



Report To:	Full Council
Date:	23 July 2025
Subject:	Implementation of HR Policies
Purpose:	To seek Council's approval for revised and new HR Policies.
Key Decision:	N/A
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Jim Astill, Portfolio Holder – Corporate, Governance, Communications and Environmental Services.
Report Of:	James Gilbert, Assistant Director - Corporate
Report Author:	Rachel Robinson, Group Manager – Organisational Development
Ward(s) Affected:	N/A
Exempt Report:	No

Summary

HR policies require regular review to ensure they are within the legal framework and reflect best practice. This report brings forward HR policies for review. The Policies have been developed by Public Sector Partnership Services, as the Councils' HR provider; with input from a Readers' Panel consisting of Officers and Trade Union Representatives (Local and Regional). The Readers' Panel have confirmed that operationally the policies are practical to implement.

The Policies have been reviewed by Policy Development Panel and the Panel is supportive of the revisions to the policies.

Recommendations

- That Council approves the HR policies appended to this report.

Reasons for Recommendations

HR policies need to be regularly updated to ensure they reflect best practice and are within the legal framework. This review has provided the opportunity to seek consistency in HR policy across the Partnership.

Other Options Considered

None

1. Background

- 1.1 It is important HR Policies are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain appropriate, reflect legislation and best practice and enable the Head of Paid Service to effectively manage the workforce.

2. Report

- 2.1 Having a single set of shared HR Policies will ensure consistency in the way the Partnership's workforces are managed. There is also a benefit to Public Sector Partnership Services of a single HR policy set for each of the three Councils as it means rather than HR advisors administering three different policy sets, they only need to administer one.
- 2.2 This report brings forward two new policies; Drugs and Alcohol Policy (Appendix A), a Menopause Policy (Appendix B). A new umbrella policy has been created; Family Leave Policy (Appendix D). Three existing policies; Disciplinary Policy (Appendix E), Adverse Weather Policy (Appendix F) and Volunteer Policy (Appendix G) have been tweaked after a review of their implementation. The existing aligned policies were reviewed and proved by Full Council previously. Approval sought for these policies is on the amendments only as outlined in the 'Existing Policy' table at 2.4.
- 2.3 The policies, as presented in the appendices, have been reviewed by an internal Reader's Panel of officers from across the Partnership, trade unions and Senior Leadership Team. The policies have their support.
- 2.4 The Policies appended to this report are:

New Policy

Appendix	Policy Name	Objective	Rationale	Implementation
Appendix A	Drugs & Alcohol Policy	Establish a comprehensive drugs and alcohol policy to ensure a safe and productive workplace.	Substance misuse can lead to decreased productivity, increased accidents, and compromised decision-making. A clear policy sets boundaries and provides support for employees struggling with substance misuse.	The policy outlines prohibited behaviours, support mechanisms, and disciplinary actions, where appropriate. It also includes guidelines for legal compliance and available employee support.
Appendix B	Menopause Policy	Introduce a menopause policy to support employees experiencing menopausal symptoms.	Menopausal symptoms can significantly impact employees' well-being and productivity. All three Councils are signatories of the Menopause Friendly Pledge. Training has been delivered to support individuals and raise awareness. Guidance is also available to managers to support their employees. The partnership also has an active informal, employee led menopause support group. A supportive policy can improve workplace inclusivity and employee health.	The policy provides guidelines for workplace adjustments, access to medical support, and education on menopause. It also strengthens provision for flexible working arrangements and guidance for managers.
Appendix C	Family Leave Policy	Create an overarching umbrella policy pulling together existing maternity, adoption, paternity, shared parental and parent leave and pay policies into one policy.	Drawing the suite of family friendly policies into one overarching family leave procedure for ease of use for employees and managers and reduces the volume of employment policies to maintain	The new Employment Rights Bill will grant employees various rights from the first day of employment, including paternity, parental, and bereavement leave. Having one central policy will ensure any future legislative changes are swiftly and consistently amended.

Existing Policy

Appendix	Policy Name	Change	Objective	Rationale	Implementation
Appendix D	Disciplinary Policy	Section 4 – Fast-track	Introduce a fast-track process for disciplinary investigations to expedite resolution and	The fast-track process aims to resolve disciplinary matters swiftly, reducing stress and maintaining productivity. This process is suitable for cases of alleged misconduct that do not constitute gross misconduct. The fast-track approach is incorporated at section 4 of the policy; the	It would be the intention not to commission an investigating officer nor the traditional investigatory report. Instead, a thorough examination of the known facts will be undertaken by the appropriate People Manager prior

			minimise disruption.	remainder of the policy remains as previously approved. The 'Fast Track' process would allow for cases to be addressed effectively and in a timely manner such as to remove unnecessary procedural steps, negate the need for a lengthy investigation, minimise the anxiety of the employee(s) and potential witnesses. It is envisaged that 'Fast Tracking' opportunities would only be considered in the clearest of cases.	to a formal hearing, to be reviewed by the Hearing Officer. Following this, the range of sanctions within the Council's Disciplinary Policy & Procedure may be applied.
Appendix E	Adverse Weather Policy	New shared policy based on SHDC existing policy	Transition from separate policies to a partnership-based adverse weather policy.	Adverse weather events can disrupt operations and pose safety risks. A partnership approach ensures consistency and shared responsibility across the partnership.	The policy will define adverse weather conditions, communication procedures, and guidelines for remote and agile working and pay during such events. It will align with existing time off policies.
Appendix F	Volunteer Policy	Update to Include Volunteer Days – Section 9	Update the existing volunteer policy to include up to 2 volunteer days per year.	Encouraging volunteering enhances employee engagement, morale, and community involvement. Providing dedicated volunteer days supports employees in contributing to causes they care about.	The updated policy will allow employees to take up to 2 paid days per year for volunteer activities. It will outline the types of supported volunteer activities, eligibility criteria, and the process for requesting volunteer days.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1. This report presents a suite of HR policies for approval by Council. These policies have been developed to ensure legal compliance, reflect best practice, and support consistent workforce management across the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership.
- 3.2. The introduction of new policies on Drugs and Alcohol, Menopause, and Family Leave demonstrate a proactive approach to employee wellbeing and inclusivity. The revisions to existing policies – Disciplinary, Adverse Weather, and Volunteer – reflect operational feedback and evolving organisation needs.
- 3.3. The policies have been reviewed and endorsed by a Readers' Panel comprising officers, trade union representative and the Senior Leaders Team. Their feedback confirms the practicality and relevance of the proposed changes.
- 3.4. The Policies have been reviewed by the Policy Development Panel and the panel is supportive of the revisions to the policies.

Implications

South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

The adoption of a unified set of HR policies will enhance consistency in workforce management and streamline HR service delivery across the Partnership.

Corporate Priorities

The policies support the service review process, which aims to make the Partnership more efficient and effective.

Staffing

The Policies will have a direct impact on the management of the workforce. The policies developed are in line with employee legislation and best practice and are designed to support positive workforce management.

Workforce Capacity Implications

None

Constitutional and Legal Implications

Employee Policies are important in protecting the Partnership Councils against any concerns that could arise linked to employment.

Data Protection

There are no direct data protection implications arising from the content of the report, but data relating to staff is protected under data protection laws. The Council has suitable technical and organisational measures in place to protect such data.

Financial

Drugs and Alcohol Policy; implementing random and for-cause testing will incur costs for purchasing testing kits and contracting with testing service providers. The costs will vary based on frequency and scope of testing.

Risk Management

The implementation of updated and new HR policies mitigates several organisational risks by ensuring legal compliance, promoting consistency across the Partnership, and supporting employee wellbeing. Failure to maintain current and legally compliant HR policies could expose the Councils to legal challenges, reputational damage, and operational inefficiencies.

The introduction of a unified policy framework reduces the risk of inconsistent application of HR procedures across the Partnership, which could otherwise lead to employee grievances or disputes. The inclusion of policies such as the Drugs and Alcohol Policy and the Menopause Policy proactively addresses potential health, safety, and inclusivity risks in the workplace.

The fast-track disciplinary process, as outlined in the revised Disciplinary Policy, helps reduce procedural delays and associated risks of prolonged employee relations issues. Similarly, the updated Volunteer and Adverse Weather Policies provide clear guidance that supports operational resilience and employee engagement.

All policies have been reviewed by key stakeholders, including officers, trade union representatives, and the Senior Leadership Team, ensuring that potential risks have been considered and mitigated through collaborative development and consultation.

Stakeholder / Consultation / Timescales

The Policies have been reviewed by a Readers' Panel including officers, trade union representatives and the Senior Leadership Team. The policies have also been reviewed by the Member Policy Development Panel. Their feedback has been incorporated into the final drafts.

Reputation

The Council recognises the importance of supporting its workforce and managing the workforce in a positive way. The policies aim to achieve that, thereby enhancing the reputation of the Council as an employer.

Contracts

None.

Crime and Disorder

None

Equality and Diversity / Human Rights / Safeguarding

The policies support inclusivity and employee wellbeing, particularly through the introduction of the Menopause policy and consolidation of family leave provision.

Health and Wellbeing

The Menopause Policy, Drugs and Alcohol Policy and Volunteer Policy updates contribute positively to employee health and wellbeing.

Climate Change and Environment Impact Assessment

Not Undertaken

Acronyms

PSPS – Public Sector Partnership Services
SHDC – South Holland District Council

Appendices

Appendix A	Drugs & Alcohol Policy
Appendix B	Menopause Policy
Appendix C	Family Leave Policy
Appendix D	Disciplinary Policy
Appendix E	Adverse Weather Policy
Appendix F	Volunteer Policy

Background Papers

No background papers as defined in Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the production of this report

Chronological History of this Report

A report on this item has not been previously considered by a Council body.

Report Approval

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Signed off by:	James Gilbert, Assistant Director - Corporate
Approved for publication:	Councillor Jim Astill, Portfolio Holder – Corporate, Governance, Communications and Environmental Services.