

Report for: General Purposes Committee - 1 July 2025

Item number: 8

Title: HR Policies

Report authorised by: Dan Paul, Chief People Officer

Lead Officer: Tanya Patchett, Head of Employee Relations, Business Partners and Reward

Ward(s) affected: N/A

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** Non-key

1. Describe the issue under consideration

The report sets out the changes to the Acting Up, Honorarium and Secondment Policy and the introduction of a new Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Work Policy to ensure that they are in line with ACAS best practice, any legal/ statutory requirements and the Council's local requirements.

This report also sets out the proposed change to the parental leave policy which was presented at the April GPC where it was requested that Officers make suggestions for extending leave and pay provisions to employees who become a special guardian or kinship carer.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

Not applicable.

3. Recommendations

- (i) That Committee consider and approve the changes to the Acting Up, Honorarium and Secondment Policy and the introduction of a new Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Work Policy.
- (ii) That committee consider and approve the proposed revisions to the Parental Leave Policy to extend pay and leave provisions for employees who become a special guardian or kinship carer.
- (iii) Note the HR policies to be presented to this Committee throughout municipal year ending April 2026.

4. Reason for Decision

Review of policies is done on a cycle basis however priority has been given this year to reviewing the key policies in most frequent use as part of our improvement to managing employee relations cases and simplifying the policies for all managers and employees. The change to policies is to make the management of people more effective.

5. Alternative Options Considered

Not applicable

6. Background information

- 6.1 Human Resources (HR) has consulted/ engaged with Trade Unions, Staff Networks and other stakeholders via our policy collaboration process to ensure the Council has fit for purpose and legally compliant policies.
 - 6.2 The new Acting Up, Honorarium and Secondment and Sexual Harassment at Work Policies have been drafted in line with ACAS best practice (with reference to Brightmine, formerly known as XpertHR), any legal/ statutory requirements and the Council's local requirements.
 - 6.3 The Acting Up, Honorarium and Secondment policy has been updated as follows:
 - 6.3.1 Merging of Purpose and Scope under the heading "Introduction", in line with other policies.
 - 6.3.2 The principles section has been updated in line with other Council policies.
 - 6.3.3 References to practice notes have been removed and relevant content has been incorporated into the policy where appropriate.
 - 6.3.4 The length of an acting up arrangement has been reduced from twenty-four months to twelve months. An extension beyond twelve months will not be considered unless there are exceptional circumstances.
 - 6.3.5 The length of an honorarium arrangement has been reduced from twelve months to six months. An extension beyond six months will not be considered unless there are exceptional circumstances.
 - 6.3.6 The duration of a secondment remains at twenty-four months, however the length of time an employee can commence a further secondment upon returning to their substantive post has reduced from twelve months to six months. This change will provide employees with greater flexibility and further career development opportunities.
 - 6.3.7 The policy has also been updated to provide clearer guidance on incremental progression for employees who are temporarily acting in a higher role or receiving an honorarium payment.
 - 6.4 We propose to introduce a Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Work policy as a crucial step in fostering a safe, inclusive and respectful workplace environment. This policy reinforces the Council's commitment to protecting all employees from inappropriate behaviour and ensures that concerns are handled fairly and effectively.
 - 6.5 Parental Leave policy; extension of provision for employees who take on special guardianship or kinship care. Currently employees in this position are not entitled to leave or pay; this is on the basis that as they are already known to the child, that the settling process and getting to know the child is less necessary. Unison asked us to consider extending the leave and pay arrangements given the responsibility being taken on, the potential saving to the organisation in the context of children's services and the need for the child to still have the opportunity to settle, given the guardianship or kinship is likely to be as a result of a difficult situation for the family. It is expected this type of arrangement will happen infrequently, expected to be less frequent than adoption leave requests which are already low. Therefore it is suggested that employees taking on special guardianship or kinship care are given the same provisions as those adopting a child.
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It is proposed to change the wording in the policy from:

3.2 Adoption Leave

- 3.2.1 Employees who are adopting a child are entitled to 52 weeks of statutory adoption leave, consisting of 26 weeks of ordinary adoption leave and an additional 26 weeks of extended adoption leave.
- 3.2.2 Depending on the amount of service the employee has, the leave may be paid at an enhanced rate, in addition to the entitlement to receive statutory adoption pay. Full entitlement details can be found at Appendix A.
- 3.2.3 You do not qualify for Statutory Adoption Leave or Pay if you arrange a private adoption, become a special guardian or kinship carer, adopt a stepchild or adopt a family member.

To:

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 - 3.2.2 Depending on the amount of service the employee has, the leave may be paid at an enhanced rate, in addition to the entitlement to receive statutory adoption pay. Full entitlement details can be found at Appendix A.
 - 3.2.3 You do not qualify for Statutory Adoption Leave or Pay if you arrange a private adoption, adopt a stepchild or adopt a family member.
- 3.3 Special Guardianship or Kinship care
- 3.3.1 Employees who take on Special Guardianship or Kinship care can take leave at the same allowance as employees taking adoption leave; 26 weeks of ordinary leave and 26 weeks of additional leave. As there is no statutory right, the pay for this will be in line with the enhanced payment offered for adoption leave.

To be updated in Appendix A:

For those with over 1 year's continuous Haringey service at the date of guardianship or kinship, 14 weeks full pay or 8 weeks full pay and 12 weeks half pay. Leave beyond these weeks would be unpaid.

For those with between 26 weeks and 1-year continuous Haringey service; 6 weeks at 9/10ths pay, any leave beyond this would be unpaid.

26 weeks or less of Haringey service but the manager could discuss a period of unpaid leave.

- 6.6 Throughout this municipal year (up to April 2026), we plan to submit an additional nine policies in stages to committee for approval, as part of the HR Policies Forward Plan. The policies are as follows:
 - Code of Conduct Policy
 - Menopause in the workplace Policy
 - Conflict of interest
 - Recruitment Policy
 - Employment References Policy
 - Induction Policy
 - Employee Supported Volunteering Policy
 - Relocation Policy
 - Trans Equality Policy

7. Contribution to strategic outcomes

The review and amendments to policies are done in order to ensure we are operating within best practice for Human Resources and in supporting the organisation to achieve its' objectives. Policies under review are also done so in order to maximise the efficiency of workforce management.

8. Statutory Officers' comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Head of Legal and Governance, Equalities

8.1 Chief Finance Officer

The proposed reduction in the duration of acting up and honorarium arrangements may generate savings through cost avoidance by reducing the risk of managers having them in place for longer than they should be. There may be limited financial implications from the change to the Parental Leave Policy, however as volumes are expected to be very low these implications will not be material.

8.2 Head of Legal and Governance

The Council must review its policies and procedure to ensure it complies with current legislation and is fit for purpose. The recommendations in this report seek to achieve this. The remit of the General Purposes Committee includes approving new and revised HR policies.

9. Use of Appendices

Appendix A - Acting Up, Honorarium and Secondment Policy
Appendix B - Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Work Policy

10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Not applicable.