager if required.

It may be appropriate for the manager to confirm the outcome of any stage 1 resolution, in writing to the employee raising the concern and any other parties.

If an issue has not been satisfactorily resolved at stage 1, an employee should follow the stage 2 process. Acceleration to stage 2 must be within 10 working days from the date of mediation, or notification of the stage 1 resolution.

Stage 2

If an issue has not been satisfactorily resolved at stage 1, the employee should submit the nature of their concerns, problems or complaints in writing, to their Line manager/Head of Service/Assistant Director. The staff members Trade Union representative, or HR are available for advice.

If the matter is being raised as a collective concern, this should be submitted by a member of staff nominated to do so by those raising the complaint or the Trade Union and the submission should include details of all those who are part of the collective.

The manager to whom the matters are submitted to, will ordinarily act as the 'Grievance Manager' and arrange to meet with the employee without unreasonable delay, ideally within 5 working days, to discuss the issues raised and the steps needed to resolve the concerns. The Grievance Manager should arrange for a note taker to be present and keep a record of the meeting.

In some circumstances, by exception, it may be more appropriate for a different, independent, manager to act as the 'Grievance Manager'.¹ (or in exceptional circumstances an external investigator). The manager who has received the written concerns should discuss any need for an independent 'Grievance Manager' with HR and the decision to do so should be made by the appropriate Head of Service (or above).

~~In Dignity at Work related complaints an independent manager should often act as the 'Grievance Manager'.~~

Before the initial meeting between the individual raising the concern and the Grievance Manager, some initial enquiries may have already been carried out by the Grievance Manager based on the information submitted by the employee.

At the meeting, the employee should outline the nature of their concerns and explain how they think this should be resolved. A general discussion can take place about the issues and possible ways forward. The meeting may be adjourned if further information, evidence, or investigation is required by the Grievance Manager. This may include speaking to any relevant witnesses.

¹ The term Grievance Manager is used throughout this policy irrespective of whether this is the individual's line manager, an alternative manager or an external investigator.

It should be explained to the employee that where complaints ~~are made against~~involve another employee, the details of the complaint will need to be shared with that person in order to get their response. ~~In these circumstances, the Grievance Manager or individual's line manager, should arrange a confidential conversation with the individual whom a complaint has been made against to inform them of the complaint and who has made this and seek their response. The individual's line manager should provide support for their wellbeing during this process. The Grievance Manager, with the support of HR, should keep the individual who has been complained about informed of progress throughout all stages of the grievance. They will be informed of the outcome as it relates to them, whilst respecting confidentiality requirements and not, for example, sharing the outcome letter.~~

Once the Grievance Manager has ascertained sufficient information to determine an outcome, a further meeting should be held with the employee to verbally confirm the outcome. The outcome will also be confirmed in writing to the employee, as far as possible, within 10 working days of providing the verbal outcome. The letter should indicate what action, if any, will be taken to resolve the grievance and a copy of this letter will be placed on the employee's personal file.

If, following consideration of the evidence, the Grievance Manager concludes that there are learning points for individuals these should be shared with them via their Line Manager. If it is felt that it may be appropriate for action to be considered under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure, the Grievance Manager should discuss this with HR. The information gathered as part of this process may, in these circumstances, constitute or contribute towards the fact-finding phase of the Disciplinary Procedure and information gathered may be used to contribute towards the disciplinary investigation.

If the employee continues to be aggrieved in respect of the original complaint, they may appeal and take their concerns to the Employment Panel.

Stage 3 – Appeal

If an issue has not been satisfactorily resolved at stage 2, the employee can appeal to the Employment Panel, in respect of the original concerns only. The employee must lodge their appeal within 10 working days of receipt of the letter outlining the Grievance Manager's conclusion. The appeal must be addressed to the Assistant Director of People and Inclusion who will acknowledge receipt.

Right to be Accompanied

Employees can be accompanied at all stages of this process. This includes the individual raising the concerns, ~~an individual who a complaint has been raised against (where a complaint has been raised against an individual)~~ and any witnesses.

The employee may choose from one of the following:

- a work colleague.
- a recognised trade union representative who is certified or trained in acting as a companion.
- an official employed by a trade union.

It is the employee's responsibility to make the necessary arrangements.

The person accompanying the employee is permitted to address the meeting however they should not answer questions on behalf of the employee.

Adjustments can be considered in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. This might mean allowing someone else to accompany them, for example a support worker or someone with knowledge of a disability and its effects.

The employee must let the Grievance Manager know who their companion will be at least 2 working days before the meeting. The Procedure does not allow for any legal representation.

If the employee or companion is unable to attend on the date of the scheduled meeting, this will normally be rescheduled on one occasion only.

A HR Representative may attend meetings in an advisory capacity. However, this is not necessary in all cases.

3. Confidentiality

Proceedings and records of any grievance will be kept as confidential as possible, but employees must appreciate that circumstances can mean that grievances cannot always be dealt with on an entirely confidential basis. ~~In particular, where complaints are made against another employee this will need to be shared with that person in order to get their response.~~

A grievance raised could result in the instigation of disciplinary action in respect of another employee. To protect the confidentiality of that process, the Council may not be able to inform the employee of the fact of the disciplinary process or of any disciplinary outcome.

An employee should not disclose the fact of, or content of, any grievance to any employee or third party without the express consent of the Grievance Manager (except that an employee is allowed to approach a prospective companion or Trade Union Representative).

Notes taken by the appointed note taker at the meeting with the aggrieved individual may be shared with the employee who may be asked to confirm their accuracy.

The Grievance Manager or HR Representative may wish to take notes during any meetings arranged to consider a grievance. These will not normally be shared with employees unless there is a specific reason to do so. An employee or representative/companion may wish to take their own notes.

Employees will not be disadvantaged or victimised for raising a Grievance.

Notifying staff involved at the conclusion of the process

The employee who has raised a complaint will be informed of the outcome both verbally and in written format. This will not ordinarily specify if disciplinary action against another employee is to be considered.

~~Where concerns have been raised against an individual they will be informed that the matter has been concluded by either the Grievance Manager or their line manager and the outcome of any allegations in relation to them.~~

Depending on the individual circumstances of each grievance, other notifications may be required (for example if there are wider corporate learning points in relation to matters such as Health and Safety or Information Governance), and this will be determined on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with HR colleagues.

4. False, Vexatious or Malicious Grievances

Making a deliberately false, vexatious, or malicious grievance under this procedure is unacceptable and may result in disciplinary action. Such issues will not normally be progressed through this Procedure.

If a Grievance is raised at any time during the formal stage of the Disciplinary Procedure, the Disciplinary procedure will not be suspended except in a situation where to continue could cause clear prejudice to the employee. If the Disciplinary and Grievance issues are related, it may be appropriate for both procedures to run concurrently.

~~5. Dignity at Work~~

~~Discrimination, harassment and victimisation are unlawful behaviours in relation to protected characteristics that the council has a duty to prevent and eliminate. The council has a zero tolerance of these unlawful behaviours, and it is the responsibility of all council employees to ensure they do not discriminate, harass or victimise in the course of their work or when representing the council. Employees also have a right to work in an environment free of discrimination, harassment and victimisation.~~

~~Protected characteristics for the purpose of this policy are:~~

- ~~▪—Age~~
 - ~~▪—Care experienced children and care leavers~~
 - ~~▪—Carers~~
 - ~~▪—Disability~~
 - ~~▪—Gender reassignment and gender identity~~
 - ~~▪—Marriage and civil partnership~~
-

- Military veterans
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex and gender
- Sexual orientation
- Socio-economically vulnerable

All protected characteristics are equal; unwanted behaviour towards one characteristic based on another is unacceptable behaviour.

Behaviours could be physical, verbal or non-verbal, written or graphical, digital or non-digital and can be isolated incidents or sustained behaviours.

Unacceptable, Inappropriate and Unwanted Behaviours

These are behaviours that cause discomfort or distress to a person or a group of people and/or could bring the Council and its officers into disrepute. These behaviours could be linked to a protected characteristic, but this is not always the case.

Victimisation is treating a person or a group of people unfairly or negatively because they have made a complaint or report of discrimination or harassment, or helped someone or a group of people make a complaint or report of discrimination or harassment. This also applies to treating a person or group of people unfairly or negatively because they are believed to have made a complaint or report or are expected to do so.

Discrimination is where a person or a group of people are treated unfairly, less favourably or negatively due to a protected characteristic.

Bullying is where a person or group of people experience unwanted behaviour that is offensive, intimidating or humiliating.

Harassment is bullying based on a protected characteristic or sustained acts of bullying.

Sexual Harassment is unwanted and inappropriate harassment/behaviour towards a person which is of a sexual nature.

Examples of sexual harassment include:

- sexual comments or jokes
- displaying sexually graphic pictures, posters or photographs
- suggestive looks, staring or leering
- propositions and sexual advances
- making promises in return for sexual favours
- sexual gestures
- questioning about a person's private or sex life or a person discussing their own sex life

- ~~sexual posts or contact on social media~~
- ~~spreading sexual rumours about a person~~
- ~~sending sexually explicit emails, text messages or online messages~~
- ~~unwelcome touching, hugging, massaging, kissing or being in someone's personal space~~

~~Unwanted and inappropriate behaviour can also include behaviours which were previously welcomed, invited or consensual but are no longer welcome, invited or consensual.~~

~~A person can experience sexual harassment from someone of the same or different sex.~~

~~Sexual harassment can also occur if a person experiences unfavourable or unfair treatment through rejecting unwelcome and uninvited behaviours or rejecting behaviours which were previously welcome, invited or consensual but are no longer welcome, invited or consensual.~~

~~In these situations, employees may wish to contact their Trade Union representative or the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Manager who can offer support and advice in these difficult situations.~~

~~Process of Considering: Dignity at Work issues~~

~~Dignity at work related matters will be managed in accordance with the procedure outlined above.~~

Appendix 1: Appeals Procedure

Staff have the right of appeal against the outcome of a grievance within 10 working days of the decision being communicated:

- Appeals against the outcome of a Grievance process are to be sent to the Assistant Director of People and Inclusion for a Members' appeal.
- The appeal must clearly state the reasons for the appeal, which can include new evidence which has only subsequently become available and/or any part of the procedure was wrong or unfair.

Upon receipt of an appeal, the Director of People and Inclusion/Assistant Director for the Service or their representative will provide acknowledgement in writing, ideally within 2 working days.

Following acknowledgement of receipt of the appeal, the Chair of the Appeal Panel plus their HR representative may agree in advance with the appellant and their representative whether the appeal:

- Hears all of the evidence and submissions made to the original hearing (appeal based on findings being unfair)
- Focuses on the issues surrounding the decision (appeal based on the penalty being unfair) – there is no reconsidering all of the evidence, but the management representative may briefly summarise the case.
- Focuses on any new evidence (as this is the reason for the appeal) – it may be considered alongside all the other evidence or may be the main focus – the management representative may briefly summarise the case.
- Focuses on the issues surrounding the procedure (appeal based on procedure not being used correctly) – management representative may briefly summarise the case.

The Chair of the Appeal Panel may request for the Employee to provide further information regarding the reason for their appeal, if insufficient information is provided within their 'Employment Appeal Form'. The appeal hearing date will not be set until such information has been provided

Appeal hearings should ideally take place within 30 working days of receipt of the written request. Where this is not possible, the applicant should be informed as soon as practically possible.

Process

- The Grievance Manager will present the management case to the hearing panel and may be accompanied by the HR representative who advised them during meetings. The HR representative's role is to provide support during the hearing if required, not to present the case.
-

- The applicant and respondent will be given at least 12 working days' notice of the date of the appeal.
- All statements and documentation to be referred to at the hearing (including any new evidence to be considered) will be submitted 6 working days prior to the hearing date, along with the names of any witnesses to be called.
- Papers will be distributed to Panel members, applicant and respondent 5 working days prior to the appeal.

If an employee remains aggrieved after raising a grievance, the appeal will normally be a review of the paperwork and process undertaken during the investigation. It is not appropriate for the aggrieved employee to see this documentation as it may contain confidential information about another employee / employees.

Procedure

The Chair of the appeal Hearing will introduce everybody and explain the following procedure to both sides:

1. The employee will be given the opportunity to state his/her case, explaining the reasons for the appeal.
 2. Management may ask the employee questions.
 3. The panel and the HR representative may also take the opportunity to ask questions.
 4. Management will state the nature of the case, and the process followed to achieve a resolution.
 5. The employee and representative may ask management questions.
 6. The panel and the HR representative may also take the opportunity to ask questions.
 7. If appropriate, there may be a general discussion to establish all the facts and/or clear up any misunderstandings.
 8. Management and employee may summarise the main points of their case. No new evidence or information may be included.
 9. The panel will adjourn to consider the case, with the HR representative.
 10. If the Chair wishes to clarify any points of evidence, both sides will be recalled.
 11. The Chair will reconvene the hearing to deliver the decision of the Hearing.
 12. The decision of the Chair will normally be given verbally at the end of the Hearing and will be confirmed in writing to both parties.
-

13. There is no further right of appeal, so the process end

Appendix 2: Examples of unacceptable, inappropriate or unwanted behaviour

Examples include (but are not limited to):

AGE	Considering someone as too young or too old for promotion; making derogatory remarks or assumptions about someone's ability or competence based upon their age; pressuring someone to retire.
DISABILITY	Derogatory remarks; mimicking; invasive personal questions; staring; ostracising, which is directed at any individual with an impairment, or group of disabled people, which results in the individual feeling threatened or compromised; making assumptions about an individual's ability because of their impairment; assuming that a disability means that the individual is inferior; assuming that a mental disability means that the person lacks intelligence; excluding people from social activities; failing to direct comments to a disabled person; use of words specific to impairment being used in a derogatory way (e.g. spastic); unreasonably highlighting a person's disability.
GENDER/SEX	Unwelcome sexual advances; touching; standing too close; forms of sexual assault; sexual jokes; displaying pornographic photographs or drawings or sending emails with material of a sexual nature; unwanted or derogatory comments about clothing or appearance; leering or suggestive gestures or remarks; sending sexually explicit emails, text messages or online messages
CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN & CARE LEAVERS	Refusing to recognise the effects of adverse childhood experience (ACE); Invasive questions about homelife and childhood experiences.
CARERS	Assumptions that carers want extra time off work. Refusing reasonable flexible working and special leave requests
GENDER INDENTITY	Transphobic comments, 'jokes' and name calling; verbal or physical abuse or intimidation; refusing to treat a person as of their new gender when they transition; failing to address a person by their preferred name and correct gender pronouns; denying people access to the appropriate single sex facilities such as toilets/changing rooms; outing a person as transgender/non-binary without their consent or spreading rumours (this may also be a criminal offence); excluding a person from conversation or activities; sexual harassment; intrusive questions.

RACE	Racial abuse; racially explicit derogatory statements; offensive jokes; racist graffiti; display of offensive material; an offensive or dismissive manner; insulting someone on the grounds of their race; refusing to work with someone or deliberately isolating them because of their race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin; unfair work allocation.
RELIGION OR BELIEF	Mocking or deriding people's religious or other beliefs; making unwanted comments on dress; making it unnecessarily difficult for people to conform to their religions or beliefs; pressure to participate in political/religious groups.
SOCIALLY ECONOMICALLY VULNERABLE	Expecting people to contribute to team funds for birthdays and special events; intrusive questioning about homelife and finances. Isolating or ostracising people for not taking part in social activities outside work
MILITARY VETERANS	Assuming veterans are unable to learn new ways of working
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	Making homophobic or biphobic insults or threats; making unnecessary and degrading references to an individual's sexual orientation; engaging in banter or making jokes which are degrading to a person's actual or perceived sexual orientation; outing an individual as LGB without their permission; ignoring or excluding a colleague because they are LGB; spreading rumours or gossip about an individual's sexual orientation; asking an LGB colleague intrusive questions about their private life; making assumptions and judgements about a colleague based on their sexual orientation; using religious belief to justify anti-gay bullying and harassment; displaying or circulating homophobic or biphobic materials; assuming that everyone is heterosexual; assuming that all gay men are HIV positive.

Appendix 3: Mediation

What is Mediation?

Mediation in organisational settings is used as a conflict resolution strategy. It is a clearly structured, formal process between two individuals, facilitated by a neutral, trained mediator. It is an entirely voluntary process and aims to defuse conflicts, allow parties to constructively resolve problems, mend broken relationships and establish ground rules for future behaviour.

Mediation should not be confused with arbitration, conciliation, or investigation. The mediator is a neutral facilitator and does not make judgements or decisions about the conflict. Their role is to assist the disputants in creating their own resolution by concentrating on future rather than past behaviours.

It is not intended that the Mediation Service replaces good management practice; rather that it offers appropriate support to managers if or when required.

How does the Mediation Service fit with other Bury Council procedures?

Mediation acts as a 'working partner' alongside Bury Council's formal procedures such as the Grievance Procedure. Where appropriate, mediation should be suggested and offered to employees in the first instance as an alternative process in conflict resolution, aiming to avoid the use of the formal procedures. It may also be used in addition to other procedures, typically at the end of the use of these procedures; aiming to assist the individuals concerned to find ways of rebuilding and maintaining working relationships.

When is it suitable to use mediation?

Mediation is suitable for use in most disputes, irrespective of either their origin or duration.

Examples of when mediation can prove useful are listed below:

- Personality clashes
- Disputes/conflict between colleagues
- Disputes/conflict between staff and supervisors/managers
- Repairing working relationships after management investigations
- Communication difficulties
- Return to work situations.

It is recommended that mediation be used as early as possible in a disagreement, to prevent conflicts from escalating or becoming entrenched.

The only prerequisite for mediation is that both parties agree to the process and wish to attempt to resolve their dispute – this is vital to its success.

Therefore, it should not be used punitively. Sometimes, however, the basis for the dispute may be so serious that mediation is inappropriate.

Disputants can seek guidance from their trade union representative before making any decision to agree to participate in mediation.

Ultimately, we will assess the suitability of a case for mediation.

Who is involved in the Bury Council Mediation Service?

The service consists of a team of trained mediators, representing different departments. This means that employees wishing to take part in mediation can work with a mediator who they don't know and who is from a different department to their own. This is to ensure the neutrality and objectivity of the mediator and that he/she is perceived as such by the two disputants. It may also be appropriate to consider the use of trained external mediators.

What happens when a 'case' is referred for mediation?

Managers, HR professionals or Trade Union representatives can all refer cases for mediation.

In the first instance a confidential discussion concerning the "case" will be held with the referrer. Dependant on the circumstances we may also contact the disputants to discuss the process of mediation. The referral will either be accepted or declined and given information about alternative courses of action. These could include recourse to a formal Bury Council procedure, training, counselling, Occupational Health, or another suitable option.

Mediation is generally not a lengthy process, and we aim to have all stages completed within 10 working days of an initial referral being made.

The referrer will be informed whether mediation was successful. However, the content of the mediation session remains confidential to the two disputants and the mediator, unless they both agree that the agreement can be circulated more widely.

Accessing the service

You can access mediation services by contacting: HRBusinessManagement@bury.gov.uk

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Flexible Working Policy

~~February-July~~
~~2024~~2026

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1. Aim

- 1.1 This policy details all of the Council's arrangements for flexible working. It sets out the process for application and complies with the Government's statutory application process and the ACAS Code of Practice on handling flexible working requests.
- 1.2 The policy recognises the many benefits flexible working. An improved work/life balance has a positive impact on employees' health and wellbeing and can also support effective workplace adjustments. In turn, these support the Council by improving employee engagement, recruitment, retention and performance.
- 1.3 This policy will help the delivery of our LET'S Do IT! Strategy for Bury 2030 by building a modern organisational culture in line with the LET'S values and behaviours.

2. Definition

- 2.1 Flexible Working is a broad term used to describe any working arrangement that meets the needs of both the employee and the Council regarding when where and how an employee works.
- 2.2 The Council's arrangements within this policy include:
 - Voluntary Reduced Hours
 - Job Sharing
 - Voluntary Term Time Working
 - Annualised Hours
 - Compressed Hours
 - Career Breaks
 - Purchasing Additional Leave
- 2.3 The Council also has separate Flexitime and Agile Working policies.
- 2.4 All Flexible Working arrangements will balance the individual's needs with the needs of the service.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all staff employed directly by the Council, excluding those working in maintained schools.
- 3.2 Within some services, Council staff will be working alongside staff from other organisations. Staff external to the Council will need to refer to their own organisational policies or appropriate joint protocols regarding flexible working.

- 3.3 It is recommended that schools adopt this policy where appropriate.

4. Principles

- 4.1 All employees have a statutory right to request to work flexibly under the Employment Rights Act 1996 (as amended) and regulations made under it.
- 4.2 The right applies from the first day of employment (except for Career Breaks where 2 years' service is required).
- 4.2 This Policy will positively impact on the Council's Diversity and Inclusion agenda ensuring employees are treated fairly in their applications and not discriminated against based upon a protected characteristic.

If an employee seeks a workplace adjustment for their disability through a flexible working request, then the Council should consider it in line with the Equality Act 2010 which requires employers to make reasonable adjustments to remove any disadvantage linked to a person's disability.

5. Approach

- 5.1 All applications for flexible working will be made following the process outlined below and a decision will be made within 1 month of the manager receiving the request in order to allow for any appeal to be heard within 2 months of receiving the application.
- 5.2 Employees are normally only able to make two flexible working requests in any 12-month period (in addition to purchased leave). However, an employee may have only one live request for flexible working at any one time.
- 5.3 Applications must be considered fairly, reasonably and with an open mind. This should include carefully assessing the effect of the requested change for both the Council and the employee, such as the potential benefits or other impacts of accepting or rejecting it.
- 5.4 Individuals and their managers will work together to ensure that agreeable compromises are reached so that any working time issues are managed quickly and effectively.
- 5.5 No request will be rejected without the manager having discussed the request and explored other alternative options with the employee.
- 5.6 The wider perspective of the team/service will be considered when making and considering applications.

- 5.7 Employees can apply for permanent flexible working within their current role or for a temporary period. It may also be appropriate to 'trial' requested ways of working.
- 5.8 Each request and arrangement will be treated on an individual basis. No one decision will set a precedent for any other.
- 5.9 If an application is rejected the employee can appeal. Appeals will follow the process below.
- 5.10 LGPS 2014 Regulations state that ~~no~~ pension contributions are compulsory for any authorised period of unpaid absence of less than 15 consecutive days. are payable. If the period of authorised unpaid leave is more than 14 days no pension contributions will be made. Therefore, if flexible working options result in unpaid periods of absence greater than 14 days pension benefits will be reduced. Active members of the Scheme can recoup lost benefits by paying Qualifying Additional Pension Arrangements Contributions (APCs) (QAPAs) ~~by completing Greater Manchester Pension Fund Form P38(1).~~ This form is available from the Pensions Team.

~~If the~~ The QAPA form should be returned within 1 year~~30 days~~ of the last day of absence, ~~the Council will contribute 2/3rds of the cost; otherwise the full cost of buying the lost pension is payable by the employee.~~

The Pensions Team can advise how much pension has been lost as a result of the break. Contributions will be based on what would have been paid if you had not been absent. ~~There is an online calculator to work out an approximate cost at~~ www.gmpf.org.uk

For further information contact the Pensions Team at pensions@bury.gov.uk

6. Application and appeal processes

6.1 Application process

All employees irrespective of length of service, may apply for flexible working. **Applications** should be submitted as early as possible before the requested start date to allow time for consideration, approval and any related action to be taken.

6.1.1 Applications for career breaks and to purchase additional leave should be made through iTrent self-service – guidance on the application process can be found here [iTrent user information - Bury Council Intranet](#)

6.1.2 Applications for all other types of flexible working should be made by completing the Application for Flexible Working on Flexible Workingthe Flexible Working intranet page. ~~and submitting it to your Manager.~~

- 6.1.3 Requests for Flexible Working must be responded to within two months of the manager receiving the request. **This timeframe includes any appeal.**

Managers must therefore discuss the request with the employee as soon as possible including discussing alternative options if appropriate. The employee should have reasonable time to prepare for the discussion and can be accompanied by their trade union representative or a work colleague, if they wish. The meeting should be held privately and notes should be kept.

- 6.1.4 The Manager will inform the employee in writing either confirming agreement to the request and the agreed start date, or to provide a clear business reason, including a detailed account of the service implications, as to why the request cannot be approved. The decision must be made within one month of receiving the application to allow time for any appeal.

- 6.1.5 The Manager may give an interim response where there is a need to take future action before a final decision can be made (for example, if a job share arrangement is requested, the feasibility of recruiting a job share partner will need to be considered and that post recruited to before the change can be made).

- 6.1.6 The manager may discuss and agree with the employee to approve the request on a temporary basis/trial with a review at the end to consider if the arrangement can be permanent.

~~6.1.7—Managers must send a contractual amendment form to HR Operations to ensure that any amendments are made and that appropriate changes are made to the employee's contract/pay.~~

- 6.1.7⁸ Managers should only refuse an application to work flexibly if there is a clear business reason for doing so – the following business reasons are set out in the legislation: -

- the burden of additional costs
- an inability to reorganise work amongst existing staff
- an inability to recruit additional staff
- a detrimental impact on quality
- a detrimental impact on performance
- a detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand
- insufficient work for the periods the employee proposes to work
- a planned structural change to your business

Where the application for flexible working is a request for a workplace adjustment, the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 should also be taken into account.

6.2 Appeal process

Employees will be given the right to appeal the decision. An **Appeal** must be lodged in writing within 10 working days of being informed of the decision and sent it to the ~~Head Chief Officer for~~ Human Resources People Advisory Services Manager. An appeal meeting must be held within 14 days of receipt of a written appeal. All appeals must be heard within 2 months of the application being received unless there are exceptional circumstances, and an extended timeframe has been agreed by all parties. Employees can be accompanied at appeal stage by their trade union representative or work colleague. This is the final stage of the process and appeal decisions are full and final.

6.2.1 Appeals will be heard jointly by representatives of the ~~Head of~~ Chief Officer for Human Resources and the Executive Director of the department. Also present at the meeting will be the employee, their representative (if appropriate) and the manager who made the decision/refused the application.

6.2.2 The appeal will follow the following process:

- The Chair of the meeting will make the introductions and outline the process
- The employee (or their representative) will present the appeal
- The panel and manager will ask questions
- The manager will give the reason for the decision or for refusing the application
- The employee (or their representative) and the panel will ask questions
- There will be a general discussion to clear up any misunderstandings
- The employee will summarise their case
- The manager will summarise their case
- The meeting will adjourn for consideration of the decision

A written record should be kept of the meeting.

6.2.3 The decision will be sent to the employee in writing within 5 days of the meeting, however, if possible, the decision will be given on the day.

7. Flexible working options

7.1 Voluntary Reduced Hours

7.1.1 Voluntary Reduced Hours allows employees to voluntarily reduce their contractual hours to enable them to have more time for personal, caring or family commitments.

- 7.1.2 Hours can be reduced on a permanent or temporary basis depending on individual circumstances:
- Permanent reduction in hours involves a permanent amendment to an employee's contract of employment and means that they have no right to revert back to full time working without this being requested and agreed.
 - Temporary reduction in hours gives employees the security of reverting to their normal working hours at the end of an agreed period and also allows a trial period for managers to ensure the service is not detrimentally affected by the change.
- 7.1.3 In effect, employees who reduce their hours will be classed as part time and any terms and conditions of service entitlements and payments will apply on a pro rata basis to the hours worked. Pension will also be affected and employees can take advice on this from pensions@bury.gov.uk.
- 7.1.4 An employee who voluntarily reduces their hours then applies for another post within the Council with different working hours does so on the basis that they are applying for a role with the hours as stated in the advertisement. There is no guarantee that it will be possible to continue with current arrangements in the role applied for.

7.2 Job Share

- 7.2.1 Job Sharing involves the voluntary sharing of a post with two (or more) employees. The job sharers share the responsibilities/duties of a post and the salary on a pro-rata basis to the hours worked.
- 7.2.2 If a job share employee resigns, their job share partner will be given the opportunity to assume the post on a full-time basis. Where there are more than two post holders, the vacant hours could be split between the remaining partners if they were in agreement.
- 7.2.3 A job share employee will be classed as part time and any terms and conditions of service entitlements and payments will apply on a pro rata basis to the hours worked. Pension will also be affected and advice from pensions@bury.gov.uk should be sought.
- 7.2.4 Job sharers will be entitled to a proportion of all the public holidays. Bank holidays are automatically added to your annual leave entitlement based on your working pattern. If you are scheduled to work on the day the bank holiday falls this will be deducted from your entitlement. If you are not scheduled to work on the day, you will get the 7.4 hours (pro rata for part time) added to your leave to take at another time.

7.3 Voluntary Term Time

- 7.3.1 Term-time working relates to school term times, which can vary depending upon different local authority areas. Employees work during

school term times and take unpaid leave during school holidays, whilst remaining on a permanent contract of employment. Voluntary term-time working should not be confused with term-time only posts (e.g. school based, when the employee's service is not required in the school holidays).

- 7.3.2 A voluntary term time employee will effectively reduce their hours (in terms of weeks worked) and any terms and conditions of service entitlements and payments will apply on a pro rata basis to the hours worked. Pension will also be affected and advice from pensions@bury.gov.uk should be sought.
- 7.3.3 Salary is paid throughout the year and payment for annual leave is included in the salary calculation. HR Operations can advise on the actual salary calculation which will depend on hours of work, weeks worked and holiday entitlement.
- 7.3.4 Annual leave must be taken during school holidays. The assumption is that annual leave will be taken in the first periods of school closure from 1st April until leave entitlement is exhausted. Annual leave requests will not be granted during term-time, therefore, there is no need to approve and record leave.
- 7.3.5 An employee who works voluntary term time then applies for another post within the Council working all year round does so on the basis that they are applying for a role as stated in the advertisement. There is no guarantee that it will be possible to continue with current arrangements in the role applied for.

7.4 Annualised Hours

- 7.4.1 Annualised hours contracts are when employees work a set number of hours over 12 months. Instead of employees working a standard number of hours per week, they are contracted to work a total number of hours per year.
- 7.4.2 Annual hours can be requested by employees or may be implemented service wide (following consultation with the trade unions under existing arrangements). Working hours should match the needs of the service, enabling a more efficient scheduling and management of work which is subject to seasonal variations or predictable 'peaks and troughs'. It is not suitable for unpredictable workloads and can cause difficulties with job sharing due to the nature of how hours are worked.
- 7.4.3 Annual hours can significantly reduce overtime and provide employees with a stable income as salary is paid in equal payments. The concept of annual hours may be implemented in 2 ways: -
 - The total number of hours per year are allocated to an individual employee or group of employees on a rota system.

- A small number of hours could be held in reserve. These reserved hours can be used for training purposes or to cover for sickness, holidays or any unexpected increases in workload. Managers requesting an employee works at short notice should take into account their personal circumstances; for example, they may need to make child care arrangements.

7.4.4 Employees are paid for the total annual hours per year, including annual leave and bank holidays. Salary will be paid in equal instalments. Employees must provide managers reasonable advance notice in respect of their availability to work.

7.4.5 Employees commencing an annual hours contract part way through the annual leave year will receive a pro-rata entitlement to annual leave/bank holidays based on the number of complete months left in that year, converted to hours.

7.4.6 Service specific arrangements will be in place where annual hours is already in place.

7.4.7 Managers are responsible for monitoring working hours throughout the year to ensure that employees are on target to work them all. Employees must make themselves available for work whenever reasonable to ensure that they meet their contractual hours.

7.5 Compressed Hours

7.5.1 Compressed hours allow employees to work their contractual hours over fewer days per week/fortnight/month.

7.5.2 All terms and conditions, apart from the working pattern, remain the same.

7.5.3 When applying for or approving an application for compressed hours, consideration should be given to any work needed to be carried out on a certain day and the covering of the service during the non-working period.

7.6 Career Break

7.6.1 A career break is a period of unpaid leave, which can be applied for after a qualifying period of 2 years' service with the Council. Employees returning to work following a career break must normally complete a further 2 years' service with the Council before being able to apply for another career break. A maximum of 2 career breaks per person will be considered.

7.6.2 Career breaks will only normally be agreed where the employee is intending to return to work following the break.

- 7.6.3 Employees will not normally be permitted to commence a career break during a period of long-term sickness absence or whilst subject to, or involved in, an ongoing disciplinary process or investigation. Exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis, and these will require approval from the appropriate Chief Officer within the service. Any live disciplinary warnings will be suspended at the start of the career break and will resume on the employee's return to work. An employee will not be permitted to commence a career break to cover long term sickness absence or whilst subject to or involved with any outstanding disciplinary action or investigation. Any live disciplinary warnings will be suspended at the start of the career break and will continue on the employees' return to work.
- 7.6.4 Applications should normally allow for a minimum of 3 months' notice of commencement and termination by either party. It will not normally be possible to extend or cut short a career break as this may impact on other contracts of employment for employees providing cover.
- 7.6.5 Employees who decide that they do not wish to continue their employment with the Council whilst taking a career break should inform their manager as soon as possible, in accordance with the normal periods of notice as specified in their individual contract of employment.
- 7.6.6 The minimum period for a career break will be 3 months; the maximum period will be 1 year. Following an agreed return to work date, the employee will return to their post on the same grade, with no loss of incremental point and length of service. If an employee is not able to return to their post, for example due to a restructuring exercise, the Council will seek to identify a suitable position, which will enable them to return on their previous grade.
- 7.6.7 Career breaks cannot be used as a means of prolonging employment in order to be able to access enhanced benefits such as pensions as this would be unlawful. Employees wishing to retire early should apply to do so and not use a career break for that purpose.
- 7.6.8 Employees should not undertake paid employment elsewhere during their normal working hours whilst on a career break. Any instances will be investigated and may result in disciplinary action being taken.
- 7.6.9 Applications will be considered on an individual basis in line with service requirements and decisions will be made at the discretion of the relevant Chief Officer.
- 7.6.10 ~~Employees will be required to sign an agreement suspending all~~The terms and conditions of ~~their employees'~~ contracts of employment will be suspended during their career break from the Council, with the exception of continuity of service. ~~Their contract of employment will remain suspended for the duration of the period of absence.~~

- 7.6.11 There will be no salary payment or payments of allowances, contractual or otherwise, during the period of the career break. At the end of the career break employees will return to work with no loss of incremental progression.
- 7.6.12 There are pension implications related to career breaks – see 5.10 above.
- 7.6.13 Employees should contact Payroll for advice regarding National Insurance contributions.
- 7.6.14 There will be no entitlement to sick leave/pay during the period of the career break. Following the career break, the career break period will count for sickness entitlements; however, SSP may be affected depending on the length of the career break. Employees who become pregnant whilst on a career break should inform their Department and Payroll as soon as possible, in order for them to assess entitlement to SMP in relation to the pay during the qualifying period. SMP entitlement may be affected depending on individual circumstances.
- 7.6.15 Employees with any other form of financial agreement with the Council, for example, a car loan or overpayment schedule, must make the appropriate repayments during the Career Break. If this, for any reason, is not practical, then the outstanding balance must be repaid to the Council before the break commences.
- 7.6.16 Employees taking a career break will be entitled to a proportion of their contractual and statutory annual leave proportionate to the length of their career break, plus any bank holidays that would have occurred during the career break.
- 7.6.17 Contact arrangements and frequency will be agreed by the employee and manager before the career break commences and must be maintained between the Council and the employee during the career break as necessary. Employees should, where practicable, advise the Council of amendments to their contact details.

7.7 Purchasing Additional Annual Leave

- 7.7.1 The purchasing of annual leave gives employees the opportunity to increase their annual leave entitlement by reducing their salary accordingly. Employees will be able to purchase up to two weeks (10 days) extra annual leave, regardless of when they apply (pro rate for part time employees). The extra leave is added to contractual leave on itrent and not treated separately.
- 7.7.2 Employees applying for this prior to the start of the next leave year in April can spread the cost equally across the next 12 months providing applications are received by 1st March. This will minimise the impact on pay each month. Applications can be made at any point in the leave

year but payments will be spread over the number of remaining months.

- 7.7.3 Payments for purchased leave will be based on the contractual pay of an employee's substantive post, is unaffected by changes in hours and is based on when the leave was purchased. Any adjustments as a result of re-grading or honorarium will be made at the end of that leave year. In the case of underpayment, employees may opt to pay the money in one lump sum or spread the payment by arrangement with payroll.

When a pay award is agreed, payments will be adjusted by payroll, as soon as is practical.

- 7.7.4 Employees off sick or going on maternity leave should consider withdrawing from the scheme as any leave untaken at the end of the leave year will be lost.
- 7.7.5 When an employee leaves, Payroll should be informed of how many days leave (including purchased additional leave) the employee has taken to enable the calculation of any over/under payment adjustment.
- 7.7.6 In exceptional circumstances, following discussion between an employee and their manager, it may be necessary for employees to withdraw from the scheme. The number of days purchased will be pro-rata to completed months, payments will cease and leave entitlement will be adjusted accordingly. However, no refund of payments will be made.
- 7.7.7 There are pension implications related to purchasing additional annual leave – see 5.10 above.

8. Evaluation and measures of success

- 8.1 All managers are responsible for ensuring that this policy is followed when receiving and considering applications for flexible working.
- 8.2 HR will record details of flexible working applications and current working arrangements for reporting purposes.
- 8.3 Success will be measured in a number of ways as flexible working has many benefits. Measures include:
- Increased employee satisfaction with their roles and the organisation in employee surveys
 - Improved recruitment and retention
 - Increased productivity
 - Reduction in sickness absence due to work related stress/burn out due to improved health and wellbeing and work/life balance

- Improved morale and motivation
- Financial benefits and reduction in costs due to reduced absenteeism and sickness absence

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Briefing Note

To	
From	Lee Cawley (EDI Manager)
Subject	Protected time for equality staff networks
Purpose	To provide structured works time for the running of staff networks
Decision required	Yes
Status	

Context

Bury has four staff equality networks which meet regularly and contribute to workplace culture at the council. The networks have a combined membership of approximately 90 staff from the four directorates and their departments, led by leads elected by network members. There is no structured protected time for network leads or members to lead the network or deliver network activities.

Network Operations

Network leads complete leadership tasks in their own time additional to their day to day work unless they have an agreement with their line manager. Leading involves convening meetings, setting agendas, taking notes and contributing to delivering engagement and awareness events throughout the year. Without leads willing to do this voluntarily, the staff equality networks would not exist or be severely limited in supporting inclusion at the council. Network members attend meetings and engagement events in their own time despite managers being encouraged to facilitate time for staff to attend up to six meetings per year (where this is operationally possible). For this reason, networks tend to hold meetings over lunch times to encourage attendance, participation and engagement.

Network functions

Staff networks are critical to modern workplaces, especially employers like our council with a large, diverse workforces that deliver services to a diverse resident base. Strong and effective staff equality networks contribute to inclusive workplace cultures, strong employee voice and equitable service delivery through:

- Fostering belonging by being a community for their members
- Improve the workplace and services by being a 'critical friend' to the council
- Support inclusivity through lived experience advice and advocacy
- Increase awareness and understanding through education and engagement
- Promoting diversity through role modelling and allyship

These critical functions require participation in meetings, working groups, planning, reviewing practices, developing resources, delivering activities and ad hoc support to individuals and groups.

Voluntary operation of the networks requires network leads and members to have availability in their free time, which severely limits the networks' ability to deliver these critical functions.

This also prevents networks from developing network action plans and development activities which also contribute to driving inclusion, belonging and meeting our statutory requirements as an employer.

Commitment to invest in and support staff networks

The council has committed to investing and supporting our staff networks through local and regional strategies and frameworks. These recognise best practice in providing strong employee voice, driving an inclusive workplace culture and tackling discrimination internally and externally. These strategies and frameworks include:

Bury Council EDI strategy 2024-2028
 Bury Council Workforce Representation Plan 2024-2028
 Bury Council Anti Racist Organisation Strategy 2026-2028
 GM People Inclusion Standards
 GM Race Equity Framework
 GM Bee Neuroinclusive Code of Best Practice
 Disability Confident Leader status

Identified best practice

Protected time for network leads and members to attend meetings, perform network duties and participate in workplace inclusion activity is widely recognised as best practice. With the [CIPD](#), [NHS England](#) and [LGA](#) recognising the most effective staff networks are supported with protected time to operate and become an integral part of an inclusive workplace. [The GM People Inclusion Standards has identified best practice](#) at GMCA, GMFRS, Manchester City Council and the Growth Company who all provide protected time to their staff networks.

How investing time into our networks can support our inclusion ambitions

Our staff networks already contribute to our workplace culture. However, with protected time instead of voluntary time, networks and network leads will show accountability through:

- Developing and delivering network action plans linked to the council's corporate plan
- Give focus to their lived experience consistently throughout the year
- Deliver innovative engagement with colleagues and communities
- Contribute to education and awareness activities for colleagues
- Attend and contribute to the Strategic Inclusion Group
- Advising on workplace policy and practices and contributing to the review of these
- Maintaining engagement of members through regular network meetings and activities

Protected time supports long term network activity planning. Network leads and members can plan ahead with managers for this time to be taken subject to service and operational needs which may take precedence on occasion meaning colleagues cannot be released.

Recommendations

Considering our strategic commitments and identified best practice it is recommended that:

- Staff network activity is considered day to day work of the council
- Two hours per month for network members to attend network meetings and activities
- Network leads are allocated a further half day per month for leadership tasks and supporting wider commitments in our inclusion strategies and frameworks

Equality Impact Analysis

This equality impact analysis establishes the likely effects both positive and negative and potential unintended consequences that decisions, policies, projects and practices can have on people at risk of discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The analysis considers documentary evidence, data and information from stakeholder engagement/consultation to manage risk and to understand the actual or potential effect of activity, including both positive and adverse impacts, on those affected by the activity being considered.

To support completion of this analysis tool, please refer to the equality impact analysis guidance.

Section 1 – Analysis Details (Page 5 of the guidance document)

Name of Policy/Project/Decision	Changes to Workforce Policies
Lead Officer (SRO or Assistant Director/Director)	Tim Normanton
Department/Team	People & Inclusion
Proposed Implementation Date	July 2026
Author of the EqIA	Claire Kirke
Date of the EqIA	July 2026

1.1 What is the main purpose of the proposed policy/project/decision and intended outcomes?
The following policies have been reviewed: 1. A new Leave Policy 2. A new Flexible Retirement Policy 3. An updated Salary Loans procedure 4. A revised Time Off for Reservists Policy 5. An updated Facilities Time Policy 6. A revised Grievance Procedure 7. Briefing Note – Equality Staff Networks The vast majority of changes are procedural or to cater for changes in legislation/pensions regulations, and do not have equality implications.

Section 2 – Impact Assessment (Pages 6 to 10 of the guidance document)

2.1 Who could the proposed policy/project/decision likely have an impact on?
Employees: Yes Community/Residents: No – internal policy Third parties such as suppliers, providers and voluntary organisations: No – Internal policy If the answer to all three questions is ‘no’ there is no need to continue with this analysis.
2.2 Evidence to support the analysis. Include documentary evidence, data and stakeholder information/consultation
Documentary Evidence: Our Employment Equality Report illustrates the demographics of the Council’s workforce.
Data:
Stakeholder information/consultation: UNISON, Legal Services, Democratic Services
2.3 Consider the following questions in terms of who the policy/project/decision could potentially have an impact on. Detail these in the impact assessment table (2.4) and the potential impact this could have.
• Could the proposal prevent the promotion of equality of opportunity or good relations between different equality groups? No • Could the proposal create barriers to accessing a service or obtaining employment because of a protected characteristic? No • Could the proposal affect the usage or experience of a service because of a protected characteristic? No • Could a protected characteristic be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the proposal? No • Could the proposal make it more or less likely that a protected characteristic will be at risk of harassment or victimisation? No • Could the proposal affect public attitudes towards a protected characteristic (e.g. by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)? No

- Could the proposal prevent or limit a protected characteristic contributing to the democratic running of the council? **No**

2.4 Characteristic	Potential Impacts	Evidence (from 2.2) to demonstrate this impact	Mitigations to reduce negative impact	Impact level with mitigations Positive, Neutral, Negative
All	The approach to Equality Staff Networks – there is a positive impact across all protected characteristics, as it proposes dedicated time for employee networks to represent these, and inform the work of the organisation.			Positive
Age	The Flexible Retirement Policy has a positive impact enabling flexible access to Pension. If an employee is over 55, there is an option there.			Positive

Disability				Neutral
Gender Reassignment				Neutral
Marriage and Civil Partnership				Neutral
Pregnancy and Maternity				Neutral
Race	The documents are in English		The documents could be provided in other languages, if required.	Neutral
Religion and Belief				Neutral
Sex				Neutral
Sexual Orientation				Neutral
Carers				Neutral
Looked After Children and Care Leavers				Neutral
Socio-economically vulnerable				Neutral
Veterans				Neutral

Actions required to mitigate/reduce/eliminate negative impacts or to complete the analysis

2.5 Characteristics	Action	Action Owner	Completion Date

Section 3 - Impact Risk

Establish the level of risk to people and organisations arising from identified impacts, with additional actions completed to mitigate/reduce/eliminate negative impacts.

3.1 Identifying risk level (Pages 10 - 12 of the guidance document)

Impact x Likelihood = Score			Likelihood			
			1	2	3	4
			Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Very likely
Impact	4	Very High	4	8	12	16
	3	High	3	6	9	12
	2	Medium	2	4	6	8
	1	Low	1	2	3	4
	0	Positive / No impact	0	0	0	0

Risk Level	No Risk = 0	Low Risk = 1 - 4	Medium Risk = 5 – 7	High Risk = 8 - 16
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3.2 Level of risk identified	0
3.3 Reasons for risk level calculation	All Council HR policies and procedures support the principles of inclusion, fairness, staff welfare and wellbeing across all characteristics.

Section 4 - Analysis Decision (Page 11 of the guidance document)

4.1 Analysis Decision	X	Reasons for This Decision
There is no negative impact therefore the activity will proceed	X	

There are low impacts or risks identified which can be mitigated or managed to reduce the risks and activity will proceed		
There are medium to high risks identified which cannot be mitigated following careful and thorough consideration. The activity will proceed with caution and this risk recorded on the risk register, ensuring continual review		

Section 5 – Sign Off and Revisions (Page 11 of the guidance document)

5.1 Sign Off	Name	Date	Comments
Lead Officer/SRO/Project Manager	Tim Normanton	14/07/2026	
Responsible Asst. Director/Director			
EDI			

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EqIA Revision Log

5.2 Revision Date	Revision By	Revision Details